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Recent Excavations in Palestine.

By Stanley A. Cook, Litt.D., Cambridge.

During the last few years the history of excavation in Palestine has entered upon an entirely new stage. With the cessation of the Great War, and under Great Britain as a mandatory power, steps were at once taken to remedy the abuses which, in spite of the sympathy and benevolence of individual Turkish officials, had hitherto hampered archæological research. The time had come for the systematic study of Ancient Palestine. Trench-digging, shell-fire, and the ravages of war had opened up interesting specimens of stratification, a mosaic, or a tomb; and problems of Palestinian topography had been discussed afresh with the aid of that great classic, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*—almost as indispensable as the Field Service Regulations—and in the light of the daily experience of strategical centres and military roads. Occasional earthquake tremors and the persistent activities of builders had long been damaging valuable Transjordanian monuments. Tomb robbers, as ever, plied their trade—not unskilfully; and the contents of tombs were being sold and scattered far and wide in a way that deprived them of real archæological importance. Forgers turned out Greco-Roman gems, often of no little merit, to be purchased by all but the more expert visitors, or to be sold by fellahin middlemen as authentic contents of recently discovered tombs.

Accordingly the Government instituted a Department of Antiquities, under the directorship of Professor John Garstang of Liverpool. Its aims were to repress unauthorized digging and to encourage all competent and scientific inquiry, to safeguard the results, and to conserve all existing remains, and, in general, to reorganize Palestinian archæology. To the famous and old-established École Biblique of the Dominicans of St. Étienne (the official French archæological institute), and to the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem (opened in 1900, now under Dr. Albright), there was at last added the British School of Archæology in Jerusalem (planned 1918, founded 1920). It was a most welcome indication of British interest in Biblical studies, the more gratifying as our Palestine Exploration Fund (founded 1865) is the parent of all such societies. The School is essentially a place for intensive research, for training students for field-work, and, like the P.E.F. itself, is on the widest possible basis.

Besides a Jewish Museum, Jerusalem now has its National Museum of Antiquities; and besides museums at Beirut and Damascus, others are projected at other centres. There are Jewish archæological and excavation societies, and the endeavour is also made to interest Orientals in their land. An International Palestine Society, established in 1920, has its own journal; and only four months ago an International Congress of Archæologists, under the joint auspices of the French and British High Commissions, was, in spite of the political conditions, an unqualified success. Although much more might be said, it is not to be supposed that the archæological millennium has dawned. It is true that there are no longer the provoking delays in obtaining permits, there are no hampering restrictions or jealous interference of incompetent Turkish officials; but difficulties enough remain caused by profiteering owners of fields, and excavators are still apt to suffer from the natives' conviction that they are hunting for buried treasure, or have designs upon venerable sacred buildings!

Of the many miscellaneous activities under the new *régime* we may mention the removal of the disfiguring screen set up in 1842 in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. Formerly intended to shut off the east end of the Church for worship, when the nave was being used by the populace as a market, it has long been an eye-sore, and thanks to its removal, it is at last possible to appreciate the structure of the inside. Mention should certainly be made, also, of the renewed interest in native beliefs and customs which, through the disturbances caused by the War, and the world-wide unrest, are ceasing to be preserved by the younger generation. Here are traditions and usages which are sometimes the Muhammadan or Christian version of what goes back to earlier ages; and sometimes it is possible to distinguish recent additions or adjustments. Not without interest is the case where a Church of the ever-famous El-Khadr, the healer of the mad, is connected by means of a wire with the cells where the unfortunate lunatics are confined. The need

of some tangible vehicle for the transmission of the mystic healing power has a psychological basis as apart from the particular vehicle employed; and this necessity of analysing beliefs and customs into their more fundamental (and psychological) and their more transient (and historical) elements has to be recognized everywhere. It must suffice to draw the attention of those interested to the new store of material from Palestine, which seems to be of the greatest value for illustrating Palestinian life and thought; it is certainly not less illuminating for Biblical research than the lore of far-off modern rudimentary peoples.

