

Marcian conclusion of the Gospel. It deserves to be remarked that Armenian MSS., when they do make the addition, write "Here ends Mark's Gospel," after the words which correspond to *ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ*, and then after a pause continue with verses 9-20.

Thus the net result of our new evidence, if our interpretation of it be correct, is to gain for these twelve verses, if not the credit of being St. Mark's, at any rate the credit of having as their author one who, according to Papias, was a *μαθητῆς τοῦ κυρίου*. Incidentally, also, our discovery of the heading "of Aristion elder," is a remarkable confirmation of Eusebius' chapter upon Papias, and of the citations from Papias which it contains. Such a confirmation would incline one to trust the account given by Papias of the way in which the four Gospels were composed.

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WAS THERE A GOLDEN CALF AT DAN?

A NOTE ON 1 KINGS XII. 29, 30, AND OTHER PASSAGES.

THE question asked at the head of this note will, to many readers, sound quite absurd. They will say, "Of course there was 'a calf' at Dan, and another at Bethel, as is stated in 1 Kings xii. 29, although there is some obvious obscurity or corruption in verse 30." Besides, that there were two calves—one at Dan and one at Bethel, has been a received tradition for at least 2,500 years; to doubt it shows the utmost temerity.

Certainly the statement has been made from early days without dispute down to the time of the latest Rabbis; and that might be considered sufficient proof. But against this argument must be set the fact that the Book of Kings was not written earlier than B.C. 542, and that Samaria fell B.C.

722; and that even if the text of 1 Kings xii. 29 be uncorrupted from the original, there would be time in two centuries of anarchy for some confusion on the subject to arise, especially as Dan lay on the remote northern frontier, and had been the seat of an idolatrous worship since the early days of the Judges, and was destroyed by Tiglath Pileser as early as B.C. 738.

In writing the volume on the First Book of Kings for the *Expositor's Bible* I felt a doubt on the subject, which was not, however, sufficiently strong to make me abandon the traditional view. But in reading 1 Kings xii. as the Sunday Lesson for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity the doubt returned to my mind, and I think that there are some grounds for the view that *there were two calves at Bethel, and that there was no calf at Dan, but only the old idolatrous ephod and images* of Micah described in Judges xvii. 4.

I will return to 1 Kings xii. 29 immediately, but will first of all examine the question independently of it.

Thirty-three or more years ago, in the article, "Calf," in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, I gave some of the decisive arguments which prove that though the epithet "calf" is given in scorn to the figure made by Aaron in the wilderness, and "calves" to those erected by Jeroboam I., the figures were by no means intended for mere calves, but were nothing less than cherubic emblems of exactly the same character as those sanctioned by Aaron, by Moses in the Tabernacle, and by Solomon in the Temple.¹

On this subject it is sufficient to notice the following facts:—

(i.) Jeroboam's calves neither did, nor were intended to, interfere with the worship of Jehovah.

(a) The prophets of Northern Israel always regarded themselves as prophets of Jehovah. Apostate kings, like Ahab, allowed alien cults to be introduced side by side with

¹ Exod. xxv. 18; 1 Kings vi. 23.

the worship of Jehovah, though, strange to say, to a far less extent in the northern than in the southern kingdom. Yet the worst of them all never persecuted, never suppressed, and never repudiated the worship of Jehovah.¹

(β) The name of Jehovah, after the days of Ahab, grew so extraordinarily common that, not only did Ahab name his sons from compounds of Yah, but every subsequent king of Israel, except the murderers Shallum, Menahem, and Pekah, had that element in their names.

