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68. The Origin of the Dolmen

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The sorcerer takes a broken piece of a monk's begging-bowl, which has been presented to the monk at his ordination and has afterwards been accidentally broken (the sooner the better, but the breakage must be accidental), together with a style offered on the same occasion. With the style he scratches some words or characters, probably meaningless to the uninitiated, and while he does so the piece of pottery must lie on the girl's breast and he must have connection with her. In order to make the charm successful three things must end simultaneously—the writing, his orgasm, and hers. If they are not simultaneous the rite has to be repeated. One suspects that, if the girl is young and pretty, a good many attempts may be necessary before success is attained, for the sorcerer is master of the situation.

Another way is for the sorcerer to take two pieces of silver leaf and, placing himself in position as above, to write on each, laying them in turn on the forehead, each breast, and the navel of the girl. Then he rolls them up separately, and puts one into his mouth and one into hers. He instructs her, as the end approaches, to work the roll out between her lips with her tongue, and he does the same with his roll. Lastly, at the critical moment, he takes her roll into his mouth with his lips and she simultaneously takes his.

When a man desires a charm of this kind he hires a prostitute to go through the rite. She has to be heavily feed, as it is believed that sickness sometimes results, and I am told that payment of two or three pounds is not uncommon.

R. GRANT BROWN.

Archæology.

The Origin of the Dolmen. *By Harold Peake.*

Peake.

68

I.

The views advanced during recent years by Professor Elliot Smith on the distribution of megalithic structures and other cultural items have lately created considerable interest and given rise to no little opposition, but it is in no unsympathetic spirit that I propose to discuss some of the views he has put forward, for I readily acknowledge the value of his inquiries, even if I am not prepared to accept all his conclusions.

One of Professor Elliot Smith's theories may briefly be stated thus. That certain developments of the tomb in Egypt in pre- and proto-dynastic times, led to the evolution of the dolmen in some adjacent regions. Later on, between 800 B.C. and 600 B.C., the Phœnicians, in search of gold, tin, copper, and other precious commodities, carried this form of tomb as far west as Spain and as far north as Brittany, the British Isles, and the Baltic.

He believes that in Egypt, owing to the peculiar views as to a future life associated with the preservation of the body, the inhabitants were desirous of preserving the corpse free from contact with the surrounding soil. As they buried in loose sand, this led them to build round the corpse a retaining-wall of sun-dried brick, thus leading to the idea of a vault, from which he believes the dolmen to have been copied. This course of development was due, he thinks, to conditions peculiar to Egypt.*

But such beliefs as to a future life—if, indeed, the origin of the dolmen be based upon them—may well have been held elsewhere—they are certainly found generally distributed at the present day—and there are many reasons for believing that the germ, at any rate, of this belief was common to the whole Mediterranean

* Elliot Smith, "Evolution of the Rock-cut Tomb and the Dolmen" in *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgeway*, 1913.

race. This point, indeed, has been to some extent acknowledged by the professor himself.*

The difficulty of preserving the corpse from contact with loose sand would be felt over the greater part of North Africa—the home, it is believed, of the Mediterranean race—and this difficulty would not be appreciably less where it was necessary to bury in gravel, clay, or loose soil, that is practically everywhere. The conditions, therefore, postulated by Professor Elliot Smith as necessary for the evolution of the dolmen may be met with everywhere, except on barren rocks, where there existed members of the Mediterranean race, or of any other race which connected the idea of a future existence with the preservation of the body.

Now the distinctive feature of the dolmen is the use of slabs of rock, most of them set orthostatically, and neither of these points are met at all generally in pre- or proto-dynastic Egypt. The Egyptians desired to construct a vault or coffer, and quite naturally used the material ready to hand, that is, sun-dried brick. But we can imagine that some people elsewhere, having the same object in view, and not in the habit of using brickwork, may have discovered other means of achieving the same end, and if they happened to live in a region in which slabs of rock, whether of slate, limestone, or marble, dislodged from the face of a cliff by the action of frost, were of common occurrence, it might have occurred to them to use slabs of the material which was ready to hand as retaining-walls to keep the soil from polluting the corpse.

