

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES ON JEWISH ANTIQUITIES.

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*(Continued from Q.S. 1917, p. 184.)*

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XL. *The Route of the Exodus Wanderings in the Desert.*

IN the excellent home provided in France by M. le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique for erudite essays upon ancient history and archaeology, the *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études* for 1916-1917, there is a lengthy dissertation by M. Maurice Vernes, entitled "Sinai Contre Kadès: Les Grands Sanctuaires de l'Exode Israélite et les Routes du Desert."

The main object of this thesis of M. Vernes is to controvert the assertions of higher critics who have sought to transfer all the honours of Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea. He discusses the theories of the Germans—Wellhausen, Reuss, Guthe, and others—and demolishes them, and, perhaps, in future they will be more wisely treated by being ignored.

A great deal of M. Vernes' description of the geography of Southern Palestine, the country between Egypt and Beersheba, the Sinai Peninsula and Moab, is familiar matter here, and would have been much improved had he perused British books upon the subject, especially the late Dr. Beke's views as regards the true identity of Mount Sinai. This remark applies also to Commandant Weill's work, *Le Presqu'île du Sinai*, of which M. Vernes makes excellent use.

M. Vernes' essay, however, should be read by all interested in Palestine geography, because of the admirable account, accompanied by a facsimile, which he gives of the "Peutinger Table" concerning the Egyptian Delta and the whole country between the Nile and Jerusalem, which he compares with the geography of Ptolemy. He confirms a very important emendation of the Peutinger text suggested by M. Desjardins connected with the names of stations

upon the road from the Red Sea, near Suez, by Elath to Ezion-Geber. Five titles upon this route have hitherto been read as Klyisma, Medeia, Phara (Paran), Haila (Elath) and Dianam, with the Sinai range indicated to the north-west of the track. Of the second name only letters, supposed to read "deia," had been visible, because of a torn place in the manuscript. M. Vernes considered "ocia" to be the correct version, and has had this view confirmed by an inspection of the map at Vienna. He therefore completes the word as (Mun)ocia, or Mnocia, the Munchiate of Ptolemy and Makoân of the modern Arabs.

The Paran of 1 Kings xi, 18, M. Vernes argues is not the desert-region of that name, but a definite site in the southern portion of it, between the Akaba Gulf and Sinai as depicted on the Peutinger map and as set forth by Ptolemy, *ἡν πρὸς τῆ κόλπῳ εἰσὶν οἱ Φαρανῖται*. It is the Arabic Feiran, at the base of Jebel Serbal. This approximation appears to be a definite gain in the geography of the region between Palestine and Egypt. In Sir William Willcocks's recent lectures, in Cairo, upon the Wandering in the Wilderness, he seems to have arrived, in some cases, at similar conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

M. Vernes dwells especially on the identity of Dianam in the Peutinger map with Ezion-Geber, and upon the probability that this was the place of junction of the road leading from Egypt at Klyisma to Dianam. Its two bifurcations proceed into southern and eastern Palestine, the western branch going to Kadesh Barnea, and the eastern passing by Edom and Petra to the Moabite side of Jordan. Of these the first was the route taken by the Israelites before their repulse at Kadesh, and the second the way by which they finally entered Palestine.

In a small map which M. Vernes inserts in the text, he appears to place Kadesh at 'Ain Gades, and not, as is usual with our geographers, to the north-east of that site. He also considers that the route to Palestine through Edom and Moab did not start directly to the north-east from Ezion Geber, but first turned back along the eastern shore of the Akaba gulf to a place termed Presidio on the Peutinger map, opposite to Elath, near the present Kalaat el-Akaba. We may add, in conclusion, that the section of the Peutinger map might have been supplemented by a copy of the portion extant of the Madaba Mosaic depicting the same territory.

<sup>1</sup> In Deuteronomy xxxiii, 2, M. Vernes renders the end of the verse: "He shone forth from Mount Paran when He arrived at Kadesh Meribah." See Numb. xx.

XLI. *Land Ownership in Ancient Palestine and Egypt and the Jubilee Year.*

The Levitical laws prohibited the Jews in Palestine from possessing land as a permanent freehold, and thus prevented the assigning of long leases, because of the reversion of land tenancies to their original owners at each of the forty-ninth or Jubilee years.<sup>1</sup> There were certain exceptions, as of plots with houses thereon within walled cities, and Levitical property. The reason given for this enactment is definitely declared in Leviticus xxv, 23: "The land shall not be sold for ever; the land is Mine, ye are strangers and sojourners (or tenants) with Me." Thus, no absolute freehold could be given by man because the absolute title was Jehovah's, and He was the landowner of Palestine. He, by the laws given to Moses, by wise economical provision, determined all sub-leases granted by His tenants every forty-ninth or Jubilee Year, when all lands were restored to the same families as those to whom they had been allotted when the country was divided up among the eleven tribes, so that these *possessed* their plots as if perpetual tenants, although they were not the *owners* of them.

