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A table of contents for *The Palestine Exploration Quarterly* can be found here:

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It will be noticed from the above table that on 27 rainy days the wind has been blowing from the E., S.E., and S., thus showing that the rain clouds coming up from those directions have evacuated the greater part of their contents on the mountains of Judea and Jerusalem before arriving at Jaffa. Clouds of rain coming direct from the Mediterranean, from the west or south-west, as a rule pour down their rain in torrents on the maritime plains, taking in Jaffa and leaving small showers for Jerusalem and its district. This explains why Jerusalem has received a greater portion of rain this season than Jaffa, the difference being about 14 inches between the latter and the former which is very unusual.

NOTE.—The rainfall in Jerusalem this season, as noted in the *Home Words*, has been about 39 inches. The rainfall at Jaffa in the preceding season was 23.50 inches in 63 days ; see *Q.S.* p. 70.

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS AND FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS.

Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale, Vol. VII, January–March, 1906. This number contains a number of short notes, principally on inscriptions, on Crusader documents, and on Makrizi's *History of Egypt*, to the latter of which some ingenious emendations are suggested. There is also an interesting paper on the word *sirr*, used in Muslim grave-formulae ; a review of Brünnow's work on Arabia ; notes on an enigmatical Byzantine inscription from Eshdud ; a summary of the work of the American expedition to central Syria ; and a large series of interesting epigraphic notes on inscriptions of Syria and Mesopotamia.

Revue Biblique, July, 1906. Beside some articles of theological importance, but not directly touching upon Palestine Exploration, this number contains an account by Prof. Clermont-Ganneau of another fragment of the great Beersheba rescript, which has recently come to light : the paper is accompanied by a facsimile. There is also an account of an Arabic description of Palestine in the Vatican Library, accompanied by a Latin translation : the first instalment of an account of the adventurous journey made by the Dominicans of St. Étienne, Jerusalem, from Nakhel in Wady el-'Arîsh to Petra : and an investigation of Saladin's journey from Cairo to Kerak and Damascus.

Notes de Mythologie Syrienne. By René Dussaud. The second

instalment of this important publication contains eight articles of various lengths and all of considerable value. One of the most interesting is that on the god-name Bel in Syria, shewing evidence of the fusion of Bel with Heracles—a fact which has its interest in connexion with the perplexing Altar of Euneios found at Gezer. The other articles in the brochure are—a lost figure of the Jupiter of Heliopolis—symbols and representations of the consort goddess (a specially interesting article)—a votive hand of the type of the Heliopolitan Jupiter—the Phœnician pantheon—Milk, Moloch, and Melkart—Brathy, Brochoi, and Baruk—the cult of Dusares according to the coins of Adraa and Bostra.

Dr. Petrie's *Researches in Sinai*. "The work of this last season in Sinai has served to put in order the Egyptian inscriptions previously known there, and to fix their places and connexions which were uncertain before. It has also uncovered many new inscriptions, and the whole of these two or three hundred inscriptions have been drawn full-size in facsimile, and many of them photographed. The publication of these will form the largest body of texts from any year's work. The plan of the temple of Şerâbit was but vaguely known before. Many more walls have been found, and also the Shrine of the Kings; and the whole is now fully planned and modelled, and the architectural details restored as far as possible. The district of Şerâbit has been planned for the first time, and the positions and character of the mines recorded. The considerable mass of offerings found in the Temple includes the finest portrait known of Queen Thyi. The fuller records now obtained have enabled us to reconstruct the old Egyptian organization of the expeditions. And the views that result from these studies regarding the early Semitic ritual restore what has hitherto been only a matter of conjecture."

In these words Prof. Petrie sums up the results of his recent expedition to the Sinaitic peninsula, and certainly he can fairly claim that it is an excellent record of work for a few months. In the interesting volume before us, perhaps the most attractive that Prof. Petrie has produced, he gives a lucid account, illustrated with admirable photographs, of the various stages and branches of his investigations.

The first three chapters of the book contain an account of the journey through the desert to the Wady Magharah, the valley of the turquoise mines, and a description of the valley itself and its series of sculptures. The numerous photographs in this part of the work give an admirably clear idea of the desert and wild mountain scenery of the peninsula. If in the letterpress one is tempted to complain that there is too much about the personal idiosyncrasies of the camels and their drivers employed by Prof. Petrie's party, it is because there is in these chapters so much geographical detail of permanent value that one grudges any space expended on these more trivial matters.

The fourth chapter commences with the miserable record of the fate of many of the sculptures which for five to seven thousand years (according to our author's scheme of chronology) had resisted the depredations of the Bedawin savages of Sinai. Prof. Petrie tells how in a short season they suffered irreparable injury, in many cases total destruction, at the hands of savages from the land which produces the worst kind of savages—namely, England. "The Khufu sculptures were "smashed up. The half-dozen Assa inscriptions were all destroyed or "buried. The Pepy inscriptions were annihilated. The whole of the "Amen-em-hat inscriptions at the mines have likewise disappeared. The "Sneferu scene has been brutally bashed about with a hammer, and the "only portrait of Sneferu has been destroyed. The Sahura scene and the "Men-ka-u-hor tablet have both been partly blasted away. The Ra-n-user tablet has had pieces knocked off it"—by English turquoise-hunting speculators. To guard the few that remained from further injury Prof. Petrie had them cut out and transported to the Museum at Cairo, where they are now to be seen. Of course, this proceeding destroys a large part of the interest both of the sculptures and of the valley; but under the circumstances, obviously no other course was open to the explorer.