The Great War had already shown how the aeroplane could contribute to archæological research. Ground, archæologically complicated, can be simplified; and it has been found possible to understand some Transjordanian Roman ruins at Kasr Azraḳ in a way that could never have been achieved by the observer on *terra firma*. Of no little importance also is the view based upon aeroplane photographic surveys that the Jordan probably originated in North Syria, and that the Syrian portion has been captured by the Lower Orontes. Apart from systematic excavation, much has also been done by trial soundings, and even by the more or less careful scrutiny of the surface of likely places. Since Sir Flinders Petrie, in his excavation of Tell el-Hesy in 1890, succeeded in demonstrating the significance of potsherds for determining the absolute sequence of the strata in which they are found and their relative dates, the study of Palestinian pottery in its relation to that of the world outside has become essential for the co-ordination of Palestinian archæology and history. Moreover, Palestinian topography itself has become a new study, and many old identifications are being reconsidered. Gath, for example, is not located, as some think, at Tell eṣ-Safī, but, as others claim, at 'Arak el-Menshiyeh, where the absence of ware of the Persian and Greek ages agrees with the disappearance of Gath from history after the eighth century B.C. Ekron, some would find at Ḳaṭra, about three miles to the south-east of Aḳir which preserves the name, for often the old name survives a little way away from the (presumed) original site. Valuable results may no doubt be expected; but the whole history of excavation warns us that it is hazardous to trust to sporadic and rather miscellaneous digging, and it is wiser to rely only upon more intensive work.

The careful and prolonged but unfortunately very expensive excavations at Jerusalem have had results more solid than sensational. Much has been ascertained concerning 'Millo' and the walls and fortifications of the city; Zion, as many scholars had already concluded, lies on the eastern ridge. But Jerusalem has suffered grievously. The destruction of the citadel by Simon the Maccabee was an archæological disaster, and the act of his son John Hyrcanus in looting the Tomb of David, and the later despoliation by Herod the Great suggest that much that was precious has long ago been removed by hands unknown as well as known. Moreover, there has been iconoclasm, and to strict puritanical reformers will be due the destruction of all that which would be offensive to the more spiritual Israelite. And what this might entail can be imagined from the sweeping reforms attributed to king Josiah. Among the really solid gains, the most significant is the demonstration of the antiquity of Jerusalem. A large cave with pottery of not later than about 2000 B.C., various 'pre-Israelite' buildings, and other traces of early settlements illustrate the fact, already revealed by the Amarna Letters, that Jerusalem was a very important city long before the days of David and that it must have had a religious tradition, and surely a sanctuary, long before Solomon's temple. The antiquity of Palestine is becoming an increasingly impressive fact.

The skull of the 'Galilæan girl' recently found by the British School of Archæology in Jerusalem near Tabgha is of the Neanderthal type, and is freely dated to some 20,000 years ago. It is one of the most important discoveries of what is called 'Pre-history,' and, together with the flints of the Tiberias region and other parts of Palestine, indicates that from the remotest times Palestine has never been aloof from the rest of the habitable globe. Coming down to comparatively modern times we now learn from the fine tombs discovered at Byblus by the French—whose activities have been mainly in Phœnicia and North Syria—that in the Twelfth Dynasty (say 2100 B.C.), and even centuries before, there were close relations between that city and Egypt. The remarkable syncretism of the Greco-Roman period was no new feature, and the 'lady (Baalath) of Gebal' was associated with Hathor and Isis in ancient Byblus and was familiar in Egypt itself. Moreover, the Royal Tombs at Byblus with their rich contents can, on archæological grounds, be associated with Egyptian tombs at

Gezer, and we can vividly realize how deeply Egyptian officials and others could have influenced Palestine centuries before Egyptian texts refer to the Egyptian temples which were built here and there in their Asiatic empire. The facts are not, however, to be exaggerated, for a careful study is suggesting that there was a certain homogeneity of culture throughout Egypt and south-west Asia, and that behind the characteristic individual features of every land there was a similarity the true extent of which can as yet hardly be determined.

