Washington, DC: More Than One Axis Shift?

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INTRODUCTION

In previous papers (Noble, 2004a; b: c; d) I described a water body that inundated the West and East Coasts of the United States at the start of the Holocene Epoch roughly 10000 years ago. This assertion contradicts the research literature's typical scenario for this period. I also postulated that this event, and others both before and after, relate to shifts in the equatorial axis relative to the orbital axis and that a disconnection exists between the Earth and its water when these shifts happen. Shoreline profiles with opposing tilts reflect these shifts and their respective return swings. These tilted shorelines are juxtaposed against today's horizontal levels, which will also tilt at some future date. In tracing the 10000 BP event up the eastern seaboard I indicated that the raised shoreline, which tilted down to the northeast, terminates near Washington DC. It ends there because it was truncated by a younger shoreline that now tilts down to the south. This paper traces the relationship between the 10000 BP shoreline and that younger shoreline through the State of Virginia and adjacent Maryland given that the younger one crosses the older one near the boundary between these two States.

THE 10000 BP AND 7800 BP SHORELINES

Figure 1 is a generalized depiction of the 10000 BP seawater level on the East Coast hinterland of the United States beginning where its shoreline crosses the Rio Grande River into Texas and following its huge embayment up the west side of the Mississippi River Valley to Keokuk, Iowa. From there it follows the valley's east side and then around the south end of the Appalachians to its truncation point on the Piedmont Slope just south of the Potomac River in Virginia. Although it can't be followed on aerial photographs beyond this intersection point it is possible to extrapolate the shoreline's route to where it dipped under present sea level near Boston, Massachusetts. A sequence of transgressive shorelines lower than the 10000 BP feature is characteristic throughout its route and is particularly apparent in some of the lateral river valleys that funnel into the Mississippi River. The 10000 BP shoreline can also be followed up the North American West Coast to where it too was truncated by the younger level indicated above (significant incursions on this coast include the Colorado River valley to the Hoover Dam area; the Central Valley; the Columbia River basin). The 10000 BP tilted shoreline is evidence of the existence of sills that are alternatively submerged or above water. These are juxtaposed against similar sills around the World (e.g., the emergent Isthmus of Panama, the submerged Bering Strait, the Isthmus of Suez). Specifically, when the Hudson Bay Slope emerges the hinterland slopes backing San Francisco Bay (e.g., Central Valley) and the Gulf of Mexico submerge, which is what occurred at the beginning of the Holocene. The search for a direct passage to the Orient may not have been wishful thinking but possibly based on sketchy knowledge that such a passage(s) once existed. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean the Mediterranean was, for the most part, empty, as was the English Channel at this time.

The truncating younger shoreline owed its existence to an axis shift that occurred about 7800 BP (Noble, 2003), that I termed the Nipissing Transgression (not to be confused with the freshwater Great Lakes 'Nipissing' level). The shoreline associated with the 7800 BP shift is traceable around a large portion of the Northern Hemisphere, or rather a tilted version of the Northern Hemisphere. Figure 2 is a map showing the routes of the 10000 BP and 7800 BP shorelines through Virginia, which is where they intersect. The two shorelines can be seen getting further apart as they progress south. Their depiction relative to the modern shoreline (the Potomac River estuary) makes perceiving the concept of opposing tilts and axis shifts easier. For continuity the 7800 BP shoreline has been extended up the Potomac River into West Virginia (it almost reached Hancock) as well as into adjacent Maryland. Offshore islands are not shown for scale reasons. The figure shows appropriate isoline elevations for the two water bodies. This allows readers to follow the shorelines on maps and aerial photographs provided on internet sites (e.g., terraserva.microsoft.com and topozone.com).

