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# The Contribution of Archaeology to the Interpretation of the New Testament

By RAYMOND F. SURBURG

## I

THE pastor, the missionary, the parochial school teacher, the Sunday school and weekday school teachers, the Christian youth leaders, and others use the Bible in their respective fields of labor in the Lord's vineyard. If these Christian workers and leaders are to fulfill the intention of the divinely appointed ministry of reconciliation and accomplish the perfecting of the saints through the Word of Truth, a correct and adequate understanding of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, together with their proper application, is essential.<sup>1</sup> The explanation and the application of the Word of God must rest upon a sound and self-evidencing science of hermeneutics. According to Terry, the purpose of the science of hermeneutics is "to remove the supposable differences between a writer and his readers, so that the meaning of the one may be truly and accurately apprehended by the others."<sup>2</sup>

The necessity of being acquainted with the principles of hermeneutics is due mainly to the existence of diversities of mind and culture among men. St. Peter in his day found certain passages in the epistles of his co-laborer St. Paul difficult to understand.<sup>3</sup> Human experience has borne witness to the perplexing problems connected with the writings, especially of those belonging to a different nationality and utilizing another language. As a rule, people do not interpret each other's speech, nor does the average reader require an interpreter for the newspaper he reads. When a people have a common language and the same culture, there is little need for rules of interpretation. Such, however, is not the case when

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: W. A. Wile Company, 1950), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1890), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter 3:16.



documents are written in a foreign or even a dead language and have their origin in widely divergent cultures and geographical localities. Add to this the fact of the intervention of many centuries between the interpreter and the books or writings, e. g., those of the Bible, to be explained, and it will be apparent why the reader has trouble in grasping the complete meaning of many passages.

In addition to the possession of a well-balanced and discreet mind, acuteness of intellect, and certain spiritual qualifications, the competent interpreter needs a wealth of general information. When Terry issued his classic on Biblical hermeneutics, he listed the following fields as essential for the Christian exegete: geography, history, chronology, antiquities, politics, natural science, philosophy, the sacred tongues, comparative philology, and general literature.<sup>4</sup> Since the first appearance of Terry's *Hermeneutics*, archaeology has been added to the group of disciplines requisite to the Biblical interpreter.<sup>5</sup> Before 1890 the value of archaeology as an important aid in interpretation was not known or appreciated. Thus Briggs in his work, written to acquaint theological students and pastors with the principles, methods, and history of Biblical study, had but one lone reference to archaeology.<sup>6</sup> In 1890, however, Gardiner took note of the contribution archaeology was able to make for Scriptural study when he asserted: ". . . It is evident that as the study of archaeology must be one of the bases of any history worthy of the name, so it must be one of the essentials to the full understanding of all those parts of the Bible which have a historical side."<sup>7</sup> The past one hundred years have been productive of a wealth of material which has transformed particularly the study of the Old Testament and to a lesser degree that of the New Testament.<sup>8</sup> Many new discoveries have been made in the years

<sup>4</sup> Ramm, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Terry, pp. 26, 27.

<sup>6</sup> James L. Kelso, "Archaeology," *Interpretation*, II (January, 1948), 66—73.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Augustus Briggs, *Biblical Study* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Frederic Gardiner, *Aids to Scripture Study* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1890), p. 209.

<sup>9</sup> H. G. Rowley, *The Re-discovery of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1945), p. 37; Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), pp. 44, 45.



between the two World Wars; in fact, it was during this period that Biblical archaeology grew into maturity,<sup>10</sup> and today is recognized as an important aid in the understanding of the Bible, whose Eastern color should never be forgotten.<sup>11</sup> Thus Berkhof began his work on Biblical archaeology with these words: "The study of Biblical Archaeology is an important aid to the correct understanding of the Bible, since it gives a description of Bible lands and of the social, civil, and religious customs of the people among whom God's revelation was given, especially of Israel, which was pre-eminently the people of God."<sup>12</sup>

Schaefer made the following pronouncement about the value of archaeology for the general student of the Bible:

No matter what may be our station in life, every Christian can learn how to make use of some of the results of recent excavations in pulpit and home, in the Sunday school, and in other forms of church work. By drawing upon these results the exegete or interpreter of the Bible is able to explain obscure passages and point out their meaning. The manners and customs of Bible times are excellent tools for teaching purposes. Abstract religious truths become more real when concrete objects are used. Words gain in vividness the moment they are interpreted in the light of concrete life-situations growing out of a concrete historical background.<sup>13</sup>

Kyle says that archaeology gives valuable guidance in the field of Biblical interpretation: "Archaeology must guide in the interpretation of ancient literature, whether that has just been dug up, as the recent finds of MSS and monuments, or that which has never been lost."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> E. G. Wright, "The Present State of Biblical Archaeology," in *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, Harold R. Willoughby, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 80.

<sup>11</sup> George H. Scherer, *The Eastern Color of the Bible* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, no date), pp. 5—7.

<sup>12</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Biblical Archaeology* (Grand Rapids: Smither Book Company; 3d rev. ed., 1928), p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Schaefer, *The Latest Discoveries in the Old Testament Field* (Columbus: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Melvin Grove Kyle, "Archaeology and Criticism," *The International Bible Encyclopedia*, I, 227.



When eventually the findings and discoveries of archaeologists were published, conservative and liberal scholars alike began to utilize the new materials to support and bolster their respective views. There is still at the present a difference of opinion among conservative, neo-orthodox, and liberal scholars as to the extent of the contribution archaeology has made to the Bible. A majority of earlier books, monographs, and magazine articles written by conservative Bible students stressed the fact that the Bible's truthfulness, accuracy, and historicity were being established. Thus Robinson, a conservative scholar, asserted: "No explicit contradiction of any moment whatsoever has ever been found."<sup>15</sup> Echoing the same sentiment, J. McKee Adams wrote: "The ancient records now in hand tend to support the proposition that *beginning with the patriarchal period and continuing through the changing fortunes of the Hebrew people to the final destruction of Jerusalem, we have practically contemporary records, thoroughly reliable and authentic.*"<sup>16</sup> On the other hand Burrows and others portray the spade of the archaeologist as revealing numerous discrepancies and contradictions in the Biblical records.<sup>17</sup>

Archaeology has verified, however, many statements once questioned and considered erroneous. This is admitted by liberal scholarship today. Thus Burrows said: "On the whole there can be no doubt that the results of excavations have increased the respect of scholars for the Bible as a collection of historical documents."<sup>18</sup> Albright asserted: "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition."<sup>19</sup> Again he declared: "Discovery after discovery has

<sup>15</sup> George Livingston Robinson, *The Bearing of Archaeology on the Old Testament* (New York: American Tract Society, 1941), p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> J. McKee Adams, *Ancient Records and the Bible* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1946), pp. 5, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Millar Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1941), pp. 1, 2, 276. Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 44. Ernst Cadman Colwell, *The Study of the Bible* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 165.