The above is only, of course, a possibility, and must remain a suggestion merely unless we can find some region in which a people are to be found, holding religious views somewhat similar to those of the Egyptians, in which the necessary raw material is also to be found and in which graves have been discovered lined with orthostatic slabs.

Now it appears that in several of the Ægean islands, as for instance Paros, OIiaros, Naxos, Amorgos, Siphnos, and Melos, graves have been found lined with slabs of marble, and dating from a very early epoch.† Marble is found in Paros and perhaps in some of the other islands, while the primitive population is believed to have been of the Mediterranean race. Here, then, we appear to have all the conditions requisite for the early development of the dolmen, though it would be hazardous, as yet, to assert that this form of tomb took its origin in any one of the particular islands named.

Professor Elliot Smith also makes much of the ante-chambers of the Egyptian mastabas, and points out the resemblances between them and some of the dolmens, as both seem to have been used for serving the dead with food and drink. But if we grant that the belief in an after-life of the corpse was a common inheritance of the Mediterranean race, and the presence of food vessels and the like in their graves compels us to believe this, the similarities of the mastabas and the dolmens are explained without assuming any further connection than similarity of religious beliefs.

II.

Professor Elliot Smith has stated that M. Siret has arrived quite independently at the same conclusions as he has, namely, that the Phœnicians carried megalithic culture to Spain and Brittany. It may be well, therefore, to examine M. Siret's conclusions in detail.‡ M. Siret begins by discussing the site of the Cassiterides, and cites very strong evidence to show that the tin islands of the ancients were the

* *Ibid.* p. 498.

† Dussaud, R., *Les Civilisations Préhelléniques dans le Bassin de la Mer Egée*. 2nd Edition, 1914, p. 83.

‡ Siret, L., "Les Cassiterides et l'Empire des Phéniciens," in *l'Anthropologie*, xix, 162.

isles off the coast of the Morbihan. He then proceeds to describe four periods during which the tin trade was in existence.

During the first period, which M. Siret fixes "provisionally and approximately" at the first quarter of the second millennium," he believes that the Sidonians "discovered the western sites of tin and other metals and started a prolonged and "lucrative trade." "Towards the twelfth century," he continues, "the invasion of "the Celtic peoples, friendly to the Greeks, hostile to the Phoenicians, allowed the "former, to the detriment of the latter, to develop their trade in the north-west basin of the Mediterranean." "At the time of this invasion of the Celts, the "Sidonians were compelled to evacuate Spain; the Tyrians succeeded them and by "the foundation of Gadir succeeded in retaining the monopoly of the ocean and of "the seaborne trade in tin." The third period included the Carthaginian and the fourth the Roman trade in this region.

Now this view agrees with that of Professor Elliot Smith in claiming the Phoenicians as the earliest traders with the west, but differs in placing the beginning of this trade about 2000 B.C. instead of 800 B.C. But when we look for evidence, we find nothing but tradition in support of the second period, and imagination only as the basis of the first. M. Siret writes much on his ideas of the early religion of these regions, which consisted, he states, of a male deity in the form of a cuttlefish and a female deity in the form of an adze, but no one, I fancy, who has read his arguments would be prepared to take them seriously.

But if we must dismiss as foolish imaginings M. Siret's restoration of the primitive Mediterranean religion, and must regard his theory of ancient Sidonian trade as based on no sound reasoning, we cannot deny that he has cited evidence

[After Siret.]

[After Siret.]

These are not all drawn to the same scale.

[118]

which will enable us to form some idea as to the origins of the trade, the existence of which he has demonstrated beyond doubt.