The well-documented Amarna Age (*c.* 1400–1375 B.C.) is a most conspicuous landmark, and a starting-point for reaching backwards and forwards. The many *tells*, especially in Syria, point to fortified cities which were already ancient; and, if we may rely upon surveys of the surfaces, had in some cases already seen their best days. Indeed, the few centuries before, during and immediately after the Hyksos period, were so significant for Syria and Palestine that the 'Israelite' period may be said to come towards the close of ancient Oriental history. At Tell Mishrifeh in Syria are the remains of an enormous fort with a rampart said to be originally twenty metres high; and at the south end of the Dead Sea an American expedition found a great and strongly fortified acropolis with a group of seven monoliths and of about 1800 B.C. A lengthy and stirring history has disappeared; only the faintest of echoes remain. If, as is not unnatural, we here include Gn 14, we cannot use it to fill out the history; and if with some authorities, and notably Dr. Hall of the British Museum, we connect the patriarchal history with the Hyksos, our gains are of the scantiest. For if we are to regard the story of the Exodus as the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt (namely, 1580 B.C.), 'looked at from the peculiar angle of Jewish tradition,' we are also to remember that we are 'dealing with legend' and are not to take our details too literally.[1] One must not deny that we have any recollection of the history of the Hyksos or of the Khabiru of the Amarna Letters; but what is our aim? Is it to determine the use that can be made of the Biblical narratives when one is writing a history of Palestine, or is it the use that can be made of the external evidence when one is writing a history of the Israelites? The Amarna Letters and other contemporary evidence constitute a secure starting-point; and more 'external' evidence is necessary before it is wise to identify the movements of the Khabiru and of the northern invaders (in the Amarna Letters) with the Biblical account of the entrance of Israelites under Joshua from the south of Palestine.

Meanwhile the age immediately following the Amarna is now being illuminated by the magnificently endowed work of the University of Pennsylvania at Beisan (Beth-Shan). Here were found stelæ of Seti I. and Ramses II., and a statue of Ramses III. We learn that Seti I. in the first year of his reign (1314 B.C.) entered the fortresses of Asia and crushed the princes of Retenu (Palestine-Syria).[2] The prince of Hamath (el-Hammi, entrance of the Yarmuk pass), in alliance with Pella (facing Beth-Shan across the Jordan), besieged Rehob (near Sheikh Rihāb), and took Beth-Shan. Seti sent out the armies of Amon, Re, and Set (Sutekh) to Hamath, Beth-Shan, and Jenoam respectively, and claims to have conquered the enemy in a day. It is possible that the stela of Seti found at Tell esh-Shihāb in Transjordania some years ago commemorated the same event. However that may be—and the conjecture is not a necessary one—it now appears that in spite of the serious troubles in Palestine to which the Amarna Letters testify, and in spite of the collapse of Egyptian supremacy attributed to the 'pacificist' Ikhnaton, Egypt was soon able to reassert her authority. If we may conjecture that, in addition to the three armies named, the army of Ptah was guarding the rear, the Egyptian military organization would be identical with that which under Ramses fought the Hatti (Hittites) at Kadesh in 1288. In spite of Seti's various successes—his stelæ have also been found at Kadesh (on the Orontes) and at Homs (Emesa)—the 'Hittites' were becoming stronger, and the famous treaty between them and Egypt was of the nature of a compromise. That is to say, the Amarna Letters illustrate only a few years in a prolonged movement, and, in the nature of the case, they must be only a relatively small portion of the correspondence which it provoked. That movement was part of a mighty contest between Egypt and the northern foe which not even a Thotmes III., still less an Ikhnaton, would have been able to avert. Yet Egypt was strong enough to hold her own, and even under Ramses III. (twelfth century) her hand hung over

[1] H. R. Hall, in *The People and the Book* (ed. Peake), 3, 10f., 15.

[2] A new translation of the stela (now in the Jerusalem museum) is given by Ranke, in the *Z.A.T.W.*, iii. (1926) 72.

Palestine, and all our theories of the early history of Israel have to recognize that the small land lay at the mercy of the two great rivals.

