

in italics in the English version; it is originally only 'thy left' (one), 'thy right' (one). Now in the *Didascalía* the passage is quoted to warn Christians against going to law before unbelievers (1 Co 6⁵). The passage runs—

It is the glory of the Christian to have no bad matter with any one; but when by means of the Enemy a temptation comes upon any and he has a suit, he ought to be careful to get free from it, even it be with some loss; and to the judgment of the heathen he must not go, nor must ye receive witness from heathen against one of ours. For through the heathen the Enemy is busy against the servants of God. Therefore, because the heathen will stand to the left (Mt 25³³), he called them the *left*. For our Saviour said so: *Nor shall know your left, what your right is doing*: nor shall know the *heathen* in your judgments, and ye shall not receive from them witness against yourselves, and ye shall not go to law before them. As He further said in the Gospel: Give to the Cesar what is Cesar's, and to God what is God's.

In the *Apostolic Constitutions*, that recast of the *Didascalía*, ii. 45, this passage is changed and replaced by a reference to 1 Co 6⁵—

διὰ γὰρ αὐτῶν (i.e. τῶν ἐθνικῶν) ὁ διάβολος ἐπιτηδεύει τοῖς δοῦλοις τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ θρεῖδος ἐπιχειρεῖ ὡς μὴ ἐχόντων ἡμῶν ἕνα

σοφὸν τὸν δυνάμενον μεταξύ βραβεῦσαι τὸ δίκαιον ἢ τὰς ἀντιλογίας διαλύσαι. μὴ οὖν γιγνωσκέτωσαν τὰ ἔθνη τὰς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὑμῶν διαφοράς, etc.

In Syriac the Devil is sometimes called directly 'the left one' (see *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2662), and it is not impossible that *Sammael*, the well-known Jewish name for the chief of all Satans (לְשָׁמַאֵל, *Targum Job*, 28⁷), may be originally לְשָׁמַאֵל, *the left*, vocalized after Rafael and similar names.¹ A corresponding designation for the Devil in the *Constitutions* is ὁ ἄλλότριος, 'the other one,' in Hebrew אֲלֹהֵי; compare, for instance, μὴ δῶ τόπον τῷ ἄλλοτρίῳ κατ' αὐτῶν, *Const.* 8⁶ = Eph 4²⁶, ῥύσηται τοὺς αὐτοῦ ἰκέτας ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ ἄλλοτρίου καταδυναστείας, *ibid.* chap. 7, ἔτι παρακαλουμέν σε . . . ὑπὲρ τῶν χειμαζομένων ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄλλοτρίου, *ibid.* chap. 12.

E. B. NESTLE.

Maulbronn.

¹ It is also in Arabic that the left side is connected with the Devil. When ye eat and drink, says a word of Mohammed, eat and drink with your right hand, for, lo, the devil is eating and drinking with the left.

Does the Papyrus of Khazmwas in the British Museum contain Early Christian Records?

BY W. ST. CHAD BOSCAWEN, F.R.H.S.

It may indeed be truly said that Egypt is the land of surprises. Year after year the explorer and the decipherer seem to bring more and more of the unexpected to light. But a few years ago the threshold of Egyptian history was bounded by the age of Senefru, the builder of the pyramid of Medum, at a period of some three thousand seven hundred years before the Christian era. The researches of De Morgan and Petrie at Abydos and Nagada have proved the age of Menes and the birth of dynastic rule to be historic events. Even here the limit was not reached, for the undaunted student of human origins has passed far beyond, into the dark and labyrinthine regions of the prehistoric, and still the spirit of inquiry remains unsatisfied, and would pass on and on. Still new problems arise demanding solution.

