Upon the Types of the Early Inhabitants of Mesopotamia

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Mr. T. G. PINCHES read a paper upon the Types of the Early Inhabitants of Mesopotamia.

Mr. CUTHBERT E. PEEK exhibited some Tablets belonging to Sir HENRY PEEK.

Dr. TYLOR, Mr. BOUVERIE PUSEY, Miss BUCKLAND, Mr. CUTHBERT E. PEEK, Mr. RANDALL PYE, Mr. BRABROOK, and Dr. GARSON joined in the discussion, and the Author replied.

Mr. F. W. RUDLER exhibited some Babylonian Tablets.

Upon the TYPES of the EARLY INHABITANTS of MESOPOTAMIA.

By T. G. PINCHES, Esq.

ABOUT five or six thousand years ago, when Nimrod, son of Cush, had "begun to be a mighty one in the earth," and Babylon, not at that time the great; Erech, the lovely city; Akkad, the renowned; and Calneh, now unknown, were among the numerous cities which, scattered along the many fertilizing canals, adorned, at this period, the plain of Shinar—a hot parched tract in summer, but pleasanter in the winter—an ancient race inhabited this tract, a race that had early learned how to remove the unfruitfulness of the parched ground by that wonderful network of canals of which the traces score the ground to this day.

The people inhabiting the country lived a most active life, which continued with many changes almost down to the Christian era. They left also numerous monuments, many of them of deep and surpassing interest. Turn whichever way we will in ancient Mesopotamia and the neighbourhood, there we find inscriptions of various kinds by the thousand, together with large numbers of sculptures, of which the value can hardly be over-estimated.

Many here present have probably heard of the remarkable discoveries of M. de Sarzec, Consul of France, some years ago at Baghdad. This gentleman, all enthusiasm for excavations, made excellent use of the opportunities which were presented to him, and carried on some most interesting excavations at a site on the banks of the Shatt al Hai, called Tell-Loh, representing the position of the ancient Lagaš, of which, perhaps, the word Loh is a corruption. This ancient city was a place of some renown from B.C. 2500–4000, and contained many very

fine statues, all bearing inscriptions, together with many smaller objects of interest, were found here. As works of art, they are fair, and some of them even remarkable; but, as a rule, the lines of the sculptures, &c., are stiff and rather clumsy, though, with regard to the statues, this may be in part due to the hardness of the stone. The appearance of the whole, however, is not by any means unpleasing. Unluckily, all the statues are, without exception, headless; but, as a compensation, two carved stone heads have been found without the bodies to which they belong. It will easily be seen that, as sculptures, these heads are a redeeming point, their excellent finish and careful manipulation making one excuse the shortcomings of the lower parts of the figures. It is greatly to be regretted that that important feature of the face, namely, the nose, is wanting in both cases. Sufficient, however, of the features remains intact to make them most valuable from an anthropological point of view.

1. From De Sarzec's "*Découvertes en Chaldée*," Plate XII, No. 1.

These two heads differ remarkably in form, and one recognizes in them at first glance two entirely distinct types—two distinct nationalities, in fact. Let us take the nobler of the two first. We have here a head with prominent cheek-bones, firm lips, and a square chin, a young-looking, dignified, self-conscious face, the face of a man not ashamed to look out, with a certain amount of pride of race into the world. The thick-brimmed

hat, of a material somewhat resembling astrachan, comes rather far down over the forehead, so that the height of the latter is not very apparent.

I have attempted a restoration of this head by comparison with a small one of white alabaster in the British Museum. My theory is that the head from Lagaš, which I have restored, is a portrait of a man of Akkadian race with an admixture of Semitic (Babylonian) blood, and I have therefore made the nose slightly curved. It will be noticed that the eyebrows meet over the nose.

