

UNEXPECTED LINKS

animal with its broad surfaces cannot possibly be regarded as an echo of the boar's head from the Kuban delta; hence it does not have to be a later product. The Ordos region has also yielded animal sculptures in hollow casting such as, for example, the charming bronze hind (FIG. 8). There is little in the way of western products which can be compared to them; and there are hardly any animal sculptures of this kind known in China, seen with such tender understanding and yet so soberly, full of natural freshness. Apparently such comprehension is only possible with a profound concern for the life of the animal in the herd or out in the open, a concern felt by the herdsman and hunter, in contrast to the tiller of fields, in whose art the animal appears more as a mythical or symbolical creature. Almost all early Chinese representations of animals are rooted in the mythological, are imaginary and hard to interpret; exceptions are to be found practically only among the small jade sculptures, among which, strangely enough, we find many elements which seem related to the miniature bronzes of the steppes: bird, tiger, stag, animal with turned head, ox head, cicada, coiled animal.

But there is another exception, to which H. Kühn was the first to draw attention. During the last ten years, Anyang (Honan) has yielded formerly completely unknown types of bronze harness and knives decorated with animal heads (horse, elk, ram) in the "Sino-Siberian style" and, moreover—as in the case of the so-called Tomb of the Elephant (contents in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)—together with sacrificial bronzes in pure Shang style! These curved-back knives with ring knob or animal-head knob from the end of the second millennium B.C. show great similarity to those of the Minussinsk Karasuk stage, whose dating they thus confirm. Further research will probably be able in time more clearly to establish the early level of Ordos art. Simultaneously, however, the problem becomes more intricate again; for what is originally Chinese, what originally Siberian in these Shang knives, cannot as yet be determined at all. But facts as they are have at least made it definitely clear that the center of origin of the earliest Eurasian animal style was somewhere in the East and that we must apparently reckon with a Chinese element which no one even dreamed of twenty years ago.

A historian presents a little-known chapter in the history of a much-discussed people.

THE JEWS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

By GERHARD KITTEL

ANY discussion of the Jews as a people must proceed from the fact that the Jews are not a race but a racial mixture. Among the Jews we find tall and short people, slim and thickset ones, people with narrow faces and with wide faces, with long, narrow heads and with short, wide heads, with brown eyes and with blue eyes, dark- and fair-haired, people with soft hair and people with coarse hair, people with "Jewish" noses and people with straight noses. How did the Jews arrive at this anthropological state? As the thousand years of the ghetto up to its abolishment in the nineteenth century represented a period of segregation, the question as to the origins of the Jewish racial mixture leads us to an age that must have preceded the ghetto, i.e., that of ancient Rome.

The decisive turning point in the ancient history of the Jews and their predecessors, the Israelites, was the Babylonian Exile, into which they were sent by King Nebuchadnezzar after repeated insurrections and which lasted throughout the better part of the sixth century. The pre-Exile history of the Hebrews represents a process of coalescence of three known racial components: the Oriental race, which brought with it the original Semitic language and

culture; the Near Eastern race, from which the Jews got their hooked nose; and the Mediterranean race, which lived in those regions before the Semitic population arrived and which was absorbed by all Semitic peoples. These three racial nucleuses form the basic racial stock underlying the ancient Israelites as well as the later Jews in all their evolution up to the present day.

ANCIENT RACIAL BIOLOGY

After the destruction of the Babylonian empire by the Persians, the Jews were allowed to return to Palestine. There they accepted the laws of Ezra, a Jewish priest who introduced one of the most radical racial legislations known in world history (fifth century B.C.). Ezra regarded the Babylonian captivity as God's punishment of the Jews for having intermarried with other peoples (Ezra IX, X). Consequently, all marriages of Jews with non-Jewish women were dissolved at the time. Modern Jews have praised these laws as "an outstanding deed of conscious racial breeding" and as a "splendid achievement of racial biology." However, Ezra's laws, which at first sharply segregated the Jews, only preceded a process which in the course of the next few

centuries led to the other extreme: a racial mixture of unique extent. Two historical movements have had a decisive effect on this process: on the one hand, the coming into being of a Diaspora, i.e., the scattering of the Jews throughout the Old World after the Exile; on the other, the proselytizing activities of the Jews as a result of which large numbers of new converts streamed into the Jewish faith for several centuries.

