

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLARS

The Second International Congress of Old Testament Scholars was held in Strasburg from August 27th to September 1st, 1956. The congress was attended by 246 members, including wives of members, representing twenty-three countries. The largest number of members, naturally, came from France with fifty-six members. Germany came next with forty-three representatives. England was represented by twenty-five delegates. The U.S.A. and the Netherlands had eighteen each; Italy, sixteen; Switzerland, thirteen; Belgium, eleven; Denmark, eight; Sweden, Israel, Ireland and Austria, six each; Jordania, four; Japan, two; Spain, Norway, Malta, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Luxemburg, Scotland and Jugoslavia, one each. An outstanding characteristic of the Congress, in contrast with that held in Copenhagen in 1953, was the prominent part taken by Catholic scholars. Eight out of fifteen papers were read by Catholics, and a large number of members were Catholics.

The Congress opened on Monday, 27th August under the presidency of Mr Jean Babin, Rector of the Academy of Strasburg, who delivered the inaugural speech. Then Mr Hauter, Dean of the Faculty of Protestant Theology in the University of Strasburg and Director of the Centre of Research in the field of the History of Religions addressed the members. He was followed by Professor G.R. Driver, President of the International Association of Old Testament Scholars and by Fr R. De Vaux, O.P., Director of the École biblique of Jerusalem and President of the Congress. The proceedings of the day were closed by a reception given by the Prefect of the Lower Rhine.

The following is a summary of the papers read during the Congress:

D. Winton Thomas. *Some observations of the Root* לָחַץ. The Hebrew verb לָחַץ and its Arabic equivalent لَحَضَ generally mean 'to forsake, to abstain from aiding, to hold back' from'. But there are some passages in the Old Testament to which this meaning does not seem to fit. Thus in Is. 53, 3 לְאִישׁוֹ לָחַץ, Vulg. 'novissimum virorum' means 'forsaking men', not 'forsaken by men'. In Is. 38, 11 and Ps. 39, 5 לָחַץ is probably, according to the Rabbinic view, a phonetic variation of לָחַץ and no emendation is necessary. In 1 Sam. 2, 5 'et famelici saturati sunt', the verb לָחַץ is related to Arabic لَحَضَ 'to become fat' and not to لَحَضَ. In conclusion reference is made to the view of older scholars

who believed that הָלַל means primarily 'to become faint', but doubt is expressed whether the Arabic meaning of ظَلَّ supports this view. It may be remarked that this last meaning is the only meaning of Maltese *hedla*, *hedla*.

A. Diez Macho. *Importants manuscrits hébreux et araméens aux Etats-Unis*. The lecturer described some important Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts existing in American Libraries, with special reference to their system of vocalization. He mentioned the following manuscripts existing in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York: Ms. 152, which contains Genesis in the Aramaic text of Onqelos which has disappeared; Ms. 153 containing five chapters of Exodus of Onqelos with the Babylonian vocalization; Ms. 191 containing almost the whole of Exodus in Aramaic sephardi with variant readings added by a Yemenite; Ms. 133a containing Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy of Onqelos with the Babylonian vocalization; Ms. 131 containing almost the whole of Deuteronomy of Onqelos with Babylonian vocalization. New fragments of of the Palestinian Targum have been discovered in Mss. 501 and 605. The Babylonian text of Jonathan ben Uzziel of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings — so far unknown — has been recovered from Ms. 229, a very important manuscript which has been copied from a Hebrew Babylonian text. Ms. 607 f. 5 contains a long fragment of a Targum of the Prophets, which is entirely different from that of Jonathan ben Uzziel. Its language is Oriental Aramaic, while Ms. T. S. B 13/2 of the University of Cambridge contains the same text in Palestinian Aramaic. Ms. 240 contains many chapters of Isaiah in Babylonian Hebrew. Ms. 508 has a number of Psalms in Babylonian Hebrew, and Ms. 456 contains almost the whole Psalter, with Yemenite interpolations, copied from a Babylonian original. Of the Palestinian text some more manuscripts have come to light. Ms. 594 Box B marks the transition from the Palestinian to the Tiberian system of vocalization; Ms. 403 f. 2 has variant Palestinian readings to a Babylonian Hebrew text; Ms. 504 f. 11 has the Palestinian accentuation. Ms. 607 ff. 1-2 as well as Ms. d 44 ff. 1-4 and d 37 of the Bodleian of Oxford present a mixture of the Tiberian and the Palestinian systems of vocalization.

