

SHEWBREAD

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SHEWBREAD.--'Shewbread,' formed apparently on the pattern of Luther's *Schaubrot*, is the tr. first adopted by Tindale, of the Heb. לֶחֶם הַפְּנִיִּים 'bread of the presence [of J'],' of which, accordingly, the more correct tr. is that proposed by RVm, viz. 'presence-bread.'

It has been usual hitherto to assign the introduction of the term 'shewbread' to Coverdale (see, e.g., Plummer's *Luke*, 167). But it is found as early as 1526 in Tindale's *New Testament*, He 9:2 'and the shewe breed which is called wholly' (Offor's reprint). Curiously enough, Tindale not only uses other renderings in the Gospels ('the halowed loves,' Mt 12:4, Mk 2:26; 'loves of halowed breed,' Lk 6:4), but retains the same inconsistency in his revised edition of 1534, after he had adopted 'shewbred' in his Pentateuch of 1530. In the latter on its first occurrence (Ex 25:30) he adds the marginal note: 'Shewbred, because it was alway in the presence and sight of the Lorde' (see Mombert's reprint, *in loc.*). Wyclif had naturally followed the Vulgate (see below) with 'breed of proposicioun.' The Protestant translators and revisers who succeeded Tindale give 'shewbread' in OT, 'shewe loves,' 'shewbreads,' and 'shewbread' in NT, the last, by the end of the 16th cent. being firmly established in both Testaments (the Rheims version, however, retaining 'loaves of proposition').

1. NOMENCLATURE.--On the occasion of the earliest historical mention of the presence-bread (לֶחֶם הַפְּנִיִּים 1 S 21:6 [Heb.7]) it is also termed 'holy bread' (לֶחֶם קֹדֶשׁ. ib. 5. 6. [6. 7] RV; AV 'hallowed bread'). The former term is that used throughout the Priests' Code (P) of the Pentateuch, with the addition of the name 'continual bread' (לֶחֶם תָּמִיד "ל" Nu 4:7b; cf. 'bread' only Ex 40:23). In the post-exilic period we meet with another designation, viz. 'the pile-bread' (לֶחֶם הַמַּעֲרֵכֹת) 1 Ch 9:32 23:29; Neh 10:33, but with the terms reversed 2 Ch 13:11, cf. He 9:2 ; also מערכת alone 2 Ch 24). This name is due to the fact that the loaves were arranged upon the table in two piles (מַעֲרֵכֹת Lv 24:6; this, the rendering of RVm, suits the facts better than the 'rows' of the text of EV). The tr. varies considerably in the Gr. versions, the most literal rendering of the older designation is ἄρτοι τοῦ προσώπου 1 S 21:6, 2 Es 20:33 (but cf. Aquila's ἄρ. προσώπων), ἄρ. ἐνώπιον Ex 25:30, of οἱ ἄρ. οἱ προκείμενοι Ex 39:18; elsewhere most frequently ἄρ. τῆς προθέσεως, 'loaves of the setting forth.' This, the term used in the Gospels (Mt 12:4, Mk 2:26, Lk 6:4), reflects the later Hebrew designation above mentioned (cf. προθέσεως in LXX to render עָרַךְ 'to set

in order,' 'set forth' [a meal upon a table]).* The variant ἡ πρόθεσις τ. ἄρτων

* Codex BeR (D) has προσθέσεως, with which comp. προστιθέναι for προτιθ. in some MSS of the LXX (passim). See for D's reading, Nestle, *Introd. to Text. Criticism of Gr. NT* (1901), 237.

(He 9:2) follows 2 Ch 13:11, 2 Mac 10:3. Still another rendering, οἱ ἄρ. τῆς προσφορᾶς, is confined to some MSS of the Greek of 1 K 7:48 (Lucian has προσθέσεως). The Vulgate also reflects both the Hebrew designations with *panis facierum* (of. Aquila, above) and *panis propositionis*.

