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THE THEBAN LEGION.

BY PROF. W. M. BLACKBURN.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE CATACOMBS.

“WHO will now trudge on foot behind the emperor’s chariot?” was the thought of Galerius, on his next return from the Persian war. He had been victorious. His insolence was now almost unbounded. There was a terror of him in the palace. A letter comes addressed to him as “Cæsar.” He exclaims, “Must I still be merely Cæsar?”

The letter however is from Maximian, who writes in this strain: “Since peace is generally restored, let us give the Christian soldiers plenty to do. I have found some slavish work for them and shall devise more. They willingly perform any drudgery, if they may only sing and pray over it! You ought to see them carrying mortar to make the baths of Diocletian at Rome and Milan. Those shall be splendid baths, meant to last for centuries. When will you be again at Sirmium? Have you not some marshes to drain in that region? Or will you send me some of these Christians to defend Eastern Gaul?” He wanted to have more soldiers at command.

With oily tongue and wily art, Galerius talked to his father-in-law about “those baths at Rome—those grand structures rearing as monuments to his enterprise.” Diocletian was flattered. Maurice was ordered to Rome with his Theban Legion. Far down in the sand-pits, beneath the Apian Way, and just out of Rome, a band of soldiers shoveled the tufa into baskets and sent it up to their comrades to be used in cementing the huge walls of the imperial baths. Those walls have stood to this day, and travelers look on them with wonder. But the groans which they cost long ago ceased, and the pride which reared them met its doom. “Is there no end to these quarries?” asked a soldier, straightening himself up and taking breath. “They run on into long galleries. I followed one a half a mile or more this morning.”

“And I saw a very strange thing, just at the end of that fine aisle,” said another. “It was this inscription on a tomb, ‘I, Procope, lift my hands against God, who snatched away me, innocent. Aged twenty years. Proclus set up this.’ This must be a pagan cemetery. I shudder to think of it.” Such inscriptions prove that the

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A NEW READING OF AN OLD MONUMENT.

BY REV. WM. HENRY GREEN, D. D.

AMONG the numerous monuments at Karnak there is none more interesting or important than one which is to be found in the outer wall of the hypostyle hall. The following brief description of its general appearance is taken from Kenrick's *Ancient Egypt*. The Egyptian monarch "is there represented as usual of gigantic size, preparing to inflict death on a group of prisoners, in the presence of Amunre, who holds out a scimitar toward him with one hand, and with the other leads to him a number of foreigners bound. To each of the five cords which he holds in his hand are attached a series of shields surrounded with an embattled edge, and surmounted by a head, round the neck of which the cord is passed. Each of the five rows contains thirteen shields, and about half of the sixty-five are legible. Among those which remain legible few have been identified with known geographical names." "Another figure on the same wall represents the goddess Egypt, who holds in her hand four cords, to each of which seventeen similar shields are attached. The greater part are legible, but none of them have been identified with names known in geography."

The attention of Champollion was early directed to this monument. He succeeded in deciphering the name of the monarch, which proved to be Sheshonk, and at once identified him with the Sesonchis of Manetho, and the Shishak of Scripture. It was to this king that Jeroboam fled for protection when his life was threatened by Solomon. (1 Kings xii. 40.) And when Jeroboam had wrested ten tribes from the hand of Solomon's feeble son, it was he who invaded Judah, and, after a successful foray, returned laden with the spoils of Jerusalem. (1 Kings xiv.

25, 26. 2 Chronicles xii. 2-9.) Champollion's further investigations led him to conclude that this tablet was designed to commemorate the triumphant issue of this very expedition. The most striking confirmation of this opinion was deduced from the fact that among the names on the shields representing the places captured by Sheshonk he read *Judhmalk*, which seemed to mean the kingdom of Judah; he also found *Mahanma*, *Makdau* and *Bathhwarn*, which at once recalled Mahanaim, Megiddo and Bethhoron in the region of Palestine. His conclusion was doubtless correct, and it had gained the assent of all competent scholars, though of the identifications just mentioned the last is probably the only one which is rigorously accurate. Sir Gardner Wilkinson says of the first name that its "component letters agree with the hieroglyphics, though the place it holds is not sufficiently marked to satisfy the scruples of a rigid skeptic."

