

Albright

Abstract from an address delivered at a dinner meeting at the Harmonie Club, 4 East 60th Street, on Wednesday, February 14th, 1934, by Dr. W. F. Albright, Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, and Professor of Semitics at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

It is an unusual pleasure to follow the two brilliant addresses by Professors Glueck and Speiser. Dr. Glueck has described the remarkable work which he has been doing in Transjordan. His success is partly due to his enterprise and courage in exploring the little-known region of Moab, which was jealously guarded by the Bedouin from intruders until recently. However, he would not have succeeded in making an intelligible picture from his archaeological explorations if it had not been for his previous mastery of that difficult, but none the less important criterion, the ancient pottery of Palestine. As his teacher it has been my pleasant experience to watch the fledgeling make his first essay at flight—but I never dreamed that his first independent flight would prove to be such a voyage of discovery. May the second year of his independent explorations be even more successful than the first one!

Dr. Speiser has taken you farther afield, into the Mesopotamia where his archaeological and philological researches have won so many triumphs. His remarks on the close relation of Mesopotamia to Palestine, especially in the age of Hebrew beginnings, illustrate once again how very important for the reconstruction of ancient history the close cooperation between students of Palestine and Mesopotamia is. It is no accident that Dr. Glueck is this year heading an archaeological expedition under the auspices of our Baghdad School. Let us hope that he discovers evidence

from ancient Edom bearing on the history of the Horites, that mysterious biblical people which Dr. Speiser has exhumed from its forgotten grave, and which played so important a historical role in the childhood of the Hebrew nation.

I should like to say a few words this evening about the remarkable archaeological work which has been going on for a number of years under the auspices of the Hebrew University. Practically all of this work has been accomplished by my friend Dr. Sukenik, Field Archaeologist of the University, who has been engaged for years in making bricks without straw, that is, in doing important archaeological work with very limited funds. In the years just after the War he studied hard in the leisure time saved from a school-teacher's busy day. In 1923, a little over ten years ago, he joined the American School, and was my pupil and assistant for a year. Afterwards he went to Berlin to specialize in the field of Graeco-Roman archaeology, so that he might devote himself particularly to the post-biblical archaeology of the Jewish people. From Berlin he came to Philadelphia, where he received his doctorate under President Adler.

It is difficult to find any part of the field of post-biblical archaeology where the researches of Dr. Sukenik have not written a new chapter, which often supersedes what others have written before. His work on the inscriptions of the Second Temple, his synagogue excavations, his studies on architecture and decoration have now made him the foremost living authority on post-biblical archaeology. Two years ago he was honored by being elected corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute; last year he gave the Schweich Lectures of the British Academy at London on the subject of the Jewish Synagogue and its Evolution. For three years he has collaborated on the excavation of ancient Samaria,



representing the Hebrew University in this joint enterprise with Harvard. His latest discovery was not made in the excavators' camp, but in the museum and the study; it is none the less a discovery of great historical importance. Hehhas succeeded in reading some enigmatic inscriptions on official Jewish stamps, impressed on jar-handles of the Persian period. Simultaneously, he has correctly read the inscription on a Jewish coin and has discovered another previously unknown Jewish coin of the Persian period with the same inscription. These inscriptions are all in Aramaic, and refer to the autonomous Jewish state of the Persian period (that is, the first two centuries after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Exile). Now we know for the first time what the political nature of this autonomous Jewish state was, and that it struck its own silver coins, and possessed an autonomous fiscal organization. Since I had myself worked unsuccessfully on these stamps and coins, I can fully appreciate the insight and patience which led to this discovery.

And yet the budget of the department of archaeology in the Hebrew University is less than \$3000! And this economy is characteristic of the management of the Hebrew University, an economy which puts much of our American research work and teaching to blush. A full professor in the Hebrew University gets less than \$2000 a year. Since the first attempts to organize a school of higher studies were made in Jerusalem, before the death of Eliezer Ben Yehudah, some twelve years ago, the idea has taken root and has grown, until now the birds come to take refuge in its branches. It was then my privilege to help the little group of scholars to plan for their future school of Jewish and Oriental studies. The plan would probably never have amounted to much, however, if Dr. Magnes had not taken hold of it, and transformed it by the power of his own idealism and his own imagination, until the

Hebrew University was created. For over ten years now I have been a warm friend and admirer of Dr. Magnes. For the past ten years I have had the rare privilege of friendship with both Dr. Magnes and Dr. Schloessinger, and I want to register the firm conviction of an outsider, who has no axe to grind, and nothing to gain, that the close cooperation of these great men, who give their devoted services without salary, who combine imagination with practicality, and who share in one of the finest types of idealism which I have ever known, is the greatest asset which the University possesses. Under their direction, with their devoted company of scholars and scientists, of teachers and investigators, the University must go on to achieve the triumphs which its destiny compels. From Zion shall go forth instruction--mi-Tziyon tetze torah!