The table of shewbread has likewise in Hebrew a twofold nomenclature: in פְּנֵי הַפָּנִים in P 'the presence-table' (Nu 4:7), but in Chronicles שֵׁן הַמַּעֲרָכָה (2 Ch 29:18) ; in both we also find הַטְּהוֹר שֵׁן 'the pure table' (Lv 24:6, 2 Ch 13:11, probably because overlaid with pure gold. For other designations now disguised in MT see next section.

ii. THE SHEWBREAD IN THE PRE-EXILIC PERIOD.

--The earliest historical mention of the shewbread occurs in the account of David's flight from Saul, in which he secures for his young men, under conditions that are somewhat obscure, the use of the shewbread from the sanctuary at NOD (1 S 21:2ff). It is here described, as we have seen, both as 'presence-bread' (v.6[7]) and as 'holy' or 'sacred bread' (vv.4. 6 [8-7]), in opposition to ordinary or unconsecrated bread (לֶחֶם). The incident appears to have happened on the day on which the loaves were removed to be replaced by fresh or 'hot bread' (לֶחֶם חֵם) v. 6[7]).

It must not be inferred from this narrative that the regulation of the Priests' Code, by which the stale shewbread was the exclusive perquisite of the priests, was already in force, although this, naturally, is the standpoint of NT times (see. Mt 12:4 and paralls.). Ahimelech, in requiring and receiving the assurance that David's young men were ceremonially 'clean' (see art. UNCLEANNES), seems to have taken all the precautions then deemed necessary. The narrative is further of value as giving us a clear indication of the meaning originally attaching to the expression 'presence-bread; for the loaves are here expressly said to have been 'removed from the presence of J'" ("מִלְּפָנַי" MT, v.7; of. the similar expression Ex 25:30). We next meet with the rite in connexion with Solomon's temple, among the furniture of which is mentioned in our present text 'the table whereupon the shewbread was' (1 K 7:48 RV). This table is here further said to have been 'of gold,' by which we are to understand from the context 'of solid gold' (cf. Ex 25:24 in LXX, and Josephus' [*Ant.* VIII. iii. 7] description of the temple). But it is well known that in this section of the Book of Kings the original narrative has been overlaid with accretions of all sorts, mostly, if not entirely, post-exilic; these are due to the idea of this latertime, that the interior decoration of Solomon's temple, and the materials of its furniture, could in no respect have been inferior to those of the tabernacle of P. See Stade's classical essay, 'Der Text des Berichtes

ueber Salomo's Bauten,' in *ZATW*, 1883, 129-177, reproduced in his *Akad. Reden u. Abhandlungen* (1899), 143ff. Stade's results have been accepted in the main by all recent scholars. Thus he shows that the original of 1 K 6:20b. 21 probably read somewhat as is still given in the middle clause of the better Gr. text of A (ἐποίησεν θυσιαστήριον κέδρου . . . κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ δαβὶρ) viz. *וַיַּעַשׂ מִזְבֵּחַ אֲרָז לְפָנַי הַדְּבַר* 'and he [Solomon] made an altar of cedar-wood (to stand) in front of the sanctuary (the 'Holy of Holies' of P).' Whether we should retain or discard the words 'and overlaid it with gold,' is of minor importance.*

The altar, therefore, of v. 20b is not to be understood of the altar of incense, which first appears in the latest stratum of P (see TABERNACLE), but, as in the passage of Ezekiel presently to be considered, of the table of shewbread. The express mention of the latter by name in 1 K 7:48b is also part of an admittedly late addition to the original text (see authorities cited in footnote). The same desire to enhance the glory of the Solomonic temple is usually assigned as the ground for the tradition followed by the Chronicler, who states that Solomon provided the necessary gold for ten tables of shewbread (1 Ch 28:16 ; cf. 2 Ch 48:19). This writer, however, is not consistent, for elsewhere we read of 'the ordering of the shewbread upon the pure table (2 Ch 13:11).' In his account, further, of the cleansing of the temple under Hezekiah, only 'the table of shewbread, with all the vessels thereof' is mentioned (ib. 29:16),--a view of the cage which is undoubtedly to be regarded as alone in accordance with the facts of history.

