JOURNAL OF

THE TRANSACTIONS

OF

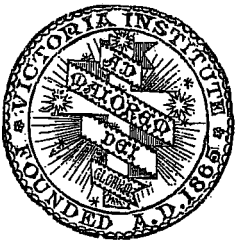
The Victoria Institute

OR

Philosophical Society of Great Britain

VOL. LXXXII

1950



LONDON:

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THE INSTITUTE, 12, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1

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886TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL, NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 16TH JANUARY, 1950.

J. McINTYRE, ESQ., B.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The subject for the Schofield Prize Essay for 1951 was announced, *viz.*, "The Place of Miracle in Modern Thought and Knowledge."

The following elections were announced:—J. W. Purdue, Esq., Fellow; F. F. Bruce, Esq., M.A., Fellow (on transfer from Member); W. E. Filmer, Esq., B.A., Fellow (on transfer from Member); J. R. Campion, Esq., A.P.A., N.Z., Member; Donald Brookes, Esq., Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called on D. J. Wiseman, Esq., O.B.E., B.A., to read his paper entitled "Some Recent Trends in Biblical Archæology."

SOME RECENT TRENDS IN BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

BY D. J. WISEMAN, O.B.E., B.A.

SYNOPSIS

This paper presents some of the recent information, obtained from documents recovered from sites in Syria and N. Iraq, which bears on the Patriarchal Age. Evidence is given for a lower dating for Ḫammurabi of Babylon and the consequent need for setting the early Genesis narratives in their new (early 2nd millennium) background on the basis of the texts from Nuzi, Mari and from unpublished texts from Atšāna. A new text from the latter site is presented to show the true nature of the Ḫabiru settlers in Canaan in the 16th century, and from Mari to show how these same people were active even earlier throughout the area. A recently published text is examined to show an instance of the way recent researches have corroborated some historical statements in the O.T. referring to Jehoiachin.

Throughout the paper references are made to the most recent developments which add to our knowledge of the races, laws, customs and language of Biblical times. The need for a synthesis of the mass of material slowly becoming available in this field is emphasised, and some suggested answers are given to problems raised by recent discoveries (e.g., The Hurrians and the O.T.).

IT is the aim of this Paper to supplement the archaeological information given by our President in 1941 and by my father in 1943. Excluding the recently discovered "Dead Sea" scrolls, which are the subject of a separate Paper during this session, an attempt is made to survey the outstanding Near Eastern archaeological finds made in recent years, and to evaluate

some of the interpretations which are currently being put forward concerning these discoveries.

From 1936 until last year the archaeological expeditions from Western countries have concentrated their main efforts upon excavations in Syria and N.W. Mesopotamia. Until the outbreak of war continuous excavations were carried out at Tell Ḥariri (Mari), Ras-es-Shamra (Ugarit) and Tell Aṭšāna (Alalaḫ). The latter site near Aleppo has also been excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley annually from 1946 until this last October. During the lull in active excavations necessitated by the war scholars have been primarily engaged in evaluating the numerous written documents—the cuneiform tablets—which each of these sites has yielded. Publication of the archives from Nuzi (S.W. of Kirkuk) found from 1925 onwards, and a re-examination of the Tell El-Amarna letters, the Boghazkoi tablets and of tablets found in Palestine have resulted in a great advance in our knowledge of the history of these areas and especially of Syria. This has been enhanced by the remarkable coincidence of the written evidence from all these sites, which in the main falls within the second millennium B.C. As will be seen during a more detailed analysis of some of this evidence it concentrates our attention largely upon two periods, the First Dynasty of Babylon (now dated *c.* 1830–1550 B.C.) and what we may call the Pre-Amarna Age, i.e., the 14th–15th centuries B.C. It will be observed that this information covers a period which is of great importance to Bible Students and previously known only from the Amarna texts and a few isolated references in so far as the extra-Biblical history of Palestine and Syria are concerned.

