

ARCHAEOLOGY

# Adam and Eve in the Oldest City

## A drama of Man, Woman and Serpent Was Known in Mesopotamia 2000 Years Before the Bible was Written

By EMILY C. DAVIS

**I**N THE OLDEST city that archaeologists have ever explored they have dug up "Adam and Eve" and the serpent.

There they are, the figures of a man and a woman which have been stamped on clay with a seal. They are a dejected human pair, bent, and stumbling forward. They wear no clothing, except that the faint forms of what might be tall headdresses rise above their heads. Back of the woman towers a snake, like some hovering, powerful evil genius.

Whether the people of Tepe Gawra, the city where the picture was found, called the man and woman "Adam and Eve," no one knows. Perhaps the two had long, unpronounceable names. But they were figures in a triangle drama which was surely very much the same as that in Biblical narrative. This man and woman fell into the clutches of a serpent, and the end of the encounter was triumph for the snake and tragedy for the miserable pair.

The picture was made by an artist who lived about 3700 B. C. The drama of a man, a woman, and a serpent is therefore 2,000 years older than the oldest written portions of the Bible. The fact that the story was memorialized in art, and used on seals, shows that it was even then well established in the world's literature of "beginnings."

The archaeologists who have pushed back the history of city life to 3700 B. C., by unearthing deeply buried ruins at Tepe Gawra, in Mesopotamia, have been conducting a joint expedition. The Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Dropsie College and the American schools of Oriental Research are the institutions. The field director is Dr. E. A. Speiser.

It is only a few years ago that archaeologists were digging up Ur of the Chaldees, home town of Abraham, and were finding there remains so old that Ur was called the oldest town known on earth. Now, Tepe Gawra has taken the antiquity record away from even old Ur.

There are older sites of habitation known on earth—cave dwellings, sim-

ple villages, perhaps a building or two in some badly demolished settlement. But the Tepe Gawra of 3700 B. C. is a real town. Nothing like it so old is known anywhere else on earth.

Finding a picture of the Adam and Eve story in Tepe Gawra has a poetic "rightness" about it. Where else would the home of the Adam and Eve story be, if not in the oldest of cities? And in the land of Mesopotamia? It was to the east of Palestine, presumably in Mesopotamia that the Biblical writer placed the Garden of Eden.

Immediately, any one would ask: What connection does this Mesopotamian Adam and Eve seal have with the Bible story?

### Hebrew Traditions Explained

That is a hard question to answer, because the picture is two thousand years earlier than the writing of the Bible, and many centuries older than Babylonian literature, with which some scholars now link portions of Genesis.

Until archaeologists began digging up the ruined cities of the Near East, the Bible was a book mysteriously isolated from the stream of history. Very little was known about Assyria and Babylonia and other Mesopotamian civilizations, and very little was known about the Canaanites and Philistines and other early inhabitants of the Hebrew promised lands. The oldest Hebrew traditions and customs appeared to spring out of nothingness, full-grown.



### OLDEST OF CITIES

*In 3700 B.C. the triangle drama was apparently well known in Tepe Gawra the oldest city that archaeologists have ever explored.*

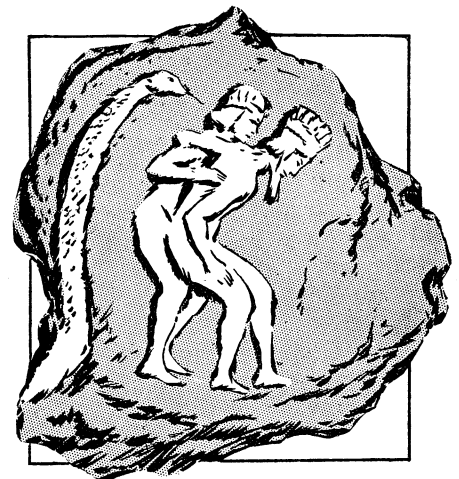
But in the past century, explorers have gone to the depths of many mounds which hid the ruins of the Old World's ancient cities.

And in these cities they have found many significant pieces of evidence linking Hebrew antiquity with Assyrian and Babylonian, particularly the latter.

The Babylonians had a story of a great flood and an ark and a Babylonian Noah who was named Ut-Napishtim. The Babylonians had concepts of angels and cherubim and seraphim, and demons and devils.

There is reason to think that the Babylonians had a story of an "Adam and Eve" and a serpent. At least, a little seal decorated with a picture of that sort has been known for some years, and has been the center of warm scholarly debates.

How the Hebrews acquired any of the Babylonian traditions, scholars are not fully agreed. It is significant that the patriarch Abraham, founder of the Hebrew nation, emigrated from Ur of the Chaldees, a Babylonian city. He and his descendants might, therefore, have repeated and remembered Babylonian history and literature. Centuries later, the Children of Israel came in close touch with Babylonia when they arrived in the Promised Land of Canaan, for the Canaanites had many Babylonian ways. At any rate, some of the Babylonian traditions, modified by much telling in the course of centuries, came to be woven into Hebrew narrative, it



### THE SOLUTION

*If you cannot readily locate Adam, Eve and the serpent on the front cover, use this drawing as a guide.*

appears, as the Hebrew traced the history of God's relationship to man.

