

## RUDE STONE MONUMENTS OF THE BIBLE.

It has already been suggested by Sepp that many of the monuments mentioned in the Old Testament resembled the rude stone monuments which have lately been attracting attention in Palestine. The following note is merely offered as a suggestion subject to criticism.

Genesis xxviii, 11. Jacob comes to a certain Makom or "place" called Bethel ("the house of God"), probably known to him in the morning by the remains of Abraham's altar (xiii, 4), and here he erects a pillar (*מִזְבֵּחַ*) and anoints it. It consisted of a single stone set up, and seems clearly to have been a menhir. The custom of anointing such stones was common to the Phoenicians, and the recent discovery of cup-hollows in the menhirs beyond Jordan is very interesting in this connection (cf. xxxv, 14). After renewed visits to Bethel I have, however, been unable to find any remains of menhirs or cromlechs at the site.

Genesis xxxiii, 20. Jacob erects an altar in the patch of ground near the well which he dug in Shechem. There was apparently near the same spot an oak under which Jacob buried the Teraphim (xxxv, 4). This is afterwards mentioned as the oak of the pillar erected by Joshua (Josh. xxiv, 26) by the Holy Place of Jehovah (cf. Judges ix, 37, "the enchanter's oak"). According to Jerome the site should be placed at Balâta, the spring near Jacob's Well, but no remains of any rude stone monument have as yet been found (cf. Judges ix, 6).

Genesis xxxi, 45. Jacob sets up a pillar at Mizpeh of Gilead, and this is surrounded with a great heap (Galeed) of stones. Similar cairns have been described in my report on the rude stone monuments of Moab, where the custom of throwing stones at a menhir is noticed. The site of Mizpeh is not yet known, but the cairn may very probably remain. The heap was called "witness," which connects it with other monuments to be mentioned later.

Genesis xxxv, 20. Jacob erects a pillar over Rachel's Tomb. The practice of placing a menhir at a tomb-head is ancient in India, and survives probably in the head-stones of Christian and Moslem tombs alike.

Exodus xxiv, 4. Moses builds under Sinai an altar, and erects twelve pillars, apparently as a cromlech or circle of menhirs. No traces of this appear to have been as yet found in Sinai.

Numbers xxiii. The altars erected by Balaam have been fully noticed in a former paper.

Deuteronomy xii, 3. The Israelites are commanded to "overthrow" the altars, to break the pillars of the Canaanites. This would apply exactly to the destruction of dolmens and menhirs which appears to have occurred in Western Palestine.

Deuteronomy xxvii, 6, and Exodus xx, 25. The altars of Jehovah were to be built of whole stones unhewn, or of earth. It seems not improbable that the earlier altars may have been similar to the dolmens and tells still existing; but according to the Talmud, the Jerusalem altar was formed of a sort of concrete of pebbles in mortar.

Deuteronomy xxvi, 14, and Psalm cvi, 28. "The offerings to the dead" here referred to were often made in Egyptian tombs. The small offerings, on the lintels of tombs east of Jordan, have been mentioned in former reports, and such offerings are found throughout Palestine on sacred tombs. The connection with the worship of Baal Peor in the Psalm agrees with the close connection which is observed in the rude stone monuments between tombs and altars. In some cases it is apparently clear that the dolmens were not tombs, but in India similar monuments have been discovered which are certainly sepulchres. The sacredness of the tombs of venerated ancestors probably explains the connection.

Deuteronomy xxvii, 2. Great stones plastered over were to be set up and inscribed with the words of the Law on Mount Ebal beside an altar of Jehovah. This was done (Josh. viii, 31), and in Egypt also similar inscriptions on plaster have been found. The altar with the inscribed cippi may perhaps have formed a circle or enclosure not unlike Stonehenge. Such a circle is said to exist to the present day in Wâdy Wâleh, and the one at el Mareighât has been described in a former report.

Joshua iv, 9. The twelve stones from Jordan were "set up" at Gilgal. The name Gilgal signifies a circle, and it seems indisputable that a circle of meuhirs is intended. There was another Gilgal in the hills near Bethel and a third in the Philistine plain. A place called Jilejil also exists east of Gerizim, and probably marks the site of another ancient Gilgal. It seems probable that circles of stones existed at one time in all these places.

Joshua viii, 20. The body of the King of Ai was covered with a great cairn. This practice is still observed, large cairns being erected over those slain in battle in Moab (as also in England in pre-historic times). It seems possible that the great stone heap of *et Tell*, near the site of Ai, may be the very cairn intended in the present instance.

Joshua xxii, 11. The altar Ed, built by the trans-Jordanic tribes, was, according to Josephus, east of the river. It is remarkable that a great group of dolmens exists at the foot of the eastern mountains, just south of the Jabbok, on the main road from Nablus to Salt. These have not yet been visited by the Survey party, but are described by Irby and Mangles. It is perhaps to one of these that the episode refers, as the Israelites were returning from Shiloh to Mount Gilead, and erected their monument "over against the land of Canaan in the borders of Jordan at the passage of the children of Israel." Similar "witnesses" are still erected by the Arabs (as often mentioned in former reports) wherever a sacred place first comes in sight of the pilgrim.

