

development at the stage represented by nomadic Arabia in the late *Jahiliyah*. Wellhausen himself was much more prudent than most members of his school, who have often assumed light-heartedly that the material contained in the codes dates in general from the time of their original composition. Actually he and his followers have only shown that the final form of each of the major documents must be set in a given chronological relation to the others. With this result work has only begun, since nothing can be said about the age of the underlying sources and materials until they have been carefully analyzed, on the basis of objective criteria unknown to Wellhausen and his contemporaries. No amount of analysis could yield satisfactory conclusions, as long as such criteria were lacking. Nor could any reconstruction of Hebrew history, whether that of the Wellhausen school or of another, carry much weight, since the earliest document, J, is dated by the school in question to the middle of the ninth century, i. e., nearly a century after the Division of the Monarchy. If Stanley Cook and the reviewer, among recent writers, are correct, the final form of J must be brought down to the end of the eighth century B.C., after the Fall of Samaria.* If we are right, the Wellhausen reconstruction becomes even more treacherous. Considerations like these impelled Kittel to make his famous pronouncement (1921) with regard to the solidity of the critical construction of Hebrew history: "Es fehlte dem Gebäude das Fundament, und es fehlten den Baumeistern die Massstäbe."

Since 1900 new criteria have become available. First and most important are the discovery and interpretation of a vast body of cuneiform legal material, including the Code of Hammurabi, the Assyrian Code, the Hittite Code, and innumerable legal documents and contracts from the last three pre-Christian millennia. In the hands of comparative jurists like Kohler, Koschaker, San Nicoló, Cuq, and Miles, this material has been reduced to manageable juristic form. Secondly comes the reconstruction of both Canaanite and Israelite culture with the aid of cuneiform, hieroglyphic, and alphabetic texts, combined with the rapidly augmenting and increasingly clear-cut archaeological data from excavations in Palestine and Syria. Thirdly—and in

*See provisionally the reviewer, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*,³ pp. 147 and 213 f. (n. 59); Stanley Cook, *JBL*, 1932, pp. 274 f. The theory that the literary sources are even later than they are placed by the Wellhausen School may seem paradoxical when combined with the reviewer's view of the substantial historicity of the early traditions of Israel, but it becomes quite reasonable when we consider the tenacity of oral tradition, especially when couched in poetic form, and the antiquity of the use of writing for formal documents.