Since the time of Champollion the more elaborate researches of other Egyptologists, especially Lepsius and Brugsch, have confirmed his original hypothesis of the identity of Shishak with Sheshonk, and of the campaign portrayed at Karnak with that described in Kings and Chronicles. Brugsch particularly subjected this tablet to a careful examination in a work of his published a few years since, devoted to the geographical inscriptions upon Egyptian monuments. And still more recently Prof. Blau, in a paper published in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, has, in the most ingenious manner, developed out of this bald list of names the entire plan of the campaign. His views have never, so far as we are aware, been presented in an English dress. But his

methods and results are so striking and plausible that they certainly deserve more than the passing and somewhat supercilious allusion made to them in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. Shishak, the able writer of which seems more desirous to exhibit his own opinion than to do justice to those of others. We suppose that we may be doing an acceptable service in presenting an outline of Prof. Blau's interpretation in these pages.

It is scarcely conceivable that so large an army (see 2 Chronicles xii. 3) should have marched in one solid column. They must have been separated into distinct corps, each pursuing its own line of advance, but all co-operating in one general plan, and subject to one central control. The leaders of these several divisions must of course have transmitted to headquarters from time to time reports of their marches made, successes gained, and places captured. It is from these official reports, filed in the order in which they were received, that Prof. Blau supposes the monument to have been prepared after the termination of the expedition. And he suggests that it is by no means impossible that the original reports of the division commanders may be in existence, and advises that the old papyri should be subjected to a careful scrutiny in the hope of discovering them.

Such a discovery, if ever made, would of course place the stamp of certainty upon Prof. Blau's hypothesis and his conclusions. Meanwhile its claims to confidence must rest on its own intrinsic evidence. If the names occurring in this monumental record at Karnak, which, superficially viewed, appear to be thrown together almost at random, and to observe no continuous or regular order, can yet be divided into groups which are capable of being combined into a grand plan of advance and attack, conformable to the face of the country and the rules of war, it would seem as though the hypothesis were justified and its conclusions inevitable. The proof of the correctness of the solution lies in its answering all the conditions of the problem.

The one hundred and thirty-three

names upon the tablet can not all represent fortresses or towns of considerable magnitude or of historical moment. Most probably many of them are merely points of strategic consequence. The records of our own late strife show many important battles fought in insignificant localities that were never before heard of. The men of Judah rallied in defense of springs and pools of water; they made a stand at caves, in woods and passes, or on hill-tops; and the number of places here recited shows how obstinately and persistently the advance of the invader was resisted. At every point which offered a prospect of checking his onward movement, they gathered to dispute his progress. The locality of every battle, perhaps of every trifling skirmish, was duly noted, each commander being willing to swell an aggregate, each item of which added to his laurels.

Of the entire number of names which the monuments originally contained twenty-five, are so completely defaced as to be no longer legible. The first nine have no special connection with this particular expedition. Of the remaining ninety-nine Prof. Blau, who bases his investigation throughout on the transcription of the hieroglyphics furnished by Brugsch, is able to assign a definite meaning to about seventy. A few of these have that sort of general significance, such as "pond," "field," "height," which would admit of their being located almost anywhere. But in regard to the great majority of them he points out places bearing corresponding names upon the map of the kingdom of Judah, and these occurring in such an order as the plan of operations would seem to require. Such a result, in the imperfect state of our information respecting the minor localities in this region at that early period, is certainly very surprising.

Of the fifteen towns fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chronicles xi. 5-10) seven are readily recognized on the monument—Adoraim, Ajalon, Shoco, Bethzur, Adullam, Gath and (Bethlehem-) Ephrata; and of places previously fortified, Beth-horon (2 Chronicles viii. 5),