One of the first effects of the decipherment of this new material, which comprises more than 30,000 tablets, has been a substantial lowering of the date for the First Dynasty of Babylon and for the well-known king Ḫammurabi. From the 5,000 letters from the royal archives of Zimri-lim, who was king of Mari until it was captured and destroyed by Ḫammurabi of Babylon in his 32nd year, there is ample evidence for the contiguity with Šamši-Adad I of Assyria. From other records we know that this king, who reigned 33 years, was still alive in Ḫammurabi's tenth year and his son and viceroy Yasmaḫ-Adad appears in the Mari letters. In 1942 Poebel began publishing the Assyrian King-list found at Khorsabad in 1932–3 and established Šamši-Adad I as 1726–1694 B.C. (with a limited margin of error due to a break in the text covering two short and little-known reigns).

By cross reference from stratigraphic, ceramic and other evidence (including the Ammi-zaduqa Venus astronomical calculations) Sidney Smith[1] arrived at 1792–1750 B.C. as the date for Ḫammurabi. Later, in 1942, Albright (and Cornelius independently) dated him 1728–1686 B.C. From the Mari and Egyptian references Albright has found a useful check on this dating from a synchronous mention of a Yantin-ḫamu of Byblos *c.* 1730 B.C. This new dating for the 1st Dynasty of Babylon (*c.* 1830–1550 B.C.) accords well with the general history, since it places the Hyksos expansion in the later part of the 17th and the Hittite and Kassite periods in the 16th century and thus eliminates the gap between the Amorite First Dynasty at Babylon and the Kassite supremacy which, despite a considerable number of documents from the main cities throughout these centuries, had never been explained. It was indeed this unexplained "gap" in the written and cultural life of Babylon that had long caused uncertainty over the hitherto generally accepted date for the renowned Ḫammurabi period (i.e. 2123–2081 B.C.).

I have gone into this new dating in some detail, since most have equated Abraham with Ḫammurabi at this early dating. They have largely relied upon a supposed identification of Ḫammurabi with Amraphel of Genesis xiv. Philologically this has always been doubtful, and even if possible there would be uncertainty as to which of the three Ḫammurabis known from the Mari, Alalaḫ and Ugarit texts, was in question. The name of Chedorlaomer does not appear on the British Museum Spartoli tablet as was at first thought, and nothing is known at present of activity by the other kings of the confederation in the Jordan area. This has led to a re-examination of the whole subject. Glueck's survey of the Jordan valley (which still needs detailed support by systematic excavation) has shown that it is unlikely that the places mentioned in the Genesis narrative were inhabited after 1800 B.C. Coupled with background evidence from Nuzi and suggested equations of the names of Tidal with the Hittite Tudhaliaš I and Arioch with the Hurrian named Ariwuku,[2] son of Zimri-Lim of Mari, there is a growing tendency to place Abraham himself at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1500 B.C.). Another point in favour of this that it would give support to a long held theory which has connected the

[1] *Alalaḫ and Chronology* (1940), by Sidney Smith.
[2] *King Ḫammurabi in the Setting of his Time.* F. Böhl.

migration of Terah with a movement westwards at the end of the third dynasty of Ur. The worship of the moon-god Sin at Ur, at Mari, on the route to another centre Haran, and among the Hurrian population of Alalaḫ in the 18th century (the ideographic writing for the moon-god Kusuḫ is the same as for Sin and is an obvious borrowing from the Sumerian) goes to strengthen this idea.

A stronger argument for this dating of the Patriarchal age might be found in the many parallels to Patriarchal customs which have been observed in the Nuzi texts. It must, however, be emphasised that no direct reference to any Biblical person has been proved in non-Biblical texts of this period, though the growing list of proper names gives adequate corroboration for the types and forms of Biblical names in this period. The Nuzi texts give us a good idea of Hurrian daily life at about 1500 B.C. From the Aṭšāna tablets it is clear that these people (probably the Horites of the O.T.) had penetrated N. Syria by the 18th century and were well established there by 1500 B.C. Hurrian names in the Amarna tablets and also in the Shechem and Taanach tablets show that the Biblical account of the "Horite" element in the land is correct. For this reason it is a fair comparison to correlate the Hurrian customs of Nuzi with Genesis xii–xxxvi. It was customary for childless folk at Nuzi to adopt a son both to serve them during life and provide for them at death. This would be the case with Abraham's first heir Eliezer (Gen. xv, 2–3). If there was a child born after the adoption the adoptee yielded his rights to the real heir. This is the legal meaning of Genesis xv, 4. When Sarah provided Abraham with a substitute slave, Hagar, to provide him with children she would seem to be conforming to the practice of the time. One Nuzi contract details how "if Gilimninu (the bride) will not bear children, Gilimninu shall take a woman of Lulluland (a slave) as a wife for Shennima (the bridegroom) . . . Gilimninu shall not send the handmaid's offspring away". Abraham may have felt that in driving away Hagar he was breaking the contemporary law until God gave him a special assurance to do so (Gen. xxi, 12). Among the Nuzi contracts are several dealing with inheritance. In one a certain "Kurpaza has taken three sheep to Tupkitilla in exchange for his inheritance share" (cf. Esau and Jacob, Gen. xxv, 31–34) If the *teraphim* of Gen. xxxi, 19, 30–35 are "household-gods" then there is a remarkable parallel with a contract which

