

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES ON JEWISH ANTIQUITIES.

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*(Continued from Q.S. 1918, p. 138.)*LII.—*The Alphabet of the Hebrew Bible.*

M. D. SIDERSKY has been reading a Paper before the Société Asiatique upon the oldest Hebrew Palestinian writing and the Aramaic or square Hebrew characters. The archaic Hebrew and the Assouan Hebrew-Aramaic documents each have but twenty-two letters, whilst the Nash papyrus shows the earliest yet known use of the five supplementary characters (final letters). The object of M. Sidersky's essay is to show how certain errors in the Hebrew Old Testament have arisen from a scribe, at some time, copying from a text in Samaritan characters and mistaking the letters in a few cases, wherein they are very similar to each other, whereas in Aramaic they are better differentiated. Thus, *aleph* (א) and *tau* (ט), the *yod* (י) and *tsadé* (צ), the *kaph* (כ) and the *mêm* (מ), when not transcribed from Aramaic easily give rise to certain faults in the rendering of sentences which can now be corrected by detecting how they may have arisen from these special causes.

In Exod. xx, 24, we have: "Where I record (or invoke) my name I will come unto thee," which should read: "Where thou invokest my name I will come to thee." The scribe who confounded א and ט had written אֹכִיר instead of תֹּזְכִיר.¹

In 2 Kings viii, 26, and 2 Chron. xxii, 2, Ahaziah is said to have ascended to the throne in his 22nd and 42nd year. The latter date, for chronological reasons, must be wrong. The figures

¹ M. Sidersky thinks this error very ancient because "the Samaritans having found it in their oldest texts corrected the אֹכִיר (in the future) into 'אֹזְכִיר, 'The place where I have recorded my name,' so as to allude to Gerizim." But they altered other texts that were not erroneous so as to suit Gerizim.

being represented by letters we can detect the error because צב , 22, is much like צב , 42, and the scribe rendered it as the latter, misreading the letter *kaph* for *mêm*.

In Isaiah xi, 15, we have: "with his mighty wind," or "with the might of his wind." This M. Luzzato takes, as far as the Hebrew word עֵיִם , "might," is concerned, to be an error, the copyist having confused מ and מ , so that the original text he should have transcribed had עֵצִים רַחוּ (viz., עֵצִים רַחוּ).

The emendation of Exod. xx, 23, was proposed in a Talmudic commentary and so is not new. This writer considers it refers to the Zion temple. If M. Sidersky's views are correct as to the extreme age of Samaritan MSS., it tends somewhat to invalidate the view of Prof. Naville that the Pentateuch was originally written in cuneiform.

LIII.—*How Cedars were Transported.*

In 1 Kings v, 9, Hiram of Tyre, replying to Solomon's request for cedar and fir to build his new temple, says:—"My servants shall bring these down from Lebanon to the sea and convey them by floats to the place thou shalt appoint." It is not generally known that visitors to the Louvre can there inspect an Assyrian bas relief of the time of Sargon II, about 720 B.C., giving an absolute illustration of such a proceeding. It is one of the monuments excavated by M. Botta at Nineveh, and is published in two plates in his book, *Le Monument de Ninive*. It depicts, undoubtedly, the departure of galleys conveying forest timber for the Assyrians; wood which would be conveyed to some port to the north and then taken overland to be floated down the Euphrates. An engraving of this tableau has recently been published in M. Pottier's little pocket catalogue of Assyrian Antiquities at the Louvre, and the following short description will doubtless be of interest to Bible students:—

"All the lower part of the relief depicts the sea at the entrance to a harbour dominated by two fortresses, one of these posted upon the foothills or rocks of the shore, on the right: the other resting upon a masonry foundation apparently based upon submerged rocks or a small islet, is at the extreme left of the design. Upon the sloping hillside, with two men standing near by, are the trunks of trees waiting to be slid down to the water's edge. In the water

itself are three galleys, two of these, having what seem to be horses' heads carved as prow ornaments, being rowed away from the shore, towing behind them the trunks of large trees, in one case apparently forming a sort of raft, but in the other they are corded to the ship and float separately. The third galley is being propelled towards the shore, with so far no towage, as it is coming in for the timber depicted as waiting to be removed. These are not war vessels as represented in Egyptian and other reliefs, but merchant ships, and were not intended for long journeys as they have no sails. Neither are they of any Mesopotamian type of galley. They are certainly Phoenician craft, employed in this case for Assyrian service."

The cuneiform royal annals continually refer to the obtaining of cedars from Lebanon and Cilicia for building palaces and temples. The "Eponym Canon" calls Amanus Shaderini Mount of Cedars. The Old Testament twice speaks of Sennacherib's securing Lebanon cedars for his edifices. In his lately-found cylinder, now in the British Museum, he says: "Beams of cedar and cyprus, whose scent is sweet, I caused to be set up." There were roads to the Euphrates, or rather caravan tracks, *via* Damascus and Palmyra, or, more to the north, by Ribla or Karkemish, but there was great lack of water for animals of burden by these ways, and it is probable that the baulks of timber were taken to sites such as ultimately became Laodicea and Antioch, and then conveyed by the shortest way to the Euphrates, after being partly cut up at their point of disembarkation.

There remains the question as to what Phoenician port the relief is intended to represent. The scene shows no sign of warfare; it must therefore be some place in alliance with or subject to the Assyrian king. During Sargon's reign he was constantly at war with Tyre, which, however, he at last boasted he subdued. In the sieges the Assyrians employed ships of Sidon, Gebal and Aradus, so with these other Phoenician harbour people, they were friendly. Indeed Sargon's texts seem to specifically mention Sidon's obedience to him. The relief leaves us uncertain whether the artist intended the outer citadel to be upon a very low peninsula or upon an island, and whether the one along the shore is erected upon a great rock or an artificial mound or hill commanding the sea. Also, the artist away in Mesopotamia may have been somewhat uncertain in his landscape.

