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Archeology-the Nemesis

W. A. Maier

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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which is caused by it, the paper mentioned observing that what the report voices has in its chief aspects long been held by the mission board of its church-body and by others of its prominent members. There are sharp words of criticism heard in certain quarters. For instance, the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions is reported to have declared: "We repudiate any adherence to, or any sympathy with, the report wherein it is a deflection from the fact that Jesus Christ is the only and eternal Son of God, who made atonement for the sins of men by His death on the cross, who arose from the dead, who is eternally alive, who by the presence of the Holy Spirit controls and energizes the Church in its divine mission to all mankind." What is distressing is that members of the United Presbyterian Church belong to the committee of thirty-five that initiated and supported this inquiry and, furthermore, that such expressions do not come from all parts of Protestantism in the United States. This leads us to say that the Laymen's Report is symptomatic above everything else, showing the hold which Modernism has come to have on the body of the American Church. Viewed in this light, it is a reminder to all who love the old Gospel to gird their loins and to bestir themselves, because the forces of unbelief are threatening to sweep the country.

W. ARNDT.

Archeology — the Nemesis.

(Continued instead of concluded.)

II. Refuted Claims of Historical Inaccuracies.

The second function of avenging archeology has been the tearing down of that amazing scaffold of theories on which a skeptical criticism has sought to reconstruct the Biblical narratives according to the blue-prints of its tendential theorization.

Perhaps the most ruthless of the three higher critical procedures of attack on the Scriptural record is the unequivocal assault upon its historicity. Under the patronage of rationalism it became the conventional procedure to make the point of departure in the discussion of Old Testament literature the unabashed contention that these Hebrew writings were replete with errors, inaccuracies, contradictions, anachronisms, and other telltale evidences of late authorship. If any one of the classical authors even incidentally suggested a reminiscence which could be twisted into a conflict with the Hebrew Scriptures, this was paraded to illustrate the alleged historical fallacy of the Old Testament. With this purpose in mind all the extant writings of early Greek and Latin authors were gleaned for negative material, their statements marshaled in apparently formidable array, and the whole indictment distorted under an extravagant conception of the validity of such ancient history.

When this procedure had developed its greatest momentum, an authentic voice of the past raised its initial protest. Since the middle of the last century, when Botta (1842) and Layard (1845) began their pioneer excavations in Mesopotamia, this new and decisive voice insisted on injecting itself into these discussions of Old Testament history. It was the voice of archeology, coming from the *débris*-covered mounds of the Tigro-Euphrates Valley, from the crumbling remains of Egypt's glory along the Nile, from the banks of the Orontes, from coastal Byblos, from Palestine, Cappadocia, Persia, Boghaz-Koei, Crete, the Sinai Peninsula, Yemen, and the long list of other sites where the excavators' spade was active, that has helped to give this generation a more intimate understanding of those early ages than Herodotus or any of his successors could enjoy in spite of the millennia of priority which was theirs.

It was in no halting syllables that this new voice spoke. When its long-muffled tones were released,—providentially in those years of unbelief's blatant insistence on its triumph,—its very first utterances swept away completely many of the most pretentious theories involving the claims of Old Testament inaccuracies. As the cold, fog-bearing east wind rolls in over the Massachusetts shore only to be repelled by the warmth of a blowing west wind, so many of the chilling and befogging clouds of destructive criticism vanished into the thin air before the vibrant and dissipating warmth of that new voice.

Scholars of critical inclinations who are at least more or less open-minded have admitted these iconoclastic effects of archeology on the venerated canons of critical theories. The most recent book on the Old Testament, as viewed in the light of archeology, is Albright's *The Archeology of Palestine and the Bible*. Admitting that Wellhausenism and some of its theories, which have become so fundamental for the modern anti-Scriptural attitude, are found deficient when weighed in the scale of historical accuracy, the author, who is separated from our position by an unbridgeable chasm of criticism, says (pp. 129. 130): "The orthodox critical attitude toward the traditions of the Patriarchs was summed up by the gifted founder of this school, Julius Wellhausen, in the following words: 'From the patriarchal narratives it is impossible to obtain any historical information with regard to the Patriarchs; we can only learn something about the time in which the stories about them were first told by the Israelite people. The later period, with all its essential and superficial characteristics, was unintentionally projected back into hoary antiquity and is reflected there like a transfigured *mirage*.' In other words, the account given in Genesis of the life of the Patriarchs is a faithful picture of the life of Israelites at the time when this account was composed, *i. e.*, according to the view of the dominant critical school, in the ninth and eighth centuries B. C. The nomadic touches were derived, it is