2. Restoration of No. 1, drawn by T. G. Pinches.

That this was the general type of the Akkadian races can hardly be doubted, and in proof of it I would point to the figures of the deities on the cylinder-seals. One, in which we have a bearded deity with a similar thick-brimmed hat, forms a good analogy. He is slim and dignified, and as far as the smallness of the work allows one to see, the type is very similar to that of the head from Lagaš. This figure is intended for a representation of the god Nergal,¹ a deity with a decidedly Akkadian name. The female standing opposite him wearing a goat-skin robe and horned head-dress, is a divine attendant, in an attitude of adoration. Other examples show also the same

¹ The inscription reads, "Sin-lâdiš, son of Ura-naid, servant (worshipper) of the god Ne-uru-gal" (Nergal).

type, but their noses are even straighter than I have made that of the head from Lagaš in my restoration. This *may* be due to careless work, but it is to be noted that the early Mesopotamian seal-engravers were quite skilled enough to make the noses curved if they had wished to do so, and as one would certainly have expected them to do, if racial distinctions were attached to it, as seems to have been the case.

3. Burial of fallen Warriors, from De Sarzec's "Découvertes," Plate III, C.

Another type¹ seems to be a variant of the last, due, probably, to a still larger admixture of Semitic blood, and in this case we have a face with a nose of truly colossal dimensions. This object is the head of a statuette in clay. The work is rough, but there is a remarkable amount of power in the face. The curve of the nose, however, cannot be regarded as excessive. The eyes were inlaid, but these are now gone. I have said that the aquiline

¹ De Sarzec's "Découvertes," Plate VI, No. 3.

nose, in this case, may be due to Semitic blood ; but this is not by any means certain. It may belong to the type of the lower-class population—that from which the warriors and workmen came, as is indicated in the scene where workmen with baskets are heaping up the earth over their comrades, fallen in battle. All the figures on the bas-relief representing this have aquiline noses and retreating foreheads, like the head of the clay statuette. It is worthy of note that this retreating forehead and prominent nose is indicated by the Assyrians as the type of the Elamites (see the bas-reliefs of Assurbanipal exhibited in the Kouyunjik Gallery of the British Museum). According to Genesis x, 22, Elam was son of Shem, so that the Elamites would seem to have been also Semites ; but the language spoken by them is rather against this, it not being in any way Semitic. I am therefore inclined to see in the Elamites a kindred race to the low-class Akkadian population of early Mesopotamia.

4. From De Sarzec's "*Découvertes en Chaldée*," Plate XII, No. 2.

The other diorite head from Tell-loh, or Lagaš, shows an entirely different type, namely, pure, or almost pure, Semitic. The face is oval, the chin and lips are prominent, but rounded, the cheekbones flat. Indeed, the photograph shows an extensive dark shadow under the eye, implying extreme flatness there. As in the case of the other head, the eye is large, and the

eyebrows meet over the nose. In order to get an idea of what the face was like when perfect, I have also attempted a

5. Restoration of No. 4, drawn by T. G. Pinches.

restoration of this, and the addition of a Semitic Babylonian or Assyrian nose has produced a thoroughly Semitic Babylonian or Assyrian face. The only thing Akkadian about it is the shaven head—an artificial peculiarity. I am nevertheless inclined to attribute the peculiar nose, which I have drawn from the Assyrian sculptures principally, to intermarriage with the Akkadian population.

Other examples show the more or less pure *Semitic* type of Babylonia, exemplified by the Semitic hero Gilgameš or Gilga-

6. Gilgameš and Ea-bani overcoming a Bull and a Lion, from a cylinder (date, about 2500 B.C.).

mos (his name, strange to say, is distinctly Akkadian), giving drink to a large-horned bull from a vase which is running over¹ (this dates from about 3800 B.C.), and by the representations of the same hero struggling with a bull, and Ea-banî, his satyr-like friend and counsellor, struggling with a lion—a design of which there are several variations. In all the hero is represented with a largish mouth, a broadish nose, large eyes, a long beard, and his hair falling in ringlets to his shoulders. He is apparently to be regarded as one of the better types of early Babylonia, as late, say, as the year 2000 or 1500 B.C.