Before the Babylonian captivity there had been no such thing as a world Jewry. Ancient Israel in the days of, for example, King David was a small national state that had grown out of the merging of several tribes. Situated in Palestine, it had multiple friendly or hostile contacts with its neighboring peoples and states, but it had never shown any inclination to spread over the world. Later, as a result of the Exile, tens of thousands were transplanted to Babylonia. When at the end of the Exile they were given permission to return to Jerusalem, many of them remained in Mesopotamia. They formed the beginning of the Babylonian Diaspora. Through many centuries, these Babylonian Jews retained their individuality and their importance; they contributed so much toward the compilation of the Talmud—one thousand years later—that its principal part is known as the "Babylonian Talmud."

CENTERS OF EXPANSION

The second Jewish Diaspora was in Egypt. As early as in the seventh century B.C. there was a small troop of Jewish mercenaries far down in the south, apparently recruited by the Egyptians. But it was only at the time of the Exile and later that the Jews came to Egypt in large numbers. In the days of the Roman Empire, almost half the population of Alexandria consisted of Jews. This great commercial port of the eastern Mediterranean was a leading center for traffic to the west. Philo describes Alexandria as having had five districts: "two of them are called Jewish quarters, because most of the Jews live there; but there are not a few of them living in the other three districts too." Among the total population of eight million in Egypt, there were about one million Jews, i.e., 12 to 13 per cent.

The third great Diaspora region is Syria and Asia Minor. During the first century A.D. there was probably hardly a town in Asia Minor or in Syria which did not have its Jewish colony. During the reign of Emperor Augustus, the Jews probably went to make up some 15 per cent of the population of Syria.

It is from these three great centers of the early Jewish Diaspora that further expansion took place. From Babylonia eastward; in the first few centuries A.D. there were Jewish settlements as far east as India and China. From Egypt southward into Arabia and Abyssinia, and westward into the Mediterranean

basin. From Asia Minor to the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Danube areas, and on into the Mediterranean basin again: to Greece, Italy, North Africa, Gaul, and Spain. In the first and second century A.D. the Talmud already contained provisions for the event of a Jew living in Spain. About 300 A.D. an early Christian synod met in Elvira in Spain; the resolutions it passed presupposed a Jewry extending throughout southern Spain. In Cologne there was a Jewish community in 321 with the offices of archisynagogues and elders. Around 400, Hieronymus had knowledge of Jews in Britain, Belgium, and "where the Rhine branches into two arms."

MIGRATION OF INDIVIDUALS

This Jewish migration is something entirely different from those tribal migrations in the days of ancient Israel as well as from the great migration of peoples which took place among the Germanic tribes during more or less the same centuries. It was not Jewish peoples or tribes which migrated, but individuals, often many such individuals who thereupon formed local communities. Nor can they be compared to the imperialistic colonization of a strong empire, as was the case with the Romans.

Who were these Jewish migrants? Some were mercenaries who served in foreign armies and then remained in those countries, above all in Egypt. Others were prisoners of war and slaves who, after the Palestinian wars, were carried off to Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome; we know of whole communities of freed slaves who built their own synagogues. But the strongest and most effective impetus to their expansion was, even in those days, commerce, which took them to the flourishing Hellenistic cities, to the ports and economic centers, along the rivers and trade routes into the most distant countries. In the days of the Roman emperors, Jews were to be found in all commercial occupations, starting from the beggar and hawker all the way up to the great merchant and banker.

The number of Jews in the Roman Empire has been calculated at $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 million among a population of 60 million; that is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 per cent. In 418 there was a persecution of Jews on the island of Minorca. We possess the report of the anti-Jewish bishop, which contains fairly accurate figures. According to this there must have been at least 800 to 1,000 Jews on this little island of the western Mediterranean, i.e., some 8 to 10 per cent of its inhabitants. In comparison let us recall that in 1925 the Jews in Germany amounted to 1 per cent of the population, in Berlin 4.3 per cent, in Frankfurt 5 per cent, and even in Vienna in 1935, 9.4 per cent.