P.A.H. de Boer. *Texte et traduction des paroles attribuées à David dans 2 Samuel 23, 1-7*. This passage is called 'The last words of David' and is generally considered to be a sort of short Psalm. In reality, however, it is only a collection of proverbs not unworthy of a king like David. The construction of the first verses is very similar to that of many sentences of the books of Proverbs. The contents of the whole

passage is the glorification of wisdom, and it is now generally held that the appreciation of wisdom in Israel is much older than it was hitherto believed. The development of ideas is this: the proverbs of David are a proof of the wisdom of the Elected One of God; David will have a numerous posterity as a reward for his righteousness; the wicked will perish without leaving a posterity.

G. Ryckmans. *Résultats archéologiques et épigraphiques d'une mission en Arabie séoudite*. The orator, well known for his studies of the South-Arabian inscriptions, has given the results of an expedition in South Arabia undertaken in 1951-2. Along the route of about 5,400 km. some 12,000 graffiti have been discovered, of which 9,000 were in Thamudæan dialect and 3,000 in Sabaean dialect. The Thamudæan graffiti were found in widely separated areas, mostly on the rocky sides of valleys. The Sabaean graffiti were found mostly along the routes of the caravans, especially the route from Nejran to the Persian Gulf. Many of these graffiti belong to the sixth century A.D. Among these inscriptions, the most important of which have already been published, deserves special attention a Christian inscription of king Abraha of Saba who defeated the Judaist king of Saba, who persecuted the Christians of Nejran. The ruins of two Sabaean cities, which emerged out of the soil, were minutely investigated: Uhdud, in the oasis of Nejran, on the boundaries of Yemen, and Qariya, a Sabaean advance-guard and a halting-place of the caravans on the way to the Persian Gulf. The paper was richly illustrated by slides.

B. Mazar. *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shishak to Palestine*. The Campaign of Pharaoh Shishak in Palestine in the fifth year of king Jeroboam of Judah is mentioned twice in the Bible, in 1 Kings 12, 25, 26 and 2 Chr. 12, 2-9. The author of Kings mentions only the attack on Jerusalem and the plundering of the temple treasures, while the Chronicler adds that Shishak took the fortified cities of Judah before attacking Jerusalem. A fuller account of the campaign is read on the Southern wall of the temple of Amun at Karnak (Egypt). The inscription is a list of Shishak's conquests in Palestine. The first part, consisting of five short lines, presents some difficulties regarding the route followed by Shishak. But the difficulties are eliminated if the first four lines are read *boustrophedon*, that is line one from right to left, line two from left to right, and so on. Thus we obtain a consistent list of place-names describing the campaign across the Kingdom of Israel. The first place to be invaded is Gaza in Southern Palestine, on the Mediterranean coast; then the invader moves to Gezer, further North; thence he continues to Ayalon,

Gibeon and the Jordan Valley; thence to Beth-Shean, the Valley of Jezrael and back to Egypt. The archaeological finds confirm this route. The second part of the list contains a great number of names of settlements, fortresses and regions many of which bear a close resemblance to the genealogical list of 1 Chronicles.

J. Coppens. *La bénédiction de Jacob (Genèse 49). Son cadre historique et philologique.* Jacob's blessing of his sons in Gen. 49 in one of the most obscure texts of the Bible. It is difficult to place it in its proper historical context. During the last years the attempt has been made to explain many passages in the light of Ugaritic literature. The lecturer, however, is very sceptical about the value of these apparent parallels and to their contribution to the problem of the origin of these ancient documents.

E. Vogt. *Die neubabylonische Chronik über die Schlacht bei Karkemisch und die Eroberung Jerusalems.* In this paper E. Vogt summarizes D.J. Wiseman's book *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London, 1956), as he had already done in *Biblica* 37 (1956) 389-97. The following dates seem to be certain: the battle at Karkemish, in which the Egyptian armies were defeated by Nabuchodonosor took place in the year 605 B.C. In December 604 Nabuchodonosor conquers Asqalon and Baruch reads Jeremiah's scroll before king Jojaqim (Jer. 36). In January-February 603 Nabuchodonosor conquers Jerusalem. In January 600 King Jojaqim revolts against Nabuchodonosor. In December 598 Jojaqim dies and is succeeded by Jojakim. In December of the same year Nabuchodonosor marches against Jerusalem. Jerusalem fell on March 16, 597.

