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Recent Biblical Archaeology.

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FURTHER researches have been made by Professor E. A. Speiser and others into the question of the Hurrians (Egyptian *Huru*, Biblical *Horites*), or Subareans, as they have been called by some scholars. It is now known that they were non-Semitic, speaking a language allied to Caucasian. They had their original settlement in and around ancient *Arrapha* (where *Nuzi*, *Kirkûk*, etc., are), east of the Tigris, and according to records from Boghaz-Keui, reinforced with valid archæological arguments, they seem to have migrated westward about 1900 B.C., some time after the Semites. Their migration changed completely the political map of the Near East, for they formed a powerful wedge, driving the Indo-Europeans into Anatolia and the Cassites into the heart of Babylonia. It is conclusively proved, especially through the recently acquired knowledge of Hurrian proper names, that during the second millennium they occupied wide regions in the Near East, including Central Palestine. They appear, in fact, to have been scattered all the way from Anatolia to Elam, and from Armenia to Egypt, interspersed with other ethnic elements or settled in colonies of their own. They must not be equated with the Mitannian nation (c. 1400 B.C.) in Central Mesopotamia, for though the latter had Hurrian as its official language, it was a short-lived empire, and owed its organization rather to an Indo-Iranian element. Judging from the Biblical record, where they are known as Horites, they are supposed to have been confined to Edom. But this concentration rests largely on erroneous textual transmission, for in several passages where 'Hivite' (חִוִּי) is mentioned, the reading should undoubtedly be 'Horite' (חִרִּי). This seems to be the case in Gn 34² 36² (cf. 36²⁰), Jos 9⁷ 11¹⁸, and elsewhere, and indeed the Septuagint has 'Horites' in the first and third of these cases. It is clear, therefore, that the Horites were spread over Palestine, and the question naturally arises whether such a people as the Hivites ever had a tangible existence. Hebrew *v* (ו) and *r* (ר) are readily confused, whether the script be Phœnician or Aramaic, and the mistake once perpetrated would extend rapidly to all occurrences of the name. Another question that emerges concerns the relation of the Hurrians to the Hebrews (*Habiru*). Considering that the former occupied large portions of the Near East, including Mesopotamia, in the second millennium, they must

have influenced the latter considerably. Many Hurrian customs would naturally be taken over by the latter, and there must have been considerable racial intermixture. This is corroborated by the numerous parallels in social conditions as reflected in the Hurrian tablets and in the Pentateuch. We find, for instance, from the *Kirkûk* texts that, according to Hurrian law, possession of the household gods or *teraphim* insured the legal right to the property, and this simple fact explains the removal by Rachel of her father's gods, which has hitherto puzzled Biblical students (Gn 31¹⁹⁻³⁵). She stole the gods, actually, to insure the inheritance to Jacob. Similarly, the Hurrian contract as to marriage accounts for the relation of Abraham and Sarah, while the legal arrangement as to birthright explains the deal between Jacob and Esau.

The Ras Shamra tablets continue to illustrate ancient Biblical traditions. In one of the poems ('The Birth of the Gods'), deciphered by Virolleaud, we have light thrown on certain Old Testament names. We read, for example, of *Etraḥ*, and his wife *Sin*, who appear as god and goddess of the new moon. The name *Etraḥ* occurs on other tablets under the form *Trḥ*, and is thus identical with *Terah*, the father of Abraham (Gn 11²⁶). Jensen was therefore correct when he suggested that *Terah* was originally the name of a god, and we learn also that, in Phœnicia at least, *Sin* was a goddess and not a god as in Ur, Harran, Sippur, and other centres in Mesopotamia. Again, we read of 'Kosher,' described as 'the son of the sea,' who was the god of Wisdom, and of a people, the 'Kosherites,' who recognized him as their lord. These people, living evidently by the sea, are associated in one of the tablets ('The Legend of Keret') with the children of Zebulun (*Zbln*), and it is noteworthy that in an Egyptian epigraph of the eleventh dynasty (c. 2600 B.C.), published by Kurt Sethe, Kosher and Zebulun figure also side by side, as two Syrian princes. It thus appears that Zebulun, though described in Jos 19 as a people entirely inland, were in earlier times dwelling by the sea or at all events not far from it. This affords corroboration of the statement in the 'Blessing of Moses' (Dt 33^{18, 19}) and also in the 'Blessing of Jacob' (Gn 49¹³), where they are pictured as touching the Mediterranean, doubtless in the neighbourhood of Accho and Carmel, and

seems to show that in these Scripture passages we have information derived from an earlier source than the Priestly document in the Book of Joshua.