Not long ago, scholars were tracing portions of Hebrew writings back to "origins" in Babylonian antiquity. Now, such discoveries as the Tepe Gawra seal apparently push origins back into much earlier times.

How the Babylonians got their particular story of a man, woman, and snake may never be revealed. But it is clear today that at Tepe Gawra, somewhat to the north of Babylonia, a story along these lines existed, long before the rise of the Babylonians. And what is surprising is that the damaged little seal presents its dramatic tableau with such clear pantomime.

Dr. Speiser describes the group on the Tepe Gawra seal this way: "There are two of them, a bearded nude male in front, followed by an unclad woman, whose outstretched arm rests on the back of her companion. They are pictured as walking, with bodies bent; the whole composition gives the impression of weariness and dejection. Behind them and overhead rises the figure of a serpent."

The Tepe Gawra seal proves that the man-woman-serpent drama is as old as the Stone Age.

The seal lay buried in the layer of ruins which Dr. Speiser counts the eighth town on the site, counting down from the top through deeper and older layers of the ruins. The eighth-from-the-top Tepe Gawra contains no metal of bronze or iron. The people were still in the Neolithic or New Stone Age. This layer of ruins is the one which dates back to 3700 B. C., and which gives the site its distinction of being the oldest city ever discovered.

### Amazing City

Tepe Gawra Eight, as the archaeologists call it, is beyond doubt one of the most amazing cities that archaeologists have ever discovered. A city so early as this might well be a bungling experiment. But not Tepe Gawra.

Here, in the oldest city known, is to be seen intelligent city planning, so executed that the charm of its order and comfort still makes itself felt.

Describing the plan, Dr. Speiser says that the heart of the settlement was an imposing forum. To the north were two shrines, connected by such buildings as storage room and bath houses. A citadel was built near the center of town. The southern section of the town was a residential development. Streets were well laid out, one being set

apart as the bazaar or market street.

The planners considered emergencies. They provided a generous-sized reservoir almost 100 feet deep for a water supply in the event of siege.

If the discoverers of Tepe Gawra Eight were surprised to find good city planning in 3700 B. C., they were impressed still more deeply to discover the building skill that the Gawrians had.

This city of 3700 B. C. is a priceless museum of architectural features that modern architects have thought of as later developments in building art. Tepe Gawra's homes boasted such features as windows, niches, recessed walls. The builders knew the secret of construct-

ing the true arch, and used their knowledge to erect houses with vaulted ante-chambers. In Tepe Gawra, therefore, may be seen the oldest examples of the true arch in the world.

To their technical skill, the gifted builders of this city added the grace of good taste. Dr. Speiser speaks admiringly of the "restraint with which they checked their enthusiasm for elaborate ornament." And he sums up his praise in the high compliment: "Planning as well as construction shows faultless taste and astounding architectural ability."

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### GEOGRAPHY

## Death Valley Becomes National Monument

**D**EATH VALLEY, famous in California history for the desperate hardships endured by pioneer trains crossing its arid, blindingly salt-crusted waste, will soon become a Mecca for modern travellers bent on recreation and scientific study. By presidential proclamation on Feb. 11, it was given the status of a national monument.

A national monument is a site or area similar to a national park, but not administered as such, either because of difficulty of access, lack of funds for full national park administration, or other reasons. Some of the present-day national parks were at first national monuments, and Death Valley may eventually be promoted to this status.

The area set aside by President Hoover is 1,601,800 acres in extent, and takes in about two-thirds of the total land in the valley. It includes particularly the land below sea level, which is the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere. Within the area are such notable natural features as Telescope Peak, Furnace Creek, the Ubehebe Crater, etc. Within it also is the famous Death Valley Scotty's Place, a fantastic rococo palace built by a "character" who seems to have money to burn and chose to spend it on interminable building.

A bill now before Congress will if passed permit Scotty to purchase 1,420 acres on which he now has an indefinite squatter's claim, at \$1.25 an acre, his intention being eventually to turn his

place over to the government for public use. The same bill provides that old-time prospectors may continue their activities in Death Valley, permitting them to trudge its desert trails with their picturesque burros, and to keep any gold they may find. It is intended, in a way, as legislation to preserve the natural wild life of the area, the prospector and his burro being as much a part of the landscape there as bears are in Yosemite and elk in the Yellowstone. Since permits to prospect will be issuable only under authority of the Secretary of the Interior, it is not anticipated that abuses will arise.

Death Valley is so terrifically arid that mineral salts of several varieties form thick crusts on the surface of the soil. At least one of these natural deposits was exploited in past days, the famous "twenty-mule team" wagons that brought out the borax figuring in advertising pictures long after modern means of freighting had been brought into use. The borax industry, however, has now migrated elsewhere.

In spite of its aridity, however, Death Valley is by no means as barren as its name implies. A number of animal species exist there, and over 500 kinds of plants. Furnace Creek, in spite of its fiery name, makes a considerable area of rich green, and even spreads out to mock the surrounding desert with the lush vegetation of swamps.

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