The Wady Magharah inscriptions consist of a series of steles, left behind by the kings who here quarried turquoise, or by their lieutenants and overseers. They begin as far back as the Ist dynasty, with king Semerkhet, whom Prof. Petrie dates about 5300 B.C., and come down through practically the whole of the Early Empire. They are triumphal monuments for the greater part, celebrating the royal victories over the Bedawin of the peninsula. But mining was carried out industriously during the middle empire as well, and not the least valuable part of Prof. Petrie's work has been the exploration of the mines of this period and the determination of the methods followed by the miners—as well as the unearthing of the workmen's settlements and the discovery of their tools and household utensils.

The central part of the book is occupied by the investigation of the great temple of Serâbit el-Khadem; a shrine which, dedicated to Hathor at latest in the IIIrd dynasty, was increased by the addition of steles and chambers, till it acquired a plan perfectly unique and singularly complex. Though the temple had long been known to exist, it would appear that Prof. Petrie's is the first exhaustive investigation.

As Prof. Petrie's description of the temple and its contents occupies over a hundred quarto pages, and is illustrated by nearly a hundred photographs, it is clearly impossible to abstract it here. Let it suffice to say that the temple consists of a rock-cut shrine and six chambers, including lavatories (perhaps it might have been better to have used some such English word for these ablution-chambers, in preference to the

native word *hanafiyeh*; which is self-explanatory only to a reader who understands the ritual arrangement of Muhammadan mosques): outside the court round which these chambers are grouped there is a further series of fourteen chambers, added one by one, by successive kings (as inscriptions found within them indicate). The whole is enclosed within surrounding walls, with which other chambers, less well defined, are associated. Judging from the remains found within the temple, and the evidences of *non-Egyptian* worship which it contained, no doubt Prof. Petrie is correct in considering this as a temple essentially for some variety of *Semitic* religious rites. The temple of Šerâbit, therefore, is of especial value at the present moment, when the excavations of Tell es-Safi and of Gezer, as well as Taanach and Megiddo, have been revealing to us the shrines and furniture of Palestinian cults. The investigation of the Šerâbit temple is a solid contribution to the complicated subject of the religion of the Semites.

Among the many discoveries made within the temple precincts, of which we cannot here speak, the most remarkable—apart, perhaps, from the striking Thyi head—is a series of stones bearing inscriptions in an alphabetic character different from the hieroglyphic. Until the more official report of Prof. Petrie's inscriptions, with facsimiles of the inscriptions, makes its appearance, it would be premature to make any detailed criticism on the one specimen of this script illustrated by Prof. Petrie—a rude figure of a sphinx bearing some random characters, and an evidently formal inscription of six letters. But these letters certainly convey the impression of being part of a form of the Phœnician alphabet. If so, this discovery is of immense importance as carrying the history of that alphabet about 500 years behind the farthest point previously known. The inscription given by Prof. Petrie reads straight off **תרענוב**, if read as Phœnician letters, though I refrain from speculation as to the possible meaning of this vocable (or vocables).

The latter part of the work is occupied by a number of chapters dealing with miscellaneous points. The first of them is devoted to an exposition of Prof. Petrie's well-known views on Egyptian Chronology, which he here re-states and for which he makes, it must be admitted, a persuasive case. It is curious, however, that the conclusions at which the Cretan excavators and those of Palestine have arrived on this difficult problem are diametrically opposed. Dr. Evans finds so great a depth of debris between the XIIth dynasty and XVIIIth dynasty strata that the short chronology does not give sufficient time for its accumulation; on the other hand at Gezer, for example, there is surprisingly little interjected between the strata corresponding to these periods if the long chronology is to be accepted. Time and further work will settle this and many other problems still in suspense.

This is followed by a short but important chapter on Semitic worship,

with special reference to the indications which the Šerâbit temple affords of its nature; and then comes a fascinatingly interesting chapter on "the Conditions of the Exodus," in which an attempt is made to reconcile the high numbers of the census-lists of the Israelite wanderings with the possibilities of desert life. Some parts of this chapter are not very convincing, perhaps. Thus the analogies drawn between the divine names in the Pentateuch documents and those in a modern hymn-book, and the deductions founded thereon, fail because the hymn-book terminology is directly founded on the Biblical, in its final form, and quite irrespective of the origin of the Biblical nomenclature. Discussion of the central thesis maintained in this chapter—the revision of the numbers based on the ambiguity of the meaning of the Hebrew word *alâph*—must be left to professed exegetes. The layman can but wonder at its simplicity and its ingenuity.

The book ends with four chapters from the pen of Mr. C. T. Currelly, Prof. Petrie's assistant, narrating his own experiences. These chapters are frankly travel notes, and contain a large number of interesting observations on Sinaitic life, manners, customs, folklore, as well as an account of his important examination of the *Nawamis* and the removal of the Wady Magharah sculptures, which delicate work was entrusted to Mr. Currelly. We should like to have heard more of the *Nawamis*, but no doubt the official publication will satisfy this desire. The suggestion that the manna story is a recollection of the first sight of snow is ingenious, but it would be difficult to explain how so singularly accurate a recollection of the appearance of the snow-fall—more accurate, one may venture to say, than the best-attested examples of folk-memory—should have received the enormous modification implied by the one additional element that the manna was used *for food*. More interesting and more convincing is the chapter on the identification of Mount Sinai; a very persuasive case for *Serbal* is made out by Mr. Currelly.

It is, perhaps, hypercritical to complain about a point of spelling, but we confess to disliking "G'aa"; because no Arabic word can commence with two consonants. Mr. Currelly sins in good company in this respect, for one often sees monstrosities like "Mkaur" and "N'aneh." These words, as written, are absolutely unpronounceable to Arabs, and therefore cannot represent any form of local pronunciation.

In closing this notice of an important and very interesting book, a word of praise must be given to the typography and the reproduction of the photographs. They are, perhaps, as near perfection as it is possible for them to be.

R. A. S. M.