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## THE CEDAR OF LEBANON: TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR THE SOURCES

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The following includes a selection of texts that provide evidence for the location and extent of the cedar forest. It is sometimes not easy to identify which wood was meant by the various ancient authors; however, in view of the fact that most of these texts refer in one way or another to Lebanon or to one of the other traditional habitats of *Cedrus libani*, it can be presumed that, no matter what confusion there is about the ancient name of the cedar, many of these texts do refer to that wood. Archaeological evidence from Egypt and Mesopotamia, from tombs, temples, and palaces is abundant. The wood was favored then and still is today for its sap, aroma, and durability.

It is likely but not certain that the Egyptian word for cedar is *meru* and that the word *ash* is a more general word for imported wood. Archaeological remains from Egypt show that the use of cedar goes back to the pre-Dynastic period and there are a number of remains from the first three Dynasties of the Old Kingdom period (Brown 1969: 75; Ward 1963: 1-57; Lucas 1962: 430). The earliest text mentioning the importation of cedar is recorded on the Palermo Stone of Snefru of the IVth Dynasty, 2613-2589 B.C.:

*Bringing of 40 ships filled (with cedar wood) ... Building of a 100 cubit ... ship of cedar wood, and 2 100-cubit ships of meru wood ... Making doors of the king's palace of cedar wood (AR 1.146-148).*

Other texts belonging to the Old Kingdom are known only from copies of a later era. For example, the text called *Admonitions of Ipu-Wer* is found in the Leiden Papyrus dated to the XIX-XX Dynasty, but Wilson (*ANET*<sup>3</sup> 441) concluded that the language is Middle Egyptian and that the events occurred in the later part of the Old Kingdom.

*Admonitions of Ipu-Wer (2300-2050 B.C.): No one really sails north to [Byb]los today. What shall we do for cedar for our mummies? Priests were buried with their produce, and [nobles] were embalmed with the oil thereof as far away as Keftiu (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 441).*

In the Mesopotamian texts, the words for cedar are *erenu* (*erinnu* and *gish-erin* (*ARAB*: vol. 4: 274-79). In Hebrew it is 'rz and *oren* (Thompson 1949: 282), in Aramaic 'RZ (Elayi 1986: 16), and in Arabic 'rz.

No scientifically identified cedar remains have been found in early Mesopotamian archaeological contexts. The textual evidence from Mesopotamia, however, is similar to the Egyptian evidence. It can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of texts found in contexts contemporary with their composition; the second group consists of texts which survive only in later copies, but recount events of the past. In the first category, the earliest texts referring to the importation of cedar from the Mediterranean area are those of Gudea of Lagash of the 22nd century B.C.:

*[who opened up] ... (all) the (trade) routes from the Upper to the Lower Sea. ... In the Amanus, the Cedar Mountain, he formed into rafts cedar logs 60 cubits long, cedar logs, 50 cubits long [and other wood] and brought them (thus) out of the mountain (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 269).*

In texts of the second category, early rulers who mention cedar are recorded; for example, the texts of Lugalannemundu of Adab are known only from copies of a millennium after his death:

*... viziers ... of ... "Cedar Mountain" land [and others] came with sacrifices to the Adab temple (Kramer 1963: 51).*

*The Tale of Enmerkar* (Sumerian) is known from a copy of the first half of the second millennium:

*... he will cross "the river of Erech, subdue all the lands above and below, from the sea to the cedar mountain (Kramer 1959: 205).*

The Gilgamesh cycle is known from several copies in a variety of languages and belonging to different periods down to the Hellenistic and even later eras (Brown 1969: 105; Kovacs 1989: xvii-xxiv; Dalley 1989: xviii-xix). The oldest version in which cedar is mentioned goes back to the Old Babylonian era (2000-1500 B.C.).

Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living, Old Babylonian version (Sumerian): *Upon their cross-*

*ing the seventh mountain, ... he did not wander about, [the lord Gil]gamesh fells the cedar (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 48).*

Epic of Gilgamesh, Old Babylonian version (Akkadian): *For ten thousand leagues extends the forest ...*

*[The cedar] - its mountain I would scale! (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 79).*

The texts of Sargon of Akkad were copied on votive objects and statues found in Nippur and dated to the period just after the end of the Akkadian dynasty (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 267).

Sargon of Agade:

*[Enlil] ... gave (him) the Upper Region ... as far as the Cedar Forest and the Silver Mountain (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 268).*

The texts of Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin, are known from copies made during the Isin era or the 1st Babylonian dynasty (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 268).

Naram-Sin of Agade in the Cedar Mountain: *Nergal did open up the path for the mighty Naram-Sin, and gave him Arman and Ibla, and he presented him (also) with the Amanus, the Cedar Mountain and (with the Upper Sea) (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 268).*

By the late Assyrian period, the copying of earlier texts was common. For example, the early texts of Sennacherib are like those of his predecessor Sargon II (see ARAB 2.70; also 2.184).

Sargon II (721-705 B.C.) ... *on the palace at Dur-Sharrukin: four cedar columns ... products of Mount Amanus (ARAB 2.100).*

Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.), palace at Nineveh: *Mighty cedar beams, the product of Mount Amanus, the shining mountain (ARAB 2.426); beams of cedar, the product of Mount Amanus (ARAB 2.366).*

Later in his reign, Sennacherib also refers to Sirara.

*... cedar logs which had grown ... as they stood concealed in the mountains of Sirara (ARAB 2.390); beams of cedar and cypress products of Amanus and Sirara, the snow-capped (lit. shining) mountains (ARAB 2.388).*

Are these texts truthful? The evidence for Sennacherib is clear. Cedar beams were found in his palace in Layard's excavation (1853: 357).

Further, the veracity of Sennacherib's texts is confirmed by a Biblical text (2 Kings 19:23).

2 Kings 19:23, against Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.): *you have said: With my many chariots I have climbed the tops of mountains, ... the utmost peaks of Lebanon. I have felled its tall forest of cedars, its finest cypresses. I have reached its furthest recesses, its forest garden.*

The ancients knew a great deal about cedar, including the terrain in which it was found and the associated plant and animal species. We are told that Solomon could talk about plants "from cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing on the wall" (1 Kings 5:13). How far this knowledge of the cedar, its geographical locale, and its uses, had spread, can be seen in the texts.

Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.), rebuilding of Babylon: *... mighty beams [of cedar], products of Mount Amanus, the snow-capped (lit. shining) mountain" (ARAB 2.63; see also 2.659D).*

Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.), temple of Assur: *... beams of cedar, products of Mount Sirara" (ARAB 2.711).*

Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.): *... together 22 kings of Hatti, the seashore and the islands; all these I sent out and made them transport under terrible difficulties, to Nineveh, the town (where I exercise) my rulership, as building material for my palace: big logs, long beams (and) thin boards from cedar and pine trees, products of the Sirara and Lebanon mountains, which had grown for a long time into tall and strong timber (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 291 = ARAB*

2.268).

This last text indicates an awareness that the cedar takes many years to mature. Saatcioglu observed that cedar tree growth rate comes to a maximum at age 20, stops at 90 to 100 years, and the harvest is best between 100 and 140 years, while Evcimen proposed between 140 and 240 years as the best time for harvest (Erdin n.d.:4-5; Bikai 1991: 27-28). One of the more striking texts is a description of the shade of the cedar tree, something that could only have been noticed by visiting the forest.

Dynasty XIX (1320-1200 B.C.), Egyptian letter:

*Thou hast [not] trodden the road to the Magur, where the sky is darkened by day*

*and it is overgrown with cypresses and oaks and cedars which reach the heavens* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 477).

