

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

but this has now appeared in the Heidelbergensis, which will henceforth, in every discussion about the Hesychius text, bear its weighty evidence.

In this connexion it is worthy of note that for the Minor Prophets the strong Hesychian tendency of \aleph^c clearly reveals itself, less that of \aleph^a , still less that of \aleph itself. Somewhat different observations can be made with reference to the hands that can be recognized in Q.

A new light falls also on the Coptic translations of the Minor Prophets. As far as I see, they all stand in very sharp contrast to the Hesychius text, represented by the Heidelbergensis, and this is especially true of the Bohairic version. Since Ceriani¹ it has become usual to speak of the Bohairic version as Hesychian; but for the Minor Prophets the opinion appears to me to be unavoidable that they, as well as the Sahidic and both the Achmimic versions, spring from pre-Hesychian originals, and that Hesychius did not trouble himself very much about the Copts. The instances of agreement—and they are not rare—between Hesychius and the Copts are easily explained by the circumstance that the translators as well as the reviser were essentially dependent on Egyptian Greek manuscripts.

Finally, it appears to me a peculiarity of the Heidelbergensis that it assimilates such passages as are cited in the New Testament, or are capable of

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 105.

a Christian meaning, as far as possible to their form in the New Testament text, or to the sphere of Christian thought. Of quite special interest is this phenomenon in the passage Zec 12¹⁰, which I have tested thoroughly. As Heidelbergensis in the cases reviewed is accompanied by a more or less stately retinue of Hesychian witnesses, the tendency to Christian harmonization is probably a peculiarity of the Hesychian text in general. Psychologically such a harmonizing comes very naturally to a reviser who is preparing the text for practical use,—so naturally that we shall not be surprised if even witnesses to the Lucianic text have in some cases the Christian reading.

Christianizing tendencies in the Septuagint text do not, of course, emerge first in the revisers. It is the great importance of the Leipsic fragments of the Psalms² that they give us a glimpse of a yet older stage of Christian work on the Septuagint text and Christian influence on the Septuagint text. All further investigation of this section of the history of the Bible and of Christian piety which has been recognized by Heinrici in its importance must start from the Leipsic fragments of the Psalms; a further tract is lit up by the remains of an Egyptian village Bible, preserved to us in the Heidelberg fragments of the Prophets.

² "Die Leipziger Papyrusfragmente der Psalmen," herausgegeben und untersucht von C. F. Georg Heinrici (*Beiträge zur Geschichte und Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*, iv.), Leipzig, 1903.

The Masai and their Primitive Traditions.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. GEORGE G. CAMERON, D.D., ABERDEEN.

II.

IN order that the question raised by Captain Merker may be easily understood, it may be desirable to transcribe, in brief form, the principal early traditions of the Masai as given by the German officer. Their resemblance to the early narratives of Genesis is, in some cases, sufficiently striking.

I. THE CREATION.

Originally, the earth was a dry desert in which a dragon had its abode. God descended from heaven, and fought and overcame the dragon.

Through the blood of the slain dragon the earth-desert was fertilized, and on the spot where the dragon was slain arose Paradise. The earth was now free from danger; and God, by His creative word, called into existence sun, moon, stars, plants, animals, and last, the first human pair. The male—Maitumbe—was sent down from heaven; the female—Naiterogob—at God's command came forth from the heart of the earth. These two met in Paradise, whither God had brought Maitumbe. On the trees of Paradise hung the most precious

fruits. And God said to the pair: 'Of all these fruits you may eat; they are to be your food; but of the fruit of one tree which stands there' (pointing His hand in the direction), 'you shall not eat. This is My command.' The pair obeyed God; and while they did so they lived an idyllic life, free from care.

II. THE FALL.

God was in the habit of visiting man in Paradise almost daily, descending from heaven by a ladder which was visible only at the time of the Divine visit. Man found great pleasure in this fellowship with God. But one day, when God came and summoned man, there was no response. The pair had hid themselves in a thicket. When God found them, and asked why they had hid themselves, Maitumbe replied: 'We are ashamed, because we have done wrong, and have not obeyed Thy command. We have eaten of the fruit of the tree of which Thou didst forbid us to eat. Naiterogob gave me of the fruit and prevailed on me to eat of it after she herself had eaten of it.' Then God asked Naiterogob why she had not obeyed and had eaten of the forbidden fruit. Her answer was: 'The three-headed serpent came to me, and said that if we ate of that fruit we should become equal to Thee. Thereupon I ate, and gave also to Maitumbe to eat thereof.' At this God was angry, and said to them, 'Since you have not obeyed My commandment, you must at once leave Paradise.' Then He turned to the serpent, and said, 'For punishment, you shall forever have your dwelling in holes of the earth.' Having spoken thus, God at once departed, and returned to heaven. Maitumbe would have hastened after Him to supplicate forgiveness, but he at once encountered Kilegen, the morning-star (Lucifer), sent by God to drive man out of Paradise, and to stand as guardian over it.