(γ) Not one of the genuine prophets of Israel is recorded to have uttered one syllable of reprobation of the "calf worship" before Amos and Hoshea, and it is doubtful whether Amos did so. Although the word of Elijah "burned like a torch"; although Elisha lived in intimacy with several kings of Israel; although Micaiah, son of Imlah, did not fear the face of Ahab; although Jonah, son of Amittai, prophesied the greatness of Jeroboam II., none of these prophets is recorded to have uttered a word of remonstrance against the irregular cherubic *cultus* which prevailed in the kingdom of Samaria from the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam I., B.C. 937, to the end of the reign of Hoshea, B.C. 722. Nor except in the late speech put by the chronicler into the mouth of Abijah, son of Rehoboam, many centuries later, is there any reprobation of the northern worship in any southern prophet, or in any king before Josiah. The Chronicler—a fact, I think, that has never been noticed, vehemently orthodox as he was for the Deuteronomic law of centralised worship—scarcely does more than mention the "*calves*";² his indignation is mainly against the irregular altars of the irregular *bamoth*, and the non-Levitic priests whom Jeroboam established, although he incidentally mentions that these priests served the calves

¹ Ahab did not do so personally, though he connived at the violences of Jezebel.

² Only in 2 Chron. xi. 15, xiii. 8. In neither place is Dan mentioned

and the *he-goats* (A.V., devils).¹ Nay, more, even the man of God from Judah, who travels to Bethel to denounce the new king of Israel, prophesies against the *altar*, but does not so much as mention the calves at all. Even as regards Hosea it is not certain that when he speaks of the "calf" he is not rather alluding to Baal worship. The Book of Tobit—which of course is a Jewish Haggadah, without the least authority, goes so far as (unjustly and falsely) to describe the imaginary calf at Dan as ἡ δάμαλις βαάλ. This, too, is perhaps implied by the feminine used by the LXX. [τὴν μίαν], which might also be a reference to Bosheth, "shame," the word often read instead of Baal.

But if the "calves" were cherubic emblems which were regarded as intolerably wicked by the historians who wrote respectively four centuries and five centuries after Jeroboam, but respecting which the consciences of the kings, and even of the earlier splendid prophets of Israel, seem to have felt no self-reproach, is it not extremely probable that there were *two calves* at Bethel, and not one? Jeroboam's avowed purpose was to provide his people with a substitute for the attractions of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem. But the central object of reverence in the Temple on Mount Zion was the Ark and its mercy-seat overshadowed by the two small ancient cherubim of Moses (if they were still preserved, for we have nothing explicit on this point)² and by the two colossal cherubim of Solomon. Jehovah was symbolised to the people as

"Thundering out of Zion, throned
Between the cherubim."

These cherubim haunted the imagination of prophets and

¹ 2 Chron. xiii. 8. Heb. (*Seirim*) "he-goats," i.e. satyrs (Luther, *Feldtäufel*).

² The word commonly used for Aaron's calf and Jeroboam's is בָּנָיִם , which properly means *μῆσχος*, "a young bull." The feminine word בָּנָיִת is used in Hos. x. 5.

psalmists.¹ What were they? It is usually assumed that they were winged *human* figures, but there is very much to be said for the belief, which is by no means a modern one, that they were winged oxen. Not to dwell upon the uncertain derivation of the word cherub,² it is extremely doubtful whether either Moses or Solomon would have tolerated the introduction of winged *human* figures. That Solomon tolerated carved oxen we know, and when Josephus charges him with violation of the law for so doing, the whole tendency of Jewish history shows that he is transferring the sentiments of A.D. 50 back to B.C. 1000. The composite fourfold cherub of Ezekiel was almost certainly a much later emblem; but even in that emblem it is a very remarkable circumstance that in Ezek. x. 14 "*the face of a cherub*" is the equivalent "*to the face of an ox*" in the parallel passage, Ezek. i. 10. Further, the cherubs over the mercy-seat are described as looking down into the mercy-seat, and yet looking towards each other. Without making too much of this description it certainly seems to accord much better with winged oxen than with winged men (Exod. xxv. 20). When Josephus says that no one could tell or even conjecture the real shape of the cherubim, he is probably concealing the fact that they were winged oxen, which would have confirmed the jibes of the Gentiles against the Jews as to their supposed animal-worship.³

Granting, then, that the calves of Jeroboam were identical with the two-winged cherubs which Solomon placed in the Holiest at Jerusalem, is it not much more probable that Jeroboam placed *two* of these symbols at Bethel than that he placed one? Would not one cherubic figure have been regarded as a very maimed and unattractive counterpoise to the two in the oracle?

