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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY THE REVEREND J. W. JACK, D.D., GLENFARG, PERTSHIRE.

M. PIERRE MONTET, the well-known Strasbourg archæologist, has furnished us with a further account of his excavations at Tanis, the Biblical Zoan, to the west of Lake Menzala, in the Egyptian Delta. The ruins of the city, which adjoin the modern village of *San el Hagar*, cover a surface of about a thousand acres, and can be seen from a long distance. The interest of the work lies in the suggestion put forward long ago by Brugsch, and strongly upheld by Montet and others, that the town is none other than the ancient Avaris of the Hyksos, and the Raamses (Ramesses) from which the Israelites started when they left Egypt (Ex 12²⁷, Nu 33⁹). It was here, these scholars hold, and not at Memphis or Heliopolis, that the Pharaohs dwelt who enslaved the Israelites, and here Moses had his memorable interviews with these rulers. The Psalmist speaks of the wonders which God performed 'in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.' The excavations show the city to have been a very ancient one, in existence during the Hyksos age, over three hundred years before the time of Ramesses II., but it was this Pharaoh, Montet believes, who greatly improved it and gave it the name of Pi-Ramesse ('Raamses'). No Hyksos inscription has been found, but a large number of sculptured columns, obelisks, and other remains of the Hyksos rule, and especially of the Pharaohs Pepi I. and Pepi II., have been unearthed, together with numerous monuments mentioning Seth, the Hyksos deity. This accords with the fact that these foreign rulers made Avaris their city of residence, where they remained till expelled from the country by Ahmosis (c. 1580 B.C.), and where they celebrated the cult of Seth to the exclusion of any other. There are also abundant traces of a Semitic nature. These may be Hyksos, if we assume these Asiatics to have belonged to this race, but it is not improbable that they are Hebrew, if Montet's theory be correct. He has discovered foundation sacrifices at the corners of a large brick rectangular enclosure (about 330 yards long by 220 broad), and also beneath a brick edifice inside the enclosure (about 33 yards by 54). Under one corner of the former was found a skeleton, and nine feet from it there was a second enclosed in a large thick earthenware jar, laid horizontally against the wall; while under the inner brick

edifice other four foundation sacrifices were discovered, two at least of these being human. In 1929 similar foundation sacrifices were unearthed beneath the city wall adjoining the north gate. Montet rightly points out that the people who interred these could not have been Egyptians, for such a custom was foreign to the latter, whereas the Semites are known to have frequently consecrated buildings and places of worship with foundation sacrifices, sometimes human (cf. Jos 6²⁰, 1 K 16³⁴). The brick edifice itself has nothing like it in Egypt, unless it be the 'House of the Jewess' at Daphnæ, about twenty miles to the east. It seems to have been a *ziggurat* or pyramidal tower with rising stages, somewhat similar to that at 'Ur of the Chaldees.' Whether it was erected by the Hyksos in honour of their god Seth, or by the Hebrews who had memories of Mesopotamia, cannot be determined, but it certainly bears witness to Asiatic influences. 'The hope,' Montet says, 'of finding at Pi-Ramesse some information as to the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt and, as to the Exodus appears to me illusory, but we may legitimately expect to lay our hands there some day on works of art and historical documents of great value.'

That the city was Pi-Ramesse is proved, Montet believes, from the expression 'Ramesses loved of Amun,' which is quite common on the monuments. Here 'Ramesses,' he holds, can only be used in a geographical sense, as the name of the city and not of the Pharaoh, seeing that it is generally preceded by the name of some divinity. Thus we find 'Ptah of Ramesses loved of Amun,' 'Prâ of Ramesses loved of Amun,' 'Setekh of Ramesses loved of Amun,' and so on. If these divinities had been those of the Pharaoh Ramesses, Montet believes they would have been found similarly expressed in the numberless sanctuaries erected by this ruler over Egypt and Nubia, whereas in the form given they are relatively rare outside Tanis.¹ Besides, for any Pharaoh to have thus appropriated to his own advantage some of the great gods of Egypt, and reduced them to the rôle of royal servants, would have been regarded as an impiety.

¹ Cf. 'Les dieux de Ramsès-aimé-d'Amon à Tanis,' in *Studies presented to F. L. L. Griffith*, London, 1932, p. 409.