The excavations at Beth-Shan have added remarkably to our knowledge of the old religion. The presence of Egyptian officers there and elsewhere would no doubt familiarize natives with the characteristic Egyptian conceptions of existence after death. These we can supplement by the extraordinarily interesting sarcophagus of Ahiram of Byblus (dated to the thirteenth century) which bears (*a*) a Phœnician inscription, the oldest known, carrying back at a stroke the origin of the North Semitic alphabet, and (*b*) funeral scenes which, in common with the evidence of tombs throughout Palestine, indicate that some sort of a belief in another life was no novelty.[1] Further, at Beth-Shan were traced the remains of four superimposed temples; and a representation of a goddess in Egyptian dress, styled 'Antit lady of heaven, mistress of all the gods,' shows that the well-known Anath, the most famous of goddesses, held a very prominent place in the cult. The discovery of strange clay objects, shrines with doves and snakes, of a sort unique for Palestine, but already found at Asshur, confirms the association of Anath with goddesses of the Ishtar-Astarte-Atargatis-Anaitis type. In addition to this, the appearance of the warrior-god (Resheph) upon a cylinder with the cartouche of Ramses II. suggests that he was the god who, to judge from 1 Ch 10[10], was afterwards known as Dagon. Finally, certain curious objects identified by the fortunate excavator (Mr. Alan Rowe) as 'gardens of Adonis,' indicate—if his view be correct—the antiquity in Palestine itself of the mystical Adonis-cults familiar later.[2] In general the successful excavations at Beth-Shan have brought out points of contact with El-Amarna (in Egypt), North Syria, the Ægean, etc. It is the typical world before the invasions in which the Philistines participated. There was a thoroughly established culture long before the Israelites could enter and exercise influence; and in Ikhnaton's monistic reforming zeal on the one hand and, on the other, in the new stage associated with the figure of Moses—whatever be his true date—we have a dividing line in the history of ancient thought: the creative power of Egypt was almost dead, that of Israel was about to manifest itself.

The P.E.F. excavations at Askalon have revealed an almost complete change of culture which is ascribed to the Philistines and dated about 1200 B.C. At Tantura (Dora) were traces in the ware of a very similar but not quite identical intrusion. This agrees with the Egyptian evidence for different though evidently related invaders and dwellers of the coast. In tumuli, south-west of Jerusalem (at Malheh), has been found pottery supposed to be that of an invading (Philistine) culture, and the problem of those movements in which the Philistines were the people best known to us, and which, it is often thought, may also account for the transition from bronze to iron, has become of more intense interest. Although it must be remembered that the coastlands were always exposed to foreign settlers and intruders, it becomes clear that we can pass from the Palestine of Egypto-Hittite rivalries to a 'Philistine' phase, and that the national history of Israel proper could hardly begin before the overthrow of 'Philistine' supremacy. Here archæology will have much to reveal, and, as this is not the place for me to develop my own particular views of the bearing of archæology upon the Old Testament, it must suffice to urge that what the external evidence of excavation and the monuments has to tell us of the culture of Palestine and all that it had to offer invading Israelites is an inquiry not less important than the task of reconstructing their early history on the basis of the Biblical record.

Meanwhile we may look forward the more keenly to those sites where 'Israelite' as distinct from 'Canaanite' remains might reasonably be expected. At Tell el-Ful (Gibeah) the American excavator found four successive fortifications from Pre-Israelite to Maccabæan times. The Danish excavator at Shiloh found ware which is said to be confined to about 1300–900 B.C. From Sellin at Balata (Shechem) and from the Berkeley School (California) at Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah) we await further information. Finally, Dr. Albright at Tell el-Mirsim—which, rather than Dahariyeh, he supposes to be Kirjath-Sepher—may, one hopes, justify popular etymology, and 'Archive-Town' will live up to its name! The prospects, it will be seen, are rosy enough, and such is the luck of excavation that any hour may bring to light material as new and as unsuspected as that which is already changing one's conceptions of Palestine and the Israelites.

