

nothing as to the manner of death, being used both of a peaceful death in the palace, like that of Nabonassar, or of one in war, like that of Tirhakah.

C. BOUTFLOWER.

*(To be continued.)*

---

ART. VII.—THE DISCOVERY OF JEWISH "MOLTEN IMAGES" AT DAN (JUDGES xvii, xviii.).

STANDING in a glass case by themselves, and placed in a prominent position in the Musée Guimet in Paris, is a small collection of bronze figures, which cannot fail to attract the attention of even the most casual observer. Seven of them are archaic statuettes of purely Semitic type, but most remarkable in detail; another is labelled "a Stryge," and is noteworthy for its complex form; while the last is an exquisite little Greek figure of Aphrodite from Sidon, a relic of Greek art grafted upon Phœnician civilization. These much-valued treasures have only recently been added to the possessions of the Musée Guimet, and of them the seven little statuettes are of priceless value to the archæological world, being the first and only specimens as yet found of Jewish gods.

They were found by M. Durighello, a well-known Italian archæologist, upon the site of the city of Dan, and are the result of fifteen years patient working and waiting. It may well be said that only those who try to pursue archæological researches in the Ottoman dominions know the meaning and value of the verb "to wait"; these can conjugate it in every mood and tense, and with every inflexion of meaning which it is possible to read into it. Upon Tel-el-Kâdi, "the Hill of the Judge," did Durighello set his mind to excavate many years ago, knowing that there, beneath the tangle of shrubs and wild plants with which it is now overgrown, lay the sites of two super-imposed cities, the one Jewish—Dan—and the other Phœnician—Laish—and feeling certain that, could he but dig down into them, he must assuredly find among the ruins of the one and the ashes of the other some traces of the lives of their former occupants.

Of their former history we have an outline given us in the Book of Judges (xvii. and xviii.); but, apart from this, we know that Laish was a Phœnician agricultural colony, and extremely fertile. Its inhabitants were a peaceable and peace-loving people, living entirely by their tillage of the soil; in

fact, so quiet were they that their government head-quarters was no nearer than Sidon, and they were evidently thoroughly unprepared for the warlike raid of the Danites, and succumbed for want of assistance. The country surrounding Laish is even now some of the most beautiful in Syria. The Tel-el-Kâdi rises up like the cup-shaped crater of some extinct volcano from the great plain north of Lake Huleh, better known as the "Waters of Merom," in the neighbourhood of which Joshua put the Canaanites to flight and smote Jabin, King of Hazor. Here the ground is dotted with great blocks of basalt, and stones bearing evident marks of fire lie about; while near the oak-trees—remnants of the southern boundary of the forest of Bashan—are numerous ruins, both ancient and massive. They mark, probably, the site of the temple raised by Rehoboam for the golden calf; in fact, Josephus assures us that they are in very truth the remains of that temple. At the foot of the western side of the hill rushes forth the great "fountain of the Jordan," the largest in Syria; another fountain springs up within the "tell," and the waters of the two, uniting below in the plain, where they are known as El-Ledân, wend their way southwards, marking their path by a rich green band of vegetation. The sides of the crater are made up of the walls of Dan, and are now completely overgrown by a dense mass of shrubs and jungle, rendering excavation a work of difficulty and patience.

Here Durighello, finding that well-nigh insurmountable obstacles were placed in his way, instilled into the natives a desire to hunt for "anteekas," and while work was thus proceeding, under the auspices of a neighbouring shêkh, the seven little images were found. They are of bronze, and represent Baal and Astarte; the type of face is unmistakably Semitic, while certain details of execution, the head-dress, etc., leave no doubt as to their Jewish *provenance*. Baal stands with the arms raised as if in the act of blessing, and Astarte has her hands folded across her breast. All the figures have small loops on the top of the head, by which they might be suspended.

Now comes the question, For what purposes were these little "molten images" made, and is it possible that they may be a survival of those used by Micah, if not the very images themselves?

It is quite clear that Micah, of Bethlehem-Judah, even if he were a follower of Yahveh, still clung to the teraphim and other talismans of his ancient Chaldean faith. Also he must have established in his household a sort of irregular priestly service, presided over by a Levite, whom he paid yearly to perform the necessary offices in his "house of gods." The

six hundred men of war from the tribe of Dan, when marching on Laish, had to pass by the dwelling of Micah. They there laid hands upon the teraphim, the molten images, and graven images, and took them, probably, as we should say, to bring them good luck, and they persuaded the Levite to come with them, saying that it was better to be priest to a tribe than to one man. So the priest and the images proceeded to Laish, which the invaders burnt to the ground—the proof of which lies in the calcined ruins around Tel-el-Kâdi—and there, in the new city of Dan, they were held in veneration, with an hereditary priesthood attached to them, until the Captivity. That it should have been possible to carry them off so easily they must have been small and of light weight and easily concealed. These images found at Dan are neither large nor heavy; the largest of them is only 37 centimetres in height. They are of bronze—that is to say, they are “molten,” and they are also purely Jewish in their characteristics. Undoubtedly, therefore, we have before us some of the actual talismanic images which were in use among the Danites up to the time of the Captivity.

All through the history of the Hebrew people it is noticeable how impossible it was for them to break off entirely with the old superstitions and myths that they brought with them from their early home. They never, at any period of their history, seem to have completely freed themselves from the cult of their Chaldean ancestors. Over and over again do we find them being enjoined not to consult teraphim, nor look in the liver, nor practise necromancy, nor venerate any other deity save Yahveh, and equally often do we find them setting up asherahim, consulting oracles, and having a “house of gods.” These little figures, made usually in the likeness of Baal and Astarte or some special deity, were hung up in the houses or placed below the thresholds to preserve the household from harm and to keep off evil generally. They were gravely consulted, even though the Jews were sternly warned that the teraphim would tell them lies and that witchcraft was an abomination. The fascination of practical magic had them so completely in its power from before the days when Rachel hid her father’s images, that even the revelation of Yahveh and the legalizing of the Urim and Thummim in the Temple worship could not constrain them to put away their “gods.”

M. BRODRICK.