From this time man was left by God to procure food for himself through his own labour. The place in which the guilty pair found themselves when they were expelled from Paradise was a steppe, without any fruit-trees. God had compassion on His suffering creatures, and, by means of a rope which reached from heaven to earth, He let down tame cattle, asses, and goats, the milk of which was to furnish food for man. As yet permission was not given to kill animals and eat their flesh.

III. THE PERMISSION TO EAT FLESH.

The narrative leading up to the granting of permission to use flesh for food contains some rather amusing passages. A great delicacy in Syria and other countries is the tail of the fat-tailed sheep.¹ This is how the fat-tail became known to man, and the first step was taken towards the use of the flesh of animals for human food. Some time after man was expelled from Paradise, a dog let drop from heaven the tail of a fat-tailed sheep. The sight of it greatly perplexed the human pair. They knew that it was a part of some animal, but not of any which they had yet seen. They entreated God to give them the animal. For a while He refused, because He knew that when men tasted this fat-tail they would soon wish to kill the sheep for the sake of it. After some time, however, He yielded to their importunity, and gave them the sheep. But the dog through which this trouble had arisen was banished from heaven to earth, and left to find a home and food for himself. Such, according to the Masai tradition, is the origin of the fat-tail.

As the human race multiplied, God saw that the milk of the animals granted to man did not supply sufficient food. Accordingly permission was given to tap the bodies of the animals, and to draw off and use a portion of their blood. This was to be done by a dart or arrow shot from a bow; but the animal must, on no account, be killed.

About this time there lived a very poor man whose food was chiefly the bark of trees or shrubs. Through his mode of life he acquired a knowledge of the healing properties of the bark of certain trees, and he became the first physician. One day his wife came to him and said, 'Our child is ill, bring me blood for his food.' This was done. Next day his wife came and said, 'My child is still ill, bring me fat.' He went and churned milk, and brought her butter. A third time his wife came with the same complaint, and asked him to bring her the marrow of the bones of an ox. 'But,' he replied, 'God has forbidden us to kill an animal. I will go to Him and ask

¹ Some of these tails are of great size, '... the fat of the rumps or tails of sheep, which are very large in the East; a small one weighing ten or twelve pounds, and some no less than threescore' (Sale's *Koran*, chap. vi. p. 114, n. London, 1734).

His permission.' (He is a very meek husband—this first physician. The bark of trees has not developed any strength of nerves or backbone. His wife (Sagati by name) gets her way, with what result we shall see.) The husband went straight to God and presented his request. 'No,' was the immediate reply; 'you are not to kill an animal.' With this answer he returned, to face Sagati as he best might. But on reaching his house he found that his strong-minded wife had taken into her own hands both God and husband, and had already caused an ox to be killed. Thereupon, the alarmed husband returned to God and reported what had been done. God was exceedingly angry, and ordered him to return and beat his wife. As he was about this unpleasant (?) task, the stick broke; on which the poor husband once more consulted God, and was ordered to remove from his kraal all who dwelt within it. This was done in the case of all save self-willed Sagati, who, with the sick child, persisted in remaining. Then God sent fire and burned up the kraal, and the disobedient wife and the unfortunate child shared the fate of their home. Then said God: 'Woman is wicked and does evil. First, it was a wife that ate of the forbidden fruit against My order. Now, a second time, it is a wife that disobeys My command. By way of punishment, the woman shall do the hard work, and the man shall beat the woman who does not obey him, or who does not do the hard work.' This is the explanation furnished by Masai tradition of the inferior—unseemly—position assigned to woman by Oriental nations. And the report has been given here partly to show this, but more particularly to direct the attention of the reader to the crude conception of God which runs through the narrative. How different a conception is suggested by the opening chapters of Genesis.

From this time permission was granted to kill male animals, so far as their flesh was necessary for food.

