

The Modern Churchmen's Union

for the Advancement of Liberal Religious Thought.

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AIMS.

- 1.—To affirm the progressive character of God's self-revelation, and the certainty that no truth can lead away from Him.
- 2.—To proclaim Christ and His Gospel in the light of modern knowledge, endeavouring to give a clear meaning to all phrases which are open to ambiguous treatment.
- 3.—To maintain the right and duty of the Church of England to reject what is false and to restate what is true in her traditional dogmas.
- 4.—To defend the freedom of responsible students, clerical as well as lay, in their work of criticism and research.
- 5.—To promote the study of the Bible according to modern critical methods, and to interpret its message in the light of such study.
- 6.—To secure more regard for beauty and truth in Church Services and the use of language and customs in harmony with modern thought.
- 7.—To promote the application of Christian principles in public as well as in private life.
- 8.—To assert the right and duty of the laity to take a due share in the government and work of the Church.
- 9.—To maintain the historic comprehensiveness of the Church of England and to foster fellowship and co-operation in Word and Sacrament with other Christian Societies.

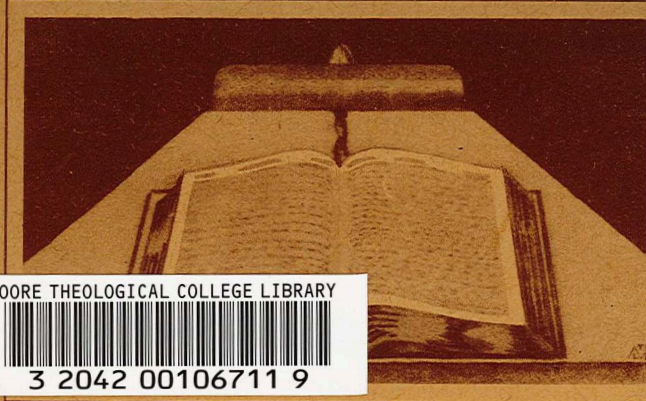
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ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

S. H. HOOKE, M.A., B.D., F.S.A.
Davidson Professor of Old Testament
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AFTER FOUR HUNDRED YEARS

EDITORIAL NOTE

IN the year 1538 Thomas Cromwell, acting for King Henry VIII, ordered that a copy of the Bible in English should be set up in every parish church. The book speedily replaced the Church as an infallible authority. But the passage of 400 years has seen the growth of knowledge on an increasing scale so that science, coming into its own, now commands the respect which the Bible once had as an encyclopædia in secular, as well as in religious matters. Nothing escapes the investigation of human curiosity. The methods by which ancient literature is examined, so as to show how it developed and to enable us to appreciate the background against which it was written, are strictly scientific and subject to certain clearly defined principles. Consequently the general public wants to know:

"What scholarship has to say about the Bible."

The idea that sixpenny books, simple in character and yet sound in scholarship, might provide the answer occurred to a Kentish churchwarden, Mr. G. T. Johnson, of Farnborough. A morning conversation between him and his parson led on to the adoption of the project by the Modern Churchmen's Union.

The more clearly it is realized that the authority of the Bible is religious, moral and spiritual, not secular and scientific, the better. The Scriptures record the supreme revelation of God to man, which centres round the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. But the vehicles of that revelation were human and subject to the limitations of their time.

R. GLADSTONE GRIFFITH.

FARNBOROUGH, KENT,
August, 1938.

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ARCHÆOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

IN one of the later books of the Old Testament we find what might be described as the beginnings of an interest in archæology. The editor or compiler of Chronicles, speaking of certain guilds of craftsmen, makes mention of the royal potters and the places where they worked, adding, "And these are ancient things," or, according to the Revised Version, "And the records are ancient." Of the records upon which the archæologist depends for his reconstruction of the ancient past few are more important and reliable than pottery. It is not necessary for the potsherds which the spade of the archæologist brings up in such vast quantities from every excavated site to be inscribed, for they themselves constitute documentary evidence of dates and epochs which the skilled archæologist can read with certainty.

Looking back over the 400 years which have passed since Thomas Cromwell, by the orders of Henry VIII., directed that a copy of the Bible should be set up in every parish church, it is possible to estimate the results of modern study and research upon our knowledge of the Book which was the subject of that epoch-making decree. The first step in the long process of re-discovery was taken about the time we have referred to—namely, the return after over a thousand years to the accurate study of the original languages in which the Bible was written. Reuchlin and Erasmus laid the foundations of the critical study of the Hebrew and Greek text of the sacred Book.

But, invaluable as the labours of learned com-

mentators have been, it is only within the last fifty years that the essential condition for the true understanding of the Bible has been realized, and it has become possible to reconstruct the social, economic, and religious background of the Hebrew people. Only by setting the literature of Israel in relation to the environment out of which it grew and by which it was shaped can its real significance be understood. Our present purpose is to give a brief account of the way in which, to use the words of an eminent American archæologist, "the unprecedented expansion of oriental studies during the past half-century" has made possible the reconstruction of the life of the ancient Near East, and of the material and spiritual background of the literature to which the Christian Church has given the name of *the Book*, the Bible.

PREHISTORY OF PALESTINE

First of all, something must be said about the fresh light thrown by recent researches, especially those of Miss Garrod and Mr. Petre, upon the prehistory of Palestine. Miss Garrod's discoveries in the Carmel district, and others in Western Judæa, have shown the existence of early settlers in Palestine to whom the beginnings of agriculture may be attributed. Among the remains of these early cave-dwellers were found a number of flint-sickles with bone hafts, a fact which seems to suggest that in Palestine the agriculturist had established himself before the appearance of the nomad, a view which is supported by the additional fact that wheat is known to have grown in a wild state in Syria.