Some time ago, as we stated in a previous article, Sir Flinders Petrie, in his excavation of Old Gaza (*Tell Ajûl*), discovered a pair of torque ear-rings, of the date of Thutmose III. (c. 1500 B.C.), which were certified by specialists to be of Irish style. He has now found other specimens of a distinctly Irish make. One is a heavy plain ring, of a thick nature, with narrow centre. It is made of copper plated with gold, and fifteen examples of such a type are preserved in Dublin. Ireland was the main source of western gold in ancient times, and with the Gaza specimens before us, there can be no doubt of the trade connexions between that country and the Near East (probably through intermediaries) over 3600 miles of sea. Sir Flinders has now excavated the substantial stone foundations of the earliest palace. It is found to have formed a square of 165 feet, with walls 6 feet thick. It dates back to the seventh dynasty (c. 3100 B.C.), having been built, no doubt, by the invaders, probably of Caspian origin, who conquered Egypt at this time. In a tomb, fourteen feet by five, which fortunately had never been robbed, a number of valuable scarabs, pottery types, gold objects, and other articles were found, including a gold ring (cast and chased) of Tut-ankh-amun, weighing 264 grains (evidently the official ring of the governor), an abundance of copper hunting arrows, and many lead sinkers for fishing nets. The quantity of foreign work from other civilizations renders this ancient site one of the most valuable for historical research. Sir Flinders, having unearthed the first palace and earliest buildings, and dug about an acre of city streets and houses of 2300 B.C., is now directing his attention to the city temples, and to the plains below the city, where there are deposits of varying ages and possibly the burial-place of the governors.

The Israelite tombs were not very different from the one just referred to. Among the Israelites all who possessed land or could afford it had their family tombs hewn out of the rock in the hillside, and provided with galleries and chambers. One such, which had originally been a cave, has recently been investigated by Sukenik. It is on the Jerusalem-Shechem road, near Gofna, and is entered from a courtyard. It is about forty feet square, with ledges all round. On the north wall near the ceiling are the Hebrew letters L G H, with signs of a letter, either Y or B, preceding. There is every reason to believe, as Sukenik does, that this

was the burial cave of Bilgah, who was head of the fifteenth course of priests appointed by David (1 Ch 24¹⁴). Twenty-nine centuries have passed since he and his family were laid to rest here, but his name remains, just as it was engraven then. Countless numbers of such tombs are to be found all over Palestine. In times of oppression, fugitives found shelter in them (Jg 6², 1 S 13⁶, He 11³⁰); and in the time of Christ, poor creatures 'possessed with demons' took up their abode in them.

Excavations have been going on at numerous ancient sites in Palestine. At *Tell Duweir* (believed to be Lachish), which is half-way between Gaza and Jerusalem as the crow flies, Mr. J. L. Starkey has come upon the early keep or palace-fort, dating, it is believed, about 950 B.C., during the reign of Solomon, and has commenced its excavation. At some parts of the town he has unearthed large quantities of Israelite pottery, including Astarte figures (some with traces of red ochre on the face), children's rattles, models of couches and chairs, figurines of horsemen riding bareback, amulets representing Egyptian deities, and various other kinds. In one tomb alone, he discovered over seven hundred pieces. A special characteristic of the early pottery is its resemblance to the Hurrian specimens (of date about 1600 B.C.) found recently by Professor Speiser at *Tell Billa*, near Nineveh. The technique of decoration, in black and red bands, with figures of birds below the rim, corresponds exactly with Hurrian ware. This fact corroborates the view that there was a Hurrian population in Palestine in the second millennium. Probably they were the dominating class before the Hebrew invasion, and it is not unlikely that Abdi-Hiba, king of Jerusalem, and other governors of Palestinian cities, whose names are non-Semitic, and whose plight is so dramatically described in the Amarna tablets, were of Hurrian parentage.

Some important new sites are being examined and excavated. The summit of Mount Nebo, the Pisgah of the Old Testament, has recently been purchased by the Franciscan Fathers of Jerusalem, and is being dug up by them. An altar there, which belonged to a Christian Church of the fourth century, and stands some 2645 feet above sea-level, is supposed to be the spot where Moses was buried or from which he viewed the Promised Land. At *Semûnieh* (the Simonias of Josephus), a small village five miles west of Nazareth, believed by Neubauer and other scholars to be the Old Testament Shimron, Professor Klein of the Hebrew University and Dr. Maisler of the Jewish Exploration Society have made investigations recently.