The expression 'Ptah of Ramesses,' if we regard Ramesses here as a king, would have been unintelligible in ancient Egypt. If any further argument be needed, Montet thinks, it should be remembered that the town founded by Ramesses II. in the valley of Adonis (near Byblos) in Phœnicia was called 'Ramesses loved of Amun.' On these grounds, the gods mentioned certainly seem to be those of the city, which was once known as Avaris, and was then re-named Pi-Ramessé after the great ruler of the nineteenth dynasty, who greatly strengthened it and added to it. The name Tanis is a much later one, and does not occur till the twenty-first dynasty. One can only wait for the final settlement of such questions till the excavations have made further progress. It need hardly be said that, in addition to jewellery and other articles, numerous ostraca (hieratic, Greek, and demotic) have been found. These number one hundred and twenty, about twenty of which have a complete text.

Père Mallon has given a preliminary account of further excavations which he has carried out this year at *Teleilat Ghassûl*. The work has been directed to Tell No. 3, where a rectangle of ninety-eight yards by forty-nine has been opened up. The usual finds are reported, such as flints, pottery, jewellery, vessels of various kinds, figurines, etc. The house walls are perfectly aligned, and meet each other at right angles. In one stretch of wall, thirty-eight yards long, the front rooms seem to have been shops, and succeed each other as in modern towns. Nearly all the walls (made of brick) have been plastered inside with clay, and present a smooth surface. In some cases an additional layer of fine white argil has been imposed, so as to form a canvas for pictures. In five cases there are remains of these, of the same type as those previously discovered. In one room two painted potsherds have been found, the one containing the picture of a stork, and the other of a stork on the back of a gazelle. What Mallon believes to be the necropolis of the city has been located on the east, some distance from the town, in the direction of the mountains. It has been examined by Stekelis, a palæontologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It consists of dolmens (properly so-called), tumuli, and dolmen tombs, the last named in rows almost parallel to each other. The dead seem to have been buried in a sitting or squatting position (generally with the face to the east), so that they occupy little space lengthways, and hence the tombs are all of small dimensions. In some cases there is a series of

them, extending to two, three, and ten. Those already opened have been found to contain potsherds, rare flints, goblets, hemispheric cups, beautiful vases with small *oreillettes*, fan-shaped scrapers, and other objects, which are similar to those unearthed in the city, and which apparently belong like them to the Early Bronze Age. A large megalithic circle, evidently associated with the dolmens, has been discovered. It is of a peculiar type, in that it has the interior surface of the stones carefully smoothed, and it must have been a sacred enclosure of some kind. The necropolis extends a long distance, north and east, to the foot of the mountains, and is only one of a large number probably of the same date and civilization, which exist in these regions. The Tells known as '*Adeimeh*, *Iqtanû*, and *Hammâm*' have each a dolmen necropolis, marked by the same characteristics. On the high plateau farther east, megaliths, dolmens, and tumuli are found scattered far and wide, from the neighbourhood of Nebo as far north as the frontiers of Syria.

The *Râs Shamrâ* tablets (which date from the fifteenth century B.C., and still earlier in their original oral form) continue to evoke considerable interest among Semitic scholars. The new language has been classed as 'Ancient Canaanite' by H. Bauer, as distinct from Phœnician and Hebrew, while it is regarded by Contineau and other scholars as the pre-Aramæan dialect of the district. According to Virolleaud, the use of the consonants does not seem to be Canaanite, and we can only await further researches before settling this question. The tablets are still throwing new light on certain passages in the Old Testament. The frequent mention of a god 'Shalem' explains the second constituent of the name 'Jerusalem.' There can be little doubt that in early Israelite times this city was called 'Shalem,' as in Gn 14¹⁸, Ps 76². It is so referred to by Josephus (*Antiq.* i. x. 2) and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (7¹⁻³), and is always called *Uru-salim(ma)*, or 'The city of the god Shalem,' in the later Assyrian records. It may even be the case, as some scholars think, that when David restored the city, he gave names to his two favourite sons which included this constituent (Ab-salom and Solom-on). The name, as occurring on the *Râs Shamrâ* tablets, is connected with the Semitic word meaning 'safe,' 'sound,' and Shalem (or Shulmānu) was the god who gave safety. The deity Alein, who is referred to so frequently in these Syrian texts, appears to be identical with Philo's Elyûn, who was called 'the highest,' and consequently with the El Elyôn

