



## Reviews and Notices of Publications

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF PUBLICATIONS.

*Legends of Babylon and Egypt in relation to Hebrew Tradition*, by Leonard W. King, M.A., Litt.D., F.S.A., &c. *The Schweich Lectures*, 1918. London. 1918.

Both the delay in the publication of these lectures and the form in which they now appear are due to war conditions. The photographs shown when the lectures were delivered were to have appeared as plates in the volumes, but the shortage of paper has led to the omission of them. This is a serious loss, and will be felt by the reader, especially of the first lecture, where Dr. King discusses the influence of Egyptian on Semitic, and of Assyrian on Syrian Art. For, though in the lectures as now published, Dr. King mainly confines himself for examples to well-known monuments, it is much less convenient to hunt up photographs of these elsewhere than to have them accompanying the text.

But if Dr. King has been thus hampered in giving to his volume the form he would have desired, he has given a rich compensation in the fulness with which he has treated his subject on its literary side. The general subject has of course been frequently discussed before, and, amongst others, by Dr. King himself; but certain new material published since the outbreak of the war is ample reason for a fresh discussion such as Dr. King has here undertaken, and it is a great convenience to have this new evidence thus brought together and examined.

That Hebrew tradition of the origin and early history of the world is closely related to traditions or theories current in Babylon, and that Hebrew ideas were much less, if at all, affected by corresponding Egyptian tradition and speculation has long been recognized. But whereas Hebrew tradition connects the great epochs of the Creation and the Deluge by a thread of history, in the Babylonian sources hitherto known the narrative of Creation and the narrative of the Deluge, each of which stood obviously related to the Hebrew stories, were isolated; now in the light of ancient texts, which are among the recently discovered documents

discussed by Dr. King, "the Hebrew connection of the narrative is seen to be on the lines of very primitive tradition." And not only of primitive, but of originally non-Semitic tradition, for the texts in question are Sumerian. But it is the antiquity not only of the Hebrew tradition in this respect, that is proved by the new texts; Berossus also connects the epoch of Creation with that of the Deluge by a line of ten antediluvian kings corresponding to the antediluvian patriarchs of the Old Testament, and the story of antediluvian cities; the antediluvian cities—five in number—appear directly in the newly recovered ancient Sumerian text, an antediluvian kingdom is implied in the fact that the hero of the Sumerian Deluge story is a king. The importance of this agreement of Berossus with the old Sumerian form of the story lies in the fact that it shows that that form of the story survived into the Neo-Babylonian period, and consequently that the Hebrews, like Berossus, may have derived their story not directly from the Sumerians, but "through Semitic channels from Babylon." And in his final discussion Dr. King inclines to the view that the Hebrews first tapped these channels after their settlement in Canaan.

In his discussion of the origin of the Babylonian Deluge story Dr. King argues strongly against the view that it is an astrological myth—the astrological *motif* is strikingly absent from the newly recovered Sumerian version—and in favour of the view that it is "a legend, which had a basis of historical fact in the Euphrates valley." Even in the case of the Creation stories "an examination of their earlier forms . . . would seem to show that many of these tales also, or their origin, are not to be interpreted as nature myths and that none arose as mere reflections of the solar system," but "in their more primitive and simpler aspects they seem in many cases to have been suggested by very human and terrestrial experience." Particularly interesting is the enquiry into the evidence of a Sumerian belief in water as the origin of all things: in this connection Dr. King suggests a new restoration of the line, "Then were created the gods in the midst of . . ."; he would now restore as the missing words [their waters], not, as formerly [heaven]. The transition from the conception of the waters as the source of life to the later, more dominant conception of waters as destructive, he traces to the combination of the Dragon myth with that of Creation.

It must suffice to make a bare reference to the discussion of the new fragment of the Palermo Stele, and of the ancient Sumerian Dynastic List, or epitomized chronicle, with its striking general resemblance to Gen. v, and to the two appendixes, the first of which contains a valuable comparative table of the various stories of Creation, Antediluvian history and the Deluge discussed in the Lectures.

G. B. GRAY.

*De Arca Foederis: dissertatio archaeologoco-historica veteris Testamenti delineationibus ornata*, a P. Gaudentio Orfali, O.F.M., Exarata.

This is a "Doctor's thesis" on a subject that has of late received much discussion, yet cannot be said to be exhausted. Dr. Orfali's is a well-arranged presentation and discussion of the Biblical and archaeological material, with a considerable number of well-chosen illustrations. The first and longest chapter discusses the form of the Ark, and compares it with similar objects among other peoples; the second chapter traces the history of the Ark, it being assumed that the narratives of the Pentateuch are Mosaic; a brief closing chapter considers the religious and national significance of the Ark. To those who are familiar with the recent literature of the subject, this treatise will bring little that is new, but as an examination of it from a certain point of view the treatise is useful and welcome.

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