

THE EXCAVATIONS IN PALESTINE

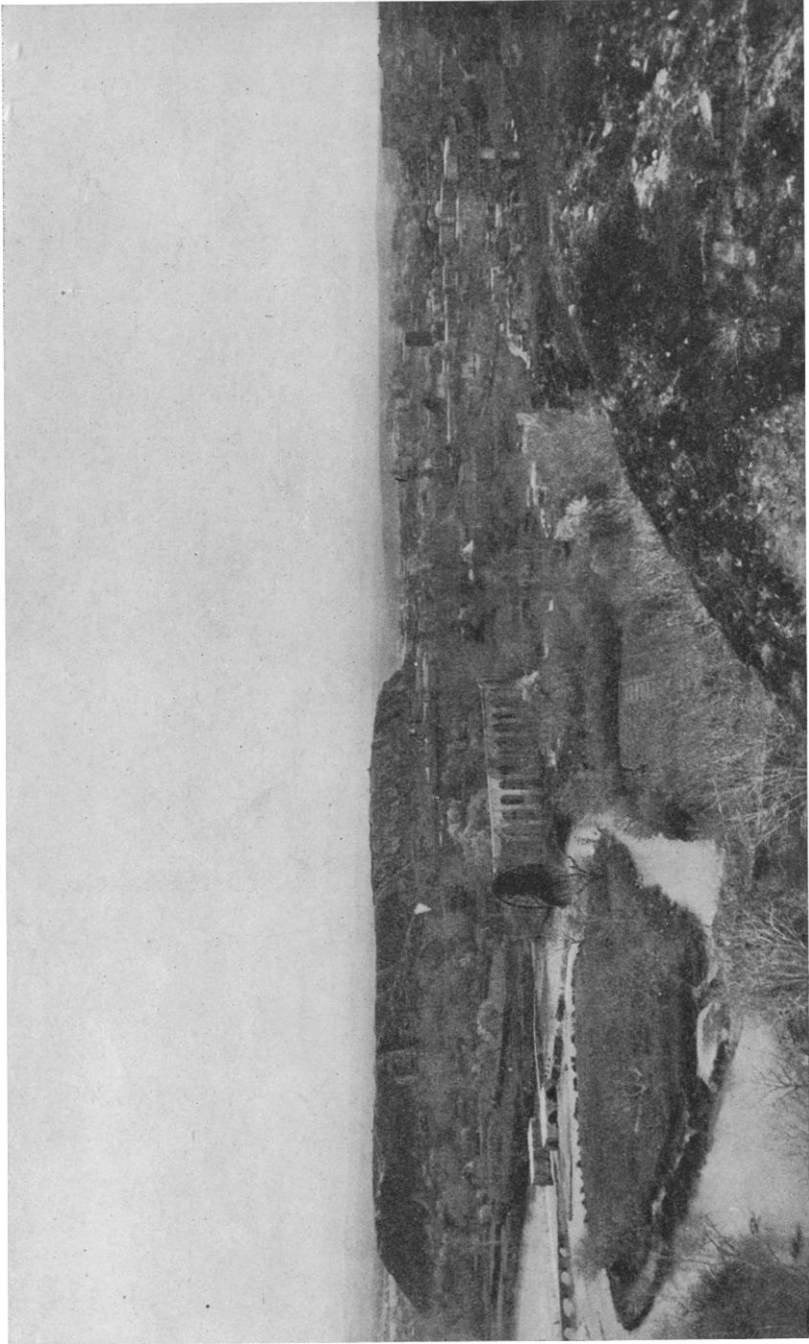
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II