He figures four axes, three of stone from Brittany and one of copper from Spain, which can be matched with tolerable accuracy by specimens from Hissarlik II,

Mané-er-Hroëg. Mont Saint Michel.

Brittany.

Jadite.

Chloromelanite.

Cyprus.

Copper.

Cyprus.

Copper.

[After Siret.]

These are not all drawn to the same scale.

Cyprus, and the Ægean. He figures also, from Neolithic graves, jars resembling Cycladic pyxades and owl-like figures resembling some from Cyprus and Hissarlik II. All this tends to show that, at a time when metal was almost unknown in Brittany and Spain, its mineral wealth was exploited by traders from the eastern Mediterranean, and that this took place during the existence of Hissarlik II.

In support of this one must cite the strange ivory object found at Castelluccio, near Syracuse, amid copper or early bronze surroundings,* which exactly resembles one found by Schliemann in Hissarlik II,† and the statement by Déchelette that vases found by Siret in Spain resemble in shape Cretan vases of the early Minoan period, while there were also found there many stone cists consisting of six slabs, exactly resembling those found in the islands of the Ægean.‡

* Peet, E., *Stone and Bronze Ages in Italy*, 204; Orsi, P., "La necropoli sicula di Castelluccio," in *Bul. Pal.* (1892), 7. Plate iv, 2.

† Schliemann, *Ilios*, 533, Fig. 565; both are figured in Déchelette, J., *Manuel d'archéologie*, ii, 75.

‡ Déchelette, J., "Essai sur la chronologie préhistorique de la Péninsule Iberique" in *Revue Archéologique* (1908, July-December), 251, 256.

This evidence seems to suggest that this trade between Spain and the eastern Mediterranean took place during the early Minoan period, which closed, according to most authorities, about 2200 B.C., and during the existence of Hissarlik II, which, as I have recently endeavoured to show, was sacked about the same date or a few years earlier.

It may, perhaps, be worth while to narrow down somewhat the area from which these traders set forth, though it is perhaps premature to put forward a suggestion as to their home. They were evidently in trade relations with Hissarlik, the Cyclades, Crete, and Cyprus. No evidence has yet been adduced that Hissarlik had a port, though it seems to have been in touch, by an overland route, with Cyprus, which will probably account for the Cyprus-Spain resemblances. Had Cyprus been in direct touch with Spain, it would probably have learnt the use of tin earlier than it did, and so brought its copper age to an earlier close. Crete does not appear to have been in direct touch with Hissarlik during the early Minoan period, and the same seems to be true, as far as our present information extends, of the Cyclades.

Of course, in dismissing these centres as the homes of our early traders with the Spanish mines we are relying on negative evidence, always a weak rock on which to found a theory, still the distribution of the places having early Spanish connections seem to indicate that the centre of this trade was some island in the north-east of the *Ægean*, and none of the islands in this region have yet been explored by the pre-historian. Later analogy suggests that even in these early days sea-power shifted from centre to centre, and that there were many thalassocracies before the days of Minos. The evidence from Phylacopi suggests that an early centre was at Melos, though as its main export was obsidian, its supremacy departed when the use of metal became general. It seems possible, therefore, if not probable, that in the first beginnings of the Metal Age the trade and industry was centred in some island not yet explored.

III.

I have endeavoured to show that it is to the north-east of the *Ægean* that we must look for the centre from which mining prospectors set out for Spain and Brittany, carrying with them the elements of megalithic architecture. As these regions have not been adequately explored from an archaeological standpoint, and are now too near to one of the centres of hostilities to be examined at the present moment, I might well leave the inquiry at this point. But I cannot forget that when history has been lacking, and archæology, for the moment, at fault, tradition has more than once, as at Troy and Cnossos, pointed the way to further investigation with surprising accuracy.