supposed, from the life of the Arab nomads of the day or, perhaps, from the life of the Judean nomadic tribes of the Negeb. Practically all of the Old Testament scholars of standing in Europe and America held these or similar views until very recently. Now, however, the situation is changing with the greatest rapidity, since *the theory of Wellhausen will bear the test of archeological examination*" (italics ours).

But one of the most graphic and demonstrable illustrations of this about-face which archeology has imposed upon the critical reconstruction of Old Testament history may be found in the examination of the many claims for Scriptural inaccuracy written a century ago by a recognized master of Old Testament interpretation. In 1835 von Bohlen's *Die Genesis* made its first appearance. It was a product of that superior, condescending criticism which, while avoiding the cut-throat blasphemies of nihilistic unbelief, approaches the text with an indulgent pseudoaffability. It was written by a trained Semitist, an expert in Sanskrit, as the last word in the rationalistic interpretation of Genesis; and it abounded in proud-crested attacks on the historicity and credibility of the Scriptures.

A century has elapsed since the publication of his book, and in no other branch of human endeavor has there been such a "century of progress" as in the field of Biblical archeology. And when to-day, in this age of archeological enlightenment, the objections of von Bohlen, typical of hundreds of similar invectives against the Old Testament truths, are investigated, a drastic demonstration of the nemesis of archeology once more becomes evident. It is for this purpose, then, that we present, from von Bohlen's own book and in his own words, his inculpations of the records of Genesis and the effective antidote offered by archeology, mindful that the procedures that he adopts against this first book of the Scriptures have been employed by his colleagues in criticism against each successive book of the Old Testament.

A. The Age of Alphabetical Writing.

In his introduction (p. XL) von Bohlen formally indicts the Book of Genesis and repudiates the Mosaic authorship on the count that writing was unknown at the time of Moses. Echoing the prevalent attitude of his day (particularly the canon of literary criticism established by Wolf a few decades before, to the effect that the employment of writing for literary purposes was unknown until the classical period of Greek history), his own words assert apodictically and not without a tinge of skeptical sarcasm: "*Das hoechste Datum fuer die semitische Schrift ueberhaupt ist kaum das zehnte vorchristliche Jahrhundert, und dieses nicht einmal beglaubigt; wer darueber hinausraet, der raet eben und mag noch leicht ein Jahrtausend hinzusetzen, weil es, ohne Gruende, nur auf den Glauben ankommt, den er findet.*"

This statement was printed in 1835. To-day no one with even an approach to an acquaintance with the remarkable archeological discoveries in the search for the origin of writing could refrain from repudiating this charge. Entirely aside from the Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Sumerian and Akkadian cuneiform, there can be no doubt to-day that Semitic alphabetic writing antedates the Mosaic era by many centuries. Within the last ten years we have these two notable conquests: 1. the French excavation at Byblos, which in 1923 unearthed the Phœnician inscription on the sarcophagus of Akiham (Hiram), king of Byblos, who, according to demonstrable evidence, ruled in the thirteenth century B. C. (*American Journal of Archeology*, January, 1926, pp. 86 f.; *Journal of American Oriental Society*, Vol. 46, No. 3, p. 236); and 2. the Harvard University investigations of the Serabit inscriptions on the Sinai Peninsula, which conservative scholars are willing to date around 1800 B. C. (Martin Sprengling, *The Alphabet, Its Rise and Development from the Sinai Inscriptions*.) By the first discovery the horizon of literacy was pushed back more than four hundred years beyond the time of the earliest alphabetic writing previously extant. By the second, the interesting, though somewhat inconclusive, results of the interpretation of these Sinai inscriptions (*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 49, No. 1, October, 1932, pp. 46 ff., 56 ff.), the date of alphabetic writing approaches an association with the end of the third millennium; for Sprengling's contention that the person who inscribed these Serabit stones was the author of the script must overcome much antecedent improbability.

