

Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen their implements, we read in verse 21: "yet they had a file for the mattocks, (etc.)." If they had a file for all these implements why would they go down to the Philistines to get them sharpened? Although it seems quite confusing, the translators of the authorized version (KJV) can hardly be blamed, since the Hebrew word pim, which they translate "file" occurs only once in the entire Old Testament, and they had no way of knowing its real meaning. Now at several places excavations have brought to light small weights marked pym, thus bearing the same consonants as the word used in 1 Sam. 13.21. Since it applies to a weight, it is easy to see that it should be vocalized not as pim but as payim, and thus mean two-thirds of a shekel, which is exactly what each of these weights has been found to weigh. So it becomes clear that the intention of the verse is to point out the high price that the Israelites had to pay to get their tools sharpened. Thus the cultural situation becomes understandable in view of the material excavated, which, in turn, corroborates the general situation described in the Biblical passage.

5. Derivation.

In the past books were written to show that the Israelites derived most of their religious and ethical ideas from the Canaanites. In view of the small amount of written material from Palestinian excavation, there is very little evidence in Palestinian archeology for or against these statements; yet the great difference in culture, and especially in moral standards, shown by the excavations, would speak against it. However, as mentioned above (IV.A.) the Ugaritic literature found at Ras Shamra in Syria gives a basis for comparison of Canaanite religious ideas with those of the Bible. This literature is very helpful for interpretation of certain Biblical references to heathen religion, but shows clearly that Biblical religion was quite distinct from that of the Canaanites