

# الوثيقة

تصدر عن  
مركز الوثائق التاريخية  
بمملكة البحرين

العدد العاشر، السنة الخامسة  
جمادى الأولى ١٤٠٧ هـ، يناير ١٩٨٧ م





○ رأس ثور من الذهب  
(جزء من آلة موسيقية  
وثرية عثر عليها في أور  
وتعود إلى فجر السلالات  
الثالث ٢٥٠٠ قدم.

على أساسها الدولة الفرعونية.  
أما الإشارة إلى الجزيرة باعتبارها  
موطن البدايات الأولى للإنسان كما  
يرى المصريون فأنني أرى من  
المناسب هنا أن نذكر وصف  
السومريين المعاصرين لديلمون وهو  
الوصف الذي دار حول محور يصف

كان لديهم ذكريات عن جزيرة تقع على  
مسافة بعيدة في الشرق وعلى حافة  
العالم وأن هذه الجزيرة حدثت فيها  
عملية الخلق الأولى وانها كانت مسكنا  
لالهة من الجيلين الأول والثاني  
واعتقد المصريون بأن هذه الجزيرة  
لعبت دورا كبيرا في النظرية التي قامت



○ راس ثور من البرونز عثر عليه في موقع معبد باربار ويرجع تاريخه الى ٢٥٠٠ قبل الميلاد ونفس المرحلة التي يعود اليها التمثال الذي عثر عليه في اور

تركز هذه التعبيرات بصفة خاصة على وصف دلمون بالطهارة:

ان بلاد دلمون محل طاهر ذلك المكان نظيف وذلك المحل لامع»

دلمون إذن عند السومريين كانت

من البلاد الطاهرة: بل انها قد تكون

البلاد الطاهرة الوحيدة كما انها كانت

بلاد القوانين النظيفة «مسكيلاج»

وكانت احدي الهاتها الحارسة هي

دلمون بالجئة الأصلية. والنصوص

السومرية التي تشير الى دلمون

تتضمن تعبيرات عديدة تصفها

بالفردوس الذي تعيش فيه الآلهة

والذي تحدث فيه عمليات الخلق وقد

جاء في هذه التعبيرات كلمات مثل

«بلاد العبور» و«البلاد التي تشرق

فيها الشمس» و«لأنها تقع في

البحار التي تشرق فيها الشمس» كما

الفرعونية وذلك في مجال شرح  
التأثيرات الأجنبية في الثقافة المتأخرة  
لعهد ما قبل الأسرات قال  
ان السمات الميزوبوتامية في البناء  
كما لاحظنا من قبل ليس لها مثيل في  
الشرق . ويبدو انها ترجع اصلا الى  
سكان «عيلام» أو الى مصدر مرتبط

«نسيكيلا» اى سيدة القوانين  
الطاهرة»  
وكدليل على ذلك فإنني انقل هنا  
ثلاث مقتطفات من رائد المصريين  
(فلنדרزبترى) فقد قال في مجلة «مصر  
القديمة» التى اسسها لتبسيط  
الدراسات الخاصة بالحضارة

○ الاله «انكى» السومرى  
اله المياه



بدجلة أو الى الافكار التي تطورت بصورة مستقلة بذاتها . وان تواجد الملاحه كعنصر هام يبطل فكرة وصولهم الى مصر عبر الصحراء العربية. وأنه من المحتمل أنهم انحدروا الى مستوطنة ما في الخليج «كجزر البحرين» او الساحل الغربى الجنوبي ومن هذا الوطن الثانى حملوا سماته وافكاره الى مصر» .

وفي مقال آخر له تحت عنوان جذاب هو «جغرافية الآلهة» ناقش فيه المصادر الجغرافية ومثلها بالآلهة المصرية الرئيسية قال بترى: «إن كثرة عبادة الآلهة «حتحور» وارتباطها بالآلهة كثيرة أخرى أو جنيات تشير الى انتمائها الى هذه السلالات... ويبدو أن هجرة ابناء هذه السلالات حدثت عن طريق البحر من الخليج والبحر الاحمر الى مصر .

وفي مؤلفه في وقت لاحق بعنوان «بناء مصر» يعود بترى الى نفس الفكرة ويقول عن «قبيلة الصقر» التى فتحت مصر قبل بداية الاسرة الاولى كما يعتقد»:

«نشأت قبيلة الصقر دون شك في عيلام كما يبدو من نقش يصور أحد الابطال ومجموعة من الاسود وجد على مقبض احدى السكاكين.. وقد عبروا الخليج واستوطنوا القرن

الافريقي وسموه بلاد «بنت» وقد اصبحت بلاد «بنت» مقدسة عند المصريين المتأخرين باعتبارها أصلا عرقيا لهم. وقد أسس شعب «بنت» جزيرة محصنة في «حافون» وسيطر على الساحل بأكمله.. اما الذين ابحروا في البحر الاحمر فقد غزوا مصر عن طريق القصير - قبطوس وذهب الآخرون الى سوريا حيث أسسوا تاير وسيدون وأرادوس وقد أخذوا هذه الاسماء من اسماء الجزر في وطنهم بالخليج» .

ان الفقرة الثالثة من هذه المقتبسات التى كتبها بترى كتبت بعد ٢٠ عاما من كتابة الفقرتين الاولى والثانية. وفي هذه الفترة قام «بترى» بارسال «ارنست ماكى» الى البحرين ليرى القبور المقبية الا أن التقرير الرزين الذى كتبه ماكى لا يعكس درجة اهتمام مدرسه بالمصادر السومرية - المصرية .

ويلاحظ أن بترى يناقش تواجد التأثيرات الخليجية والعيلامية في عهد ما قبل الاسرات في مصر بدرجة تعكس يقينه الكامل بهذه النظرية. لكن الأمر الذى يحوطه الغموض هو اعتقاده بأن الجزر الخليجية كانت ذات علاقة بالأمر. ان المعلقين في بداية القرن التاسع عشر كانوا يعتقدون بصفة

# اعتقد المصريون القدماء أن دلمون حافة العالم وأنها شهدت بداية خلق

البريطاني وهو يرى أن البحرين قد تكون مارست تأثيرا جذريا على المصريين.

وخلال مناقشة دارت حول بحث تقدم به «تيودور بنيت» الى الجمعية الجغرافية الملكية. عقب زيارته للبحرين عام ١٨٨٩م قال «سميث» ان

عامّة ان المصريين والسومريين كانوا اما من أصل واحد واما تأثروا بطرف ثالث في الدورات التكوينية ويبدو أن «بتري» يرى أن شعب جزر الخليج هو هذا الطرف الثالث.

ولقد سبق بتري بقليل باحث آخر هو «سيسيل .. سميث» من المتحف



○ اهرام الجيزة بنيت ما بين ٢٧٠٠ و ١٦٠٠ قبل الميلاد

# على الإنسان



○ معبد حورس في إدفو  
ويعود الى البطالسة في  
القرنين الثالث والثاني قبل  
الميلاد

في العصر الحديث عن دلمون القديمة  
وهو التحليل الذي قدمه «رولنسون»  
تعليقا على تقرير «ديوران» حول «قدم  
جزر البحرين» في ١٨٨٠م أن كلمة  
«تلمون» قد تعني «الجزيرة»

«نفر» كان اسما مصريا لبلاد «بنت»  
وأن موضعها كان يوصف في الازمنة  
المتأخرة بأنه محل الآلهة وأنه «جزيرة  
مقدسة»  
وقبل هذا ورد في أول تحليل علمي

المباركة»

وتعتقد «باوم جارتل» التي قامت بتحليل دقيق لعصر ما قبل الأسرات بأن الموطن الأصلي لشعب «نقادا الثانية» لم يكن بعيدا عن موطن السومريين كما ترى بأن الملوك المتأخرين لعهد ما قبل الأسرات انحدروا من شعب «نقادة الثانية».

ويبدو أن المصريين القدماء تمسكوا منذ العصر القديم بفكرة أن معظم معتقداتهم والملاحم التي تميزت بها ثقافتهم نشأت في بداياتها الأولى في جزيرة نائية. يؤكد ذلك ان الرمز الذي يستخدمونه غالبا للإشارة الى أول قطعة أرض في خلق الكون هو الجبل أو التلة وكثيرا ما يتخذ هذا الرمز شكل جزيرة وفي النص رقم ٤٨٤ من نصوص الأهرام وردت عبارة «التلة البدائية في وسط البحار» وهى تعنى هنا الجزيرة المحاطة بالماء وليس جزءا من الأرض يتبدى للعيان عندما تنحسر مياه المد - كما ورد في وصف علماء الآثار المصرية عن ظهور أول قطعة أرض في خلق الكون - وكان هذا المكان البدائي هو جزيرة الراحة أو السلام وكانت جزيرة السلام مرتبطة عندهم «بالشمس المشرقة» ومن هذا المصدر نفسه جاءت عبارة: «جزيرة اللهب» وهى جزيرة مقدسة

ظهرت الى حيز الوجود من اعماق المياه البدائية متمثلة في شخصية «نون» وهو من اقدم الآلهة حسبما ورد في العلوم اللاهوتية

وفي هذا السياق اطلق على التلة البدائية في بعض الاحيان اسم «تار - تانن<sup>(١٨)</sup> وتانن كان إله التلة البدائية كما ورد في نقوش ممفيس وكان سلفا لـ «بتاح» ومن جزيرة «اللهب» أو «النار» جاء منذ البداية الأولى «هايک» الذي يمثل جوهر الخصوبة التي يعتبرها المصريون اساس الحياة. وكانت هذه الجزيرة مكانا سحريا بعيدا كل البعد في الشرق عبر حدود العالم ومكانا للنور الخالد حيث ولدت الآلهة. يقول الملك بيبي : «لقد ذهبت صاعدا الى الجانب الشرقي للسماء حيث ولد الآلهة» (ب. ت. رقم ٢٦٤) وجاء في الانشودة السامية (رقم ٤ - ٢٧٣) أن الملك المرفوع يقفز الى مرتبه إله السماء حيث يقضي على الآلهة الأخرى خلال طقوس سماوية وحشية ويصف النص الطبيعة السحرية لجزيرة النار:

ان الملك ثور السمار:

الذي يقهر كما يشاء

والذي يعيش على حساب حياة

كل إله آخر.

