

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

Old Testament History And Recent Archeology From Abraham To Moses

Gleason L. Archer, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

For students of the Bible the last fifty years of archeological discovery have been more momentous than in any previous period of comparable length in the history of the Christian church. With the establishment of the British mandate in Palestine and the French mandate in Syria-Lebanon in the aftermath of World War I it became possible for European and American scholars to obtain unhampered access to many of the important biblical sites and to enlist the interest of wealthy contributors to cover the costs of major excavations in this entire region. In Mesopotamia also major discoveries were made at Mari and Nuzi in the kingdom of Iraq, which threw a flood of light upon the pre-Mosaic period of Bible history.

As the evidence was exhumed from the soil at localities like Samaria, Jericho, Lachish, Shechem, Beth-shan, Megiddo, Bethel, Ezion-geber, and even the hill of Ophel in Jerusalem, many details of the cultural life of the Israelites came to light, to the enrichment of our understanding of the religious and political conditions under which the great leaders and prophets of Old Testament times carried on their ministry for the Lord.

Further information of great value for the understanding of ancient Phoenicia was obtained from continued digging at Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, and especially from a town virtually unknown before 1928, named Ugarit, and located more than one hundred miles north of Byblos. The discovery there

Editor's note: This article is the first in the series of W. H. Griffith Thomas lectures delivered by Dr. Archer in November, 1969, at Dallas Seminary.

of an entire library of literary and economic texts dating from about the time of Moses and written in a Canaanite dialect closely related to Hebrew perhaps outranks all the others in value for Hebrew backgrounds in the second millennium B.C. Even more sensational was the discovery of the Dead Sea caves in which the Qumran sectarians hid their scrolls at the time of the first Jewish revolt, among which the most celebrated was the complete copy of Isaiah dating from the second century B. C., a thousand years earlier than the earliest dated complete copy of the Hebrew Bible.

The impact of these discoveries upon the world of modern biblical scholarship can scarcely be overrated. The accuracy of the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible as preserved by the Massorettes was completely vindicated as an authentic text tradition going back to pre-Christian times, contrary to the conjectures of many European scholars who had recklessly amended it to conform to the Greek Septuagint version. The dogmatic assertions of the Wellhausen school of higher criticism to the effect that the Pentateuchal legislation contained cultic terms not invented until the time of the Babylonian Exile were rendered ridiculous by the appearance of those same terms in the Ugaritic tablets of the fourteenth century. The alleged late date of the Psalms was rendered almost untenable by the discovery of similar poetic phrases and parallelistic structures appearing in the epic poetry of the Mosaic era in Ras Shamra.

The cumulative impact of all these testimonies to the historical accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures served to persuade even such outstanding experts as W. F. Albright, reared in the Wellhausen tradition, that the artificial reconstruction of Hebrew history advocated by the nineteenth-century critical schools was a mere figment of their imagination. As early as 1941 he stated in the *American Scholar* magazine: "Wellhausen still ranks in our eyes as the greatest biblical scholar of the nineteenth century. But his standpoint is antiquated and his picture of the early evolution of Israel is sadly distorted,"¹ Earlier in this same article he asserted: "Archeological and inscriptional data have established the historicity of innumerable passages and statements of the Old

¹ *American Scholar Magazine*, X (1941), 183

Testament; the number of such cases is many times greater than those where the reverse has been proved or has been made probable.”² The result of this new attitude of respect for the historical accuracy of the Bible has been the casting aside of many of the objective arguments advanced in favor of the documentary hypothesis in the age of Graf, Kuenen, and Wellhausen—arguments based upon alleged anachronisms and misrepresentations of earlier history by the spurious authors of the Pentateuch. John Elder goes so far as to declare: “It is not too much to say that it was the rise of the science of archeology that broke the deadlock between historians and the orthodox Christian. Little by little, one city after another, one civilization after another, one culture after another, whose memories were enshrined only in the Bible, were restored to their proper places in ancient history by the studies of archeologists. . . . Contemporary records of biblical events have been unearthed and the uniqueness of biblical revelation has been emphasized by contrast and comparison to newly discovered religions of ancient peoples. Nowhere has archeological discovery refuted the Bible as history.”³

Yet despite the embarrassment to the older critical views which these newer discoveries have produced, it is safe to say that there have been few conversions to evangelical convictions resulting among the ranks of the archeologists themselves. The basic philosophical position of theological liberals and rationalists has not been gravely imperiled, even though much of its alleged scientific evidence has been exposed as false. That is because liberalism and rationalism are ultimately based upon faith rather than upon evidence; conceivably every historical record in the Bible could be verified by archeological discovery and the rationalist would still affirm his antismiraculous position. Having firmly closed his mind against all evidence favorable to supernaturalism, he will never allow himself to be convinced by anybody of proof no matter how overwhelming it may be. After a careful study of the works of Julius Wellhausen himself, R. K. Harrison comes to this conclusion: “Wellhausen took almost no note whatever of progress in the field of oriental scholarship, and once having arrived at his conclusions, he never troubled

² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

³ John Elder, *Prophets, Idols and Diggers*, p. 16.

to revise his opinion in the light of subsequent research in the general field. He ignored completely such vastly important discoveries as the Tell el-Amarna tablets, even though Hugo Winckler had made the texts readily available in a critical edition. Even as late as 1893 the faithful followers of Wellhausen were still propounding his dictum that, since writing was only utilized about the time of David, Moses could not possibly have written the Pentateuch even if he had wanted to."⁴

Naturally, then, it follows that the convictions of rationalistic higher critics are not likely to be seriously shaken despite the modern vindication of the Bible's historical accuracy. They will continue as a matter of faith to reject the possibility of special revelation coming from a personal God, or of the performance of miracles by divine power, or even of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, no matter how impossible it may be to explain away the evidence for these things. It is a forlorn hope, then, that humanistic liberals will be brought to the point of conversion or repentance by any amount of objective proof along this line. For all their vaunted openness of mind to scientific evidence, they will remain impervious to the call of God to face the truth as it is in Jesus, or to yield to God that absolute primacy which they have arrogated to themselves alone. As the Scripture itself makes clear (I Cor. 2:14), the truths of the Spirit are foolishness to the natural man, because they are spiritually discerned.