Archæology has further shown that the discovery of agriculture and the domestication of animals was accompanied by a sudden rise in population. Settled communities grew up and became centres of arts and crafts. Lands were reclaimed from desert and marsh, a process which was to these ancient agriculturists the creation of order out of chaos, and the memory of these beginnings has survived in their

traditions in the form of the various stories of creation. But the most important change of which archæology has laid bare the record was that which Professor Childe has called the Urban Revolution. One of the many *tells*, or artificial mounds of débris, with which the plain of the Euphrates abounds, is Warka, the site of the very ancient city of Erech, coupled with Babel in Gen. x. 10. The excavation of this site shows in a vivid way the change from the simple life of the early farming communities to the complex life of a great Mesopotamian city. The first fifty feet of the mound are composed of the débris of reed huts and mud-brick houses. Then suddenly appear the foundations of great temple buildings enclosing the vast artificial mountain, so characteristic of the Mesopotamian ritual system, known as the *ziggurat*. Such imposing buildings presuppose an organized community, an educated priesthood, a knowledge of many arts and crafts, a system of trade exchange, and a fully developed religion. Similar results have been obtained from Sir Leonard Woolley's excavation of Ur, the city from which, according to Hebrew tradition, the ancestor of the Hebrews set out to seek a new country and to found a nation.

Hence the first thing to be said about the results of recent archæological research in relation to the Bible is that during the last thirty years archæology has reconstructed the stage, so to speak, on which the drama of the history of the Hebrew people was to be played. Out of the mists of prehistory we see arising on the Nile and in the valley of the Euphrates those great ancient civilisations which surrounded and profoundly influenced that small country of Canaan which was to be the home of the Hebrews for nearly two thousand years.

In the uncovered streets of Ur we can now see what sort of houses men lived in, what household utensils they used, what gods they worshipped, how they conducted their business correspondence; in short, all the details of daily life in the age of

Abraham. Similarly, on the walls of countless Egyptian tombs we may see the life of ancient Egypt going on: ploughing, sowing, reaping, baking, hunting, fishing, and, above all, that intense pre-occupation with the mystery of death and the after-life which so dominated the minds of the Egyptians from the beginnings of their civilization.

Still more recently other details of the background have been filled in. The early civilization of the hinterland of Asia Minor has been brought into the light, and we now begin to understand the importance of the people known as the Hittites, and how deeply they influenced the history of Palestine and Syria from the middle of the second millennium B.C. until they were absorbed by the Assyrian Empire in the eighth century.

The splendid discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos have brought to life again that most vivid centre of Mediterranean civilization in Crete, and enabled us to understand both the debt of Crete to the ancient Orient and the extent to which Ægean civilization made its influence felt even in Canaanite cities lying far from the actual seaboard.

Having thus briefly described the general result of the application of scientific methods of excavation to the task of reconstructing the life of the great empires which formed the environment of the Hebrew people, we may now turn to some of the most striking examples of the new light which recent archaeological research has thrown on the Bible.

EARLY HISTORY OF WRITING

First, we have received during the last few years remarkable additions to our knowledge of the early history of writing in Palestine and Syria. It need hardly be said that, although some writers still appear to believe that biblical critics hold that writing was unknown to the Hebrews in the time of Moses, such a view belongs to the limbo of forgotten theories which have been rendered untenable

in the light of modern knowledge. Fifty years ago the discovery of the Tell el-Amarna Letters showed that Canaanite scribes were familiar with Babylonian cuneiform script in the fourteenth century B.C., and that the Babylonian script and language were the usual medium of diplomatic intercourse throughout the ancient East at that time. It has also long been known that the alphabetic script commonly spoken of as the Phœnician script was in use in Canaan by the time of Ahab, in the ninth century B.C., as the famous stele of Mesha, King of Moab, bears witness. This script is the ancestor of all our Western alphabets through the introduction of the Phœnician form of writing into Greece. But recent discoveries have thrown new light on the beginnings of this form of writing. The first point of departure was the discovery of a number of inscriptions in the turquoise and copper mines of Serabit el-Hadim, in the Sinai peninsula. Here the Egyptians had mined copper from very early times, and the inscriptions were evidently based on Egyptian hieroglyphics, but it was clear, from the limited number of signs employed, that the script must be alphabetic. Then, still more recently, a number of short inscriptions in a very similar script have been found in various Palestinian sites, such as Gezer, Shechem, and especially Lachish, showing that this very early form of what was probably an alphabetic script was being used in Palestine somewhere about the period 1500 B.C. At Byblos, Montet discovered the sarcophagus of Ahiiram, King of Byblos, with an inscription in so-called Phœnician script, not greatly differing from the inscription on the Mesha Stone, and carrying the origin of that script back to a date nearly half a millennium earlier than the Moabite stele.

But most exciting of all was the discovery at Ras Shamra, the ancient city of Ugarit, on the extreme north-west corner of the coast of Syria, of another experiment in alphabetic writing, in cuneiform characters. We shall return later to the contents

of the abundant material from Ras Shamra, as they are of first-rate importance, but here we are only concerned with the evidence they furnish that along the coast of Palestine and Syria, about the middle of the second millennium, people were finding the traditional methods of writing, whether hieroglyphic or cuneiform, slow and cumbrous, and were experimenting with the alphabetic principle. This period of experimentation coincides with the period of Hebrew occupation of Palestine. The general evidence of archæology seems to indicate that business correspondence, contracts, title-deeds, personal letters, and so forth were a common feature of daily life, even before the end of the third millennium, and that by the end of the second millennium the ability to read and write was common in Syria and Palestine. The farmer's calendar from Gezer shows that the ordinary agriculturist about the time of David could make intelligent use of an inscribed tablet containing a list of farm tasks for each month in the year.

Special interest attaches to the discovery at Lachish, two years ago, of a number of fragments of potsherd inscribed with writing in ink. These proved to be letters to the military governor of Lachish from the commandant of a neighbouring fort. The contents of the letters show that they were written in the last days of the Judæan monarchy, and the eminent French scholar, M. René Dussaud, thinks that they contain references to the activities of the prophet Jeremiah. In any case, they are, with the exception of the Siloam Inscription, the only considerable Hebrew literary remains which archæological research in Palestine has hitherto discovered, and they show us the nature of Hebrew writing and Hebrew speech in the sixth century B.C.