(' God Most High ') of Gn 14¹⁸⁻²² (RV margin) and of Ps 78³⁶ (cf. ' Yahweh Elyôn,' Ps 7¹⁷ 47²; ' Elohim Elyôn,' Ps 57² 78⁶⁶). One of Aleïn's designations in several passages is Baal-zebûl (' Lord of the Abode, *i.e.* Shrine '), which corresponds to the Biblical name of the god of Ekron (2 K 1), later used as an appellation of Satan, and confirms the view of modern scholars that this form of the name, and not Baal-zebûb (' Lord of flies '), was the original one. Another frequent designation of Aleïn in the texts is Baal-şaphon, which has doubtless some connexion with the Biblical locality (Ex 14^{2, 9}, Nu 33⁷) before which the Israelites encamped on their journey to the wilderness. ' Şaphon,' coming from a root signifying ' a place of observation,' was a prominent mountain (probably *Djebel el-Agra*, the Casius of Græco-Roman times), just above *Râs Shamrâ* to the north, and the name Baal-şaphon appears to have been carried by Phœnician navigators to Egypt in the early part of the eighteenth dynasty. A hill sanctuary under this name is known to have been founded by them on the coast to the east of Pelusium, as a substitute for the one in Syria, and like the latter it was also known in later times as Mons Casius. But whether this was the ' Baal-şaphon ' before which the Israelites encamped, as Eissfeldt has recently tried to show, is somewhat doubtful. It would mean that the Israelites took the extreme northern route along the shore between the Mediterranean Sea and Lake Serbonis, and that the pursuing army perished in the Serbonian lagoon. The *Râs Shamrâ* epic, with its mention of Şaphon, El, and Elyôn, seems to have given rise to Isaiah's words (Is 14^{13, 14}), ' I will ascend into heaven . . . above the stars of El . . . I will dwell on Har-môed (' the mountain of assembly '), in the heart of Şaphon . . . I will become like Elyôn.'

A full statement of the work at Samaria, which comes to an end this year, is to be published by the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1934. Meantime Mr. J. W. Crowfoot, the Director, has reported among other discoveries that of a great semicircular tower, apparently Israelite, on the north of the rocky summit, clinging to the edge of the cliff. It resembles the round one excavated by Reisner at the south-west corner of the summit, but is stronger and much more extensive. The

semicircle is about fifteen yards in diameter, while the wall is over six feet thick. There are still parts of fifteen courses of stone in position above the rock, each of them averaging about sixteen inches in height. Four more Hebrew ostraca have been recovered. According to Dr. Sukenik, of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, one of them contains the name of Isaiah in the form ' Yoyesha,' and another reads, ' Blessed be Ahaziah.' The five Hebrew ones discovered previously by the Expedition have been found by Dr. Sukenik to be of little value, owing to the incompleteness of the lines and the absence of word division. One is covered with scratchings bearing only a remote resemblance to Hebrew characters, and is probably the work of a child.

Readers interested in the geology of Palestine will be glad to have the results of the latest survey by Blanckenhorn, the well-known geological scholar, who has devoted much of the last forty years to studying the constitution and structure of the earth's crust in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Following on a recent re-examination of Palestine, he deduces five principal phases in the formation of the surface. The first, which took place at the beginning of the Eocene Age (about twenty million years before our era), determined the anti-clinal ridges which run from south-south-west to north-north-east; (2) at the end of the Miocene Age (about six million years ago), the depressions from south to north were produced; (3) in the Middle Pliocene (about three million years back), the Valley of Jezreel was formed, the movement being accompanied by volcanic eruptions throughout Syria and Arabia, following a line from south-east to north-west; (4) later, at the commencement of the diluvium, there were again important movements of the surface, along with volcanic disturbances; (5) towards the end of the diluvium, at the beginning of the neolithic epoch, the last volcanic upheavals occurred, when violent and extensive eruptions of lava took place. Blanckenhorn, who admits that the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah preserves the memory of an historic occurrence, dates the destruction of the Pentapolis (which he places at the south end of the Dead Sea) at the end of this period, a fact which seems to confirm the Old Testament narratives of Abraham and Lot.