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Old Testament History And Recent Archeology From Moses to David

Gleason L. Archer

From the earliest period of the development of the documentary hypothesis in the nineteenth century, it was assumed that Moses lived in an age prior to the knowledge and use of writing in ancient Israel. Since then there has been a wealth of archeological evidence proving that writing was well known and widely practiced by all of Israel's neighbors during the second millennium B. C., and employed even for common purposes by the rank and file of the citizenry. It has nevertheless been difficult for those who still advocate the Wellhausen hypothesis to accept the possibility that Moses could himself have composed the five books of the Pentateuch and committed them to writing. Even the advocates of the form critical approach have insisted that while very ancient oral traditions may have been embodied in the Pentateuch, yet they were not committed to writing until the sixth century B. C. or later.

It is interesting to see how this carry-over of the older view still persists in the thinking of the Swedish scholar Ivan Engnell, who insisted that the art of writing was an affair of the specialist in Palestine.¹ His argument that the written literature of Ugarit was unique in Syria-Palestine is belied by the facts that documents in the Ugaritic script have been discovered in Mount Tabor, at Beth-shemesh, and at Taanach. As Kitchen suggests,² the reason for the scarcity of written materials from the late second millennium in Palestine is probably due to the fact that they made extensive use of papyrus (imported, of course, from Egypt), and in the cli-

¹ E. Nielsen, *Oral Tradition, a Moral Problem in Old Testament Introduction*, pp. 17, 56.

² Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, p. 137.

matic conditions which prevailed through much of the Holy Land (excluding the Dead Sea region) this was a very perishable medium for documentation. Nevertheless, there have been some epigraphs found on a stone in a linear alphabetic script from the late Bronze Age in Palestine itself.³ It is safe to say that if the Ugaritic literature had been known to the scholarly world in the time of Wellhausen, it would have been impossible to assign to a late period those sections of the so-called priestly document of the Pentateuch which exhibit terms and phrases already appearing in fifteenth-century Ras Shamra. Some of the hitherto difficult expressions and passages in Leviticus have recently been cleared up by parallels in the Ugaritic tablets composed in the eighteenth to the fifteenth centuries B. C. Some of these have been noted by E. A. Speiser.⁴ Some of these expressions in Leviticus were already archaic and obscure by postexilic times, and their appearance in Leviticus completely ignores the lines of distinction drawn by the higher critics between the holiness code and the rest of the priestly document. The variation between the singular and the second person plural which has been used by some critics as a basis for division of sources in Deuteronomy is found similarly intermingled in Ugaritic style.⁵

The form critical school has assumed from the very beginning of their movement that there was a uniform evolution from smaller so-called primitive literary units to larger, more complex entities in the course of the development of the Pentateuchal literature. Kitchen points out, however, that this is a fallacy, judging from the ancient Oriental literature that has been preserved for other cultures of the third millennium B. C. and onward. Albright himself has pointed out the same thing in his critique of *Formgeschichte*, both in its application to biblical studies and to Homeric study. The fact of the matter is that literary works for any given period may vary considerably in length. Among the nine epic tales extant from the twentieth to the nineteenth century in Sumeria, Kramer indicates that they vary in length from one hundred to six hundred lines. In Egypt likewise there is no noticeable trend

³ *Ibid.*, footnote 102.

⁴ E. A. Speiser, "Leviticus and the Critics," in the *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume*, pp. 29-45.

⁵ Cf. W. L. Moran, *Biblica*, XLIII (1962), 103.

from the smaller to the larger and more complex; the twentieth-century "Tale of Sinuhe" is actually longer than the thirteenth-century "Tale of Two Brothers."⁶