DILEMMA

Scattered as it was for centuries throughout

the whole world, this people was bound to be confronted with the question whether it wanted to retain its racial composition or mix with other peoples and races. Of course, it carried with it the laws of Ezra, which seemed to bind it and prevent any mixture with others. But now it was no longer a question of whether the Jews wanted to raise racial barriers against foreigners in Jerusalem or Judea, but of whether they wished to impose a voluntary ghetto upon themselves wherever they were scattered all over the world. In the literature preserved from those centuries one senses how the foundations of Ezra are consistently being undermined. The first book of Maccabees, dating from pre-Christian times, already contains the sentence: "In those days men went out from Israel who spoke: Let us unite like brothers with the peoples living all around us, for since we have secluded ourselves from them we have met with great misfortune; and," so the story goes on, "they forsook the Holy Covenant, and they married with the Gentiles." Countless warnings show us how great this danger was and how often the marriage rules of Ezra were violated. We are told of no less than nine mixed marriages having been contracted in the Herodian house alone within the short span of a few decades; and the number of those cases not mentioned in history was probably just as great.

If it is more or less a matter of chance that such reports about mixed marriages have been handed down to us, it is even more so in the case of illegitimate relations between Jews and non-Jews. They seem to have been quite frequent. In the course of a single discussion in the Talmud at least seven cases are mentioned of children of Jewish women and uncircumcised men. In the town of Sepphoris a rabbi once complained: "How many men there are in our generation who have had intercourse with non-Jewish women!" We can take it for granted that the same was said in hundreds of variations in all the great cities: in Alexandria, Antioch, Corinth, and Rome. In short, there can be no doubt that during these centuries mixed relations between Jews and non-Jews were exceedingly frequent and that this fact simply corresponded to the situation in which world Jewry found itself.

In spite of all this, the tradition of seclusion would even have retained its compelling force among the Jews of those days, at least to the extent of raising considerable barriers to racial mixture and disintegration, had not a new factor appeared which changed everything: proselytism.

PROSELYTES

A proselyte is a newly converted non-Jew who accepts the Jewish faith by baptism and circumcision. And it is another phenomenon characteristic of that same period of ancient

world Jewry that millions of proselytes, i.e., people of other nations and races, streamed into the Jewish faith and, as we shall see, into the Jewish race. A simple comparison will give us an idea of the numbers that must have been involved. About 500 B.C. there were at most some 500,000 Jews. Six hundred years later, about 100 A.D., in the days of the Roman emperors, there were, as we saw before, some $4\frac{1}{2}$ or 5 million Jews. This represents a ten-fold increase. These figures and the increase are only to be explained by the fact that proselytes were counted among the Jews and that the number of proselytes amounted to several million.

Like world Jewry, the proselytes, too, were a new phenomenon which had been practically nonexistent in pre-Exile Israel. It is closely related to the development of world Jewry as well as to religious developments. The Jewish faith had become a ritualistic religion of laws, and the old moral-religious idea of a Covenant had been transformed into the entirely new idea that the Jews were called upon to rule over other peoples—an idea which is already the subject of acrid polemics in the New Testament.

It is in connection with these claims to power that the entire problem must be seen. If the Jews of that time—to use Christ's ironical words—roamed over land and sea to gain a proselyte, it only reflects their knowledge of the power represented by this proselytism: spiritually, economically, socially, and politically. They were proud of the fact that many prominent and powerful people were converted. There was even a proselyte royal house, in Adiabene on the upper Tigris River; in Rome, too, there were proselytes at the emperor's court, probably even in the emperor's family, indeed, perhaps even including Empress Poppaea, the wife of Nero, and there were many proselytes in noble Roman families. This does not, of course, exclude the possibility that countless proselytes belonged also to the lower and lowest social levels.

What interests us is that this deeply affected the racial situation of the Jews. A tension had arisen: on the one hand, the Ezra tradition of seclusion from all foreign elements and the ban on mixed marriages; on the other, the tendency of world Jewry to establish contact with foreigners. The proselytes were the compromise between these two opposites. For the proselyte became a Jew; "once he has taken the baptismal bath and has emerged, lo! he is in all things like to an Israelite," says the Talmud.

Now there was no longer any obstacle to marriage. The danger of a strict Jew contaminating himself by contact with a non-Jew was removed. But the other danger was also removed, namely that the Jew might be lost to Jewry through a mixed marriage: since the proselyte has been converted to the Jewish

faith, the marriage is in every respect a Jewish marriage. The Jew who contracts such a marriage is no longer a renegade; on the contrary, the spread and the power of Jewry are promoted by this proselyte marriage. From now on, the entire polemic against mixed marriages was directed solely at the nonproselyte marriage; it did not even concern itself with the proselyte marriage.