<sup>18</sup> Millar Burrows, "How Archaeology Helps the Student of the Bible," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, III (May 1940), 17.

<sup>19</sup> William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 176.



established the accuracy of innumerable details and has brought increased recognition of the value of the Bible as a source of history."<sup>20</sup> As Orr<sup>21</sup> and Unger<sup>22</sup> have attested, however, Biblical archaeology has suffered at the hands of both friend and foe. In the past, some Biblical scholars and students were guilty of what Caiger termed embroidering "the less colorful discoveries so as to arouse popular interest."<sup>23</sup> An example in point was the mis-translation by Grimme of the alphabetic inscriptions of Sinai, who read these in such a manner as to find in them a reference to Moses and his rescue from the water by Queen Hatshepsut. When Grimme, an Orientalist of repute, published his translation, it caused great rejoicing in the world of Bible-believing scholarship. But, alas, other epigraphists and scholars could find no reference to Moses and his benefactress. It is generally agreed that Grimme found in the Sinaitic graffiti not what they actually contained but what he read into them.<sup>24</sup>

While there are differences of opinion as to the degree and extent to which archaeology confirms the Scriptures, scholars of various schools of theological persuasion have realized that today a mass of material exists which aids in illustrating and understanding the Bible. The testimony of archaeology, as Driver already showed, is either direct or indirect.<sup>25</sup> When the evidence of archaeology is direct, the matter in question is usually determined; but when the archaeological data is of an indirect nature, the suggested solution becomes probable. No student can afford to ignore the study of Biblical archaeology, for as Kyle averred, "archaeology furnishes the true historical setting of Scripture, and nothing else does so or

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<sup>20</sup> Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1932), p. 128.

<sup>21</sup> James Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 396.

<sup>22</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "The Use and Abuse of Biblical Archaeology," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, CV (July—September 1948), 298.

<sup>23</sup> Stephen L. Caiger, "Archaeological Fact and Fancy," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, VIII (December 1945), 94.

<sup>24</sup> H. G. May, "Moses and the Sinai Inscriptions," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, VIII (December 1945), 94.

<sup>25</sup> S. R. Driver, *Modern Research as Illustrating the Bible* (London: Oxford University Press, 1909), p. 16. Cf. also Driver's essay in D. G. Hogarth, *Authority and Archaeology* (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 143.



can do so."<sup>26</sup> Archaeology has also modified the findings of higher criticism and brought about a more conservative attitude toward the Old and New Testaments.<sup>27</sup> No New Testament student can ignore the light archaeology has and is throwing on the historical, cultural, and religious background of the New Testament. F. F. Bruce in *Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?* declared the evidence of New Testament archaeology important in terms of the bearing it has on the New Testament.<sup>28</sup>

This essay proposes to set forth the contributions which archaeology has made toward the understanding and interpretation of the New Testament. Furthermore, it will endeavor to indicate fields in which Biblical expositors and exegetes may continue to look for more help from Biblical archaeology. The term "archaeology" is not used, as formerly, to denote a systematic description of ancient customs and social institutions as distinguished from history as the narrative of movements and events.<sup>29</sup> Presenting the old definition, Benzinger writes: "Das Wort Archäologie wird heutzutage gebraucht als Name einer speciellen historischen Disciplin, die zu ihrer Aufgabe hat die wissenschaftliche Darstellung der gesammten Lebensverhältnisse, der Sitten und Gebräuche, der bürgerlichen und religiösen Institutionen."<sup>30</sup>

Wright describes archaeology as "the study of life and culture of the human race as it is revealed through excavation."<sup>31</sup> This is the definition generally used throughout this essay. Occasionally

<sup>26</sup> Kyle, *The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism: An Introduction to the Study of Biblical Archaeology* (Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra Company, 1924), p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> Albright, "Archaeology Confronts Biblical Criticism," *The American Scholar*, VII (1938), 176—188. J. Garrow Duncan, *The Accuracy of the Old Testament* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930), p. x.

<sup>28</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?* (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1943), p. 91.

<sup>29</sup> Kurt Galling, "Ausgrabungen," in *Biblisches Reallexikon* (J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1937), p. 42. The term is thus also used in Edmund Kalt, *Biblische Archäologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder and Company, 1934). Paul Volz, *Die Biblischen Altertümer* (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1924).

<sup>30</sup> I. Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie* (Leipzig: Verlag von Eduard Pfeiffer, 1927), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Wright, p. 74. Harold R. Willoughby, ed.



the term will be employed in its more inclusive sense, covering all material from the Near East, whether written or unwritten.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the contributions of archaeology to the New Testament, we shall point out some significant differences between Old Testament and New Testament archaeology. When the latter is compared with the former, it labors under apparent disadvantages. New Testament archaeology does not make the same sense appeal, since it cannot point to picturesque discoveries, such as characterize Old Testament archaeology. New Testament archaeology is unable to show colossi, sphinxes, pyramids, golden coffins, or even mysterious and untranslatable inscriptions. Furthermore while Old Testament archaeology spans millenia New Testament archaeology embraces a mere hundred years. "No discoveries for the period of the New Testament compare in importance with those for the Old," was the judgment of Wright.<sup>32</sup> While the material available to the New Testament student is not so romantic or sensational,<sup>33</sup> yet much valuable light is being shed through the window of archaeological study upon the New Testament. In fact, the material now at the disposal of New Testament scholars has not yet been extensively incorporated into current lexica and commentaries.<sup>34</sup>

To successfully interpret the writings of the New Testament to the reader of to-day, we have to bridge the four gaps of language, culture, geography, and history.<sup>35</sup> To each of these four categories the science of New Testament archaeology has thus far made contributions.

## II

The first step in the understanding of the New Testament is to ascertain the exact text as it left the pens of the New Testament authors in the period between A. D. 40 and 100. Before the expositor can interpret to others what the New Testament means, he

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>33</sup> Wright, "A Phenomenal Discovery," *The Biblical Archaeologist* XI (May 1948), 21—23. John C. Trever, "The Newly Discovered Jerusalem Scroll," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, XI (September 1948), 46—57.

<sup>34</sup> Wright, "Biblical Archaeology Today," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, IX (February 1947), 16.