Judges vi, 26, and xiii, 19. An altar built on a rock and a rock used as an altar are mentioned in these two passages. The occurrence of cup-

shaped hollows in rocks, proper for such libations as are mentioned in the latter passage is instructive. The Sakhrah at Jerusalem and that on Mount Gerizim seem to be instances of such rock altars.

1 Samuel vi, 14. The great stone in the field of Joshua the Beth-Shemite on which the ark was placed remained as an *Ed* (rendered "unto" in A.V., verse 18), or menhir afterwards.

1 Samuel vii, 12. The stone Ebenezer was placed by Samuel as a monument of victory.

1 Samuel xiii, 3 and 23; xiv, 1, 4, 6. The word rendered "garrison" is, with only a change of points, the same (מִשְׁבֵּחַ), rendered "pillar" in some passages and "image" in others (Hosea iii, 4). Jonathan "smote the pillar," which was perhaps a cippus to mark the Philistine boundary, and at the same time a sacred stone, and for this desecration Israel was "had in abomination with the Philistines." The pillar seems to have been then removed, and Jonathan crossed over to overthrow it a second time.

1 Samuel xiv, 33. Saul uses a great stone as an altar on which sheep and oxen are slain.

1 Samuel xv, 12. Saul sets up a place, literally a "hand." With this must be compared 2 Samuel xviii, 18, where Absalom's place or "hand" is called a pillar. The word for pillar is מִזְבֵּחַ, i.e., an upright thing, not עֲמֹד or column, and it seems evident that a memorial menhir is intended.

1 Samuel xx, 19. The stone Ezel was probably another of these monuments. It appears to have been connected with a cairn, since the words "out of a place towards the south" (v. 41), are more correctly "out of the stone heap" (Argab). Perhaps David had hidden inside a cromlech or dolmen covered by a cairn.

1 Kings xii, 27. The altars of the Golden Calves at Bethel and at Dan were set up by Jeroboam, but there is no notice of any temples having been built in connection with them. Bethel was an old sanctuary, and it seems therefore probable that Dan may have been a former centre of worship. A striking discovery in connection with this episode will be noticed fully in a future report.

1 Kings xviii, 31. Elijah builds an altar of twelve stones, but their arrangement is not specially described.

2 Kings xxiii, 17. "What pillar (A.V. 'title') is that that I see?" Josiah was overturning the idolatrous altars and emblems at Bethel, and the monumental pillar over the grave of the prophet attracted his attention. This is an interesting instance of the connection between pillars which were objects of idolatrous worship, and which the Israelites overthrew, and similar pillars used as head-stones to tombs.

In Isaiah (lxv, 11) the "table for Gad" (or Jupiter), and the "drink offering of Meni" (probably Venus), are mentioned. It seems probable that a dolmen altar may be intended, while the libation would have been poured on the rock, or the table-stone, into a cup-shaped hollow such as have been described in my report on the Moabite dolmens.

An expression in Hosea (xii, 11) seems to be also well explained by referring it to the dolmen altars. "Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field." The appropriateness of the simile will strike any one who has seen a field of fallen dolmens and compares it with the heaps of stones collected for clearing the land in any part of Palestine. The great number of the altars at one site seems to be indicated clearly.

The deductions which it seems legitimate to draw from the above passages appear to be.

1st. That Dolmen altars, menhirs, both idolatrous and sepulchral, stone circles and cairns of stone, monumental and sepulchral, are all mentioned in the Old Testament, and probably resembled those which occur in Galilee and beyond Jordan. These monuments form a connecting link between those found in Europe and those of Eastern Asia. They are also similar to monuments discovered by Professor Palmer in the Sinaitic peninsular, and by Palgrave in Arabia, notably with the great cromlech of Darim in the Nejed, the pillar-stones of which are 15 feet high.

2nd. No difference appears to have existed between the monuments used by the Canaanites and those erected by the early patriarchs, by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel. The consecration to a Canaanite deity, and the cruel and obscene character of the worship connected with the Canaanite shrines, was the cause of the destruction of the altars found existing by the Israelites, which were superseded by monuments of very similar character, dedicated on appointed sites to Jehovah; and these were in turn superseded by the Temple and Altar of Jerusalem, before the erection of which the worship in high places, such as Gilgal, Nob, Gibeon, Bethel, Shiloh, Shechem, and Carmel was lawful, according to the Mishna.

3rd. Some of the monuments thus noticed in the Old Testament may perhaps be recognised as existing at the present time, but in other cases they have entirely disappeared, as notably at Gilgal and Bethel.

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### JEWISH TRADITIONS IN JERUSALEM.

THE ancient nomenclature of Jerusalem, according to the traditions of the Jewish population, which has never been entirely banished from the Holy City, presents many points of great interest. The most important of these—the identification of the hillock in which is the so-called grotto of Jeremiah (a name only as old as the 15th century), with the Beth-has-Sekilah, or "place of stoning," has already been published in "Tent Work in Palestine," and it appears to be a very widely recognised tradition among the German and Mughrabi Jews alike.

On the 21st March, with Lieutenant Mantell, R.E., I visited the tradi-