

DAN IN THE BLACK SEA

[Note by James Bruggeman: We provide the following article as supplemental material for our audio lecture series, *Joseph the Overcomer*, specifically for the lecture entitled *Joseph and the Tennessee Valley Authority*. The article was published in *The Covenant People, an Expositor of the Prophecies concerning the Two Houses of Israel and Judah* in Volume V, 1899. The several articles in the series by Col. Gawler were later published in book form. Entitled, *Dan, The Pioneer of Israel*, it is available through Stone Kingdom Ministries.]

by the late COLONEL J. C. GAWLER, Keeper of the Crown Jewels.
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Jason's expedition—Thessalians, so-called Phoenicians, who composed it, were also Heraclidae and Argives—i.e., Danai—The Colchians, descendants of the Argonauts, acknowledged as relatives by the Lacedaemonians—Colchians, in Herodotus' time, observed circumcision—Town of Jason, Median helmet—Divine forethought— " My sanctified ones "—Halor and Habor, Colchians and Iberians—"Elect of the dispersion"—Tumuli and serpent worship—Indian rock records of Dan and other Tribes of Israel, probably in Media, attacked by Cyrus.

It was, as nearly as chronologists can determine, about b.c. 1280 when Jason's expedition, composed of the flower of Thessaly, sailed in the Argo from the port of Iolchos. To compare dates : this expedition took place about 160 years later than Joshua's conquest of Canaan, about 150 years later than Danaus' first colony in Argos, and about five years later than when Deborah and Barak taunted Dan with keeping on board ship.

The Thessalians are Heraclidae, for Thessalus was a mythical son of Heracles. Now Thessaly, Strabo tells us (ix. ii. 3), was colonised by Phoenicians (so called). He also tells us (v. ii. 4) that it was Argive. hence we come round again to the Danai. There is an additional tallying proof also of their being genuine Danai, for, many years afterwards, a shipload of the descendants of the Argonauts found their way back to Greece

(Strabo viii. iii. 19; Herod, iv. 145), and claimed relationship with the Lacedaemonians, whom they called "their fathers;" and the claim was admitted.

To return to the Argonauts. Their object is shrouded in mythic legend, but it was probably some buccaneering enterprise. Heracles is said to have been on board; and they sailed to the Eastern extremity of the Black Sea, and founded Colchis, the modern Poti.

Herodotus (ii. 104) mentions the important fact that in his time, b.c. 420, the Colchians observed circumcision,¹ He adds:—" I found that the Colchians had more recollection of the Egyptians than the Egyptians had of the Colchians." Israel, indeed, would long retain a very lively recollection of the Egyptians! He also says (ii. 105):—"The Colchians alone, and the Egyptians, manufacture linen in the same manner, and the whole way of living and the language is similar in both nations; but the Colchian linen is called by the Greeks *sardonic*,² though that which comes from Egypt is called Egyptian."

These Argonauts—reinforced, perhaps, by fresh batches of their countrymen—pioneered their way inland, for Strabo (xi. xiv. 12—14, and i. ii. 39) says, "Traces of Jason's expedition still remain, and the Jasonica, or towns of Jason, are everywhere met with in Armenia, Media, and the surrounding countries." The Median helmet, we are told by several writers, was serpent-crested. Might this not have been introduced among the race by these Dannite colonists? At any rate, even here the Bible does not leave us without a witness to God's providence. In Isa. xiii., which calls the hosts together for the punishment of Babylon, the banner for their assembly is to be lifted " upon the high mountain "—i.e., the mountains of Armenia—whence the scourge came: the first called are "My sanctified ones" (ver. 2, 3); and in the 17th verse, the Medes are mentioned; but who but Israel could be called God's "sanctified ones"? What then? Why, it shows that, 500 years before Israel's captivity, God, who foresaw Israel's sin and necessary punishment, was still providing for Israel's safety and comfort by having the country—to which as wretched,

degraded captives they would eventually be brought—pioneered, opened up for them, and settled by batches of their more adventurous brethren the Dannites; and secondly, that, while using Babylon as a scourge against Judah, who had gone after Babylonish gods, God was secretly fostering in the mountains of Media, North of Babylon, a rod of His own "sanctified ones:" an offshoot of Israel, wherewith to destroy Babylon for her cruelty towards His people. These "sanctified ones" in Media may give us a clue to the ancestry of that remarkable man, Cyrus, whom God calls "Mine anointed" (Isa. xlv. i). (See note, chapter iv.)

Sir Isaac Newton ("Chron. Anct. Hist.," p. 283), and most other writers on the subject, take Halah and Habor (2 Kings xviii. n) to be Colchis and Iberia. Allatius supposes that the Israelites who were placed on the Chaborras also peopled the countries of Iberia and Colchis; and he adduces the authority of Constantine Porphyrogenetes in support of the Israelitish origin of the inhabitants of Iberia. The name Iberia, as well as Bithynia—also on the South Coast of the Black Sea—certainly strike one as of Hebrew origin.

Again, I find in Ezra viii. 17, that, on the return of the seventy years', or Babylonish, captivity, having no Levites, Ezra had to send to "Iddo, the chief of the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of God." And in Dr. Henderson's Russian researches, Casiphia is identified as a district bordering on the Caspian.

In the times of the apostles it was recognized that members of the Ten Tribes were in Asia Minor, for St. Peter's first epistle is addressed, not to the "strangers scattered," &c., as in our translation, but "to the elect strangers (in the sense of strangers and pilgrims) of the dispersion" (see the Greek and Alford's notes on this passage); "the dispersion" being the word used by the Jews denoting the Ten Tribes.