The ancient texts reveal an often close knowledge of the areas in which cedar forests were to be found. In the earliest written records, the forest is in a distant land which is difficult to reach; it is on the peaks of high mountains—almost at the end of the world.

Epic of Gilgamesh, Hittite version, Enkidu speaking of a door: *At twenty leagues away I found choice thy wood, (Long) before I beheld the lofty cedar* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 86).

Epic of Gilgamesh, Assyrian version: *He who knows the path protects his friend. Let Enkidu go in front of thee. He knows the way to the Cedar Forest* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 81).



Fig. 1. The guardian of the cedar forest at Ma'asir es-Shuf, 1985.

Gilgamesh had to cross "seven mountains" to reach the forest. The location is given as "twenty leagues away." To find the forest, he needed an experienced guide who "knows the way". It seems that beginning in the early Sumerian era, the "Cedar Mountain" was a sort of "edge of the world." The *Tale of Enmerkar* speaks of "all the lands, from the sea to the Cedar Mountain". Enlil gave Sargon the "upper region as far as the cedar forest"; Nergal gave Naram-Sin the "Amanus, the Cedar Mountain and (with the Upper Sea)". Gudea opened up routes from the "Upper to the Lower Sea" including the Cedar Mountain. The boundaries of the world are marked by cedar and the hulab-tree in *Inanna and the King* (Sumerian):

*"From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea,  
From (where grows) the hulab-tree to*

*(where grows) the cedar"* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 641).

*Tale of Enmerkar* (Sumerian): ... *he will cross "the river of Erech", subdue all the lands "above and below, from the sea to the cedar mountain"* (Kramer 1959: 205).

Similarly, the Egyptian texts speak of the land of the cedar as being distant so the procurement of cedar required an organized effort. During a period of chaos, Ipu-Wer laments that no one goes to Byblos for cedar; Byblos for him is as far away as Keftiu (Crete). In the *Story of the Two Brothers*, Bata says he will go to the Valley of the Cedar, as though that were a very distant place.

A number of the Near Eastern texts place the cedars in a mountainous locale; they refer to the "mountain," the "Cedar Mountain", "the highland of God's Land," and "the terraces". The envoy of Thutmosis III goes "above the clouds". Several of the Assyrian kings claim to have ascended the mountain and Sennacherib, for example, speaks of that mountain as "snow-capped."

Thutmosis I (1525-1512 B.C.): *august flagstaves were erected at the double facade of the temple of new cedar of the best terraces* (AR 2.103).

Ahmosé I (1570-1546 B.C.): ... *a barge of ... new cedar of the best of the terraces, in order to make his voyage* (AR 2.32).

Amosis I (1570-1546 B.C.), Abydos Stela: *I built the august [barge] of new cedar of the best of the terraces"* (AR 2.94).

A rare Ugaritic reference to cedars mentions both Lebanon and Siri.

*Ugaritic poem about Baal:*  
*[As for Baal] his house is built,*  
*[As for Hadd] his palace is raised.*  
*They [ ... ] from Lebanon and its trees,*  
*From [Siri] on its precious cedars* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 134)

Sometimes, as in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*, the cedars are in a valley, presumably a valley in a mountain region; they can also be near water.

Dynasty XIX, ca. 1225 B.C., *Story of the Two Brothers*: *I won't be in the place where you are—I shall go to the Valley of the Cedar!* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 25).

Numbers 24:6, Oracle of Balaam: *Like valleys that stretch afar, like gardens by the banks of a river; like aloes planted by Yahweh, like cedars beside the waters!*



Fig. 2. The cedars above the clouds at *Ma'asir es-Shuf*, 1985

While Gilgamesh described the extent of the cedar forest as ten thousand leagues, authors of later periods were more specific.

Antigonus in Lebanon in 315 B.C.:  
*... brought the wood down to the Sea from Libanos. ... This mountain extends along behind Tripolis and the territory of Byblos as far as the territory of Sidon and is full of cedar and cypress trees* (Diodorus Siculus 19.58.2-3; text of Brown 1969: 207-8).