We need merely scan the dates given on pp. 26 f., to see that there is absolutely no room for the centuries of Babylonian overlordship in Palestine assumed by the pan-Babylonians for the period before Egyptian influence began.³⁸ On the other hand, when we reach the Amarna period, *ca.* 1400 B. C., we suddenly find Babylonian the diplomatic language of the oriental world. The Pharaoh of Egypt carries on his correspondence with the kings of Babylonia, the Mitanni and Hittites, as well as with the local governors of the cities of Syria and Palestine, in the Babylonian language and the cuneiform script. This astonishing fact was brought out by the discovery of the el-Amarna letters.³⁹ The excavations at Tell el-Hesi, Lachish, produced a letter which proved to belong to the same period; in fact, it contains the name of one Zimrida, probably the same who is mentioned in the letters discovered in Egypt. Again, in the ruins of Tell Taanach a number of letters were found which proved that the Babylonian language and script were used in the correspondence between the governors of neighboring cities and in administrative documents. These must also be dated approximately 1400 B. C. How

³⁸ It is instructive to read such a chapter as Sayce's on "Babylonia and Palestine," in the *Archaeology of the Cuneiform Inscriptions*, pp. 135 f., to see how sweeping may be the conclusions drawn from the slightest evidence. After showing that Palestine was a Babylonian province from the time of Sargon, according to his dating, 3800 B. C., possessed of all the culture of that mighty empire on the Euphrates, Sayce must admit, when he takes up the excavations in Palestine, that "apart from the cuneiform tablets [the el-Amarna letters are meant] the more strictly archaeological evidence of Babylonian influence upon Canaan is extraordinarily scanty," p. 151; but he consoles himself, p. 158, with the statement, "But neither in archaeology nor in anything else is negative evidence of much value." The seal-cylinder found at Taanach and referred to by Sayce, p. 152, n., as "earlier than B. C. 2000," was found in a stratum of later date (*Tell Ta'annek*, pp. 27, 28).

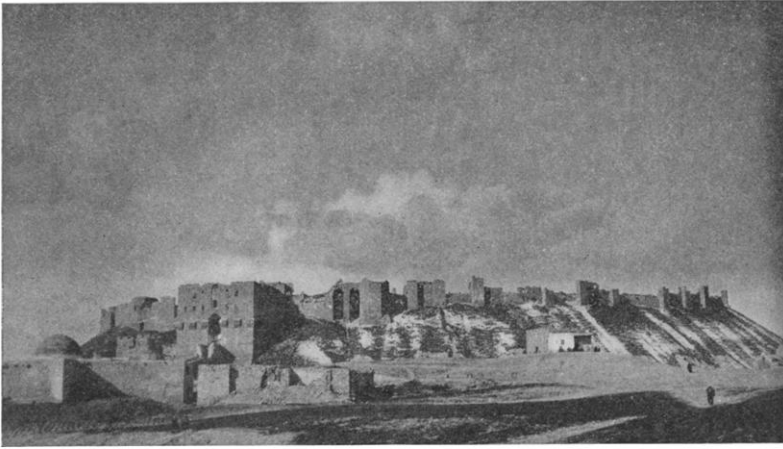
³⁹ Discovered in el-Amarna, Egypt, 1887. The best and latest critical edition has been issued by Knudtzon in *Die el-Amarna Tafeln, Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*, 2.



HAMATH, MODERN HAMA, ON THE ORONTES
(Hamath was a famous Syro-Hittite city)

are these facts to be explained? The pan-Babylonians point to these letters as positive proof of their hypothesis of centuries of Babylonian supremacy in the "West," and it is probable that if no excavations had been conducted in Palestine the hypothesis would have received general acceptance. Is another explanation possible? The writer believes that the following hypothesis is more nearly in accord with the historical and archaeological data than is that of the pan-Babylonians.

We have seen how Thutmose III reached the Euphrates on his triumphal march northward, how the king of Babylonia as well



CITADEL OF ALEPPO
(Aleppo was one of the Hittite strongholds)

as the Hittite king sent presents to the victorious Pharaoh. But it is evident from the Amarna letters that the work of Thutmose was soon undone. The disturbing influence was the Hittites. We have already seen how the Hittites had invaded northern Babylonia as early as the reign of Samsu-ditana, and that this was probably the reason why the Cassites were able to overthrow this king and his dynasty. For some reason, the Hittites did not follow up their success in Babylonia at this time: probably because of the rise to power of a related people, the Mitannians.⁴⁰ The Amarna letters show Tushratta,