Nevertheless, a consistent testimony to the historical accuracy of the Bible may serve a very useful purpose for sincere seekers after God who have turned to the Scriptures for a knowledge of His saving grace. If they have been assured by apparently knowledgeable experts that no intelligent person can reasonably take the Bible seriously as an authentic word from God because of the host of inaccuracies and self-contradictions which it contains, then they are entitled to be presented with the data which support the claims of Scripture. It will not do to affirm, as so many neoorthodox writers have been doing in recent decades, that the Bible as the Word of God (or at least a written testimony pointing to the Word of God) needs no defense, and therefore does not need to be

⁴ R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 509.

proved accurate in matters of history and science.

To those who are faced with these confident assertions of the spurious and unreliable character of Holy Scripture it is of utmost importance to show that it is not because of a paucity of evidence that such intellectuals reject its authority but, on the contrary, because of an unwillingness honestly to face evidence, an unwillingness that stems from an insuperable philosophical prejudice. It is important thus to demonstrate that only the Bible believer has a true grasp of reality and a grip upon eternal values. It is therefore the soul of the undecided, uncommitted thinker which is at stake; if he has a willingness to face the revealed truth of God, the overwhelming evidence of the bodily resurrection of Christ and the transformed lives of those who believe in Him. For such it is worthwhile to continue the contest on the arena of historical evidences and utilize to the full the corroborative testimony of archeological discovery.

And since new information comes to light with every new excavation, we must continue to involve ourselves in a careful study of the most recent findings, if we are to maintain our usefulness as persuasive advocates of the claims of Christ. By no means does this imply that the authority of Scripture stands or falls by every latest discovery that comes to light from archeological investigation. But it does imply that since the one true God is both the Author of Scripture and the Lord of history, therefore, there can be no genuine contradiction between the two, even as there is no self-contradiction in God Himself. As your speaker once remarked to a colleague of his on the Divinity School faculty: "Remember, John, no matter how clever and learned your opponent may be in tonight's debate on the 'God is dead' movement, you have one tremendous advantage on your side: your cause is right, as right as God is true." It is this firm, serene confidence which every well-trained evangelical should have as he faces the foolish wisdom of the Christ-rejecting world.

One other observation should be made before we begin our study of recent archeological discovery, and that is that subjective factors must be carefully reckoned with even in those who deal with the objective data of archeology. Every archeologist, no matter how scientific and unbiased he pretends to

be, operates from a complex of philosophical presuppositions. He is already committed to certain metaphysical hypotheses before he begins his investigations on the field, and these hypotheses cannot fail to exercise an important influence upon his handling of the evidences, even though he has every intention of being objective. Consider, for example, the profound influence of Roman Catholic attitudes on the part of those excavators who a few years ago were commissioned by the Pope to examine the bones discovered beneath the Church of St. Peter in the Vatican. If a team of Protestant excavators had been assigned this task, it is more than doubtful if they would have come up with the verdict that these were indeed the bones of Simon Peter himself! So also in the much-debated question of the date of the fall of Jericho to the forces of Joshua, a desire to bring this event into line with the time of the destruction of Debir, Bethel, Ai, and Hazor seems to have exerted a controlling influence upon Hugues Vincent and Kathleen Kenyon in their opposition to Garstang's findings.

John Garstang had discovered in the burial grounds belonging to City D of Old Testament Jericho a large number of scarabs, many of which were inscribed with the names of Egyptian pharaohs, but none later than Amenhotep III (1412-1376). Out of more than 150,000 pottery fragments only one piece was identifiable as Mycenaean, even though Mycenaean ware became common throughout Palestine very soon after 1400 B. C. No subsequent digging by Dr. Kenyon could possibly upset these data, even though some other deductions by Garstang may have been rendered questionable in regard to the towers and walls. In 1948 Garstang himself made this interesting observation: "We are aware that varying opinions have appeared in print which conflict with our interpretation of the fall of Jericho about 1400 B. C. Few such opinions are based on firsthand knowledge of the scientific results of our excavations; while many of them are devoid of logical reasoning, or are based upon preconceptions as to the date of the Exodus. No commentator has yet produced from the results of our excavations, which have been fully published in the *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology*, any evidence that City IV remained in being after the reign of Amenhotep III. . . . We see no need therefore to discuss the date as though it

were a matter for debate.”⁵

The controversy concerning Jericho thus furnishes a prime example of how profoundly scholars may be influenced by subjective preconceptions in the handling of archeological evidence. Two specialists guided by differing attitudes or presuppositions may face the same data and come out to diametrically opposite conclusions. It is therefore altogether essential for seminary-trained men to preserve a careful distinction between objective facts and subjective interpretations, as they read the reports of archeologists. For all of their competence and proficiency, these experts may nevertheless have slipped into the fallacy of screening out relevant data which cannot be squared with the theory they are seeking to buttress. Of course this may be true of an evangelical scholar as well as a liberal, and we must all be on our guard against mishandling concrete evidence in the interests of our personal viewpoints, or allowing ourselves firm and positive conclusions on the basis of tenuous or ambivalent data. Yet it must be admitted by all who have investigated the history of Old Testament higher criticism that uncontrolled or undisciplined methodology has characterized liberal scholarship far more markedly than ever was true of orthodox or conservative scholarship. Flashes of intuitive genius and brilliant deductions from unestablished premises can never take the place of a self-consistent and systematic handling of the concrete data of history and of revelation.

THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD: FROM ADAM TO MOSES

As we turn to a consideration of the most important works for discussion produced by archeologists within the last ten years, we encounter the name of William Foxwell Albright of Johns Hopkins University as continuing to dominate the scene from the standpoint of correlation between the data of archeology and its meaning for biblical studies. Albright still ranks as the foremost expert in his field in the English-speaking world and is a very prolific author who constantly comes out not only with new information, but also with revisions of his former opinions. For the most part, he is quite candid in admitting where his mind has changed in the light of new evidence. One of his most recent discussions has been published

⁵ John Garstang, *The Story of Jericho*, p. 122.

under the title of *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*.⁶ These chapters were composed of the Jordan Lectures delivered at the University of London in 1965, and contained some very helpful information concerning the religion of the Canaanite peoples whom Israel encountered at the time of the conquest under Joshua and with whom they continued to have dealings during the ensuing centuries.

Albright's view of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 is naturally that of a comparative religionist, and his effort tends to bring out some kind of conformity between the account of Moses and that of the pagan literatures such as *Enuma Elish* epic from ancient Babylon, and the parallel accounts in Sumerian literature. He does not discuss in this book his earlier suggestion that Genesis 1:1 should be translated as a temporal clause, "In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth, then the earth was without form and void. . . ." But he does discuss some of the prominent motifs in Genesis 2, including the passage beginning with verse 4, which he renders, "When Yahweh Elohim made earth and heaven before any vegetation had yet come into being in the earth and before any herbage had yet sprouted, for Yahweh Elohim had not caused rain to fall on the earth and mankind was not there to till the soil, then he caused the primordial river (which is his translation of the Hebrew 'ēd to rise from the earth irrigating all surface soil.'"

In response to this we should first observe that the proposal to alter the standard translation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" is not a new one, for it is found in the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon which recommends, "In the beginning when God created. . . ." However, it ought to be noticed that nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible does the expression *berēshit* occur in this fashion, that is, taking a clause as its object; but rather it occurs only as a separate expression operating as a normal adverb. While there may be some analogies found for this use of the expression, "In the beginning," in Ugaritic, as taking a clause in dependence upon it, we would be operating on a better level methodologically to interpret this in the light of its usage elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures. Therefore, it would seem

⁶ William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

better to stay with the traditional rendering, that God is the Creator of all things that have ever come into being both in heaven and in earth.

Then in regard to the rendering of the word 'ēd, the word in Genesis 2:6 which is normally translated *mist*, the evidence for a tie-in with the Sumerian *ID* is fairly persuasive; although it is not clear whether this is referring to an inundation from a surface river, or whether it is the welling up of water from some subterranean source as Albright implies.⁸ But the important thing to notice is that Albright is influenced in making his choices of interpretation of these terms by an unproved theory as to the origin of the whole creation narrative. On page 92 he says: "Genesis 1, though going back to early times in its original poetic form, received its present form in the seventh century B.C. (P), and is probably a specifically Israelite synthesis of elements from Babylonia, Egypt, and Canaan (Phoenicia), largely obscured by Israelite demythologizing." But as Kenneth A. Kitchen remarks, "The common view that the Hebrew account is simply a purged and simplified version of the Babylonian legend (applied also to the flood stories) is fallacious on methodological grounds. In the Ancient Near East the rule is that simple accounts or traditions may give rise (by accretion and embellishment) to elaborate legends, but not vice versa." Kitchen illustrates this from Egyptian literature, using as an example the legend of Sesostris, which by progressive exaggerations exalted him to a superhuman figure. The same was true with the later traditions about the Hyksos kings in Egypt. Similarly in Mesopotamia, the growth of traditions about Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, shows the same direction of development from the simple to the elaborated and complex.

In regard to the word *tehōm* (or "great deep") occurring in Genesis 1:2, Albright understands this as pointing to a pagan archetype which was thoroughly demythologized by the Hebrews at some stage in the history of the development of this chapter. He says: "There are many other cases of demythologizing in the cosmogonic narratives of Genesis, as well as in the patriarchal stories. . . . It may be confidently stated that there is no true mythology anywhere in the Hebrew

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, p. 89.