Hence it may be inferred from this body of evidence that documentary material for the history of the Hebrews may have been in existence much earlier than has hitherto been thought probable, and

that the early historians of Israel may well have had written sources at their disposal as well as oral tradition.

HEBREW LAWS

The next aspect of Hebrew culture upon which fresh light has been thrown by archæology is the domain of law. The famous Code of Hammurabi has long been known, and scholars have shown many points of similarity between Babylonian law in 2000 B.C. and the Hebrew body of law; but in recent years the basis of comparison has been considerably widened. There are now available for study and comparison the early Sumerian laws, which underlie the Code of Hammurabi; the early and middle Assyrian laws; the Hittite Code; and from the Nuzi and Kirkuk tablets we have some knowledge of Hurrian law and custom.

The comparative study of all this legislative material, and the task of relating Hebrew law to the general body of law and custom current in the second millennium, will occupy the attention of students for many years to come, but the main point of advance is that archæology has made it impossible any longer to consider Hebrew law and custom in isolation from its environment.

It need hardly be said that very few instructed students of the Old Testament hold the view that the Pentateuchal legislation as a whole was the work of a single author, or that it was promulgated at one particular point in the history of the Hebrew people, but the attention of scholars has been specially directed in recent years to the problem of determining how much of the Hebrew legislation was borrowed and adapted from current Canaanite law and custom, and how much was peculiar to the Hebrews and brought with them when they came to settle in Canaan.

One of the most suggestive results of the new comparative study of ancient oriental law is the view that most, if not all, of what may be called

case-law is Canaanite in origin, and belongs to the common stock of early Semitic law and custom underlying all the Semitic codes. Case-law is marked by the introductory formula "If a man," etc., followed by the description of some anti-social act and the appropriate penalty. This form has been shown to be common to all the early codes of law, and characterizes many of the legal provisions in the Pentateuch. Over against this there is a large amount of material in the Hebrew legislation which shows a different form and character. First, there is the survival of the old *lex talionis* and the custom of the blood-feud; and, secondly, there are a number of offences which are described as disobedience to the commands of Jahweh, and whose penalties are vague and unspecified, generally being expressed in the threat, "shall be cut off from his peoples," possibly indicating some form of excommunication. It has been suggested that legislation of this kind may go back to nomad conditions, and may represent the kind of law which the Hebrews brought with them on their entry into Canaan.

This will serve to indicate the direction in which the study of Hebrew legislation is moving under the stimulus of the new light thrown on the subject by recent archæological research.

We may next go on to speak of a number of specific historical problems in Hebrew history upon which archæology has thrown new light in recent years.

THE SAGAS OF GENESIS

The first of these is concerned with the sagas of Genesis and the movements of peoples which are implied in the stories of the movements of Abraham and his immediate descendants. Here much is growing clear which was previously obscure, though many details still await fresh light. But the new historical material from the Hittite archives in the old Hittite capital of Boghazköi, together with the Tell el-Amarna Letters and material from Egyptian

and Assyrian sources, have made the general historical background of the patriarchal narratives fairly clear. We now know that the second millennium was a period of great racial movements, that it was ushered in by one series of such movements and closed by another. In the beginning of the second millennium archæology shows us the rise of the great Hittite Empire in Asia Minor, and the coming of another non-Semitic racial group who were to dominate Syria and North-West Mesopotamia for the greater part of this millennium, and whose struggle with the Hittites for the control of that part of the Near East constitutes the main centre of historical interest during this period. Archæology has shown that the people mentioned in the Hebrew lists of dispossessed nations by the name of Horites, and whom earlier exegesis regarded as the remains of early Canaanite cave-dwellers, were in reality an important racial group, known in the historical sources to which we have already referred as the Hurrians.

Interesting parallels have been established between the customs of the patriarchal times as recorded in Genesis and the laws and customs of the Hurrians. Hence the point is raised as to the probable date of that movement of the Hebrews into Canaan which is represented by the stories of the entry of Abraham into the Promised Land and his wanderings there.

Until recently it has generally been accepted that the age of Abraham is to be identified with the period of the great Babylonian king Hammurabi, of whose code we have already spoken. According to varying reckonings, the date of Hammurabi may be placed either shortly before or after 2000 B.C. This synchronism rests upon the identification of the Amraphel of Gen. xiv. 1 with the Babylonian king Hammurabi. But serious objections have been raised of late to this identification. In the first place, it is possible that the Hebrew pronunciation of the name does not represent its original form, but

is due to the later Hebrew custom of vocalising names of foreign gods or of foreign enemies with the vowels of such words as *bosheth*, "shame," or *araphel*, "darkness." For example, we have the name of Saul's son, Ishbaal, the puppet king set up in opposition to David, changed to Ishbosheth. Moreover, even if the Hebrew form be accepted, it would not be related to the name Hammurabi, the East Canaanite form of whose name would be Hammu-rawih, but to such a form as Amurru-apili, meaning "the god Amurru is my avenger," a type of name occurring in the Kassite period, two centuries or more later.

Moreover, the name Shinar, used in Genesis to designate the kingdom of Amraphel, is used in Kassite sources to denote a region expressly distinguished from Babylon, which is there called Karduniash. In the middle of the second millennium Shinar was a kingdom distinct from Babylon, and was of considerably more importance for the West and for Egypt at that time than the weak kingdom of Babylon. It consisted of a region extending to the neighbourhood of the Euphrates near the mouth of the Habur. Bordering, as it does, on the north-west extremity of the lower Mesopotamian plain, we can understand that it would be natural for a Hebrew writer to apply the name of the nearest district with which he was familiar to the whole of the Babylonian valley. This also explains the use of the name Shinar for Babylon in the story of the Tower of Babel.

