

# Diogenes's Invectives

## I demystify

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I have just finished reading a marvelous book which I ought to have known about long ago, for it dates from 1930: it is Adolphe Lods' famous history, *Israël, des origines au milieu du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*.

This book is wonderfully scholarly. I counted nearly two thousand footnotes, some of which cite fifty or more references. The masterpiece is five hundred ninety-five pages long, printed in small type.

I can just imagine the respect and admiration which my laborious task will earn me. This Mr Diogenes, people are already saying, is going to tell us all about ancient Israel. He has learned Adolphe Lods' two thousand footnotes by heart. No doubt he will triumph in one of those television quiz shows. For when it comes to Israel, he knows everything.

But no. There's the hitch. Ever since reading Adolphe Lods' incomparable work, I have been completely in the dark. I had always thought that ancient Israel was the Flood, the patriarchs, Noah, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Mount Sinai. Did you think so too, perhaps? Well then, it is high time you read Adolphe Lods' book. Where he passes, the grass no longer grows. And he passes everywhere, several times.

His method is quite simple. First, he distinguishes two categories of Biblical stories. There are those which are not confirmed by any independent document or text, nor by archeological discoveries. In this case, the story in question is obviously legendary. Then there are those which are confirmed. And in this case, it means that borrowing has taken place: the story is therefore still legendary, for it has been borrowed from other sources.

Example: the Flood. A first indication of its legendary character is that it is reported in the epic of Gilgamesh, which proves that the story was borrowed from the Babylonians; unless of course Babylonian legends are of Hebrew origin, in which case, since Gilgamesh is a legend, the Flood must also be one (p. 86). But the real proof that the Flood is a legend is that archeologist Sir Leonard Wooley found traces of a colossal inundation in Mesopotamia: the legend of the Flood was thus surely born of this inundation.

Now, you may be tempted to ask what is the difference between a Flood and a colossal inundation. I can tell from your question that you understand nothing of historical method and, worse, that you have not yet read Adolphe Lods. Let it be said then that an inundation reported in the Bible is a legend called the Flood.

Another example: the story of Abraham, who, according to the Bible, came from *Ur in Chaldea*. Absurd, demonstrates Adolphe Lods. In the first place, Abraham never existed; he is a

character of folklore. Next, he couldn't possibly have come from *Ur in Chaldea*, since that's too far away. Finally, the fact that the Bible says *Ur in Chaldea* shows that there were other towns named *Ur*; otherwise, why specify *in Chaldea*? Surely there was another *Ur* much closer, toward the north. Therefore, when the Bible says that Abraham came from *Ur in Chaldea*, it clearly proves that Abraham never existed and that he came from a town called *Ur* which was not in *Chaldea*.

In my humble opinion, Adolphe was a bit tired the day he outlined this argument (p. 165) My own theory is, first, that this town never existed, and, second, that it was not called *Ur*, but more probably *Cucuron-les-Olivettes*. Don't jump to the conclusion that it has to do with the *Cucuron* found in the French departement of *Vaucluse*: the proof that there exist one and probably several other *Cucurons* is that this *Cucuron* is in *Vaucluse*, Therefore, the others must be somewhere else, and I am ready to wager that Abraham, who never existed, came from a *Cucuron* which flourished at the time of Sargon the Elder somewhere in Upper *Accadia*.

For some time now, I have been working on the demystification of that legendary epic known as the *History of France*. My work is progressing rapidly, and I am already in a position to reveal that we have long been duped by the legends of a folk hero called *Napoleon*.

I searched for traces of this so-called *Napoleon* in Chinese chronicles and found not a shadow of a reference. Thus, we must be dealing with a legend. On the other hand, I found him cited two thousand eight hundred eighty times in various novels, including those of that mythical author known under the name of *Balzac*. (In passing, I might note that this *Balzac* is nothing but a late compilation of two traditions: one of them bawdy [*The Droll Stories*] and the other bourgeois [*The Human Comedy*], but this is only one of my minor findings.) Innumerable English, German, Russian, and other history books also speak of this *Napoleon*, which just goes to show the extent to which legends are borrowed. And as for the story of the Empress *Josephine*, brought to France from a distant island, it is plain for all to see that this myth is a copy of that of the *Queen of Sheba*. Once one understands these things, all is crystal clear.

Those jealous of my scholarly achievements will no doubt try to contest my discoveries. Contest you may, but facts are facts. I'll be waiting for you at *Napoleon's tomb*, though of course it is but a monument to myth.

Diogenes.