Nor can the form critical principle be sustained in non-Hebraic ancient Near East literature that the genre determines the historical accuracy of a tradition. Thus, in Egypt it would be absurd to argue that the warlike exploits of Thutmose III are the less real because they are set forth in victory hymns, as over against prose annals of some sort (such as the selections translated by John A. Wilson).⁷ Nor is there any justification for the tendency of Formgeschichte practitioners like Sigmund Mowinckel to press many of the poetic compositions of the Pentateuch and the Psalms into the mould of a cultic *Sitz im Leben*. It is quite unwarrantable, for example, to insist that the triumphal song of Exodus 15 was composed for cultic use; it is very clearly an example of the triumph-song genre like the victory hymns of Thutmose III, Rameses II, and Merneptah so largely practiced in the very culture from which the Israelites emerged at the time of the Exodus.⁸

A very interesting trend in Israeli scholarship has been initiated by Professor Yehezkel Kaufmann. In his work, *The Religion of Israel* (translated from the Hebrew original published in 1948), Dr. Kaufmann shows on the basis of a careful analysis of the internal evidence of the text that the material of allegedly postexilic "P" is actually older than that of Deuteronomy, for it says nothing about requiring the worship of God in a single, fixed location or permanent sanctuary (as "D" does). Moreover, it preserves an outlook completely unaffected by the great ideas and ethical insights of the eighth-century prophets; hence it must be preprophetic in origin. Mosaic monotheism is to be regarded as a revolutionary emergent, radically different from all forms of paganism exhibited by Israel's neighbors.⁹ In this connection, it is instructive to compare what Albright says about the ethical standards of supposedly monotheistic Akhnaton of Egypt, who followed the example of Osiris in marrying his own sister,

⁶ Kitchen, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁷ John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, by James B. Pritchard, pp. 234-41.

⁸ Kitchen, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-33.

⁹ Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, p. 187.

and even his daughter (as Ramesses II did later on). Albright compares the performance of Baal in the Ugaritic epic, who raped his sister Anath (in the form of a heifer) eighty-eight times, and made her his consort.¹⁰

As to Mosaic authorship of the Torah, Albright continues to emphasize the important role which he must have played in initiating this legal code, at least in its original oral form. In an article for *Christianity Today*, he stated: "The Pentateuchal law is substantially Mosaic in origin, and that the patriarchal and Mosaic historical traditions are astonishingly early and dependable seems in my opinion certain."¹¹ Further, he says: "There has also been a great deal of nonsense written about discrepancies and contradictions in the Bible."¹² Thus he states that there are far more undeniable discrepancies between some of the laws in the Code of Hammurabi than can be found in the Pentateuch; yet such discrepancies by no means prove multiplicity of sources.

Another interesting approach on the basis of comparative literature is offered by Cyrus Gordon. He points out that documentarian critics have uniformly assumed that different areas of interest in the Pentateuch can only be accounted for by difference in authorship.¹³ Yet we find that the themes carved on the shield of Achilles in Book 18 of Homer's *Iliad* contain a series of scenes from both war and peace, with the heavenly objects of the sun, moon, and stars, along with a representation of the cosmic river. There are illustrations of agriculture, herding, and worship at the altar; there are litigants arguing in court, and there are young couples getting married. All of these diverse elements are represented on this one shield because of the artist's desire to set forth the many facets of Hellenic life. Gordon writes: "Traditional Judaism, from remote antiquity, never doubted that the five books of Moses formed one perfect opus. The critics, however, came along and asked how the Pentateuch could be a single work, when it deals with the universe, law, agriculture, herding, hunting, sacrifice, social institutions, war, and peace. The

¹⁰ William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, p. 129.

¹¹ Albright, "Moses: A More Realistic View," *Christianity Today*, XII (1968), 8-10.

