

the approach of demons. This custom was also prevalent among the ancient Egyptians; the Mohammedans, too, inscribe verses from the *Koran* on their doors. Modern Jews, of the orthodox type, still use the *Mezuzah* ("Doorpost Symbol"), which consists of a metal, glass or wooden tube fixed on to the doors of rooms; the tube is hollow, and contains a piece of parchment on which are written the first two paragraphs of the *Shema*' (Deut. vi. 4-9, xi. 13-21). If this custom was not taken from the Babylonians, they at least had one of an absolutely similar character; for, in order to guard themselves against demons and witches (who, as we have seen, were believed to be the incarnations of demons), they hung on the outside of their houses and on doors little plates with extracts from religious texts inscribed upon them.<sup>1</sup>

Space forbids us to deal with the connexion between demons and forbidden foods; for the same reason it is impossible to show how a number of mourning customs are to be explained by a belief in the presence of demons wherever there was a dead body; but sufficient has, it is hoped, been said to show that Old Testament Demonology is a far larger subject than would appear at first sight to be the case.

In a concluding article we shall hope to deal with Psalm xci. W. O. E. OESTERLEY.

### *THE ASSUAN ARAMAIC PAPYRI.*

By the munificence and enterprise of Mr. Robert Mond, Honorary Secretary of the Davy-Faraday Research Laboratory of the Royal Institution, these priceless memorials of the past have been rescued from the rapacity of the dealer and private collector, and made available for science.

<sup>1</sup> Jastrow, i. 285. Cf. King in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, xi. 50-62.

Found accidentally by some workmen, they were secured just in time for the Cairo Museum, the Bodleian Library and the Berlin Museum. They have lately been published in superb form at Mr. Mond's expense by Professor Sayce, assisted by Mr. A. E. Cowley, with notes on the Egyptian names by Professor Spiegelberg, and an extensive Bibliography of the Egyptian Aramaic literature by Seymour de Ricci. Most scholars will be content to envy the completeness of the work which has left them so little to criticize. It is a significant feature that Professor Nöldeke is unsparing in his praise of translation, notes and the whole production.

The texts are those of a number of conveyances and legal documents relating to the transfer of property between the members of a Jewish settlement and their neighbours in Assuan and Elephantine, the twin fortresses which guarded Egypt against the Soudanese tribes. The population of these towns was extraordinarily composite. Egyptians, Persians and Babylonians appear beside a large number of Jews and Aramaeans. The documents extend over sixty years, from B.C. 471 to B.C. 411, from Xerxes to Darius Nothus. They constitute the largest connected body of early Aramaic yet available, and the gain to lexicography, grammar and the history of institutions is inestimable.

We know that early in the sixth century B.C. a number of Jews fled to Egypt, carrying with them the prophet Jeremiah: possibly thinking he would be an acceptable sacrifice to the Egyptian monarch as he had been in favour with the Babylonians. Whether the Jews of Assuan were the direct descendants of this migration, or of some later transportation, we cannot say. At any rate the refuge in Egypt did not avail long; for Egypt, as well as Babylonia, fell under Persian conquests. Babylonians

served in the Persian forces and the Persian rule was after all an extension of Babylonian power and civilization by new and more vigorous hands.

The great interest for us lies in the Jewish community. They had not apostasized from the faith of their forefathers, but they had not the same view of that faith as the prophets and historians of the Old Testament would have us believe to be orthodox. At a time when Ezra and Nehemiah were returning to inaugurate the era of Judaism as we know and understand it, these Jews, in Pathros, where Jeremiah had prophesied, worshipped Jehovah, calling him Yahu openly and without scruple. They thought it no wrong to build him a shrine on the king's way in Assuan, and they swore by his name in courts of law as freely as they did by that of the Egyptian gods when necessary to satisfy their neighbours. The Persian conquest had imposed no new religious ideas here at any rate, and it appears that the doctrine of worship at Jerusalem alone was unknown to the Jews of Assuan. There is no synagogue. Their attitude is that which later led to the temple of Onias at Heliopolis, and the whole religious atmosphere of the papyri is one more argument that the religion of the people in Judea was not quite what the orthodox party would have desired.