<sup>35</sup> Ramm, pp. 3, 4.



must know what it says.<sup>36</sup> "Underlying all New Testament study is the reconstruction of its text."<sup>37</sup> Since the original autographs no longer exist, the devout student of the Scriptures must be interested in the establishment of the most accurate text possible. Sir Frederick Kenyon, one of the great living authorities on the text of the Greek Bible, asserts that during the first two centuries of the Christian era the original text of the New Testament was lost under a mass of variants, resulting from errors, deliberate changes, and attempts to remove seeming difficulties in the text.<sup>38</sup> As further efforts were made to recover the lost text, families of text took shape. To restore the original text of the autographs has, consequently, become the great objective of textual criticism.<sup>39</sup> Beginning with Cardinal Ximenes' Complutensian Polyglot (1514 to 1522) and Erasmus' first edition of the Greek New Testament (1516), many scholars have labored at the important task of restoring the original text.<sup>40</sup> In 1881 Westcott and Hort issued their now famous scientific and critical edition of the Greek New Testament.<sup>41</sup> Both the English Revised Version of 1885 and the American Revised Version of 1901 were based on the text of Westcott and Hort. The latter recognized four families of text: (1) The "Syrian," so-called because it was believed to have been revised at Antioch; it was an eclectic text. (2) The "Neutral" represented by Aleph and B, supported by 33 and the Bohairic Version and sometimes by Origen, being regarded as the purest representative of the original text. (3) The "Alexandrian," found in C, L, and sometimes in Origen, was considered to reveal evidences of scholarly revision of the Neutral text. (4) The "Western," represented by D,

<sup>36</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, "The Relation of Archaeology to Biblical Criticism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, CIV (April—June 1947), 170.

<sup>37</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, "The Present State of New Testament Studies," *The Haverford Symposium on Archaeology and the Bible* (New Haven: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938), p. 80.

<sup>38</sup> Sir Frederick Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), pp. 117, 118.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth W. Clark, "The Manuscripts of the Greek New Testament," in Merrill M. Parvis and Allen P. Wikgren, *New Testament Manuscript Studies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 1—24.

<sup>40</sup> A. T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1928), pp. 17—40.

<sup>41</sup> Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1882).



the Old Syriac and Old Latin versions, and in the writings of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Cyprian.<sup>42</sup> In this edition of the New Testament, in the opinion of Westcott and Hort, only about a thousandth part of the whole text might be called doubtful.<sup>43</sup>

Since the appearance of the Greek text of Westcott and Hort a considerable number of additional manuscripts have been discovered. According to Frederick Grant, the list of important manuscripts which have become available to New Testament scholars is imposing.<sup>44</sup> The following are some of the most important textual finds since 1891: (1) The Old Syriac version of the Gospels, discovered on Mount Sinai by Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson.<sup>45</sup> Its value lies in the fact that it is a witness to the nature of the Greek text in about A. D. 150. (2) The discovery of a Greek Diatessaron fragment from Dura, on the Euphrates, providing another second-century witness of the Greek New Testament text.<sup>46</sup> (3) The Washington manuscripts of the Gospels (W), purchased by Charles Freer of Detroit, consisting of two volumes of Old Testament books and two volumes of New Testament books, together with some fragments of the Epistles of St. Paul.<sup>47</sup> These documents contain a mixed text, i. e., some parts were copied from one type of text, other parts from another type.<sup>48</sup> (4) The Chester Beatty Papyri, discovered in 1931, comprise fragments of twelve Biblical manuscripts (eight Old Testament, four New Testament). These papyri are of extraordinary importance since they originated a hundred years before the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus.<sup>49</sup> The Gospels and Acts probably come from the first

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Introduction and Appendix, pp. 119—135.

<sup>43</sup> As quoted by George Milligan, *The New Testament and Its Transmission* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), p. 24.

<sup>44</sup> Frederick C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," in *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament* (Chicago: The International Council of Religious Education, 1946), p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Ernst von Dobschütz, *Nestle's Einführung in das griechische Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923), p. 110.

<sup>46</sup> Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible* (New York: Dutton & Company, Inc., 1937), p. 98.

<sup>47</sup> Kenyon, *Recent Development in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 26—28, 48, 57, 69.

<sup>48</sup> W. F. Howard, "The Greek Bible," in *The Bible in Its Ancient and English Versions*, W. Robinson, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 73.

<sup>49</sup> Kenyon, *Recent Development, etc.*, p. 51.



half of the third century, while the Pauline fragments are from about A.D. 250. The Chester Beatty Papyri are considered to be the most important New Testament manuscript discoveries since Tischendorf found the Codex Sinaiticus in a wastebasket in a monastery on Mount Sinai.<sup>50</sup> Kenyon has issued the Biblical portions of the Chester Beatty Papyri in their entirety.<sup>51</sup> In this collection three, designated by von Dobschütz and Rahlfs as P<sup>45</sup> (Gospels and Acts), P<sup>46</sup> (Pauline Epistles), P<sup>47</sup> (Revelation), are of special interest to New Testament students. Document P<sup>45</sup> contains portions of two leaves of Matthew, six of Mark, seven of Luke, two of John, and thirteen of Acts; P<sup>46</sup> contains eighty-six nearly perfect leaves of Romans, Hebrews, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians; and P<sup>47</sup> contains nearly ten complete leaves of the Apocalypse.<sup>52</sup> These papyri are especially important for the light which they shed upon the vexing problem of variant readings. According to Metzger, they "emphatically confirm the general soundness of our text of the New Testament."<sup>53</sup> P<sup>46</sup> is noteworthy because it contains the two chapters which have been so widely disputed by critics,<sup>54</sup> Romans 15 and 16. The doxology, however, which in the earlier manuscripts stands at the end of ch. 16, and in the great mass of later manuscripts at the end of ch. 14, is found in the Chester Beatty Papyri after 15:33. The editors of the Chester Beatty Papyri have suggested that it was placed here because the personal references at the close of Romans were not for public reading. Since the early church only read the doctrinal portions in their assemblies, the doxology was transferred to follow the benediction that closes ch. 15.<sup>55</sup> The pericope of Christ and the woman taken in adultery (John 8) is not a part of St. John's Gospel if the Chester Beatty

<sup>50</sup> Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1949), p. 76.

<sup>51</sup> Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri Descriptions and Texts of Twelve Manuscripts on Papyrus of the Greek Bible* (London: Emery Walker Limited, 1933—1941).

<sup>52</sup> Howard, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>53</sup> Bruce Metzger, "Recently Published Greek Papyri of the New Testament," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, X (May 1947), 37.

<sup>54</sup> Henry A. Sanders, *A Third-Century Papyrus of the Epistles of Paul* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1935), p. 54.