حتى أولئك الذين يأتون وقد

امتلات اجسامهم بالسحر من جزيرة النار .

وقد قيل ان الالهة «اعطوا جزيرة لـ «أوزيريس» وأوردت الاساطير المصرية وصفها لـ «جزيرة وسطى» كمكان بعيد مجهول لا يمكن الوصول اليه الا بواسطة سفينة «أنتى» وهو ملاح السفينة الذي ينقل الركاب الى الجزيرة مثل «سرسنابى» وهو ملاح «زيوسدرا» الذى نقل جلامش الى دلمون ويلعب «أنتى» هذا دورا مشبوها في الصراع بين «حورس» و«ست» وذلك لأنه عندما قررت المحكمة الاستماع الى شهادة الالهين تقرر نقل مكان الاستماع الى جزيرة بعيدة نائية وصدرت تعليمات لـ «أنتى» الا ينقل «ايزيس» الى هذه الجزيرة. ولكن الالهة ايزيس «تقدم رشوة الى «أنتى» فينقلها وخلال دفاع يرثى له تحصل الالهة على حكم لصالح ابنها «حورس» ضد «ست» ومما يجدر ذكره هنا أن «ست» كان آله لـ «أسيا» ويقصد بها وقتها البلدان الواقعة شرقي مصر . لقد كان من القاب حورس لقب «حورس بلاد الشمس المشرقة» وكان يتلقى تحية تقول «حاراختى» ومعناها «حورس الأفق» وطبقا لما يقوله «فرانك فورت» فان كلمة «الأفق» تدل على بلاد

النور والجبال الواقعة شرق مصر على الحافة الشرقية للأرض .

ويرد ذكر ملاحين كثيرين في نصوص الاهرام ومعظمهم ينتمون الى المناطق الشرقية فقد ورد في النص رقم ٣٥٩ . يا «رى» امنحنى توصية الى ملاح الطريق المائى الملتوى كى يأتى بسفينته التى يستخدمها في نقل الالهة الى الجهة الشرقية للسماء»

وقد أشير الى الجزيرة اكثر من مرة كمكان للقصب وبلاد المستنقعات ومن اسمائها كما ورد في «كتاب الموتى» «حقل القصب المملوك للمباركين» الى جانب الاشارة الى انها المكان الذي يقع على الحافة الشرقية للعالم ويبدو أن المصريين والسومريين احتفظوا بذكرات عذبة عن معابدهم القديمة التى شيدت بالقصب ويعلل ذلك ما نجده في معبد «ادفو» من نموذج لمعبد قصبى منقوش على الحجر في اعماق المعبد الحجرية كما خلد السومريون في شعرهم ما يطلقون عليه الكوخ القصبى لـ «زيوسدرا» حيث همس بين جدران الالهة «انكى» محذرا من الطوفان الوشيك كما يعيد اقدم المعابد المكرسة للالهة «انكى» في منطقة «اريدو» الى اذهاننا ما يمكن أن يطابق

# بتري : المصريون القدماء

## جاء وامن سومر عبر البحر

الاسمى الذي يتلقى التحية كإله بلاد الشمس المشرقة.

وكان الى جوار «وا - رت» عدة أماكن مقدسة وهى بلاد غنية مثل جزيرة الغضب وكانت هذه الجزيرة مكانا لمعبد مماثل وتعتبر موطننا للأوائل البدائيين

وطبقا لأساطير «هرموبوليس» فإن آله الشمس نفسه ولد فى بركة كانت موجودة فى الجزيرة الأصلية

وتشير نصوص «ادفو» الى الجزيرة نفسها بأنها «كبركة برزت الى الوجود فى البداية» وكانت الجزيرة مركز العالم كله والالهة الذين برزوا فى هذا العهد كانوا شيوخا معمرين من العصور البدائية وكانت البركة على حافة الجزيرة ومحاطة بالقصب وكانت الجزيرة معروفة بـ «اقليم الصقور» ويبدو من ذلك ان الجزيرة كانت مرتبطة بفكرة انها المكان الذى مات فيه جيل مبكر من الالهة وان هؤلاء

نموزجا دقيقا لمعبد مقام من القصب

وحسبما جاء فى نقوش معبد «ادفو» فإن الارواح الخالقة خلقت عدة اماكن مقدسة وعلى رأس هذه الاماكن مكانان هما «قبة الآلهة المشرق» و«جزيرة رى» وكان من بين الاماكن الأخرى «الجبل العالى» و«شجرة الزيت» و«محل الاشباح»

وسميت الأرض المجاورة للجزيرة الأصلية «وتجيسيت نيتير» وكانت الجزيرة تسمى فى الأصل - وطبقا لهذه النقوش - جزيرة السلام كما كان يطلق عليها الى جانب هذا الاسم اسماء جزيرة ترامبلنج» و«جزيرة القتال» وكانت هذه الجزيرة محاطة فى الاصل بالظلام والمياه الأصلية المعروفة باسم «وا - رت» وكان سكانها وحكامها الأصليون هم الصقور وطبعاً فإن حورس هو الصقر المصري



○ موت اوزوريس وبعثه من اشهر الاساطير المصرية القديمة وترى زوجته ايزيس الى اليمين وقد جمعت اشلاءه تساعدها اختها نفتيس الى اليسار وبينهما اوزوريس في الوسط.

الآلهة قد لقوا مصرعهم اثر معركة من نوع ما وربما أصبحت الجزيرة مقبرتهم . وقد ارتبطت الصقور التي كانت تحكم الجزيرة في الأصل بالطوقس الجنائزية التي كانت رائجة هنا والتي كانت تستعيد ذكرى الجيل المبكر من هؤلاء الآلهة الذين لقوا مصرعهم ومن هنا فان فكرة وصف الجزيرة بالمكان المقدس تبدو فكرة قديمة .

وأما البلاد المجاورة للجزيرة والتي أشرنا من قبل الى انها كانت بلادا غنية . فان الخالق خلقها بتجفيف المياه حول المكان الذي نشأ فيه وهكذا ظهرت اليابسة الى حيز الوجود ثم واصل الخالق بعد ذلك خلق العالم . ويبدو ان الخالق الذي كشف أنه كان يطلق عليه اسم « تانن » قد قام برحلة بمصاحبة الصقر عبر « وا - رت » التي انضمت اليها بعض الأراضي الغنية ويبدو أنهما بدأ رحلتها من الجزيرة اذن هي موطن الأسلاف وحسب تقليد ادفو فان الأسلاف جاءوا من أماكن بعيدة عن ادفو نفسها وكانت ادفو تهتم بأن تصف نفسها بأنها موطن الشعب المصرى والافتراض بأن هؤلاء الآلهة القدماء كانوا آلهتهم أيضا انما كان جزءا من حملة قامت بها ادفو للاعتراف بها

كموطن أصلى للمصريين .. ويعتقد بأن المعبد الأصلي للصقر جاء من « جزيرة الطفل المباركة » وينسب المعبد نفسه الى التلة المقدسة الأولى أى الجزيرة المقدسة الناشئة . وكما لاحظنا سابقا فان التلة الأصلية مرادفة تماما للأرض الطاهرة وهو وصف ينطبق غالبا على دلمون وهنا لا يفوتنى ان أشد الانتباه لتشابه غريب آخر أو ربما كان مجرد صدفة - ان شئت ان تقول ذلك - وهو وجود تكرار في النقوش الأيقونية لقدم أو لأثر قدم وجد على الاختام التي عثر عليها في منطقة الخليج نفس النقش وجد في الرافدين في العصور القديمة وإذا قارنا هذا النقش في الرافدين والخليج مع النقوش التي تمثل القدم في مصر نجد ان نقوش مصر تظهر بالشكل الجانبى وهى تعنى مكانا أو موقعا وكذلك تمثل حرف « باء » الساكن وكانت النقوش التي عثر عليها في نصوص الأهرام لها استعمال خاص ( على الرغم من ندرته كما يرى « جاردنر » فهى تظهر القدم بشكل مركب ويتكون هذا المركب من نقش للقدم مع جرة يسقط منها الماء مما يعنى (حسب قول جاردنر) النظيف أو «الطاهر» كما جاء في نص رقم ٥١٣ :