Now Greek tradition is full of references to mysterious divine or heroic beings, closely associated with the working of metals, of whom the Dactyls and Cabiri are the most prominent. Whether the former were always associated with Crete, or trace their origin, as has been suggested, to Caria, does not matter for the moment, as they were in any case associated with the south-eastern corner of the *Ægean*, while it is to the north-east that our attention is at present directed.

But those mythical early metal-workers, the Cabiri, were worshipped especially in Samothrace, Imbros, and Lemnos, though their cult spread later to other regions, and these three islands are in the right area and lie at no great distance from Hissarlik. The Cabiri were reputed to be the sons of Hesphestos, and the story that the god of metals, when ejected from Olympus, fell into Lemnos, "where Sintian folk tended him," is as old as the *Iliad*.

Time will show whether I am right in my suggestion that Lemnos was the home of the early metal-traders who visited Sicily, Spain, and Brittany, but it may be worth while to remind my readers that at a later date Lemnos was inhabited by

Tyrrhenians, probably akin to those other ancient metal-workers, the Etruscans, and that an inscription in the Etruscan tongue, or one closely resembling it, has been found in the island. Also that Tyrrhenian Pelasgians are credited with having built the Pelasgian wall on the Acropolis at Athens, and possibly elsewhere in Greece, that similar masonry is found on the older sites in Etruria, and also in Sardinia in association with megalithic structures.

The suggestions that I wish to make—for they are suggestions only—are that prior to 2200 B.C. some traders from the north-east of the Ægean, familiar with the use of copper, and probably possessing the secret of bronze, set out from their home, which may have been Lemnos, in search of copper and tin. Their voyages of discovery led them to Sicily, Spain, and in all probability to Sardinia and the Balearic Islands. They were also in touch with the Morbihan, though possibly through the mediation of western traders, who may have been engaged, for some time past, in commerce along the Atlantic sea-board. At home they had relations with Crete, the Cyclades, and Hissarlik, and through the last-named possibly with Cyprus. They were accustomed to erect Cyclopean walls, and learnt the use of cists from the people of the Cyclades; they spread the knowledge of these two arts among the people with whom they traded, and the result was the evolution of the Dolmen.

HAROLD PEAKE.

Admiralty Islands.

Hardy.

Note on Native Dance in the Admiralty Islands. *By Commander* **69**
H. N. M. Hardy.

While visiting Pitelu, an island on the north side of the Admiralties, in January 1915, the dance which is the subject of these notes was given before the Administrator, Colonel Pethebridge, and his staff, of which I was at the time a member.

The males, to the number of 150, gathered on a beach at some little distance from the scene of the dance, and there could be seen searching for specimens of the large white cowry (*Ovulum ovum*), each man jamming his shell on to his penis in such a way that the glans was gripped tightly in the opening of the shell. They then came to the dance ground, in single file, performing a step resembling the common gymnastic performance of "knees up," and collected in lines of about fifteen facing us.

The "star" performers, of whom there were eight, took their places on a prepared stage, which had been set up the day before, and which consisted of a carved beam, some 25 feet long, the upper surface being some 3 inches wide. The ends were curved upwards, and carved very similarly to the bows of a canoe, while less elaborate carving in the form of crocodiles extended the length of the beam. The whole was supported on trestles some 6 feet from the ground.

In addition to the shells, their costume consisted only of bead necklaces and bracelets and the usual head ornaments, with a few coin and shell armlets on the upper arm. No weapons were carried.

Those who danced on the beam were all men in the prime of life, but among the rest were men of all ages, from five up to sixty or seventy. The children who were too young to wear the cowry shell, of which there is only one size, knocked holes in a smaller shell, a kind of cone-shell, and threaded their members through these holes. On a signal from the Lului—the local chief—the dance began, the steps being apparently designed to make the shells oscillate as much as possible, accompanied by loud shoutings and wild leapings into the air. Each rank came in turn to the front through the gaps in the rank before it, the front rank moving back, but the "beam" men remained on their rather uncomfortable stage the whole time—about half an hour.