¹ See Ezek. x. 2, 5, 16, 29; Exod. xxv. 22; Num. vii. 89; 1 Sam. iv. 4; Isa. xxxvii. 18; Ps. lxxx. 1, xcix. 1, etc.

² Perhaps from כָּרַב, "he ploughed."

³ Jos., *Antiq.*, viii. 3, § 3.

Further, I may claim for this view the authority of the prophet Hosea, who speaks of "the calves of Beth-aven" (Hos. x. 3). It is no answer to this that he says, "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off"; or, as it should be rendered, "Thou hast cast off thy calf, O Samaria," because there, obviously, the word "calf" is only generic.

If then there were two calves in what the priest Amaziah calls "the king's chapel" at Bethel, this fact and the constant reference to them as two in number—would naturally help to stereotype the notion that one of them was at Dan and one at Bethel when once it had arisen; especially since there was *also* a highly irregular cult at Dan, and the growth of centuries tended to obliterate the distinctness of facts which were only preserved for long centuries by dim tradition.

For to the calf at Dan, during all the process of the history of the northern and southern kingdoms, we *have not a single allusion*, unless there be one in Amos viii. 14, to which I will refer later on. To trace so much as the existence of a "calf" at Dan we have to come down from its inauguration, B.C. 937, to the Book of Tobit, perhaps A.D. 70.¹

It has indeed been customary to say (and I repeat it in the article "Calf," in Smith's Dictionary) that the calf at Dan was carried away by Tiglath Pileser III. (Pul) about B.C. 738; and the calf at Bethel by Sargon (about B.C. 722). But what is the authority for this statement? The *Seder Olam Rabba*, a Rabbinic book of no authority on such a subject!² And when we come to think of it, the total

¹ So Hitzig. But even the passage in Tobit does not mention Dan, it only says that Nephthali sacrificed "to the she-heifer Baal." It is only in the *Itala* that we find Dan mentioned. And even here Grätz and Neubauer conjecture that the right reading is *Bethel*.

² The Rabbis had many monstrous *Haggadoth* about the calves:—*c.g.* that they were suspended by magnets; that they spoke, etc. (*Sanhedrin*, f. 107, 2); that the foundation of Rome began the day they were erected (*Shabbath*, f. 56, 2), and so forth.

absence of all mention of this supreme relic—one of the two chief “gods” of the conquered nation—in the records of Tiglath Pileser III., or in any other Assyrian records, or in any Jewish writer, makes the guess of the Talmudists extremely improbable. As to the golden calf or calves at Bethel we read in Hosea that they shall be dashed to splinters, and be taken as a bribe or present to King Combat, but this may not be meant for a literal prediction.¹

Further, it is *a priori* improbable that Jeroboam would think of erecting a golden calf at Dan;—and that for two good reasons.

(i.) The place was indeed nominally in his dominions, but it was on the remote border, and not at all on the road to Jerusalem as Bethel was. It was a town which entered so little into the ordinary stream of Israelitish life that it is only mentioned once in all the history, and only twice in all the prophets.²

And (ii.) there was an overpoweringly strong reason why Jeroboam should *not* take this step. There was an ancient and venerable sanctuary and *bamah* at Dan already; and there was an ancient venerable molten or plated image there known as Micah’s “ephod”;³ and there was an hereditary line of priests who traced their ancestry direct to Jonathan, the grandson of Moses.⁴ In the story of that wandering Levite—the degenerate grandson of the mighty lawgiver who was content to serve a private idol for a few pounds a year—we are expressly told that priests of his family continued to be in charge of this cult “to the *days of the cap-*

¹ Hos. viii. 5, x. 5, 6. See Wellhausen *Die Kleinen Propheten*, p. 118.

² Amos viii. 14. In Jer. iv. 15, viii. 16 it is only mentioned as a northern frontier town.

³ There was, indeed, a complete treasure-house of images there—“an ephod and teraphim, and a graven image and a molten image” (Judg. xviii. 14, 18). They would not want a cherub beside. Was the molten image a calf?