indicates that the possession of the household gods constituted the right to the chief inheritance and honour in the family. It was a common Hurrian practice for a man to become a slave on the condition that his owner provided him with a wife. So too Jacob worked for his brides among the Aramaean tribe of Laban. The important place in law of an oral blessing such as those given by Isaac and Jacob is confirmed by one tablet at least, where an oral blessing is upheld in a Nuzi lawcourt. Among other practices reflected in this group of tablets are a form of levirate marriage comparable to the Hebrew custom, the right of a daughter to inherit property where there is no male issue, and a form of sale-adoption such as may be seen in Exodus xxi, 7–11. It must, however, be continually kept in mind that the Old Testament and these documents imply a very mixed population throughout Syria and Palestine at this period. In addition to the Horites (Hurrians) there were the Hittites, Canaanites and Aramaeans, not to mention the Biblical Kenites, Perizzites and other groups of which we still await some detailed evidence from archaeological research. This very mixed population, which is revealed by excavation at the sites we are discussing, is an additional pointer to the probable correlation of the pre-Israelite occupation of Canaan with these sources. Until more is known from Palestinian excavation itself it would be unwise to attempt to make too firm a definition of the influence of any one of these races upon Biblical narratives. Attempts are being made at present to see a Hurrian influence in even the earliest parts of Genesis, and to claim for this group that they carried the earlier Babylonian accounts of Creation and the Flood to the Hebrews. Not only do we still know comparatively little about the Hurrian language, but even their exact relationship with other peoples, and especially the Subartu Hittites, Mitanni and Hanigalbat peoples in Syria, known from contemporary records, is by no means clear. Moreover A. Heidel in his detailed comparisons of the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts of these two events has concluded, "We still do not know how the Biblical and Babylonian narratives of the Deluge are related historically. The available evidence proves nothing beyond the point that there is a genetic relationship between the Genesis and Babylonian versions. The skeleton is the same in both cases, but the flesh and blood and, above all, the animating spirit are different. It is here that we meet the most far reaching divergences between the Hebrew and Mesopotamian stories".

(*The Gilgamesh Epic and O.T. Parallels* (1945), p. 268.[1]) We can however confidently expect help from current Hurrian studies in seeking to explain personal names in that part of the Old Testament contemporary with their power in Syria. I would cite Anah, Aholibamah, Alian, Ajah, Dishon and Ezer in Genesis xxxvi, 'Anath and Shamgar (Judges iii, 31), To'i (2 Samuel viii, 9f.), 'Age' (2 Samuel xxiii, 11), Eli-ḫipa (2 Samuel xxiii, 32) which can be both paralleled and explained from existing Hurrian personal names as examples. The time may not be far off when chapters of the Pentateuch can be more exactly equated with their historical background through this means.

The Ras Shamra tablets, as is now well known, are of considerable importance for the study of the Old Testament, as they give a clear picture of the type of Canaanite religion which may have prevailed further south in the period of the Judges. It should however be noted that there is still some difference of opinion in the interpretation of these texts in detail, and that there is no support for the view that the names of Terah, the Palestinian Negeb and other Biblical persons and places occur in the texts. These tablets are proving very useful for the historical study of the Hebrew language. From this source too we may then expect further help in the present efforts to relate the Biblical narratives to our new appreciation of the Near Eastern History in the second Millennium.

