

The Ark of the Covenant

Bill Howell, draft 13May2012, I will add comments and additions with time if there is interest...
14May2012 added Figure 8 from Velikovsky, moved Annex on Velikovsky to a separate paper

Summary

Is the “Ark of the Covenant” shown explicitly on an engraving of the Temple at Karnac, and labelled as “Item #9” in Figure 8 (a drawing by W. Wreszinski) in Immanuel Velikovsky's “Ages in Chaos I: From the Exodus to Akhnaton”? According to [Velikovsky 1952] this drawing was made as a recording of the loot taken from the Temple of Solomon during Pharoah “Shishak's” conquest of Jerusalem.

Incomplete draft – more to come!

Status as of 14May2012 :

There is a huge amount of material (books, articles, videos, presentations, etc) on this subject, and I have NOT even tried to do an extensive literature review. I assume that the idea presented here has been put forth many times in the past, and that excellent analysis are available, SOMEWHERE. My next step is to use this to see if others can easily remember anything like it. Ut this work has no priority, and it's not clear I'll even get back to it.

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Graham Hancock's theory

The 2011 A&E History DVD “The Lost Ark” presents the religious and historical context of the Ark of the Covenant, as well as the theories of journalist Graham Hancock who was with the Economist at the time he looked into this. According to Hancock, there is historical evidence to support the thesis that the Ark survived in Jerusalem from the time of the sack of the Temple of Solomon in the general following his death, until somewhere between 701 and 626 BC. At that time it may have been moved to Elephantine island in the Nile River opposite Aswan, where the only other Jewish Temple besides that of Solomon was constructed (? I may be missing qualifiers here?). Construction of that temple started about the time the Ark left Jerusalem, and this is seen as significant by Hancock. Over the next two hundred years at Aswan the Jews had returned from slavery in Babylon, and would no longer have considered the Ark to be central to the Jewish faith. In ~410 BC the Jewish Temple at Elephantine was destroyed. According to Hancock, the Ark would next have migrated to Lake ?Tanak? In the Ethiopia, on the island of ?Tanakurcos?, where it was hosted for 800 years. At that time, with ?the regional? Ethiopians having changed to Christianity, the Ark was taken to the city of Axon in Ethiopia, to reside ever since in the Church of St. Mary of ?Zion?.

The “Lost Ark” DVD does go into the story of the Queen of Sheba, who is presented as an Ethiopian Queen (as is still believed in Ethiopia today). She becomes pregnant from Solomon during her famous visit to Jerusalem. Her son, ?Menalik” goes back to Jerusalem as a boy for education, but in spite of the requests of his father Solomon, he returns to Ethiopia.

Richard Fales

As an example of another perspective that I have just picked out, Richard Fales seems to think that the Egyptian Pharaoh Sheshonk (Shishak in the Old testament) did NOT take the ark when he plundered Jerusalem. He gives two reasons :

- no indication was found in the tombs or inscriptions, when one would have expected huge mention of a triumph like that.
- “... history verifies the sacred objects of the Temple such as the Golden Table of Shewbread, the Golden Menorah, and the Golden Alter of Incense, were somehow overlooked by Pharaoh and his men. ...” Ergo, if these other objects survived, then it is likely that the Ark survived as well.

Immanuel Velikovsky

Velikovsky provides strong, but not accepted, arguments for alternative chronologies for ancient history, in particular for ancient Egypt (and ergo, pretty well every civilisation “tagged” to ancient Egypt!). His version of events is that Pharaoh Queen ?Hatsushep? Is the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon. Her son Thutmose III was “Shishak”, who conquered Jerusalem and took all of the treasures

from the Temple of Solomon.

The “booty” is itemised meticulously on a wall of the Karnak temple (which Karnak temple isn't stated, so I hope there is only one?). Figure 7, page 16-167 of [Velikovsky 1952] is a picture of the inscription, and Figure 8 on pages 170-171 is a drawing by W. Wreszinski that make the items clear.

So here is the heart of my question: Is Article number 9 on the drawing the “Ark of the Covenant?”

Velikovsky's only comments are (page 173) :

“... In the Temple of Solomon there was an altar of gold for burnt offerings (I Kings:48; II Chronicles 4:19). It was the only such altar. N the second row of the bas-reliefs s an altar with a crown around the edge, partly destroyed, but partly plainly discernible (9). The inscription reads 'The [a] great altar.' It was made of gold. ...”

I doubt very much that Velikovsky would have missed any possible link between the altar and the “Ark of the Covenant”. Three things come to mind :

1. the altar is well known and is clearly not the “Ark of the Covenant”
2. The ark disappeared long before the Egyptian conquest.
3. Velikovsky may have recognized it as the Ark, but felt it inappropriate to fan the flames of idol-worship?