The thoroughly Jewish character of the community is strikingly attested by the names its members bore. The divine name rarely occurs at the beginning of a compound, only in Jeho-adar and Jah-hadari, but is frequent at the end of names in the familiar Biblical form *-iah*. Many of these names are borne by more than one person. Thus Ananiah at least twice, Azariah twice, Ba'adiah, Berechiah, Gedaliah, Gemariah twice, Hodaviah, Hoshaiah twice, Isaiah, Jezaniah three times, Malchiah twice at least, Me'oziah twice, Mibhtahiah, Pelaliah, Pelatiah,

Qoniah, Reuiah, Uriah, Jedoniah six times, Zechariah three times, Zephaniah, are mostly well known Biblical names. They stamp the community as essentially Jewish.

Such names as Ahio twice, Ater, Ethan, Haggai, Hanan, Hosea six times, Menahem five times, Meshullam five times, Nathan six times, Shallum three times, Shalom, Shelomim, Zaccur five times, Zadok, are Biblical for the most part, and their owners were by parentage or relation evidently Jews. What is very remarkable among these Jewish names is the complete absence of compounds of El. It is equally interesting to find among the Jewish names of Assuan not a few of the most suspected forms in the Bible. The old Massorettes must chuckle in their graves. Yet these Jews were writing, if not speaking, Aramaic; no longer Hebrew, though a few Hebraisms are detected by scholars. The Aramaic language for this period is too little known, however, for us to be sure that it did not possess many words not now found in Biblical Aramaic.

Persian names are Artabanos, Artaphernes, Artaxerxes (the monarch), Arusathmar (?), Aryishâ, Athropadan, Bagdates, Damidata, Dargman (?), Darius (the king), Haûmadâta, Ostones, Phrataphernes, Satibarzanes, Warizath, Widrang, Xerxes (the king). For the most part these appear to be officials, probably concerned with military or fiscal administration of the empire. We look in vain in the glossary for Persian words introduced by the conquest into Aramaean daily life. Only one or two are doubtfully assigned by Mr. Cowley to a Persian origin, and they may turn out to be Babylonian or possibly misreadings of the text.

Egyptian names are few; As-Hor (but compare the Ashur of 1 Chronicles ii. 24, iv. 5, and compounds of Hur in Assyrian and Babylonian names), Espemet, Khnum,

Pahi, Peft-ônît, Peti-khnum, Petisis, Petosiris, Pî, Teos, Thebo (?). It is clear that the Jews in Assuan spoke Aramaic without any admixture of Egyptian words. They could hardly have learnt that tongue in Egypt, though it was the official language of their Persian masters. The inference is that they came into Egypt speaking it. There is nothing remarkable in this, as Aramaic appears to have been the colloquial tongue throughout the late Assyrian empire and Babylonia before the captivity.

Assyrian, or rather Babylonian names, 'Athar-ili, 'Athar-shuri (probably Syrian names; see my *Harran Census*), Ben-Tirash (Elamite ?), Hadad-nûrî, Ibni-Marduk, Iddin-Nabû, Lîlû, Lûhî, Mannu-kî, Marduk (?), Nabû-kuduri, Nabû-lî, Nabû-shum-ishkun, Nabû-tukulti, Nabû-zîr-ibni Nabû-zar-adan, Paltu, Sin-kashid, and possibly a few others, are very startling to find far away at the extreme south of Egypt. What did such persons there in Assuan ? Were they officials sent from Babylonia by their Persian masters ?

Names like Gadol five times, Hanûl (?), Mahaseh, Mahseiah twice, Nebo-nathan, Nebo-re'î twice, Penuliah twice, Yigdal, Yislah and a few others may be Aramaic purely ; but some of them have marked similarities to Biblical names, though not actually to be found as such. We have no right to assume that the Bible contains all the names that were borne by Israelites either before or after the captivity. The evidently Jewish names are those known to us for the later times of Ezra and Nehemiah, and there are none of the characteristic names of the Maccabaeian age, Johanan or Simeon or Joshua ; on the other hand the names of the patriarchs, Abraham, Israel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc., are as entirely absent as if these Jews had no knowledge of such ancestry.