Theophrastus (372-287 B.C.) *Hist. Pl.* 5.8.1:  
*Each kind of timber ... differs according to the place where it grows; in one place nettle-tree, in another the cedar is remarkably fine, for instance in Syria; for in Syria and on its mountains the cedars grow to a surpassing height and thickness.*

Vitruvius (before 29 B.C.) 2.9.1113: *Likewise cedar and juniper ... These trees are found particularly in Crete, Africa, and certain parts of Syria* (Brown 1969: 155).

As we have seen, the texts often refer to the mountains of Lebanon, Amanus, and Sirara, but they can also use other names: Djahi, Retenu, Negau, God's Land near the Lady of Byblos, "Usermare-Meriamon," (possibly Beit Meri in

Lebanon), Hatti, and Carchemish. Some of these are not easy to identify.

Thutmosis III (1504-1450 B.C.), Barkal Stela:  
*When my majesty crossed over to the marshes of Asia, I had many ships of cedar built on the mountain of God's Land near the Lady of Byblos ... Every year there is hewed [for me in Dja]hi genuine cedar of Lebanon, ... New [wood] of Negau [is brought], the choicest of God's Land ... When my army which is the garrison in Ullaza comes, [they bring the tribute], which is the cedar of the victories of my majesty ...* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 240).

Thutmosis III (1504-1450 B.C.), an official's trip to Lebanon: *... above the clouds* [See Fig. 2]. *I entered the forest-[preserve] ... [break] ... in Byblos...* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 243).

Thutmosis IV (1425-1417 B.C.), funeral boat for his father: *... the great barge ... shaped of new cedar, which his majesty cut in the land of Retenu, wrought with gold throughout* (AR 2.838).

Amenophis III (1417-1379 B.C.): *... making for him a great barque upon the river;*

"Amon-Re in Userhet," of new cedar which his majesty cut in the country of God's Land, dragged from the mountains of Retenu by the princes of all foreign countries (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 375).

Tutankhamun (1361-1352 B.C.):

"His majesty ... has built their barques upon the river of new cedar from the terraces of the choicest (wood) of Negau (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 252).

Ramesses II (1304-1237), march to Kadesh: ... his majesty was in "Usermare-

Meriamon," in the city of cedar (AR 3.308).

Among the names of the mountains mentioned in connection with the cedar forest, the Amanus mountain is more prominent in the early Mesopotamian texts; it seems clear that while the Egyptians were more familiar with the resources in Lebanon which they could reach by sea, the Mesopotamians used the Amanus which could be reached, at least for part of the way, by use of the river systems. Sometimes the cedar wood is mentioned as coming as tribute from Carchemish and, Hatti in the Amanus region.

Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.): *I subjected the entire country of Great-Hatti, imposed upon Ili-Teshup, king of Great-Hatti a tribute of [ ... ] talents [of ...] cedar beams* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 275).

Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.), temple: ... *138 cedar trees have been brought this year from Carchemish ... among them thirty big ones*" (ARAB: vol. 4: 276).

Dynasty XIX (1320-1200 B.C.), Egyptian letter: *Thou hast [not] trodden the road to the Magur, where the sky is darkened by day and it is overgrown with cypresses and oaks and cedars which reach the heavens* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 477).

Ramesses III (1198-1166 B.C.), monument for his father: ... *making for [him] great flagstaves of real cedar of the best of the terraces, of the choicest of the Lord of Two Lands* (AR 4.16).

Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.): *I went to the Lebanon mountains ... I cut cedar beams for the temple of Anu and Adad* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 275).

Journey of Wenamun (ca. 1075 B.C.), an

account of a mission to Byblos to purchase cedar (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 27-28).

The procurement of the cedar was celebrated as a victory for the king, and sometimes commemorated with stelae or plaques; a large collection of these can be seen today on the cliffs of Nahr el-Kalb, north of Beirut. Again, the sources of cedar are mentioned.

Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.): *I ascended the mountains of the Amanus ... and cut down (there) logs of cedars, stonepines, cypresses (and) pines ... I (had) made a sculptured stela (commemorating) my heroic achievements and erected (it) there* (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 276 = ARAB 1.167).

Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.), year 1:

*I climbed Mount Amanus: I cut cedar and cypress timbers* (ARAB 1.558).

Piankhi (817-730 B.C.): *Then the ships were laden with silver, gold, copper, clothing, and everything of the Northland, every product of Syria ... and all sweet woods of God's Land* (AR 4.883).

Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.), palace:

*With long ... cedar beams, whose fragrance is as good as that of the cypress tree, products of Amanus, Lebanon and Ammanana (Anti-Lebanon), I roofed them over ...* (ARAB 1.804).

In northern campaigns, the Egyptian rulers mention many sites such as Megiddo and Qadesh as being on the route to Djahi. Djahi is mentioned in some texts as a source for cedar and is considered by Wilson (ANET<sup>3</sup>: 234) to denote Lebanon, but he also points out that it sometimes covers all of Syria and Palestine. Negau is sometimes mentioned with Djahi, e.g., in a text of Thutmose III, and according to Wilson (ANET<sup>3</sup>) here Negau means Lebanon. The term "Retenu" is associated with the term "God's Land" in AR 2.451, and with "all the northern countries of the ends of the earth" (AR 2.761); Lebanon is located within Retenu (AR 2.548). Among the products of Retenu mentioned in the Egyptian texts are meru-wood (AR 2.447) and cedar-wood (AR 2.838, 888). There is an Upper Retenu and a Lower Retenu in the Egyptian texts. Brown (1969: 178) made an interesting suggestion about this, but wrote only one sentence: "I do not know whether 'Retenu' could represent Litani. It is interesting that the name for Lebanon as it

appears in the Karnak relief of Sethos I is *rmnn*; one notes the exchange of "r" and "l" and may have been the same in Retenu/Litani. The Litani is the longest river in Lebanon and is the only one which starts in the Beqa Valley, crosses the

Lebanon range and reaches the sea just above Tyre; it cuts the country into two parts. The fact that it is such an important river may have led to the terms Upper Retenu, above the Litani, and Lower Retenu, below the Litani.

Other geographic names are mentioned in the Egyptian texts, such as *Herw* in the text of Piankhi; Breasted (*AR* 4.883) says that this is Syria. Syria is used in the Greco-Roman texts associated with cedar, e.g., in Theophrastus.

Among mountains mentioned in the texts, the Amanus and the Lebanon are mentioned most. These two mountains still have the same names.

The Amanus is called *Am-a-num* by Gudea, *A-ma-nam* by Naram-Sin, *Ha-ma-mi* by Ashurnasirpal, *Ha-ma-na* by Tiglath-pileser III, *Ha-ma-ni* by Sargon II, *Ha-ma-nim* by Sennacherib, *Ha-ma-nu* by Nabonidus.

The Lebanon range is known from Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Biblical and other texts; it kept its name through time: Egyptian *Rmnn* (Karnak relief), while in the Old Babylonian version of Gilgamesh it is *La-ab-na-na*, and in the Lipsur Litanies, it is *Lab-na-nu*. The early ruler of the Old Assyrian period, Shamshi-Adad I, mentions that he erected stela in *La-ab-a-an* but did not specify where he obtained the cedar for his temple of Enlil at Ashur. Tiglath-pileser I got his cedar from *Lab-na-ni*, and Ashurnasirpal II, Tiglath-pileser III, and Ashurbanipal from *Lab-na-na*. The same word is used in the Elamite version of the account of Darius's palace at Susa, while Nebuchadnezzar use *Lubnan*; Nabonidus uses *Lab-nim*. In Hebrew, Lebanon, translated as the white, snowy mountain is commonly used.