¹² Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹³ Cyrus Gordon, "The Minoan Bridge: Newest Frontier in Biblical Studies," *Christianity Today*, VII (1963), 3-7, March 15.

shield of Achilles answers the question: life is made up of just such elements. The Pentateuch, being the perfect book, told the ancient Hebrew all he had to know about the universe, history, human relations, religion—in short, everything essential."¹⁴ Gordon also points out that just as Deuteronomy serves as a recapitulation of the laws set forth in the earlier books, so the final book of Homer's *Odyssey* gives a summary restatement of the action of the *Iliad* in direct discourse, as told by famous participants in the Trojan War."¹⁵

One of the most significant developments in recent Pentateuchal criticism pertains to the relationship between the covenant portions of the Pentateuch and Joshua and the standard form of suzerainty treaty followed in the second millennium B. C. In 1954 George Mendenhall drew attention to the similarity between these Hittite covenants between overlord and vassal and the structure of the covenant between God and Israel at Sinai.¹⁶ In 1960 Meredith Kline extended this line of comparison in the *Treaty of the Great King* to the structure of the book of Deuteronomy.¹⁷ The typical second-millennium suzerainty treaty contained the following elements in a fixed and standard order: (1) the preamble (cf. Deut. 1:1-5); (2) the historical prologue (cf. Deut. 1:6—4:49); (3) the stipulations (cf. chapters 5-26 of Deuteronomy); (4) the curses and blessing attendant upon covenant-breaking or covenant-keeping, followed by covenant ratification (so Deut. 27-30); (5) arrangements for perpetuating the covenant, which included the invocation of witnesses, the official disposition of the written copies of the treaty, and arrangements for its periodic reading aloud in public (cf. Deut. 31). It is important to observe that in contrast to these Syro-Anatolian treaties of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, preserved in the archives of Boghazköy, the half dozen or more Assyrian, Aramaean, and Phoenician treaties known from the eighth century and onward show a quite different structure and uniformly omit item number two: the historical prologue.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ George Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*.

¹⁷ M. G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*, pp. 10ff.

¹⁸ Cf. Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity*, second edition, p. 16.

Kitchen comments: "Nearly all the known treaties of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries B. C. follow this pattern closely. Sometimes some elements are omitted, but the order of them is almost invariable, whenever the original texts are sufficiently well preserved to be analyzed. This is, therefore, a stable form in the period concerned."¹⁹ In these second-millennium covenants Kitchen adds: "The divine witnesses almost always come between the stipulations and the curses, whereas, in all the first-millennium covenants so far known they never do. The divine witnesses are introduced either before the stipulations or after the curses, never in between. Furthermore, in second-millennium covenants the curses are balanced off by blessings for treaty-performance; whereas in the first-millennium documents the curses have no such counterpart."²⁰

Lastly, the later covenants vary the order as between stipulations and curses, but in the earlier the stipulations always precede the curses. So in Exodus, the preamble to God's covenant with Israel begins with 20:1; the historical prologue follows in 20:2; the stipulations come next in 20:3-17, 22-26, and all through chapters 21, 22, 23, 25-31. The deposition of the written text is referred to in Exodus 25:16; 34:1, 28-29. The witnesses specified are memorial stones (rather than the gods of a pagan pantheon (Ex. 24:4), while the curses and blessings follow in Leviticus 26:3-33. The oath and solemnizing ceremony are referred to in Exodus 24:1-11. A similar structure occurs so strikingly in Joshua 24 that Albright makes special mention of it,²¹ and he makes this significant admission: "I formerly held that the religious traditions of Genesis were, in general, retrojections from post-Mosaic times, but I have now changed my mind, since there is no reason to single out religious traditions as relatively late, while accepting the antiquity of patriarchal customary law and historical tradition in general. Thanks to the work of E. A. Speiser and Frank M. Cross, Jr., it has become clear that early Hebrew religious traditions rest on pre-Mosaic foundations, since the divine names and forms of cult are different from anything in the later theology and cultic legislation of the Pentateuch."²² It is interesting to see from this

¹⁹ Kitchen, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 96.