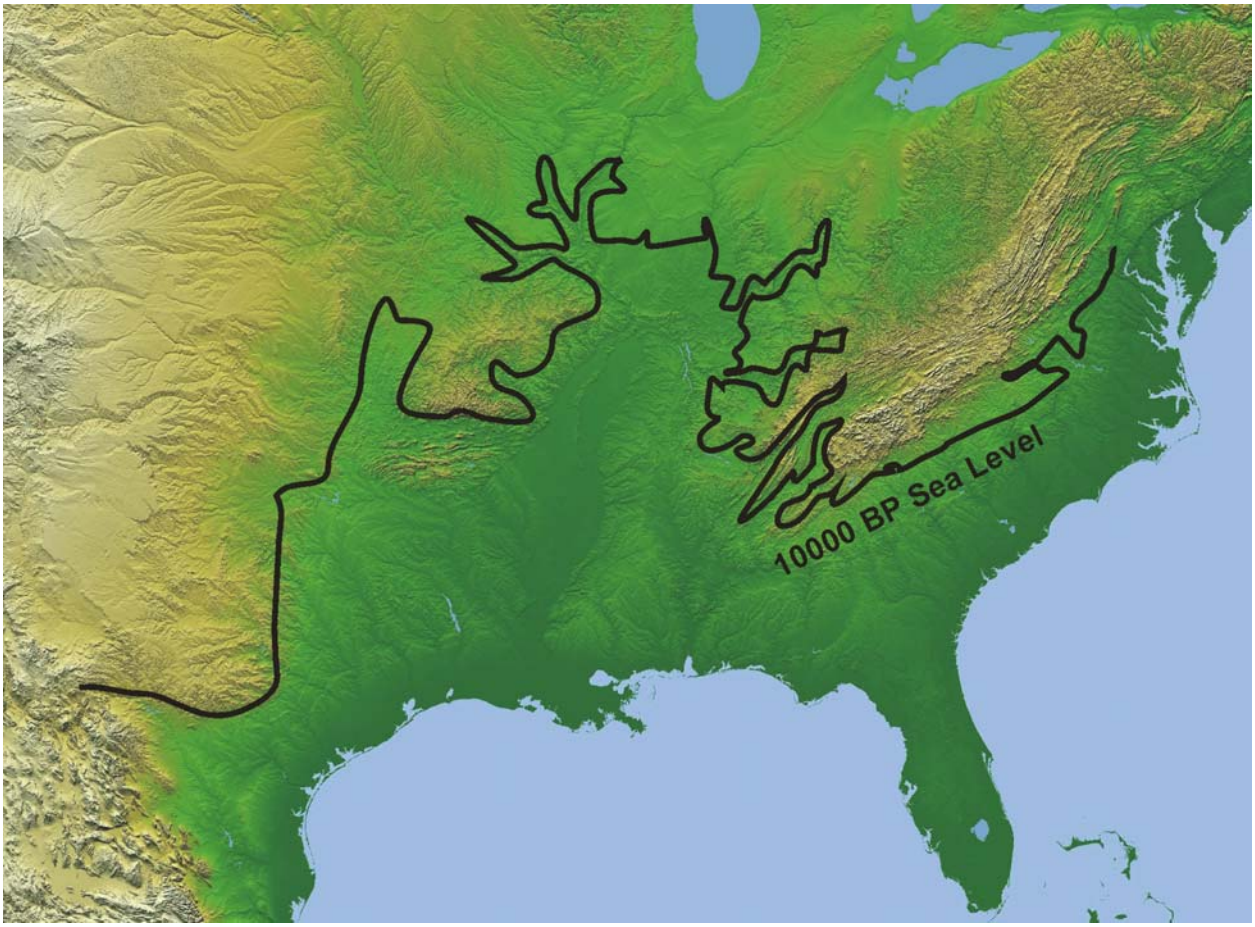

Figure 1. A generalized depiction of sea level along the East Coast of the United States roughly 10000 years ago (superimposed on a NASA radar image). The shoreline extended to Boston, Massachusetts but was drowned by later events including present sea level. It now terminates just southwest of Washington, DC, where it was truncated by a younger shoreline (7800 BP) having an opposing tilt.