⁴⁰ Ungnad, *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, VI, 5, pp. 8 f., shows, on the basis of the personal names of the earliest Assyrian inscriptions, that the founders of the city of Ashur, the early capital of Assyria, whose founding falls before the time of the First Dynasty of Babylon, were Mitannians.

king of Mitanni, in active correspondence with Amenhotep III, but this correspondence suddenly breaks off with the death of this Pharaoh, and we have no more letters from Mitanni princes to the Egyptian court. The excavation of the Hittite capital, the modern Boghaz-köi, by Winckler, has explained this. Tablets found there show that Subbiluliuma, king of the Hittites, who was also in correspondence with Amenhotep III, took advantage of a dispute about the succession in Mitanni⁴¹ to interfere, and this country was henceforth under Hittite suzerainty. It is evident from the letters of Rib-Addi of Gebal (Byblos), and other Syrian princes, that the Hittite king was just as active in Syria, and that he was laying his plans to wrest the whole of this country from the Pharaoh.⁴² From the Boghaz-köi documents we learn that Aziru of Amurru, who had been wavering between Egypt and Hatti, finally went over to the latter, submitting to the sovereign of the more powerful state. This attitude we find common in the later history of Israel, when the kings waver between Assyria or Babylonia on the one hand, and Egypt on the other.

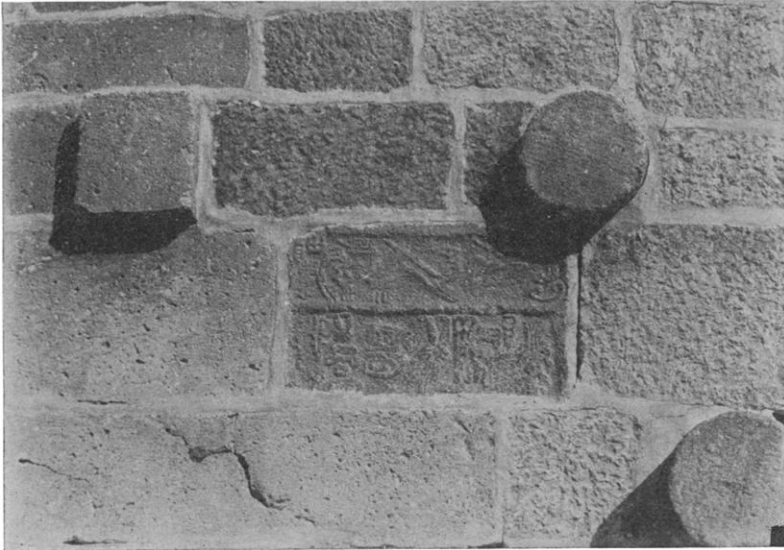
In a word, it is evident from the latest discoveries in the Hittite country, and might have been inferred from the Amarna letters, that there must have been considerable Hittite influence in Syria and Palestine about 1400 B. C.⁴³ Evidence that confirms this conclusion is found in the personal names in these letters. A large

⁴¹ Tushratta died shortly after the death of Amenhotep III.

⁴² A few quotations from the Amarna letters will illustrate this: Knudtzon, *Die el-Amarna Tafeln*, No. 31. ll. 55 f., Rib-Addi writes to the Pharaoh: "Further; behold we have been the faithful servants of the king from earliest days. Further: behold, I am thy faithful servant, and yet I am sorely oppressed. Behold this word, 'I am the dust of thy feet, O king' . . . Who are they—the sons of Abdi-Ashirta [The reference is to Aziru and Japa-Addi of Amurru] that they have seized the land of the king? The king of Mitanni are they, and the king of Kashi, and the king of Hata [the Hittite land]." That is to say, they are acting in the interests of these kings. Rib-Addi is particularly distressed by the sacking of the city Sumur in his province by Aziru. When the Pharaoh wrote to Aziru about it, he replied, in his usual evasive way, that he was prevented from rebuilding this city by the kings of another city who were hostile to him, but that he would attend to the matter "at once." To the question of the Pharaoh, why he receives the diplomatic agents of the Hittite king and neglects the Pharaoh's agents, Aziru replies, "Surely this land belongs to my lord, and the king has appointed me regent over it."