It is not with the early history of Egypt, or the dark hinterland which stretches like a primeval African forest beyond that age, that I have to deal in this article. It is with the later links in the chain of findings that I would concern myself. In recent years the sandy dunes of the Fayoum and the Roman cemeteries of Akhmin have yielded up an astonishing *trouvaille* of buried literature. Fragments of famous classical authors—Homer, Demosthenes, Aristophanes, many writers known to us by name but whose works were lost, such as Hysperides the poet—have been brought to light. The lost Politics of Aristotle and a poem of Sappho are all proof of the existence in Egypt of a literature, and a reading public. More important still has been the discovery of some few—as yet very few—fragments of Christian

literature. Chief among these are the portions of the Gospel and Apocalypse of St. Peter from Akhmin and the Logia of Jesus from the Fayoum. These fragments at least prove the existence of a Christian literature in Egypt; and when we add to these the numerous fragments of Gospels found at Oxyrhynchus, we may hope for yet more important discoveries. There have, however, been discovered other papyri which, while not of Christian origin, belong to a period contemporary with the advent of the gospel preaching in Alexandria, and which certainly seem to throw a side, if not a direct, light upon the earliest traditions of Christianity. According to the best received tradition, the gospel teaching was introduced into Egypt by St. Mark about the year A.D. 67. Of this we have no authentic evidence; but if it is not possible to fix this definitely, there is evidence that the new teaching had been promulgated in Egypt towards the end of the first century, and borne considerable fruit by the early part of the second. The writings of the Gnostics Basilides and Valentinus contain references and quotations from the Gospels which imply that the pupils of these teachers must have known the books upon which the Christian faith was based.

The Gnostic papyri, written in demotic, contain, as De Groof has shown, charms in which the names of St. Peter and other apostles occur.¹ We may therefore assume that Christian teaching would be known to a considerable portion of the population of Egypt, at least in Alexandria, between A.D. 67 and A.D. 150. One other point I would venture to suggest has a considerable bearing on this subject. It is hardly to be supposed that the earliest Christian community was one derived from the Greco-Roman population, or from the Hellenized Egyptians, but rather from the poorer Jewish-Aramæan, and possibly a few of the lower Egyptians. The only convert we know of from the New Testament is Apollos, an Hellenistic Jew. It was therefore to this class the first teaching would be known. Now among this class the Egyptian patois would be the debased tongue which we find in use in the demotic papyri. Moreover, the demotic was the script of the trading community, as we know from the numerous contracts, wills, letters, etc., which have been found. To place the matter clearly, and it will be seen to be of importance, there was

¹ *Bulletin de l'Institut Egyptienne.*

probably a small Christian community in Egypt to whom St. Mark went; indeed, De Groof deduces considerable evidence to ascribe the foundation of this nucleus to the preaching of Philip, and the Egyptian language of this community would be that which we find in the demotic papyri.

Egypt was *par excellence* the home of magic, indeed the Talmud styles it the land to which eleven portions of magic were given when only twelve had been created. It was also the home of the novel or popular tale, as shown by such tales as that of 'The Two Brothers' in Daubeneay Papyrus, or the Magic Tales in the 'Westcarr Papyrus,' or the 'Story of Sinhuit,' etc. The magical tales were the literary pabulum of the common people. Such a literature took a firm hold upon the popular imagination, and, like the *Arabian Nights*, was handed down orally more than in written form. Like all folk-lore tales, these stories grew with centuries; all legend being fish for the net of the popular raconteurs of Thebes and Memphis, and in later times for those of Alexandria. The vitality of magic and wonder tales was great; and when religion and priestly tradition had lost their power, and popular faith grew dim, these stories survived. The decadence of the Egyptian faith after the fall of the Theban priesthood, followed by the overthrow of the Saite rule, obliterated much of the canonical literature of Egypt. The 'Book of the Dead,' a vast emporium of magic, gave place to shorter rituals, such as the 'Book of Breathings,' or the still shorter rituals of Greco-Roman times; but the magicians held their own. In Ptolemaic and Greco-Roman times there was a great revival of the love of these tales, of the tales 'of the things which men of olden time knew,' as the prince in the Westcarr Papyrus calls them, and several collections were made.

