

lations to be provided for the use and benefit of the faithful. And it is not without interest here to observe that it is Pius XII who in 1945 provided the clergy with an alternative new Latin translation from the original of the Psalms, for use in their Breviary. The last attempt to replace the existing text (translated from the Greek translation) was St Jerome's nearly 1,600 years ago. He made a fresh translation from the Hebrew for the purpose, but it was never adopted into the *Liturgy*.

(9) All three encyclicals inculcate a *special love for the Word of God*, the treasure-house of heavenly teaching. Everyone can derive benefit from the Scriptures. The Theology in Scripture must be taught, and the Scripture in Theology: priests must steep themselves in Holy Writ, for their own sanctification and that of their flocks. St Jerome says that his beloved Scripture always brings 'dulces fructus'; and the chief fruit is a more intimate knowledge and love of Our Lord. When we realise that Pius XII was writing in the midst of the most disastrous war, we understand the earnestness of his appeal to Catholics to preserve the Church's age-long devotion to the Scriptures, for to know the Scriptures is to know Christ.

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NOTE ON BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

It is noteworthy that in 1943, when the whole world was embroiled in war, the Holy See issued an Encyclical letter¹ on Biblical studies and the opportune means of promoting them. Much stress is laid on new efforts, certainly, but also on new preoccupations, new investigations, new orientations, in a word, on the changed conditions of Biblical study, 'for deeper archaeological research has given rise to new questions offering occasion for a closer investigation of the subject'. Indeed, we are urged to pay close attention to archaeological findings; 'Archaeology', or its equivalent, is referred or appealed to some six or seven times and unquestionably holds a high place among the many endowments expected of those whose duty it is to make known the Biblical authors' meanings.

And so a note on some recent Biblical archaeology will not seem out of place.

Writers on Biblical archaeology like to refer to 'direct' and 'indirect' evidence about Biblical narratives; and it is usually said that very few finds bear directly on the Bible, whereas the indirect contribution is very rich. But this division into 'direct' and 'indirect'

(1) *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, September, 1943.

seems fruitless and unessential; rather should we say that any little information, from any source whatever, however tenuous, if it throws light on the sacred text, is to be highly prized, and 'receives an added and nobler dignity, a consecration as it were, when it is used to shed a brighter light on divine things'. It is true no doubt that we must widen the term 'Archaeology' and bring in considerations of topography, history, and in fact anything illustrative; possibly 'sacred antiquities' would describe better that *ensemble* of findings which help us to know the mind of the inspired writer and the way in which he expressed it. Here the Biblical commentator and the pure archaeologist may want to part ways. The commentator is intent on light on the text; the archæologist, as such, pursues the aims proper to his own 'systematic study of antiquities' and knowledge of the usages, customs, and life of a people as can be derived from monumental or fragmentary remains. The Biblical archaeologist has avowedly a special preoccupation. Yet it is important to remember that it is not necessarily apologetic. His foremost task is to throw light on the Biblical narratives; he may or may not take up an apologetic standpoint. There have indeed been signs of undue zeal and haste to 'prove the Bible true', as in some popularizing works. The Catholic is in a happier position; *securus judicat* . . . he need not set out to prove by long ratiocinations that the Bible is true. He knows it is the Word of God.

Only a few archaeologists, a few specialists and students, and the Holy See are in a position to realize the vast changes in and the immensity of the Biblical background revealed after some fifty years more of excavation and enquiry; few are fully awake to the magnitude of the tasks and the innumerable problems that await research and solution. At the time of the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) 'only one or two places in Palestine had been explored by excavations for the purposes of this study'. Today a mere listing of the various excavations and studies thereon, in Palestine and Syria alone, would take many pages.⁽²⁾ But the biblical archæologist has also to consider the entire Near East of the past, Assyria, Babylonia, sites in Syria as Tell Halaf, Ras Shamra, Mari, or Palestine as at Bethsan, Megiddo, Samaria, Jerusalem, Jericho, Lachish, etc., etc. Egypt, the Hittites, Crete and Philistia; none can be omitted. A vast background and whole millennia of history, with quasi-infinite degrees of relevancy to the biblical narratives. Outstanding at the moment are the discoveries from Ras Shamra. These alone may revolutionize our notions of early Hebrew origins, and certainly throw a flood of

(2) Cf. Hennequin in *Supplément du Dictionnaire de la Bible*, 368-524. Fouilles et champs de fouilles en Palestine et Syrie.

light into our knowledge of the ancient east from the 18th to the 15th centuries. De Langhe in a monumental work⁽³⁾ has paved the way and provided the necessary spadework for sober investigations, and has given some idea of the vast amount and possible surprises that may yet come from this site, only one-eighth of which has been systematically explored. And all this is highly relevant for forming the commentator's mind, as we are urged that 'it is absolutely necessary for the interpreter to go back in spirit to those remote countries of the East and to make proper use of the aids afforded by history, archaeology, ethnology and other sciences.'