⁴³ Sayce, *op. cit.*, p. 196, argues against the generally accepted identification of part of the Habiri with the "Hebrews," and sees in them Hittite condottieri. The Old Testament records continually mention the Hittites along with the Canaanites as early inhabitants of Canaan.

percentage of the persons mentioned in these documents bear non-Semitic, and therefore, in all probability, Hittite names. This is naturally more noticeable in the letters from the Syrian states,⁴⁴ but the king of Jerusalem also bears a Hittite name, Abdi-Hepa. Hepa is the name of a Hittite goddess and is found in such names as Tatu-Hepa, Gilu-Hepa and Pudu-Hepa, all genuinely Hittite personal names.⁴⁵



HITTITE HIEROGLYPHIC INSCRIPTION
(Built into the wall of a mosque at Aleppo)

When we bear in mind that in less than fifty years after the death of Amenhotep IV the Hittites were in possession of Syria, and that they succeeded in fighting Rameses II to a standstill, so that he was compelled to conclude a treaty of peace with them, we have further evidence of Hittite influence in this country. In fact, scholars are now seriously asking the question whether the Hyksos invasion of Egypt some centuries earlier was not Hittite.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Cf. such names as Zurata, Zatatna, Shuwardata, Tagi, Labaya, and others. See the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, January, 1910, pp. 96 f.

⁴⁵ The first part of the name Abdi-Hepa, *servant* of Hepa, is not necessarily to be read *Abdi* at all. Cf. Winckler, *Mitteilungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 35, p. 48

⁴⁶ Cf. Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 442, note x.

We are thus in a position to suggest the answer to the question when and how cuneiform came into Canaan. In the opinion of the writer, the Mitannians borrowed the cuneiform writing from the Babylonians, and in turn gave it to their neighbors and successors, the Hittites, and from here it spread along with other Hittite influences into Syria and Palestine;⁴⁷ probably not long before 1400 B. C. The natural line along which the cuneiform writing would spread is that of trade. As Winckler has well said,⁴⁸ the merchant precedes the conqueror and explorer, and reaches more remote regions than either of these. Perhaps the most positive proof of the probability of this hypothesis lies in the fact that while the excavations in Palestinian mounds produced cuneiform tablets—at Tell el-Hesi, Gezer, and Taanach⁴⁹ such were found—in no case were tablets found which date from *before the Amarna period*.⁵⁰ If this is a coincidence it is certainly a most remarkable one.

From the Amarna letters we also learn that simultaneously with the invasion from the Hittite quarter, two other groups of peoples were pushing into Syria and Palestine, namely, the Sutû and the Habiri.⁵¹ These were evidently nomads pushing in from the desert,

⁴⁷ That the Babylonian language was not so well known in Canaan as some have inferred, is proved by the Canaanite glosses in the Amarna letters. These glosses are Canaanite words inserted at frequent intervals in the texts to explain some Babylonian word—evidently a word about which the writer himself was not certain, or one which he thought his reader might not know. Similar glosses are found in the "Arzawa letters," which are written in a non-Semitic language related to the Mitannian and Hittite.

⁴⁸ *Alte Orient*, VII, 2, p. 5.

⁴⁹ At Gezer and Jericho *uninscribed* tablets were also found. These date from this same period, as is shown by the strata in which they were found, *Quarterly Statement*, 1908, p. 187.

⁵⁰ The cuneiform tablets found at Boghaz-köi also date from this period. This may be a coincidence, because it is evident that Boghaz-köi had probably just been made the Hittite capital at this time. Further excavations in the Hittite countries must determine how early the Hittites made use of cuneiform, and also the relation of these tablets to the inscriptions, long since known, in Hittite hieroglyphs. Even if it should be shown that cuneiform reached the Hittites as early as the Hammurabi period, or even earlier, it would not affect our argument that it was not until the Amarna period that cuneiform was introduced into Palestine.

