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Civilization in Israel

Kulturgeschichte Israels by Alfred Bertholet

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*The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan., 1921), pp. 96-97

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1195395>

Accessed: 02/07/2013 01:57

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# BOOK REVIEWS

## CIVILIZATION IN ISRAEL<sup>1</sup>

A good book upon the history of civilization in Israel has long been needed. The need is in great part met by Dr. Bertholet's work. The history begins with the civilization of the stone age in Palestine as revealed by the excavations. It is then traced through the Amorite and Canaanite periods to the entry of Israel. The pre-Canaanitish culture of Israel is briefly sketched and, still more briefly, the culture of the period of transition. Here the historical treatment ceases. The rest of the book is devoted to the civilization of Israel in Palestine. No attempt is made to analyze this into periods; it is treated as a whole. The contents of this section are organized in five chapters, (1) Family and Household Life, (2) Occupations, (3) Social Life, (4) Political Life, (5) Psychic Life. Under this last chapter fall Justice, Learning, Arts and Literature, and Religion.

Upon scrutinizing this treatment, it is at once noted that the greater part of it is the familiar material found in the handbooks on Old Testament archaeology. But this material is brought down to date and often handled in a fresh way. It is to be regretted that the high cost of these days presumably ruled out all illustrations. The discussion of many subjects is pitifully inadequate owing to the limitation of space. Fortunately the Pan-Babylonian temptation has been successfully resisted.

The section devoted to religion covers only 29 pages. This, of course, excludes any possibility of a comprehensive survey of the subject, and no such thing is attempted. Religious archaeology is the real subject of this section. It concerns itself with such things as the sanctuaries, images and idols, prophets, nazirites, priests, feasts, sacrifices, the law, and the sage.

The significance of the Assuan papyri for an understanding of Hebrew civilization has been strangely overlooked. In the treatment of the religion, though confined to the external and objective side, the Assuan temple, sacrifices, and priesthood should have received considerable notice. Not only so, but the presence of an Aramaic copy of the inscription of Behistun among these Jewish documents found away off

<sup>1</sup> *Kulturgeschichte Israels*. Alfred Bertholet. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1920. 294 pages. M. 14.30.

in Egypt is worthy of emphasis as showing the way in which the literatures and institutions of the Oriental world were carried throughout its whole extent and therefore must be reckoned with in estimating the civilization of any particular area or people.

Would not a full appreciation of the significance of the presence of a fully equipped Yahu-temple in Egypt, as shown by these same papyri, have made it safer to interpret Mal. 1:11 (p. 278) as referring to sacrifices in Jewish temples throughout the pagan world rather than as expressive of an absolute, clearly thought through monotheism?

It is ungracious, however, to ask for more when we are given so much. An immense amount of labor has gone into the making of this book, and every student of Hebrew life and thought will find occasion to be grateful for the aid here furnished.

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#### NEW BOOKS ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Three books of note dealing with the history of early Christianity have recently appeared. One of these is the concluding volume of Johannes Weiss, *Das Urchristentum*,<sup>1</sup> another is a group of five popular lectures by Kirsopp Lake,<sup>2</sup> and the third is the initial volume in a projected series of elaborate studies edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Weiss of Heidelberg died on August 24, 1914, less than a year after the publication of the first part of his book. But at that time the undertaking had progressed so far that it was found practicable to have an editor complete the work as originally planned. In the matter of actual composition pages 555-672 come from the hand of the editor, but his task has been done so well that probably no reader will feel any break in continuity or any lessening of interest in passing the point where the pen was dropped by the author and taken up by the editor.

As originally designed, this history of early Christianity aimed to be a semi-popular presentation embodying the results of years of scientific

<sup>1</sup> *Das Urchristentum*. Von Johannes Weiss. 2. Teil: Schluss. Nach dem Tode des Verfassers herausgegeben und am Schlusse ergänzt von Rudolf Knopf. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1917. x+417-681 pages. M. 11.10.

<sup>2</sup> *Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity*. By Kirsopp Lake. London: Macmillan, 1920. x+147 pages. 8s. 6d.

<sup>3</sup> *The Beginnings of Christianity*. Part I: The Acts of the Apostles. Vol. I. Prolegomena I: The Jewish, Gentile and Christian Backgrounds. Edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. London: Macmillan, 1920. xi+480 pages. 18s.