But the name of most importance as a clue to the historical setting of the Genesis story is the name Tidal. The discoveries referred to above have shown that this name corresponds to the name Tudhaliash, a name borne by no less than five Hittite kings. The first king of that name was the third or fourth king of the Old Hittite kingdom, and, for those who prefer to identify Amraphel with Hammurabi, this Tudhaliash I. may be identified with the Tidal of Genesis. But what we know of

the historical circumstances makes it improbable that Tudhaliash I. should have played any important part in the affairs of Mesopotamia or Palestine. The second king of that name is known as the founder of what is now called the New Hittite kingdom, whose influence extended over Syria between the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries B.C. The interval between the period of Tudhaliash I. and the founding of the New Hittite kingdom is occupied by the Middle Hittite kingdom, during which period Babylon was taken and sacked, and the dynasty of Hammurabi brought to an end either in 1870 or 1758, according to varying chronological reckonings.

The next two centuries were occupied by what is known as the Hyksos period. It is now generally accepted that the people known by this name, a corruption of the name given to them in Egyptian sources, and meaning "desert princes," were a mixture of Canaanite or Amorite stock under the leadership of a body of Indo-European nobility. They founded a strong kingdom with its central point in Palestine, conquered and ruled Egypt from their capital at Avaris, and extended their influence over a part of Asia Minor, and possibly even over the Aegean, since the seal of one of their kings has been found in Crete.

The revival of Egyptian power under the seventeenth and eighteenth dynasties led to the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt about 1600 B.C. Shortly after this event the New kingdom of the Hittites under Tudhaliash II., with its capital at Hattusas, the modern Boghazköi, was founded, and the struggle between Egypt and the Hittites for the heritage of the Hyksos kingdom in Palestine was begun.

If we identify the Tidal of Genesis xiv. with Tudhaliash II., then the movements of Abraham and his group will fall into the framework of the great movements of nations about the end of the sixteenth century B.C.

Two other names occur in the alliance over which Abraham was victorious. By those who identify Amraphel with Hammurabi, Arioch, king of Ellasar, has been equated with Warad-sin, or Rim-sin, the only two kings of the dynasty of Larsa whose dates can be brought into relation with the reign of Hammurabi. This equation depends upon the assumption that Ellasar is Larsa, and not upon any phonetic resemblance between the name Arioch and either of the two names in question.

An earlier conjecture that the name Arioch is not Semitic but Indo-European has been confirmed by the discovery of the new tablets from Nuzi and Kirkuk. These have established the existence of an important kingdom, now known as the kingdom of the Hurri, or Hurrians, in West Mesopotamia, whose principal city may have been Harran, the place from which the tradition of Genesis makes Abraham finally set out for Canaan. Hurrian personal names show the presence of a strong Aryan element in the population, and the study of the Nuzi tablets has revealed striking parallels in Hurrian law and custom to the customs depicted in the sagas of the Patriarchs, as we have already pointed out. There is a strong probability that it was the invasion of this Hurrian group, and the founding of the Hurrian kingdom in the neighbourhood of Harran, which caused the southward movement into Canaan of those Hebrew clans which were led by Abraham. We have already seen that the Horites, located in the south of Palestine by later Hebrew writers, are the same as the Hurrians, whose presence in the south of Palestine is due to the fact that about 1500 they, in their turn, were driven out by the Aramæan invasion and dispersed throughout Canaan, where they were gradually absorbed. These historical facts provide still further support for the view that these racial movements form the background of the Patriarchal narratives. For the close connection between the Patriarchs and the Aramæans reflected in Genesis would be an anachronism in the

time of Hammurabi, when the Aramæans had not yet appeared upon the stage of history.

Hence it seems most probable that the name Arioch is not that of some king of the dynasty of Larsa, contemporary with Hammurabi, but rather the name, Aryan in form, of some Hurrian princeling whose city may possibly be the same as the Telassar of 2 Kings xix. 12, mentioned along with Harran.

With regard to the fourth name, Chedorlaomer, there is no doubt that this is a genuine Elamite name, which would probably read Kudur-lagamar, but hitherto archæology has been able to furnish very scanty information about the early history of Elam. One king of Elam emerges from the mists about 2167 as the conqueror of Larsa—namely, Kudur-mabuk—and it is this king who has been identified with the Chedorlaomer of our passage, since he is the only king of Elam known to us whose date coincides with the period of Hammurabi. But in the absence of any direct evidence of the existence and activities of an Elamite king whose name corresponds to the Biblical name Chedorlaomer, it would appear that the period of the founding of the New Hittite kingdom by Tudhaliash II., when both Egypt and the Hittites were contending for the remains of Hyksos power in Palestine, is a more probable time for the interference of an Elamite king in the affairs of Canaan, with the same object in view.

Hence, with regard to the much-discussed problem of the date of Abraham, the tendency of the most recent archæological discoveries is to bring the period of Abraham's settlement in Canaan two or three centuries nearer to the main settlement of the Hebrews as told in the book of Joshua.

THE HEBREW CONQUEST OF PALESTINE

It is round this latter problem, the date and manner of the Hebrew conquest of Palestine, that

the most lively discussion of recent years has arisen, and much new light has been thrown by archæology on this subject. We have dealt in some detail with the previous problem in order to give the general reader an idea of the way in which the archæologist approaches such a narrative as that contained in Genesis xiv., and what new light has been thrown on the historical questions involved by recent archæological discoveries; but the second problem, or, rather, the group of problems, relating to the Hebrew settlement of Canaan is too large a subject to deal with in detail in the short space here available; hence we shall only summarize the most important changes which archæology has brought about in the approach to this question.

These changes are, in brief: first, the general recognition that only a part of what afterwards became the Hebrew nation went down into Egypt and passed through the experiences of the Exodus and the wilderness; second, the recognition that the Hebrew settlement of Canaan formed part of the general movement of peoples, referred to above, which took place at the close of the second millennium B.C. and made such profound changes in the political map of the ancient Near East; third, the recognition that the Hebrew conquest of Canaan was a long and gradual process, probably beginning about 1400 B.C., and not fully completed till about the time of David.

These changes have been the result of the convergence of various lines of evidence, partly old and partly new, inscriptional and excavational.