IV. THE FLOOD.

Tumbainot closely resembles Noah. The Masai hero, however, had two wives—the second being the childless widow of a bosom friend. He had three sons by each wife. Like Noah he was a good man and enjoyed the favour of God. But the world was wicked. The human race was now numerous, but it had grown in wickedness as in numbers. Before the days of Tumbainot, no

murder had been committed; but in his time this greatest of crimes was added to the sins of the race. This exhausted the patience of God, and He resolved to destroy the human race. But Tumbainot found favour in His sight, and was to be spared. Accordingly he was ordered by God to prepare an ark,—to enter it with his two wives, their six sons, and the wives of those sons,—and to take with him into the ark a certain number of animals of the different kinds. When these were brought into the ark, with a large supply of provisions, God sent a heavy and long-continued rain; a huge deluge arose, and all men and animals outside the ark were drowned. The ark itself floated on the waters of the Flood.

After a time Tumbainot looked, with anxious desire, for the cessation of the rain. Food was becoming scarce. At last the rain ceased. Tumbainot, desirous of knowing how the water stood, sent a dove out of the ark. It returned in the evening exhausted, and Tumbainot knew that the water was still too high to allow the dove to find a resting-place outside the ark. Some days later he sent out a vulture. But before sending it forth, he fastened a dart to one of the tail-feathers in such a way that if any prey appeared for the bird the dart would fix itself in the prey, as the vulture lighted on it and dragged the dart after it; and both feather and dart would be left behind when the bird forsook the prey. In the evening the vulture returned without the dart and the tail-feather to which it had been attached. Tumbainot knew that the bird of prey had found food, and that the waters of the Flood were drying up. By and by the water still further subsided, the ark grounded on the steppe, and men and animals disembarked. As Tumbainot was leaving the ark he noticed four rainbows, one in each of the four quarters of the heavens. And this was to him the proof that the anger of God was past.

V. ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB.

Certain of the Masai traditions reported by Captain Merker bear a close resemblance to the patriarchal narratives of Genesis. Naraba corresponds, in many respects, to Abraham. He received his name from a certain weakness of the limbs which prevented him from walking easily. He was a rich man, possessed large herds, and, on account of the infirmity just mentioned, he rode on an ass when he moved with his flocks from

place to place (cf. Gn 22⁸). In order to guard against theft, he was in the habit of carefully looking over his herds every evening, when they came home from pasture. Through this practice he was led to the use of numbers and to the assigning of names to the numerals. And, as he was otherwise a man of ability and wisdom, this knowledge of figures procured for him the appointment to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer to the ruler of the Masai.

When Naraba was well advanced in years, permission was granted to the Masai to have more than one wife. Naraba's wife had borne to him two children—a son and a daughter—but both had died young. The patriarch, in his old age, availed himself of the newly accorded privilege,—and by his second wife, had two children—also a son and a daughter. The son—Mutari by name—grew up and married. His wife gave birth to triplets; but at first only two children—both sons—were born. The third child, also a son, was born three months later, and received the name of the *Tarrier*. The firstborn was covered with hair and had a beard at birth, and was named accordingly, 'L ol Munjoi. The second son in course of time had a short beard. The third son had no beard. The two elder brothers were greatly attached to each other, and were generally found together.

One day Mutari fell seriously ill, and the two elder brothers went to a place of prayer in the neighbourhood, to entreat God that their father might recover. The youngest son did not go with them. During the absence of the two elder sons, Mutari became much worse; and feeling that he was about to die, he called for 'L ol Munjoi, his eldest son, in order to bless him and to make over to him the inheritance. When Ndarassi (the youngest son) heard his father's call, he hastily cut up the skin of a goat and fastened pieces of it on his arms, shoulders, and cheeks. Then he stepped into the dark hut where his father lay dying, and said, 'Father, you called me; here I am.' 'I called 'L ol Munjoi,' replied Mutari, 'but you, as I judge by your voice, are Ndarassi.' 'Nay, father,' replied Ndarassi, 'I am 'L ol Munjoi.' Thereupon Mutari called him to his side, and in the darkness moved his hands over him. When he felt the goat-skin he believed it was really 'L ol Munjoi, and he proceeded to give him instructions regarding the inheritance,—constituted him his heir, handed over to him the management of his estate, and admon-

ished him to be good. Soon after the elder brothers returned, and 'L ol Munjoi went straight to the place where his father was lying. As he entered, Mutari said, 'L ol Munjoi, I am dying.' On which the son said, 'Father, bless me before you die.' The old man replied, 'I have just blessed you.' The son answered that he and his brother had just returned from praying for him. On which the father said, 'If you and your brother were not here, it must have been Ndarassi that I blessed.' And with these words he died. Ndarassi at once took possession of all his father's property, which should have gone to 'L ol Munjoi. The latter left the kraal, but soon returned with a considerable body of warriors to fight his treacherous brother. When Ndarassi heard this, he went to meet his brother, with a great profession of friendliness, and said, 'My brother! it is not my fault that our father blessed me instead of you. Perhaps his mind was no longer quite clear when he kept constantly calling for me. I went in to him because he called my name. Let us agree to be friends. With a view to this I have brought as a present for you, two oxen, two sheep, and two goats.' The false, flattering words of Ndarassi were too much for 'L ol Munjoi. The latter yielded, and the brothers entered into friendly relations.