The discoveries at Aṭšāna are, however, not well known. For a period after 1750 B.C. this city was under the control of Ḫammurabi and Iarimlim, kings of Iamhad with their capital at Aleppo. Later the Hittites controlled the area, which formed part of a small kingdom of Mukish. From this period comes an inscribed statue of a king Idrimi whom I would date shortly after 1450 B.C. Part of the historical account of his reign I translate:—"There was a revolt in the city of Aleppo, my inheritance, so that we fled to the city of Emar where my mother's relatives were, and dwelt in that city. My brothers who were older than me stayed with me. But since none of them thought on the things that he once pondered I said 'Whoever has an inheritance, let him hold it fast, and whoever has not let him join the men of Emar.' I left with my horse, chariot and attendant and, crossing the desert, went in among the Sutu warriors. I passed the night with them in my covered chariot

[1] Cf. also *The Babylonian Genesis*. A. Heidel. Chicago, 1942.

and on the next day departed and went to the land of Canaan. In Canaan I stayed in Ammia. But in Ammia there were men of Aleppo, the lands of Mukish(he) and Ni', and warriors of the land of Ama'u dwelling. They saw me, and behold, I was the son of their lord so they banded against me. Accordingly I led all my companions away and for seven years I dwelt among the 'Apiru warriors. I explained (lit. made clear (the omens of)) the birds, I examined (the intestines of) lambs (for omen purposes). . . ." The long inscription goes on to tell how he later made a sea-borne invasion of Mukishhe, which we must therefore place on the Syrian coast North of Ugarit, and having made a treaty with Paratarna, overlord of the area, became king in Alalaḫ. After detailing an expedition against the Hittites who appeared to dominate the coastal area to the North-west of his realm, Idrimi recounts how he ordered his internal affairs and paid attention to what was probably a minority group in his realm. " The Sutu whose dwellings were within my territory I caused to abide in content, those who had no settled abode I caused to abide in one." From this and other Aṭšāna references it is clear that at this time the Ḫabiru[1] were a settled community in Canaan with a distinct tribal area, the Sutu being similar folk but still in a semi-bedouin state. From this it appears too that nearly fifty years before the Israelites entered Canaan a group of Ḫabiru were occupying a zone approximately that later taken by Asher (Joshua xix, 24–31) and Zebulun (Genesis xlix, 13, etc.). We can see how Syria and N. Palestine at this time consisted of city areas between which various groups of people from the eastern desert entered to find a semi-permanent dwelling-place or pasturage. This evidence forbids the identification of the Ḫabiru, as has been done recently, with either a class of slave, prisoner of war or even with a social group, although of course individuals might be found among any group or in any country at, and before, this time. The location of Ammia can be ascertained from references to it in the Amarna letters, and Emar was situated on the desert fringe in N.E. Syria in the area bounded by the Orontes Lebanon and Damascus known as Amurru, the home of the Amorites at this time. It is interesting to note that Idrimi's move southward avoiding the inhabited localities shows the possibility of such a move to areas even further south by a coalition like that recorded

[1] Ḫabiru, Ḫapiru and 'Apiru are alternative readings of the same name.

in Genesis xiv. The location of Amurru is of interest to Bible students as it incorporates the area of Aram to which references are made in early cuneiform literature. At varying times the Assyrian kings waged war against the nomad folk in this zone and speak of their contact with Aramaean tribes there. Tiglath Pileser I (*c.* 1100 B.C.) names one of these tribes as Aḫlamê, and later Sargon II (722–705 B.C.) differentiates between fifty Aramaean tribes. From the Semitic names of these tribes Moritz has considered that they must be Arabs. The Sutu mentioned in the above inscription are referred to as nomads as early as the First Dynasty of Egypt and as Sutiu by the Akkadians in 2700 B.C. The increasing knowledge of tribal activity in this desert area gives us fresh insight into the "wandering Aramaean" who was the father of the Hebrew race (Deut. xxvi, 5). We know from Genesis xix, 30–38 that Moab and Ammon were also an Aramaean people by descent from Lot. Again Glueck's researches indicate that the Hebrew Aramaeans must have moved into Palestine before the desert border area ceased to be inhabited for some centuries after 1800 B.C. When combined, all these lines of evidence would indicate that incursions of tribes from the desert to take up residence in Palestine were as common in the Patriarchal and early Israelite times as they have been until more recently.