« كن طاهرا . احتل مكانك في غشاء

شجرة رى .. وجدف عبر السماء  
واركب الى الأماكن البعيدة . وجدف  
مع النجوم الخالدة . وسير السفينة  
مع النجوم »

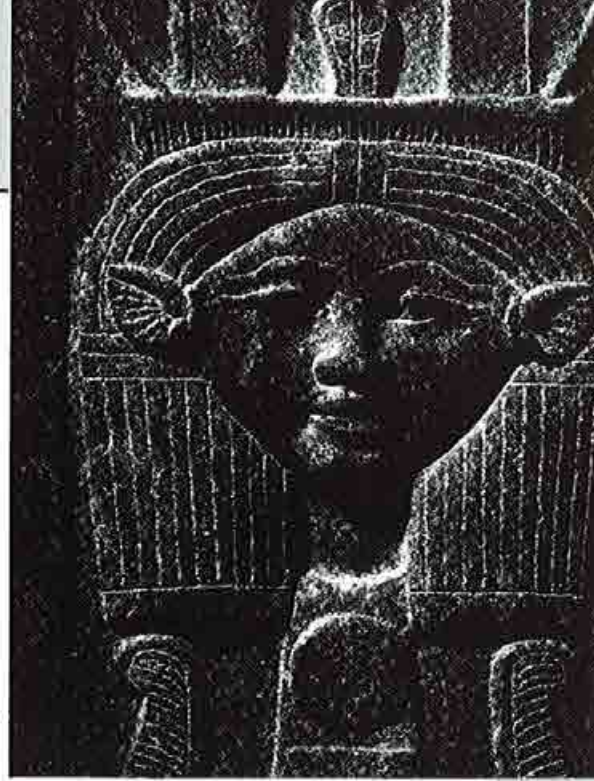
كما ورد وصف لأحد معابد  
« انكى » بأنه « محل نظيف » ان  
الارتباط بين القدم والماء ومعنى المكان  
والنظيف وفكرة السفر الى الأماكن  
البعيدة يجبر من يعى ادراك المصريين  
لمعنى السفر ارتباط هذه المعانى  
بجزيرة .

ويمكن القول هنا ودون مجافاة  
للحقيقة أننى بالغت في صنع جبل  
ضخم من تلة صغيرة بدائية وان  
الأدلة الأثرية التى تؤيد نصوص  
المصادر التى نقلت عنها ضئيلة جدا  
ولا يسعنى اذا قيل ذلك الا ان أقبله .  
ولكن دراسة الثقافات الخليجية  
المبكرة حيث لعبت ملون - البحرين  
دورا حيويا دون شك سوف تقدم  
الدليل فى السنوات القادمة وهو الدليل  
الذى يلقي الضوء على هذا الموضوع  
وهو ان القاسم المشترك بين  
السومريين والمصريين هو الشعب  
الذى أصبح فيما بعد الديلمونيين .  
وأظن أن اهتمام النصوص بما يطلق  
عليه البلاد الغنية وخطوات تجفيفها  
ورحلات « تانن » و « الصقر » وتكرر  
نقش القدم الذى يدل على الجزيرة كل  
هذه قد تمثل ذكرى عهد متوتر وخطير  
فى حياة الشعوب التى عاشت حول

الربع الخالى أو فى الأنحاء المجاورة  
له . خاصة ونحن نعلم بأن السكان فى  
العصر الحجري الحديث المتأخر  
عاشوا فى هذه المنطقة فى رخاء ونعيم  
وان البحيرات وجدت واستمرت حول  
أطراف ما نسميه اليوم بـ « الربع  
الخالى » حتى أواخر عصور ما قبل  
التاريخ . واذا كان بعض الباحثين  
يرى بأن سلاح العصا ذات الرأس  
المليئة بالبروزات وهو سلاح من  
الرافدين ربما يكون قد لعب دورا فى  
فتح الأرضين بواسطة الأمراء  
المصريين الصقور الا أنه لا يوجد أى  
دليل فى صعيد مصر يشير الى غزوة  
تمت قبل توحيد القطرين . وفى  
ضوء التاريخ اللاحق يبدو ان تأثير  
الرافدين المتواجد فى مصر وذكريات  
الجزيرة البدائية فى الوعى المصرى  
ربما يرجع ظهورهما الى جماعات  
صغيرة نسبيا اما من التجار واما من  
اللاجئين واما من الاتنين . وربما كان  
احدهم راويا ممتازا بارعا ومقنعا  
لقصص عن الحياة من بلاد الشمس  
المشرقة البعيدة أراد بها ان يؤثر فى  
سامعيه تأثيرا عميقا ودائما وخاصة  
اذا كان سامعه رئيسا بارعا لمجموعة  
من القبائل ومعه بعض زملائه .

وأخيرا فان موهبة السرد تثير  
ذكريات الجزيرة الساحرة التى حكى  
عنها الملاح الذى غرقت سفينته فى  
حكاية مدهشة لقد كان يبحر الى

بلاد « بنت » في الاحساء لأن هذه المنطقة توفر فيها حيوان الحمار منذ القدم - وعندما غادر الملاح الجزيرة في النهاية أعطى له الثعبان الملك الكريم هدية ثمينة والذين يلمون بسلع دلمون التجارية القديمة سوف يشوقهم أسماء التحف والهدايا لأنها تمثل المنتجات التي اشتهرت بها تجارة دلمون في وقت لاحق وهي العطور والعاج والأخشاب النادرة - وللعجب - القرود ومن الصعب ان نفهم أهمية القرود في التصدير لأن مصر نفسها كانت غنية بهذا الحيوان .. كما قدمت كلاب الصيد أيضا هدية للملاح وهذا أيضا مشوق لأن « أنوبيس » وهو كلب صيد في احد مظاهره ترأس « البلاد الطاهرة » ( ب. ت. يو ٤٣ ) هو نفسه أنوبيس آله الموت لدى المصريين مما يجعل هذه الحكاية تربط بين الآله الجنائزى والبلاد الطاهرة الاسطورية . وقد أعاد الثعبان الملك الملاح بأمان الى منزل ملك مصر التي وصل اليها بعد سفر بحرى دام شهرين . وحتى في المملكة الوسطى التي تم فيها تدوين هذه القصة لأول مرة . أحب المصريون فكرة الجزر الساحرة الواقعة في البحار البعيدة وهي الجزر الفاتنة الخالية . وعلى الرغم من أن هذه الصورة



○ هاتور إلهة الحب والمرح.. من معبدها في دندرة بالقرب من الأقصر.

المناجم ( ترى أين كانت تلك المناجم يا ترى كي يصل اليها بالسفينة) وقد غرقت سفينته اثر طوفان والقى به الماء وحده على جزيرة مهجورة بعد ان غرق رفاقه . وهناك لقي ترحيبا حارا من آله الجزيرة وهو ثعبان برأس انسان وقلب رقيق . مغطى بالذهب والأحجار الكريمة (اللازورد) وقد قدم الثعبان نفسه على انه ملك من ملوك « بنت » - وحسب معرفتى فهذه هي المرة الوحيدة التي أشير فيها الى بلاد « بنت » على انها جزيرة - ورفض الثعبان عرضا لقربان حمير من قبل الملاح - ومن المعقول أن يرفض الملك الثعبان هذا العرض اذا كان موقع

كانت بداية السلسلة المتعاقبة لخلق الكون .

ربما أكون قد أضفت بعض الأوهام لكنني وجدت صعوبة في العثور على جزيرة ما ذات سمعة خاصة في القدسية وأهمية بالغة كمقبرة وتقع بعيدا كل البعد في الشرق بالنسبة لمصر غير البحرين .

وإذا كانت البحرين هي دلمون كما يعتقد الكثيرون منا وانها كانت بلادا « مقدسة نقية » كما جاء وصفها في الاساطير السومرية المتأخرة فالبحرين بهذه الصورة تكون أكثر من مجرد تخمين اسطوري في سياق الاساطير المصرية يؤكد ذلك طبوغرافيتها ووجود جبل في وسطها وبركها وشواطئها القصيبة واقتربها الى السبخة في الجزيرة العربية .

لا تزال غامضة الا أنه تبرز عدة نقاط بشأن ذلك الأفق الشرقي البعيد . وان مزيدا من الدراسة سوف يخرج بنتائج طيبة . وسوف يكون من الحماسة ان يدعى الانسان بأن كل اشارة الى الجزر في النصوص الدينية أو الاسطورية المصرية القديمة تشير حتما الى دلمون ولست أدعى بوجود اشارات دقيقة اليها وكذلك لا أنكر احتمال وجود الجزر في الأفكار فقط ودون أن يكون لها وجود في الواقع واقتصر على القول بأن ذكريات الجزيرة المقدسة ربما نسبت الى دلمون اما بصورة مباشرة واما نقلت الى المصريين عن طريق طرف ثالث ثم حدث اندماج بين الذكريات والميل الطبيعي لشعب في الاعتقاد بانسحاب كتلة كبيرة من الماء لتكشف عن جزيرة

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the Pure Land of myth. The serpent-king returned the sailor safely to the Residence of the King of Egypt, which he reached after a sea-voyage of two months. Even in the Middle Kingdom, when this engaging story was first written down, magical islands in far-away seas still exercised a fascination for the Egyptians.