Thus while von Bohlen pictures an analphabetic ancient world and scoffs at the notion of literary activity in the Mosaic era (a position also shared by Reuss, Dillman, and others), the modern verdict, which rests on a definite historical basis, is not only this affirmation: "It is probable that at the time of the Amarna letters" (the fourteenth century, or the time of Moses) "the usual mode of writing in Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine was the alphabetic" (*American Journal of Archeology*, l. c.), but also the unavoidable conclusion that the real origin of alphabetical writing lies in the dim past, too far anterior to Moses to be dated definitely.

B. The Table of Nations.

Von Bohlen did not refrain from indulging in the criticism of that chapter which is still the playground of higher critical fancy, the table of nations, Gen. 10. He held no high opinion of its origin or its accuracy, for he wrote (p. 136): "*Welche Gruende aber den Anordner veranlassen konnten, grade so einzuteilen, laesst sich bei jeder einzelnen Voelkerschaft nicht ermitteln; bei Assur, V. 22, werden Semiten vorausgesetzt, und es konnte leicht kommen, dass der Verfasser durch einzelne Hebraeer, welche aus fernen Landen nach*

Palaestina kamen, ueber entlegene Nationen getauscht wurde; bei andern mochten befreundete Ruecksichten obwalten, wie das Entgegengesetzte bei den Phoeniziern und uebrigen Kanaanitern fast mit Bestimmtheit darf vorausgesetzt werden. Bei noch andern sind wir nicht mehr imstande, die Richtigkeit durch die Sprache zu pruefen."

Specifically he mentions as inaccurate the association of Elam with the Semitic nations. His indictment (p. 112) reads: "*So haben sich doch manche Unrichtigkeiten eingeschlichen; einige wohl aus Unkunde, wie die Verbindung von Persien (Elam) mit dem semitischen Stamme, . . . und man wird demnach auf keine Weise mit den aelteren Erklarern eine rein geschichtliche Wahrheit des Ganzen behaupten koennen.*" Trained Orientalist that he was, his Sanskrit studies protested against the inclusion of the Elamites, whom the ethnographical science of his day classified as Indo-Europeans, in the Semitic group. And until very recently his objection was shared by a large number of critical scholars. Even Hommel at first protested that the Elam of Gen. 10 could not be identified with Elam proper.

But again the spade brought to light indisputable evidence which corroborated the classification of Gen. 10. The French excavations at Susa, the capital of Elam, showed that, while the later cultural and racial affinities of Elam were unquestionably Indo-European, an earlier civilization, antedating the Persian period by long centuries, was Semitic. To-day the Elamite texts, written in the cuneiform characters of the Babylonian and published by Pere Scheil, demonstrate the unmistakable affinity of this language, both the vocabulary and construction, with the Semitic group.

The related attacks by von Bohlen on the ethnographical details of Gen. 10 were destined to the same fate. He protests, for example, against the inclusion of the Assyrians in the Semitic group, an objection which becomes a philological curiosity in the light of subsequent discoveries. He insists that the Lydians must likewise be divorced from the Semitic group; but no one acquainted with the development of historical research would endorse that contention to-day. In short, in every point in which he has voiced his dissension from the statements of this tenth chapter the monumental evidence has contradicted his theorization.