<sup>55</sup> Cf., however, the interpretation given the evidence by Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Christianity Goes to Press* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 20.



Papyri are accepted as representing an authentic tradition of the Greek New Testament text. In 1946 one of the contributors to this journal made a study of the implications for textual criticism implicit in P<sup>46</sup>.<sup>56</sup> (5) The Koridethi manuscript, which was discovered in a remote valley of the Caucasus, is another important manuscript discovery made within the last fifty years.<sup>57</sup> Although first noticed by von Soden in 1906, it was only published in 1913 by Beerman and Gregory. This manuscript escaped being brought in harmony with the standard Byzantine text. Professor Lake of Harvard, after subjecting the uncial, now designated as Theta (o38), to a thorough study, arrived at the conclusion that it together with some other MSS, especially a group of cursives, represents what is called the Caesarean text.<sup>58</sup> (6) The Rylands Fragment of St. John's Gospel, P<sup>52</sup>, measuring 2 by 3 inches and containing but a few verses of ch. 18 (31-33, 37, 38) has the distinction of being the oldest fragment of the New Testament in existence. C. H. Roberts published the Rylands Fragment and upon the basis of its style set the date in the first half of the second century.<sup>59</sup> What remains of this Johannine text agrees substantially with the critical text of the Gospel of John in the Greek New Testament.<sup>60</sup>

As a result of the discovery of the Washington Codex, the Koridethi uncial, P<sup>45</sup>, and the establishment of families 1 and 13, a new textual family has been established, called the "Caesarean." The latter holds a position intermediate between the Neutral family, headed by B, and that of the Western family, headed by D. The "Caesarean" derives special importance from its connection with Origen and the school of Caesarea.<sup>61</sup> The results of the study of

<sup>56</sup> Elmer Moeller, "P<sup>46</sup> and Textual Criticism," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XVII (May 1946), 340-350.

<sup>57</sup> Heinrich Joseph Vogels, *Handbuch der neutestamentlichen Textkritik* (Aschendorff: Münster in Westfalen; Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923), p. 66.

<sup>58</sup> Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1940), p. 259. P. E. Kretzmann, "The Koridethi Manuscript and the Latest Discoveries in Egypt," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, III (August 1932), pp. 575, 576.

<sup>59</sup> Metzger, p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> Metzger, p. 39

<sup>61</sup> Kenyon, *Recent Developments*, etc., p. 29.



the manuscript just discussed have modified certain conclusions of Westcott and Hort.<sup>62</sup> Instead of four classes of texts, scholars are now convinced of the existence of five main types of text at the end of the second century. All existing New Testament Greek manuscripts are supposed to be traceable to one of these five types.<sup>63</sup> Kenyon listed these as follows: (1) The Western, represented by the Old Latin and Codex Bezae; (2) The Caesarean, represented by the Koridethi Gospels and family 1 and 13; (3) The Alexandrian, represented by Codex Sinaiticus, and the Coptic Version; (4) The Syriac, represented chiefly by the Old Syriac; (5) Other, i. e., a classification of readings which does not fall within any of the other four groups.

The study of some of the most recent manuscript finds have convinced scholars of the nonexistence of any one infallible or superior type of text as Westcott and Hort had claimed. Hort's Neutral text is now recognized merely as a text type having been existent in the third century in Egypt.<sup>64</sup> The eclectic principle, which examines each variant on its merits, has now come into vogue among textual authorities.<sup>65</sup>

According to Grant, the new manuscript discoveries with their resultant changes in textual theory would in themselves have necessitated a new translation of the New Testament in English. The Revised Version of 1946 rests upon a text which in many respects is different from that of the 1885 and 1901 revisions.<sup>66</sup> In 1937 Goodspeed urged a new American translation of the New Testament, on the ground of the existence of a sounder Greek text than that utilized by previous revisers of the King James Version.<sup>67</sup> A comparison of *The Standard Revised Version* with

<sup>62</sup> Howard, pp. 80—82.

<sup>63</sup> Kenyon, *Story*, etc., pp. 131, 132. *Our Bible*, etc., p. 118. [For another fivefold division of the material available for textual criticism cf. B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, Macmillan, 1924 and 1931. See on this division CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, V, 577 ff.; XVI, 180 ff. — Ed.]

<sup>64</sup> Merrill M. Parvis, "New Testament Criticism in the World-Wars Period," in *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow* [fn. 10, above], p. 57.

<sup>65</sup> Ernest Cadman Colwell, "Biblical Criticism: Lower and Higher," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXVII (March 1948), 10—12.

<sup>66</sup> Grant, "The Greek Text of the Bible" [fn. 44, above], p. 42.

<sup>67</sup> Edgar J. Goodspeed, *New Chapters in New Testament Study* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), p. 113.



the King James and the American Standard Version of 1901 reveals that the revisers of 1946 followed B-Aleph-Chester Beatty Papyri in the following passages: Matt. 3:16; 9:14; 12:47; 17:22; Mark 1:1; 7:4; 8:15; 10:24; 15:44; 16:9-20; Luke 2:14; 4:44; 5:17; 12:39; 15:16; 22:16; 23:38; John 3:13; 5:2; 7:53—8:11; 8:16; 8:57; 9:35; Acts 11:20; 18:7; 19:39; Rom. 4:1; 5:1; 5:2; 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:4; 1:14; 2 Cor. 3:2; Eph. 1:1; 2 Thess. 2:3; Heb. 3:2; 3:6; 6:2, 3; 9:11; 1 Peter 4:1; 5:2; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 2:10; 2 John 8; Rev. 21:3; 22:14.

The manuscript discoveries have thus carried the evidence for the sacred text a full two hundred years earlier than the earliest vellum codices. The recently discovered papyri, in fact, all but bridge the existing gulf of two hundred and fifty years between the Codex Vaticanus and St. John the Apostle. There are at least eight different papyri finds of New Testament books antedating the two fourth-century uncials, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.<sup>68</sup>

A correct text is the very foundation of Biblical study. If the text is incorrect, the study and interpretation of Scripture will lead to erroneous paths and result in faulty conclusions.<sup>69</sup> The contributions of the newly discovered papyri will, consequently, be welcomed by the student of the Greek New Testament, because he realizes the fundamental importance of textual criticism, basic as it is to every other type of theological inquiry.

Have the New Testament Greek papyri finds shaken the confidence of the interpreter in the original text of the New Testament? Kenyon has expressed this reasoned opinion: "It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain."<sup>70</sup> In another writing, he asserted: "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the *authenticity* and the *general integrity* of the books of the New

<sup>68</sup> Stephen L. Caiger, "Archaeology's Contribution to New Testament Knowledge," in *The Story of the Bible* (New York: Wm. H. Wise & Company, 1948), IV, 1489.