They have found pottery and bronze of about 1500 B.C., as well as candelabra, which point to the existence of a place of worship there in earlier times still. Shimron was one of the towns which Jabin, king of Hazor, called to his assistance when he heard of Joshua's conquest of southern Palestine. Further explorations of ancient sites in Transjordan, particularly in Ammon and Moab, have been made by Nelson Glueck, of the American Schools of Oriental Research, accompanied by Mr. George Horsfield, Advisor to the Director of Antiquities. Over one hundred and fifty sites have been examined, extending from *Tell Shîr* in the north, just west of Arbela (*Irbid*), to Petra and Kilwa in the south. Several of these, such as *Medeiyineh* (Mattanah, Nu 21¹⁶⁻¹⁸), lay in the itinerary of the Israelites. Everywhere east of the Dead Sea a new type of pottery was found which must be definitely characterized as Moabite. The sherds are covered with a beautiful rich red or brown slip, highly polished, and decorated with exact horizontal bands, and bespeak a high civilization possessed of a fine artistic sense. Several large *tells* were inspected, including a tremendous walled Bronze Age site, measuring approximately 820 yards by 270, which, judging from the pottery, dates back to about 2000 B.C. Strange to say, all the Bronze Age sites visited show a large gap in their history from the eighteenth to the thirteenth centuries B.C., whatever the reason may be. These scientific explorations in Eastern Palestine have almost revolutionized our knowledge of the historical topography and culture of Moab.

Examination of the Kadesh-Barnea region (*'Ain Kedeis*) has been made recently to discover the tomb of Miriam, who died and was buried there (Nu 20¹), and this appears to have been successful so far as the latest reports go. Josephus (*Antiq.* iv. iv. 6) informs us that Miriam was buried at the public expense, amid great display, on a mountain called Sin, and that the people mourned for her thirty days; and Eusebius and Jerome state that her tomb was pointed out in their day. In October 1931, R. Neuville, the French vice-consul at Jerusalem, in making an exploration of the Kadesh region, had his attention attracted by a peculiar mound or *tell*, of artificial appearance, known as *Tell Qataf*, about twelve miles south of *Qseimeh*, and on the west of the road that leads down from

Gaza to Aquaba. Guided to the spot by his instructions, Dom. B. Ubach, with Professors Baldi and Lemaire of the Franciscan School in Jerusalem, have made a careful examination of the mound. It rises in isolation from the middle of a short mountain chain, and stands from 26 to 29 feet high. It is ellipsoidal in shape, stretching from north-east to south-west, and measuring 459 feet round the base, and it is enclosed with a double circle of limestone and basalt blocks, the whole construction having a very ancient appearance. In the opinion of the explorers, it has not been formed by the accumulation of old ruins, as *tells* generally are, nor can it be the remains of some geological layer. Owing to its formation and type, it has every appearance of being a commemorative mound or burial-place, not unlike those of Bahrein described by Jouannin. The location seems to correspond with that of the tomb of Miriam, as referred to by Josephus, for it is both on a mountain and within the northern border of the desert of Sin. It dominates a vast extent of the desert, and could not fail to attract the attention of passing caravans in ancient times. Probably, its memory was preserved in this way, for it is not likely that Josephus or Eusebius or Jerome ever visited the region. Excavation on the spot is necessary, but meantime there is every reason to believe that here, at *Tell Qataf*, only about eight miles south-west of *'Ain Kedeis*, we have the genuine tomb of the prophetess Miriam, the illustrious sister of Moses, who was buried here, amid great public mourning, over three thousand years ago.

The examination of prehistoric caves and sites has developed largely within the last year or two. British and American archaeologists have collaborated together in this work, and have been excavating at Mugharet-et-Tabun, one of a group of caves. They have succeeded in digging down through unexpected depths (about seventy-two feet), beneath the pre-Mousterian layers, and reaching bedrock. Here they have discovered a deposit containing a flake industry, similar to the Tayacian (as Abbé Breuil has named it) found in the lowest levels of La Dordogne in France. This bottom layer of the cave must be placed in the last interglacial period (Riss-Würm), and cannot be much less than 100,000 years ago.