



The Excavations at Van in 1939

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Palestine between cir. 1500 and 1250 B. C.⁴⁹ Since they date from the late seventeenth century, they carry our latest possible date for the Indo-Iranian irruption into Western Asia back into this country—cir. 1650 at the latest. Incidentally, they are already represented as ruling over the Hurrians in much the same way as we find an Indo-Iranian dynasty ruling over Hurrian nobles and commoners in the kingdom of Mitanni, from Shuttarna I, cir. 1500, to the fall of the dynasty in the early thirteenth century.

From Babylonian sources we have interesting, insufficiently considered evidence for the Indo-Iranian invasion of Mesopotamia in the seventeenth century B. C. In the series of astronomical observations of the movements of Venus made in the reign of king Ammišaduqa of Babylon, a number of important details about current events is listed.⁵⁰ Among them appears the following notice of a victory of the king over the Ummân-Manda ("the Manda hordes") in the 16th or 17th year of his reign (cir. 1630 B. C.): "Overthrow (*šumqûtu*) of the Ummân-Manda; over [their] totality [the king ruled]." This notice is supplemented by a similar one (undated) in the great Babylonian compendium of astrology from the second millennium: "The Ummân-Manda invade and rule the land; the sanctuaries of the great gods are destroyed; Bêl (Marduk) commands a journey to Elam; after thirty years vengeance is taken; the great gods return to their places."⁵¹ This omen seems to refer to events following immediately after the destruction of Babylon by the Hittites about 1600 B. C. or a little later, before the Cossaeen dynasty had become firmly established. It is not our place here to discuss this difficult subject further in its historical and archaeological implications; evidence for precise conclusions is still lacking. In the near future we hope to treat the ethnic problems connected with the Hyksos movement again in the light of fresh evidence from Mari and Ugarit, etc.⁵² It may already be said that the Hyksos royal names are, after all, predominantly Canaanite or Amorite, so that the irruption of the Indo-Iranians and Hurrians seems largely to have spent itself before reaching the Egyptian frontiers.

THE EXCAVATIONS AT VAN IN 1939 *

Brown University and the Semitic Museum of Harvard University have sponsored the second campaign of excavation at Van (Eastern Asia Minor) under the direction of Professor Kirsopp Lake and Dr. Silva Lake. Van Kaleh is a hill about one mile long, rising from the eastern shore of Lake Van. On the high western end of the hill is the citadel of Van, the fortress of Tuspa built by Sardur I, who was the founder of the Kingdom of Van (Urartu in Assyrian, Ararat in the Old Testament) in 841 B. C. As the

⁴⁹ The best discussions of this material are those by Friedrich, Wüst, and Goetze; Mironov's treatment is worthless.

⁵⁰ See Langdon and Fotheringham, *The Venus Tablets of Ammišaduqa*, 1928, p. 9.

⁵¹ Cf. *Jour. Soc. Or. Res.*, X, 241 f.

⁵² Cf. my latest treatment five years ago in *Jour. Pal. Or. Soc.*, XV, 228 f. Many more names ending in *n* can now be added to the list given there, and it has become increasingly probable that these names are in general of Canaanite or Amorite origin.

* Cf. the *Report of the President of Harvard College for 1938-39*.

capital of this kingdom, the city prospered from 841 to 714, when this buffer state between Assyria and the hordes of northern barbarians played a notable part in the history of Western Asia. Weakened by the victorious raid of Sargon of Assyria in 714 and devastated by the Cimmerian hordes soon after, this kingdom led a precarious existence until its end in the early part of the 6th century. Half a century later the Armenians occupied this region.

During the spring and summer Professor and Mrs. Lake directed excavations at three separate localities. At Van Kaleb, the citadel hill, progress was made in tracing the walls; the complicated and widespread maze of ruined masonry is beginning to fall into a pattern, and it has been possible to prepare architectural plans.

The second site excavated was Tilke Tepe (Shamiramalti), four kilometers south of the citadel. While the citadel of Van may have been uninhabited before 841 B. C., Shamiramalti was a much earlier settlement, reaching back to the end of the Neolithic period in the fourth millennium, but abandoned before the founding of the Vannic Kingdom. In the earliest strata, the fine pottery was of the "Tell Halaf" type. The principal industry in the early town seems to have been the manufacture of obsidian knives, of which hundreds were found, along with over twenty cores, the largest of which weighs 25 pounds. There is reason to believe that these knives were exported to distant localities.

The third site excavated was Kalebjik, a smaller Vannic citadel some eight kilometers north of Van Kaleb. This site furnishes a chronological link between the other two, since it was inhabited from Chalcolithic times, overlapping Shamiramalti, to the Vannic period, when Van Kaleb flourished. A little kitchen of the Chalcolithic period was uncovered. The obsidian implements at Kalebjik were not made by a single blow, like those from Shamiramalti, but were worked over more carefully.

One of the most important results of the excavation is the fixation of the sequence of pottery from 4000 to 600 B. C. in a region where almost no historical and archaeological data were available for the period before the Iron Age (beginning about 1200 B. C.).

ROBERT H. PFEIFFER

SELECTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SPRING MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES

The spring meeting of the Trustees of the American Schools of Oriental Research was held at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, on March 26, 1940. The meeting was called to order by the President at 8.08 P. M. In addition to President Burrows the following were present: Messrs. Albright, Bull, Morey, Moulton, Newell, and Sellers of the Trustees; Messrs. Goetze, Jeffery, and Pfeiffer of the Associate Trustees; Messrs. Matthews and Montgomery as members of the Committee of the Corporation; Messrs. Speiser, as Director of the Baghdad School, and Engberg as Field Secretary.

The report of the President and the Executive Committee was presented. It was announced that the Smithsonian Institution had agreed to contribute