<sup>69</sup> Montgomery Schroyer, *Understanding the Scriptures* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1948), p. 17.

<sup>70</sup> Kenyon, *Our Bible*, etc., p. 23.



Testament may be regarded as finally established."<sup>71a</sup> Finegan is convinced that the New Testament interpreters are able to approach their work knowing the text they operate with to be dependable.<sup>71b</sup>

### III

After the original text has been determined, the task of ascertaining the meaning of the New Testament may be undertaken. This requires a thorough knowledge of the Greek language. Archaeology has also provided invaluable material for a better understanding of the language of the New Testament. Thus Caiger declared: "Perhaps the most important concrete and direct evidence made by the papyri to our understanding of the New Testament has been in the linguistic sphere."<sup>72</sup> The discoveries, coming chiefly from the papyri unearthed in the refuse heaps of Egypt, have changed the concept of the nature of the Greek of the New Testament. Formerly New Testament Greek was considered a specially devised language; it was referred to as "Biblical Greek," "tired Greek," or even "bad Greek." Deissmann must be credited with pointing out the similarity between the Greek of the New Testament and the Greek current in the Roman Empire among the simple and unlettered populace.<sup>73</sup> Robertson, in his monumental grammar, evaluated the new papyri discoveries and their relationship to the Greek New Testament as follows: "The N. T. Greek is now seen to be not an abnormal excrescence, but a natural development in the Greek language; to be, in fact, a not unworthy part of the great stream of the mighty tongue. It was not outside of the world-language, but in the very heart of it and influenced considerably the future of the Greek tongue."<sup>74</sup>

In the days before the discovery of the papyri it was estimated

<sup>71a</sup> Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*, pp. 288, 289.

<sup>71b</sup> Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient East: The Archaeological Background of the Hebrew-Christian Religion*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), pp. 351, 352.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen Caiger, *Archaeology and the New Testament* (London: Cassel and Company, 1939), p. 161.

<sup>73</sup> Adolf Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1923), p. 48.

<sup>74</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (4th ed.; New York: G. H. Doran Company, 1923), p. 30.



that at least ten per cent of the words employed in the Greek New Testament (500 or more) were especially invented by Biblical writers.<sup>75</sup> *Hapax legomenon* was the notation found after many words in New Testament dictionaries. Today the number of *hapax legomena* have been reduced to a small group since most of these words have been found in first- and second-century papyri. Tens of thousands of papyri have shown New Testament Greek to be fundamentally the spoken language of that day.<sup>76</sup> New Testament Greek is essentially the same as Koine Greek. So much information has become available regarding the lexicography of the New Testament that Moulton and Milligan were able to issue a vocabulary of the New Testament illustrated by the papyri,<sup>77</sup> and there were issued New Testament grammars showing the relationship of the Greek of the New Testament to that of the papyri and inscriptions.<sup>78</sup> No New Testament student can afford to remain in ignorance of the papyri in their relationship to the vocabulary and syntax of the Greek New Testament.<sup>79</sup> The papyrological finds touch exegesis at innumerable points. Some of the best and trustworthy commentaries need to be overhauled because of the new light from the ancient East.<sup>80</sup>

The papyri enrich our knowledge of the language of the New Testament in various ways. For example, the use of many words is illustrated. When Paul spoke of Christians as "Christ's slaves" (Rom. 1:1; 6:22) or of "Christ's freedmen" (1 Cor. 7:22), being "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20), and as "redeemed from the curse of the Law" (Gal. 3:13; 4:4), he employed the terminology

<sup>75</sup> A. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book Company, 1899), pp. 698-710.

<sup>76</sup> Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Problems of New Testament Translation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 705 pages.

<sup>78</sup> Albert Debrunner, *Friedrich Blass' Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921), 336 pages. F. M. Abel, *Grammaire du Grec Biblique* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1927), 414 pages. Ludwig Rademacher, *Neutestamentliche Grammatik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1925), 248 pages. J. H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek* (3d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), Vol. I, Prolegomena.

<sup>79</sup> Edgar J. Goodspeed and Ernst Cadman Colwell, *A Greek Papyrus Reader* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), p. ii.

<sup>80</sup> Moulton, *Grammar*, p. 2.



familiar to the Greeks of his day. Thus an inscription from Delphi describes slaves as "being bought from their masters in the name of Apollo and regarded as his slaves."<sup>81</sup> The word λογία (1 Cor. 16:1,2) has been shown to be a common term for collections. In the command of Jesus to His disciples: "Take nothing for your journey save a staff only, no bread, no wallet (πήραν), no money" (Mark 6:8, Revised Version), the word for wallet, which was thought to mean portmanteau, has been shown to be a mendicant's collection bag.<sup>82</sup> The word for daily bread (ἐπιούσιον) in the Fourth Petition (Matt. 6:11; Luke 11:3) has recently been discovered to mean "daily ration."<sup>83</sup>

Not only have the papyri made clear the general character of the language of the New Testament, but they have also aided in clarifying certain words and expressions. Greek words occurring in classical Greek in the course of the centuries have taken on a new meaning, as the papyri and inscriptions reveal.<sup>84</sup> Milligan lists the following as examples of words which were raised from their original and popular usage to a deeper and more spiritual sense: αἰώνιος, βαπτίζω, κύριος, λειτουργέω, παρουσία, πρεσβεύω, πρεσβύτερος, προγράφω, σωτήρ, σωτηρία, and χρηματίζω.<sup>85</sup> The language employed by St. Paul in describing the Atonement has been shown to have been borrowed from the legal terminology of the time.<sup>86</sup> The titles for bishop, presbyter, and deacon were used in the contemporaneous documents in connection with trade unions and other organizations.<sup>87</sup> The verb ἀπέχω, used by Christ to describe those who seek the praise of men as having their reward, is found in the papyri in the sense of "receive in full."<sup>88</sup> For further light on the terminology of the language of the New Testament the reader

<sup>81</sup> Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* p. 50.

<sup>82</sup> Moulton and Milligan, p. 512.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>84</sup> George Milligan, *Selections from the Greek Papyri* (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p. xxx.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. xxx.

<sup>86</sup> A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932), I, xiii.

<sup>87</sup> Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* p. 52.