⁵¹ Winckler, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 35, p. 25, claims that the tablets discovered by him at Boghaz-köi make it certain that the Habiri and another people of whose name we were not certain from the writing of the Amarna letters, the so-called *Sa-Gaz* people, are one and the same group of people.

and scholars are almost unanimously agreed that the tribes who later combined into the "twelve" tribes of Israel were a part of the Habiri, or "Hebrews." It does not lie within the scope of this paper to discuss the exodus from Egypt and the historicity of the Hexateuchal accounts of the conquest of Canaan, but it is worth noting that the excavations in Palestine show that there is no break between the culture of the Canaanites and that of Israel. Let us hear the verdict of Sellin, the excavator of Taanach. Speaking of the events following upon the Amarna period, he says,⁵² "With reference to the later history of Taanach, it is to be noted especially that the excavations have demonstrated throughout the correctness of the view which is becoming more and more general, namely, that the occupation of the cities by the Israelites was gradual. There is no evidence of a break in the culture, but there is evidence of a very gradual development. The city will have remained Canaanite for some centuries longer, while the Israelites from the villages of the plain will have been gradually drawn into the city and assimilated."

This is the conclusion which must be drawn from the excavations at Gezer and the other Palestinian mounds.⁵³ We shall see the importance of this conclusion when we take up the discussion of the origins of Israel's religion in the light of the excavations.

While we are not certain where the boundary between the Hittite and Egyptian territory was located by the treaty between Rameses II and the Hittite king, "all Palestine and possibly some of southern Syria continued to pay tribute to the Pharaoh, probably until after the reign of Rameses III."⁵⁴ Eduard Meyer in summing up the history of this period says,⁵⁵ "The fact that Palestine was invaded from the east and south, and that it was not until long after they had established themselves in the hills that they succeeded in conquering or absorbing the Canaanite towns, remained a vivid memory among the descendants of the conquerors. But all the details of the conquest had been completely forgotten by the time the Jahwist collected the legends concerning early Israel, current in his day, and wove them into a connected narrative. That we do not have *history* here may perhaps be seen from a striking omission. The Old Testament does

⁵² *Tell Ta'anek*, p. 102.

⁵³ Cf. Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁵⁴ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

⁵⁵ *Die Israeliten*, p. 226.

not give us any intimation of the fact that the early Israelites in Palestine were subject to Egypt for about two centuries, until after Rameses III. Not until the end of the Egyptian supremacy in Palestine, toward the end of the twelfth century B. C., do we begin to have real historical records. Our earliest historical records in the Old Testament are those which relate the deeds of Debora and Gideon."

About 1200 B. C., that is at the beginning of the Twentieth Egyptian Dynasty, we find the peoples of the northern Mediterranean, the "peoples of the sea" or "Northerners," pushing southward in ever-increasing numbers.⁵⁶ This movement, which must have started considerably earlier,⁵⁷ brought the Indo-Germanic peoples south into Greece and Asia Minor, leading to the overthrow of the Minoan culture⁵⁸ in Crete, and probably also, of the Hittite state in Asia Minor,⁵⁹ and brought the Philistines into Palestine.

At Gezer Mr. Macalister discovered tombs whose structure Pro-

⁵⁶ Breasted, *op. cit.*, pp. 333 f.

⁵⁷ Burrows, *Discoveries in Crete*, p. 159.

⁵⁸ It is a mistake to think, as the pan-Babylonians seem to do, that we have a sufficient explanation of the origin of all *oriental* culture in that of the Babylonians, or Sumerians. It is true they object to the term *Babylonian* culture, and prefer to speak of *ancient-oriental* culture, but in the practical application of their doctrine this distinction is forgotten, and Babylonia remains the source and center of all oriental culture. The student of the Old Testament who fails to follow the results of the excavations in Crete as well as those in "Semitic" countries, is missing one of the greatest opportunities of gaining a clearer understanding of the influences that entered into the history, life and religion of Palestine. In Crete there developed a culture (which we must regard as *oriental*, but not necessarily influenced to any great degree by *Semitic* culture), which spread over a period beginning perhaps as early as the First Dynasty of Egypt and extending down to the coming of the Greeks. Pottery, which must be regarded as Aegean, was found in First Dynasty tombs in Egypt (Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 50) and it is evident from the excavations in Palestine, that Aegean pottery was brought into Palestine, through the Phoenician traders, soon after the Canaanites built their first cities there. The student should not fail to read the chapter entitled "Crete and the East," in the book by Burrows.

