

BURIAL AND BURNING.

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THE discovery of the burnt bodies in the cistern at Gezer has raised questions as to the disposal of the dead, which may be illustrated by Babylonian discoveries. Not only were all the Semitic peoples apparently always accustomed to bury the body, but the non-Semitic Akkadian race were so also. It is, in fact, only among Aryans, whether in Europe or in Asia, that burning as a regular custom seems to have prevailed, and even many Aryan tribes were exclusively burying peoples. Even to-day the Moslem reproaches the Hindu as the "son of a burnt father." Babylonia is full of tombs of both its races, and the bas-relief at Tell Loh represents the building of a mound over the dead, and is accompanied by Akkadian texts. It would seem that to burn the bodies of enemies was considered a revenge by Semitic peoples. Mr. Macalister has kindly undertaken to study the question I have asked him, as to whether the burnt people at Gezer may not have been Egyptians. If so, they may have been murdered and burnt when the natives revolted against Egyptian rule. Enemies and captives were also (like children) burnt as human sacrifices by the ancients generally.

In illustration of the fact that the non-Semitic races of West Asia buried the dead, attention may be drawn to two Akkadian tablets, translated into Assyrian, which have lately been published. The Akkadians, like the ancients generally, were much afraid of ghosts, and propitiated the manes with offerings and libations. Like the Egyptians, they believed the "water of life" to be given to the pious dead, in the underworld, by the gods; and they even spoke (or at least the Babylonians did so) of Nebo as "giving life to the dead." Food offerings, and objects supposed to be useful to the dead, are as common in their tombs as in those of early Semitic and Aryan peoples in other countries. These facts explain the meaning of the texts in question.

(1) An extract from one of the Akkadian litanies (given by M. A. Boissier in the *Proceedings* of the Biblical Archæological Society, January, 1903, p. 24) refers to "the ghost of a man drowned in the sea from a ship, or of a man not buried, or of a

man having no one to visit him (*i.e.*, his tomb), or of one with no place consecrated by charms, or of one without a libation, or of one whose name is not had in remembrance."

(2) Another difficult text (discussed by Dr. T. G. Pinches in the same *Proceedings*, May, 1901, p. 205) appears to read as follows, the first part being rendered difficult by being broken away:—

"Spell for the spirit of a man who is slain to earth the spirit of the ghost the one that is sent back. The place is void: the pit is void: the (underworld?) is void. It is void for the ghost that is sent back. Like a tree cut down, it bends its neck to earth. Ea saw this man. One put food at his head. Food for the body was placed. The prayer for life was prayed for him. O ghost, thou art a child of thy God. May the food placed at thy head—food for the body—expiate. May thy evil pass away. Live thou. Let thy foot go forth in the land of life. O ghost, thou art a child of thy God. The eye for evil watches thee. The eye for sin watches thee may the God of the tomb smite with the rod may the God *Gunura* (perhaps 'of the narrow abode') bind with the great cord as the rain that falls from heaven on earth may Ea, king of the abyss, take away from thy body End of charm. Incantation to protect men from the spirit of a ghost."

The ghost is laid by offerings at the tomb, and prayed for, that it may be happy in the underworld to which it is to return.

FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS.

Revue Biblique, vol. xi, part 4.—Macridy Bey commences a report, with numerous illustrations, on the excavations which he has been carrying out, for the Imperial Ottoman Museum at Constantinople, in the temple of Eshmun, built near Sidon by Bodashtart, the grandson of Eshmuazar, and king of Sidon. The temple stood on rapidly falling ground, at a place now known as Bostân esh-Sheikh, "garden of the Sheikh," which lies south-east of the bridge by which the Sidon-Beirût road crosses the Nahr 'Auwall. Thus far the excavations have brought to light the walls of an exactly oriented rectangular enclosure, measuring about 197 feet east and west, and about 144½ feet north and south—the usual plan of the Semitic *hieron* or *ḥarâm* within which the *naos* or temple is built. During the excavations Macridy Bey turned up many fragments of