

Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

I.

The Greeks in Cyprus.

MRS. OHNEFALSCH-RICHTER has lately published an interesting book¹ on the manners, customs, beliefs, and religious rites of the Greeks in Cyprus which I can recommend to readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. Her husband was for many years settled in the island, partly as an excavator, partly as an official in the Department of Forestry, and as both he and his wife learned to speak the Cypriote dialect and mixed a good deal with the natives, they acquired a large amount of valuable information about the islanders' habits and beliefs. The materials they collected are the more important as under the English occupation the life of the Cypriote Greek is rapidly changing and education is bringing with it the inevitable loss of old traditions. A good many of the customs recorded by Mrs. Ohnefalsch-Richter have already disappeared; the muleteer, for instance, is gone, and with him a number of characteristic customs; and even the dress of the peasantry is becoming Europeanized. It is therefore fortunate that the old traditional life of the Cypriote Greek was, as it were, photographed before it was too late.

A considerable proportion of the manners and customs of the people was naturally connected with their religious life. Many of these went back to pre-Christian antiquity and had received only a varnish of Christianity. Dr. Ohnefalsch-Richter's excavations and archæological knowledge have been of assistance to his wife in this branch of her subject, and students of theology and comparative religion will accordingly find much in the book to interest them. The festival of the rising of Aphrodite from the foam of the sea is still kept in her island, though under a changed name; the sacred dove is still to be found there, and the god who was worshipped in the spring of water is still adored though he has become a Christian saint. Even the myrtle and the laurel retain their sacred associations.

Perhaps the most interesting survival of ancient belief and religious practice is to be found in the festival of the raising of Lazarus to life. Mrs.

¹ *Griechische Sitten und Gebräuche auf Cypern.* By Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1913.

Ohnefalsch-Richter shows that this is nothing more than the ancient festival of the death and resurrection of Adonis. The festival is still accompanied by the sound of tambourines and flutes, by dancing, and even by a modern representative of the so-called gardens of Adonis. As in pagan days, moreover, cakes are eaten which are moulded in the shape of animals and men.

A curious custom is one that relates to begging. Beggars are rare in Cyprus, but if a child is unable to walk, the mother, whether rich or poor, puts it into a basket and goes from house to house begging for food. The food is afterwards given to the child, whom, it is supposed, it will strengthen and cure. A similar custom is met with among the Copts in the Egyptian Delta. Here, too, if a child is ill the mother, whether rich or poor, puts on a beggar's dress and goes about begging, in the belief that the money she receives will serve to cure the child. The only difference between the Cypriote and Coptic customs is that in Cyprus food alone is allowed to be accepted. But it is plain that a connexion exists between them, going back, it may be, to the period when Cyprus was a dependency of Egypt.

Among the many archæological survivals pointed out by Dr. Ohnefalsch-Richter there is one that is especially interesting. A bronze vessel discovered at Enkomi shows the heads of two women looking out of a double window. By the side of it Mrs. Ohnefalsch-Richter places the photograph of a modern window in Cyprus of exactly the same shape, with the heads of two women behind it in precisely the same position. Two stone windows of the same pattern have been found in a tomb at Palæpaphos, and an ivory carving from Nimrud, now in the British Museum, is an extraordinarily close duplicate of the Enkomi design. That the ivory must be a product of Cypriote art seems clear from the fact that underneath the window is a balustrade of four columns which is identical in form with the balustrade of the windows from Palæpaphos. As a somewhat similar window exists in the palace of Ramses III. at Medinet-Habu, it is possible that here again we have evidences of contact between Cyprus and Egypt. At any rate we are reminded of the famous passage which tells us how Jezebel looked down through

the window of Ahab's palace, and in the objects from Enkomi and Nimrud we may see a picture of the actual scene at Samaria.

The book is profusely illustrated, and the photographs in it add considerably to its value. The present condition of Cyprus and its population is very fully described, and there are many details which ought to be of interest to the English reader. It is somewhat of a shock to learn that the copper mines for which the island was once so celebrated are now practically exhausted, and that henceforward Cyprus must be content to be a purely agricultural country. Here and there, however, remarks are made about the English administration which a German writer would have been better advised to omit.

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II.

Exploration in Palestine.

Dr. Thomsen is singularly well equipped for the work of tabulating the results of Palestinian exploration and excavation.¹ He has already issued two volumes dealing with the literature of Palestine, and has a third in preparation. He has also been resident in the land for two lengthy periods, and the outcome of this appears in 42 photographs, illustrating the *Kompendium*, all taken by the author himself. The great merit of the book is that it seeks to make good a defect in previous publications within the department of Palestinian archæology by exhibiting the results attained not merely in their relation to Biblical times (especially the Canaanite and Israelitish epochs), but as they concern the whole range of the country's history. It is true that excavators during the actual process of disinterring remains of antiquity have duly registered finds of every period in proper sequence, but those who have utilized their memoirs for literary purposes have as a rule laid emphasis on the periods coincident with Scripture, and other epochs have suffered comparative neglect.

After a sketch of the development of archæological research in Palestine, the results hitherto achieved, the present location of finds in museums and collections, with the relative literature, Dr.

¹ *Kompendium der Palästinischen Altertumskunde*, von Dr. Peter Thomsen. Tübingen, 1913. Pp. viii, 109. M.4.80.

Thomsen passes on to treat of the races and peoples of Palestine, the history of civilization in the land, and the successive settlements from prehistoric times down to the Middle Ages.

Of special interest is the section dealing with prehistoric remains: flints, dolmens, cromlechs, menhirs, maşşebahs, cup-marked stones, etc. Upon this follow chapters on Housing and matters of everyday life; on Art (in connexion with which there is given a full survey of building styles and pottery remains); on Tombs (a careful and exhaustive *résumé*); on Writing and Inscriptions, including the Calendar, Weights and Measures; and on Money (with a very serviceable list of coins of various denominations down to Byzantine times).

While Dr. Thomsen accepts most of the findings of excavators, he uses his own judgment on occasion, and enters a mild protest against extracting more than is warranted from the records of the past that have been brought to view. Thus, not every stone circle had a ritual purpose, but some were simply enclosures for herds. The rearing of doves was a favourite occupation in Palestine in ancient times, and this in itself sufficiently accounts for the niches of the underground *columbaria*, literally understood, without the necessity for supposing that urns containing ashes found there a resting-place. Upright and round stones with chisellings and grooves are not always to be identified with maşşebahs; they were used in connexion with oil-presses and with wine-presses (p. 43 ff.). These and similar instances we appreciate and concede, but it is with a measure of regret we receive the information that the so-called 'altar of incense,' found at Taanach, had probably a merely secular use as a house-oven ('es ist eher ein mit besonderer Liebe für einen vornehmen Mann gearbeiteter kleiner Ofen, wie er in einfacherer Form noch mehrfach in Thaanach gefunden wurde'; p. 73, cf. Jer 36^{22f.}, R.V.). This opinion is shared by others (D. D. Luckenbill, *Biblical World*, 1910 (May), p. 305 n.).

Dr. Thomsen's classification of Pottery is about as satisfactory as any hitherto devised:—I. Till the beginning of Ægean influence; II. Under Ægean influence; III. Indigenous; IV. Under Hellenistic influence; V. Roman-Byzantine.

Instead of Old-Hebrew or Phœnician as a title for the system of writing current in Palestine at the end of the second millennium B.C., the writer