Now, when we examine the vocabulary we are struck

at once with the Babylonian complexion of it. This may be deceptive; for the Babylonian literature is now so extensive and the vocabulary so large that it may well contain many words originally Aramaic: especially as it has hitherto been known chiefly for the periods after the Aramaeans were in touch with Assyria or Babylonia. We are, however, becoming increasingly acquainted with the earlier Babylonian of the First Dynasty, and finding it markedly West Semitic or "Amorite." Hence we may regard the presence of many words in Aramaic as due to Aramaean indebtedness to Babylonia after their settlement in Upper Mesopotamia. Names are often borrowed with things, and it is always precarious to argue much influence from the mere lexicon. It is, however, pleasing to Assyriologists to note the increasing willingness of Semitic scholars to acknowledge the influence of Babylonian or Assyrian civilization in the Western Oriental world.

Much more significant is the form in which these legal documents are drawn up. They quote Assyrian formulae in a very remarkable way. As in many ways the Persians took over the Babylonian civilization and impressed it on their empire one might expect that the Babylonian legal forms would serve as a model for Aramaic-speaking people. We know the forms current in Babylonia under Artaxerxes from the *Business Documents of Murashû Sons*, published by Dr. A. T. Clay, and we can trace them back for centuries in Babylonia. But the Jews at Assuan did not use them. They used the forms current in Assyria in the seventh century B.C., which themselves go back to the Babylonia of the Hammurabi period. Unless the Persians had learned them from Assyria long before the time of Cyrus we cannot see how they could have taught them to the Jews of Assuan. They taught those Jews

little of their own. The Babylonians present in Assuan would surely have taught them the forms then current in Babylonia. Assyrians, if such they were, might have preserved remembrances of bygone custom. Aramaeans might have acquired them in the past from Assyria; but at any rate they had preserved them intact with singular fidelity. It is more likely that the compatriots of Jeremiah brought these elements of Assyrian legal procedure into Egypt with them. Then it is obvious to conclude that the Jews in Palestine and even Judea before the captivity were accustomed to use the legal formulae of Assyria. We have long been aware that the Jewish law forms in the Talmud are closely related to those of Babylonia, there was nothing in them repugnant to the religious consciousness of the people. This is, however, a far more significant conclusion. If legal forms, how much else? They called their temple of Jehovah by no Hebrew, Aramaic, Egyptian or Persian name, but plain Assyrian, as Nöldeke has pointed out.

It must be insisted upon that at present we have no full proof that such legal forms are actually due to the impress of Assyria upon Judea before the captivity, only a strong probability, which will not convince all. It is noteworthy, however, that the Assuan papyri give transliterations of the Assyrian forms, not translations into Aramaic. They quote them as lawyers now quote tags of Latin. They had words of their own that would form exact translations, but they transfer the very words. This is far more significant of "borrowing" than any amount of general similarity of procedure, which might arise from the tendency of men everywhere under the same necessities to hit upon the same devices. What is now needed is a study of other Aramaic legal documents, whether from Egypt or elsewhere, to see whether this copying of Assyrian

legal forms was confined to the Jews of Assuan. Until proof arrives that it was not so confined, the above theory holds the field that they brought these forms from Judea, and that therefore Judea before the captivity was "permeated" as far as its lawyers were concerned, at least, by Assyrian culture. Whether this was absorbed during the Assyrian conquests of the seventh century, or whether it along with Assyrian culture itself goes back to the Babylonia of the First Dynasty, must depend upon other evidence. In the latter case we should have the pre-Israelite Canaanites as the intermediaries. As it stands, there is food for thought and much need for further research.

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*THE DIVINE CHILD IN VIRGIL :*

*A SEQUEL TO PROFESSOR MAYOR'S STUDY.*

PROFESSOR J. B. MAYOR has treated afresh the interesting and oft-discussed problem of the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil in a recent number of this magazine ;<sup>1</sup> and on the whole the present writer is in agreement with the general results of the treatment. In particular, it seems impossible to understand the Fourth Eclogue without the supposition that Virgil had experienced a certain influence from Hebrew poetry ; and in this present article other reasons for this opinion besides those mentioned by Professor Mayor will be mentioned.

But, whereas Professor Mayor is inclined to reject the supposition that this influence came direct to Virgil from the works of Isaiah as translated (we must of course understand a Greek, not a Latin, translation), and argues that the Roman poet knew no more of the Hebrew poet than what filtered through the poor medium of the Sibylline Books, I confess that this appears to me an inadequate

<sup>1</sup> EXPOSITOR, April, 1907.