The issue was first raised by the discovery of the well-known stele of the nineteenth-dynasty Pharaoh, Merneptah, by Sir Flinders Petrie in 1896. It had generally been accepted that this Pharaoh was the Pharaoh in whose reign the Exodus took place, about 1215 B.C. But this stele, which contained a list of various places and peoples in Canaan conquered by Merneptah, had a significant reference to a people called "Isirail" as among the conquered

peoples. The fact that Israel was thus found to be in Canaan at a period when they were still supposed to be in bondage in Egypt raised the whole question of the date of the Exodus afresh.

Then came the discovery of the Tell el-Amarna Letters on the ruined site of the capital of the famous "heretic" Pharaoh, Akhnaton, or Amenophis IV. These letters, written in cuneiform script and in the Accadian language by Canaanite scribes, for the most part, proved to be the diplomatic correspondence between the Egyptian court and the petty kings of Canaan at the beginning of the fourteenth century B.C. They gave a full picture of political conditions in the Near East in general, and in Canaan in particular, at that time. They showed that a movement of peoples into Canaan from the north-east and south-east was taking place, and threatening the suzerainty of Egypt in Palestine. The attention of scholars was especially seized by the repeated mention of a group called Habiru, who were active in this thrust of new elements into Canaan. After considerable discussion concerning the philological relation between the name Habiru and the term Hebrew, it was generally admitted that the philological equation Habiru = Hebrew was well founded, and hence that the invading Habiru represented some part of the Hebrew invasion of Canaan.

But further discoveries have shown that the name Habiru is of much earlier origin and wider meaning than was realised when the identification of the Habiru with the Hebrews was first proposed. We hear of the Habiru in Babylonian documents of the pre-Hammurabi period, and the new and important texts from Mari, a city not far from Harran, mention their activities during the reign of Zimri-lim, the last king of Mari, and contemporary with Hammurabi. They are mentioned in the Cappadocian tablets, which contain the records of a colony of early Assyrian merchants in Asia Minor, shortly before 2000 B.C. They are named in the Hittite documents from Boghazköi and in the Nuzi tablets,

where their status seems to be that of slaves. Finally, if we accept the identification of them with the 'apiru of Egyptian sources, they are found in Egyptian inscriptions as late as the time of Rameses IV. in the twelfth century B.C. Hence the range of the term, both with regard to time and to geographical distribution, is much too wide to allow of any simple identification with the Hebrews, such as was at first entertained on the evidence of the Tell el-Amarna Letters.

On the other hand, the evidence shows that among the various movements of peoples taking place during this disturbed period of history the wanderings of the Habiru have left their mark upon the records of the second millennium B.C. The term is not an ethnic designation, for the Habiru of these various texts are of mixed racial origin, including both Semitic and non-Semitic elements, but its fundamental meaning seems to be "wanderers," "those who pass from place to place." Here the philological connection with the Hebrew term 'ibri, first used in the Old Testament as a description of Abraham, seems to be assured, and makes it possible to see in the patriarchal movements of Genesis, and in the Hebrew conquest of Canaan, parts of that larger movement which is reflected in the archaeological record of the whole movement of the various groups indicated by the term Habiru.

We must now go on to show the relation of the excavational evidence to the lines of evidence already discussed—namely, the evidence of the stele of Merneptah and that of the Tell el-Amarna Letters.

Thirty years ago Dr. Driver, in his Schweich Lectures dealing with the progress of archaeological research in relation to the Old Testament, pointed out that so far all the evidence of excavated sites in Palestine revealed nowhere any sharp break in the continuity of culture. This still remains true, though the immense advance in archaeological methods during the period which has elapsed since

the publication of those lectures has made accurate stratification possible in the excavation of any given site, and hence made it possible to date within fairly narrow limits the successive periods of habitation revealed by the spade of the excavator.

Hence, while the bearing of the fact pointed out by Dr. Driver on the question which we are discussing is clear and important—namely, that it implies that the Hebrew occupation of Canaan was not a sudden and catastrophic event, but a slow and gradual process—the bearing of recent excavation, such as that of Professor Garstang at Jericho, is even more significant. For it converges on and supplements the evidence of the Tell el-Amarna Letters. The main point of Professor Garstang's results was the demonstration that about 1400 B.C. Jericho suffered a disaster, marked by a collapse of the city wall in several places, apparently through earthquake shock, and accompanied by extensive destruction by fire. The stratification showed that after this disaster the city remained unfortified and practically uninhabited until the ninth century.

Hence the results of Professor Garstang's excavation of this city, which according to Israelite tradition was the first city to be taken by the Hebrews, show that Jericho suffered a major disaster about the time when, according to the evidence of the Tell el-Amarna Letters, foreign invaders were threatening Egyptian supremacy in Palestine. The inference is unavoidable that the Hebrew invasion of Palestine is a part of the general situation described in the Tell el-Amarna Letters, and that it was beginning about 1400 B.C. Thus the general tendency of recent archaeological research has been to bring the date of the first entry of the Hebrews into Canaan, represented by the saga of Abraham, considerably closer to the date of their main settlement, represented by the earlier parts of the narrative in Joshua and by the first chapter of Judges.

Lastly, in connection with this subject, mention must be made of the bearing of the evidence of the

new material from Ras Shamra, by far the most important discovery since the appearance of the Tell el-Amarna Letters. The Ras Shamra tablets have done for the religion of Canaan what the Tell el-Amarna Letters have done for the political history of Palestine, and we shall have more to say about them later. Here it will suffice to say that certain tribal names seem to occur in these tablets under circumstances which suggest the possibility, already mentioned, that some of the tribes and clans which afterwards constituted the Hebrew nation were settled in the north of Canaan at an early date, and did not take part in the sojourn of Israel in Egypt and in the Exodus. There is not space to go further into this question, but what has been said will show the extent to which archæology has contributed in recent years towards the solution of old problems and the raising of new ones in the sphere of Old Testament studies, more especially with regard to historical questions. As fresh historical horizons are opened it is inevitable that fresh problems should arise. Seemingly familiar situations are seen against a new background of unfamiliar patterns, and the necessary process of weighing and sifting evidence must go on unceasingly, bringing us ever a little nearer to the constantly receding goal of full knowledge, "for we know in part."