This table fell a prey to the flames which consumed the temple in the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar (2 K 25:8, Jer 52:18). The tale related by the Byzantine chronicler (Syncellus, 409), that it was among the furniture concealed by Jeremiah on Mount Pisgah, is but a later addition to the earlier form of the same fable, which we already find in 2 Mac 2:1ff. Notwithstanding these uncertainties, the continuance of the rite under the monarchy is sufficiently assured.

iii. THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD.-Ezekiel in his sketch of the ideal sanctuary likewise contemplates the perpetuation of the rite, for in a passage of his book, which on all hands is regarded as

* See besides Stade, *op. cit.*, the commentaries of Kittel and Benzinger, esp. the latter's Introduction. xvi if., where an interesting study will be found of the gradual growth of the accretions with which 1 K 6:16-21 is now overgrown; also Burney's art. *KINGS* in the present work, vol. ii. 863b, and his *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings*, in *loc.*

corrupt, but capable with the help of the LXX of easy emendation, we read thus as emended): 'In front of the sanctuary [this also=P's 'Holy of Holies'] was something like an altar of wood, three cubits in height, and the length thereof two cubits, and the breadth two cubits ; and it had corners, and its base and its sides were of wood. And he said unto me: This is the table that is before J" (Ezk 41:21, 22 ; so substantially Cornill and all recent commentators). Here, then, we have not the altar of incense, but once more the table of shewbread. The twofold circumstance that it is here expressly termed an altar, and is of plain wood without a gold covering, is a strong argument in favour of Stade's restoration of the text of 1 K, discussed above. Ezekiel's table of shewbread resembled in its general outline the similar altar-tables so often seen on the Assyrian monuments (see last section) its height was half as much again as its length, and in section it formed a square of at least 3 ft. in the side. The projections or 'horns' were, no doubt, similar to those of the Assyrian altars (see, e.g., Perrot and Chipiez, *History of Art in Chaldea and Assyria*, i. pp. 143, 255, etc.).

In the temple of Zerubbabel, consecrated in the 6th year of Darius (B.C. 516), the table of shewbread, we may safely infer, had its place in the outer sanctuary, although we have no information as to whether or not it was modelled on Ezekiel's altar-table. After the introduction of the Priests' Code it may have been remodelled according to the instructions there given (Ex 25:23f.); we may at least, with some measure of certainty, suppose that it was then overlaid with gold, since Antiochus Epiphanes, when he carried off the spoils of the temple (1 Mac 1:22), would scarcely have taken the trouble to remove a plain wooden altar. The well-informed author of 1 Maccabees, in the passage cited, includes among the spoils not only the table itself, but 'the flagons and chalices and censers of gold' used in the ritual of the table (see for these art. TABERNACLE, section on Table of Shewbread). The provision of the shewbread, it should be added, was one of the objects to which were devoted the proceeds of the tax of one-third of a shekel instituted by Nehemiah (1032, cf. Jos. Ant. III. x. 7, § 255).

Here attention may be called to two non-canonical Jewish writers who allude to the subject of this article. The earlier of the two, is pseudo-Hecataeus, whose date is usually assumed to be the 3rd cent. B.C. (Schurer, GJV 3 iii. 465; but Willrich, *Judea u. Gricchen*, etc., 20 1., argues for a date in the Maccabaeen period). This writer, in a passage preserved for us by Josephus (c. *Apion*. i. 22), describes the second temple as ' a large edifice wherein is an altar (βωμός), and a candelabrum both of gold, two talents in weight.' The former term, in the light of what has been said above with regard to the altar-tables of Solomon and Ezekiel, we must identify with the table of shewbread. The other writer referred to is pseudo-Aristeas, whose date falls within the century 200-100 B.C.. In his famous letter, purporting to give an account of the origin of the Alexandrian version of the OT, he gives the rein to a lively imagination in his description of a shewbread table of unexampled magnificence--all of gold and precious gems, and of unsurpassed artistic workmanship--which Ptolemy Philadelphus is said to have presented to the temple at Jerusalem (see Wendland's or Thackeray's edition of

Aristeas' letter-tr. by the former in Kautzseh's *Apolcryphen u. Pseudepigraphen*, ii. 6 ff.). This table is admitted to have had no existence outside the pages of Aristeas.