Figure 3 below profiles the tilted relationship between these two shorelines along the eastern seaboard of the United States (a few comparative isoline elevations for this same shoreline beyond the East Coast are also provided). For instance the profiles show that Boston was on the 10000 BP coast but about 2200 years later in 7800 BP it was roughly 640 feet underwater. Florida was completely submerged 10000 years ago but by 7800 BP its landmass was substantially greater given that its then shoreline was some distance seaward from today's shore. The 10000 BP shoreline extended up what is now the James River Valley almost to Lynchburg where it is close to the 500 foot contour. The equivalent 10000 BP 500 foot shoreline on the West Coast passes through the City of North Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada, putting Vancouver itself under about 500 feet of water at the time. Continuing north up the East Coast the 7800 BP shoreline passes through Baltimore (408 feet) and along the west side of Philadelphia (460 feet). In the New York area the 7800 BP water body can be found at roughly 512 feet. From there it can be traced up the Hudson River where it passed over the Rome, New York, sill into the Lake Ontario basin, which was simultaneously being inundated by water moving up the St. Lawrence River valley.

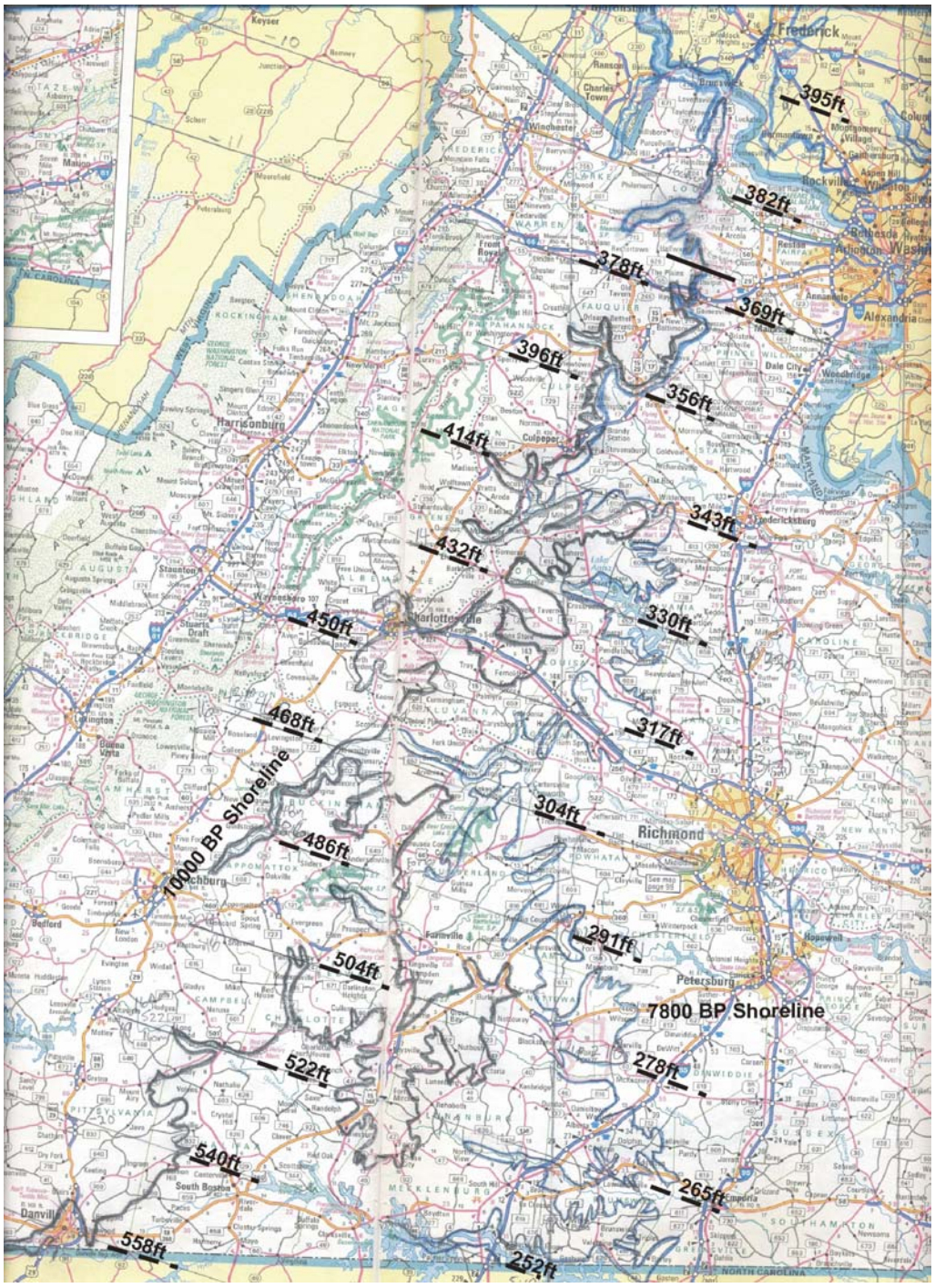

Figure 2. The 10000 BP (black line) and 7800 BP (blue line) shorelines through Virginia showing the 7800 BP shoreline truncating the older shoreline near Washington, DC. The solid line marks the location where the two shorelines intersect. The nearby Potomac River estuary represents the modern sea level shoreline, which will also tilt at some point in the future.