As an example of the type of the Mesopotamians of a later date, we may take the numerous monuments of Assyria. It differs but slightly from that of ancient Babylonia. The repro-

7. Divine Figure and winged Bulls, from an Assyrian cylinder in the British Museum (date, about 650 B.C.).²

duction of a cylinder-seal which was shown (No. 7) may be regarded as one of the best. The cheeks are full, the face, as usual, is heavily bearded, and the hair also rather luxurious. The nose is fairly long, and is curved downwards at the tip. Judging from the representations on the sculptures, the Assyrians must have been a muscular race. Some of the examples on the cylinder-seals (two male bearded and winged figures before the sacred tree) are rather indifferent; but there is a very fair specimen, showing, or intended to show, a female (the goddess Istar standing on a lioness) and a eunuch-priest. Here, again, the smallness of the original has prevented the artist from doing so much as he would otherwise have done to produce really effective engravings of the people of the country at the time.

¹ From a cylinder-seal in the possession of M. de Clercq (see his *Catalogue Raisonné*, Plate V, No. 46).

² The inscription reads: "Thy Prince, O light of Nebo, always going behind thee, have mercy upon me." (The last character I am unable to read.)

The goddess is, in fact, almost a caricature, though there were certainly people with this cast of features at that time—as indeed, there probably are now.

8. Istar and the Eunuch-priest, from an Assyrian cylinder in the British Museum (date, about 650 B.C.).

One of the best specimens, however, of the Assyrian type of features, is probably that presented by the head of a winged bull of Esarhaddon's time, which may be regarded as the Assyrian personification of manly beauty. The face is round and full, the beard and hair heavy, the nose not over long, curved and flattened at the tip. The eyebrows meet in the middle, and the hair falls in waves, low down on the forehead. This last, however, can hardly be taken as a racial peculiarity, because the Assyrians, especially the higher classes, wore wigs. Further illustrations of this type are the sculptures of the time of Sargon, Esarhaddon's grandfather, and of Aššur-našir-apli or Aššurnāširpal, a king who reigned about 885 B.C. The type is in all cases practically the same.

The Jews of Baghdad offer some points of resemblance to the Assyrians of the Euphrates valley, and though the sculptures do not give types of very great beauty, yet there may have been Assyrians and Babylonians in ancient times quite as beautiful as their modern Jewish representatives.

Of course the more noble of the two Mesopotamian types, the Akkadian, was destined to disappear in the course of centuries; nevertheless, it left its impress not only on the outward form of the Babylonian people, and through this, on the Assyrian, but also on the temperament of the two nations. They both exhibit all the energy of a mixed race, the Babylonians in the arts of peace, the Assyrians in those of war. They both excelled, though, also in branches which were not their respective "specialities"; for the Assyrian, though war-

like in the extreme, was often learned and extremely artistic; and the Babylonian, though a trader, could also act the brave warrior and the learned man and author.

With regard to the intellect of the two races, the Semitic Babylonians and the Akkadians, it is probable that they both possessed, in a marked degree, all the qualities of shrewd men of business, such as the many trade documents show, and this led to another peculiarity, namely, a love for legal forms, and later on, for litigation; indeed, the courts of law seem to be specially mentioned in the Akkadian inscription of King Gudea at Lagash. The result of this was excellent, for, from the many legal decisions that have come down to us, we are enabled to recognize how just the laws of the ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia were, and how fair the judges.

On the whole, we may class the Mesopotamians among the finest examples of the Semitic race, equal to any existing in the East in ancient times, and far superior to those still there. Their descendants, the Chaldean Christians, who exhibit the same peculiarities to this day, are of the same temperament, and under any other rule, would certainly come to the fore in anything to which they might turn their attention.

In connection with the above remarks upon the ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia, I beg leave to call your attention to the very fine specimens of Babylonian tablets belonging to Sir Henry Peek, which Mr. Cuthbert E. Peek exhibits this evening.

I have remarked above on the love of these people for litigation, and this collection of tablets enables me to bring before you the proof that this was so. The earliest tablet in point of date (2280–2268 B.C.) shows an example of one of these interesting law records, and is probably one of the oldest, if not the oldest, that has yet been translated. It relates to a claim which two men made to a house which two others had bought. The disputants went before a judge, who pronounced judgment. He adjudged to one claimant the well of the house in question, and then an agreement was made by which a further portion of the property was given by the owner of the house to the two claimants together. Further litigation in the matter was then declared to be at an end, and the spirit or name of the sungod, the god Merodach, and the king, Zabium, was invoked.