⁴ Judg. xviii. 30. Manasseh is a timid Jewish falsification, caused by the introduction of the single letter *n*, which was suspended above the *Q’ri*, and was only intended to mislead the uninitiated.

tivity of the land."¹ Ewald indeed conjectures that the reading should be "till the days of the captivity of *the ark*" (reading אָרֶךְ for אָרֶן), which would bring the priesthood of the descendants of Moses to an end at the destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines in the days of Eli. But there is not a trace in any MS., or version, or Targum, of such a reading; and though I once thought it possible, it now seems to me entirely untenable. All who know the extraordinary tenacity of reverence with which Orientals cling to local sanctuaries and to local cults, will see at once that, independently of its situation, which does not seem appropriate to Jeroboam's object, the last place which seems probable for Jeroboam to have thought of as suitable for the introduction and establishment of an unauthorized image-worship was one in which an unauthorized image-worship so many centuries older was already existing under the jealous guardianship of generations of Levitic though heretical priests.

What then are we to say of the only two passages of the Bible which would militate against these conclusions?

(1) As regards Amos viii. 14 there is little to explain, for it says nothing of a golden calf at Dan. It runs in our A.V.:—

"They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and the manner of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again."

This is corrected in the R.V. into "*As thy god, O Dan, liveth.*"

It is on the face of it unlikely that this refers to any golden calf at Dan. For (i.) there could in that case be no reason for passing over the far more prominent calf or calves at Bethel; (ii.) the sin of Samaria was probably some Baal-image or Asherah there, and "the way of Beersheba" also points to some unknown cult other than that of the golden calves. In all probability, therefore, the special

¹ Judg. xviii. 30.

reference is still to the old ephod—a plated image—of which the worship and the priesthood had by that time acquired an immemorial sanctity.

For, indeed, Amos does not seem to have said one word against the “calf” worship, any more than Elijah or Elisha did. All his stern denunciations are aimed at oppression, robbery and wrong; at luxury, cruelty, and greed; and in accordance with normal message of all the greatest prophets, he denounces the reliance on ritual in place of righteousness. His silence is the more remarkable because it was at Bethel that he exercised his prophetic functions. “Come to Bethel,” he says, “and transgress; at Gilgal multiply your transgressions” (iv. 4); and “I will also visit the altars at Bethel” (iii. 14);¹ and “Seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba.” He alludes to unauthorized worship at Bethel, but nowhere mentions the word “calf”; and when Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, complains of him for constructive treason, he reports him to Jeroboam II. for threats of doom especially against the royal house, and tells him to prophesy no more at Bethel, because “it is the king’s chapel and the national temple.”² (Amos vii. 10–13.) But he does not say that Amos had denounced the long-established form of northern worship, which, in the eyes of its High Priest would have been a far more heinous crime. And, in fact, the worship at Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba—even at Samaria itself—may have been irregular rather than idolatrous; it may have been the worship of Jehovah, but under false and dangerous forms. In any case viii. 14 is the sole mention of Dan, and there is no certainty at all that the reference is to any golden calf.”

The inference is strengthened by reference to the almost

¹ Wellhausen (*Skizzen—Die Kleinen Propheten*, pp. 7, 77) thinks that iii. 14 breaks the connexion, and militates against the things against which Amos really spoke. But apart from this the allusion is quite indefinite.

² Literally, “house of the kingdom.”

contemporary, though somewhat later, prophets, Hosea, and the Zechariah who wrote Zech. ix.-xi.

1. As regards Hosea, he speaks of Gilgal and Bethel, but apparently in connexion with the worship of Jehovah (iv. 15); of Mizpah and Tabor (v. 1); of Samaria (x. 5); of Bethel again¹ (x. 15); and of Gilgal (xii. 11); but