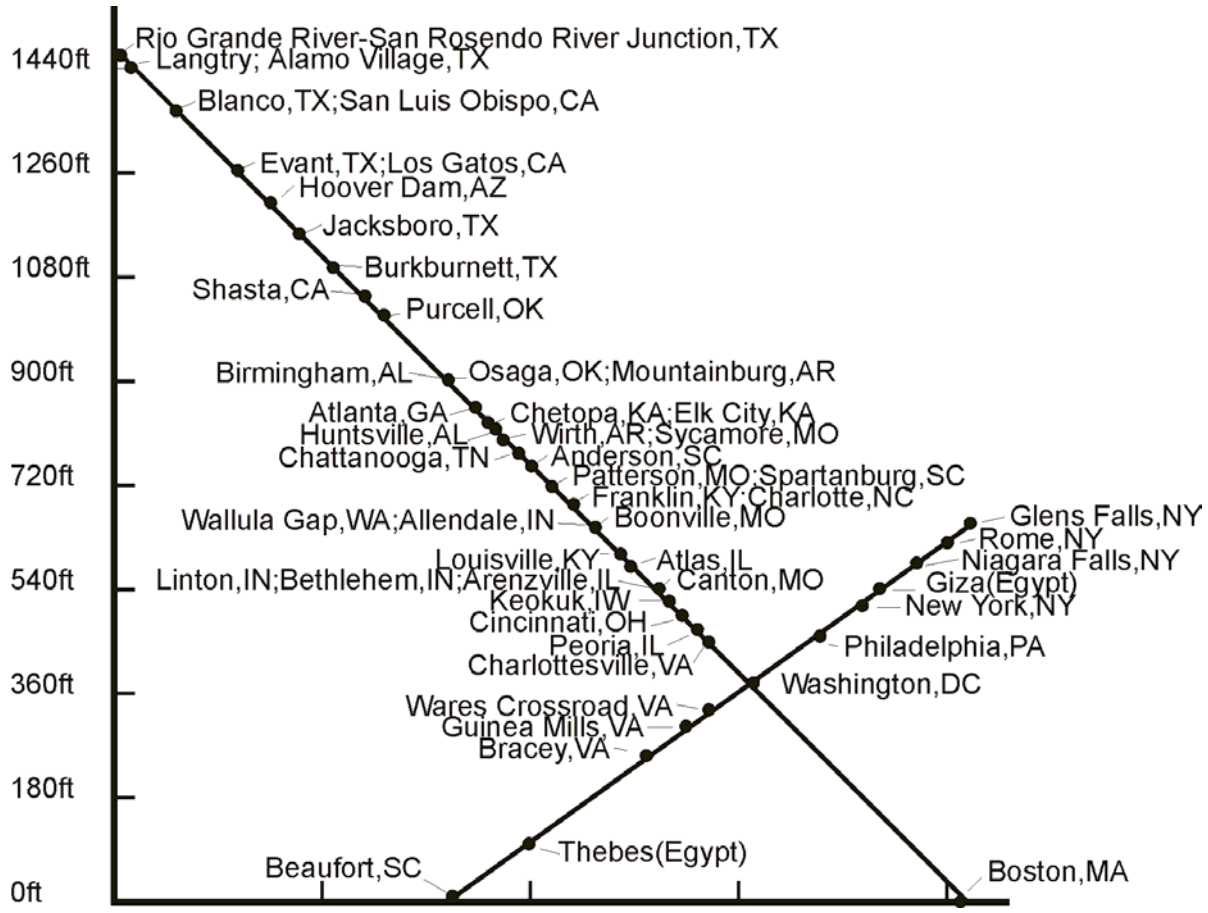

Figure 3. Profiles of the 10000 BP and 7800 BP shorelines along the East Coast of the United States showing their intersection near Washington, DC. The 10000 BP shoreline tilts down to the north to pass under the present Atlantic Ocean at Boston, Massachusetts. The 7800 BP level dips to the south to pass under the Atlantic near Beaufort, South Carolina. Shoreline elevations for some other locations are provided for comparative purposes.

I indicate above that the Mediterranean basin was mostly empty at 10000 BP but this wasn't the case in 7800 BP when seawater flooded into the basin and up the Nile River beyond Thebes in the Valley of the Kings to the Aswan area. There is some debate as to just when the three pyramids at Giza were built. If they were constructed before 7800 BP this level impinged the second pyramid (the Khafre Pyramid) just below its remnant limestone capping. If this event did remove the lower limestone veneer, and my estimated date correct, it would mean the pyramids, or at least the second pyramid, are older than commonly believed. The water body narrowed considerably as it progressed south up the Nile. Its roughly 100-foot elevation in the Thebes/Luxor area put it at the foot of the antiquities in the Valley of the Kings. The 7800 BP transgression, and others both before and after, account for the rise and fall of numerous cultures in the Nile Valley as well as many migration events between the Ethiopian Highlands and the Mediterranean Sea bed. The submergence of Alexandria is related to a much later shift and its associated water level. The 7800 BP shoreline dips under the Red Sea south of Jiddah (the biblical floods relate to this and other shifts). It flooded over the Suez area forming an embayment that ended on the ocean floor at the south end of the Red Sea Rift near Jubal Zugar Island where a land bridge (isthmus) connected what is now Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula and Eritrea in Africa. This land-bridge, now