I give here a translation of the essential part of the document:—

“Abdi-ili and Ya'zar-ilu laid claim to the house which Nûr-

Išum bought along with Milki-Bêlti, and they went before a judge, and the judge let them have his judgment, and the judge gave the well of his (Nûr-Išum's) house (called), Ê-azaga-zi of Anu, to Abdi-îli. They made the agreement in Nûr-Išum's house (called) Bit-Šamaš, and Nûr-Išum conveyed to Habdi-ili (=Abdi-îli) and Ya'zar-îlu, sons of Yadihu^m, 2½ furlongs, dwelling house inclusive (?), (and) 3 cubits inclusive (?) up to the fence (?) of the boundary of (the property of) Šamaš-nûr-mātu^m and Êtel-pî-Sin, son of Abu^m-hibu^m. They shall not withhold the property, and they shall not litigate against each other. They have invoked the spirit of Šamaš, Merodach, and Zabium^m."

The names of fourteen witnesses follow this.

The next text is one of those most interesting documents known as case-tablets, that is, a tablet which, after it had been inscribed, had an envelope moulded round it, also inscribed with the same transaction. The envelope was then impressed with the seals (cylinders) of the contracting parties or the witnesses. In this case the seals may be seen on the top, bottom, and left-hand edges, and in the blank space to the left of the inscription, on both sides. This tablet is of the time of Samsu-iluna, king of Babylon from about 2175 to 2140 B.C. The following is a translation of the text, as far as I have been able to make it out:—

"Three acres of a field in the province of Tarbani (and) part of an acre of a field, the property of Âḫati-šunu (situated) beside the field of Âmat-Šamaš, daughter of Libit-Nanâ, and beside the field of Bêl-šunu, one end (being) the river Euphrates, and the other the aqueduct. Two-thirds of a furlong and 5 *zu*, (with) the house (in) Sippara, 1½ furlongs (with) the house (in) Tarbani, 1 ox, 1 young sheep, (and) 1 *'ikuše*-stone—all this property together (?), which is in the possession of Sig-Annunitum, Bêl-šunu, Bêl-banî, Îl-šu-banî, Rêmu^m, and Marduk-našer, she has sold, and they have paid the complete price. They are content from the word to the gold (that is, with regard to the contract, and with regard to the money and everything else) at no future time shall they (the buyers and the seller) have any claim against each other. They have invoked the spirit of Šamaš, Aa, Marduk, and Samsu-iluna, the king."

The names of five witnesses (one of whom, named *Dadaša*, has impressed his seal) follow this, and then comes the date—"18th day of Iyyar of the year of the conference (?) concerning (?) the temple of Bel."

For inscriptions of such antiquity—for they were written now more than 4,000 years ago—they must be regarded as of

very considerable interest, to which the language and the quaintness of the phraseology naturally add.

The other four tablets are of later date, namely, the reigns of Nabonidus (555–538 B.C.), Cyrus (538–530 B.C.), Cambyses (530–522 B.C.), and Darius (519–484 B.C.). The first records the selling, by Marduk-našer, a Babylonian, of 300 *gur* of fruit, to Akdu-lûmur (apparently a freedman) and Haninâ, Marduk-našer's own female slave, and gives them permission to take also whatever else they may want from his (Marduk-našer's) house at Sippara, where Akdu-lûmur was to be regarded as his (Marduk-našer's) representative. The scribe and another act as witnesses.

The second refers to the letting of a house by Itti-Marduk-balaṭu, for eight shekels of silver, to be paid half-yearly. The hirer was to do all repairs and to pay on "the day of Bel" the tax of one shekel of silver. This is an ancient representative of the modern English lease, except that, in this case, only one tax, and not three, as is usual, is mentioned. The names of two witnesses and of the scribe are attached to the document.