²⁰ Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²² *Ibid.*

quotation how this eminent scholar of essentially rationalistic, antisupernaturalistic persuasion feels driven by the force of archeological evidence to recognize the historical accuracy of large portions of the Pentateuch which were formerly pilloried as anachronistic by the architects of the documentary hypothesis. He even suggests²³ that the case-laws of early Israel were already in use among the Hebrews before the time of Moses himself and were probably brought from Mesopotamia in the form of modified Babylonian case-laws, as illustrated by Exodus 21:2 (the provision limiting the maximum servitude of a Hebrew slave to six years.)²⁴ Even though he holds this position in an acceptable form (i.e., he supposes that additional Hebrew immigrants arrived in Canaan during the sixteenth century, fleeing from the Cassite conquerors of Babylonia), this still constitutes favorable testimony from an adverse witness, and therefore is of special significance according to the rules of legal evidence. The same is true of his abandonment of the time-honored distinction between Yahweh and Elohim as valid criteria for source-division. He points out that in Ugaritic poetry we find constantly recurring parallelism containing different names or appellations of the same divinity.²⁵ The goddess Athirat is also referred to as Qudshu, Aliyan Ba'lu as Zubulu ba'lu 'arsi. It may have been true, says Albright, that definite scribal schools from the tenth century on tended to prefer Yahweh or Elohim in position A of a parallelism, but the other name would often appear in position B; it is therefore hopeless to attempt division into watertight "sources" who employed one of the two principal divine names exclusively.

Nor is it possible any longer to maintain that the idea of covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel was of first-millennium origin. Both the basic term, *berit* (covenant), and the related expression, *'ēdut* (testimony) have been found in pre-Mosaic times.²⁶ We stress this because as late as 1959 L. Rost asserted²⁷ that *'ēdut* was a late Aramaism; but the Egyptian Turin Judicial Papyrus 4:5, by A de Buck employs

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 121-24.

²⁶ Cf. *Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental Research*, CXXI (1951), 21f.

²⁷ L. Rost, *Baumgärtel Festschrift*, p. 163.

it as a loan word.²⁸ It also appears as Item 300 in M. Burchardt's "Altkanaanäische Eigennamen im Ägyptischen," II, 1911.²⁹ In view of this information (which had been lying around in published form for nearly fifty years) it seems highly absurd for a scholar like Rost to make such a baseless assertion.

Turning now to the continuing controversy concerning the date of Exodus, there has been little in the way of new archaeological evidence to weigh in the balance in coming to a decision between the early date theory (approximately 1445 in the reign of Amenhotep II) and the late date (approximately 1290 in the reign of Rameses II). Even recent conservative writers like Kenneth Kitchen and Ronald K. Harrison (whose 1969 volume in the field of Old Testament introduction marks a new milestone in conservative scholarship) are willing to settle for the 1290 date, even though they recognize the difficulty of reconciling this with the 480-year interval between the Exodus and the founding of Solomon's temple specified in I Kings 6:1.³⁰ Harrison tries to cope with the problem by explaining the 480 as twelve generations of forty years each; but since a true generation span is more likely to be twenty-five years, he says we may multiply twelve times twenty-five and come out with 300—which allows nicely for the Rameses dates.³¹ He does not explain, however, the reason for the ignorance on the part of the ancient Israelite historian that generations during the period of the Judges really lasted only twenty-five years rather than forty; nor does he explain how twentieth-century A. D. experts could be more knowledgeable on this matter than those who lived within a few centuries of the Exodus itself.

The alleged difficulty that a date in the 1440's would reduce the length of the 430-year sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt to a mere 180 years, or else extend Abraham's birth date back before the Third Dynasty of Ur, overlooks the factor that no long date is given in Scripture as to the interval between Abraham's first arrival in Canaan and Jacob's

²⁸ A. de Buck, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, XXIII (1937), 163.

²⁹ Cf. Kitchen, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-75. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 174-80; 315-25.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

migration to Egypt, whereas a long date is given in I Kings 6:1. It is easier to allow for overlapping reckonings where no such long dates are specified; it is actually necessary to do this in the computation of the period of the Judges, where an end-to-end total of 410 must be compressed to about 290 years between Othniel and Eli. Harrison makes no attempt to explain how Jephthah in 1100 B.C. could have labored under the misapprehension that Israel had for 300 years been in possession of territory claimed by the Ammonites, according to Judges 11:26. He does not even suggest that Jephthah was ignorant of the true length of an Israelite generation; nor for that matter does he demonstrate that the author of I Kings 6:1 actually had twelve generations in mind, since he says nothing about time when he gives the long date as 480. Since Jephthah's whole argument with Ammonites rested upon the length of Israel's possession of the disputed territory, it hardly seems possible to explain it away as numerological legerdemain.