Though the picture is still as misty as ever I believe there may be some points emerging on that distant eastern horizon which may repay further consideration. It would be foolish indeed to assert that all references to islands in Egyptian religious or mythological texts must refer to Dilmun. Indeed I do not suggest that any are precise references nor that the island did not exist in the dimension of myth more often than being fixed on the earth's surface: rather I suggest that the recollection of a sacred island, which may have been Dilmun, was a direct inheritance or was handed on to the Egyptians by a third party. Then it was conflated with the natural tendency of a riverine people to think in terms of the great waters of their river withdrawing to reveal an island at the beginning of the sequence of creation.

I may be piling fantasy upon speculation but it seems to me difficult to identify any island with a reputation for special sanctity, of great significance as burial place, lying far away to the east of Egypt which so precisely matches the required topography as does Bahrain. If Bahrain is Dilmun, as most of us will recognise, the Sacred Pure Land of later Sumerian myth, then Bahrain's topography, its central mountain, pool, reed lined shores and proximity to Arabia's sabkha may, in this context, be something more than merely suggestive.

implanted by relatively small bands of men, traders perhaps or refugees from a dying environment, or, conceivably, both. It probably only needed one of them to be an exceptionally accomplished and persuasive raconteur for his stories of life in the far distant land of the sunrise to make a profound, even a lasting impression, on his hearers, particularly if his audience were the able chief of a lively congeries of tribes and his close associates.

Finally, the mention of the power of story-telling prompts the recollection of the Enchanted Island, of which the Shipwrecked Sailor told so marvellous a tale. (64). He had been voyaging to the mines (where were those mines located, one would like to ask, that he had to sail to them?) when a storm destroyed his ship and, alone of his companions, he was cast up on the shores of a lonely island. There he was most graciously received by the island's divinity, a human-headed serpent of a notably kindly disposition, who was bedecked in gold and lapis lazuli. The serpent-king introduced himself as one of the rulers of Punt. This is, so far as I am aware, the only occasion when Punt is identified as an island. The serpent-king declined the offer of the sacrifice of asses, which, rather surprisingly, the sailor proposed. Well he might refuse it, if Punt proved to be located in East Arabia, for the asses of the Hasa province have long been celebrated.

When the sailor eventually left the island he was loaded with treasures by the generous serpent. To anyone familiar with Dilmun's customary merchandise the gifts make interesting reading for they are all products for which the island's trade was celebrated: (65) perfumes, ivory, rare woods and, very strikingly, baboons, though what an Egyptian was to do with such animals in which his own land abounded is not clear. The sailor was also presented with hunting dogs. This too is interesting in that Anubis, who, in certain of his manifestations was undoubtedly a hound, is proclaimed as 'Anubis who presided over the Pure Land' (PT.U 437) (66) Since anubis is a god of the dead, in several forms, this utterance seems to link a funerary divinity with

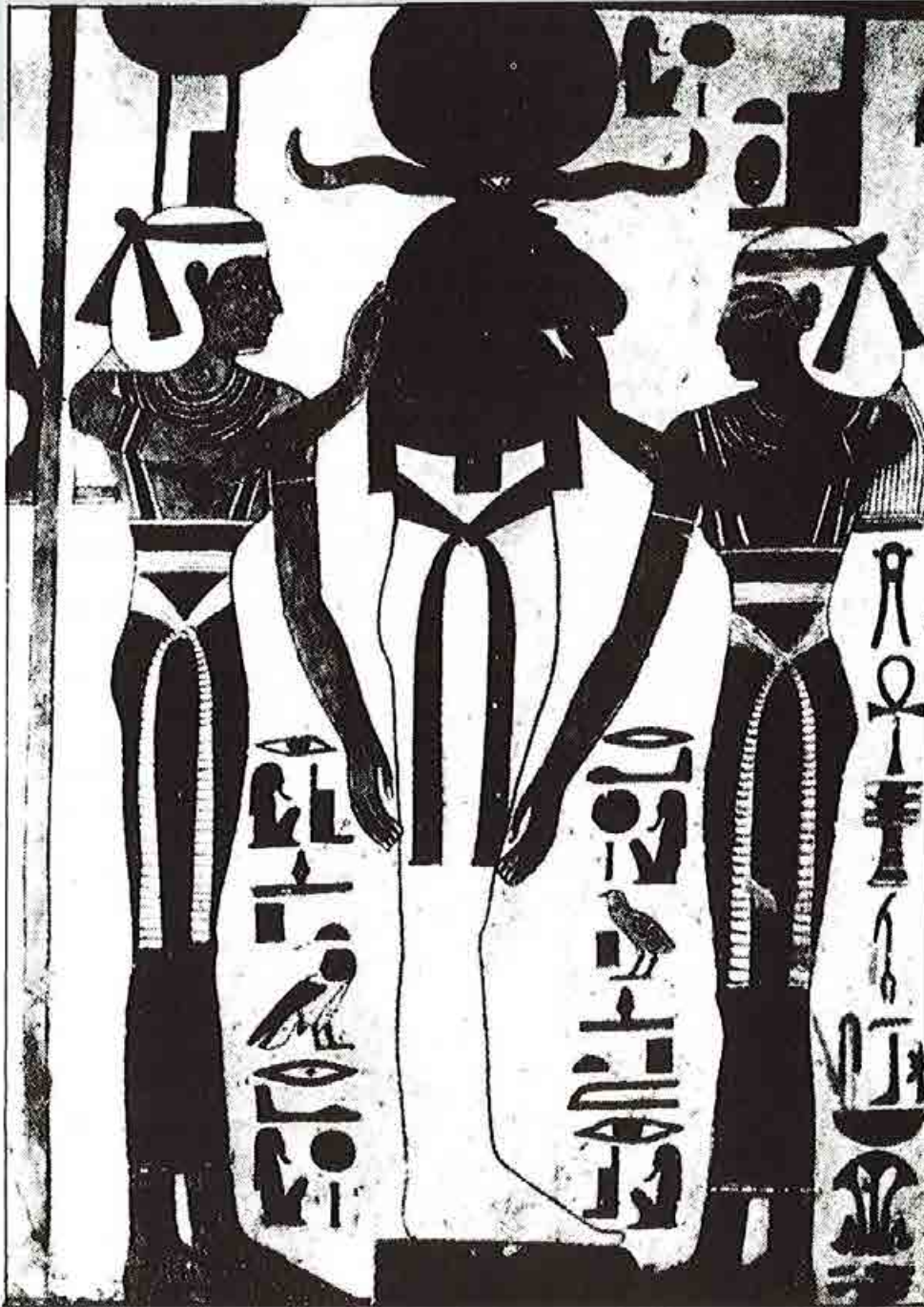
'Be pure: occupy your seat in the Bank of Re: row over the sky and mount up to the distant ones: row with the imperishable stars, navigate with the Unwearying Stars' (60) One of Enki's shrines is described as the clean place' (61).

The associations of the foot, water, the meanings 'place' and 'pure' and the idea of distant journeying (albeit to the far-off stars) is compelling, at least to one who started out on this voyage through the Egyptians' perceptions of their island connections.

It will be said, perhaps with reason, that I am making a Cosmic Mountain out of a Primaeval Molehill. The archaeological evidence to supplement my textual references is slim enough, that I readily admit.

But the study of early Gulf cultures, in which Bahrain-Dilmun plays so essential a role, will, I have no doubt, produce evidence in years to come which will bear much upon these issues. It may even be that the common denominator between the Sumerians and the Egyptians will prove to be the people who became the Dilmunites. I suspect that the texts' concern with the pay-lands, the process of their drying up, the wanderings of Tanen and the Falcon and the repetition of the island motif might represent the memory of a disturbed and precarious period in the people's history, when they were living perhaps around the perimeter of the Rub al-Khali or in its vicinity. We know that late neolithic populations flourished there and that lacustrine conditions persisted well into late prehistoric times around the edges of what is now the Empty Quarter. (62).

Whilst, as several scholars have suggested, the Mesopotamian mace may have played a part in the eventual conquest of the Two Lands by the Falcon princes from This in Upper Egypt, there is no evidence for an invasion or anything like it in the period immediately before the Unification. (63) In the light of later history it seems more likely that what Mesopotamian influences there are in Egypt and, perhaps, what recollections there may be of the Primaeval Island in the Egyptian consciousness, were



★ The death and resurrection of Osiris the most profound of ancient Egyptian myths. His wife Isis (R) and Nephthys, his wife's sister (L) with the mummy of the god reidentified with Osiris in the center

numinous places and their funerary nature seems thus singularly ancient.