Generalized war was not fatal to the pursuit of archæology. Admittedly much field-work had to stop peremptorily, and it is not easy to see how any appreciable work can be achieved in the next decade in Palestine. However, a certain amount *was* accomplished during the fallow years; and reflexion and consolidation are always valuable.

Here are some examples of work accomplished in Palestine in the war years. In 1940, C. N. Johns of the Palestine Department of Antiquities published a memoir on the excavations of 1934-1939 at the Jerusalem citadel. The citadel is typically variegated and complex in its structure⁽⁴⁾. A building of the Mamluke and Turkish periods stands on the ruined Crusader castle of the 12th and 13th centuries. This castle was built astride the Roman or Byzantine city wall so as to incorporate the Herodian tower Phasaël, described by Josephus (*Wars* vii, 1, etc.) and built about 25-24 B.C. This tower, popularly known as 'David's tower' and part of the Jewish 'first' wall survived the destruction of 70 A.D. All this is new confirmatory evidence for the configuration of Jerusalem in the New Testament days, the Jerusalem seen and known by Our Lord; and we have additional evidence concerning the course of the walls at earlier periods.

In southern Palestine, Tell-el-Kheleifi near Agaba is considered to be Solomon's Eziongeber (cf. III Kings ix, 26 and xxii, 49). A third and last campaign on this site was in March-May, 1940, under Nelson Glueck of the American School of Archæology. Remains indicate large smelting installations; and there are many traces of copper ore in the rocky hills of the lower Arabah. The localization of Eziongeber seems assured, and Solomon 'in all his glory' should mean more to us. Other war-time excavations include that of Sheik Abreig, directed by Dr B. Maisler of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society. Sheik Abreig is the Talmudic Beth Shearim, or Besara of Josephus, a spiritual centre of the Jews and one-time site of the Sanhedrin. A syna-

(3) De Langhe. *Les Textes de Ras Shamra Ugarit et leur rapport avec le milieu biblique de l'Ancien Testament*. 2 vols. Gerbloux et Paris, 1945.

(4) Cf. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, April, 1940, pp. 36-56.

gogue and very impressive catacombs have been found, and no less than 200 inscriptions of the 2nd to the 4th centuries. This furthers our knowledge of Jewish burial customs, etc., just as we have materials for understanding the tomb of Our Lord, and the point of: 'Who is to roll the stone away for us from the door of the tomb?' (Mark xvi, 3). Tombs of the 1st century with rolling stone entrances are still to be seen⁽⁵⁾.

Other finds are better known and have appeared in *Times* photographs, e.g., Kh. Mefjer near Jericho. An extensive 'Arab' palace is being unearthed here by M. Baramki of the Palestine Department of Antiquities. Some magnificent mosaics have well rewarded the explorers. And some preconceived notions of Islamic art have received their death-blow. This 9th century 'Arab palace' has the human head well represented in mosaics and multiplied manifold in statuary. Another newspaper 'hit' has been the ossuaries of Talpioth⁽⁶⁾. The bones are said to be those of an early Jewish-Christian family (before 70 A.D.); but, as yet, Prof. Sukenik has not published the results of his findings; so little can he said, and *festinemus lente*.

In 1944 the Dominican Biblical School of St Etienne supervised the excavation of remains of an Arab inn o 'khan' at Abn Gosh (better known for its magnificent Crusader church). A detailed report has appeared recently⁽⁷⁾, in which we see that a valuable contribution has been made to Islamic history and archæology.

But, it may well be objected, these last-named examples of excavations bear no relation to the Bible. This is true; however, such work adds to that general knowledge and appreciation of the Near East which is encouraged by the Encyclical *Divino Afflante*, and enables the competent to keep hand and eye in until such time as more biblical sites are opened up.

