

NOTES AND QUERIES.

(1) *The Coracinus of Josephus.*—In the article on “the site of Capernaum” in the July *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Dr. E. W. G. Masterman (p. 223) admits that “by his reference to the Coracinus fish, Josephus has introduced what has seemed to many a difficulty in identifying the spring to which reference is made with the fountain called after *Sheikh ‘Ali edh-Dhather.*” This admission has been made because the *Coracinus* has been supposed to be the catfish known as *Clarias macracanthus* (not “*Charias maerocanthus*”). The *Coracinus* of the Ancients, however, is by no means a *Clarias*, but a very different fish. From the records of it by Aristotle, Pliny, Martial, and Gillius, this is evident, as Cuvier has proved. The identification of the *Coracinus* by Lortet and others is entirely opposed to the old record. I have referred to this subject in a recent article in the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1895 (p. 518).

Species of the genus *Tilapia* are, however, found in springs near as well as in, Lake Tiberias, and several species (*T. Galilaea*, *T. Simonis*, *T. Flavii-Josephi*) and a *Paratilapia* (*P. sacra*) have been recorded by Tristram (*F. & F. P.*, 166–168) as being found in the fountains called Ain Mudawarah, Ain et Tin, and Ain et Tâbighah. Doubtless one or more may be found in the *Birket Sheikh Ali edh-Dhather*. These are very much like the famous Bolti or Bully (*Tilapia nilotica*) of the Nile, and this identification would be corroborative of Dr. Masterman’s contention as to “the site of Capernaum.”

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(2) *Zion.*—In the *Quarterly Statement* of July, 1907, Sir Charles Watson’s interesting article on “The Site of the Acra,” contains the following statement: “The name Zion was more specially applied to the Temple hill, and, when the latter hill became a fortress, it was called the fortress of Zion. The transfer of the name of Zion to the western hill does not appear to have taken place until after the destruction of the Temple by Titus.”

Some proof for this is to be found in the daily prayer of the Jews, called שמנה עשרה (or the eighteen blessings), which, in the opinion of all the Rabbis, was composed at the time of the Babylonian captivity, consequently many centuries before Titus. One finds there the following benediction: ברוך אתה ה' המחזיר שכינתו לציון, "Blessed be thou Eternal, who shalt bring back thy dwelling on Zion." Everyone knows that the Israelites, in using these words, "dwelling of the Eternal," always wished to indicate the Temple. Zion was therefore the Temple hill.

Further than this, the same prayer contains a passage added later than the destruction of the Temple by Titus, and which is repeated only on the ninth of Ab—a passage in which occur these words: נחם ה' אלהינו את אבלי ציון ואת אבלי ירושלים, "Console those who mourn for Zion and those who mourn for Jerusalem," in which it is evident that by "Zion" is meant the Temple, otherwise the same thing would be said twice. This shows that even after the destruction by Titus the Jews still designated the Temple hill by the name of "Zion."

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(3) *Babylonian Chronology*.—Some new cuneiform texts have recently been discovered and edited which throw new light upon the chronology and history of Babylonia. Here it is only necessary to refer to Mr. L. W. King's *Chronicles concerning Early Babylonian Kings* (London, Luzac, 1907), which bring valuable information to bear upon several contested points. In the first place, it is now evident that the first Sargon did not cross the Mediterranean to Cyprus; a better text has come to hand, proving that he crossed the sea "in the East." Mr. Hall, *Oldest Civilization of Greece*, p. 113, had previously shown that the archaic cylinder found by Cesnola at Curium, with its reference to a deified Naram-Sin (Sargon's son), was scarcely older than the seventh century, and he suggested that Sargon merely coasted along the Palestinian littoral. Next, Sargon's empire tottered while he himself was on the throne; the kingdom was thus hardly very firmly established, and it is very noteworthy that a Babylonian chronicle passes immediately from Naram-Sin to Dungi. It would be strange if so long an interval as

fourteen or fifteen centuries separated the period of Sargon from that of Dungi and his father Ur-Engur, and Prof. A. T. Clay (*Light on the Old Testament from Babel*) has recently observed that the pavement of Ur-Engur at Niffer rested immediately upon the two-course brickwork of Naram-Sin, thus suggesting that there was on great interval between those rulers. Consequently, it may be necessary to reduce the date of 3800 B.C. for Sargon of Agade (King, p. 17).¹ Still more interesting is new evidence correlating the Khammurabi dynasty with that which follows. By converging lines of reasoning, it appears that its date must be brought down lower, and the famous king himself should now probably be assigned to the twentieth century. It is obvious that these results are not confined to Babylonia alone; they bear upon questions of Egyptian chronology, which in turn are closely linked with the archaeological history of Palestine and Crete. Babylonia at present holds the key to the wider problems of the Ancient East, and the new discoveries, with the natural probability of fresh ones in the future, only emphasize the necessity of applying the results from one department of research to another, only with the greatest caution.

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(4) *Inscribed Objects from Gezer*.—The stamped jar-handle described above by Mr. Macalister (p. 264) is noteworthy for its beautifully clear-cut script which, as he correctly remarks, is against any hypothesis of Greek influence. The form of the ∇ is particularly interesting. On the Moabite stone (in the name Ataroth), on the inscriptions of Panammu and Hadad found at Zenjirli, and in the old European forms—Greek and Etruscan (*viz.*, Formello)—two cross-bars are found, more or less at right angles to each other. The form with one bar occurs notably in the Zenjirli inscription of Bar-rekub, second half of the eighth century, and in the later inscriptions from Nerab, south-east of Aleppo. These two are Aramaean, and it is singular to observe that the monumental script on the Gezer jar-handle finds its closest analogy in the former. Obviously we cannot draw any sweeping inferences from this,

¹ See also Ed. Meyer, *Sumerier und Semiten in Babylonien*, p. 10, n. 1 (*Abhandlungen*, of the Berlin University, 1906).

although it is sufficient to warn us that the lettering may not represent any Hebrew or even Semitic name, but that of some foreigner, *H-y-r-t* (! cp. the earlier *Duš-ratta*). The presence of an *h* in this case would be an argument against any Assyrian derivation.

In regard to the inscribed weight (p. 266), it may be noticed that Prof. Barton published one bearing the identical enigmatical lettering in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. XXIV, 1903, pp. 384 *sqq.* This weighed 120 grains, a little more than $7\frac{1}{2}$ grammes, but was probably once slightly heavier. Mr. Macalister's weight proves the reading פִּיִּם, for which Prof. Barton had ventured the very tentative suggestion that it was an abbreviation for פִּיִּם (שֶׁקֶל), "according to the (standard) weight." At all events, the doubts previously raised by Lidzbarski (*Ephemeris*, ii, 149) regarding the genuineness of the object, now seem quite unnecessary.

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