

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

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I NOTE with satisfaction that a young English Assyriologist, Mr. Campbell Thompson, has turned his attention to the much-neglected subject of Babylonian astronomy. In two handsome volumes on *The Reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon in the British Museum* (London: Luzac & Co.) he has published a large number of astronomical and astrological texts, and has at the same time cleared up the meaning of many of the technical terms used in them. His work thus constitutes a distinct step in advance in our knowledge of these difficult texts. With the exception of the important articles of Epping on the later Babylonian astronomy and Hommel's criticism of Jensen, little has been done for them from an astronomical point of view since the contributions of Mr. Bosanquet and myself to the Royal Astronomical Society (with which, by the way, Mr. Thompson does not seem to be acquainted). It was time, therefore, that the stores of material in the British Museum should be made public; if ever we are to obtain a really satisfactory knowledge of the early astronomy of the Babylonians, it can only be through their help. What can be done by a comparison with classical tradition has been shown by Mr. Robert Brown.

One of the words upon the explanation of which Mr. Thompson is to be congratulated is *ribu* 'earthquake'; another is the Sumerian *tiranna*, which he has demonstrated must mean 'the rainbow.' I am not so sure of his interpretation of the technical term *tarbatsu* in the sense of 'halo,' but I can suggest nothing better for it.

Mr. Thompson's philology, however, seems in advance of his astronomy. He is too much inclined to follow Jensen, whose views in regard to the planets are accepted in spite of Oppert and Hommel. And the identification of the star Dilgan or Iku with Virgo has involved him in a series of difficulties. One of the few points connected with early Babylonian astronomy which are astronomically certain is that Dilgan is Capella.

On the geographical side also one or two corrections are necessary. The Mannâ of the Assyrian inscriptions is the Minni of the Old Testament, westward of Lake Urumiyeh, and has

nothing to do with Van or Biainas, the Urardhu (Ararat) of the Assyrians. The Tel el-Amarna tablets, again, have proved that the word formerly read Akharu, and translated 'the West,' should be Amurru, 'the Amorite(s)'; it has therefore no connection with the western frontier of Babylonia. Subartu (or Suri), moreover, was not a district in northern Babylonia, as is stated in the Introduction, but the country towards the sources of the Euphrates, which subsequently came to include the whole of northern Mesopotamia.

These, however, are small matters, and have but little bearing on the general purport of the book, the value of which is enhanced by its excellent indices. Those who wish to know what the astrological lore of Babylonia was like cannot do better than study it.

Mr. A. J. Evans' startling discoveries in Krete have gone far to confirm the view that it was the original home of the Philistines. The beautiful frescoes found by him in the 'Palace of Minos' seem to make it clear that the Keftu of the Egyptian monuments were, at all events primarily, the cultured inhabitants of that island in the 'Mykenæan' epoch. It is necessary, therefore, once more to revert to the old theories which connected the Keftu with the biblical Caphtor. None of the old explanations, however, of the difference between the two names can stand in face of my discovery in 1894 of the hieroglyphic form of Caphtor.¹ This shows that the final consonant was an integral part of the name. I would accordingly suggest that it represented a suffix, perhaps of the genitive plural or of the gentilic adjective. If the language spoken by the 'Mykenæan' Kretans was a form of Greek, such a suffix could be easily explained.

¹ Dr. W. Max Müller ('Studien zur vorderasiatischen Geschichte' in the *Mitteilungen d. Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, v. p. 5) complains that I have 'buried' the discovery in 'periodicals.' So far, however, is this from being the case that I published it, along with the further discovery of the name of the Casluhim, in the third edition of my *Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments* (1894), p. 173, as well as in *Recent Research in Bible Lands* (p. 123), which latter book was published in America, at Philadelphia, in 1896.

It is just possible that Krete is the Alasia of the Tel el-Amarna tablets. The prevalent belief at present is that Alasia is Cyprus. This is based partly on the reference of the king of Alasia in one of his letters to 'the working of copper' (*ebis eri*), partly on the fact that in the Golénischeff papyrus the captain of an Egyptian vessel, when leaving Dor for his own country, was carried by contrary winds to Alasia. But the working of copper does not necessarily mean mining; it might refer to the manufacture of bronze objects, which Mr. Evans' excavations show to have been largely carried on in Krete. And St. Paul's voyage in Ac 21¹⁻³ makes it evident that ships could sail direct from Lycia to Phœnicia. Against the identification of Alasia with Cyprus is Gn 10⁴, which distinguishes Elishah or Alasia from Kittim or Cyprus. Classical tradition associated Krete and Lycia together, and it is therefore noteworthy that one of the Tel el-Amarna letters describes the Lukki or Lycians as having made a raid on the coast of the Delta along with subjects of the king of Alasia whose vassals the Pharaoh considers

them to be. The statement in another letter that the kings of the Hittites and of Shinar (Sankhara) had intrigued with the king of Alasia would be quite as explicable of Lycia as of Cyprus, like the mention of Kinakh[khi] or Canaan, which also occurs.

A connexion has been suggested between Alasia and the title of 'Alasiote,' which is given to Resheph-Apollo in a bilingual Phœnician and Cypriote inscription (Tamassos II.). But the first letter is doubtful in both the Phœnician and Cypriote texts, and the fact that the name is written 𐤀𐤋𐤏𐤍 (𐤏𐤍?) in the Phœnician text excludes Alasia or Elishah altogether. I would rather propose to see in Alasia the Ἀλῆιον πεδίον of Homer (*Il.* vi. 201), where the Lycian king Bellerophon is said to have wandered. Ἀλῆιον presupposes an original Ἀλάσιον.¹

¹ I find it difficult not to believe that Ἀλάσιον, like Alabanda, Hali-karnassos, and the Kretan Phalanna, is connected with the Karian *ala*, 'horse,' when we remember the close connexion that existed between Bellerophon (who was also called Hippo-noos) and the horse.

The Father's House.

BY THE LATE REV. W. A. GRAY, ELGIN.

'In My Father's house are many mansions.'—John xiv. 2.

As I intend taking these words in a wider sense than the ordinary one, I would like to make it plain at the outset that I do not exclude the ordinary one,—far less contradict it. I know how dear the common interpretation is to many, bound up as it is with the teaching of bygone instructors, and the scenes and the sayings of Christian deathbeds. And, therefore, I would wish you to understand that in bringing before you anything that is new, I am not asking you to part with anything that is old—the old comfort, the old sweetness, the old spell. If it pleases you to believe that the Father's house means heaven, and the many mansions the varieties of accommodation, employment, and blessedness, which heaven provides, believe it still. The thought is true in itself. And it has a place, too, in the meaning of the text. Only I have sometimes had

the feeling that the idea is a broader one. What if the Father's house should be looked at as something wider even than heaven,—heaven I mean in the material and local sense in which we usually employ the expression: What if it should enclose both heaven and earth, throwing its ample roof over each, and so making of twain one.

This is quite consistent with the context. For observe how the words come in. The disciples had just awakened to the truth that Christ was to leave them. And they were filled with sorrow on account of it. He was going, they thought, to a different sphere. He was removing, they imagined, to a distant bourne. Henceforth they would be cut off from Him, and He from them, by the wide deep gulf that divides between the known and the unknown, the seen and the unseen, the temporal and eternal. 'Nay,' says the Saviour (according