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Let us turn now from the domain of history and attempt a brief survey of the contribution made by recent archæology to a fuller knowledge of the religious background of the Old Testament. Here the outstanding discovery of recent years has been that of the now famous Ras Shamra tablets, briefly referred to above.

Ever since 1928 a French expedition, under the able leadership of Professor Claude Schaeffer, has been engaged in the excavation of the site of the

ancient city of Ugarit, now known as Ras Shamra, close to Latakia, on the north coast of Syria, opposite the pointing finger of Cyprus. The results of the excavation have been rich beyond all expectations, disclosing a civilization of great antiquity and of most diverse characteristics. Mingled with the native Canaanite or Phœnician culture were found Egyptian, Mycenæan, Hurrian, Hittite, and Mesopotamian elements side by side.

But our concern is with the discovery, in the "library" of one of the temples, of a large number of tablets. Many of these were in ordinary cuneiform script and easily legible by scholars, but 600 or more were in a script which, although it appeared to be in cuneiform, could not be read by the cuneiform experts. The limited number of the signs suggested that the script was an alphabetic one, and it was very soon discovered that the tablets were written in an alphabet composed of cuneiform signs, and that the language represented by this alphabet was a new Semitic dialect or language, closely related to Hebrew and other Semitic forms of speech spoken in Canaan.

But the chief significance of the tablets lay in their contents. They were found to be a series of religious texts, in poetic form, embodying various myths and rituals and saga material, giving us the first contemporary evidence of the nature of Canaanite religious beliefs and practices in the middle of the second millennium. The Tell el-Amarna Letters had given some indirect and scanty evidence as to the religion of Canaan during this period, while the Old Testament evidence is much later than the period in question, and also suffers from the fact that it came mainly from the later writing prophets, who were in fundamental opposition to all that the older type of religion represented. Hence the value of this new evidence can hardly be over-estimated, since it enables us for the first time to obtain a complete idea of what the religion of Canaan was like at the period when the

Hebrews were entering the land, and of what the religious influences were to which the Hebrews must have been exposed at the formative period of their history.

It is only possible here to give a brief summary of the new light afforded by these tablets, and of its bearing on the Old Testament.

First, we find extensive information as to the Canaanite pantheon, since the texts contain references to a large number of gods and goddesses and lesser divinities. The high god of Canaanite religion is El, the Father of Years, who dwells in the Mount of the North; we have also Baal, Dagan, and the two gods who form the centre of interest in the main group of poems, Aleyan and Mot; there are also a number of lesser gods and messengers. Of goddesses we find Anat, who was adopted into the Egyptian pantheon, and who even figures as the consort of Jahu in the Elephantine Papyri; Asherat, the Mother-Goddess, who bears the strange title "Lady of the Sea," connecting her with foam-born Aphrodite; we have also the mysterious goddess Shapash, the Flame of the Sun, who is the ally of Anat in her search for her lost brother-consort Aleyan.

But it is not the mere list of deities so much as the extensive mythology contained in these poems which is of significance, for we find that the central motive in these myths is the familiar theme of the dying and rising vegetation god. This new material from Ras Shamra makes it abundantly clear that the Canaanite pattern of religion was a fertility one, with its characteristic myth and ritual, akin to that which prevailed in Mesopotamia, but bearing the individual stamp of Canaan. We are now in a position to estimate better the nature of the influences to which the Hebrews were exposed when they settled in Canaan, and to understand how deeply rooted were the religious beliefs and customs against which the later prophets, from Amos onwards, waged such a bitter and relentless warfare.

Moreover, it is clear from this body of literature that civilization in Canaan in the middle of the second millennium B.C. was highly developed. In the poems of which mention has been made we find all the main characteristics of Hebrew poetry already fully displayed. There are a great number of striking parallels between Hebrew poetry and the epic poetry of Ras Shamra, and the frequent references in Hebrew poetry to the struggle between Jahweh and the dragon find their parallel in the Ras Shamra myth of the fight between Baal and the dragon; even the name Leviathan, the coiled one, occurs in the Ras Shamra poems.

There are important connections between the cult as practised in this ancient Canaanite city and Hebrew ritual prescriptions. A number of the special technical terms which occur in the regulations of the Priestly Code concerning sacrifices are also found in the Ras Shamra texts, proving that the elaborate priestly ritual which earlier scholars thought to be the product of the post-exilic period was in operation in Canaanite temples long before the Hebrews had built a temple to Jahweh. One of the tablets contains the order of sacrifice for a seven-day period, and is the earliest mention of the seven-day week in Palestine.

One of the most recent of these texts to be published is concerned with a mythical king, possibly a king of Tyre, named Danel, another form of the name Daniel. In the book of Ezekiel xxviii. 3, the prophet, addressing the king of Tyre, says, "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel," a reference which seems to point to some traditional hero connected with Tyre. Hence there is a strong probability that the figure of the wise Daniel of Hebrew tradition is another link with early Canaanite tradition, and a further witness to the extent to which the Hebrews were indebted to the culture of the land of their adoption.

Much more might be said about this most important body of texts and their relation to the Old

Testament, but enough has been said to show that up to the present time no archæological discovery has been of greater significance for the reconstruction of the religious background of Canaan in the middle of the second millennium, the actual period of Hebrew settlement in Palestine.

THE LACHISH LETTERS

One more special discovery which has roused general interest may be dealt with here. This is the discovery two years ago, by the late Mr. J. L. Starkey, in the excavation of Tell ed-Duweir, the ancient Lachish, of a number of inscribed potsherds in the ruins of the guardhouse of the city gate. These potsherds proved to be the fragmentary remains of a correspondence between the military governor of Lachish and the commander of some neighbouring fort. Some of the fragments contained more or less complete letters, and showed that the historical setting of the correspondence lay in the troubled times of the close of the Judæan kingdom, a few years before the final capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's troops in 586 B.C. These documents were of interest for several reasons. In the first place, they are the first literary remains of any extent which archæology has recovered from an actual Hebrew site. The Siloam Inscription from Jerusalem is the only other documentary survival, apart from short seal and jar-handle inscriptions, belonging to the period of Israelite occupation of Palestine.