The lands in the vicinity of the island were known, as we have seen, as pay-lands. The Creator brought them into existence by drying up the water around his place of origin and so exposing the land. (50) He went on to create the world.

Then the Creator, who is now revealed as Tanen, and the Falcon seem to have made a journey through the Wa'ret which took in some of the pay-lands. (51) They appear to have set out on their journey from the island. (52)

The island is the place of the Ancestors. (53) In the Edfu tradition the Ancestors came from places far distant from Edfu itself, which is concerned to present itself as the home of the Egyptian people. (54) Indeed, the assumption of such Ancestor gods as their own was part of Edfu's campaign in asserting its claim to be recognised as the Egyptian homeland.

The original temple of the Falcon is recognised as originating in the Blessed Island of the Child. (55) The temple itself is identified with the primaeval sacred mound, the Divine Emerging Island. The Primaeval Mound is, as we have seen, identical with the Pure Land, one of the most frequently employed epithets of Dilmun. (56)

I cannot resist drawing attention to one other curious parallel, or coincidence, if you prefer. One of the most frequently repeated glyphs in the iconography of, for example, the Gulf seals is the foot or footprint, a symbol which indeed appears in Mesopotamia in the earliest times. (57) In Egypt, by contrast with Mesopotamia, the hieroglyph which represents the foot is shown in profile; it means 'place' or 'position' and also represents the consonant 'b'. (58) However there is a special usage of the hieroglyph in the Pyramid Texts, though very rarely, according to Gardiner, where it appears as a compound. (59) The compound consists of the foot with a jar from which water is pouring. The meaning here, according to Gardiner, is 'Pure', 'Clean' as in Utterance 513.

which Enki whispered the warning of the Deluge to come. (32) Enki's most ancient shrine at Eridu was, of course, a little reed structure. (33)

At the creation, according to the Edfu inscriptions, the creator spirits brought into existence a number of sacred places of which the first two were 'the Mound of the Radiant One' and 'the Island of Re'. (34) Others included the High Hill, the Oil-Tree and the Place of Ghosts. (35)

The land contiguous to the original island called Wetjeset -Neter. (36) Other names by which the island was known in the beginning, as well as the Island of Peace, were the Island of Trampling and the Island of Combat. (37) The island first lay in darkness surrounded by the primaeval waters called Wa'ret. (38) Its original inhabitants and sovereigns were Falcons. (39) Horus is, of course, the supreme Egyptian Falcon, the same Horus who was saluted as Lord of the Land of Sunrise.

Adjacent to the Wa'ret were several sacred places: the paylands. (40) These included the Island of Fury. (41) The island was the site of the archetypal temple and is to be recognised as the Homeland of the Early Primaeval Ones. (42)

According to the Hermopolitan myths the Sun-God himself was born in a pool which existed on the primaeval island. (43) In the Edfu texts the island itself is called the Pool which came into existence at the Beginning. (44) The island was the nucleus of the world. The gods who emerged in this period were the most Aged Ones of the Primaeval Time. (45) The pool stood on the edge of the island; it was surrounded by reeds. (46) The island was known to be the realm of the Falcons.

It seems that the island was associated with the idea of the death of an early generation or company of the gods; the gods were killed, it appears, in some form of battle. (47) The island may have become their tomb. (48) The falcons who were the island's original rulers became associated with its funerary customs, thus recalling the early generation of gods who met their deaths there. (49) The idea of islands as

The gods are said 'to give an island' to the justified Osiris and Egyptian legend spoke of 'Middle Island' (23) an unknown, distant locality which was reached only by the boat of Anty, the Ferryman, who carried passengers to the island as did Sursunabi, Ziusudra's ferryman, who carried Gilgamesh to Dilmun. (24) Anty plays a somewhat equivocal role in the dispute of Horus and Seth for when the tribunal hearing the evidence of the two gods' contention decides to remove its hearings to a remote and distant island, Anty the ferryman is instructed not to provide Isis with a passage to the island. The goddess bribes Anty however and, by a deplorable piece of trickery secures the verdict in favour of her son, Horus, at the expense of Seth. Seth incidentally was Lord of Asia and particularly of lands to the east of Egypt. (25)

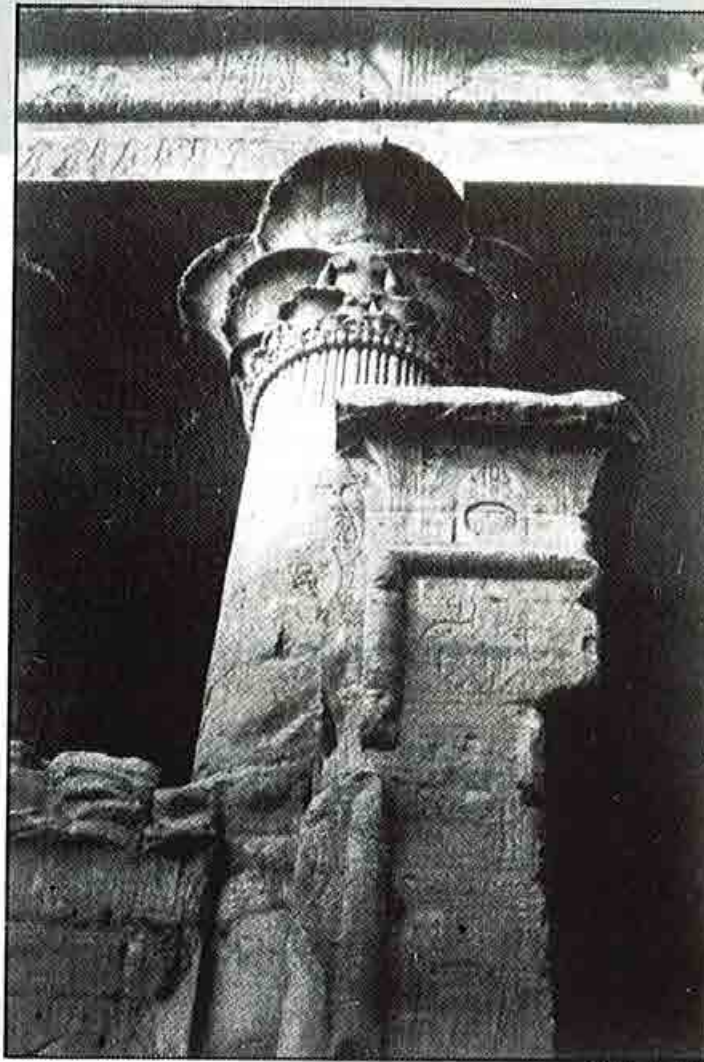
One of Horus' titles is 'Horus of the Land of Sunrise'. (26) He is often saluted as Horus of the Horizon (Harakhte) in which, according to Frankfort, the horizon signifies the land of light, the mountains to the east of Egypt at the eastern edge of the earth. (27)

There were many ferrymen who feature in the Pyramid Texts; various of them are associated with regions to the east. Thus Utterance 359 observes:

'O Re, commend me to the ferryman of the Winding Waterway, so that he may bring me his ferryboat ... in which he ferries the gods ... to the eastern side of the sky'. (28)

The island was repeatedly identified as a place of reeds; (29) the land there was marshy. One of its names, as we learn from the Book of the Dead, was the Field of Reeds of the Blessed. This, too, is said to be located on the eastern edge of the world (30). Both the Egyptians and the Sumerians sustained the most affectionate memories of their earliest shrines or temples, which were built of reeds. The Edfu temple, in its innermost recesses reproduces the archetypal reed shrine in stone; (31) the Sumerians immortalised in their poetry Ziusudra's reed hut, to the walls of

★ The temple of Horus at Edfu. It was built in the third and second centuries B.C. under the Ptolemies



leaps into Heaven and consumes the other gods in a celestial cannibal rite, the text proclaims the magical nature of the Island of Fire:

“The King is the Bull of Sky,  
who conquers at will,  
who lives on the being of every god,  
who eats their entrails  
Even of those who come with their bodies full  
of magic  
From the Island of Fire.” (22)

Antiquity of the Bahrain Islands' in 1880 observed that 'Tilmun' might convey the meaning 'The Blessed Isle' (13)

Baumgartel, who analysed the predynastic period exhaustively, believed that the 'original home of the Naqada II people' was not far distant from that of the Sumerians (14). She also suggested that the late predynastic kings were descended from the Naqada II people.