Perhaps others have commented on the Karnac inscription and the Ark, but my quick search hasn't turned up anything yet. I will try again over the next 6 months (depending on higher priorities!).

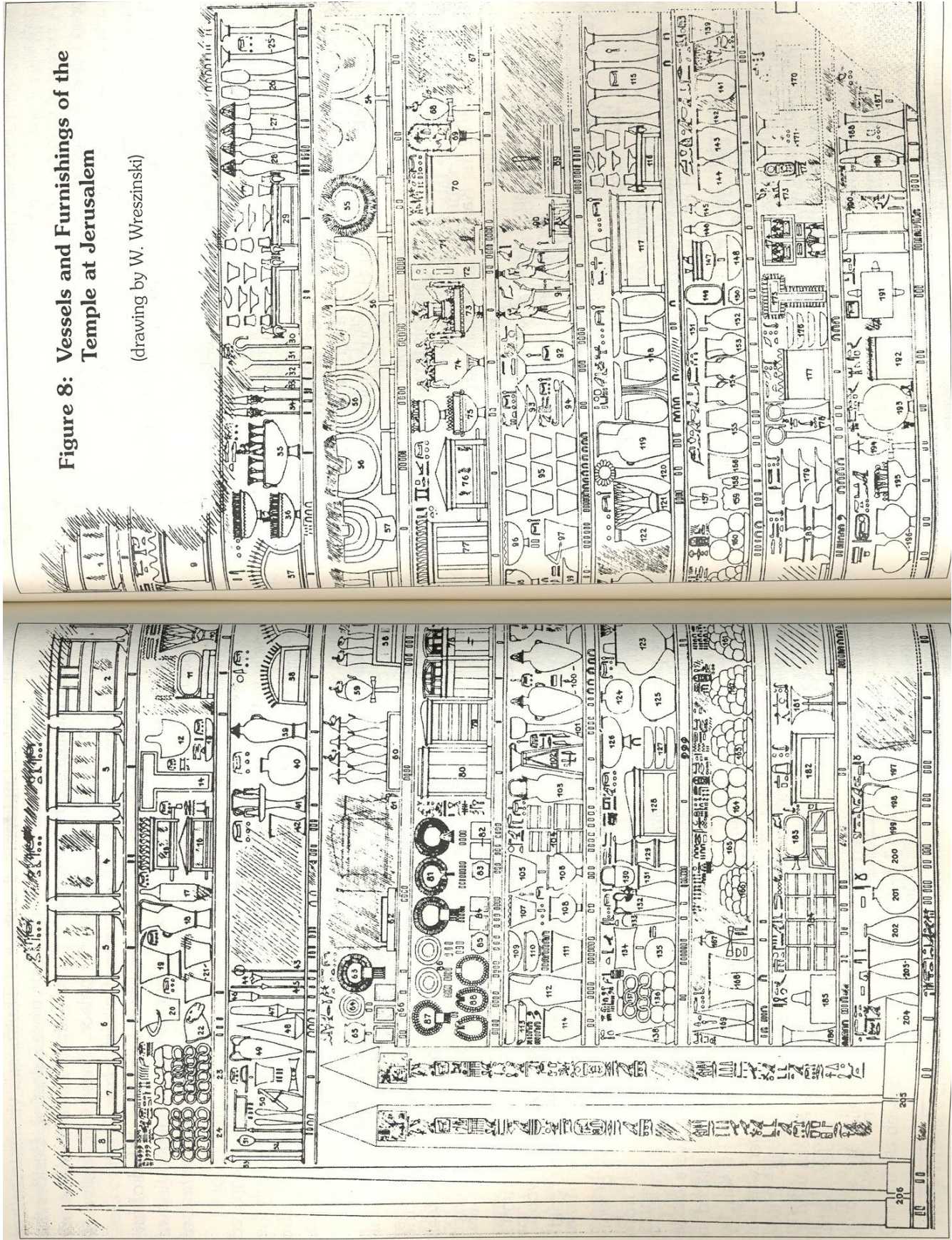
A subsequent question might be whether Thutmose III simply gave the Ark to the Ethiopians who had accompanied him on his conquest of Jerusalem. Presumably he had to share some loot? (maybe not). That would be an easy explanation of the Ethiopian link with the Ark.

Many people will be surprised or repulsed that I have based key parts of my question on work by Immanuel Velikovsky, who was an extremely controversial character. However, information, as long as it is reliable and good quality, is still information regardless of its source. Furthermore, I am a great fan of Velikovsky, right or wrong. Some of my thoughts regarding the Velikovskian controversy are given in the annex below.

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Figure 8: Vessels and Furnishings of the Temple at Jerusalem

(drawing by W. Wreszinski)



References :

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