Those who take Bible chronology seriously and regard I Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26 as trustworthy may take comfort from the fact that the arguments based on the apparent date of the destruction of cities like Lachish and Debir (late thirteenth century) are easily set aside by the observation that the book of Joshua says nothing about the total and permanent destruction of these particular cities by the Israelite forces. As for Hazor, it is true that the term *heherim* ("devoted to destruction") is used in Joshua 11:11 of Joshua's destruction of this city. Very clearly all who were captured there were put to death, and the city was put to the torch. But this does not necessarily mean that the late thirteenth-century ash level is to be associated with this episode, for it would all depend upon how quickly this desirable site was reoccupied, either by refugees of the original population or by other new Canaanite settlers. If a burnt city is reoccupied soon enough, the ashes of its recent destruction tend to be carted away rather than being left in place to form a hardened and permanent layer. It should also be borne in mind that Hazor was not put under a divine curse, as Jericho was, and it may have been as quickly reoccupied after the departure of Joshua's troops as Athens was in 479 B. C.

after the withdrawal of the Persian forces that had reduced it to ashes. Athens actually became rebuilt without delay, and went on to greater strength and glory than it ever had before the Persian invasion. So also with Hazor, which proved to be such a formidable power by the time of Deborah and Barak. Note that already in Joshua 19:36 the erstwhile devastated city of Hazor is spoken of as a walled community once more, serving as a boundary for the tribe of Naphtali. Judges 4:2 refers to a later King Jabin (apparently of the same dynasty as the Jabin whom Joshua defeated) as reigning over a large district with Hazor as his capital, in the time of Deborah. The late thirteenth-century destruction level might then be associated with Barak's victory over the forces of Jabin and Sisera.

On the basis of the scarabs and pottery found in the cemetery associated with City IV in Jericho, it is impossible to date the fall of that city subsequent to 1400 B. C., despite all of the negative findings of Kathleen Kenyon (as we have previously shown). On the other hand, there are absolutely insurmountable objections to the Late Date Theory on the basis of archeological discovery. The most noteworthy of these is the evidence of extensive Egyptian occupation³² and building in Goshen during the period of Rameses II, whereas the record in Exodus concerning the ten plagues (cf. 8:22; 9:25-26) makes it clear that Goshen was at that time occupied by the Hebrews alone.

The former confident claim of a lack of sedentary population in Transjordan during the early fourteenth century, or indeed during the entire Late Bronze era, is now being subjected to increasing modification as more and more discoveries are made in Transjordan from this very period. Just a year ago³² the excavators of Pella reported finding sixteenth-century potsherds and a burial labeled the "Tomb of Goblets" dating to about 1550. Tomb 4 was found to be from the final phase of Middle Bronze. Coupled with G. Lankaster Harding's discovery of ceramic ware and scarabs from about 1600 B. C. in some tombs at Amman, and of Middle Bronze pottery at Naur and Mount Nebo, it augurs the demise of Nelson Glueck's old argument concerning a lack of any population

³² *American Schools of Oriental Research Newsletter* 9, 1967-68, p. 5.

in Ammon and Moab who could have opposed the Israelites during a fifteenth-century invasion.

In this connection, it ought to be added that no advocate of the Late Date Theory has yet come up with a satisfying explanation of how Joshua and his Hebrew cohorts could have been ranging about freely and unchecked by the powerful Rameses II right in the middle of his reign. Even after the thirteenth-century mutual nonaggression treaty between Rameses and the Hittites, all of Palestine proper was acknowledged by both signatory parties to be exclusively Egyptian domain, outside the Hittite sphere of influence. In short, the Late Date Theory, which implies an outright rejection of the biblical chronology as fallacious in at least three passages, labors under such a complex of difficulties and improbabilities as to be incapable of logical defense.