From the very earliest times the Egyptians seem to have maintained the idea that many of the beliefs and events which characterised their 'culture' — to employ a term which of course they would not have recognised — had their origins, in their pristine form, in a far distant island. One of the most frequent symbols for the first land to emerge at the creation is the Primaeval Hill or Mound. This is sometimes explicitly insular in character: thus in the Pyramid Texts Utterance 484 speaks of 'the Primaeval Hill in the midst of the sea'. (15). The land here is specifically a sea-girt island and not a hillock of mud revealed by the withdrawal of the waters of the inundation which has so often been described by Egyptologists as the first land to appear at the Creation. The primaeval place was the Island of Rest, or Peace. (16)

The Island of Peace was associated with the Rising Sun, in which capacity it was 'the Island of Flame'. (17) It was the Divine Emerging Island which appeared from the Abyss of primaeval waters, personified as Nun, the oldest of the gods, according to some theologies. (18) In this context the premaeval hill sometimes was called Ta-Tanen (19); Tanen was the god of the Primaeval Mound in Memphite theology and is clearly a precursor of Ptah. From the Island of Flame (or fire) came, in the very beginning, Hike (20) the personification of the vital essence which to the Egyptians was the basis of Life. The island was a magical place, far distant to the east, beyond the limits of the world, a place of everlasting light where the gods were born. As King Pepi remarks 'I go up this eastern side of the sky where the gods were born' (PT Utterance) (21). In the great incantation which forms Utterances 273/4, in which the deified King

race. The Pun people founded the island fortress of Ha-fun which commands the whole of that coast, and hence came the Punic or Phenic peoples of classic antiquity. Those who went up to Red Sea formed the dynastic invaders of Egypt entering by the Qoceir-Koptos road. Others went on to Syria and founded Tyre, Sidon and Aradus, named after their home islands in the Persian Gulf'. (10)

The third quotation is separated from the earlier ones by some 20 odd years; in between them Petrie was responsible for sending Ernest Mackay to Bahrain, to review the grave mounds. No hint of the Master's concern for Sumero-Egyptian origins, however, appears in Mackay's rather staid report (11).

Petrie, it will be observed, speaks of the prospect of Gulf as well as Elamite influences being present in pre-dynastic Egypt with considerable assurance, which might indeed be taken for an expression of certainty. What is not clear is why he considered that the Gulf islands were involved, though earlier nineteenth century commentators seem often to have believed that the Egyptians and the Sumerians had either a common origin or were influenced in their formative periods by some other, third party. Evidently Petrie saw the people of the Gulf islands fulfilling this role.

Another scholar of a time slightly earlier than that in which Petrie was writing and who toyed with the idea that Bahrain might have had some special, insular significance to the Egyptians was Cecil H. Smith of the British Museum. In a discussion following the presentation of a paper by Theodore Bent to the Royal Geographical Society on his visit to Bahrain in 1889, he suggested that "To Nefer", the Egyptian name for the land of Punt, one of the most frequent loci cited in later times as the home of the gods, might in fact mean 'the holy island'. (12) Earlier still, in the first scholarly analysis of ancient Dilmun in modern times, Rawlinson in his commentary on Durand's report 'On the

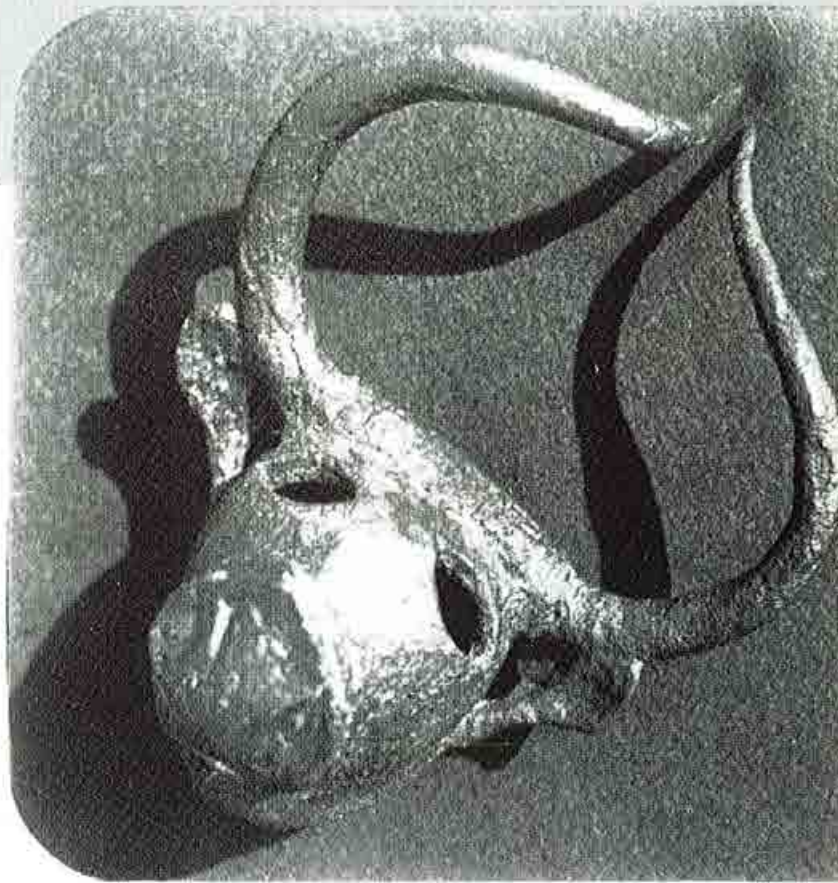
same theme. Speaking of the 'Falcon tribe' which he believed had conquered Egypt prior to the beginning of the First Dynasty, Petrie says:

'This falcon tribe had certainly originated in Elam, as indicated by the hero and lions on the 'Araq knife handle. They went down the Persian Gulf and settled in 'the horn of Africa'. There they named the 'Land of Punt', sacred to later Egyptians as the source of the



★ "Anki", God of Water at "Sumer"

★ A copper bull's head dating from around 2500 B.C. found at Barbar temple site



factor would be against their having come to Egypt across the Arabian desert. The probability seems that they branched off to some settlement in the Persian Gulf (such as the Bahreyn Islands) or on the South Arabian coast and from their second home had brought its style and ideas into Egypt'. (8)

In another article, charmingly called 'The Geography of the Gods', in which he examines the geographical origins and associations of the principal divinities of Egypt, he writes:

'The general diffusion of the worship of Hathor and her identification with many other deities or genii points to her belonging to the dynastic people, as already stated. The movement of the dynastic people appears to have been by sea round from the Persian Gulf and up the Red Sea into Egypt. (9)

Later, in 'The Making of Egypt', he returned to the

island, far distant towards the east, on the edge of the world, where the first and most crucial acts of creation occurred and where the first and second generations of gods had their home. This island the Egyptians believed, played a profound part in the folk-experience which contributed to the very foundations as well as to the ideology of the Pharaonic state.

But in considering the place of beginnings as the Egyptians envisioned it, it may be appropriate first to recall how the Sumerians spoke of Dilmun, the paradisaical and pristine nature of which is central to what follows here.

In Sumerian texts which celebrate Dilmun, several epithets are customarily attached to it, in which it is represented as a paradisaical place where the gods dwell and in which various acts of creation are induced. These epithets include the Land of Crossing, the Land where the Sun Rises (5), (for the land is sited in the Sea of the Rising Sun) but throughout its literature particular emphasis is placed on Dilmun's purity:

**“The Land Dilmun is a clean place,  
That place is clean, that place is bright” (6)**

Par excellence, Dilmun is a pure place, perhaps even the pure place. Dilmun was ‘the land of pure decrees’ Meskillag, and one of its tutelary goddesses was Ninsikilla, the Lady of Pure Decrees (7). I shall return to this aspect of its reputation further.

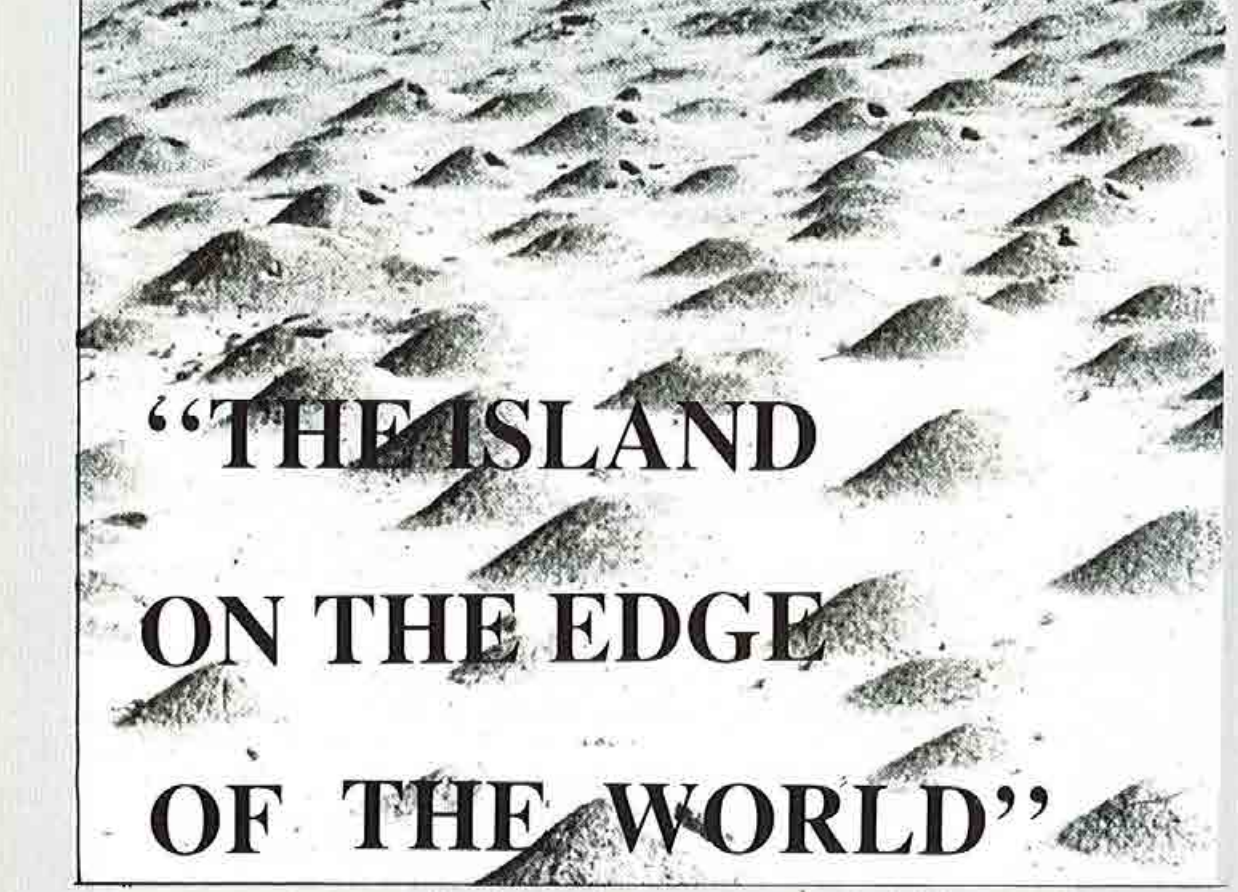
Now let me call in evidence three quotations from the Father of Egyptology himself, Flinders Petrie. Writing in the magazine ‘Ancient Egypt’, which he founded to popularize the study of the Pharaonic civilization, he wrote of the alien non-Egyptian influences which he, like others, felt could be detected in the late predynastic cultures.