Chief among such cycles of stories was one grouped round a certain Kha-m-uas 'Manifestation in Thebes,' who was the son of the Pharaoh named Usamara, whom we may identify with the User-mat-Ra of the monuments, or Rameses II., the Pharaoh of Moses. The prince is known to us from several monuments as the 'High Priest of Memphis,' and there is a statue of him in the British Museum. In ancient times he had a great reputation for knowledge of esoteric learning and magic; and it is curious to note that the in-

scription on his statue seems to be partly written in some secret writing. Throughout these legends or tales we find him usually mentioned as Setne or Setme, a name really derived from his title as High Priest of Memphis; but in some cases his full name is given, so that there can be no doubt as to the identity.

Of these tales we possess two manuscripts; the first is in the Museum at Gizeh, and has been published by Brugsch, Hess, and recently by Mr. Griffith. The date is uncertain, but undoubtedly it belongs to the Ptolemaic age. The second, and in many respects more important manuscript, is now in the British Museum, where it is numbered Papyrus DCIV., and has recently been published in facsimile by the Oxford Clarendon Press, and translated and edited by Mr. F. M. Griffith, F.S.A., reader in Egyptology at Oxford. Of this valuable document we are able fortunately to fix the date with considerable accuracy. It consisted of two sheets of papyrus originally used for the writing of a series of accounts and land registers of the city of Crocodilopolis, and is dated in the seventh year of the Emperor Claudius, that is, A.D. 46-47. The reverse of the papyrus has been cleaned, and upon it has been transcribed in demotic of a very cursive character, a series of tales of Kham-uas. Judging from the re-usage of the Greek papyri in the Fayoum, the interval between the two writings may be fairly placed at about thirty years, which would give for the demotic transcript a date of A.D. 76-77, that is, from ten to twelve years after the reputed mission of St. Mark.

The contents of the papyrus may be divided into two portions: (1) the story of the birth and childhood of Se-Osiris (son of Osiris) the son of Kham-uas, and (2) the weaving in of an old story of a contest between rival magicians and Se-Osiris which contains matter closely resembling the episodes in the life of Moses at the court of Rameses II.; but with this portion I cannot now deal.

The tale commences with the story of the birth of Se-Osiris. Setme (Kham-uas) and his wife are anxious for a child, and are aged, as several references in the papyrus imply. The wife's name is *Meh-usekht* ⁽¹⁾. The first complete portion of the story commences with the dream of Setme.

We read—

Setme laid him down one night and dreamt a dream, they speaking to him, saying, Meh-usekht thy wife hath

taken conception in the night. The child that shall be born he shall be named Se-Osiris; for many are the marvels that he shall do in the land of Egypt (*Kemi*).

Here we are at once struck with a similarity to the Gospel narrative; but before dealing with this section one other quotation—

Her time of bearing came. She gave birth to a male child. They caused Setme to know it; (and) he named him Se-Osiris, according to what was said in the dream.

Here we have in both passages a most striking parallelism with the Gospel narrative. The passage may be quoted from Mt 1²⁰⁻²².²⁴ I have placed in italics the parallels.

'But when he (Joseph) thought upon these things, behold, an angel of the Lord *appeared unto him in a dream*, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that *which is conceived in her* is of the Holy Ghost. And *she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.*'

Here also we may quote v.²⁴ 'And Joseph rose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and . . . unto him his wife: and knew her not till *she had brought forth a son: and he called His name Jesus.*'

It is also necessary to quote a passage from the Gospel of St. Luke, as it throws considerable light upon the comparisons we may institute.