Josephus states (Antiq. xi. v. 2) that when Ezra received permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, "he sent a copy of the epistle to all of his own nation that were in Media;" he adds, "But then *the entire body of the people of Israel* remained in that country, wherefore

there are but Two Tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, -while the Ten Tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude and not to be estimated by numbers."

Of the region of Colchis, Dr. Clarke mentions the vast number of *tumult* which he thinks must be placed as marks for guidance across the immense plains, and they continue on to the sea of Azov; "reminding us of the prophet's warning to exiled Israel, ' *Set thee up waymarks*'" I have observed the same on the Danube, where tumuli stretch from Widdin in a S.E. direction, apparently towards the Gulf of Burgas: a few are visible on the North bank stretching towards the N.W.

The Russian Archeological Society opened one of these tumuli near Poti. Within was a large arched vault beautifully constructed of white limestone, in which was found a gold serpent with ruby eyes. Now the Beni-Israel of India secretly worship a serpent of this sort, generally of silver (Carpenter, 42).

The rock temples of India give us some additional testimony regarding the existence, in the regions about the Black Sea, of the Dannites and other Tribes of Israel. (The Cyrus mentioned is probably the one who was killed in an expedition against the Massagetae.) From the preface of "Moore's Saxons of the East and West" I extract the following translation of a Hebraic inscription upon the walls of a rock temple in Kanari, twenty miles North of Bombay:—

"Lo, the worship of Saka is the fruit of my lip. His garden, which Cyrus laid low, was glowing red, behold it is blackened. His people being aroused would have their rights, for they were cast down at the cry of the parting of Dan, who being delivered was perfectly free. Everyone grew mighty, and Saka's mouth enkindling them brought the princes together of the race of Harari (people of the hill country of Ephraim, so called—2 Sam. xxiii. 9—n). As to Dan, his unloosing was destruction, oppression, and strife. He stoutly turned away, he departed twice. The pre-determined thought is a hand prepared : yea, Gotha (*i.e.*, the opposite or North coast of the Black Sea called Gothland), that watched

for the presence of Dan afforded concealment to the exile The redeemed of Kasha wandered about like a flock over-driven " (See note, chapter iv).

This name *Saka*, used in the inscriptions apparently as a title of their God, is one of the titles signifying " *the most pure*," given to God in the Jewish Passover hymn at the present day. The people who used it were in company with Dan, and as it is Hebraic, and an allusion seems to be made to the princes of Ephraim, they were probably the descendants of the captivity of Samaria (2 Kings xvii, 6), and of Reuben, Gad, and the half Tribe of Manasseh (2 Kings xv. 29) who had had some two centuries to increase and expand. Might they not also be identical with the Sakai or Scythians who about this time possessed those regions? The Persians called all the Scythians Sakai. The *Jewish Chronicle*, 24th March, 1876, mentions the *Zwai* as one of the oldest family names among the Jews of Cochin remaining to this day.

I shall in the next chapter endeavour to show the Israelitish affinities of these Sakai or Scythians, and their connection with the Danai.

In the historical facts which I have brought forward and endeavoured to connect, there is one point which needs explanation before the subject of this chapter is dismissed. It will occur to many to ask, why, assuming the Lacedaemonians, Thessalians, and Colchians to be Danites of Israel, should there be traces of circumcision among the Colchians only ? The answer is, that the Dannite element was probably in many places a comparative handful, more or less, of the clever, enterprising, determined set of spirits, bred in the wilderness under Moses, and inured to war, which imposed its rule³ and name on inferior and more primitive races. This would seem to account for the "descendants of Heracles" being sometimes compelled to fly their countries, and make a fresh muster ere they could get back again. The colony of Danaus in Argos was avowedly such a handful, reinforced it may be afterwards. The other colonies were probably the same, and, had the Macedonian people *generally* been Argives,⁴ it would have been too well

known and admitted for any doubt to have been raised at the Olympian games when one of their princes (Herod, v. 22) was compelled to prove his Argive descent ere he was permitted to enter the lists.

I assume that the Colchians, as descended from the Argonauts, the best blood of Thessaly, were composed chiefly, if not altogether, of this Hebrew stock, and that, while this strengthened their position in Colchis, and favoured the retention of their racial customs in that remote corner, it impoverished the Hebrew blood left in Greece, where those customs which were peculiar to Israelites, and of no apparent general utility or interest, disappeared, as Greece became a centre of attraction for various races in an age of progress.⁵ And thus I think it was that the Colchians retained circumcision until the time of Herodotus, while the Lacedaemonians, when claiming relationship with the Jews, could only refer to their ancient writings and their seal.

NOTES

1. Herodotus adds;—The *Syrians* about Thermodon (a river running into the Black Sea), and the river Parthenius, with their neighbours the Macrones, confess that they very lately learnt the same custom from the Colchians." Thus there was a genuine colony direct from Syria in these parts. Now Josephus, on this very passage in Herodotus, denies that any inhabitants of Palestine, except Jews, practise circumcision (Joseph, agst. Apion i. 22). Instead of *learning* it from the Colchians, these emigrants from Syria possibly *returned to the covenant at the instigation*, or through the *example*, of the Colchians.

2. [Hebrew] *sar* (from [Hebrew] to *scatter, disperse*}, one *alienated.*, a *stranger* "who had been as it were *scattered* at a distance, or cast away from others (Parkhurst Lex.); in fact, *detached, or emigrant*. Thus Sar-don-i and Sar-din-i would mean *emigrant, dispersed, or detached* Dannites; and Sar-don-ik, anything made by, or pertaining to, them.

3. Like the modern British in India and the colonies.

4. The Septuagint (Esther ix. 24) calls "Haman the *Agagite*," "Haman the *Macedonian*,"

5. See also Herod, ii. 104 :—" The Phoenicians who have any commerce with Greece abstain from circumcising their children.