“The strong Mesopotamian suggestions of the design have, as we noted before, no exact parallel in the East. They seem rather to belong to a people of Elamite or Tigrian origin and ideas who had progressed on their own lines. The presence of shipping as an important



directions in the exploration of that misty hinterland, lying somewhere between myth and reality, which surrounds the prospect of contacts between the Sumerians and the Egyptians at the end of the fourth millennium, a contact in which the Gulf people, specifically the Dilmunites, may have been involved. My guide books are rather cumbersome documents: they include the Pyramid Texts, (2) (which, incidentally must surely be acknowledged as the supreme literary expression of the collective unconscious) the inscriptions of the Horus Temple at Edfu, (3) which, though Ptolemaic in date probably incorporate much earlier material and, like some of the Pyramid Texts, descend from Predynastic times, together with other inscriptions at Hermopolis, (4) which may also contain early records or recollections of the Egyptian people.

I would like to suggest that these texts (and no doubt others unknown to me) may contain evidence that the Egyptians preserved, however faintly, memories of an



# “THE ISLAND ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD”



By:  
**Michael Rice**

At the Third Conference in Asian Archaeology, held in Bahrain in 1970, I presented a paper which reviewed some of the relatively familiar, more or less archaeological, evidence for a connection between Sumer and Egypt affected through the Gulf route in high antiquity. (1) I also dilated on some less familiar material, like the curious similarity between the silhouettes of Osiris and the male Eridu figure. My observations were then quite kindly received; I have been prompted therefore to repeat the journey, but this time to take with me as my guides some texts which seem to me to point to a variety of interesting

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other places and times. Indeed, the Kassite presence in Qatar seems most readily explicable as a primary extractive rather than a secondary commercial, situation. This hypothesis regarding Qatar, together with the explicit concern for dates and security from intruding pastoralist expressed in the pair of Nippur letters, suggests that the Kassites were in the Gulf to control a limited range of local, principally agricultural and maritime, production, and only secondarily if at all to control commercial links beyond the Gulf. Such a situation would comfortably account for the shell evidence linking Babylonian sites with the Gulf. This relationship of Babylonia to the Gulf effectively defines a colonialism oriented directly around land and production rather than indirectly by way of exchange over these functions.

The question of local populations is more difficult, and at the same time more important. The existence of hostile pastoralists is attested in the Nippur letters and is implied, perhaps, in the local abandonment of settlements and material traditions throughout the Gulf. A complete shift to pastoralism in the face of permanent water and a history of cultivation as was the case on Bahrain and the adjacent Saudi Arabian coast does not seem entirely plausible, however. Moreover, the continuities in glyptic tradition found on Failaka and perhaps also Bahrain urge caution in this regard. On the other hand, the absence of habitation after the Kassite episode suggests that if local populations did exist in the central Gulf they were thin and perhaps aceramic throughout the 2nd mil. This is a subject in need of a great deal of more investigation.

did not come from that direction, notably iron. In any case, one must agree with Brinkman (1968: 197-8) that, judging by the variety of the tribute, the southern tribes were in control of a large-scale and extensive trade by the end of the 9th century B.C. All of this correlates very well with the literary evidence that Dilmun was able a century later to give over to Assyria 'tribute' which included copper presumably originating in Oman, a complete return to the 3rd mil. symmetries. All of these fragments of evidence point to the conclusion, only slightly speculative, that the Gulf trade had revived considerably by the end of the 2nd mil.

Evidence, whether textual or material, for earlier in the 2nd mil. is, however, extremely limited. Indeed, apart from marine shells, one is hard pressed to find any evidence for a maritime Gulf trade during the late Old Babylonian through Kassite periods, particularly if one excludes Collon's (1977) highly contentious thesis concerning ivory. Given that the 3rd mil. trade was so strongly oriented around copper, the absence of any real indication of an active 2nd mil. Gulf trade is hardly surprising: Babylonian acquisition of copper shifted early in the Old Babylonian period from a southern orientation through the Gulf to a westward (Mediterranean) and northwestward (Anatolian) orientation. At the same time, the tin trade apparently also shifted northward to Assur from the Susa-Larsa axis (cf. Muhly 1973). Lapis Lazuli seemingly followed suit. Thus it seems unlikely that commerce through the Gulf, if existent, was of great importance either to Babylonia or to the Gulf itself.

This tentative conclusion may then be reflected back onto the situation in the Gulf as perceived archaeologically, i.e. the later Kassite presence. Absence or unimportance of trade through the Gulf implies that Kassite installations on Bahrain and elsewhere were not commercial establishments, nor motivated fundamentally by control over traffic coming through the Gulf, in the manner well known for

- 1) Kassite occupation occurs in a locally near or total occupational void;
- 2) Kassite occupation on Bahrian shows many of the earmarks of public function, including massive architecture and accountancy by writing and sealing;
- 3) The period of Kassite occupation of Bahrain coincides with the peak of Kassite power.

For the most part, then Bahrain and Malyan seem to show the results of highly similar expansions from Akkad and Elam respectively. The conclusion that the Kassite horizon in the Gulf represents an expansionary episode of the late 15th or 14th centuries B.C. needs further refinement. At issue is the nature of the Kassite presence in the central and upper Gulf, and its relation to local populations. One avenue of approach to these issues is the question of trade through the Gulf.

The well-known Gulf trade of the 3rd mil. collapsed with the urban crisis at the beginning of the 2nd mil.; indeed, both failures were different aspects in single process of retrenchment. As with many other facets of 2nd mil. history in the Gulf, the status of trade during the subsequent 'dark age' is largely unknown. Although the available textual information is virtually silent on the issue, some hints do come through at the end of the 2nd mil. The inscription of a king of the 2nd Sealands Dynasty describes a throne made of **Mesu** wood and inlaid with gold (cf. Brinkman 1968: 153); **mesu** wood was a standard commodity of the 3rd mil. trade, and this reference may reflect a renewal of trade through the Gulf. At a slightly later date, when the Assyrian Shalmaneser III was establishing effective control over the southernmost parts of Babylonia on behalf of the new Babylonian king, the tribute extracted from the southern tribes included many items which **May** have been traded through the Gulf — ivory, elephant hides, **mesu** wood, ebony, incense, etc.; other items most certainly

this general pattern of urban or settled population is Khuzistan. As with Kassite Akkad, Middle Elamite Khuzistan formed the core of a fairly extensive, relatively centralised political entity. In both regions urbanism was, to a large degree, artificial, in that a high proportion of urban space was new foundation of a ceremonial and administrative nature (Dur-Untash and Dur-Kurigalzu). More important to the present problem, Elam and Babylonia shared the characteristic of establishing centres in outlying regions, Anshan and Liyan in the case of Elam, Dilmun in the case of Babylonia.