In the Annunciation as described by St. Luke we have again the naming of the child, for we read, 'Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus.' Then follows (1³⁵), 'That which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.' Incidentally, we have also a parallelism with the naming and birth of St. John the Baptist as described by St. Luke.¹

Without pushing these comparisons too far, there are some points of interest to be noticed. From the few fragments of the commencement of the papyrus and also a passage near the end, we learn that the birth of Se-Osiris was of the nature of a miraculous conception. Se-Osiris, who was with his father Osiris in Amenti, saw the trouble that was being placed upon Egypt by wicked magicians who would 'bring shame upon the land of Kemi.' Now in Egyptian theology shame (*betes*)

¹ Very similar circumstances attend the birth of the Coptic Saint Shenadi, as described in his Life by M. E. Amélineau, *Les Moines Egyptiens Vie de Schmoudi*, p. 15 *et seq.*

is the equivalent of sin; as in the Book of the Dead, chap. 14 we read: 'Behold the god hath shame of me, but let my faults be washed away.' He then requests his father Osiris to allow him to go and deliver the land. To this end he is transformed into a plant, of the seed of which Meḥ-useḫt eats and conceives of the child. A somewhat similar legend is current as to the birth of Zoroaster; and to trace this to Persian influence may be possible, but the doctrine of transmigration of souls through the medium of plants was a great power in Gnosticism. The end of the story may also be quoted after the contest with the magician, the Pharaoh and his court took for the wonder-working child, but *he was taken* out of their sight. It is not my intention to deal with any of the difficult theological problems which arise from these parallels, but I now pass to another striking passage describing the youth of Se-Osiris.

It came to pass that when the child Se-Osiris was one year people might have said he was two years, he being two years they might have said he was three years. He grew big, he grew strong, he was put to school, and he rivalled the scribe whom they caused to give him instruction. The child Se-Osiris began to speak magic (*Heḥ*) with the scribes in the House of Life in Memphis, and all the land wondered at him.

Behold the boy Se-Osiris was *twelve* years, and it came to pass that there was no good scribe or learned man in Memphis that rivalled him in reading or writing a spell.

Here again we seem to be almost in touch with Lk 2⁴⁰ *et seq.*: 'And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the power of God was upon Him. And when He was twelve years of age (2⁴⁶) they found Him sitting in the temple in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.' Here the verbal correspondence is even more close than in the former passages, and even the differences are important. We have agreement in age, in growth, in wisdom and stature, and in the resort to the temple and consultation with the learned men. In the case of Se-Osiris it is magic that constitutes his great wisdom, at which all wondered. We must remember that this is the very source to which Talmudic writers attribute the miracles of Jesus, who say that Ben Stada, one of the Talmud names of Jesus, brought his magical spells from Egypt.

The superiority of learning of Se-Osiris agrees

with that ascribed to Jesus in the 'Gospel of the Infancy.'

A word must be said as to the name of the hero, Se-Osiris. It means, as I have said, 'the son of Osiris'; but as I have shown, the legend points clearly to his being a miraculous birth, and an incarnation. Throughout the papyrus, Osiris is always called "the god" (*pa neter*), or "the great god" (*pa neter āa*), and is really the only god who appears prominently, both Anubis and Thoth, who appear in the judgment scene in Amenti, being inferior to him. So that Se-Osiris becomes a very close equivalent of 'the Son of God' or 'the son of the God.' We must remember, as Amélineau says, the Egyptian Christians never entirely abandoned their own creed. He says: 'Isis or Horus lost none of their popularity; Anubis remained always the one who conducted the souls of the dead to the supreme judge Osiris, and he Thoth was still the supreme recorder. The Christian Hell did not change in any way anything of the Egyptian Hell, it was always Amenti in the west of Heaven.' So that we have in this papyrus all that might have been gathered from an Egyptian Christian and utilized by the story-teller.

It is important to notice that all the matter affords parallels with the writings of St. Matthew and St. Luke, but there is no contact with St. Mark. The part which describes the visit of Se-Osiris and his father to Amenti contains a curious parable resembling that of the 'Rich man and Lazarus,' again in touch with St. Luke, and also teaching as to the judgment and future life quite different from the ordinary eschatology of the Egyptians. But to deal with this portion, which is of great value, would require the study of several important new inscriptions. In conclusion, we have here, within twenty years of the mission of St. Mark, folk tales which present most striking parallels to the Gospel writings, and which, so far as we know, occur nowhere previously in Egyptian literature. It is very tempting to see in them the first echoes of the preaching of the Christian faith in the land where it made its earliest and greatest conquests.

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