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Editorial

IT is not my intention normally to focus editorial interest round my own personal activities, but a visit to the Near East this summer gave me an unusual opportunity to make an unhurried tour of some of the famous sites of biblical archaeology. The original aim was to spend several months covering the main biblical sites in the various countries in a preliminary way with a view to returning later for detailed photography and to make notes for writing later on. With this purpose in mind my wife and I, together with a friend, equipped a Volkswagen Caravan, which was to be our home for the duration. We had of course reckoned without the Arab-Israeli war, and as events turned out anyone with a British passport was unable to cross either the Syrian or Iraqi frontiers. This meant that we could not without inordinate expense both for ourselves and for the vehicle, get into the Arab countries themselves or through them into Israel. Accepting our sad fate, we decided to concentrate primarily on Turkey, and also Greece. We had taken with us a considerable library of archaeological books from the classic Anatolian studies of Sir William Ramsey to a spate of recent publications, from the technical to the semi-popular. I was particularly interested to discover how valuable these books really were when read with some care on the sites.

There has been tremendous progress in biblical archaeology from the time of the First World War's end to our own day, interrupted only temporarily by the Second War. Several factors have contributed to this development, the extension of metal surfaced roads, the increasing participation of Americans, the continuing work of major European Universities, and not least the lucrative tourist industry on which so many of the countries in question greatly depend. Roads have not only helped the archaeologists themselves but also brought the tourists, and that in turn has meant that otherwise scarcely wealthy governments have been willing to sink capital into archaeology since they know that once the scholars go, the site can be developed for tourists. Tourism has been a major factor in the blossoming of archaeological studies in Turkey. I shall not cover in any detail what we saw in Turkey since I hope to write that up elsewhere shortly; here I want to concentrate on the books.

The general books on the value and significance of biblical archaeology were excellent. Kenneth Kitchen's *Ancient Israel and Old Testament* (Tyndale, 191 pp., 18s. 6d.) while lamenting that OT and ancient Near Eastern study have become somewhat compartmentalised, shows that archaeology can illuminate and illustrate the OT, and occasionally confirm it. Another valuable general book is W. G. Williams, *Archaeology in Biblical Research* (Lutterworth, 223 pp., illustrated, 35s.); Dr. Williams covers a wider range, showing how archaeology developed from random digging by enthusiasts into a science, and how modern archaeologists work. He demonstrates how archaeology has filled in a vast new background picture of the ancient world in which the Bible

is set. Finally he tells how archaeologists have helped unravel the mysteries of ancient languages. These two books are written by scholars for the educated non-technical reader, and as such are excellent.

But when we turned to the semi-specialist works which were often by well known names and look both from their titles and from the contents and index pages as if they covered most of the field of biblical archaeology, we were largely disappointed. It would perhaps be invidious to mention particular books, but suffice it to say that we spent several days, before we left, sorting through archaeological books with some care and selecting the most informative. What all too often happens is that the author writes up at great length the sites in which he is interested or has special knowledge, and either omits the others or pots them down into two or three sentences of little worth. Over and over again we found major sites handled in this way. The need for a comprehensive coverage within one book of all biblical archaeology is great, perhaps even a dictionary of biblical archaeology.

S.O.T.S.

These initials stand for the *Society for Old Testament Study*, which in 1967 celebrates its half-centenary. It was with delight and relief that on return to England I found awaiting me their jubilee volume edited by Professor D. Winton Thomas, *Archaeology and Old Testament Study* (OUP, 493 pp., 75s.); I only wished I had had it in my possession before I went out. It is written at specialist level by experts, but it is well written and thus quite intelligible to those who do not know the more esoteric languages, and also comprehensive in its coverage of major sites. Half the book is devoted to Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria and Anatolia, and the rest to Palestine. The contributors are internationally known, and the work will doubtless be a standard reference book for years to come.