O. Eissfeldt. *Silo und Jerusalem.* The juxtaposition of Silo and Jerusalem may at first sight appear surprising and unjustified. The history of Jerusalem since the beginning of the second millennium B.C. is so well known from available biblical and extra-biblical information, that it is not difficult to write its history from 2,000 B.C. down to the present day. On the contrary our biblical and extra-biblical information about Silo is extremely scanty. But yet Silo can be compared to Jerusalem. Without Silo Jerusalem would have never been what it became. In its earlier days, from about 1,200 to about 1,000 B.C., Silo was to the Israelite tribes settled in Canaan a national-political and a cultic-religious centre of the highest importance. There had the Ark, the symbol of Yahweh's presence, its seat, and, consequently, Silo seemed to be the place chosen by God as the abode of his Name. It was for this

reason that the Philistines, about the year 1060 B.C., destroyed Silo and captured the Ark. And it was for the same reason, that is the political and religious significance of the ark and its abode, that David, some sixty years later, transferred the Ark from Silo to Jerusalem, which he had captured from the Jebusites and made the capital of his kingdom. The transference of the Ark from Silo to Jerusalem is the fulfilment of Jacob's prophetic blessing to Judah in Gen. 49, 10 where the Hebrew word Silo must be preserved unemended and interpreted as a symbolical name of all the tribes of Israel. The lecturer concluded expressing his wish that the Danish excavations of the site of ancient Silo may yield more information about the early history of Silo.

P.W. Skehan. *The Qumran Manuscripts and Textual Criticism*. The textual evidence of the Qumran manuscripts has been the object of many publications, and the lecturer does not intend to repeat what has already been said. He limits himself to the Qumran cave materials on which he is working. As regards Isaiah, the complete scroll from cave 1 remains textually the most important, and there is nothing particularly interesting among the thirteen manuscripts of cave 4. For the Psalms, the oldest manuscript available, presents the standard Massoretic disposition of the text and titles. There are no important various readings. As regards the Greek fragments of the LXX, we have now a broader understanding of the transmission of its text before Origen. A text of Numbers from cave 4, first century B.C., gives some variant readings unsupported by manuscript evidence. A text of Leviticus from the same period gives the current Greek form with the tetragrammaton written IAO. Another copy of Leviticus, seemingly first century A.D., gives the same text but in a form that shows a clear priority over any extant codex.

W. Eichrodt. *Ist die typologische Exegese sachgemässe Exegese?* The lecturer begins by defining typology as an hermeneutic method which considers persons and events of the God-directed course of Old Testament history as prefigurations of corresponding persons and events of New Testament times. It is, obviously, different not only from the historic-critical method, but also from the allegorical method, from spiritualistic exegesis, from symbolism and from any such method which views ordinary past events as foreshadowing higher spiritual realities. The typological method rather takes the activity of the Old Testament notabilities as a prefiguration of Christ's work, as it appears in the New Testament, without being bound, in the several cases, to the New Testament method. The origin of typology lies not outside the spiritual world

of Israel, but essentially in the eschatological thought of the prophets, who describe the continuity of God's work of salvation through the correspondence of type and antitype. Typology, therefore, is a part of the prophetic mission.

The relation between the historical facts of the Old and the New Testament has nothing to do with the literal exposition of the text. The several historical facts must rather be considered in the light of the general history in the context of the development of the history of salvation. This gives a comprehensive view of Old and New Testament events as a continuous history of salvation which has its meaning and purpose in Christ. The relation between type and antitype is, therefore, not the mere repetition of events, but their higher evaluation either through confirmation and fulfilment or through antithetic correspondence.

Typology contributes to the understanding of the history of salvation inasmuch as it brings to light, in central points, the continuity and purposefulness of God's operation. It shows the development of salvation through a history, which has been formed among the Old Testament as well as among the New Testament community in such a way that the benefits of salvation, shorn of all spiritualistic character, will appear a concrete historic reality. Therefore typology shows a constant in God's relations to man, which confirms the clarity and absoluteness of God's love throughout the ages. Consequently typology in its origin, method and purpose has an exegetical and theological relevance. As, however, the extension of its application is limited, it serves only as a subsidiary means of positive exegesis.

G. Castellino. *Les origines de la civilisation d'après la Bible et les textes cunéiformes*. The lecturer limits his investigation mainly to chs 2 and 3 of Genesis and to the Sumerian myths published by S.N. Kramer in his Sumerian Mythology. The problems dealt with are: (1) What is the relation between ch. 1 and ch. 2 of Genesis? Are they two narratives of creation or only one? (2) Exegetical questions regarding chs 2 and 3. (3) What is the relation between ch. 2 and ch. 3? Are they one homogeneous narrative, or are they derived from independent mythological narratives? (4) Do the cuneiform texts provide information about the origin of social life described in ch. 4?