Bible. What we have consists of vestiges—what may be called the débris of a past religious culture.”¹⁰ Kitchen, however, completely rejects this attempt to correlate the Hebrew *tehōm*, “deep,” with the Babylonian *Ti’āmat* (the goddess of the deep), which is merely a proper name derived from the basic *tehōm*, a word common to the Semitic languages and exhibited in the Ugaritic literature as *thm*, “deep.” Since this term occurs early in the second millennium B.C. in contexts that have no conceivable link with epic poetry, there is no evidence here for Hebrew borrowing from a Babylonian mythological background. Even the existence of any real relationship at all between Genesis and the *Enuma Elish* is open to considerable doubt.¹¹ Kitchen then challenges the usual higher critical supposition that Genesis 1 and 2 represent creation traditions from two different sources. He says that in point of fact Genesis 1 mentions the creation of man as the last of the series without any details, whereas in Genesis 2 man is the very center of interest, and more specific details are therefore given about him and his setting in the Garden of Eden. He mentions that this is a standard technique in Ancient Near Eastern literature: the presentation of a general summary outline comes first, followed by a more detailed account of one or more of the major aspects of the preceding.

This indeed was the commonplace practice in ancient Oriental texts; thus, in the Karnak Poetical Stela, the god Amun addresses the king Tuthmosis III, first setting forth his supremacy in general terms in the first twelve lines, and then elaborating upon this theme with more precision in stately stanzas more rigid in form than any portion of Genesis 1 (namely, in lines 13 to 22); then he concludes with a more varied finale in lines 23 to 25. Similarly, there are many royal inscriptions from Urartu which show an initial paragraph ascribing the defeat of various lands to the chariot of the god Haldi, and then relating these same victories in greater detail as brought about by the king himself. Note that in the case of both compositions, the Egyptian and the Urartian, the Old Testament source-critic using Wellhausen methods would have to divide these undoubtedly unitary compositions into several different sources.

¹⁰ Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

¹¹ Kitchen, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

Kitchen then comments: "What is absurd when applied to monumental Near Eastern texts that had no prehistory of hands and redactors should not be imposed on Genesis 1 and 2, as is done by the uncritical perpetuation of a nineteenth-century systematization of speculations by eighteenth-century dilettantes, lacking as they did all knowledge of the forms and usages of Ancient Oriental literature."¹² He then states that the stylistic differences between Genesis 1 and 2 are meaningless and reflect only the differences in detailed subject matter, while a supposed contrast of a transcendent God in Genesis 1 with naive anthropomorphisms in Genesis 2 is greatly exaggerated and indeed illusory. The supposedly more sophisticated text of Genesis 1 (attributed to a post-exilic "P") contains nevertheless clear anthropomorphisms in stating that God "called," "saw," "blessed," and "rested."

In regard to the record of the Flood in Genesis 6-9, Albright remarks: "The story of the plot in Genesis is so close to the various Sumerian and Accadian accounts of the Great Deluge that a close relationship is certain. It is quite impossible, however, to assume that the story of the flood is derived from any of the extant Sumerian or Accadian versions. They are all different in detail. The Hebrew story shows archaic features which must have been derived from a form of the Mesopotamian myth earlier than any preserved in cuneiform sources."¹³ He then ventures to suggest that a myth so widespread as to be found all over the world, even in pre-Columbian South America, finds a most reasonable explanation in some catastrophic event which took place at the close of the Glacial Period in Pleistocene times.

In regard to the table of nations in Genesis 10, curious notions seem to persist from the times of scholarly ignorance back in the nineteenth century. But present-day experts in the field of Old Testament should be so aware of the flood of recent information that has come in that they are on guard against repeating the naive conclusions of Wellhausen and his predecessors. Yet even a respected liberal scholar like Frederick V. Winnett in his presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature in December 28, 1964, could state: "The list of Japhethite peoples in the table of nations in Genesis

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹³ Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

10:2-5 points to an even later date, for, judging from the other references to Japhethite peoples in the Old Testament, the Hebrews did not become acquainted with most of them until the time of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah."¹⁴ Edwin Yamauchi comments on this, ¹⁵ remarking that we now know that even in the time of the dynasty of Agade (about 2350 B.C.) there were extensive trade relations between Mesopotamia and Crete as H. W. F. Saggs also point out.¹⁶ There were Babylonian cylinder seals of this period discovered in Crete itself, and there was also a dedication inscription which a Babylonian princeling left on the island of Cythera (which lies between Crete and Greece). Yamauchi also mentions some beautiful polychrome *kamares* ware characteristic of the Middle Minoan Period (2000-1500 B.C.), which has been found at various locations in Egypt, such as Kahun and Abydos.¹⁷

On the other hand, a statue of an Egyptian official of the Middle Kingdom was discovered at Knossos, the capital of Crete. From Mari on the middle Euphrates there is evidence of trade with Kaptara (or Caphtor) during the period of Hammurabi; for Zimrilim, the king of Mari, sent an imported *objet d'art* from Crete to him as a gift. In the tombs of the officials of the early Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt during the earlier part of Moses' life, a goodly number of Aegeans (most probably Mycenaeans) were depicted on the wall paintings. Now that Cyrus Gordon has raised the distinct possibility that "Cretan Linear A" was a dialect of northwest Semitic, the relations between the Hellenic and the Palestinian world are even more clearly demonstrated than before in regard to the second millennium B. C. Apparently the merchants from Phoenicia who set up business in the port cities of Crete introduced a mode of bookkeeping and documentary recording which so appealed to the native population that they adopted the practice of keeping such records in their Northwest Semitic dialect. But this was written, not in the Phoenician alphabet, but in a Cypriote-Cretan hieroglyphic style of syllabic writing which we know as "Linear A."

Interestingly enough, the name of the traditional founder

¹⁴ Frederick V. Winnett, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXIV (1965), 4.

¹⁵ Edwin Yamauchi, *Greece and Babylon*, p. 26.

