

# *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*

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To  
V.B.G. & T.S.F.

[p.vii]

## CONTENTS

Preface	ix
Abbreviations	xi

### PART ONE

#### *Problems and Solutions*

1	ANCIENT ORIENT AND OLD TESTAMENT: THE BACKGROUND	15
	I An Age of Change - II The Basis of the Main Problems - III Some Basic Principles of Study	
2	EARLY HEBREW CHRONOLOGY	35
	I Before Abraham - II The Date of the Patriarchal Age	
3	LATER HEBREW CHRONOLOGY	57
	I The Date of the Exodus and Israelite Invasion of Canaan - II The Monarchy and Later	
4	SOME HISTORICAL PROBLEMS	79
	I Alleged Anachronisms - II False Identifications	
5	HEBREW CONTACTS WITH NEAR EASTERN RELIGIONS	87
	I Introduction: Some General Principles - II Creation and Flood Stories - III The Sinai Covenant - IV Enthronement Festivals and Divine Kingship - V Judaeon and Egyptian Kingship	
6	THE QUESTION OF LITERARY CRITICISM	112
	I Documentary Hypotheses - II Form Criticism - III Oral Tradition	

[p.vii]

7	PRINCIPLES OF LINGUISTIC STUDY	139
	I The Need for Sound Method - II The Role of Emendation - III Lexical Criteria and the Dating of Old Testament Literature	
8	FURTHER ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL AND ORIENTAL STUDIES	147
	I Ancient Law in the Biblical World - II The Topography of Bible Lands	

### PART TWO

#### *Illumination and Illustration*

9	NEAR EASTERN LIGHT ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT	153
	I Ancient Legal Custom and the Patriarchs - II The Period of Moses - III Examples from Later Hebrew History - IV Light on Old Testament Hebrew from Linguistic Studies - V The Old Testament Illustrated - VI The Issue of Confirmation	

10	CONCLUSION	171
	INDEXES	
	Index of Biblical References	175
	Index of Subjects	179

[p.ix]

## PREFACE

The following pages are intended to give some idea of the kind of contribution that Ancient Near Eastern studies can make to the study of the Old Testament, and towards a critical reassessment of problems and methods in the Old Testament field. By way of illustrating these themes, I have deliberately included a wide variety of topics dealing with essentials or salient points rather than attempting to be exhaustive. A full treatment of this width of subjects would call for a dozen or so large tomes, not just one modest book.

Because this book is rooted in primary source-material and is not tied to conventional viewpoints, it has been essential to include running references throughout. Although in no way exhaustive, the notes provide the necessary documentation for facts adduced and views mentioned, and document the paradigmatic examples of principles and points raised in the text. Not every reader may need all the details, but these references will provide the serious student with the indispensable means for verification and for pursuing any special interest.

This book originated in two lectures delivered at the International Student Conferences held under the auspices of the Vereinigte Bibelgruppen von Schweiz at Casa Moscia in September 1962. A German translation of the English original was published at the end of 1965. The present book is a completely revised and up-dated version of the original English text, completed in late summer 1965, only limited revision being possible since then. Expansion of text and notes has been kept down to a minimum; Part Two could very easily have been expanded to match Part One, or even to the size of a separate work.

In some respects, this work has taken on elements of a *Programmschrift*, though not by original intention. It is an invitation to view afresh the Old Testament writings in their

[p.x]

proper Ancient Near Eastern context; only diehards, imprisoned within the inhibitions of fixed ideas and inflexibly obsolete methods, need fear its contents. Today, more than ever before, the Ancient Near East offers rich resources for study of the Old Testament in fresh perspectives.

It is a particular pleasure to express my indebtedness to Mr. A. R. Millard for various references and, with Mrs. Millard, for helpful stylistic criticisms; likewise to Mr. T. C. Mitchell for comments on the original English manuscript; and not least to the publishers for kindly undertaking to produce the book. However, any failings noted should not be charged to these good friends, and the responsibility for views expressed remains mine.

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