Reference should be made to much quiet work accomplished by the Palestine Department of Antiquities in making more widespread the sounder results of archæology. Biblical students can but be immensely grateful for admirable 'guides'⁽⁸⁾ and maps published by the same Department, e.g., *O.T. Palestine*, *Avi-Jonah's Roman Palestine*, *Palestine of the Crusaders* (C. N. Johns). Further, the Palestine Archæological Museum, with its lay-out, gallery books, library, etc., is a model of what such places ought to be. It is with helps as these that the biblical student can most profitably respond to the

(5) At Abn Gosh. Cf. Suppl. D.B. 'Fouilles,' col. 372; and at the so-called 'Tombs of the Kings' in Jerusalem.

(6) Suburb of Jerusalem on the Bethlechem road.

(7) *Revue Biblique*, Jan., 1946, pp. 125-134.

(8) To Bethlechem (1939) Sumaria-Sebasti (2nd Ed. 1944) by R. W. Hamilton, to Acre by N. Makhouly (1941), to Beisan by I. Ben-Dor (1943) to Megiddo by G. M. Shipton (1942, 3), etc.

Church's call for more and better-formed exponents of Holy Scripture. In this connexion it is cheering to note that, despite the unrest in Palestine, the Biblical School of St Etienne is fully active again.

From the topography of the Bible to 'Holy Places' is no great step, seeing that the vast majority of 'Holy Places' are, or purport to be, biblical. Some, unjustifiably, seek to dissociate archæology and 'Holy Places,' as e.g. Sir Frederick Kenyon, who says of 'Holy Places' that 'the sites assigned to them have not been discovered by archæology and archæology has not much to say about them. They are matters of tradition, of topographical considerations, and of probability, as to which no certainty is likely to be obtained'(9). But where would we be without archæological findings and expertness in the matter of Siloam, Hezekiah's Tunnel, Ophel, the fortress Antonia, Robinson's Arch, and much else? 'Archæology' and 'Holy Places' have a wider, and truer sense, and most of us prefer a 'Holy Place' after the archæologist has had his say. The work of Vincent and Abel cannot be dismissed in a sentence(10). Certainly the Catholic student will use all the aids available in archæology and cognate studies for the better understanding of Scripture and of 'Holy Places.'

Almost any study of the ancient Near East can be profitable for biblical studies. Let us now consider where archæology has made or can make outstanding contributions.

There is overwhelming evidence that writing was much older and more widespread than has been usually imagined. Evidence to this effect was already forthcoming from Mesopotamia (Kish, Ur Erech) and Egypt up to the third millenium B.C., and even more important, from Tell-El-Amarna from which we know of the copious mail between Syria, Palestine and Egypt about 1400 B.C.; but now with the evidence from Ras Shamra it is impossible to aver, as Welhausen and many of his followers did, that the Hebrews knew nothing of writing (apart from inscriptions) till the 9th century, and that consequently all the early period, especially the patriarchal stories, was but an amalgam of unreliable oral traditions and inventions. A truer note is struck by C. F. A. Schaeffer: 'The Israelite compilers made use of positive information about real events preserved through the centuries as written legends, of which the pattern is preserved by the Ras Shamra texts'(11). And a text as Judges viii, 14 can be taken

(9) *The Bible and Archaeology*, p. 181 A similar expression by Prof. Macalister in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. IV, p. 353.

(10) Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem Antique, Jérusalem Nouvelle*. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, I (1933) and II (1938). Vincent, *L'Authenticité des Lieux Saints*, Paris, 1932. And numerous other works and articles, e.g., *La topographie des Évangiles* (Vincent) in *Vie et Penser*, 3rd Series, Paris, 1945, pp. 45-76.

(11) Schweich Lectures, 1936, p. 58.

quite simply: 'the boy *wrote down* the names . . .'; we need not say that all Israelites at this period could write; but writing was certainly known and in current use.

With a greater knowledge of the origins of writing, much historical criticism is relegated to the lumber room: the residue must be reconsidered. It is no longer possible to assert that the pentateuchal legislation and ritual reflect a later stage in the evolution of society. Codes and cults every bit as elaborate flourished in the world of Ugarit, and that is sufficient for our purposes; it little matters that the geographical extent of that world is far from clearly defined⁽¹²⁾. It is as yet too early to say if or how much the documentary theories of pentateuchal origins will need to be revised; but it is possible and necessary to keep an open mind about all the widely accepted conclusions of scholars. With the rapid advance of knowledge, wisdom demands this. The theory of pentateuchal sources developed by Lagrange⁽¹³⁾ in more recent years, has suddenly acquired *actualité* and certainly shows Catholic scholars avenues to be developed and explored in the years to come.