¹⁶ H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon*, p.277.

¹⁷ Yamauchi, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

of Thebes in Boeotia was, according to Greek tradition, a native of Phoenicia named Kadmos. This very name has been found in the Cretan inscriptions, spelled as "ka-du-ma-ne." Other significant terms in these inscriptions indicating relationship with the Semitic Near East include such names as "Misirayo" and "Aikupitiyo," both of which mean "the Egyptian"; "Aradayo," the "man from Arvad" in Lebanon; "Perita" "the man from Beirut," and "Turiyo" the "Tyrian," all of which are mentioned in "Linear B" inscriptions dating from 1415 to 1115 B.C. "Linear B" written in Achaean Greek, also exhibits loan words, such as the word for "gold," "khrysos" (which is spelled as "ku-ru-so"), clearly related to the Semitic "kharus"; and two words for spice may be mentioned in this connection as well: "cummin," which is spelled ku-mi-no and appears in Ugaritic as "kmn" and in Hebrew "kammon," and then also "ku-ba-ro" which is related to the Hebrew "kōper." Then there is the word for "tunic," "ki-tona," related to the Hebrew "ketōnet," Ugaritic "ktmt." All of these appear in the "Linear B" inscriptions.¹⁸ Achaean Greeks established a number of colonies not only in Asia Minor but also in Cyprus, and apparently also at Ai-Mina, the port city of Ugarit. During this period from 1400 to 1200 B.C. Mycenaean imports were evidently quite available around the Near Eastern area. Mycenaean IIIB pottery has been found at Alalakh, Ugarit, Byblos, Sarepta, Megiddo, Ta'annek, Shechem, Gezer, Gath, Lachish, and Tell Fara.¹⁹

Turning now to the history of Abraham, the contacts between Palestine and Egypt are now known to have gone back to at least the First Dynasty in the time of Narmer, says Albright. For the excavations of Ruth Amiran at Arad have demonstrated the existence of First Dynasty imports in this Palestinian site dating back to Early Bronze II. Byblos, the most important of the earlier seaports of Phoenicia had come under decisive Egyptian influence in the Old Kingdom Period. After a later era of dominance by the power of Ur, Byblos again came into the Egyptian orbit in the time of the Twelfth Dynasty, and specifically in the reign of Amenemhat I around 1960 B.C. At a time when relations between Palestine and Egypt were so close, there is no reason to doubt that Abra-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-33.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

ham had ready access to the prosperity of Egypt during the time of famine in the Canaanite territory. So far as the military operation recorded in Genesis 14 is concerned, the invasion of the Transjordanian region by the Mesopotamian kings is evidenced by many corroborative discoveries at archeological sites recently excavated, such as that at Bab Edh-Dhra. Excavations conducted at this location on the east bank of the Dead Sea by Paul Lapp indicated a sudden gap in occupation a little before 1900 B. C., with no population inhabiting the area from that time on.²⁰ It is significant also that the two cities of Ur and Harran seem to have been the greatest centers of trade during the 1900's B. C. and both shared the same cult of the moon god, Nanna, or Zuen. It was therefore quite logical for Abraham, once he had migrated from Ur, to settle for a time in Harran, as the Bible records.

Getting back to the invasion of Trans-Jordan by the Mesopotamian kings, Albright suggests a new identification for the "Amraphel, king of Shinar" who used to be identified with Hammurabi (although this has turned out to be chronologically untenable). He would equate him now with a king of the Babylonian district of Amudbal, which he understands to be a shortened form of Yamud-pal-adad ("May the kingdom of Adad endure"). This reading of course would involve a correction of "p" to "b," and also of "r" to "d," the "r" in the name Amraphel" ('-m-r-p-l). (It is of course true that "r" and the "d" greatly resembled each other in shape at all periods of the history of the Hebrew alphabet.) The people of Amudbal are known to have been actively engaged in caravan activities, and their state was one of the most important principalities in all of Babylonia-Elam during the Eighteenth Century B. C.

Albright says, therefore, that the campaign described in Genesis 14 has an undoubted historical foundation, however much the details may have been altered in the course of time. He says: "It stands to reason that the five kings of the Dead Sea valley appeared chiefly because their role in the episode was the primary interest of the narrator. . . . The campaign itself was presumably directed against the Egyptians. This again points to a date towards the end of the Nineteenth, or

²⁰ Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

the beginning of the Eighteenth Century B.C. It is interesting to note that Abraham's immediate retainers are called 'hani-kim,' a word which must be identified with the Egyptian 'h_nkw' used in the contemporary Execration Texts of the retainers of Palestinian chieftains, as well as with the 'hanaku' of the Taanach letters, where they are retainers of the local prince."²¹

One interesting discovery in regard to Abraham's period has to do with the use of the domesticated camel. Abraham is said in Genesis 12:16 to have had considerable wealth in camels. In the Genesis 24 account of the courtship of Rebecca, the servant of Abraham is said to have taken ten camels with him up to Padan-Aram in order to seek a wife for Isaac. Albright has always maintained that the camel was not domesticated nor particularly known in the Ancient Near East until the Thirteenth Century B.C. But Kitchen points out²² that even apart from a probable (but disputed) Eighteenth Century allusion to camels in a fodder list from Alalakh (as attested by Lambert), there is undoubtedly a reference to the domestication of camels in the Old Babylonian period, between 2000 and 1700 B.C.