⁵⁹ The coming of the Indo-Germanic peoples into Asia Minor and the farther East is discussed by Prášek, *Geschichte der Meder und Perser*. We now know that they must have reached Asia Minor considerably earlier than could be inferred from the Assyrian inscriptions used by Prášek. At Boghaz-köi Winckler discovered a tablet containing the names of the gods Mithra and Varuna, which clearly points to Aryan peoples. The date of these tablets is shortly after 1400 B. C., a date corresponding roughly to that of the beginning of the invasion of Crete by the Northerners.

fessor Myres asserts "agrees in general with that of the 'shaft-graves' of Mycenae and Knossos, which belong to the late Minoan period (1300-1000 B. C.), and more closely with the Carian tombs at Assarlik." After discussing the contents of the tombs, he reaches the conclusion that they probably represent "the burials of a people who had invaded the Philistine coast land in the period of the Sea Raids, and maintained themselves there, in occasional contact with Cyprus, but not with anything further west, for a century or two after the tenth.



ASHDOD, MODERN ESDŪD. ONE OF THE FIVE PHILISTINE CITIES

This general character and these limits of date would, therefore, agree closely with the little we know of the Philistine occupation of Philistia."⁶⁰

The struggles of the less cultured Israelites with these people are well known from the Old Testament and need not be discussed here. It is interesting to notice that the Old Testament tradition has the Philistines come from Caphtor or Crete.⁶¹

Among the important archaeological discoveries which illustrate the later history may be mentioned the cuneiform tablets found at

⁶⁰ J. L. Myres, in *Quarterly Statement*, 1907, pp. 240 f.

⁶¹ For a discussion of Caphtor cf. *Ency. Biblica*, pp. 698 f.

Gezer⁶² which date from *ca.* 650 B. C. This points to Assyrian domination of Judah in the time of Manasseh. Last year a fragment of a neo-Babylonian tablet was found on the surface of the same mound.⁶³ At Megiddo a seal "belonging to Shama^c, servant of Jeroboam" was found,⁶⁴ and another with meaningless hieroglyphs, belonging to Asaph. Other "finds" will be discussed when we take up the early religion of Israel in the light of the excavations.

In conclusion let it be said that if the influence of Babylonia in Palestine seems to have been minimized, it is because the results of the excavations do not warrant the sweeping statements about this influence found in almost every book dealing with Old Testament subjects that has appeared in recent years. On the other hand, one reads little of Egyptian influence upon Palestine, although almost every spadeful of earth that is turned over in Palestine brings to light more evidence of this influence. The centuries of Babylonian influence prior to the Egyptian supremacy assumed by the pan-Babylonians have not left a trace in the Palestinian mounds thus far excavated: indeed, we have seen that there is no room for them. As long as the date of Sargon of Akkad was placed at *ca.* 3800, and that of Hammurabi at *ca.* 2300 B. C., such statements could pass unchallenged. But when Sargon's date must be put at *ca.* 2500 and Hammurabi's at *ca.* 2000-1900 B. C., and the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty at 2000-1788 B. C., with the earliest settlements thus far excavated in Palestine showing the influence of the Egyptians of this dynasty, it is high time that we readjust our statements to the facts. Even Old Testament scholars seem to have overlooked the importance of the latest changes in the chronology of early Babylonian history upon the questions of Babylonian influence upon Palestine. This point will come up again in the discussion of the early religion of Palestine.

⁶² *Quarterly Statement*, 1904, pp. 207 f., and 229 f.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1909.

⁶⁴ *Mutesellim*, p. 99. The Jeroboam mentioned is probably Jeroboam II, 783-743 B. C.