Then they are of interest because they show us the nature of the Hebrew script and language in the time of the prophet Jeremiah. We can see by them the extent to which the so-called Phœnician script had developed into an instrument of everyday use since the period of the Ahiiram Inscription and the well-known Moabite Stone.

Lastly, they contain interesting references to some unnamed prophet's activities, and the eminent

French scholar, Professor Dussaud, thinks that this prophet may well be Jeremiah himself.

Such a discovery illustrates the way in which archæology continues to furnish fresh details, here a stone and there a stone, serving to build up with increasing accuracy the background of life in the Old Testament period.

While our more immediate interest is centred in the results of Palestinian archæology and its relation to the Old Testament, it must not be forgotten that Palestine cannot be considered apart from the great civilizations by which she was surrounded, and which contributed so much to the shaping of her destiny. Hence before we close this brief account of the bearing of archæology upon the study of the Bible with a summary of the present position, it is necessary to say a few words about the progress of discovery in other regions besides Palestine.

THE PROGRESS OF DISCOVERY

Egypt was already a well-worked field before Mesopotamian archæology had begun to yield important results, and, while excavation goes on steadily in Egypt, there has been no discovery of striking significance bearing on the Old Testament since the discovery of the Tell el-Amarna Letters, of which we have already spoken. But the last ten years have seen immense advances in the excavation of Mesopotamian sites, and a great store of valuable documentary material has been accumulating which it will take many years to translate and publish.

Sir Leonard Woolley has completed his excavation of Ur and thrown a flood of light upon the earliest period of civilization in the Euphrates valley. A German expedition has excavated Uruk, the ancient Erech, which Hebrew tradition connects with the figure of Nimrod, possibly the Babylonian Gilgamesh. Babylon, Nippur, Nineveh, Assur, Khorsabad, and many other historic sites have been laid bare, and the wealth of inscriptional material,

infinitely greater than the inscriptional yield from Palestinian excavation, has made it possible to reconstruct in a large measure the civilization of Mesopotamia from the earliest times down to the Seleucid epoch. Here some mention must be made of the most recent finds from the French excavation of the site of Mari, in North-West Mesopotamia. Here M. André Parrot has discovered a very large number of tablets which have already thrown much light upon a little-known period of Mesopotamian history—that immediately preceding and contemporary with the time of the Babylonian king Hammurabi. The translation of these tablets has only just begun.

Although the epoch-making discoveries of Hugo Winckler at Boghazköi, the site of the ancient capital of the Hittites, were made some thirty years ago, the vast amount of material discovered there is only recently beginning to be available for study, since the discovery of the nature of the language of the tablets, and their subsequent translation, has been a long and difficult task. But the results have been of the greatest importance for the history of the Near East during the second millennium B.C. They have supplied the necessary supplement to the Tell el-Amarna Letters, and we are beginning for the first time to grasp the general outlines of the whole field of international politics, embracing the relations of Egypt, Palestine and Syria, North-West Mesopotamia (*i.e.*, the Hurrian sphere of influence), Assyria, and the Hittite Empire.

It is also now possible to set the references to the Hittites in the Old Testament in their proper perspective. We find that the original *Hatti*, or proto-Hittites, to whom alone the name Hittite properly applies, were one of the early populations of Asia Minor, speaking a non-Indo-European language akin to those of the North-Eastern Caucasus. About 2000 B.C. an Indo-European migration conquered the proto-Hittites and founded an empire in Asia Minor whose capital was Boghazköi. Their lan-

guage, belonging to the Indo-European family, is that of the Boghazköi texts, mentioned above, and is properly called Kanisian, but the neighbouring peoples gave to the new settlers the name by which they had been accustomed to designate the original inhabitants—that is, Hittites. In the period of the great king Soppiluliuma, in the middle of the fourteenth century B.C., the Hittite—that is, the Kanisian—empire was extended as far as Northern Syria, and the Northern Lebanon became the boundary of Hittite power.

Then came the disastrous invasion of the Sea-Peoples, already referred to, and the fall of the Hittite empire in 1191 B.C., as the result of which the Hittite territory in Asia Minor and Northern Syria fell into the hands of invaders who called themselves Tabalians. Under them the Hittite empire was divided up into about thirty small kingdoms, those to the north of the Taurus being known in Assyrian documents as "the twenty-four kingdoms of the land of Tabali," while those of Northern Syria retained the name by which the Assyrians had been accustomed to style the Kanisian rulers of that region—namely, *Hatti*, or Hittites.

Finally, a fourth group, bearing the name "Hittites" and inhabiting the hill-country of Judah and the cities of Beersheba, Hebron, and Jerusalem at the time of the invasion of Canaan by the Hebrews under Joshua, has been distinguished. The evidence from recently deciphered Hittite texts shows that this group probably corresponds to a mixed body of Hittites and other elements which escaped from the city of Kurustamma, in Asia Minor, after its conquest by Soppiluliuma in 1353 B.C. and settled in Palestine, in what was then Egyptian territory.

These results suggest the following conclusions with regard to the passages of the Old Testament in which the Hittites are mentioned. In the first place, the Hittites of Genesis, with whom Abraham and Isaac are represented as having dealings, are those belonging to the fourth group referred to

above. As a possible explanation of what seems to be an anachronism, here it may be suggested that the relations of the Habiru (Hebrews) with the Hittites of the hill-country of Judah, during their period of settlement in Canaan, may have been transferred in error to the period of that earlier settlement of Habiru in Palestine in the period of the Hurrian migrations, the possible period of Abraham's settlement in Canaan. A similar anachronism with regard to the Philistines in the time of Isaac is well known, and may serve as a parallel instance.