Sometimes archæology has been able to settle a point of criticism with some trenchancy. There was a time when schools of thought averse to anything like a traditional date or an apostolic origin for St John's Gospel would, on slender grounds, date it 119, 140, or even 170 A.D. But since the finding of the Rylands Papyrus No. 52 we can reasonably suppose that the gospel was written about 100 A.D. All who are competent to date the fragment of M.S. that has been found, agree that it is of the early 2nd century, and so we can conclude that St John's Gospel, seemingly as we have it, was circulating in Egypt at that early date.

More often archæology adduces parallels and learns from comparison. Thus it is argued that the plan of the Solomonian Temple must be traced back to Syro-Palestinian origins and inspiration inasmuch as the plan of the Fosse temple at Lachish comprises the elements *ulam*, *hekal* and *debir*, as do the little temples of 'Seti I' and 'Amenophis III' at Beisan⁽¹⁴⁾. Or we may have very enlightening texts, such as those found at Ras Shamra⁽¹⁵⁾ which seem to give the key to biblical passages⁽¹⁶⁾ or at least illustrate them, e.g., Joel iii, 18:

(12) Cf. an attempt to localise Daniel story in Galilee, *Mémorial Lagrange*, Paris, 1940, pp. 29-37.

(13) R.B., 1938, pp. 163-183.

(14) Cf. de Vaux in R.B., Jan., 1946, p. 152. Review of O. Tuffnell, C.H. Juge, and L. Harding: *The Fosse Temple, Lachish II*. Oxford, 1940.

(15) Cf. De Langhe op. cit. vol. I, p. 372.

(16) But Dussand points out rightly that up to now the Bible explains Ras Shamra texts rather than vice versa. Dussaud, his *Découvertes de Ras Shamra et l'Ancient Testament*. 2nd Ed., Paris, 1941, pp. 79-80.

'... the mountains shall drop down sweetness and the hills shall flow with milk' is paralleled by 'the heavens shall rain down fat and the streams will flow with honey.' And a turn of phrase in the sapiential books, e.g., 'six things there are which the Lord hateth, and the seventh his soul detesteth' is also paralleled: 'there are two sacrifices which Baal hates, and three that are hated by him who rides the clouds.'

Most evident though, as archæology and history gradually reveal the background of the ancient world, is the transcendence and moral superiority of the religion of Israel. Fairly full accounts are available of the mythology and ritual of Babylonia, Egypt, etc., and more matter is to come from the Hittite angle (Boghaz Keni, etc.); and Ras Shamra will once again be a fruitful source of information. But in this matter, as Allbright has said⁽¹⁷⁾: 'every fresh publication of Canaanite mythological texts makes the gulf between the religions of Canaan and Israel increasingly clear.' The gods of Canaan and all Ugarit are born, live as men only can, die: Israel has but one God (Exod. xx, 3), no mythology, no consort, no children. The Israelites were continuously tempted and often fell. The lure of Canaan was always there. The prophets had a stern struggle, and kings were often ineffective: 'but yet he took not away the high places: for the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places' (IV Kings xii, 3). Yet, despite all, Israel remained faithful to Jahveist monotheism.

In short, we are far better off now as regards knowledge of the whole background of the Bible, and better equipped than ever before to understand the literal meaning of the Sacred Text, and to 'bring forth new fruit in the field of Sacred Scripture, a field ever fertile and never cultivated enough'⁽¹⁸⁾. The newly-found truths are intimately connected with the unchanging truth: lead to it, illustrate it, participate in it. Here is a delicate interweaving of revealed truths and truths of human finding: all is from God: and from God's viewpoint, if we may so speak, all are but one. Meanwhile, seemingly endless years of patient hackwork remain to be done. Many must sacrifice the best of their lives to tasks which so often will seem so material. Upon others devolves the more genial work of synthesising and collating the results of practical finds and arriving at some conclusions about the meaning of the Sacred Text. Then may true theologians come forward to use the conclusions thus acquired: *non omnes omnia possumus*.

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(17) Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938, p. 24.

(18) *Divino Afflante*.