Albright devotes a good deal of attention to the Habiru, who figure so prominently in the Tell el-Amarna Letters from the first decades of the fourteenth century. He comes up with a new etymology for the name itself.⁵³ Instead of relating it to *'ābar* (*cross over, pass through*), as has hitherto been done, he derives it from *'āpār* (*dust*) and interprets it as meaning *dusty man* (the Egyptian spelling as *'Apīru* gives him the warrant for seeking a Semitic root with middle radical *p* rather than *b*). He then suggests that a *dusty man* is a term applied to a donkey caravaner (without offering any proof that other trades and outdoor activities would be exempt from this dusty label), and deduces from this unproved assumption that the donkey caravan trade was the chief activity of this wandering, transient people.

He suggested that they also practiced banditry on the side, especially after the destruction of Accad by the Gutians (ca. 2200 B. C.). Yet they also made more respectable contributions as well, for among the ancestors of Samsuiluna of the First Dynasty of Babylon were the eponymous founders of the tribes of the Awnanum and the Yahrurum. He then explains Awnanum as the original form of Onan, the son of Judah, and Yahrurum as the same as Er, his brother. He fails to explain how Onan and Er, both of whom seem to have been cut off childless according to Genesis 38:7-9, managed to

⁵³ Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

found large and powerful tribes which located in Mesopotamia rather than in Canaan. It must be admitted also that Akkadian *Awnanum* is not particularly close to Hebrew Onan, and it is rather unlikely that a long name like Yahrurum would be the origin of the monosyllabic *Er*. But Albright also mentions that the Banu-Yamina (whom he apparently equates with the tribe of Benjamin) were seminomadic groups living in villages and in sheep-grazing territory in northern Mesopotamia. By the fifteenth century B. C., the Ugaritic documents list a suburb of Aleppo as "Hlb-'prm," which of course would mean *Aleppo of the 'Apiru*. Albright concludes that in the late eighteenth century the 'Apiru had become bandits or mercenaries serving under foreign powers.

In the case of the Hittites, during the period of the Old Hittite Empire, the 'Apiru served also as handlers of transport and baggage for the Hittite army. By 1430 an inscription of Amenhotep II lists among the captives taken by Egyptian forces thirty-six hundred 'Apiru. Albright even suggests that Lab'ayu of Shechem was actually an 'Apiru, who gave his territory over to the invading 'Apiru troops. This would fit in with an early occupation of Shechem by the Hebrews of Joshua.³⁴ But even after this, Rameses II, and also Rameses III of the Twentieth Dynasty, list large numbers of 'Apiru as still being employed by the Egyptians as transport laborers from their stone quarries. Back in the early fifteenth century, 'Apiru appeared to have been used as vineyard workers in the northeastern portion of the delta. To sum up Albright's approach to the relationship between the biblical Hebrews and the Habiru of the cuneiform and Egyptian records, he seems to approve the soundness of the theory that the Hebrews were at least a branch of this same larger group of Habiru who were active in the third millennium, prior to the birth of Abraham in Sumeria. It goes without saying that this interpretation assumes that the record in Genesis contains a much later simplification of the true historical facts. Therefore, among other difficulties, it certainly militates against the uniqueness of Abraham as the ancestor of the entire Hebrew race. From this standpoint, therefore, one can hardly reconcile this theory of Albright's with the accuracy and reliability

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

of the biblical record.

Reverting now to the question of the date of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, it is interesting to note that Kitchen (who himself is an advocate of the late theory of the Exodus) indicates that the city of Debir was twice attacked by the Hebrews: once during Joshua's campaign, personally led by him and on a later occasion by Caleb and the tribe of Judah, when they began their own separate settlement. He feels that the major destruction of Debir (assuming it to be the same as Tell Beit Mirsim) is to be identified with that second campaign conducted by Caleb. This then would indicate that the time of the destruction of this city was not as closely tied in with the date for Joshua's invasion as was formerly believed. At the same time, he concedes that the case for dating this destruction of Debir at about 1220 B. C. depends on the soundness of interpreting an ostrakon that has "the year four" written on it in Egyptian, as indicating the fourth year of Merneptah. This deduction is far from conclusive, as Kitchen himself admits.³⁵