Dr. Coutineau, who has been writing upon the question, considers it cannot be Tyre because that city possessed a large island fortified town. In Ezekiel xxviii, 2, Tyre's king was lifted up because he boasted: "I am a God seated in the midst of the seas." Gebal or Byblos has no outlying islet or partly submerged peninsula, nor has Berytus; whilst Aradus, which the doctor omits to mention, has a large island, as does Tyre. At Sidon the conditions of the relief are to be found. Some distance from the shore there is a narrow rocky island just rising above the waves, and it bears vestiges of a strong building having once been founded upon it.

Assyrian inscriptions, three times at least, speak of Sidonian princes "taking refuge in the midst of the sea," as if an islet were their last stronghold. It was so small as apparently to be considered maritime, for Esarhaddon says: "he captured Abdi-Milkitti there *like a fish*." Moreover, Sidonian Phoenician inscriptions speak of two Sidons, one of them "Sidon of the Sea." The shore fortress is the hill rising out of the sea nearest to the part of the harbour approaching the road of Tyre. It can be seen from a distance, and is now called Kala'at-el-Mezah. There are remains there of a Crusader's fortress, but it was, no doubt, occupied as such in far more primitive times.

The relief must not be taken as accurately representing Sidon of 800 to 700 B.C., but to be a foreign artist's depicting of it from a description given him by persons who had been there, and shows cedar or firs of Lebanon or Hermon being exported as they had been for Solomon shortly before.¹

LIV.—*The Egyptian Name for Lebanon.*

In the Egyptological Journals of the French scholars at Cairo, there has been prolonged discussion as to the species of tree the Egyptians imported from Palestine and Syria, which they called the "true ash." M. Loret has finally decided it was *Abies cilicia*, but also that ash, without any adjective, stood for the shorter

¹ Some verses of Quintus Smyrnus, XI, 309, seem to refer to such a scene:—

"As when upon the shore of the deep-voiced sea, men take the long ropes, and the well-wrought pegs and scatter the long baulks and timber of the towing-raft and the broad beaches strew with them, and the black water splashes amid them"

pinces and firs.¹ The debate would have been decided long ago but for the fact that the papyri and hieroglyphic texts never, apparently, spoke of Lebanon, but said this timber came from , which M. Daressy reads *R-mn-nm*. This was a name whose geographical Semitic name was supposed to be most probably Hirmil, because it does not equate with Lēbānōn (לְבָנוֹן) = White Mountain.

The truth, however, is, as R. P. Ronzevalle has recently pointed out, that whilst Lebanon could hardly be a Semitic Ramanan, there were quite possibly two Semitic pronunciations and even spellings of the word as far as the letter B is concerned. If by the *R-mn-nm* they intended Lebanon, the Egyptian scribes endeavoured to be accurate, and must have come across people who used some such form for the district. Now there are ample instances, Père Ronzevalle quotes, of the Semitic B changing to M. Thus, in Canaanite, Abana becomes Amana, and Dibān, Dimān.

The Libnah of Numb. xxxiii, 23, somewhere near Sinai, in the LXX is both *Λεβνωα* and *Λεμνωα*; the Samaritan has לבונה. In the well known papyrus of Wen-Amon's voyage to Byblos and Sidon for timber, an Egyptian transliteration of one of the maritime coast population's name reads undoubtedly ברכת-אל as the local pronunciation for "Benediction of El." This indicates the possibility that the type of Canaanites or Phoenicians with whom the Egyptian writers came in contact, called Lebanon *L-mn-nm*.

The initial letter of the Egyptian sign, read by M. Daressy as "r," is equally likely to have been "l." This was referred to in documents some thousand years later; see the note upon the Alabarches or Arabarches of Josephus and late Egyptian inscriptions and papyri.

At the date in ancient times, when the word for Lebanon which we are discussing occurs in Egyptian records, there are scores of instances of the sign that is most often correctly rendered "r" being used for "l." These are in Egyptian hieroglyph (or hieratic, practically the same thing) transliterations of Semitic place- or personal-

¹ The "true ash" was used for the high masts erected in front of Egyptian temple pylons. So the author of Ezek. xxvii, 5, seems to intimate about Syrian trees shipped from Tyre, speaking of firs from Senir, and cedars (?) of Lebanon for ship timbers and masts. Senir (see Deut. iii, 8, Assyrian, Saniru = Hermon) was famous for its cypresses; Shalmaneser says Saniru was "in front of Lebanon," viz., "over" Anti Libanus.

names, so there cannot be any error. Thus we have the Prince Hallusil = Yagob-el, and Pulusati = Philistine.

In addition to their true "ash," or "ach" (*Abies cilicia*), which on Lebanon attains a height of one hundred and fifty feet, the Egyptians imported from North Palestine an inferior or less lofty kind of "ash." In the story of Bata this tree was said to flourish upon the Syrian shore. This should be the *Pinus pinea*, which reaches sixty-five feet. These trees, they say, produced tar, or pitch. It was commonly used for making coffins and for ship building. The word is much like the "arz" used for a tree in the Ta'anach tablet and 1 Kings vi, 36, but that appears to have been an Amorite or Aramean name for cedar, and a duplicate for that tree of Erinnu, the Assyrian word for cedar; compare the Hebrew *eres*.

The word in Isa. xlv, 14, rendered "ash," has no connection with the Egyptian ash. It was possibly so translated because the Hebrew *oren* was so similar to the Latin *ornus*. The Egyptian ash of Palestine and Phoenician Lebanon was not the cypress which flourished on loftier Hermon, the northern slopes of which were called Senir (Assyrian *Saniru*).