

sequence would begin, rather awkwardly, with *Middle Bronze II*. Thus Kenyon (1973) and others have referred to Albright's *Middle Bronze IIA* as *Middle Bronze I*, and we carry this approach to its logical conclusion, adding *Middle Bronze II* and *Middle Bronze III*.

The change in terminology is thus partly a matter of newer perceptions of the transition between the Early Bronze and Middle Bronze periods, as well as a means of keeping the system of nomenclature consistent and as convenient as possible. It must be noted, however, that all terminologies agree on the essential unity and continuity of the several phases of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine as a historical and cultural entity. Most Israeli archaeologists even go so far as only acknowledging two phases, arguing that there is still an insufficient stratigraphic and ceramic basis for subdividing the second phase into a second and third phase (Kempinski 1983). American authorities, on the other hand, generally retain Albright's threefold division, basing their view on the fine-grained stratigraphic sequence produced by recent excavations, especially those conducted at Shechem and Gezer.

There is also broad agreement on several other aspects of the period. First, the Middle Bronze Age represents not only a period of rapid recovery and reurbanization after the hiatus in Early Bronze IV but is, in fact, the zenith of urban development in the long Bronze Age in Palestine (about 3400–1200 B.C.E.). Second, Palestine was less isolated than it had been in Early Bronze; indeed, it was so much an integral part of Syria that it may be properly regarded as simply the southern portion of "Greater Canaan," whose existence is well documented in the literary texts of the time, comprising approximately modern coastal and south-central Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, Israel, and, probably, the northern Sinai. Third, the geograph-

The New Archaeology

New archaeology is a term coined by several Americanist archaeologists in the late sixties and early seventies for a new—and then highly controversial—approach to New World archaeology. The new archaeology differed from the old largely in arguing for the substitution of an overall theoretical framework that was in a sense less historical and more anthropological and scientific.

The new school contended that the traditional approach, which was basically concerned with studying culture history, had proven deficient. It had been too preoccupied with the relative dating, comparison, and classification of regional archaeological assemblages. The principal tool employed was usually typology, the exhaustive cataloguing of artifact types and their distribution. The major goal was setting up a relative chronology of the development of types, usually with the assumption that charting the diffusion of artifacts could adequately account for cultural contact and change. But the traditional approach, argued the *new archaeologists*, remained merely descriptive; because of its narrow perspective it lacked true explanatory potential. The ultimate goal of archaeology, in the new view, should be a science of cultural evolution.

The new archaeology demanded nothing less than a radical rethinking of the fundamental methods and objectives of archaeology. The debate, which continued into the early 1980s in Americanist circles, was marked initially by a bewildering variety of proposals and counterproposals, as well as by heated polemics. The leading American journals and the programs of the annual meetings of professional organizations like the Society of American Archaeology reflected the trends. The proliferating literature gradually revealed, however, despite some extremist positions, a growing consensus.

Today, there is general agreement that the new archaeology is here to stay, and the significant trends in theory and method may now be enumerated somewhat as follows. As we shall see, several of these trends have had an impact on Old World archaeology as well.

An ecological approach. This entails the study of sites in their total environmental, as well as historical and cultural, settings. The fundamental assumption is that culture is partly (though, of course, not exclusively) an adaptation to basic physical factors, such as geographical situation, climate and rainfall, natural resources, possibilities for exploiting plants and animals, access to natural trade routes, and the like. One may adopt here a version of general systems theory, a theory first developed by economic geographers and currently employed in many of the natural and social sciences today. The fundamental principle of this theory is that any system, biological or social, is the result of the complex interaction of many components, and the system either grows or declines as a result of the changing balance (homeostasis) it is able to maintain. Subsystems of a culture, such as agriculture and other economic strategies or population growth, will all preserve evidence to some extent in the archaeological record and should be investigated as fully as possible. Central place theory may also be employed to study settlement patterns, the relation of sites to each other, urban-rural dynamics, and the function of marketing economics.

Multidisciplinary strategies. The broader objectives of the ecological approach outlined above require the adoption of methods beyond the traditional tools of stratigraphy and typology. Thus the new archaeology pioneered many innovative methods in fieldwork and analysis, often borrowed from other disciplines. Today, alongside traditional skilled excavators and ceramic