Furthermore a Sumerian text from Nippur from about the same period gives clear evidence of the domestication of the camel by that time, for it alludes to camel's milk. The bones of camels have been found in the ruins of houses at Mari at levels from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-fourth centuries B.C.²³ A similar discovery has been made in various Palestinian sites from 2000 to 1200 B.C., as Roland de Vaux reports.²⁴ In Byblos, Phoenicia, there was found an incomplete camel figurine dating from the nineteenth to the eighteenth centuries B. C. In view of all of this evidence, it seems very strange that Albright still is not willing to concede the domestication of camels and their use in caravans as early as the period of Abraham. In this instance he seems to be unwilling to change his mind after once taking a contrary position in earlier years.

For many decades it has been a commonplace in liberal handbooks on Old Testament Introduction that the mention of

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

²² Kitchen, *Op. Cit.*, p. 79.

²³ Cf. A. Parrot, *Syria*, XXXII (1955), 323.

²⁴ *Revue Biblique*, LVI (1959), 9.

Philistines in any period prior to the twelfth century B. C. is an anachronism in the Pentateuch. Nevertheless, as Kitchen states²⁵ that there is now no question that there were earlier Aegean immigrants into Palestine from the island of Kaphthor; the "Kaphthorim" of Deuteronomy 2:23 undoubtedly referred to these same settlers in the time of Moses. There is no difficulty whatever in supposing that there were successive waves of immigrants from Crete, even as early as Abraham's time, and that they kept coming until the reign of Rameses III, and the naval engagement in which he repulsed them from Egyptian shores. After the defeat of these "sea peoples" they simply joined their predecessors from Crete, settling on the Philistine coastline. If Gordon's identification of Minoan Linear A as Semitic is sound, there would be no difficulty in accounting for the fact that the Philistine king of Gerar in Genesis 26 had a Semitic name or title like Abimelech.

It would be quite apparent that not only after settling on the Palestinian coastline, but even before their migration from Crete, Abimelech's fellow citizens were already somewhat acquainted with the Northwest Semitic language and culture. As T. C. Mitchell points out,²⁶ the power of the Philistines had already become so well entrenched by the time of the Exodus that it was considered inadvisable for the Israelites under Moses' leadership to enter their territory as a means of access into Canaan. This of course disposes of the argument that the Philistines did not enter into the Palestinian political picture until after their defeat by Rameses III in their naval engagement of 1199 B.C. Even the 1290 Exodus theory would demand their occupancy of the west coast at least a century previously.

We now come to a consideration of the Hyksos dynasties which figured so prominently in the Second Intermediate period of Egyptian history. An old tradition embodied in the writings of the fourth century B.C. historian Manetho apparently indicated that the migration of the family of Jacob and Joseph into Egypt took place during the Hyksos period. The rulers then occupying the throne were of Semitic background and might therefore have been more favorable to other Semitic

²⁵ Kitchen, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

²⁶ T. C. Mitchell, *New Bible Dictionary*, p. 988.

immigrants than would have been the case with a native Egyptian dynasty. This tradition, however, has been rendered quite untenable by the fact that the period of Hyksos domination has recently been shown to have lasted less than two centuries, rather than Manetho's estimate of a full five hundred years. It is therefore quite probable, if the biblical chronology is correct, that Joseph's career in Egypt was served out under a native Egyptian ruler of the Twelfth Dynasty.

The Hyksos began to make their influence felt sometime in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dynasties and apparently furnished the rulers who governed Egypt during the Fifteenth Dynasty. No new discoveries have been published during the last ten years to upset this assumption, but there has been a good deal of controversy about the location of the Hyksos capital, Avaris. In 1966 an important discussion of this question appeared in a publication by John Van Seters.²⁷ For many years it had been believed that this capital (which was later rebuilt or enlarged as Pi-Ramesses or Per-Ramessu) was to be found at Tanis, located on the Tanitic branch of the Nile, right near the shore of Lake Menzaleh on the north coast. Many monuments from the period of Ramesses the Great and even from Hyksos times have been found at Tanis, and yet none of them has actually been found *in situ*; rather these statues and stelae were all apparently brought there during the Twenty-First Dynasty, when for some reason it was decided to move the capital to that location.

There is, however, no stratum yet found that goes back to a period before the Twenty-First Dynasty at the site of Tanis itself. Hence it is very difficult to believe that this was the true location of the Hyksos capital during the Second Intermediate Period, even though this view is still upheld by P. Montet ever since 1930.²⁸ But even the "Four Hundred Year Stela" first discovered at Tanis by Mariette in 1863 now seems to have been brought there from some other location. This noteworthy inscription speaks of some past event which is dated to the "four hundredth year of Seth," as king of Upper and Lower Egypt. This would indicate that the city of Avaris was founded by the Hyksos four hundred years before the time

²⁷ John Van Seters, *The Hyksos, a New Investigation*.