[1] Professor Macalister has already pointed out how very important the archæological evidence is for the study of the development of the ideas of life after death (*A Century of Excavation in Palestine*, 316).

[2] See Gressmann, *Z.A T.W.*, *loc. cit.* p. 75.

There are those who think that the Israelite invasion meant a complete set-back. It is perhaps impertinent of the mere arm-chair student to be sceptical and to believe that the chief break comes later.[1] The spade will decide, but a distinction must always be drawn between the objects actually discovered and the interpretations—at times unjustifiable—placed upon them. Meanwhile Megiddo, one of the largest of unoccupied *tells*, first attacked by Schumacher (1903–05), is now being reopened by the University of Chicago. We learn that there are signs of Astarte-cult from the Amarna age downward—no surprising fact in itself—and that a fragment has been found of a monument of the invading Pharaoh Shishak (*c.* 930 B.C.). We do not know whether this invasion betokens more than a temporary interest in Palestine. An inscribed ostrakon found at Jerusalem, too obscure to be of much service, is a reminder that with good fortune really important texts might be found. It is *à propos* to state that the numerous inscribed ostraka of the ninth century found by the Harvard University on the site of Samaria in 1908–10 are now among the contents of a sumptuous publication (1924), and prove to be the most informing of the earlier remains. The proper names, it will be remembered, include an average number of compounds of Baal; and in the name Egli-yau (however it was pronounced), the Divine name (=Yahweh) is combined with 'calf,' an indication of calf-cult. But on the whole there is little fresh to be said concerning the period of the monarchies. It is not until we come down to the sixth century B.C., and later, that we have to note Dr. Albright's conviction, based on a survey of sites in South Judah and Simeon, that many of these were not occupied after the Exile, and that the Babylonian invasion is responsible for this catastrophe. The point is of great importance on account of the tendency of some of us to recognize (1) after the Fall of Jerusalem, a certain *rapprochement* of north and south—what I would venture to call a new Israel, and (2) after the time of Zerubbabel a new crushing disaster to Judah.[2] It is this later disaster, annihilating the hopes of reconstruction under Zerubbabel, which, as I think, has left its mark on the Old Testament; and it may be questioned whether any 'post-exilic' criteria make their appearance before the middle of the fifth century and the age of Nehemiah. At present archæology does not speak with any very decided voice on this period, and here again we must look to excavation and to *the scientific interpretation of the results.*

The Greek and Roman periods continue to be richly illustrated. Askalon has given us remains of the famous peristyle of Herod, an Isis-like Tyche ('Fortune'), and statues of Victory and Peace. The Harvard publication of the Samarian excavations gives us a good idea of Herod's temple in honour of Augustus, where a portion of a huge statue of the Emperor was found. At Tell Barak, near Cæsarea, fine sculptured sarcophagi were discovered; and these, together with the renewed attention to the many grand Roman remains in Transjordania, combine to present an excellent picture of the breadth and depth of Greek and Roman influence, and of the material prosperity of Palestine. But the picture is a one-sided one and it is not so evident that the external influence was really more than a veneer. Hellenism provoked a powerful Oriental reaction; and beneath the veneer and by the side of the strangest of syncretisms the old Oriental life was preserved and shows itself, for example, on the coins, or in the mixed culture at Sandahannah, or in those forces which account both for the persistence of the old name Beth-Shan in the later Beisan, and for the disappearance of 'Scythopolis' and many another brave symbol of exotic culture. And, once more, the history of religion in Palestine is not the same as the history of religion as it appears to the Biblical student.

The study of Jewish synagogues has received new stimuli. An interesting Greek inscription from Jerusalem tells of Theodotos, priest and chief of a synagogue with its hospice, chambers, and baths; and since the name of his father, Vettinos, suggests that of a slave named after Vettius, Cicero's agent, it has been conjectured that the synagogue was that of the Freedmen or Libertines (Ac 6⁹). In Galilee the non-Jewish *motifs* on the synagogue have long attracted attention, and a careful study of their architectural and other features has been made at Tell Hum or Capernaum (by the late Father Orfali), and by Jewish societies at Tiberias and elsewhere. At Chorazin the Dionysiac features are most marked; and they are explained either as an indication of a

[1] *The Expositor*, August 1909, p. 105 ff.