To resume the thread of our narrative, we find that on the re-dedication of the temple (B.C. 165) Judas Maccabaeus had new furniture made, including the shewbread table (1 Mac 449),--now, we may be sure, constructed in entire conformity to the requirements of Ex 25:23ff.--upon which the loaves were duly set forth (v.51). This table continued in use till the destruction of the temple by Titus in A.D. 70. Rescued from the blazing pile, it figured along with the golden candlestick and a lull of the law in the triumph awarded to the victorious general (Jos. *BJ* vii. v. 3-7, esp. 5, § 148). Thereafter, these were all deposited by Vespasian in his newly built temple of Peace (ib. v. 7), while a representation of the triumph formed a conspicuous part of the decoration on the Arch of Titus, erected subsequently. Few remains of classical antiquity have been so frequently reproduced as the panel of the arch on which are depicted the table and the candlestick, borne aloft on the shoulders of the Roman veterans (see illustration under Music, vol. iii. p. 462). Both seem to have remained in Rome till the sack of the city by Genseric, king of the Vandals, in 455, by whom they were transferred to Carthage, the site, of the new Vandal capital in Africa. From Carthage they were transferred to Constantinople by Belisarius, in whose triumph they again figured. On this occasion a Jew, it is said, working on the superstitious awe felt by Justinian for these sacred relics, induced the emperor to send them back to Jerusalem. They probably perished finally in the sack of Jerusalem by Chosroes, the Persian, in 614 (see Reinach, 'L'Arc de Titus,' in *REJ* 20, p. lxxxv f., in book form, 1890; Knight, *The Arch of Titus*, 112 ff.).

iv. PREPARATION OF THE SHEWBREAD.--According to the express testimony of Josephus (*Ant.* III. vi. 6), the Mishna, and later Jewish writers, the shewbread was unleavened. Nor does there seem to be any valid ground for the assertion, frequently made by recent writers, that it was otherwise in more primitive times. The absence of leaven best suits the undoubted antiquity of the rite, and, moreover, is confirmed by the Babylonian practice of offering 'sweet' (i.e. unleavened) bread on the tables of the gods (see below). The material in all periods was of the finest of the flour (Lv 24:5), which was obtained, according to *Menahoth* (vi. 7), by sifting the flour eleven times. The kneading, and firing of the loaves in the time of the Chronicler was the duty of the 'sons of the Kohathites,' a Levitical guild (1 Ch 9:32) ; in the closing days of the second temple their preparation fell to the house or family of Gamin (*Yoma* iii. 11, *Shekal.* viii. 1). The quantity of flour prescribed by the Priests' Code for each loaf (הלֶחַם halls) was 'two tenth-parts of an ephah' (Lv 24:5 RV), which reckoning the ephah roughly at a bushel--represents about 4/5ths of a peck (c. 7 ¼ litres), a quantity sufficient to produce a loaf of considerable dimensions, recalling the loaves which gave their name to the Delian festival of the Μεγαλάρτια.

In the earlier period, at least, the loaves were laid upon the table while still hot (I S 21:6). The later regulations required that they should be arranged in two piles (מַעֲרֻכּוֹת, see sect. i. above). On the top of each pile, apparently,--on the table between the piles, according to another tradition, stood a censer containing 'pure frankincense for a memorial (אֵזֶבֶתָהּ, for which see comm. on Lv 24:7), even an offering by fire unto the LORD.' Alexandrian writers give salt in addition (Lv *l.c.* in LXX; hence, doubtless, Philo, *Vit. Mos.* ii. 151). The stale loaves, by the same regulations, were removed and fresh loaves substituted every Sabbath. According to *Sukka* (v. 7 f.), one half went to the outgoing division of priests, the other to the incoming division, by whom they were consumed within the sacred precincts.* In order to avoid repetition, further examination of the details given by post-biblical Jewish writers--many of them clearly wide of the mark—regarding the shape and size of the loaves and their arrangement on the table, as well as regarding the nature and purpose of the vessels mentioned, Ex 25:21, Nu 4:7, is reserved for the section on P's table of