Ashdod and Jericho. These supply the key to the whole movement, and suggest a plan of the campaign, which the intervening names fill out and complete in detail. The statement in Chronicles as to the constitution of the army makes it probable that it proceeded against Palestine by land, and that it was in the outset concentrated at Gaza, whither the requisite supplies could readily be transported by sea. It then took up the line Eglon-Lachish-Adoraim, which affords the only possible base of operations against Judah from the south. From this the center moved forward in three columns. The first forming the advance-guard was charged with the capture of the fortifications lying to the northwest of Jerusalem. It accordingly pushed rapidly forward by forced marches from Eglon, avoided both the fortresses of Gath and Zorah by taking the route between them, threatened Jerusalem for an instant from the north, and then flung itself upon Beth-horon and Ajalon, a maneuver well adapted to further the operations of the main body in the south. After the capture of these strongholds it was only required to seize the northern boundary of the kingdom of Judah and make a gradual approach by a circuitous route to Jerusalem, investing it on the north. The second column, led probably by the king in person, was obliged to take Shoco before it was free to march upon Jerusalem. It does not, however, stop to reduce any other of the more important fortifications, but leaves this task, as well as that of covering its rear connection, to the third column, which hurls itself against Beth-zur and Adullam to the east of the king's route, and then upon Mareshah and Gath to the west of it, garrisons these points, and continues to hold them.

These movements cover the first eighty-three names upon the tablet. Then follows (84-99) the route pursued by the left wing, to which is assigned the task of taking Ashdod, and then probably of maintaining the connection with a portion of the fleet lying at Joppa. Finally (100-133) we have the operations of the right wing, which

divides into two columns, one of which was directed upon Bethlehem, and the other upon Jericho. The latter, in consequence of the want of water and the other difficulties which beset the direct route across the wilderness of Judah, was obliged to make a bend to the southeast and skirt the shore of the Dead Sea. The two columns ultimately unite on the northwest of Jerusalem. About each of the more considerable fortifications is grouped a number of names of places taken *en passant* on the march against these fortifications, or which, after their surrender, formed the line of connection to the next principal point of attack.

The last name on the tablet is sadly mutilated and can not be made out. But as the first sounds, which are all that can be recognized, are Jura—it can scarcely have been anything else than Jerusalem, the object and termination of the whole expedition, around which all the columns are now gathered.

We can not here go into any further detail in presenting the grounds upon which Prof. Blau rests his identifications and his results. The final judgment in the case must be left with experts and proficients in hieroglyphical inquiries. But the intrinsic evidence is such as greatly to commend his view. And we are very willing to believe, until the contrary shall be conclusively demonstrated, that we have here the general features of Shishak's expedition and the plan upon which it was conducted. It is, of course, to be expected that further research may modify some, perhaps many, of its minor particulars. But this might be done without effecting any material change in its main outlines, or overturning the principle of interpretation, which is here so ingeniously applied, and which is the basis of these remarkable results.

These results, supposing them well established, possess great interest and importance alike for the student of Egyptian antiquities and for the student of the Scriptures. To the former, they afford a rare and invaluable test of the accuracy and trustworthiness of

all that has hitherto been done in deciphering and interpreting the monuments. The science of unriddling the hieroglyphics is yet in its infancy. It has made rapid and surprising advances. Each knot, as it has been unraveled, has afforded some fresh clew for the unraveling of others. Each signification obtained for a group has fixed the vocal equivalent of some of its constituents. And thus step has succeeded step and one result is built upon another. But in all this, more or less that is conjectural, is necessarily involved. And an unexpected error at any stage of the process might vitiate all subsequent conclusions. Notwithstanding the amazing care with which these successive steps have been taken, and after every possible endeavor to eliminate or neutralize errors, there must still remain a measure of doubt or uncertainty as to the success which has attended them. The corrections resulting from the patient comparison and mutual adjustments of the monumental legends, can not after all purge out every suspicion as to the correctness of the whole.—Notreale.

In these circumstances a monument, like this of Shishak, affords just such a criterion as is most to be desired. The hieroglyphic record is brought face to face with a historical narrative proceeding from a totally different source. If now an intelligible sense can be put upon the former which shall bring it into harmonious relations with the latter, if the readings of the monument, independently made out, adapt themselves to the requirements of the narrative, it is such a triumph as the lovers of true science know how to appreciate. It conciliates confidence in results already won, and gives a new vantage ground for future successes.