The third is the sale of a slave, with her three-months-old daughter, by Iddin-Nabû, to the above-named Itti-Marduk-balaṭu, for two mana of silver. This tablet, however, is a historical document, for it states that this slave-woman and her child were "the spoil of the bow" of Iddin-Nabû, and that they were Egyptians. As is well known, Cambyses (the tablet is dated in his sixth year) made an expedition to and subjugated Egypt, so that this tablet is practically a contemporary reference to the event. After stating that Iddin-Nabû has now no further right of any kind to the slave and her child, the names of five witnesses are given. There is also a reference at the end to another transaction between the same parties.

The last tablet on my list refers to the transfer of a loan from a father to his son, or rather the repayment by the father, and the promise of the same amount to the son. The following is a free translation of this not over-easy text:—

"On the second day of the month Tisri, the loan of four mana and one-third of silver, grant of Nergal-âhê-iddin, son of Marduk-bêl-napšâti, descendant of the priest of the sun-god, which was made to Marduk-rêmanni, son of Bêl-uballiṭ, descendant of the treasurer, Nergal-âhê-iddin will take away, and will give to Bêl-bulliṭ-su, son of Marduk-rêmanni. There is no grant whatever of Nergal-âhê-iddin unto Bêl-bulliṭ-su, and Marduk-rêmanni, his father. Wherever this contract is shown that is the guarantee."

This text, which is in excellent preservation, has the name

of ten witnesses, including the scribe; and on the edge an impression (or part of an impression) of the cylinder-seal of Nadin-âhê, a priest or scribe, of the city of Sippara, who seems also to have acted as a witness. The text is dated in the 34th year of Darius.

The text of all these documents, with translations, notes, &c., will be found in "Inscribed Babylonian Tablets, in the possession of Sir Henry Peek, Bart.," London, 1888-1891.

DISCUSSION.

The PRESIDENT mentioned as among the many important details brought forward by Mr. Pinches the tendency both in Akkadian and Assyrian figures to represent faces with the eyebrows meeting. Such when met with in Europe are explained in popular folk-lore by the belief that the person is a vampire or witch, whose soul appears in the form of a butterfly (that is, in the joined eyebrows), ready to take flight from the body.

Mr. BOUVERIE-PUSEY asked if anything was known as to what was the religion of the Semites before they came into contact with the Akkadians.

Mr. BRABROOK remarked that the valuable collection of tablets exhibited by Sir Henry Peek formed a series of precedents in conveyancing, and exemplified the great advantage the ancients possessed, not only in the durability of the material upon which they inscribed their deed, but also in the succinctness of language which they were compelled to adopt.

Dr. GARSON said that he wished to call Mr. Pinches' attention to the possibility of the presence of Mongolian blood amongst these ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia which he had described that evening, and to the means by which it may be recognised. In the typical Mongolian races the form of the eye—elevated at its external angle—and the enlarged fold of mucous membrane at the inner angle, were well-known characteristics. These characters are, however, soon lost when the Mongolians are crossed with other races. As an example of this he mentioned the Lapps. The chief character which can be relied on for the identification of the presence of Mongolian blood is the form of the face, which has a particularly flat appearance, with well marked malar bones flattened in front. The angle formed by the projection of the face at the level of the nasal notch with the external borders of the orbits is always 144° or more. In all other races the angle is much more acute.

An examination of the types of inhabitants of ancient Egypt, discussed at a meeting of this Institute, by Mr. R. Stuart Poole, a few years ago, showed that one of these is unmistakably Mongolian.

Mr. RANDALL H. PYE remarked that in the south of China the phrase "a one eye-browed man," *i.e.*, a man whose eyebrows met,

was proverbial as describing one with a haughty or ungovernable temper.

Mr. PINCHES said in reply that, in answer to a question as to whether, with the change of race, any change of religion was noticeable, it seemed to him that whilst the Akkadians were polytheists, the Semitic population had more monotheistic tendencies, and quoted, in support of this, some names from Sir Henry Peek's tablets where a single supreme god seemed to be referred to.

In answer to a question as to why one of two figures on the cylinder-seal exhibited on the screen was upside down, he said that this had been explained, by R. Brown, jun., as their way of representing the constellation of the twins.¹

In answer to the question, "What was the special object of cases or envelopes round tablets," Mr. Pinches replied that it was for the preservation of the record, both by protection of the writing by the envelope, and by the copy with which the latter was inscribed. This double record was most valuable, at times, on account of completion of the text, and variant readings.