<sup>88</sup> Adolf Deissmann, *The New Testament in the Light of Modern Research* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1929), p. 87.



is referred to the works of Deissmann, Meecham, and Moulton.<sup>89</sup> The readers of this journal have at their disposal a contribution giving illustrations how the papyri have aided the better understanding of the writings of St. Paul.<sup>90</sup>

The first-century documents have further shown "that for the interpretation of the New Testament what is decisive is not the derivation of a word or its meaning in the fifth century B. C., but what it meant to the people of the Roman empire in the first century A. D."<sup>91</sup> The fine distinctions of classical Greek are shown by the evidence of the first-century nonliterary documents to have been lost by the time of St. Paul.<sup>92</sup>

A comparison of New Testament Greek with the language of the papyri has likewise resulted in increasing the confidence of students in the accuracy of the transmission of the text itself. It has become apparent to discerning scholars that the language of the New Testament is not that of later centuries, but the product of the times in which the documents were composed. The archaeological finds have contributed to the historical grammar of the Greek language and have in turn furnished New Testament scholarship with a criterion for the dating of the books of the New Testament canon.<sup>93</sup> Thus the papyrus fragment of the Gospel of John, found by Roberts among the treasures of the John Rylands library at Manchester plus the larger papyrus fragment from the British Museum, published by Bell and Skeat, containing a small account of the life of Christ using all four Gospels, including St. John, has dealt a *coup de grace* to the extreme critical views held by certain scholars about St. John. The Tübingen School, founded by Ferdinand Baur, dated St. John's Gospel about A. D. 170 and only a half dozen books before A. D. 100. Likewise the Dutch School, headed by Van Manen and Loman, denied to St. Paul all

<sup>89</sup> Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, pp. 65—114; Henry G. Meecham, *Light from Ancient Letters* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1923), pp. 46 to 157; Moulton and Milligan, loc. cit.

<sup>90</sup> Eric C. Malte, "Light from the Papyri on St. Paul's Terminology," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XVIII (July 1947), 499—517.

<sup>91</sup> Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* p. 52.

<sup>92</sup> E. Osty, "Les Langues," in *Initiation Biblique. Introduction à L' Etude des Saintes Ecritures*, A. Robert et A. Tricot, editeurs (Paris: Desclee & Cie, 1948), pp. 74—77.

<sup>93</sup> Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* p. 53.



the letters which the Christian Church has always attributed to him. Both schools now stand discredited in the light of the archaeological finds of the last thirty years.<sup>94</sup>

Archaeological evidence has also undercut the assumptions of the more radical "form critics." Martin Dibelius and Rudolph Bultmann originated this new type of criticism about 1919. They contended that the oral traditions of the church developed into definite literary forms, such as the sayings of Jesus, miracles, and parables.<sup>95</sup> Much of the contents of the Gospels, according to form criticism, was later postulated to conform to situations which developed after the days of the Apostles. The Gospels thus depict the faith of the Christian Church of the second century and not the faith taught by Jesus. The Gospel of St. John is held to contain very little historical material but to reflect conditions as they existed in the second century. Concerning the views of form criticism, Albright averred: "Archaeological data already speak with no uncertain voice against the vagaries of radical form criticism according to Dibelius, and even more decisively against the extreme views of some of his followers."<sup>96</sup> Among the evidence cited by Albright for the first century date of St. John is an ossuary recovered by E. L. Sukenik on Mount Scopus, having on it the Greek name Theodotion in Aramaic characters and the word διδάσκαλος as his title. It had been argued that St. John's usage of the word διδάσκαλος to render the Aramaic "rabbi" was an anachronism, having been borrowed from the second century, when it was employed in the Mishna and other writings of the Jews.<sup>97</sup> The objection put forth by critics that the names in the Gospel of St. John are anachronistic has been disproved by the finding of ossuary inscriptions. Names such as Miriam (Mary), Martha, Elizabeth, Salome, Johanna, and others,

<sup>94</sup> W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949), p. 240; Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 299.

<sup>95</sup> Martin Dibelius, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur, Evangelien und Apokryphen* (Berlin und Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Company, 1926), I, 1—54; Dibelius, *Jesus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Company, 1939), pp. 10 to 28; Dibelius, *The Message of Jesus Christ*, trans. Frederick C. Grant (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939); Floyd V. Filson, *Origins of the Gospels* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1938), pp. 85—114.

<sup>96</sup> Albright, *Archaeology*, p. 243.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.



illustrate the accuracy of local coloring in St. John and the other Gospels, indicating that the material might have been put together in its extant form before the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70).<sup>98</sup> The form critic is consequently left without archaeological support when he attempts to use the criterion of personal names as an argument for the late date of St. John.

One of the open questions of New Testament introduction involves the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>99</sup> The Chester Beatty Papyri have disclosed some interesting evidence on the subject. The order of the appearance of the Pauline Epistles in P<sup>46</sup> is highly significant, as they seem to follow in doctrinal importance. The Roman Epistle comes first, as in the English version; it is followed by Hebrews, the two Corinthian Letters, Galatians, Philipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians.<sup>100</sup> The position of Hebrews in the Chester Beatty Papyri establishes the authenticity and the importance of the Epistle. The manuscript reveals that about A. D. 250 that part of the church from which this Biblical document has come considered Paul the author of Hebrews. P<sup>46</sup> thus joins the group of those who held the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, as Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine, and the Greek writers after Athanasius.<sup>101</sup>

According to Albright, archaeology also helps in solving one of the controversial questions in the New Testament field — the original language of the New Testament. While the majority of Christian scholars consider the original language of the New Testament to have been Greek, certain scholars in the last sixty years have advocated Aramaic as the original language of composition, and the several thousand existing manuscripts as survivals of a translation made from original Aramaic documents. Burney, Montgomery, Olmstead, Torrey, and others, have sponsored the Semitic theory.<sup>102</sup> From 1912 to 1941 Torrey published an impressive series of

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 244.

<sup>99</sup> E. L. Lueker, "The Author of Hebrews: A Fresh Approach," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XVII (July 1946), 499, 500.

<sup>100</sup> Kenyon, *Recent Developments*, etc., p. 60.

<sup>101</sup> H. Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 298.