* It is a mere conjecture that the shewbread was originally burned (Stade, *Akadem. Reden*, etc., 180, note 15).

shewbread and its vessels in the general article TABERNACLE.

v. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RITE.--The rite of 'the presence-bread' is one of the fairly numerous survivals from the pre-Mosaic stage of the religion of the Hebrews, and goes back ultimately to the native conception that the god, like his worshippers, required and actually partook of material nourishment. No doubt, as W. R. Smith has pointed out, this idea 'is too crude to subsist without modification beyond the savage state of society' (RS¹ 212). In the case of the shewbread, it may be suggested that the odour of the 'hot bread' (חֶמֶד חֶמֶד) 1 S 21:6[7]) was regarded in ancient times as a 'sweet savour,' like the shell of the sacrifice to J" (Gn 8:21, Lv 23:13). In any case the custom of presenting solid food on a table as an oblation to a god is too widespread among the peoples of antiquity to permit of doubt as to the origin of the rite among the Hebrews.

The *lectisternia*, which the Romans borrowed from the Greeks, afford the most familiar illustration of this practice (see Smith's *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antiqs.* 3 s.et). In the OT itself we hear of Jeremiah's contemporaries kneading cakes for the queen of heaven (Jer 7:18), and, at a later date, of the table which even Jews spread to Fortune (GAD, Is 65:11 RV). In the religious literature of the ancient Babylonians, again, particularly in the ritual tablets to which the attention of scholars has lately been turned, we find numerous references to the various items of food and drink to be presented to the deities of the Babylonian pantheon. The tables or altars, also, on which the food was set out are frequently represented on the monuments (see, e.g., Eenzinger, *Heb. Arch.* 387; Riehm's *HWB* 2 1. 148, etc.). And not only so, but, as Zimmern has recently shown, the loaves of sweet or unleavened bread thus presented are, frequently at least, of the number of 12, 24, or even as many as 36 (see the reff. in Zimmern's *Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Babylon. Religion*, 1901, p. 94 f.). These numbers, we can hardly doubt, have an astronomical significance, 12 being the number of the signs of the Zodiac, 24 the stations of the moon, and 36 those of the planets (see 2 K 23:5 RVm, Job 38:32, and art. BABYLONIA in vol. i. p. 218a). The knowledge of this ancient practice of offering food on the tables of the gods survived to a late period; see Epist. of Jeremy, v.28ff and the fragment of Bel and the Dragon (esp. v. 11; note also that the food of Bel comprised 'twelve great measures of fine flour'). Hence, if the loaves of the presence-bread were 12 in number from the earliest times,--though of this we have no early testimony,--we should have another of the rapidly increasing instances of early Babylonian influence in the West (cf. Josephus' association of the 12 loaves with the 12 months, *Ant.* in. vii. 7).

While, however, it must be admitted that the rite of the presence-bread had its origin in the circle of ideas just set forth, it is not less evident that, as taken up and preserved by the religious guides of Israel, the rite acquired a new and higher significance. The bread was no longer thought of as J"s food (" חֶמֶד) in the sense attached to it in an earlier age, but as a concrete expression of the fact that J" was the source of every material blessing. As the 'continual bread' (חֶמֶד תָּמִיד)

Nu 4:7), it became the standing expression of the nation's gratitude to the Giver of all for the bounties of His providence. The number twelve was later brought into connexion with the number of the tribes of Israel (cf. Lv 24:8), and thus, Sabbath by Sabbath, the priestly representatives of the nation renewed this outward and visible acknowledgment of man's continual dependence upon God. The presence of the shewbread in the developed ritual, therefore, was not without a real and worthy significance. It may here be added, in a word, that the explanation of the shewbread hitherto in vogue among the disciples of Bahr, according to which 'the bread of the face' was so named because it is through partaking thereof that man attains to the sight of God, accords neither with the true signification of the term, nor with the history of the rite.

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