And further, if the hypothesis of Prof. Blau, verifies itself in the present instance, it is altogether probable that it will be found applicable to other monuments, likewise, both in Egypt and in Assyria. Several of them contain recitals of marches or of conquests; and it is very likely that they are all constructed in a similar manner. Nothing would seem more

natural than that they should be made up from the combined reports of the generals at the head of the several columns or divisions of the army engaged in the campaign. If this be so, the identification of the individual names recorded in each monument may be very far from completing its interpretation. After this has all been accomplished, the structure of the whole and the grouping of its parts will remain to be studied; and from this may be developed results such as have never hitherto been suspected, nor imagined to be possible. These bald lists of names may contain hints of strategic plans, which shall unfold the whole course of the campaign and bring to view its successive stages and the various steps by which it advanced to its accomplishment, with as much precision and vividness, as though it were delineated by a modern historian. These skeleton marches may clothe themselves afresh with flesh and blood under the wizard touch of learned investigation, and the entire transaction live once more, revealed in its original features, disclosing the policy of governments and the feats of sagacious generalship, and wearing still the impress of those minds by which they were originally conceived.

But this monument has proved of very essential service to Egyptian studies, altogether apart from any question affecting the details of its interpretation. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of Prof. Blau's exposition, enough appears to be settled beyond peradventure to establish that the Sheshonk of this tablet is the Shishak of Scripture, and that the expedition commemorated in the former is identical with that narrated in the latter. This determines a point of contact between sacred and Egyptian chronology, and gives to the latter, what was previously lacking, a fixed epoch from which to reckon. All its deductions prior to this were relative. The order of succession was ascertained for various monarchs, and the length of their reigns approximately made out. But to what definite periods of time they severally belonged,

or how they synchronized with the history of other lands, there were no data for discovery. This missing link of connection between Egyptian and all other history is here at length supplied. And if the labyrinthine maze of the monumental legends shall ever be threaded, and their dates reduced to something like accuracy, and the mooted points regarding the various dynasties shall be satisfactorily settled, a perfect synchronism can be effected by making Shishak's reign the starting point, and reckoning from it backward in the past and forward in the future.

This monument also has its interest and its value for the theologian as well as for the Egyptologist, though its importance to the former is not of the same grade with that which it possesses for the latter. The truth of the scripture history is abundantly supported by its own proper evidence, and it stands in no need of confirmation from extraneous sources. And yet such corroboration as is here offered by authentic and contemporaneous records is highly gratifying. It is especially a welcome addition to the defenses of divine truth against the assaults of adversaries, and not the less so, that the learned men, by whom these records are deciphered, can not ordinarily be suspected of any partial leanings to the side of revelation. The fact of the existence of such a monarch as Shishak, and of his successful raid upon the kingdom of Judah, is by universal confession unmistakably written upon the monument.

If Dr. Blau's unriddling of the inscription shall be accepted as the true one, the verification of the Scripture account is complete. The capture of Jerusalem must then have been the object of the campaign, instead of the assault upon Judah and its capital forming a mere incident in a larger expedition, as some have been ready to conjecture. Color was given to this latter hypothesis by the supposed mention of Megiddo and other towns in the kingdom of the ten tribes, or of localities east of the Jordan. If this could be substantiated, it would not discredit the sacred narrative, which

might restrict itself to the invasion of Judah, though the march of Shishak was continued to regions more remote because this alone was of special interest to the writer and his readers. But if Shishak's own tablet moves within precisely the limits indicated by the inspired historian, if the monument at Karnak, like the book of Chronicles xii. 4, simply declares "He took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah and came to Jerusalem," then the coincidence is complete and all cavil is precluded.