<sup>102</sup> Filson, pp. 56—81; Goodspeed, *New Chapters*, pp. 127—168; Edgar J. Goodspeed, *New Solutions of New Testament Problems* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), pp. 67—92.



books,<sup>103</sup> in which he undertook to show that the Four Gospels are translations of original Aramaic texts, going even so far as to reconstruct the nonexistent Aramaic original and then translating it into English.<sup>104</sup> There was, of course, a reason for such an attempt. Jesus undoubtedly made use of at least two languages in His public ministry. After all, most writers of the New Testament were Jews who spoke Aramaic. There are also a number of Aramaic words and phrases in the Greek New Testament. Various dialects of Aramaic were used in and around Palestine in the centuries before and after the Christian era.<sup>105</sup> Beginning with the third century A. D., Jewish Aramaic is found in the Palestinian Talmud and the Targums. The Samaritan dialect goes back to the fourth Christian century. Babylonian Aramaic was in use in Babylonia from the fourth century onward, with Mandaean, another Aramaic dialect, found some centuries later. Syriac, the Aramaic dialect of northern Mesopotamia, was used especially in Edessa in the second and the third century. Between the sixth and ninth centuries Christian Palestinian Aramaic was in vogue in Palestine. In the light of this background it is not difficult to understand how scholars might have postulated an Aramaic original for the books of the New Testament.

Two of the chief arguments advanced by the opponents of the Aramaic schools are: (1) none of the Aramaic dialects just mentioned are contemporaneous with the time of Christ in Palestine; (2) there are no literary Aramaic writings from the period between the second century B. C. and the second or third century A. D.<sup>106</sup> There seems to have been a real eclipse of Aramaic during the Seleucid epoch, covering the period from 312 B. C. to the early first century, since scarcely an Aramaic inscription has come from this period. Archaeological discoveries militate against the pos-

<sup>103</sup> Charles Cutler Torrey, *Our Translated Gospels* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936).

<sup>104</sup> Torrey, *The Four Gospels* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1933), 331 pages.

<sup>105</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *Die aramäische Forschung seit Th. Nöldeke's Veröffentlichungen* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1939), 307 pages. Henri Fleisch, *Introduction des Langues Sémitiques* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1947), pp. 67—87.

<sup>106</sup> Goodspeed, *New Chapters*, etc., p. 156. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), pp. 295, 296.



sibility of the continuity of a literary written Aramaic through Hellenistic times. Albright concludes: "Archaeological evidence, as we see, does not support the view that the Gospels were written in Aramaic."<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, the relatively long first-century Uzziah inscription, written in Aramaic, reveals the danger involved in attempting the reconstruction of Aramaic documents in Palestine without any check from contemporary Aramaic literature. Thus the Uzziah inscription contains, for example, two forms which Semitic scholars would not have expected to find in first-century Aramaic.<sup>108</sup> One was the much later Samaritan word for "bones" in place of an older form, and an archaic form of the verb "it is [they are] brought," previously only known from the Book of Daniel.<sup>109</sup> Another item of archaeological evidence militating against the existence of an Aramaic literature in Christ's day, is the result of the comparison of the Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar, found at Elephantine in Egypt, of fifth century origin, with the Syriac Ahiqar, a literary work taken over by the Syriac-speaking Christians of Mesopotamia.<sup>110</sup> These two versions differ so widely from each other that one can only speak of a common oral tradition; the Syriac work cannot be said to be a translation of the one found at Elephantine, in Egypt. This argues against the persistence of an Aramaic literature up to the time of Christ. It would, therefore, seem that the Aramaic materials in the Gospels are the result of the translation of orally transmitted documents.<sup>111</sup>

#### IV

The archaeological findings, whether in the form of papyri, coins, inscriptions, ossuaries, graffiti, potsherds, or ostraka have in many cases established the historical accuracy of the New Testament writings. In this connection the work and writings of Sir William Ramsay should be mentioned. While a student at the University

<sup>107</sup> Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 203.

<sup>108</sup> Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, pp. 340, 341.

<sup>109</sup> Albright, "The Discovery of an Aramaic Inscription Relating to King Uzziah," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, XLIV (December 1931), 8—10.

<sup>110</sup> Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 202.

<sup>111</sup> Filson, p. 80.



of Oxford, he shared the critical views of his day and distrusted the authenticity of the New Testament. Winning a Research Fellowship from Oxford, he went to Asia Minor with the intent of proving how the Book of Acts was in error in its geographical and historical allusions. Ramsay was convinced of the inaccuracy of Luke's geographical and historical statements, believing them to be in accord with the facts as they obtained ca. A. D. 200.<sup>112</sup> As Ramsay, however, retraced the steps of St. Paul through Asia Minor and Europe, as described in the Book of Acts, he became amazed at St. Luke's accuracy as a historian. The story relating the complete change of heart Ramsay experienced is told by him in *The Bearing of Recent Discoveries on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*.<sup>113</sup> In many of his writings Ramsay has defended the accuracy and historicity of the New Testament, and the serious student of New Testament history and doctrine will find them of great help in obtaining a better and clearer understanding of the books comprising the New Covenant.<sup>114</sup>

Many historical and geographical references in both the Gospel of Luke and its companion volume, the Acts, have been confirmed. In a commentary which frequently censures the Biblical writers, Bishop Gore wrote: "It should of course be recognized that modern archaeology has almost forced upon critics of St. Luke a verdict of remarkable accuracy in all his allusions to secular facts and events. . . . Perhaps the greatest living authority on ancient history, Eduard Meyer, has called the work of Luke 'one of the most important works which remain to us from antiquity' (Anfänge,

<sup>112</sup> Caiger, *Archaeology of the New Testament*, pp. 106, 107.

<sup>113</sup> London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915. Cf. particularly pp. 33—35.

<sup>114</sup> The following are Ramsay's most important books: *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen* (New York: G. P. Putnam Sons, 1896); *The Church in the Roman Empire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893); *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem? A Study on the Credibility of St. Luke* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898); *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900); *The Letters to the Seven Churches* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904); *The Cities of St. Paul* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907); *Luke the Physician* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908); *The Teachings of St. Paul in the Terms of the Present Day* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913); *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915).



I, viii); and Meyer has certainly no prejudice in favor of religious tradition." <sup>115</sup>

In the past the chronological references of St. Luke's version of the Christmas story were impugned as unhistorical. It was asserted (1) that Quirinius did not govern Syria until after the death of Herod (A.D. 4); (2) that Augustus did not order a universal census; (3) that, in any case, a citizen would not be required to repair to his home city for enrollment as Luke states in ch. 2:3. Luke 2:1-5 was considered a crucial passage by expositors. Archaeology has come to the defense of St. Luke. In regard to the census of Luke, Barton wrote: "Archaeological research has recently thrown much light upon the census of Quirinius mentioned in Luke 2:1-5. . . . The following extract from a large papyrus establishes the fact that a census or an assessment-list was made in the Roman empire every fourteen years." <sup>116</sup>

Refuting the charge that St. Luke blundered in speaking of an enrollment by households extending throughout the whole Roman empire, an edict of Gaius Vibius Maximus, governor of Egypt, issued in A.D. 104, says: "The enrollment by households being at hand, it is necessary to notify all who for any cause are outside their homes to return to their domestic hearths, that they may accomplish the customary dispensation of enrollment and continue steadfastly in the husbandry that belongeth to them." <sup>117</sup>

A papyrus fragment, found by Grenfell and Hunt, dated A.D. 20, shows conclusively that periodic enrollments were made at that time. Another papyrus was discovered attesting the ordering of an enrollment in Egypt around the year 23 or 22 B.C. <sup>118</sup>

The statement of St. Luke placing the census by Caesar Augustus in the days when Quirinius was governor of Syria caused Biblical students difficulty. Critics declared that St. Luke was in error because, according to the records of Roman history, Quirinius was governor in A.D. 6, but not in 6 B.C. St. Luke was accused of

<sup>115</sup> Henry Goudge, Charles Gore, and Alfred Guillaume, *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 210.