As regards 2, vv. 4b-7 contain three tableaux showing a progressive delimitation of the field of view. The word רָאשׁוֹן 'land' of ch. 1 becomes שָׂדֶה 'field' and אֲדָמָה 'soil' in ch. 2. The second section, or vv. 8-17, describes the garden of Eden thus completing the 'scenario' on which the drama is to be played. The analysis of the two terms גַּן 'garden' and אֲדָמָה helps us with the aid of cuneiform texts to grasp the real

meaning and to estimate rightly the secondary character of the description of the four rivers. The third section, or vv. 18-25, relates only the creation of the animals and of the woman. The lecturer concluded this part by emphasizing the unity and homogeneity of ch. 2.

The literary structure of chs 2 and 3 is similar to that which we have in cuneiform texts, that is, introduction and body of the narrative, ch. 2 being the introduction and ch. 3 the body of the narrative.

The comparison of the Sumerian texts with the *enûma elish* throws further light upon the differences between the poem which narrates the creation and the Sumerian texts which describe the development of the earth or the land of Sumer. We notice the same difference between ch. 1 which narrates the creation of the world and ch. 2 which narrates the development of the land of Eden, or the abode of the first man. There is, therefore, no opposition between the two chapters.

The study of the cuneiform texts provides us with some information about the ideas of the Ancient East concerning the origins of the social life in its different manifestations. Some light is shed upon ch. 4 of Genesis.

H. Junker. *Das Messiasbild des Propheten Isaias*. The figure of the Messiah in the sense of an expected king of salvation receives its definite form in the announcement of Emmanuel (Is. 7). The meaning of this section must be sought for in the exact interpretation of the original situation as indicated by the prophet. Isaiah tries to dissuade Achaz from turning to Assyria for help, because this will certainly lead both the people and the dynasty into disaster. As Achaz persisted in his plans, it became clear to the prophet that the house of David too, in which God, in his prediction to Nathan, had placed the salvation of his people, will perish. What will now become of that prediction? The answer to this question is given by the revelation of Emmanuel: It has for its gloomy background the judgment and fall of the people and the kingdom which Achaz, through his wrong decision, has called upon himself and his people. Therefore, there is for him and his contemporaries no sign of deliverance but of perdition. To him, who has refused the mediator of salvation, the prophet opposed the true king of salvation in the person of Emmanuel, whose name represents the opposition to Achaz's policy. Therefore, this new king of salvation does not appear as an ordinary successor to the throne of David, but as an entirely new beginning set up by God after the fall of the previous people and kingdom. He will bring something new and nobler than what has perished. This seems to be the prophetic meaning of the sign of the $\text{Im} \text{An} \text{Nu} \text{Im}$ Emmanuel's mother. As all this occurs to the prophet by divine inspiration, it must

be assumed that both for his contemporaries and for himself it was shrouded in darkness. Perhaps there is a link in the exhibition by the prophet of the 'holy seed' (6, 13) from which a new people of God was to come forth. Accordingly the son of the בן־דָּוִד must here be thought of as the new 'holy seed' of the house of David to which God will fulfil the prediction. It is more reasonable to be content with this answer and the indication of the mysterious character of the sign than to try to identify accurately the person of the בן־דָּוִד .

It is more difficult to determine the point of time for which the prophet is predicting the coming of Emmanuel. There is no clearly defined time perspective. The prophet has seen the divine judgment and the downfall of the people and the kingdom in the near future and placed the Emmanuel in close connection. The judgment, considered as a separation between the present generation destined to destruction and the intense expectation of the future gave this vision an eschatological character similar to that of the expectation of the Parusia by the first Christians.

Geo. Widengren. *Quelques rapports entre Juifs et Iraniens à l'époque des Parthes*. These relations are considered under three aspects: political and social; cultural; religious.

While Rome was engaged in war against the Parthians, Iranian forces helped the Jews to defend Jerusalem. The Jews not only revolted against the Romans during the reign of Trajan and Hadrian, while these were fighting against the Parthians, but very probably there was a coalition between Jews and Parthians. Iranian influence upon the constitution of Jewish society is visible in many instances especially in the Jewish feudal system, in their agrarian system in Mesopotamia and in their colonial system in Mesopotamia and Media.

The synagogue of Dura shows marks of influence of the Iranian art during the age of the Parthians. The decorations are essentially Parthian. There are traces in Jewish literature of Iranian influence. There are also a few words in Hebrew and Aramaic of Parthian origin.

The points of contact between the Jewish religion and the Iranian religion are reduced to the following: dualism, apocalyptic doctrine, eschatology, the resurrection of the dead, the incarnation of the Saviour, angelology, the devil and the demons, mythical description of Paradise and Hell, the ascension of the soul, the rites of baptism and communion.

