Sydow], Jesus Christ Superstar (dir. N. Jewison, 1973) sets the supper as a picnic, but still evokes Da Vinci in a momentary tableau. Surrealist director Luis Buñuel, in one of his most iconic scenes, crudely parodies Da Vinci in Viridiana (1961); raucous beggars take the places of Jesus and the disciples while one beggar pretends to photograph them with his geni- tals. With the beggars’ boisterous and destructive feast on stolen lamb, Buñuel mocks the naiveté of Viridiana (Silvia Pinal), an overly pious novice nun who sought to give them a home. At the same time, Humphrey Jennings’ Viridiana (Silvia Pinal), an overly pious novice nun who sought to give them a home. At the same time, moreover, the grim Lenten fast of Mayor Comte de Tassis, following a suicidal mission (Wise: 185–86). Fasting, alone, gorging himself, after sending his son Far- ton’s line (Matt 4:1–4, Luke 4:1–4) in King of Kings, The Greatest Story Ever Told, and The Gospel According to St. Matthew, in Chocolat (dir. L. Hallström, 2000), however, the grim Lenten fast of Mayor Comte de Renaud (Alfred Molina) negatively portrays the nar- row limits of his spiritual vision, in contrast to the life-affirming indulgence promoted by the magical chocolate shop of Vianne (Juliette Binoche).


James H. Thrall

Ebal

Ebal [Heb. אֵבָל; Gk. Λυδία] is identified in parallel genealogical texts, Gen 36:23 and 1 Chr 1:40, as the third of five sons of Shobal in the greater clan list of Seir the Horite. This genealogical list follows Esau (Edom), reflecting an Edomite alliance. Rather than reflecting a blood kinship, scholars assert that the genealogies reflect tribal territories or alliances in the Edomite region.

Amy E. Meverden

Ebal, Mount

Mount Ebal is located in the middle of the hilly heart of the Holy Land, 2 km north of Shechem (Nablus) and about 60 km north of Jerusalem (7154/ S694 Universal Transverse Mercator grid). Below the peak of Mount Ebal, the highest mountain in the Northern Samaria region (940 m a.s.l), there is an expansive view of eastern and northern Samaria, together with the Jordan Valley in the east.

Discovered by the Manasseh Survey (directed by the author) in 1980, the place attracted the attention of the team because of its isolation, its view, the pure Early Iron Age pottery, and the possible biblical relevance.

Mount Ebal itself was found to be empty of other Iron Age sites.

The excavation took place during eight seasons (1982–89), under the direction of the author and on behalf of Haifa University, Israel. The preliminary report was published soon afterwards, and the final report is in preparation.

The Mount Ebal site is relatively small, comprising two stone-built enclosures. It is 800 m a.s.l., comprising an area of 14,000 sq. m (large enclosure) and 4500 sq. m (small enclosure, which is a part of the large enclosure). The main construction, which is interpreted as an altar, is located in the middle of the inner and higher enclosure. Both enclosures are encompassed by a low stone wall some 2 m wide, having been shaped like a large “sandal” or “foot.”
Stratigraphically, the site consists of two levels with little time-span in between. Level 2 was founded around 1220 BCE, when a cultic site began to be active on the spot. From that level, we found a thick layer of ash, bones, and other signs of eating and sacrificing. In that stage, judging by the remains, popular gatherings took place at the site, together with ceremonies. At the center of the future altar and upon the rocky surface, a stone circle 2 m in diameter was found, filled with bones of sacrificial animals. During that stage, the inner enclosure seems to have been built as well.

Level 1 (ca. 1200–1160 BCE) saw a revolutionary change. On top of the modest popular site, a large and well-planned high-place was founded. In that level, the outer, large enclosure was added, together with a three-stepped entrance 7.5 m wide between the enclosures, in addition to the altar itself.

This latter level consists of a construction measuring 9 x 7 m, standing ca. 4 m tall. It was built of large, uncut stones, having been shaped like a large rectangle with its inside space filled by ashes, dirt, and burnt animal bones. Upon this, the altar was paved so that only two inner walls, built as leading to the center, have been left protruding a little above the pavement.

To the center of the altar, a stone ramp 1.2 m wide was mounted, enabling one to ascend to its top. On three sides of the building a step was added, 1 m lower than the top and more than 1 m wide. A second ramp was leading to this step, built as one unit with the main ramp.

Around the altar some 100 or more stone-built installations were erected containing gifts: pottery vessels of different kinds, together with a few jewels, a stone cube with incisions, and two Egyptian scarabs dated to the second half of Ramesses II’s reign (ca. 1250–20 BCE). From the altar and its surrounding area, more than 3,000 animal bones were collected, mostly burned and cut. They belong to four species: cattle, sheep, goats, and fallow-deer. Most if not all of the animals were young males.

The last stage of the site’s life was an organized abandonment, when the place was intentionally covered by a 40-cm thick stone cover, meant to preserve its sanctity.

Above all, it is the architecture of the site that has identified the place as an early Israelite altar. The central construction was built along the same lines as the First and the Second temple altars in Jerusalem, as described in Ezek 43, the Mishnah lines as the First and the Second temple altars in Jerusalem, as described in Ezek 43, the Mishnah. A second ramp was leading to this step, built as one unit with the main ramp.

As for dating, it was dated by the pottery, the two Egyptian scarabs and a 14C date around 1200 BCE.

An altar on Mount Ebal is mentioned in Deut 27:1–10 and Josh 8:30–35. According to these, a large gathering of the Israelites took place on Mount Ebal after crossing the Jordan, when the priests and Levites read the Torah of Moses and Israel became a nation to its God. These sources were considered Deuteronomistic and late by origin, whereas the discovery of the altar sheds a new light upon the dating and the significance of the Dtr school in particular and the historical evidence of the beginning of Israel in general.

Editor’s note: It should be noted that the identification of this site is controversial. Some have more or less accepted his suggestions (e.g., Zevit), while others have questioned whether it is a cultic site (e.g., Rainey), and even if it is a cultic site, whether the altar can be connected to the altar as described in the HB/OT, or if it can be connected to the altar on Mt. Ebal in Josh 8:30–35 and Deut 27:1–10 (e.g., Hess). In addition, equating the altar with Josh 8 (where it is located facing Mt. Gerizim), requires identifying Mt. Gerizim at another site, NE of Mt. Ebal (since the altar is on the NE slope of Mt. Ebal). Textually, assuming the identification of the location of an altar on Mt. Ebal in Deut 27 is not without problems, as the text may originally have located the altar on Mt. Gerizim (e.g., Kreuzer).


Adam Zertal

Ebed

1. Father of Gaal

The name of Ebed (Ebed), father of Gaal (Judg 9:26–41), is disputed. Is the MT vocalization meaning “slave, servant” an alteration from Obed (cf. Vg. and Old Latin) in order to create a word play with the verb “to serve,” which occurs often in the story? The Greek has ἄφικτο (A) and ἵφις (B). The latter might stem from ἵφις through confusion β/θ in uncials.