

**EXTRA-BIBLICAL
SOURCES FOR HEBREW
AND JEWISH HISTORY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649579990

Extra-Biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History by Samuel A. B. Mercer

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LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK

LONDON, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

1913

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THE FLIMPTON PRESS
HORWOOD-MASS-U.S.A.

02694/6 F.S.
0 Jan 9 '28 B.F.

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PREFACE

THE period covered by the term "Hebrew and Jewish History" is taken, in this book, to extend from the beginning of Old Testament history down to the final destruction of the Jewish people as a nation in the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian. To the last part of the period pertain New Testament and Early Church history. No attempt has been made to deal with this subject. Our interest as to this period is confined to Jewish history.

No serious student of Hebrew and Jewish history is willing to confine his reading to modern histories and text-books, excellent though they may be. He feels that he ought to go back of them to the original sources from which they are drawn.

Before the present century such an investigating student had, as sources, the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical Books, the New Testament, Philo, Josephus, Rabbinical literature, Herodotus, Tacitus, and other Greek and Latin writers. During the present century, however, the new science of Archaeology has thrown a flood of light upon Hebrew and Jewish history. Many inscriptions have been found, and translated, but the translations are so scattered in special works and technical journals that even the specialist finds it a difficult task to gain access to all of his material.

The present volume primarily represents an attempt to bring together in an accessible form all these new sources, that is, all Cuneiform, Egyptian, and extra-biblical Semitic sources for the study of Hebrew and Jewish history. It also aims at a collection of all Greek and Latin historical sources, down to and including those of the time of Tacitus, which throw an independent¹ light upon the subject. It has been considered unnecessary to collect material later than that period because of the fact that it must necessarily have been derived second-hand from our earlier sources.

The Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Philo, and the New Testament are so easy of access that their historical sections have not been reproduced here, but, whenever considered necessary, reference has been given to the more important sections of them which bear upon the history of the Jews.

Much space has been devoted to Babylonian and Assyrian chronological material. This has been done with a view to encouraging the student to build up his own chronology. Egyptian chronological lists are very few and fragmentary. Those that we have are not as valuable, in any specific way, as those of Babylonia and Assyria, for Old Testament chronology. This is due to the fact that close contact between Egypt and Syria-Palestine occurred before the occupation of Canaan by the Hebrews. Egyptian chronology, however, is very valuable in a general way, since the whole field of Egyptian history from 4241 B. C., down to 525 B. C., has been chronologically arranged.

¹ Even Tacitus depends, to a considerable extent, upon Josephus.