AN ARAMAIC INSCRIPTION FROM SYRIA.

M. Pognon, French Consul at Aleppo, has just published the second part of his *Inscriptions Sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie, et de la région de Mossoul* (80 francs), of which the first part appeared last year. Most of the inscriptions are Syriac of the first century A.D. and later; but the volume which appeared last year contained an interesting cuneiform inscription of Nabonidus, found at Eski-Harran, a village a few miles north-east of the ancient Haran; and the present volume contains (pp. 156 ff.) an Aramaic inscription (No. 86), which mentions Hazael and the second Ben-hadad of the Old Testament (2 Kings xiii. 3, 25), found at a village which, for prudential reasons, M. Pognon does not name. It is of this Aramaic inscription that I propose to give a short account in the present article.

It is inscribed on the front and left side of a monolith, now broken into four blocks, about 2 ft. broad and 1 ft. deep at the base, and, in its present condition, about 3 ft. 6 in. high. The stèle must, however, originally have been 6 or 7 ft. high; for its upper part is at present missing, and the inscription begins below a figure, carved in bas-relief upon the stone, of which only the lower part of the robe and the feet still remain. The inscription on the front of the stèle consists of seventeen lines of about thirty-two letters each; the one on the left side consists of twenty-eight lines of about fourteen letters each; when the stèle was complete there were probably some thirty additional lines on the upper part of this side; there is also an independent short inscription on the right side of the stèle. The words are separated from each other by thin vertical lines, which,
however, have in some cases been omitted, or once, in I. 9 after the י in יָבֹא, misplaced by the engraver.

The following is the Aramaic text of the inscription, as read by M. Pogon, transcribed into square Hebrew characters; in several places, it will be seen, there are passages which are illegible. The general sense is, however, clear. Zakir, the king of Hamath and La'ash, erects the stèle with the inscription in order to declare how his god, Baal-shamain, the Baal of heaven, had helped him against his foes. Bar-hadad (Heb. Ben-hadad), son of Hazael, king of Aram (Syria), had gathered round him a number of allies, and laid siege to Hazra, a fortified city, it may be inferred, in Zakir's domain. He had appealed to Baal-shamain for help; and his god had answered him, and encouraged him with promises of assistance and deliverance. The imperfect lines at the beginning of col. ii. seem to have told of his successes against the besiegers of Hazra, and of the temples and other buildings which he had erected in his land after the repulse of his foes. The inscription ends, as ancient inscriptions often do, with an imprecation against any one who injures it or removes it from its place.

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In the translation which follows the mark of interrogation indicates a word or passage of which the meaning or reading is uncertain.

I.

(Front of Stèle.)

1 The *stelē* which Zakir, king of Hamath and La'ash, set up to Alur. 2 [This day?] I, Zakir, king of Hamath and La'ash, . . . ? . . . and Baal-shamain [Baal of heaven] . . . 3 me, and stood with me; and Baal-shamain made me king . . . 4 . . . Bar-hadad, son of Hazael, king of Aram, assembled (?) and united against me . . . 5-teen kings; Bar-hadad and his army [lit. camp], Bar-gash and his army, the king 6 of Kaweh and his army, the king of 'Amk and his army, the king of Gurgum 7 and his army, the king of Sam'al and his army, the king of Malaz and his army: 8 . . . seven[-teen kings] 9 were they with their armies. And all these kings laid siege against Haz[rach]; 10 and they raised up a wall higher than the wall of Hazrach, and made a trench deeper than its trench. 11 And I lifted up my hands unto Baal-shamain, and Baal-shamain answered me. 12 [And] Baal-shamain [sent or spake] unto me by the hand of seers and by the hand of . . . ? . . . ;
[and] Baal-shamain [said 13 unto me,] Fear not; for I have made thee king, and I will stand with thee, and I will deliver thee from all [these kings who] have driven siege-works against thee. And he said to all these kings who have driven [siege-works] and this wall wh[ich]...

II.

(On the left-hand side of the Stele.)