Dr. Thomas' introduction is probably the best succinct introduction to biblical archaeology available. He recognises that people know of the great progress archaeologists are making, but are much less clear as to what the precise contribution of archaeology to biblical, and in this case of course OT, studies either is or can be. He shows in assessing this a proper scholarly caution throughout. The first question is to interpret the evidence, and experts do not always agree on interpretation. Then it has to be assimilated to other discoveries, archaeological, linguistic, historical and cultural. Dr. Thomas warns against all attempts to prove the Bible true by means of archaeology. Though he does not mention them, one thinks of the misguided attempts of Sir Charles Marston and more recently the two books by Werner Keller to do just this. Dr. Thomas is certainly right. For one thing, the truth of the Bible is not dependent on whether or not archaeologists can prove this or that, and secondly—and this shows the impossibility of the task—nearly all the evidence bears only *indirectly* on what the Bible is saying.

Dr. Thomas believes the direct contribution of archaeology to OT study is very small but that the indirect contribution is enormous. The indirect evidence is provided by means of sketching in the background of culture, social and economic customs, laws, history and a host

of other details, to say nothing of linguistic studies and the help given by comparative philology. He summarises:

'If the OT needs archaeology for its better understanding, archaeology needs no less the OT for the interpretation of the material remains which it unearths. If, without the light which archaeology sheds, the significance of much in the OT would be missed, so, without the OT, much archaeological material would go unexplained. Archaeology and the OT together form a mutually interdependent aid for the understanding of one another' (p. xxxi).

As to the particular studies in this book Professor Bruce gives a tentative working hypothesis for regarding the Habiru of the Tell El-Amarna letters as containing a branch of Hebrews who came to settle in Palestine. The German Martin Noth is equally cautious about the tombs and inscription from the royal seat of the eighteenth dynasty Pharaohs further down the Nile at Thebes. Of the four Mesopotamian studies Professor Saggs of Cardiff records the pilfering of the Babylon site by local builders and also the unauthorised digging. Despite both, quantities of texts have been recovered dealing with a wide range of subjects—business, administration, legal matters, chronicles, astronomy, letters, etc. The famous stele giving most of Hammurabi's laws was found by the French at Susa not Babylon, but Babylon finds reveal interesting legal development from the earlier laws of Eshnunna to those of Hammurabi. Professor Mallowan laments the fact that Nimrud has been overshadowed by better known Nineveh, for Nimrud casts a good deal of light on Assyrian activities paralleled in the OT. Professor Weir shows how the Nuzi texts reveal that the social customs, names, and laws mentioned in the Pentateuch were part of the Ancient Near Eastern background in the second millennium. This is a good example of what archaeology does, and does not, do. It does show how closely and well the Pentateuchal narrative fits with the general pattern of ancient history, and thus makes even more improbable some earlier and rather wild speculations about the patriarchs being mythical tribal and nomadic figures. Such speculations were only speculations, but they hardly square with the sophisticated background we now know to have existed in Abraham's day. Ur and Bogazkoy, the one Anatolian study, are sites that were largely excavated before the second war.

Alalakh, just inside the Turkish border, has revealed tablets which show from Syrian sources the history of that area in the eighteenth to fifteenth centuries BC, and like Mari and Ugarit, Alalakh provides comparative historical material to parallel the OT accounts. Professor Wiseman writes on Alalakh, A. Parrot on Mari, and Professor Gray on Ugarit. The significance of the explorations at Ugarit is largely in the literary parallels which the Baal mythology provides for the OT. The content is of course different but the literary conventions are similar.

The Palestine section contains eighteen entries. Professor Albright on Debir is particularly interesting showing the range of evidence coming from one place. His summary on pp. 281 f. shows that evidence pertains to the period of Abraham, the Hyksos, the Conquest, the Judges, and the last years before Judah fell, as well as ruling out the wilder guesses of certain scholars like Kosters and Torrey. It is perhaps invidious to pick out special chapters but there are particularly im-

portant contributions on Jericho by Kathleen Kenyon, on Jerusalem by D. R. Ap-Thomas, and on Hazor by Israeli, Y. Yadin. This excellent volume contains photographs, full notes, bibliographies, several indexes, maps and illustrations. It is indeed a worthy tribute to a great society.