An example from life: the story is told of a young Jew of Akko, who had a love affair with a Gentile girl who was passionately in love with him and wanted to possess him at all costs. He realized that this was not right. She would not give him up and went to the rabbi, to the young man's teacher, and begged him: "Make me a proselyte!" Whereupon the old rabbi spoke to the young man: "Rise; now that she has become a proselyte you may rightfully take possession of her. Marry her!" The non-Jewish woman, having become a proselyte, was now a completely legitimate wife. Or another example: a Jewish princess had become notorious among the people because of her dissipated life. In order to restore her reputation she decided to marry. The man she chose was the Gentile King of Cilicia, who had himself circumcised for her sake and became a proselyte. We see that this marriage, contracted for the sole purpose of restoring the young lady's reputation, was regarded as being perfectly in order from every point of view: moral, ritual, and religious, national and racial. She took a proselyte: that meant at that time exactly the same as marrying a genuine Jew.

SLAVES AND JEWS

So the situation created under Ezra was completely altered, being turned into the exact opposite. The new situation was enhanced by the inclusion of slaves in proselytism. The Jews had a lot to do with slaves, since they owned them and traded in them. From a racial point of view, the gradual inclusion of non-Jewish slaves among the proselytes and thus into the marriageable Jewry must have had considerable consequences, since a lot of these slaves were recruited from the prisoners of war taken during the Roman campaigns, i.e., from peoples from the more remote border regions of the Roman Empire. The Talmud, for example, mentions Gothic slaves in the possession of Jews. As late as during the fifth and sixth centuries, the question of Jewish slaveholders and slave traders always played a role at the Frankish synods in Gaul, for instance at the fourth synod of Orléans in 541: "A Jew who, even with the promise of liberty, converts a slave to the Jewish faith or takes his non-Jewish slavewoman for a concubine will be punished with the loss of all his slaves." Similarly, the synod of Matisco in 581 decreed: "No Jew is allowed henceforth to keep a non-

Jewish slave; a Jew trying to persuade his slave to enter the Jewish faith shall lose not only all other slaves but also the right to make a will." These recurrent synodical bans prove the burning nature of this question at that time. If we want to know whence these slaves in Gaul came, we are given the best reply by the Jewish historian Dubnow, who mentions "trading with labor fetched from the remote parts of Gaul and Germany." A Nordic racial component in the Jews has been assumed by all anthropologists, some of them estimating it as high as over 10 per cent.

In certain regions, negro slaves seem to have been particularly popular. There is a story in the Talmud which is told several times and in several versions and must hence have been fairly typical: of a black slavewoman who boasted that her Jewish master preferred her to his own wife and would soon marry her. Anthropologists have on several occasions pointed to the fact that a negroid trace is to be found in the present Jewish racial mixture. According to anthropological claims, this negroid component seems to be far more pronounced among the Sephardim—the southern Jews—than among the Ashkenazim of central and eastern Europe, some 8 per cent as against 2 per cent. The Sephardim are those Jews who originally settled in Spain; from there they were driven out in 1492, some of them streaming back toward the east again. Without doubt, the greater part of these Sephardim originally started out from Alexandria, either sailing by ship toward the west or moving along the northern coast of Africa, where Jewish settlements from Roman times have been discovered in Cyrenaica, in Africa Proconsularis, in Mauritania, and in Numidia. In Spain the oldest centers of Jews seem to have been in the southern provinces, viz., in those parts of the peninsula which were first reached from Africa. These parts of ancient Jewry had more than enough opportunity in Egypt as well as on their route along the North African coast to absorb negro blood and to carry it along to Spain. On the other hand, the Ashkenazic Jews of the east apparently had less opportunity on their routes to intermix with negro blood.

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In the Talmud we now and again find the sentence that the Jews resemble an *issah*, which means a dough, a hodgepodge, and which we can translate into the modern language of anthropology as a "racial mixture." It was only the strict regulations of the Roman emperors and of the early Christian synods which put an end to this process. Throughout the Middle Ages and up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Jews were once again almost entirely segregated, until the barriers of the ghetto and the new period of mixture, that of modern Jewish assimilation, set in.