Similar evidence is found by examining the tablets from the Amorite stronghold at Mari across the desert in the Middle Euphrates area. From the correspondence found there we find that the interests of these people were directed westwards towards Syria. These tablets are approximately contemporary with the First Dynasty of Babylon and with the earlier levels at Aṭšāna (which was however under Hurrian influence). Again we find the Mari people contending endlessly with the desert folk. Mashum writes to the King of Mari that Iapaḫ-Adad has occupied the city of Zallul (on the Euphrates bank) with a force of 2,000 Ḫabiru, thus showing that like their fellows in the west the Ḫabiru were wont to come in from the pastural areas and settle into towns. Frequent allusion is also made in these letters to the Benjaminites or *marē iamini*. These cannot be the tribe mentioned in the Old Testament for the texts are dated early in the second millennium. This tribe operated under a dawidûm, or chief (cf. Hebrew dawid) and are mentioned with another tribe the *mare šim'al*, "sons of the left (north)", and the Ḫabiru. It has been pointed out that the Biblical Benjaminites, "the

sons of the right (south)" were the southern branch of the descendants of Rachel.

One illustration from a new Mari text must suffice us here to show the unusually frank nature of this literature, and to illustrate something of the religious background also revealed by these texts. Professor Albright in *From Stone Age to Christianity* (1940) considers the language of the Mari texts "virtually identical" with that spoken by the Hebrew patriarchs, who would be surrounded by a culture which is "a mixture of Hurrian and Amorite elements on a Sumero-Accadian foundation" (pp. 112, 180). This Mari text concerns a revelation given by the Amorite god Dagan at his temple at Terqa near Mari, reported in a letter from Itur-Asdu to king Zimrilim:—"On the same day that I sent this tablet to my lord, Malik-Dagan, an inhabitant of Sakka, arrived here and spoke to me as follows: 'In a dream which I had I proposed to come to Mari. At Terqa, which I had just entered, I went into the temple of Dagan and bowed before him. While I prostrated myself Dagan spoke saying "Is it well with the troops of Zimrilim who have gone against the sheiks of the Benjaminites?" I answered "The reports are not good". Just before going out he said to me, "Why do the messengers of Zimrilim not come to me regularly to place a full report of his doings before me? If he had done so I would have delivered the sheiks of the Benjaminites into the hands of Zimrilim. Now, go, I send you to address Zimrilim in the following terms: 'Send me your messengers and tell me of your affairs in detail, then I will lead the sheiks of the Benjaminites captive (lit. with the fisherman's harpoon), and set them (as servants) before thee.'" This is what the man saw in his dream and thus he has told me' . . . ."

In addition to such texts of a political and religious character many texts of an economic nature from Mari still await publication. When this has been done we shall be able to make a comparison with recently issued economic texts from the Third Dynasty of Ur and the published business documents of the Hammurabi period. Then at last an economic history of the ancient Near East in patriarchal times can be written. It is enough here to emphasise by the foregoing examples the tremendous strides made in the last five years in our knowledge of the background to the Patriarchal narratives of Genesis. This is one of the main contributions that archaeology can make towards our understanding of the Scriptures.

A number of other recent developments in our knowledge can now be mentioned, although it is as yet too early to be able to assess the full part that they may play in Bible study. Discoveries of two new codes of law from Babylonia put the famous Ḫammurabi Code in a new perspective. In 1947 F. R. Steele published new fragments of a Code of Laws which prove beyond doubt that the credit for this development in the history of civilisation belongs not to Ḫammurabi but possibly to his predecessor by more than a century, Lipit-Ishtar of Isin. Ḫammurabi apparently remodelled or borrowed from this earlier Sumerian law-book when he compiled his new code as an aid to the administration of his expanding territory with its mixture of Sumerian and Semitic peoples. In the same year an older code of laws drawn up by Bilalama, king of Eshnunna, *c.* 1920 B.C., was found during an Iraq Government excavation at Tell Harmal. Since a number of the provisions in each of these three groups of laws from Babylonia cover the same field as the Old Testament legislation, some significant comparisons may be made. It is interesting that the law concerning the goring ox (Exodus xxii. 28f.) in each of these codes is in almost identical wording.