<sup>116</sup> George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (17th ed. Philadelphia: *Sunday School Times*, 1937), p. 553.

<sup>117</sup> Adolf Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, pp. 231, 232.

<sup>118</sup> W. M. Ramsay, *Was Christ Born in Bethlehem?* pp. 131-148.



confusing the two dates. Ramsay, however, has shown from the Tibur inscription that Quirinius had twice been governor of Syria as *legatus* of the divine Augustus.<sup>119</sup> Quirinius was consul in 12 B. C., which means his first mission was subsequent to that date. Ramsay has further brought to light from the papyri that the fourteen-year cycle was used for the Roman census. The first census was instituted in 8 B. C., according to the calculation of Ramsay. Herod, as a vassal king, would be allowed to conduct the census in Jewish, not Roman fashion, and thus it was probably delayed several years in the lands under Herod the Great's jurisdiction.<sup>120</sup> Accordingly, Joseph and Mary participated in an enrollment which took place in 6 or 5 B. C.

Ramsay and Anderson of Oxford found an inscription in southeastern Phrygia or southern Galatia in 1912 which names Publius Sulpicius Quirinius as commander in chief of the Roman armies in the Homanadensian War of 10—7 B. C., with military jurisdiction over Syria.<sup>121</sup> From Roman history, however, it is known that Saturninus became governor of Syria in 9 B. C. and that Varus succeeded him after the death of Herod the Great. This would not leave room, so it seemed, for Quirinius. The date when Quirinius exercised his military governorship over Syria has been set in 6 B. C. A much-defaced stone found at Tivoli refers to an official, who is thought by historians to be Quirinius, and calls him *legatus iterum Syriae*, twice governor of Syria. The solution of the entire matter would, therefore, seem to be that Quirinius was military while Saturninus was civil governor when Christ was born.<sup>122</sup> Armstrong explains the difficulty in Luke 2 regarding Quirinius as follows: "It is possible that the connection of the census with Quirinius may be due to his having brought to completion what was begun by one of his predecessors; or Quirinius may have been commissioned especially by the emperor as *legatus ad census accipiendos* to conduct a census in Syria and this commission may have been connected

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., pp. 227 ff.

<sup>120</sup> A. T. Robertson, "Gospel of Luke," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, III, 1938a.

<sup>121</sup> Caiger, *Archaeology and the New Testament*, p. 142.

<sup>122</sup> A. Rendle Short, *Modern Discovery and the Bible* (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1943), p. 158.



temporarily with his campaign against the Homanadenses in Cilicia." <sup>123</sup>

At Ancyra in Asia Minor, on a temple built by the Emperor Augustus, there is an interesting inscription, known today as the Monumentum Ancyranum, which reads:

I performed the census after an interval of 42 years. At this census 4,063,000 Roman citizens were entered on the rolls. A second time, in the consulship of C. Censorinus and C. Asinius, I completed a census with the help of a colleague invested with the consular imperium. At this second census, 4,233,000 Roman citizens were entered on the rolls. A third time I completed a census, being invested with the consular imperium, and having my son Tiberius Caesar as my colleague. At this third census 4,937,000 Roman citizens were entered on the rolls.<sup>124</sup>

These three enrollments are considered to have taken place in 28 B. C., 8 B. C., and A. D. 14. It is a striking thought that the second of these, involving 4,233,000 Roman citizens probably had some connection with the one of which St. Luke wrote: "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed," and that St. Paul was one of the 4,937,000 Roman citizens of the third enrollment.

Archaeology has confirmed numerous statements in the Book of Acts.<sup>125</sup> For example, Gallio's proconsulship (18:12) has not only been confirmed, but an inscription helps to date approximately the beginning of St. Paul's stay in Corinth. St. Luke's usage of such special terms as "politarch" at Thessalonica (17:5 ff.) and "asiarch" at Ephesus (19:31) has been authenticated. The "altar to an unknown god" (17:23) is one of a type known from archaeological discoveries coming from the first Christian century.<sup>126</sup> Robertson, in ch. 14 of *Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*,<sup>127</sup> enumerated many more instances in which archaeology has confirmed the statements of St. Luke.

<sup>123</sup> W. P. Armstrong, "Chronology of the New Testament," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, I, 645, 646a.

<sup>124</sup> Quoted from Caiger, *Archaeology and the New Testament*, pp. 138, 139.

<sup>125</sup> William F. Albright, "Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands," in Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (20th American ed.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1936), p. 41.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>127</sup> Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, pp. 179—189.



Another contribution of the science of archaeology to the understanding of the New Testament has been the elucidation of obscure and troublesome passages, which hitherto defied a satisfactory explanation by exegetes, as, for instance, the opening verse of Luke 3. Christ's ministry began, according to the Gospel testimony, when Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene. While a Lysanias of Abilene was known from Roman history about fifty years before this time, first-century documents were silent about a Lysanias as a contemporary of Jesus. This discovery of an inscription later published in the *Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum*, confirmed the accuracy of St. Luke and simultaneously helped to clear up this chronological reference, in that it mentions Lysanias as tetrarch during the reign of Caesar Tiberius.<sup>128</sup>

Another passage, in which New Testament scholars believed to find an error, was that of Acts 13:7. Here again archaeology has helped to solve a crux. In ch. 13 St. Luke described Sergius, the governor of Cyprus, as a proconsul. Not long before St. Paul's visit to Cyprus it had been an imperial province and consequently would be governed by a propraetor or a legatus. Nineteenth-century critics accused the author of Acts of a blunder because of his designation of Paulus as proconsul. Since that time both Greek and Latin coins have been found with the title of proconsul for the governor of Cyprus.<sup>129</sup>

(To be continued)

<sup>128</sup> John Martin Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan & Company, 1930), pp. 307—309.

<sup>129</sup> Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pp. 150—172.