With regard to the writing of the tablets, Mr. Pinches said that this was done with the rectangular corner of a square stick, and all the various kinds of wedges could be produced by a very slight movement of the wrist. The cylinder-seals, &c., were engraved by means of the drill, and by grinding.² The writing, impressions of seals, &c., were made whilst the tablet was in a soft state, and it was afterwards baked, or (as is generally the case in Babylonia) simply sun-dried.

In answer to Mr. Cuthbert E. Peek, Mr. Pinches said that it was true that there was a land called Aa, which seemed to be mentioned on tablet No. 1 of Sir Henry Peek. He hardly thought that this was the land of the moon-god, or rather goddess. [It is a mountainous tract on the borders of Kurdistan. See Fried Delitzsch, *Paradies*, p. 247.]

In answer to the President, Mr. Pinches said that he had not studied the question of the measures, but had read through the works of M. Aurès [and some of Prof. Oppert]. The most interesting analogy with modern measures was one which occurred on a tablet in the Edinburgh Museum. This text referred to an ass of five cubits high, and he judged, therefore, that the cubit in question must have been more or less equal to our foot. Mr. Pinches was inclined to regard the type with joined eyebrows as one not universal in Assyria in ancient times, though fairly common. He thought that the sculptures showed the eyebrows joined because the people considered this as handsome. With regard to the question of religion, Mr. Pinches hardly thought that Merodach could be regarded as a sun-god, notwithstanding that the last component part of the full form of the name, Amar-utug, might be regarded as the Akka-

¹ "Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology," March, 1891, p. 252.

² Mr. John Pinches, however, is of opinion that they used wheels similar to those employed to-day, in which case a lathe would have been needed for the work.—T. G. P.

dian word for "day." With reference to the language of the Akkadians, he thought that much progress had been made, and that this progress tended to confirm the comparison with the Tartar tongues, though the Rev. C. J. Ball had made a large number of comparisons with Chinese, and had found some most remarkable likenesses between the two. Mr. Pinches thought that the Akkadians had a certain claim to be considered civilizers, though they shared the honour with the Semitic Babylonians. The wedge-writing seems to have originated with the Akkadians.

In answer to another question as to whether the eyebrows meeting over the nose indicated among the Akkadians and Assyrians a bad temper, the author said that there was no means of telling, as he did not think that that subject was treated of on the tablets. The gentleman who had asked the question had said that that was the opinion in China, but Mr. Pinches had heard that same opinion expressed much nearer home—namely in England.¹

In reply to the remark that the tablets of Sir Henry Peek exhibited, constituted a very complete series of precedents in conveyance, the author said that these were only, in reality, specimens, and that the British Museum contained a large number of other types, and included wills and lawsuits.

Referring to the remarks made about the Mongolian type of features, which was found also in Egypt, Mr. Pinches said that he had not, on any of the sculptures, noticed the oblique eyes which some Assyriologists thought they had observed, and which was particularly noticeable in the case of the sculptures from Cyprus. If there were any Mongolian blood, one would certainly expect to see this peculiarity sometimes reproduced on the numerous sculptures.²

*An ACCOUNT of a COLLECTION of ETHNOGRAPHICAL SPECIMENS
formed during VANCOUVER'S VOYAGE in the PACIFIC OCEAN,
1790-1795.*

By CHARLES H. READ, Esq., F.S.A.

[WITH PLATES X AND XI.]

[Read 10th March, 1891.]

THE specimens I have the pleasure of exhibiting this evening are selected from a much larger number recently acquired by Mr. A. W. Franks, who intends to present them to the Christy

¹ The gentleman afterwards said that he had not meant really bad temper, but rather that seriousness and pride of race which I had mentioned in the course of my paper.—T. G. P.

² This remark, however, is now no longer correct, for No. 1 on Plate XXV of the quite recently issued part of the account of M. de Sarzec's discoveries ("Découvertes en Chaldée"), a small head is figured in which an obliqueness of the eyes is certainly noticeable.—T. G. P.