Another encouraging feature of recent discoveries has been the light thrown upon the written language and geography of Palestine over a considerable period of time. Excavations down to tablet-bearing strata in Palestine have been few, and few palaces or well-to-do houses of the Late Bronze Age have been excavated. Inscribed material from Tell el-Hesi, Gezer, Megiddo, Jericho and Shechem have been added over the course of years to the Taanach tablets found in the only well-preserved Canaanite palace so far uncovered. It is evident that clay tablets were commonly used for writing in Palestine as in Syria, in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries. A recently published tablet in which a teacher writes to a man in Shechem about 1400 B.C. adds to the names of the period known from the Amarna tablets,[1] and from earlier Egyptian execration texts, some at least a century before the Exodus, which are paralleled in the Hurrian names at Aṭšāna at about the same period. In 1947 the discovery of the longest extant Phoenician inscription was made near Karatepe in Cilicia. Some long royal inscriptions of Azitawadd who ruled a territory in the plain of Adana were

[1] *Melanges Syriens offerts à M. R. Dussaud*, ii. (1939), pp. 923–935.

written in Phoenician and Hittite hieroglyphs. These inscriptions will therefore form the equivalent of the Rosetta stone or Behistun inscription, since by providing a long bilingual text they are already enabling scholars to read the Hittite hieroglyphic texts, and thus eventually will produce more information to aid in the compilation of the history of Syria and Asia Minor and of the dialects spoken there. But the Phoenician text helps us in another direction. Variously dated by scholars in the ninth (C. H. Gordon) or eighth century (Marcus and Gelb) the implication is that the Phoenician language was used for Cilician literature until displaced by Aramaic as witnessed by the *Bar rkb* text of the early eighth century. There are other recensions of the main Azitawadd text so that Gordon is right in claiming that "the time is ripe for a comparative study of the literature from Canaan. The Old Testament, Ugaritic tablets and the N.W. Semitic inscriptions illuminate one another."

Lest it be thought that archaeology has only contributed to our knowledge of the background of the Bible, one instance is cited to show how the Bible narrative is directly substantiated at one point by recently acquired information. It is typical of the kind of evidence which might turn up at any time in view of the large number of unpublished cuneiform texts that exist today. Of course the reason for this present state of publication is primarily a lack of trained scholars, coupled with financial and other considerations, not the least being the lack of adequate dictionaries. So fast and in such quantity has new information come to us, that there will for some time be a considerable lag between excavation and the final publication, where texts are found in any quantity. In 1939 E. F. Weidner published some fragments of Neo-Babylonian tablets found by Koldewey before 1918 in a vaulted basement below the palace near the Ishtar gate at Babylon. They form part of the administrative records of the Nebuchadnezzar II's tenth to thirty-fifth years, i.e., 595/4–570/69 B.C. Comparison shows that these fragments are parallel accounts of the issue of oil and barley rations to foreign prisoners and inscribed at varying dates. One tablet (VAT 16283) bears a date—13th year of Nebuchadnezzar, i.e., 593 B.C. Three of the tablets show "½ PI (of oil given to) Jehoiachin King of Judah; 2½ sila to 5 sons of the king of Judah in the custody (hand) of Qana'ma, 4 sila to 8 Judeans, ½ sila each." From these facts we can safely conclude that we have a cuneiform account of an event referred to in 2 Kings

xxiv, 6–15; xxv, 27–30. "And Jehoiachin, the King of Judah went out to the King of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) took him in the eighth year of his reign." We now have direct confirmation of the imprisonment of the Judean king and followers which took place five years before the tablets were written. There can be no doubt of the readings of the Biblical names of Jehoiachin and Judah since they are written in three different syllabic spellings, one of which confirms the reading of this name in the form *ywchn* found on a seal at Tell Beit Mirsim in Palestine.[1] Although the royal ration (approximately 15 litres) seems excessive when compared with that given the lesser individuals it probably includes the ration of the king's immediate entourage. There is certainly no ground for considering that the king was yet treated with the special favour he was to receive at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar's successor Awel-Marduk (Jeremiah lii, 21). There are a number of unpublished economic texts of the latter king, and we may yet find further evidence of the situation of these captives in his day. The term "sons of the king of Judah" may be used to denote a general family relationship, as in earlier cuneiform texts, or even the "princes" of 2 Kings, xxiv, 12. It is, however, not impossible that by 593 B.C. the king, aged twenty-three, might now have five sons of his own born in captivity. These tablets accord with Jeremiah lii, 32 by showing that other royal captives were held at Babylon at the same time. Another striking feature in these lists is the number of craftsmen and foreigners who receive rations. The lists include the sons of Aga' and three sailors of Askelon; at least 190 sailors and 126 other persons from Sidon; 8 carpenters from Byblos and 3 from Arvad. Other individuals named include a Judean Ur-Milki, Gadi-'ilu (the same name as the Gaddiel of Numbers, xiii, 10); Shalamyama (cf. Shelumiel of Numbers i, 6); and Samakuyama (Semachiah of I Chron., xxvi, 7, a name already attested in the Lachish ostraca). In addition to the Philistines and Phoenicians, persons from Elam, Media, Persia, Egypt, Lydia and some unidentified places are listed. The conquest of these countries by the Babylonians had been foretold by Jeremiah.