(i.) he does not once mention Dan; and

(ii.) the only passages in which he distinctly refers to "calf" worship are viii. 5, 6, x. 5, xiii. 2, *the only passages in all the Prophets in which "calf" worship is mentioned at all.* And here we may note (a) that this earliest allusion to the cult of the cherubic symbols as "calves" would probably sound very blasphemous and unjust to the Israelites of the northern kingdom at first, familiar as the taunt afterwards became;² (β) that the use of the plural ("the calves of Bethaven," as x. 5) seems to support the belief that there were *two* there, as well as in the Holiest place of the Temple; (γ) that Hosea seems to mingle up the worship with Baal worship, and even with burnt sacrifice, which certainly did not originally belong to it (xiii. 1, 2, *Heb.*);³ (δ) that viii. 5, 6, "He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria, . . . the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces," *may* refer to some image of Baal at *Samaria*, not at Bethel; (ε) that when he speaks of "the black-robed ones" (the *Chemarim*, or illegal priests) of Bethaven, mourning for the "calves" of Bethaven, and adds "it (the idol) shall also be carried for a present to King Jareb," he does not say, as is sometimes assumed, that Sargon should carry the calf or calves away captive, but rather uses the reproachful threat, "Your calf is of gold, so that you will have to send it as part of your ransom money to King Combat."

¹ He, or a later editor, calls Bethel "Bethaven," "house of vanity," *i.e.*, of idols; and Aven (x. 8).

² Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten*, p. 118.

³ The meaning may be, "Let them that sacrifice men kiss the calves."

2. As for the Zechariah of Zech. ix.–xi., occupied as he is with Ephraim and her murderous later kings, he does not drop a single allusion to the calves either at Dan or at Bethel.

It only remains to examine 1 Kings xii. 28–30, where we are told that Jeroboam “made two calves of gold. . . . And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin; for the people *went (to worship) before the one, unto Dan*”; for which the R.V. gives, in the margin, “before *each* of them, even to Dan.”

The unexplained difficulty in verse 30 shows that there has been some early confusion of the text. Little as I am generally inclined to follow the somewhat wild conjectures of Klostermann—and I do not wholly follow him here—it seems to me, that, considering all the circumstances which I have mentioned, the text may here have originally been to the following effect. “And Jeroboam bethought himself of a plan, and went and made two golden calves *in Bethel*, and said to the people (LXX. *πρὸς τὸν λαόν*), “Enough of going up to Jerusalem! See thy Elohim, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and who established the one (emblem) in Bethel, and conceded (LXX. *ἔδωκε*) the *ephod* in Dan. And the people went to the *ephod* at Dan (and neglected Bethel). Then made he *bamoth in Bethel*, and made priests of all the people.”

I do not of course say that the text stood exactly so; I only say, partially following Klostermann, that it may have been to this purport. The *alteration of a single letter*, reading *הֵאֱפֹד*, “the *ephod*,” in verse 29, for *הַאֱפֹד* “the one,” accounts for the main confusion; and if “*in Bethel*” stood in verse 31, it may easily have got confused with *Beth bamoth* (“a house of high places,” or, as the LXX. has it, *οἴκους ἐφ’ ὑψηλῶν*).

Every one will see at a glance how well this corresponds

with the conclusion of the passage. For there (xii. 32, 33) Jeroboam makes a great feast at Bethel to the people, and, while not a syllable is said of Dan, we are told that *there* he offered upon the altar, "sacrificing unto *the calves*" (observe the plural) "that he had made; and he placed *in Bethel* the priests of the *bamoth* that he had made, and went up to the altar that he had made *in Bethel*." Attention is as entirely concentrated, as it is throughout the whole history, on *Bethel*: and Dan is passed over as completely as if it never existed.

Of course if this misconception, or error, was early found in the text of the Book of Kings (which was not published before B.C. 542) it would naturally be the case that in the shape of a single marginal gloss, it would get early established in the tradition, as in 2 Kings x. 29. The "two calves" are also mentioned in 2 Chron. xiii. 8, but in that place it is not stated that they were not both at Bethel.

Klostermann, in his very brief note on 1 Kings xii. 28-30, gives a hint of these conclusions, which seem to me not only possible but adapted to remove many difficulties. So far as I know, the matter has never been argued out before. *The alteration of one letter*, and the excision of a brief exegetical gloss in 2 Kings x. 29, gives a clearer and more consistent view of the whole history of Israel. I do not, however, pretend to do more than to invite further attention to the matter.

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