

Albright, W. F., History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism (McGraw-Hill Book Co.: New York) 1964

p. 85 We are only just realizing that if the usual scholarly datings were correct, Hebrew literature would be an exception to all other known national literatures.<sup>2</sup> We can now say with confidence that Biblical Hebrew literature - both poetry and prose - dates almost entirely, in substantially its transmitted form, between the thirteenth and the fourth centuries B. C., i.e., during the millennium between the Mosaic age and the end of the Persian period. There are passages which are earlier and some which are later,<sup>3</sup> but in general I think this dating may be accepted as definitive. Thanks especially to the new knowledge obtained from the recovery of steadily increasing masses of Northwest Semitic pre-Biblical literature, found by C. F. A. Schaeffer at Ras Shamra on the Syrian coast, and to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we have ample evidence today for dating.<sup>4</sup> The religious literature of Israel is therefore mostly later in date than the new known canonical religious literature of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, the Hittites, Canaanites, etc.<sup>5</sup>

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2 See below, pp. 267-269, and my discussion in my Goldenson Lecture for 1961: Samuel and the Beginnings of the Prophetic Movement, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1961, pp. 21 ff.

3 Now that fragments of the Daniel cycle of the Persian period have been recovered from Qumran, it is clear that part of Daniel is older. Esther and Canticles probably date from the fourth century B.C.

4 See above, pp. 34-36, and below, p. 133.

5 Nearly all known Egyptian religious literature antedates the eleventh century B.C., and what we have from the Ethiopian, Saite, and later periods represents late copies or collections of much older material. Nearly all known Assyro-Babylonian religious literature dates from before the tenth century B.C. Hittite and Canaanite religious texts all antedate ca. 1200 B.C.