The outlook for archaeological studies relating to the Bible

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[1] W. F. Allbright. Journal of Biblical Literature. 51, p. 81.

is very bright. The long-needed synthesis of the small details which go to make up our knowledge of the Palestine of Bible days has recently been produced by Albright, and excavation continues in that land under Israeli supervision. In Iraq the native department of Antiquities is carrying out surveys and actual excavation, and once more Western scholars are at work in that field. Last year an American expedition recommenced a long-term dig at Nippur, the Sumerian site which has contributed more than any other to our knowledge of Sumerian literature. The tablets found at Nippur as long ago as the beginning of this century which have been translated during the last five years force us to see in many a Sumerian epic the forerunner of the more well-known Babylonian versions of the 18th century like the Gilgamish epic. The original development of many of this class of cuneiform parallel to the earliest Old Testament stories must therefore be sought in a period long before Abraham. Excavations in the Tablet Hill section of Nippur this year may well extend both our knowledge of this literature and of the history of the place. From N. Iraq a new account of the annals of Shalmaneser III, the opponent of Ahab and overlord of Jehu, has been discovered, while excavations at Layard's favourite site at Nimrud (the Biblical Calah) have been recommenced. Already some economic tablets from the reign of the little-known Shalmaneser IV have been recovered, and no one can prejudge what might be the success of further scientific excavation in this mound which contains the palaces of those Assyrian kings whom God used as His instrument to punish His sinning people. With all this archaeological activity revealing so much detail relative to Bible times it is more than ever interesting to note that while many problems are being raised, and many more are awaiting solution, no *fact* found has contradicted the Word of God. As this paper has so inadequately sought to show, some opinions and suggestions based on archaeological finds which a few would seek to present as facts must be discarded in the light of the latest evidence.

Discussion.

The Chairman (J. McIntyre, Esq.) said: I am sure that you would wish me to express our joint thanks to Mr. Wiseman both for the general survey he has so ably given of recent trends in Biblical archaeology and also for indications he has given of possible solutions to the problems which recent discoveries have raised.

It is well to emphasise, perhaps, that an attempt has been made to present a comprehensive view of the subject, which means, firstly, that much detail is of necessity omitted and secondly that a repetition of certain facts already known is unavoidable. On the first point I would only say that the need for further detailed study of the problems raised will be apparent, and on the second, that although Mr. Wiseman has referred to facts already known, yet this is the first occasion, to my knowledge, on which any extensive reference has been made to the unpublished Atšana texts in relation to Old Testament history and teaching. Many of you probably share my hope that before long Mr. Wiseman may be able to treat this subject more fully.

I am glad that Mr. Wiseman has given a warning against the danger of drawing too firm conclusions even from this new evidence to which he has directed our attention. I think that zeal for Biblical truth should not be allowed to obscure our scientific judgment of accessible facts, for nothing is more calculated to bring the Bible into disrepute than well-meaning attempts to prove its truth on the basis of evidence which may be manifestly doubtful. The warning against what has been called "Pan-Hurrianism" is therefore justified.

A final general question presents itself to me, and it is this: "What practical steps are interested persons in this country taking in the field of Near Eastern archaeology from which we may yet hope for fresh light on the Bible?" The present difficulties in the way of further excavations will be well-known to most of you, but in spite of this, it is gratifying to learn that the British School in Iraq, which is of fairly recent foundation, will shortly be engaged in a fresh "dig" at Nimrud, under the expert guidance of Professor Mallowan.