²⁸ Cf. P. Montet, *Les Enigmes de Tanis*, Paris, 1952.

of Haremhab. According to Sethe's reckoning this would make 1725 the date for the founding of this city by the Hyksos. The stela itself was set up at the order of Ramesses II, and was obviously intended to glorify his ancestors, who had a blood relationship with the Hyksos royal line. Montet conjectured that the names "Sethpehti" and "Nubty" which appeared in some of the cartouches in the text of this stela pointed to the kings who set up an independent rule in Avaris under the patronage of the cult of Seth. Van Seters feels that it is more likely that the names in these cartouches represent the god Seth himself, and thus the stela was intended to commemorate both the establishment of his cult in Avaris and his commencement as a patron of the monarchy of Egypt.²⁹

Van Seters then suggests that a king named Nehesy, whose obelisk was discovered at Tanis with a number of similar obelisks from the Ramesside period, may have been the one who commenced this cult at Avaris at the beginning. He seems to have come sometime after the Egyptian kings of the Thirteenth Dynasty had passed away. On this obelisk he refers to himself as "the oldest royal son, Nehesy, beloved of Seth, lord of R-'ht.' In another fragment of this inscription he speaks of himself as "beloved of Hrsf" (or Arsaphes) a god who was worshipped at Heracleopolis Parva, the capital of the Fourteenth Nome. There well may have been some political advantage in this exalting of Seth to a place of prominence, inasmuch as the northeast delta was a region quite well populated with Asiatics from Syria and Palestine by this time, and Seth was of course the Egyptian equivalent of their god, Baal. It is significant that at this same period the tomb of Abishemu II of Byblos uses the same epithet as Nehesy, namely, "beloved of Hrsf."

Van Seters finds the more probable location of the original Avaris or Pi-Ramesses to be Qantir, located some thirty miles south of Tanis on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, right next to the land of Goshen. Excavations there have come up with evidence of continuous settlement from the time of Senwosret III of the Twelfth Dynasty, with documentation also from the Thirteenth Dynasty, Pharaoh Aamu-sahornedjheriotef (a Semite) and also king Ay seem to have belonged to this same

²⁹ Van Seters, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

dynasty. A scarf pin has been found there inscribed with the name of the Hyksos Pharaoh Khyan, bearing the epithet Hk', H',swt (presumably the H',swt, Egyptian spelling of "Hyksos"). A stela of the Hyksos prince Tany has also been found there, along with other remains representing later periods until the reign of Ramesses II, who erected a beautiful palace at Qantir.

It is important to observe that all of these architectural elements are *in situ*, rather than having been brought there from somewhere else at some later time. Van Seters remarks "If a choice between the two sites must be made from the archaeological data alone, then Qantir is certainly preferable. Everything found at Tanis from the Ramesside Period and earlier can easily be explained as having come from Qantir at the start of the Twenty-First Dynasty. However, there is no way of explaining how the data from Qantir came there, except to say that it was the capital, Pi-Ramesses, in the Ramesside period."³⁰ The area adjacent to Tanis, especially to the south, is now mostly desolate waste with just a few trees. It is often flooded from the sea, and occupied by sandy salt flats such as could hardly have supported any large-scale agriculture. But in the Papyrus Anastasi III, the scribe Pibesa refers to the area around Pi-Ramesses as a marshalling place for Merneptah's cavalry, and possessed of good harbors for ships, and strategically located between Palestine and Egypt.

Tanis, however, has no direct land connection with the frontier in the direction of Palestine. Hence Tanis would have been a poor place from which to send troops into Asia. Furthermore, no palace has yet been found at Tanis, even though Ramesside palaces have been discovered at Qantir which anciently were described as possessing halls of lapis lazuli and turquoise. Pi-Ramesses was associated with Shihor, literally "Pool of Horus," which was apparently connected with the branch river flowing through the Fourteenth Nome. Montet tries to show that Tanis was in the Sethroite nome, as Manetho states that it was, and that Shihor was the same as Lake Menzaleh on which Tanis is located. Yet even Alan Gardiner concedes that Shihor was a part of the Nile River

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.

system and associated with the Fourteenth Nome, extending to the vicinity of the fortress of Sile. Incidentally Lake Menzaleh did not extend as far as Sile in ancient times, for the Pelusiac River went all the way to the Pelusiac mouth in the B.C. period.

In the Golenischeff Glossary of the Twenty-First Dynasty, the city of Tanis is mentioned with several other city names listed in between before Pi-Ramesses is referred to. This is a factor which even Gardiner (who favored identifying Tanis with Avaris) was at a loss to explain. Furthermore, as has already been suggested, Goshen was located near the royal capital in the time of Joseph and in the time of Moses. Hence Avaris or Pi-Ramesses must have been on the border of Goshen rather than as far north as the city of Tanis. Shihor seems to have been a lake region branching out from the Pelusiac branch of the Nile and extending south to Sile. This theory fits all the requirements of the ancient authorities in regard to the eastern branch of the Nile and the location of the Fourteenth Nome.³¹ The name "Avaris," incidentally, comes from the Egyptian "Hwt W'rt," which apparently meant "headquarters of the department"—a very appropriate name for a capital intended to command the military route from Egypt to Palestine.

Another debated point in connection with the Hyksos is the manner of their conquest of Egypt. According to the traditional account recorded by Manetho, as quoted in the works of Josephus, the Hyksos came in like a devastating flood under the leadership of a king named Salitis. Most modern authorities consider the account by Manetho to be legendary and embellished, but there are some like H. W. Helick,³² who feel that Manetho is likely to have preserved a reliable account and that he is speaking of the violent inauguration of the Fifteenth Dynasty. In any event, there were doubtless some Semitic kings on the throne of Egypt as early as the Thirteenth Dynasty. But Van Seters points out that this theory of sudden and overwhelming invasion is scarcely to be reconciled with the indications of the "Admonitions of Ipuwer," which is now dated Dynasty. In any event, there were doubtless some Semitic kings on the throne of Egypt as early as the Thirteenth Dynasty. But