The narrative just given is very like the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as recorded in the O.T. In character and conduct Naraba resembles Abraham. The same remark applies to Mutari and Isaac. The latter appears in the O.T. narrative as a man of no great strength of character. He leans upon others. He follows the course of his father Abraham, when it is possible to ascertain it, and makes no attempt to mark out a line of action for himself. Mutari appears to have been a man of similar character. And what a Jacob Ndarassi makes! He has no trouble in supplanting the true heir. He appears to have gone farther in downright lying than Jacob; but essentially there is little to choose between them.

It may be noted that, in the Masai tradition, all the three brothers are shepherds. In the O.T. the elder brother is a hunter. And in this fact Captain Merker finds an explanation of the apparently lenient manner in which the base conduct of Jacob is dealt with. Attention has been called to the position assigned to smiths among the primitive Semites. Hunters—as being dependent on smiths for their tools—were associated with the latter in

the estimation of the community. And a piece of deceit on the part of a shepherd, in order to get the better of a hunter, would scarcely be regarded by a primitive Semite as involving guilt. In connexion with this point, the author reports a Masai legend to the following effect:—

In primitive times, when men were vegetarians, God summoned two brothers. He showed to them a shepherd's crook and a bow, and instructed them in the use of them. Then He ordered them to

cover their eyes with their hands. When this was done, God held up the shepherd's crook, and asked which of them wished to have that which He was holding up. One of the two separating his fingers looked through, saw that it was the shepherd's crook, and immediately replied that he wished it. He became a shepherd. The other who kept his hand close over his eyes, and saw nothing, became a poor hunter.

(To be continued.)

At the Literary Table.

THE CHILDHOOD OF RELIGION.

1. THE CHILDHOOD OF FICTION: A STUDY OF FOLK TALES AND PRIMITIVE THOUGHT. By J. A. MacCulloch. (*John Murray*. 8vo, pp. xii, 509. 12s. net.)
2. THE SECRET OF THE TOTEM. By Andrew Lang. (*Longmans*. 8vo, pp. x, 215. 10s. 6d. net.)
3. LECTURES ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE KINGSHIP. By J. G. Frazer. (*Macmillan*. 8vo, pp. xi, 309. 8s. 6d. net.)

Folk tales are the wild flowers of literature, and as there are four ways of regarding wild flowers, so are there four ways of treating folk tales. The first way is the way of the men of business. They want to turn everything to profit. They ask of every study, what is the use of it?

Their ambition's masterpiece
Flies no thought higher than a fleece,
Or how to pay their hinds, and clear
All scores, and so to end the year.

The second way is the way of the man of science. His thirst is for knowledge. He has been accused, with some bitterness, but sometimes also with some justice, of 'botanizing on his mother's grave.' But his aim is higher than that of the man of business. The third way is the way of the imagination. It is the way of the poet. It is the way of Burns with the mountain daisy. There was no profit in the daisy, and it did not occur to him to vivisect it for the imperious purposes of science. It was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. The last way is the way of the worshipper. It is Coleridge's way in the presence of Mont Blanc—

O dread and silent mount! I gazed upon thee
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Mr. MacCulloch's way with the fairy tales is the way of science. He searches for their origin. He traces their kinship all the world over. This is the fashionable way with the fairy tale at present, and we are getting a good deal of instruction and even a little entertainment out of it. But the man of science has not been allowed his way with the fairy tale without protest. Sir George Douglas has complained, even bitterly, of the scientific folk-lorist, and pleaded for the study of folk tales from the point of view of the story-teller pure and simple. Mr. MacCulloch has heard the complaint. And although he claims that his business is not with the mere enjoyment of literature, but with the study of it, in his heart he has much sympathy with Sir George Douglas, and from the beginning of his book to the end of it he shows himself still susceptible to the charm which overcame him in earliest years. Never once can the charge be laid against him of pulling his toy to pieces in order to see its mechanism. He claims, indeed, that the scientific study of folk-lore does not diminish our imaginative enjoyment of the fairy tale, but rather increases it. 'As grown men and women,' he says, 'we take up a volume of these tales, and perhaps, ingrates that we are, we are ashamed that they should still charm and please us. But we are inevitably drawn to study them; and then we are amazed, as an investigation of their contents reveals to us that such marvellous invention and execution, such tender and moving situations, such a world of