It is interesting to observe that he does not favor the identification of Et-Tell with the biblical Ai, but rather with some other ancient site like Beth-aven; for he feels that Ai must be looked for in some other region than Et-Tell. Indeed this identification has always provided embarrassment even for Albright himself (who first persuaded the scholarly fraternity to adopt this identification) because it necessitated the assumption that the biblical writer had confused Bethel and Ai. Since Et-Tell could not have been inhabited in the time of Joshua's invasion (whether that be understood as taking place in the early fourteenth century or in the mid-thirteenth), it was necessary to assume that the actual Israelite attack was upon the city of Bethel, and that only later was it confused with Ai. This, of course, left unexplained how Bethel could be mentioned in Joshua 9:17 as a separate, although nearby, city in connection with the Ai episode. In other words, if Ai was really Bethel, what then was Bethel itself in this same account? Such an explanation really raises far more problems than it pretends to explain.

In regard to the Israelite conquest of Canaan, Kaufmann

³⁵ Kitchen, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

has some interesting observations to make.³⁶ He points out that the usual theory of modern critics is that the historical basis for the boundaries promised to the Israelites by the Lord in the Torah was a retrojection from the actual limits of the empire of David. Yet this explanation does not fit the facts. For example, Joshua 1:4 specifies the limits of Israel's conquest and settlement as extending north from the Lebanon range to the Euphrates River, and then all the way south to the River of Egypt (or Wadi el-'A-rish). No mention of the Transjordanian region is ever included in any of these promises of possession for the descendants of Abraham, whether in Genesis, Exodus, or in any other part of the Torah.

Indeed, the choice of the half-tribe of Manasseh and the tribes of Gad and Reuben when they selected territory on the east side of the Jordan valley was regarded by the others as somewhat of a departure, putting them at a spiritual disadvantage because they had settled outside of the Land of Promise. This could hardly be reconciled with the actual state of affairs as it existed in the time of David. On this Kaufmann writes: "Every explanation based upon actual historical circumstances for later hopes is wrecked upon the hard fact that the promised land does not include Transjordan. Why should territory conquered by Moses, settled by Israelite tribes, united ethnically, culturally, and politically with the western tribes, have been excluded by these patriots from their dreams and hopes for the future? There is but one convincing way of accounting for this: the boundaries of the promised land are a legacy from before the Conquest. There existed an ancient oracle promising the land of Canaan to Israel."³⁷ Earlier Kaufmann asked the question: "Moreover, if the Davidic empire is the model, why does the promised land not include Ammon, Moab, and Edom? Even when the future territory promised to Israel is specified in the prophecies of Jeremiah, Obadiah, and Zechariah, they never include Tyre, Sidon, or Byblos in the Phoenician territory. Even the prophecies concerning the downfall of Tyre and Sidon do not include any promise that Israel will some day inherit their land."³⁸

³⁶ Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

It is very significant how effective is the use that Kaufmann makes of this type of approach. He points out the fact that the special enemies of Israel mentioned in the Pentateuch include Amalek (Ex. 17; Deut. 25) and also Midian. Yet, the last recorded battle with the Midianites was in the days of Gideon, and Amalek appears only in connection with one of the expeditions by King Saul. The bitterest and most dangerous enemy of Israel, the Aramean power of Damascus, is never mentioned as hostile in the Pentateuch, but, on the contrary, the region of Padan-aram is mentioned only in the most favorable manner as a proper place for Isaac and Jacob to seek their wives. Likewise, he points out that the attitude of the Pentateuch toward kingship in Israel is of a very vague and general sort, and this can hardly be explained as an extrapolation or retrojection from a time in Israel's history when monarchy had actually been instituted. The few regulations in Deuteronomy 17 which do refer to a king simply specify that he may not be a foreigner, nor is he to amass horses, women, silver, or gold. But these few moral and religious rules do not even touch upon such matters as the basic privileges of the monarchy, the rite of anointing a king, the royal prerogatives of taxing the population or exacting from them tithes, or administering justice to them. Nothing is said about court officials, or about the right of confiscating property and so on. Therefore, it is very difficult to suppose that this passage could have been written subsequent to the time of King Saul and his successors.

