

**THE EARLY POETRY OF
ISRAEL IN ITS PHYSICAL
AND SOCIAL ORIGINS**

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The early poetry of Israel in its physical and social origins by George Adam Smith

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GEORGE ADAM SMITH

**THE EARLY POETRY OF
ISRAEL IN ITS PHYSICAL
AND SOCIAL ORIGINS**

THE BRITISH ACADEMY

The Early Poetry of Israel in its
Physical and Social Origins

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1912

TO

L. S.

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PREFACE

THESE three Lectures with their Introduction were delivered in London before the British Academy towards the close of 1910, but till this summer I have been unable to prepare them for the press. In the Introduction I recount the materials available for the illustration of the subject; but it was not possible to cover the whole range of these within three hours. I have, therefore, much to add to what was actually spoken. Some of the discussion of technical questions in Lecture I required expansion; and I desired to give in Lecture III as full a translation as was possible of all the poetical passages relevant to the subject.

Where it is necessary to quote the original I have done so, for the sake of those who are ignorant of Hebrew, in the letters of our own alphabet. The details of this transliteration are given on page 1 and at the top of page 4; I may say here that in the transliteration of single words in Lecture III and its notes, I have not thought it necessary always to mark the softer forms of the letters *b, g, d, k, p,* and *l*. The name of the God of Israel is given as *Yahweh*, except in the translation of Deborah's song, where, as in our English version, it appears as *THE LORD*.

What is said on pages 84, 85 as to the translation of the Song of Deborah, and the division of it into lines, and its rhythm, is applicable to all the translations offered in these Lectures.

In connection with the discussion of rhythm and parallelism in Lecture I, the reader should consult Professor G. B. Gray's paragraphs (44-57) on 'The Poetical Forms of the Prophetic Literature' in his 'Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, i-xxxix', in the *International Critical Commentary*, 1912. The volume by Professor Gordon, of Montreal, on *The Poets of the Old Testament* (1912), has

reached me only this month, and I regret that I have not been able to make use of the valuable materials for translation which it contains,

I reserve the right to use the contents of these Lectures in a larger work on Hebrew poetry which I hope some day to publish.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

The University of Aberdeen.
October 1912.