[2] Cf. in particular Kennett and Hölscher on the sixth-century date of Deuteronomy, and Löhr (*Orient. Lit. Zeit.*, Jan. 1926, col. 7) and the present writer (*Camb. Anc. Hist.*, iii. 415, 499) on the new Israel which was growing up.

less strict Judaism, or as due to the employment, sometimes perhaps by Roman patrons, of Roman workmen. Both explanations may be true, and subsequent iconoclasm may account for some of the mutilations, for example, that of the sculptured eagles in the synagogue of Tiberias. The subject is one that deserves to be followed up in view of the underlying principles. Was the patronage of Persian kings an unmixed boon? Had the curiously un-Israelite elements on seals and other objects of the Israelite period any strange and un-Israelite significance for those who employed them? It is often difficult to make up one's mind, and it is prudent to remember that 'Israelite'—in the ideal and spiritual sense—and 'Palestinian' are not conterminous.

Mention must be made, in conclusion, of the discovery at Ain Duk (Docus, near Jericho)—thanks in the first instance to a Turkish shell—of a Jewish synagogue with mosaic inscriptions, miscellaneous scenes (including Daniel in the Lion's Den), and an almost complete zodiac. The names and seasons are in Hebrew, and the mosaic is a striking proof of the spread of astrological ideas. It is difficult to date the Synagogue with precision; but, in any event, it falls into line with the astral religion which can be traced from Egypt to Asia Minor in the early centuries of the Christian era. The great rivals, Judaism and Christianity, were not the only ones to hold the field; on the basis of archæological evidence alone we have to recognize a variety of cults which help to explain the presence of contemporary sects and heresies. Already coins and inscriptions have told us of 'Our Lord' (Marna) at Gaza, of 'Face of Baal' at Askalon, of Apolline and Dionysian gods, and of the prevalence of presiding and local goddesses of cities and counties. Many archaic features, which at first sight seem to carry us back centuries, persist in and about Palestine, and they provide us with evidence enough for sounder theories of the history of religion.

It is much to be hoped that funds may be forthcoming to enable the parent excavation society to carry out more extensive work. Although much has been done, much remains to be done, and the results of past excavation are too imperfect and too tantalizing to allow our indifference or neglect. The history of Palestine has been carried further back, and a new view has been obtained of the place of the little land among her greater neighbours. The history of the religious development comes before us in a new light, and repeatedly we come to see that there are many Biblical problems upon which the spade will decide. Palestinian archæology is of the first importance, not only because of the Bible, but also because of the interconnexions between Egypt, the Ægean, and south-west Asia. The subject is so bound up with a wider field that it is of singular complexity. It is a serious discipline, no dilettante study; but it is impossible to believe that it will therefore frighten students or patrons, the questions with which it has to deal are so absorbing and vital.

Literature.

THE DECLINE OF THE WEST.

It is well that Dr. Oswald Spengler's 'Untergang des Abendlandes' should be published in English, and we are glad that the authorized translation was entrusted to an able and competent hand—*The Decline of the West,* translated by Mr. C. F. Atkinson (Allen & Unwin; 21s. net). Mr. Atkinson has given us not only a most readable translation, despite the many inevitable hyphenated phrases, but also a number of useful footnotes. In annotating a work so full of technical and recondite references it must have been hard to decide where to begin and where to end, and the translator would no doubt admit that a certain arbitrariness attaches to this part of his work. It is the first volume only, sub-entitled 'Form and Actuality,' that is offered to us in the meantime; the second volume, 'World-Historical Perspectives,' is promised us. The translation is from the second revised edition.

Dr. Spengler's work, which is really a philosophy of history, appeared in 1918, and 90,000 copies of it have already been printed. It has been authoritatively characterized as 'the most important and influential work published in Germany during the last decade.' The secrets of its popularity are not far to seek. Massive and elaborate as the work is, and often difficult to follow and understand, it