All these archaeological books which stress the setting and background of the Bible in the ancient Near East, raise one general question, which has yet to be fully answered. How far is the Bible different from these surrounding cultures, and how far is it one among many cultures assimilating ideas from those around about? Ultimately this is a theological question on which archaeology will have nothing to say, but one can indicate a certain trend among OT studies. Whereas at the turn of the century evolutionary hypotheses were all the rage, and we were confidently assured by scholars of distinction that the OT evolved from primitive religion just like all other ancient religions, and Fraser's *Golden Bough* was often cited, now we know that at certain points the distinctions between Israel and her neighbours were as clear as the similarities. This is particularly so of the religious and cultic practices. Such a situation is what the sharp OT condemnation of the various Baalim would lead us to expect, but it is important to realise that archaeology does bear out differences as well as similarities. We have come a long way from these evolutionary hypotheses; perhaps future emphases will be more on the differences than at present?

Another contribution from the S.O.T.S. is *A Decade of Bible Bibliography* edited by G. W. Anderson (Blackwells, 706 pp., 84s.). This is a real labour of love by a team of OT scholars, and classifies all the main works, English and foreign languages, on the OT and related fields for the past decade. They are in twelve classifications, and the argument of each is summarised in a paragraph or so under the initials of one of the collaborators. There is an author index. This book will be indispensable to all serious OT students though one fears its price, not unreasonable for its size, will make it mainly a library book.

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Two further books should be mentioned here. Butterworth have brought out a fourth edition of Sir William Dale's *The Law of the Parish Church* (183 pp., 32s.). The last edition appeared ten years back, and this new one should be a handy, if unnecessarily dear, guide to parish law. Most of it is excellent and wholly reliable, though how soon it will date in the present fast-changing Anglican situation, no one can be sure. Chapter 5 attempts to deal with some major doctrinal issues in very brief compass, and inevitably makes a few sweeping generalisations, which need to be handled with caution.

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It is not often that we draw attention to a second edition of a work which is little changed, but we make an exception in the case of a very important study *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* by Francis Clark S. J. (Blackwells, 582 pp., 55s.) reviewed in Dr. Hughes' *Churchman* editorial, p. 75, 1961. The new edition, apart from a change of publishers and very minor corrections, is unaltered but with the

addition of a foreword and a new introduction. The former is by Cardinal Heenan and must be assumed to be largely window-dressing, for its comments scarcely show the perception of the book itself. The latter is, however, of considerable importance. Father Clark deals with Roman Catholic reaction to his work, which has been mostly favourable; then he turns to the astonishingly favourable Protestant reaction drawn from Anglicans of various outlooks, Scottish Presbyterians and Baptists. These things emerge; first, the contentions of Dr. Dugmore in *The Mass and the English Reformers* have scarcely found a supporter, and cannot now be accepted as adequate history by anyone without much more evidence. Second, the attempts stemming from the Tractarians in the last century to their modern successors like Dr. E. L. Mascall, to minimise the break which took place at the English Reformation have, unless they, like Dr. Dugmore's contentions, are quickly buttressed, to be dismissed as unbalanced if not erroneous history. This will mean a very big rethink for most Anglicans, for progressively these views were becoming normative Anglicanism in Lambeth circles, though not in theologically and historically profounder ones. The impact of this volte-face remains to be seen, but if Anglicans are to remain serious on the scholarly front, they cannot ignore Dr. Clark's contentions and the support building up for them in scholarly quarters.

Thirdly, this short introduction shows that even when they disagree as profoundly as they do on the eucharist, Evangelical Churchmen and Roman Catholic scholars like Dr. Clark can agree in sorting out the history, and enter into constructive dialogue. It may well be that contrary to the expectations of some of the extremer Protestants Evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue will be as fruitful, if not more so, as Evangelical dialogue with more doctrinally nebulous ecumenists. Time will show.