submerged under the Strait of Bad el Mandeb, extended south to the Gulf of Aden. Further north the water body extended inland beyond the Gulf of Aqabah into Israel's Timna Valley. At the east end of the Mediterranean basin Israel's coastal slope was submerged leaving the biblical highland emergent. Water, however, was able to get into the Dead Sea basin through valleys east of Haifa. In the Persian Gulf this shoreline dips underwater at the Strait of Hormuz and formed a long narrow embayment that extended north over the valley now occupied by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to beyond Bagdad.

SUMMARY

The above figures show that the Mississippi River Valley has, in the past, looked like the St. Lawrence River/Gulf of St. Lawrence system does today. The present ocean shoreline marks an interim position or the status quo today. Ten thousand years ago, however, the Mississippi River Valley was submerged to Keokuk, Iowa, while the Gulf of St. Lawrence was empty, or much reduced. By 7800 BP, however, the reverse was true. Seawater flooded up the St. Lawrence River system over the Kingston sill, as well as up the Hudson River over the Rome sill, to refill the Lake Ontario basin to just above the lip of what is now the falls at Niagara Falls on the Canada/United States border. Seawater simultaneously moved up the tributary Ottawa River system to rush over the North Bay, Ontario sill, to refill the almost empty Lake Huron basin. The Lake Huron basin is what I term a 'back-exit' basin, which is presently being flushed out with freshwater exiting through its southern outlet at Port Huron, Michigan. While the St. Lawrence system was submerged with seawater the Mississippi, a much longer river than it is today, emptied some distance beyond it present outlet into a much reduced Gulf of Mexico.

References

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