C. Amraphel and His Expedition.

In the much-abused fourteenth chapter of Genesis and its record of the four kings embattled against the five von Bohlen gives his critical gainsaying free rein. He ridicules the idea of an Amraphel as king of Babylonia and contemporary with Abram and claims: "*Fuer diese Verhaeltnisse bietet sich geschichtlich nur die Zeit des Sardanapal dar, wenn wir dem Erzaehler eine geringe Verwechslung der Namen zugute halten; denn auch fuer ihn war die Zeit eine alte und laengst entschwundene, da er sie als die Periode der Patriarchen bezeichnet. Wie naemlich in Indien ganze Dynastien den Beisatz*

"pāla" oder Beschuetzer annehmen, so scheint אפרל sich ungewungen durch Amarapāla, Beschuetzer der Goetter, deuten zu lassen und ist dann vielleicht gleichbedeutend mit Sardanapal selbst, da morgenlaendische Fuersten haeufig Titel fuehren und Sridhanapāla Schaetzebhueter bezeichnen wuerde." Such fantasies (Sardanapalus is a mythical mistake for Ashurbanipal, 668—626 B. C.) might have passed unchallenged in the precuneiform days, but with the discovery of the royal inscriptions of Hammurabi, his correspondence to Sin-iddinam, and particularly his monumental code, there can be no doubt that the Amraphel is to be identified as Hammurabi on the basis both of the linguistic evidences and of the harmonious concordance of details between Gen. 14 and Hammurabi's own records.

But von Bohlen anticipated other objections which were later to be voiced by men of such recognized critical authority as Noeldeke and Eduard Meyer. For instance, he finds it objectionable (p. 168) that powerful rulers of these Mesopotamian districts would institute campaigns against apparently insignificant countries, and he asserts that the military cost would have outweighed any resultant revenue. But it is now a commonplace of Babylonian history that similar expeditions were made to the Mediterranean countries at the time of Sargon I, or even of Lugal-Zaggizi, long before the days of Hammurabi's dynasty. The expedition of the four allied kings to the west was probably a general expedition in which the Canaanite kings were only one of similar groups of rebellious vassals.

D. Aegyptica.

It is in the chapters of Genesis relating to Egypt that von Bohlen finds a field for the most detailed attack upon the credibility of the Old Testament. In the following we have listed a half dozen of his typical disparagements of this part of the Genesis narrative, each of which has been completely repudiated by archeological developments.

In Gen. 12 he maintains that the animals mentioned in Abram's inventory (v. 16, sheep and oxen, she-asses and camels) form evidence of unhistorical presentation and later authorship. He insists (p. 163): *"Im uebrigen nennt der Erzaeher Tiere SEINES Vaterlandes, welche Abram zum Teil in Aegypten nicht erhalten konnte (vgl. 45, 23; 47, 17; Ex. 9, 3); er gibt ihm keine Pferde, welche im Niltale recht heimisch waren, wie es allerdings der Referent weiss (41, 43; 47, 17), dagegen aber Schafe, welche so wenig wie Kamele in den Marschlaendern Aegyptens vorkommen, daher die letzteren von den Alten dem Lande abgesprochen werden, und Esel, die ihrer Farbe wegen ausserordentlich verhasst waren."* A much-enlarged acquaintance with things Egyptian has invalidated all these objections. It is now recognized and admitted that camels were known from the time of the first dynasty. In regard to the asses, Knight well summarizes

(*Nile and Jordan*, p. 114): "Wilkinson, however, has shown the frequency with which the ass is represented on the monuments as an integral portion of domestic riches, some Egyptians possessing even 700 or 800 of these animals. The famous Sheikh Abishua in the Beni-Hasan wall-paintings is shown with his thirty-seven companions accompanied by their asses, while in 1913 Petrie discovered in the cemetery at Tarkan, thirty-five miles south of Cairo, in a predynastic tomb the skeletons of three asses. Their heads had been cut off and placed beside their bodies, the animals having been killed to accompany their masters to the other world. This proves what has hitherto been scouted—the existence of the ass in Egypt at the very earliest period." Sheep were not only well known, but were sacred to the Egyptians. The arguments based on the non-mention of the horse may simply be a fallacious *a-silentio* conclusion. But if Abram had no horses at the time, it is very likely due to the fact that these animals were introduced (or perhaps reintroduced) into Egypt during the subsequent Hyksos dynasties. This would also account for the important rôle assumed by the horses and chariots of Pharaoh centuries later at the time of the Exodus.