These regulations are very similar to the rules and ideas upon such matters prevalent in Ancient Egypt, wherein, strictly speaking, all the lands belonged to the Pharaoh as the deified human personification of Horus-Ra. There really was not any private ownership of land there, because the sole owner was the king. Notwithstanding this sort of regal legal subtlety in the flux of actual daily transactions in real estate, much of the soil along the Nile did remain in the private possession of certain families, especially priestly ones, for many generations, and the temple estates for even much longer periods. But the long lines of *de facto* hereditary occupants were not *owners*, but *possessors*. Yet they were so far owners that they could, and did, sell, mortgage, and bequeath their land, subject to certain taxes, or really royal or "fee-farm," rents, chiefly payable in kind or produce. These imposts were quite distinct from many other such, payable by the community in general.

It might be argued that land so disposable could scarcely be correctly defined as leasehold land at all, yet practically it was so, because, although the actual tenure was so secure, the rent, or its

<sup>1</sup> The word Jubilee is ultimately derived from *Yôhâl*, the long drawn out blast of horns and trumpets which announced the Jubilee Year.

equivalent land taxes, could be increased, and if these annual imposts were not forthcoming, the land reverted to the crown.<sup>1</sup>

Technically, the lands had been surrendered by some Pharaoh upon certain conditions of tenure, and were liable to be resumed, by his successor to the crown, if they were broken. The fact of this semi-insecurity of holding it—although for centuries the land had been in possession of certain families, or of others to whom these had disposed of it—was the cause of the priests' attempts to wring from the king charters assigning certain lands and their revenues as the price of favours bestowed by their prelates, such as certificates of his orthodoxy as a genuine member of the royal divine line of Horus, on his ascension to the throne, such charters making over the ground and its produce, or rents if sub-let, to the god of a special temple for its upkeep, subject only to strictly limited and non-augmentable taxes in perpetuity, or entirely free from such, so that all the usufruct went to the god.<sup>2</sup>

These remarks apply to the soil of Egypt as a whole, but in course of time there were within it other lands which had reverted to the deified king, called "royal lands." These were let to so-called "royal tenants" who were compelled to cultivate them carefully and were also permitted special privileges. They, at any rate in later times, appear to have been liable to surrender every five years, when they were allotted to the proposing proprietor who offered the highest rental.

In contrast to such practice, no Jewish king claimed any revenue from the land-holdings of his subjects by alleged divine or any other rights, and the redistribution of the land according to Hebrew legislation must have prevented many injustices of modern freeholders towards tenants, and vice versa. Thus no tenant would erect buildings or make expensive improvements for a short tenure unless assured of compensation from the landowner. On the other hand, if a non-original tenant was overcropping the land, it soon passed from his possession into the hands of its legal owner (under Jehovah) who would not let him have it again.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the nature of the tenure of property, see the papyrus of the Great Petition of Peteesi, in the Rylands Collection at Manchester.

<sup>2</sup> Such contracts were between one god and the Pharaoh deity as Horus, so between equal parties and thus supposed undeterminable.

<sup>3</sup> The exhaustion of land by continuous cropping was wisely alleviated by the Sabbatical year regulations.

The Levites appear to have had certain privileges, precisely as the Egyptian priests obtained somewhat similar ones, but not upon the same grounds, the latter's claim being founded upon Egyptian polytheism.<sup>1</sup>

#### XLII. *The Capitols of Roman Palestine.*

Among the thousand prosperous cities which existed under the aegis of the mighty Roman Empire, a certain number bore the title of Capitolium, which was, as far as we know, only assigned to a town having a temple dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, or a shrine of Jupiter Capitolinus. They were not necessarily the largest cities, but usually so; thus in Asia, Smyrna, Antioch on the Meander, Syrian Antioch and Nysa in Caria were Capitols. The evidence for a place being such is frequently numismatic, or epigraphical, and a careful search for existence of Capitol cities of Palestine has only produced proof for three. Of these, one is Diocaesarea (Sepphoris) to the north of Nazareth, for which we have the witness of coins. Thus, one of Antoninus Pius has on its reverse the design of a Capitol with statues of Jupiter, Minerva and Juno displayed. For Jerusalem, or rather Aelia Capitolina, we have the direct testimony of Dion Cassius. Upon the coins there is shown the Zeus temple, and on their reverse Jupiter erect between two figures, evidently Minerva and Juno. One of the latest of such coins was struck between April, A.D. 217, and April, 218. Finally, Neapolis (or Naplous) was a Capitol city. A coin of Caracalla shows on the reverse, statues of Jupiter, Juno and Pallas, and a text, *Αὐρ(ηλίας) Φλ(αουίας) Νεασπολε(ως Μ)ητρο(πολ) Παλ(αιστίνης?)*.

The coin referred to concerning Diocaesarea has upon its reverse *ιερας ἀσὺλ(ου) αὐτον(όμου)*. So it was one of the cities upon whom the emperor had granted the privilege of autonomy, but was not then either a municipium or colonia.

<sup>1</sup> See further on this interesting subject H. Sottas, *La Préservation de la Propriété Funéraire dans l'Ancienne Égypte*. Also M. Moret in *C. R. Académie des Inscriptions*, 1916, "Dedications by Royal Decrees at Coptos," and "Local Administration under the Old Egyptian Empire" (in French). See "The Byzantine Servile State in Egypt," by H. Idris Bell, M.A., *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1917, p. 86.