Conclusion: The Jews lived in very close cultural contact with the Parthians. We must no longer speak of a 'Parsism' which is compared with the Jewish religion, because this term is altogether inexact and the product of wrong ideas. The Iranian religion at the time of the

Parthians is not a Parsism, the result of a long historical evolution. A new analysis of the apocryphal writings and of the Pehlevi writings is absolutely necessary.

W.F. Albright. *Le Haut-Lieu dans la Palestine ancienne*. The terms 'haut-lieu' and 'high-place' are the translation of the Hebrew word בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ which occurs very frequently in the Old Testament and has religious and cultic associations. What is its exact meaning? The explanation given by Albright himself in 1942 in his *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, pp. 105-7, 202-4 and by Fr L.H. Vincent in *Revue Biblique*, 1948, pp. 245-78, 438-45 is now abandoned on account of later discoveries. The proposed meaning is 'funereal monument'.

This meaning receives striking confirmation from the first scroll of Isaiah 53,9 where instead of the enigmatic בְּמִוְתוֹתָיו 'in his deaths' we read בְּמִוְתוֹ 'his bomah'. In the Vulgate, which is a faithful rendering of the Hebrew text, the verse reads thus: 'Et dabit impios pro sepultura, et divitem pro morte sua'. Albright renders the verse thus: 'Sa sépulture sera mise avec les méchants / et son installation funéraire avec les démons (Albright reads רְשָׁעִים instead of רְשָׁעִים). In 1951 I have translated independently of the Isaiah scroll: 'U tawh qabar mal-hiziena, u ma' dawk li jaghmlu d-deni d-difna ueghu'.

There are other passages where בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ means 'funereal monument', as Ex. 43, 7; Job 27, 15 where instead of בְּמִוְתוֹ we must perhaps read בְּמִוְתוֹ .

Albright's conclusions are these: The word בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ is a contraction of 'barmatu' which means 'a vertical projection, back'. The original meaning developed a secondary meaning 'a commemorative heap of stones, a cairn' erected on the top of a hill. Such burying-places were generally provided with funereal steles set up on the cairns and became later places of cult of the ancestors. There were also temples with one bamah or more bamoth, as in Megiddo, and commemorative steles. The frequent juxtaposition of בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ and בְּמִוְתוֹ is probably the source of the secondary meaning 'stele'.

The full text of the papers may be read in the fourth volume of the Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*.

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An important item of the Congress were the receptions given by the civil and University authorities of Strasburg. On Monday, 27th August, after the inaugural sitting, a reception was offered to us by Mr Trémaud, Préfet du Bas-Rhin at the hotel de la Préfecture. On Tuesday,

28th August, another reception was offered by Mr J. Babin, the Rector of the Academy of Strasburg at the Hotel du Rectorat. On Thursday, 30th August, we had an excursion across the Vosges, visiting Mount St Odila and, on the way back, the city and Library of Sélestat; afterwards we were cordially received by the Mayor of the city at his Hotel de Ville. An official banquet closed the proceedings of the day. On Friday, 31st August, another reception was given by Mr Altorffer, the Mayor of the city of Strasburg, at the Hotel de Ville.

These international congresses are very important not so much for the papers read as for the opportunity they give to make new acquaintances and to renew old friendships. I have so far attended many international congresses, I have met almost all the leading biblical scholars, I have a number of friends in all countries, and the influence I have received on my intellectual development is incalculable.

P.P. SAYDON

CONGRATULATIONS!

In October 1956 the Rt Rev. Mgr Prof. P.P. Saydon, B.Litt., B.L.Can., D.D., Lic.S.Script., completed twenty-five years as occupant of the Chair of Holy Scripture in the Royal University of Malta. On this occasion the Editorial Board of *Melita Theologica* wish to congratulate the distinguished Professor for his outstanding University career and to thank him publicly for the great service he has rendered to the students of the Faculty of Theology and to our Association in particular.

Prof. Saydon needs no introduction to our readers. He has been one of our chief and constant contributors and his scholarly writings have always elicited admiration and praise. His great Biblical erudition has been amply shown in his substantial contributions to the *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, as well as in his masterly translation of the Bible into Maltese from the original languages and in numerous articles published in leading Biblical reviews.

But surely none has had as much opportunity to appreciate Professor Saydon as we, his students, who have had the privilege to know him more intimately from his lectures and to be constantly illuminated by his profound and up-to-date knowledge of the Scriptures. We cannot therefore but wholeheartedly thank him and hope that successive generations of students will long continue to enjoy the fruits of a mature and consummate scholar.