That Elam did indeed behave in this manner is clear from material and epigraphical finds at Malyan and Bender Bouchir. In the case of Malyan, Middle Elamite ceramics occur only at this centre and not in the environs of the Kur valley. The Middle Elamite occupation is characterized by a massive architectural complex with which are associated epigraphical and glyptic material, and apparently also storage facilities for various kinds of materials, all these elements being consistent with an administrative function for the building (cf. Carter and Stolper 1976). This occupation of Malyan occurred during a period when local painted ceramic traditions were present, but which defined low intensity and divergent occupation of the valley (Jacobs 1980). At Bouchir the nature of the Elamite occupation is less clear, as is the nature of local populations, though again the public nature of the epigraphical remains suggest the Elamite presence as a political function. In sum, the end of the 2nd mil. on the Iranian plateau saw a Middle Elamite expansion to the south and southeast, an expansion which involved the transference, indeed imposition, of the political and administrative apparatus of the Elamite kingdom, in areas which immediately prior to this expansion had been outside the sphere of Elamite materials.

The Gulf presents a number of parallels with the Elam-Malyan pattern. The points of similarity are as follows:

conventionally thought. Such a revision does not seriously alter the hypothesis of a profound economic shift to camel pastoralism, with its attendant absence of substantial architecture, during the 2nd mil. (cf. Cleuziou 1981).

## DISCUSSION

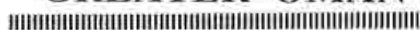
The patterns of occupation reviewed above may be summarized by the following two points:

- 1) Chronologically and materially a well-defined late Kassite horizon occurs in the upper and central Gulf, with relative intensity of occupation decreasing with distance from Babylonia. The only other apparent occupational period is post-Kassite, known definitely only from Failaka, and Middle Elamite at Bouchir.
- 2) This late Kassite horizon occurs within the context of a long-term gap of local cultural tradition and documentable occupation, a gap which covers and defines the 2nd mil. as an historical unit. Some continuity may exist in the dark-faced wares of Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf stamp seal tradition of the 3rd mil. finds some continuation through the 2nd mil., particularly at Failaka. The significance of this glyptic continuity in the face of a disruption of all other cultural expressions is unclear.

These conclusions are not unexpected. The second millennium is a period of declines in urbanism, total area of settlement, or both, and of profound shifts in economic, political and military relations on an interregional scale. In Babylonia, the centre of population, urbanism and political power shifted from south to north, into Akkad; these shifts were accompanied by agrarian decline in the south and a shift of trade to a more northerly control. At the same time, Central Asia and Indus urbanism collapsed, leaving viable but presumably less 'internationally' oriented village settlement systems. On the Iranian plateau, similarly, population centres were reduced in size, as at Malyan and the entirety of the Kur valley. In addition to Akkad, the exception to

exist. Principal of these indications is a ceramic style which is usually placed in the 3rd mil., the so-called dark-faced hole-mouth material. While this style is undoubtedly a 3rd mil. product, a radiocarbon determination from a sounding in the Jabrin area indicates that the ware may extend to the end of the 2nd mil. (a date of  $1100 \pm 85$ , though whether this date is reported corrected, or what half-life is used is unclear; Adams et al. 1977: 29). As before, a single date by itself has limited significance particularly when a clearly 1st mil. ceramic form occurred on the same site in a cist grave (Adams et al. 1977: 29; Bibby 1973: 48). Bibby also reports a socketed spear point from a tomb in the region, which he would date to the 2nd mil.; given the revised dating of Omani metal (Lombard 1981), however, and the apparent Yabrin-Oman connection at this time, this dating is extremely dubious. The subject of 2nd mil. occupation in the Eastern Province clearly needs further clarification.

## **GREATER OMAN**



As in the littoral regions to the north, occupation here is undocumented for the 2nd mil. i.e. between the so-called Wadi Suq horizon and the Iron Age. The end of the Wadi Suq may be dated, somewhat conventionally, to 1800 or 1700 B.C., and the beginning of the Omani Iron Age to c. 800 B.C. These chronological limits correspond perfectly with the 2nd mil. of this review — a thousand years of negative evidence. The only hint of occupation during these thousand years comes from a series of radiocarbon dates published by Frifelt for Hili, two of which pertain to surficial features which perhaps post-date the Wadi Suq horizon (Frifelt 1969: 174); determinations fall at C. 1800 and 1550 B.C. corrected. A third determination, from Bat falls at C. 1600 B.C. and may also refer to a post-Wadi Suq feature (Frifelt 1979: 584). The ceramic and other materials associated with the dated features at Hili and Bat are not described, and one cannot exclude the possibility that the Wadi Suq actually terminates further into the 2nd mil. than

1970). Given this new site in the Gulf, there is no longer any reason to assume, **a priori**, that textual references to marine dyes implies relations to the west (cf. Oppenheim 1967 for just this assumption at a slightly later date, though in this case, the assumption seems justified, judging from the other materials mentioned). In sum, the archaeological and textual evidence for Babylonian involvement in the Gulf during the 2nd mil. indicates that this involvement went well beyond a simple traffic in dates.

## LIYAN



Pezard's excavations at Bender Bouchir in the early part of this century indicates occupation dating to both the end of the 3rd and end of the 2nd millennia (Pezard 1914). The earlier occupation shows relations with the Gulf, Malyan and Susa, thus forming an important Elamite link into the Gulf economic system. The latter occupation is attested principally by dedicatory inscriptions which date to both the 13th and the 12th centuries, but the greater part of which belong to the middle of the latter century. This date corresponds to the period of maximum Elamite power, and falls slightly after the date proposed above for the Kassite installations in the Gulf. A correlation with the Post-Kassite occupation at Failaka, where Elamite style seals are reported (Kjaerum 1980), cannot be ruled out.

## SAUDI LITTORAL



Occupation of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia is virtually unknown during the course of the 2nd mil.: following the Barbar II horizon on the coast, the next datable occurrence is a still somewhat nebulous horizon perhaps correlated with the Qala'at City IV or slightly earlier (cf. Potts 1982). Some indications of intervening settlement, particularly from the Jabrin area, however, do

repertoire of motifs. Such a combination of traditions on a cylinder seal calls to mind the al-Hajjar example mentioned above. The meaning of this stylistic continuity and 'hybridization' is uncertain in the face of disruption and discontinuity of other traditions, most obviously of ceramics.

## QATAR



The only site definitely assignable to the 2nd mil. in Qatar lies on a small island in the bay of Khor, excavated by the French mission in the early part of this decade (Edens 1981, 1982). The site consists of a small series of structures visible on the surface and a small shell midden, these being the only contexts which yield any depositional depth. The ceramics of the site appear to conform to the Kassite assemblage at Kailaka (Hojlund 1983) and match well certain elements of the Kassite assemblage at Babylon (Reuther 1926: 14; Abb. lc, 7, 9; cf. Strommenger 1964). The Qatari assemblage also matches the City III corpus in the presence of a red ware as a minority fabric. Needless to emphasize, the same ambiguities in dating as face Bahrain and Failaka are present here as well. The single available radiocarbon date falls at 1000 B.C. corrected, and so tends to support a slightly later date; however, a single date on shell cannot be given a great deal of credence by itself.

The content of the midden is dominated by a single species of marine gastropod which, like its near relative the *Murex* in the Mediterranean, produces a fast purple dye. The high relative frequency and absolute abundance of the gastropod, and the physical state of these shells in the midden all converge to suggest that the Khor site was in fact specialised in the production of purple dye. The entirely Kassite character of the ceramics of the site — both in fabric and in form — suggest further that the occupants of the site were closely associated with Babylonia of the later 2nd mil., either directly or, more likely indirectly through Bahrain. The use of purple dyed cloth in Kassite and Post-Kassite Babylonia is well known through textual evidence (cf. Aro

er, the sites, particularly F3, apparently represent classic examples of spiral stratigraphy, with sectors of the sites experiencing cyclical settlement and abandonment. This situation makes the apparent ceramic breaks of uncertain import. Nonetheless, in view of occupational history both in Bahrain and in southern Babylonia, a hiatus of settlement during the several centuries between the early Old Babylonian and the later Kassite occupations is not unreasonable. A similar gap between Kassite and Post-Kassite levels is less certain.

The sites F-3 and F-6 are fairly small (each under a hectare) and were differentiated in function throughout the 2nd mil., with F-6 containing a 'palace' complex and F-3 private architecture and various special activity areas (e.g. Barbar period kilns). While Kassite occupation of F-3 is definite, such an occupation of F-6 is less sure (cf. the contradiction on this point in Hojlund 1980, 1983); Post-Kassite levels may have the reverse distribution.

As with Bahrain, the dating of the Kassite and Post-Kassite phases is far from evident. The large number of Mitanni-style seals would urge a date roughly comparable with that suggested above for the Qala'at City III, i.e. 15th-14th centuries B.C., in the present case as well. The Kassite ceramics of F-3 are not yet well enough published to enter the discussion usefully. The Post-Kassite dating of the last occupation on F-6 presumably rests again on glyptic evidence, though the published ceramics are entirely compatible with a Kassite dating as well. On the whole, the combination of available ceramic and glyptic indices fit most comfortably with a date broadly identical with the date for City III, with a somewhat later occupation also occurring on one site.

Kjaerum indicates a basic stylistic continuity from the older 3rd mil. Gulf seal tradition to major element of the later 2nd mil. corpus on Failaka, exclusive of the cylinder seals. This suggestion is expanded by the cylinder seal published by Ferrara, which presents a combination of Kassite inscription and execution with a Gulf tradition