Again, the dream of the butler is attacked. This, it is urged, presupposes the cultivation of the vine, an agricultural development allegedly introduced only after the time of Psammetichus (594—589 B. C.). Citing Herodotus for his authority, he maintains (p. 373): "*Ein wichtiges Zeitdatum fuer die Jugend der Erzaehlung liegt hier in dem Traume des Schenken, nach welchem der Weinbau in Aegypten vorausgesetzt wird; denn erst NACH Psammetich, also grade um die Zeit des Josia, war derselbe notduerftig im Niltale versucht worden, und konnte in einem flachen Lande, welches grade um die Zeit der Traubenreife unter Wasser steht, nur an einigen wenigen Punkten Fortgang finden. Die Aegypter bedienten sich zum Getraenke einer Art Bier, wobei Herodot ausdruecklich hinzufuegt, dass keine Weinstoecke in dem Lande wuchsen. . . . Den orthodoxen Aegyptern galt der Wein als Blut des Typhon, sie tranken ihn nicht vor Psammetich, sagt PLUTARCH (Isis und Osiris, 6), und brachten ihn auch nicht zum Opfer. In gegenwaertiger Zeit kommt nur bei Phium die Traube fort und gibt schlechten Wein.*" This preference of Herodotus over the much earlier Scriptural records is not only unscientific in principle, but it is also fatal in its conclusions. The process of wine-making is so amply illustrated in early Egyptian scenes, and references to the vine are so definite, that to-day not even the most radical opponent to the Scriptures would repeat this charge.

Related in principle are many other attacks, all of which have been nullified under the progressive revelation of Egyptology. An inaccuracy is found in the fact that Joseph eats meat, Gen. 43, 16 (p. LV). We now know, as Rawlinson emphasizes, "Animal food was

the principal diet of the superior classes in Egypt." The Joseph-Potiphar story in Gen. 39 is attacked on the ground that Egyptian conventions at that time would prevent Joseph from coming into contact with Potiphar's wife, since the women were restricted to the harem (p. 371). But Egyptian explorations have revealed repeatedly scenes depicting the unusual degree of freedom conceded to Egyptian women.

These objections carry over to the Book of Exodus, whose first chapter is attacked under the indictment that construction with brick was Babylonian and not Egyptian and whose second chapter is disparaged because Pharaoh's daughter bathes in the Nile, a procedure which this German critic finds too primitive to be concordant with the high civilization of Egypt at this time. These and a dozen other minor attacks pertaining to the *Aegyptica* of both Genesis and Exodus have been squarely met and completely repudiated by the new light which a more advanced age has shed upon these passages.

In listing these samples of assaults upon the historicity of Genesis, we have presented only one phase of the critical attack which is systematically directed against the rest of the Old Testament. For von Bohlen did not stand alone in urging these incriminations. His procedure has been adopted in a modified or extended form by his like-minded successors. In striking repetition they have singled out some passage of the Old Testament and cried, "Unhistorical!" only to have the nemesis of archeology confound their charges. We think of the discrediting of the early records concerning the Philistines and those touching upon the Hittites; the association of Abraham and Brahma, which would have made the Semites Hindus; the serene insistence that Sargon II was a figment of free imagination; the critical *tour de force* by which ancient geography was reconstructed and Egypt transposed from Africa to Asia; the ridicule heaped on the succession of Belshazzar, — these and other confidently voiced triumphs of higher criticism over Biblical history that have been silenced by the onward march of archeology's conquests.

While the presentation of these errors and inconsistencies is largely negative, a rapid survey of this kind is not without a tangible and stimulating lesson; it makes a pronounced contribution to Christian confidence, for it lends the weight of its force to strengthen the intelligent Bible student's appraisal of the many new and repeated charges that are directed against the Scriptures to-day. If the anti-Bible movement in the past has been characterized by such premature judgments, hasty conclusions, and false premises in regard to Israel's history, we may rest with the conviction that the nemesis of archeology will inevitably overtake many of the claims raised by the unbelieving criticism of to-day and to-morrow.

(To be concluded.)

W. A. MAIER.