Except for the Amanus which is geologically related to the Troodos chain, the mountain chain east of the Mediterranean is called "The Lebanon." The geographic division between Amanus and the Lebanon was recognized in antiquity; e.g., Adan-nirari II claims (*ARAB* 3.92) the town of "*Araziki which lies opposite the land of Hatti, and at the foot of Mt. Lebanon*". Another

text (*ARAB* 3.89) says, "*as far as the city of Carchemish, which is in Hatti*". This shows that the Lebanon range was supposed to extend into north Syria, and may reflect the fact that a single Lebanon forest once extended from south Lebanon into northern Syria; as we have seen, the Old Babylonian version of Gilgamesh says that the forest extended for 10,000 leagues (*ANET*<sup>3</sup>: 79).

While there is no problem with the identification of Amanus and Lebanon, a controversy arises with the identification of Sirara (Senir). It is called, in the Old Babylonian version of Gilgamesh, *Sa-ri-a*, in the Lipsur Litany, *Si-ra-ra*. In an Akkadian text from Boghazkoi, the word *Syrn* is used and in a Hurrian text and elsewhere, *Sa-ri-ia(-an)-na* (Ikeda 1978: 33). "The Peshitta Syriac translates "*Sirion*" in Ps. 29 as "*Senir*" (Brown 1969: 117), and "*Sirara* is believed to be the Accadian equivalent of Hebrew *Syrion*, or *Senir*, or both" (Brown 1969: 195). Based on Deut. 3:9, in which it says, "Hermon is called *Sirion* by the Sidonians, while the Amorites call it *Senir*," Ikeda (1978) claims that Sirion and Senir were the names of Mt. Hermon.

Epic of Gilgamesh, Old Babylonian version (Akkadian): ... *the cedar, Enkidu has slain the [ ... ] of the forest, at whose words [trembled] Hermon and Lebanon*" (*ARAB*: vol. 4, 274-75).

Brown (1969: 23, n. 4) points out that Simon believed that Senir was the true Hebrew-Canaanite name of the Antilebanon, and continues:

At 1 Chron 5-23 Senir is explicitly distinguished from Hermon [as it is in Song of Songs 4.8]. At Ezek. 27.5, it is parallel with Lebanon. Then Deut. 3-9 is at least misleading in saying that "*Senir*" is the Amorite name for Hermon. Another name for Antilebanon is "All Lebanon [towards] the sunrise" Josh. 13.5, hence "Lebanon" alone can serve, Deut. 1.7, Judges 3.3.

The terminology "All Lebanon towards the sunrise" is still used today by the local population; modern maps call the Antilebanon the "eastern" Lebanon mountains, that is "towards the sunrise," since "east" and "sunrise" are related words in Arabic. The western terminology "Antilebanon" is first seen in Strabo 2.16. Brown (1969: 192) in commenting on a text concerning Sennacherib in

Isaiah 37:24-25, says:  
The statements that "Sirara" is covered with snow and contains cedar suggest strongly that the Eastern slopes of Lebanon [the coastal range] are meant, since Antilebanon is not often snow-covered and

Hermon has no cedar.

Elsewhere (1969: 195), however, Brown says, "*Senir* properly is Antilebanon as distinct from *Hermon*; perhaps *Siryon* and *Si-ra-ra* both mean *Hermon* proper". In the Song of Songs it says:

*With me from Lebanon my promised  
with me from Lebanon come  
look from the summit of Amana  
from the summit of Senir and Hermon.*

Ikeda (1978: 36) comments:

*... it seems that [this text] lists all the main ranges in southern Syria: the Lebanon, the Antilebanon (Senir-Hermon), and the Amana in-between. But, it is of significance that Senir is clearly described as distinct from Mount Hermon. Likewise, Senir and Hermon are mentioned as two different toponyms in 1 Chron v 23: "Half the tribe of Manasseh lived on the land from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir and Mount Hermon", although "and Mount Hermon" is generally understood as a later gloss.*

The eastern Lebanon chain (Antilebanon) consists of several mountains, among which there are three main blocks. The first of these is Mt. Hermon or Jebel al-Sheiq, the "old man", so called because of the permanent snow on it. The name Hermon carries the same meaning as it is from the Arabic *harima*, to become decrepit from age and advanced in age.