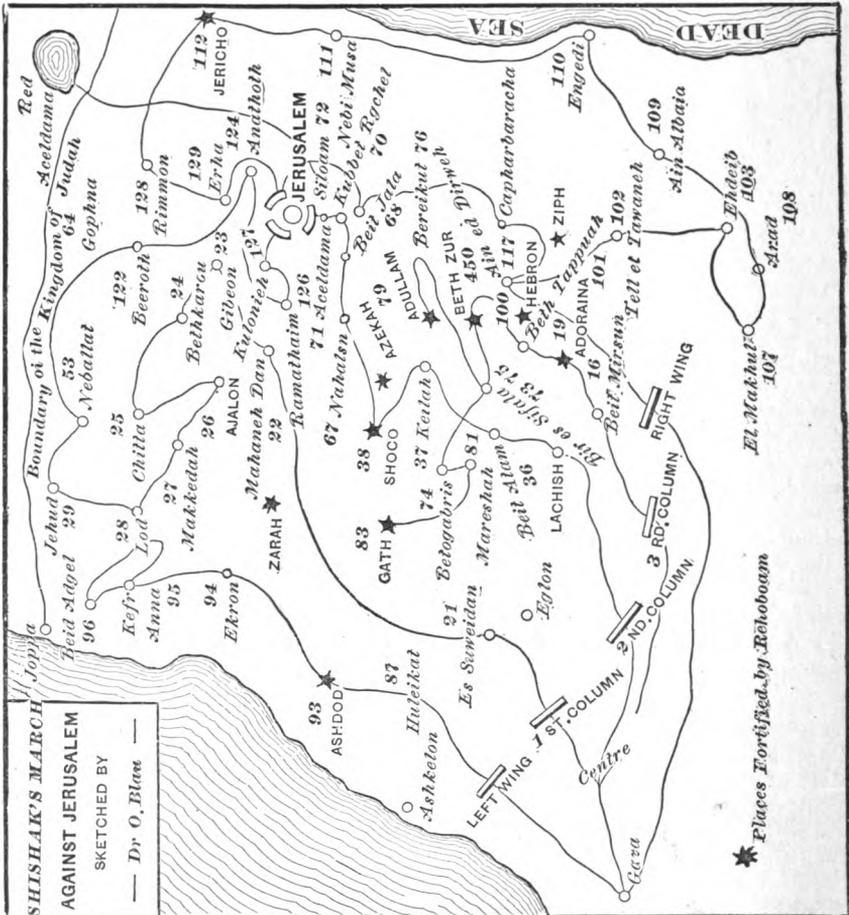
The additional particulars supplied by the tablet add materially to our knowledge of the whole transaction. We not only have mapped before us the route taken by the Egyptian army in its several divisions, indirectly confirming the inspired statement regarding the towns fortified by Rehoboam, but we see the whole kingdom swept by these predatory bands. And we see evidence of the sturdy and desperate resistance offered to the invaders. The kingdom had been weakened by its recent division, but the memory of Solomon's power and of David's prowess was still fresh. The sanctuary of God in Jerusalem had never yet been desecrated by the foot of an idolatrous foe. Fired with religious enthusiasm, as well as with patriotic ardor, they contested the advance of the foe inch by inch. Every point was garrisoned that could be made available for defense; and when obliged to yield to overpowering force, they sullenly fell back for the sake of rallying afresh. And thus, in this small kingdom, the captured places mount up to 133 by the time that Jerusalem is taken.

Perhaps, too, it may not be too much to hope that some light may be thrown upon the geography of Palestine by this tablet. According to Prof. Blau's reading, localities are mentioned in Shishak's line of march, whose names are preserved in Scripture, but in such connections as do not enable us to determine their position with precision. May it not be possible that the march of Shishak may yet render a service akin to that performed by the ancient itineraries in the

Holy Land? Why may not names of places, which have been mere names to the sacred geographer hitherto, be referred to their true position by the fortunate circumstance, that they lay upon a route which the monument at Karnak has enabled us to plot?

And finally the monument, as deciphered by Prof. Blau, lends a confirmation to the recorded numbers of Shishak's army too striking to be overlooked. The statement in Chronicles (2 Chron. xii. 3) has been rashly suspected of exaggeration. Not to speak of other grounds which might be ad-

duced in justification of the employment of so large a force which was designed to be irresistible, it can not have escaped attention, that according to the exposition given above, the advance was conducted in six columns, three of which operated in the center, two on the right wing and one on the left. This corresponds remarkably with the sextuple numbers of the sacred text, "twelve hundred chariots and threescore thousand horsemen," allowing ten thousand horsemen and two hundred chariots to each column. The accompanying map illustrates



the march according to the view presented above. The numbers attached to the various names of places indicate their order in the monumental series, and will enable those, who are curious to do so, to compare these identifica-

tions with those of Brugsch and with the forms of the names yielded by the hieroglyphics, as these are given in the article on "Shishak," in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.