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³² H. W. Helick, *Die Beziehungen Aegyptens zu Vorderasien.*

Van Seters points out that this theory of sudden and overwhelming invasion is scarcely to be reconciled with the indications of the "Admonitions of Ipuwer," which is now dated by Van Seters as belonging to the Second Intermediate Period (rather than the First Intermediate Period as was formerly believed). The cumulative evidence for this dating is quite convincing: for example, the Nubians are referred to in "Ipuwer" as "nhsyu," foreign bowmen are referred to as "pdyu," and Libyans as "Tmhw." These three terms were current in the Middle Kingdom Period rather than during the First Intermediate. Furthermore, the medjay (md'yw) are spoken of as allies of the Egyptians (undoubtedly mercenaries in her armed forces), as would hardly have been the case prior to the Middle Kingdom. The term "h,'styw in Ipuwer clearly means "Asiatics" in particular, a usage foreign to the First Intermediate Period. Moreover, the "Great Prison" (Egyptian "hnrt wrt") is often referred to in the "Admonitions," but does not elsewhere appear in Egyptian literature before the Middle Kingdom Period. Furthermore the royal capital is spoken of as the "hnw," or "residence," a term which is not so used until the Twelfth Dynasty.

These indications add up to the conclusion that the "Admonitions of Ipuwer" describe conditions that prevailed during the Second Intermediate Period, between Dynasty XIII and XVII. The Egyptian seer implies that Semitic immigrants have already settled in the delta region and are available to act as a fifth column for the coming takeover by a Hyksos dynasty. In like manner the Amorites seem to have taken over the government of Ur at the conclusion of the Third Dynasty, after they had first infiltrated the area as immigrants. Thus the greatest threat to Egypt from the standpoint of Ipuwer comes from foreign mercenaries, Asiatics who seized control. Rather than a concerted invasion, then, there was a gradual takeover by these Asiatic troops, acting in concert with their Egyptian confederates. Doubtless, the Fifteenth Dynasty, says Van Seters, was instituted by Hyksos leaders who threw off all Egyptian overlordship and enlarged their control over all of northern Egypt and a good distance up the Nile as well. There were undoubtedly some Hyksos rulers in lower Egypt even prior to the Fifteenth Dynasty, and the beginning

of this Hyksos period would probably be 1725 B.C., if we may trust the indications of the "400 Year Stela" discovered at Tanis.

During the Fifteenth Dynasty itself the two most powerful rulers were Apophis and Khyan; the name of the last ruler of this dynasty is given in the Turin Canon as Khamudy. Somewhere in between came the rulers named Sheshy and Ja'qob-har and possibly also M',-ib-r' (which however may be only a premen of Sheshy). The extent of the Hyksos domains is indicated by the Kamose Stela, which records the capture of three hundred cedar ships from the Hyksos containing the tributes of Retjenu intended for King Apophis, who is there called "chief of the Retjenu." This clearly implies his overlordship of Palestine and Syria, as well as Lower Egypt. Incidentally, it should be mentioned that Albright³³ feels that the readings "Jacob-el" and "Ya'qub-har" are both mistaken in these inscriptions, but rather the first name should be read as Ya'qub-'ali, bearing in mind that "l" cannot be distinguished from "r" in the Egyptian mode of writing. The "h" of "har" was inserted by the Egyptians in order to avert the repetition of an 'ayin in the same name. The Egyptian 'ayin, says Albright, was pronounced more softly than the Semitic one.

We may then consider it quite certain that the Hyksos represented an interlude in Egyptian history during the Israelite sojourn in Egypt, and that they came into power sometime after the dynasty in which Joseph rose to prominence. The Pharaoh under whom Joseph served, according to Genesis 46:34, was evidently a native Egyptian who shared the Egyptian aversion to shepherds. It is also quite clear that the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph was head of a fighting force far less numerous than the native Egyptian population could muster, for he expressed in Exodus 1:9 an apprehension that the Israelites (whose numbers were approaching somewhat over two million) were becoming more numerous than his own population. This statement could never have been said of the whole Egyptian race, but it might well have been said by the leader of the Hyksos aliens, whose troops may well have been inferior in numbers to the Israelites. The reason that the Hebrews

33 Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

were not expelled from Egypt by the native founders of the eighteenth dynasty along with the hated Hyksos must have been that the Egyptians recognized that the sympathies of the Israelites during the Hyksos domination had been with the native Egyptians rather than with the invading Hyksos. However, it was not long after the expulsion of the Hyksos that a general antiforeign feeling developed against the inoffensive Hebrews. Later representatives of the Eighteenth Dynasty such as Amenhotep I made determined efforts to curb the population increase of the Semitic Israelites and ordered them back to the task labor and slavery which they had endured under the Hyksos.

REPRINT AND MICROFILM SERVICES FOR SUBSCRIBERS

Back numbers of *Bibliotheca Sacra* may be ordered from the subscription office of *Bibliotheca Sacra* in Dallas. Old volumes no longer in print may be secured at \$30.00 per year by addressing inquiries to Johnson Reprint Corporation, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003.

Through an agreement with University Microfilms, *Bibliotheca Sacra* is available to libraries and other subscribers in microfilm form beginning with the January-March, 1953, Number (Volume 110, Number 437). Subscribers may also obtain separate xeroxed articles and portions less than complete volumes at the rate of \$2.00 for one copy of a complete article, including postage, with additional copies costing 50¢ each. Full remittance must accompany order. Inquiries should be directed to University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.