The second block is Jebel al-Zabadani which is separated from Hermon by a valley through which the Beirut to Damascus road passes; it is separated by another smaller valley from Jebel al-Sharqi which forms the northern part of the Antilebanon. This mountain is associated with ancient *Amana* based on geographical texts (Brown 1969: 22, n. 3; Ikeda 1978: 36; Elayi 1986: 21, n. 39) and is the same *ammanana* where Tiglath-pileser III obtained cedar.

The third block is Jebel al-Sharqi, the "eastern mountain." It is here proposed that al-

Sharqi may be the mountain which the texts call Sirara, Sirion (Senir). As we have seen, there is a clear distinction in the texts between Senir and Hermon. Senir is distinct from the Amanus of the Assyrian kings. The confusion caused by Deut. 3:9 can be related to the perspective from which the range is viewed; from the south, one sees Hermon, but Senir is not visible; from the north, one sees Senir, but not Hermon. Among the Arab historians, al-Yakübi (9th c. A.D.) says that Jebel Senir is found between Golan and Baalbek (Ikeda 1978: 36-37). In another text, al-Yakübi (937: 176) quotes Yakut as saying:

*Le mont Djalil se trouve sur le littoral syrien et s'étend jusqu' aux abords de Homs ... une chaîne venant du Hedjaz, que prend en Palestine le nom de mont Hamal; dans la region du Jourdain, celui de mont Djalil; à Damas, elle se nomme Lubnan (=Liban); et à Homs, Sanir ... Sanir est une montagne située le long de la route que mène de Homs à Baalbek; elle est surmontée du fort de Sanir. ... Cette montagne ... s'étend vers l'ouest jusqu'à Baalbek; vers l'est, jusqu'à Karyatain et Salamiya. ... Elle se trouve à l'est de Hama; du côté du littoral ...*

Another source is al-Mas<sup>c</sup>udi (d. 346 H.) who, in speaking of the temple of Baalbek, said that it is "of the governate of Damascus in Mt. Senir" (p. 250). Ibn al-Qalanisi (p. 24; 555 H.=A.D. 1160) said, "Qara, Yabrud, Ma<sup>c</sup>lula, Tina, Sydnaya, Ma<sup>c</sup>arat, Taflita, and others, are villages of Senir"; elsewhere (p. 27), he repeats that Taflita is a village of Mt. Senir. These villages are in Syria; in addition to Yakut, el-Karyatain, Salamiya and Baalbek, we find that these towns and villages all surround the mountain called Jebel al-Sharqi. None of the towns mentioned by the historians are in the area of Hermon or Zabadani. There is no cedar today on Jebel al-Sharqi; there is only Juniper. Al-<sup>c</sup>Umari (p. 106), speaking of Alexander the Great when he came to Damascus, says: "*In the valley where the river of Damascus runs was a forest of cedar and they say that the cedar tree that was found in the year 313 is all that is left of that forest*". A similar story is given by Ibn ad-Dāwādārī (p. 111). This is the only hint this writer could locate that there was once a cedar forest in the Jebel al-Sharqi region.

The inhabitants of the eastern Mediterranean were good salesmen from the dawn of history. Their commodity came to be much in demand in the whole region. It was favored for its aroma and durability, but those qualities brought destruction

to a forest that used to cover all the mountains of Lebanon.

#### REFERENCES

##### Abbreviations

*ANET*<sup>3</sup>: = Pritchard 1969

*AR* = Breasted 1906-7

*ARAB* = Luckenbill 1926-27

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