This project is, I may say, of interest to the British Museum, for our connections with that site date back to 1846 when the Trustees assumed from Sir Stratford Canning, the British Minister in Constantinople, the financial responsibility for Sir Henry Layard's work, and later, for the work of his successors. There is every hope of this well-known site yielding still further information, not only of the Assyrian period itself but also of earlier times, for there is evidence that Kalkḫu was an important settlement long before the

days of Shalmaneser. A few remains of the 2nd millennium were found previously and fresh discoveries of this period may have much to teach us.

The interest of the Museum in this season's work at Nimrud is being expressed in a practical way by the attachment of a member of the Museum staff to the expedition as epigraphist, and I think you will be both interested and gratified to learn that the officer chosen is Mr. Wiseman.[1]

Mr. L. D. FORD said: I notice that the present tendency in archaeology is to be swamped with undigested evidence. Evidence of what? That the life history of the ancients was as full and accidental as ours is, and the further we hunt for direct corroboration of Biblical incidents the less likely we are to find them, among the ever-growing mass of unidentifiable events of two millenniums past. And so it should be. Fifty years ago every discovery of the past was pushed into a confirmation of some Biblical event. Now we are swamped with it, and with the hundreds of thousands of undeciphered tablets we must at least suspend judgment, and when they are deciphered we shall be overwhelmed with a mass of unrelated items that will want more than a Solomon to put them together. For the believer, the Bible speaks God's voice to man, and there will always be a sharp cleavage between the man who has faith and the man who has not.

The Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT said: The reference on page 4 to Tupkitilla is evidently to the Tupkitilla family records that cover a period of some 150 years. The late Dr. Chiera of Chicago writes about them in his book, *They Wrote on Clay*. They were found buried under the floor in the corner of one of the rooms, and give a vivid picture of the rise and fall of the family during this period. This is of special interest in considering the question of the authorship and compilation of Genesis. I personally believe that Moses compiled Genesis from written family records that were brought by Abraham from Ur, preserved and added to by Isaac,

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[1] [An account of this 1950 expedition has been contributed to the *Illustrated London News* of July 22 and 29, 1950, by Professor Mallowan. In his preamble Professor Mallowan pays tribute, among other collaborators, to "Mr. D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities Department of the British Museum, who undertook the decipherment of all the inscriptions and has contributed the information provided about them in this article."—ED.]

Jacob, and probably Judah and Reuben, and taken down into Egypt. If important families in the ancient world did preserve their family records, it is likely that the family who were conscious that they were being specially set aside by God, took steps to hand on the story of what God was doing for them.

Would Mr. Wiseman say what connection, if any, there is between Dagan (on page 9) and the god Dagon ?

Mr. TITTERINGTON asked whether Mr. Wiseman could say what were the affinities of the Hittite and Hurrian languages ; to what families do they belong ?

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

Mr. Ford can be assured that much is now being done by scholars to prepare the needed syntheses of the recently increased archæological evidence relating to various branches of study. My last paragraph indicated the commencement of this trend with regard to all the evidence available concerning Palestine. Other volumes correlating all that is known about the mathematics, music, law, botany and mythology of the Sumerians, Babylonians, and also Egyptians, have been published recently, but are outside the scope of this paper. Increasing specialisation will indeed make it harder for an overall appreciation of a particular phase of ancient civilisation to be made by any one scholar, but this is true of all branches of science to-day. The need for a general appreciation in the realm of Biblical archaeology has been partly met by Millar Burrows' *What Mean these Stones*,? but still challenges Christian scholars in this country. It is not therefore strictly accurate, I submit, to refer to this new archæological material as "undigested evidence." The totally unpublished tablets (to be numbered in thousands) deal mainly with economic and similar matters. These have had to wait their turn for publication after the more immediately important texts such as the historical, religious and lexicographical tablets. The number of "undeciphered" tablets is believed to be very small.

There is no certain classification yet made of the Hurrian language. It is suggested that it may bear possible affinities with some Caucasian dialects, but it cannot be related to Hittite which, in the main, is one of the Indo-European group of languages.

I am glad that Mr. Stafford Wright has drawn attention to an interesting point of literary history from the Nuzi tablets. The Hebrew Dagon and Accadian Dagan refer to the same god. This god, with his symbolic ear of corn, was much worshipped in Syria and in the central Euphrates valley (Mari) from the early second millennium B.C. onwards.