Secondly, the "Hittites" with whom Solomon had dealings, and the "kings of the Hittites" mentioned in 2 Kings vii. 6, are clearly the third group of so-called Hittites already referred to—namely, the Tabalians.

These are some of the salient points marking the main lines of advance in archæological research as it concerns the records of the Old Testament. We shall now close this brief survey, of whose inadequacy I am only too well aware, with an attempt to estimate the present position of Old Testament studies in the light of the fresh knowledge provided by archæology during the past quarter of a century.

CONCLUSION

First, it may safely be said that the whole trend of recent discovery has been to emphasize the impossibility of treating the Old Testament in isolation from its cultural environment. It is impossible to understand the New Testament without the Old, and it is impossible to understand the Old Testament without an adequate knowledge of that ancient civilization which, in our time, archæology has brought forth like Lazarus from its long entombment and made to live again before our eyes. Hence, in passing, I would make an urgent plea for the recognition in those places where men are being

prepared to be teachers of the Bible of the central importance of a study of the archæological background of the Bible.

Nothing is more striking than the way in which every fresh discovery illuminates some obscure point in the Biblical record by bringing it into relation with the historical or cultural setting necessary for its proper understanding.

Next, a word must be said about the present relation of archæology to what is commonly called, sometimes with a slightly depreciatory meaning, Biblical criticism. While it will always be true that the essential light of the revelation contained in those records which we call the Bible is something by which we are ultimately judged, yet the records themselves are human documents, and must be submitted to the same processes of careful scrutiny and comparison as are applied to all the other documents which archæology is daily bringing to light. This necessary process is criticism, itself a human and fallible process, but without which we cannot arrive at the truth. We hear from time to time that the progress of archæological research has completely destroyed the results arrived at by the labours of scholars in the field of Biblical criticism during the last fifty years. This is very far from being the truth. The tentative and progressive nature of such studies has always been recognised by the scholars who have engaged in them, and it is no discredit to the earlier scholars who laid the foundations of the critical study of the Old Testament that the growth of knowledge, largely due to archæology, and in part to the great advances in Oriental philology made in recent years, has modified some of the earlier positions held by Old Testament scholars.

With regard to this point, three things may be said. First, there can be no question in the minds of unbiassed students but that the broad outlines of what is called the documentary criticism of the Old Testament, so far from being destroyed by the results

of archæology, have rather been confirmed. As the details of the history of the Hebrew people become clearer it becomes more and more certain that the main stages of the evolution of the literature of the Hebrews, as represented by the critical analysis into the three great sources, J-E, D, and P, correspond accurately to the main stages of the historical development of the people and of the growth of their religion.

Secondly, literary criticism still continues with its task of endeavouring to discern as accurately as possible, with the help of fresh philological knowledge, the elements of which the various books of the Old Testament are composed, and to assign them to their proper date and environment. While such a line of study cannot be expected to yield anything spectacular in the way of results, yet it steadily advances, and, in the words of a well-known scholar, "it has taken on a new lease of life in the case of the Hexateuch and the earlier historical books; and, what is more, it has now even invaded works such as those of the prophetic literature and the book of Proverbs, where, on the whole, it appeared to have no task." Important advances along this line have been made in recent years in the books of Samuel and Ezekiel, and much still remains to be done.

Thirdly, although the work of literary criticism must go on, yet the result of the immense impetus given to archæological activities during the last quarter of a century has been to turn the attention of students more to the contents of the sources than to their analysis. The results of archæological research have made it clear that much of the material, even of the latest sources, belongs to the early periods of Hebrew culture. For example, the evidence from Ras Shamra has shown that the technical terms connected with the sacrificial system contained in the Priestly Code go back to a time prior to the Hebrew occupation of Canaan. It is also becoming recognized that written sources for Hebrew history

and saga may have existed at a much earlier date than was thought possible fifty years ago.

Hence, summing up the present position of the relation between archæology and Biblical criticism, it may be said that, while details have been corrected, the main outlines have been confirmed, and that the main result has been the reconstruction of the cultural background of the ancient Near East, the knowledge of which is essential to any real understanding of the meaning of the Old Testament. Here it is appropriate to quote the words of a distinguished American archæologist: "The recovery of the ancient Orient is giving so great a spur to historical studies in general that it can only be compared with the effect upon scientific research in general of the revival of learning." And again:

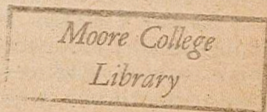
"The recovery of the ancient Orient has doubled the span of human history as recorded in contemporary written documents; it has nearly trebled the duration of archæologically recorded sedentary society. In thus extending the chronological scope of Western European history it has given us a vastly enlarged perspective in studying all phases of history, from material culture to the history of religion. The light cast by this new knowledge on the development of the religious institutions which preceded and partly inspired our own, is alone worth all the effort put into the ancient Oriental field."

In closing I will venture to quote what I have said elsewhere on this subject: "It is not an uncommon view of the relation of archæology to the Old Testament to regard the former as a somewhat lowly handmaid to Revelation; a hewer of wood and drawer of water for the Temple. In other words, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, the function of archæology is merely to produce external evidence of the truth of the Record which embodies the Revelation.

"But there are manifest signs that in our day there is a tendency to take a deeper and more serious

view of the significance of the results of archæology, anthropology, and other kindred studies in their relation to the Old Testament.

"Thoughtful people are beginning to recognize that the Old Testament is not so much a single indivisible record, marked off by some special divine quality from all other records of human activity, as a collection of records, varying widely in date and character, in which, through the web of human activities, there appears a gradually emerging pattern of divine purpose, the experience of which constitutes the Revelation which the records contain. From such a point of view every clay tablet, every fragment of papyrus, every potsherd brought to light by the spade of the archæologist, is another record, another fragment of human experience, to be subjected to the same processes of careful study and analysis as have already been applied to the records which make up the Old Testament. Each new record broadens the basis of interpretation, enlarges the total record of relevant human experience, and makes us feel that we have to deal, not with a closed and static record, but with a living and growing thing which records its growth as the living trunk of a tree records its yearly growth by a ring of new living matter."



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