We close this section of Israel's history with some observations concerning Albright's valuable contribution to our understanding of the Canaanite religious situation. The figure of Asherah, which is mistakenly translated in the King James Version as *a grove* in connection with idolatrous worship, was apparently the consort or wife of the god Baal, who was the high god of the Canaanites. Albright suggests that her name was originally part of a longer appellation which appears in Ugaritic as "Rabbatu 'athiratu yammi," meaning either *the lady who traverses the sea* or *the lady who treads on the sea dragon*. She is also given by the Ras Shamrans the appellation Qaniyatu 'elima or *she who gave birth to the gods*. In an earlier myth she was said to have destroyed the sea

dragon SD, although later Baal or his sister Anat was given the honor of being the slayer of the primeval dragon.

As for Baal himself, Albright suggests that his personal name was really Hadad. Baal hardly ever appears as a title for Hadad in the earlier texts of the Mari Period or in the Egyptian transcriptions from 1900 to 1700 B. C. But it became quite common indeed from the fifteenth century and onward. Baal-Hadad's home was said to be on Mount Sapunu, which apparently was Mount Casius, to the north of Ugarit. Therefore, he is often called Baal-Zephon. Among his favorite titles in the epics are *'Al'iyān-Baal*, which means the *triumphant lord*; and also *Rakibu 'arapati*, meaning *rider of the clouds*. Occasionally also he is entitled *Zubulu Ba'alu 'arsi*, meaning *majesty, lord of the earth*. Baal was closely associated both with Anath and Astarte or Ashtaroth. Anath was not only Baal's virgin sister, but also his consort. One of her titles at Ashkelon was *darkatu*, apparently meaning *dominion or rule*. In a recently described Ugaritic tablet the titles attributed to her and *Ba'latu Mulki* (meaning *mistress of kingship*), *Ba'latu Darkati* (meaning *mistress of dominion*), and *Ba'latu Shamemi Ramemi*, meaning *mistress of the high heavens*. The Carthaginian goddess Tanit was more fully called *Tennit-Pane-Ba'al* which means probably *radiance of the presence of Baal*. Tanit was then an aspect of the goddess Anath. In Phoenicia and Palestine, Astarte or Ashtaroth grew in importance in the pagan cult while Anath became hidden under various other appellations. Later still, both goddesses were apparently combined into a conflated figure called Atargatis.³⁹

As for the sacred Tetragrammaton itself, Albright believes that Yahweh is the verb *hayah* used in the hiphil stem, and means, *He brings into being*. Therefore, he would interpret Exodus 3:14 as being properly vocalized *'asher 'ahyeh*, meaning *I bring into being that which I bring into being*. This would be a first-person form of the usual third-person form, meaning, *It is He who creates what comes into existence*. This would correspond with the Egyptian "shpr.f pw wnn.ty.fy" which would mean, *He brings into being that which is to be*. The difficulty of relating this to the specialized way in which the name is actually used in the Torah and the subsequent

³⁹ Albright, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-33.

books of the Old Testament is not really dealt with by Albright as he advocates this theory. The difficulty, of course, is that Yahweh is almost never used in speaking of God simply as Creator, but rather of His relationship as covenant-keeping, redeeming God of His purchased people, Israel. Consequently, it is probably better to keep to the traditional explanation, that the pointing in Exodus 3:14 is correct, and that the true reading was " 'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh," meaning, *I am who I am*. But the verb *to be* must be understood not as an affirmation of mere existence, but rather relationship. That is, He is the redeeming God of His covenant people. This would fit in with the characteristic covenantal affirmation, "I will be your God and you shall be my people."

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