1 . . . Hazrach . . . 3 . . . to the chariots and horsemen . . . 3 his (or its) king within it . . . I 4 have . . . Hazrach, and have added [to it] all the territory (?) of . . . 6 to . . . ; and I made him king 7 . . . 8 . . . these enemies on all sides. 9 I built houses (i.e. temples) of gods in all 10 my . . . And I built . . . 11 . . . ? . . . and . . . 12 . . . the house (temple) . . . 13 . . . And I set up before Al-14'ur this stele; and I wrote (on) 15 it the . . . ? . . . of my hands. 16 Whosoever shall remove (?) the . . . ? . . . of [the hands of] Zakir, king of Hamath and 18 La'ash from this stele, and whosoever 19 shall remove (?) this stele from before Alur, and destroy (?) it from 21 its [place], or whosoever shall send away . . . 22 . . . ? . . . 23 . . . [Ba']al-shamain, and A[1'ur] . . . and Shamash, and Sahar, 25 . . . and the gods of heaven 26 and the gods of earth, and Baal 'A . . . 27 . . . , and . . . 28 . . .

III.

(On the right-hand side of the Stele.)

1 . . . 2 the name of Zakir, and the name of . . .

The inscription, both by its contents and by the peculiar type of Aramaic in which it is written, takes us into the same region as Zenjirli, about seventy miles north of Aleppo, and Nêrab, a few miles south-east of Aleppo, from both of which places some very interesting inscriptions, dating from the eighth century B.C., and written in Aramaic
of the same character, were found in 1891 (see text, translations, and notes in G. A. Cooke's *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, 1903, pp. 159-91; extracts, also, in the essay by the present writer, on archaeology as illustrating the Old Testament, in Hogarth's *Authority and Archaeology*, pp. 131-3). The Aramaic-speaking people in all this region evidently at this time used the same dialect, worshipped largely the same deities,—some Assyrian, some not otherwise known,—and had the same civilization. The date of the inscription must be about b.c. 800 *: it is consequently the oldest Aramaic inscription at present known, and only about fifty years later than the inscription of Mesha on the "Moabite Stone."

I append a few notes which may help to explain or illustrate the inscription; for the historical and geographical particulars I am largely indebted to M. Pognon, to whose full and lucid expositions I must refer those desirous of further details.

I. ¹ *The stele which... set up*. Cf. l. 1 of Bar-rekub's inscription (Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, 62. 1).

*Zakir*. So vocalized by M. Pognon, because the name is thus found in Assyrian inscriptions.

*Hamath*. Of course, well known from the O.T. On the Orontes, about 110 miles north of Damascus, and eighty miles south of both Aleppo and Antioch.

*La'ash*. Not otherwise known; from the context, it cannot have been far from Hamath.

*Alur*. A deity mentioned here for the first time.

² The restoration 'this day' is very uncertain, the form נַנ being also questionable. Mr. Pognon's rendering of the words represented in the English by a ? is not satis-

* Hazael, Bar-hadad's father, is known to have been reigning in the eighteenth year of Shalmaneser II (=842 b.c.)—the same year in which Shalmaneser received the "tribute of Jehu" (see K.B. i. 1, p. 141; or *Authority and Archaeology*, p. 95).
factory; and the photograph of the inscription is not distinct enough to enable the correctness of the reading to be tested. *Baal-shamain.* "Baal of heaven" is constantly mentioned in Phoen. and Aram. inscriptions: see Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Zakir speaks of "Baal of heaven" as having given him his throne.

3 *Stood with me.* So in Panammu's inscription (*ib. 61* (2, 3).

4 *Bar-hadad.* The *Ben-hadad* (II), son of Hazael, of 2 Kings xiii. 3, 25. The Aram. "Bar-hadad" is in the O.T. Hebraized into "*Ben-hadad*"; in the Pesh. the Aramaean form is used. Hadad was one of the principal Aramaean deities—probably a storm-god; Panammu (*ib. 61*) places him at the head of the gods whom he names and attributes all his successes to him.

5 [*...*]een kings. One is reminded of the thirty-two kings who accompanied the first Ben-hadad on his expedition against Samaria (1 Kings xx. 1, 16).

6 *Bar-gash.* "Gash" is presumably the name of a divinity. M. Pognon asks whether שַׁם should not be read for שֵׁם on the seal, *C.I.S.* II. i. 105.

6 *Kaweh.* A *Kawi* is mentioned by Shalmaneser II as twice invaded by him, after crossing the Amanus-range (*K. B.* i. 1, 141, l. 101; 145, l. 132 f.), and consequently in Cilicia. Though 140–150 miles north of Hamath, it is doubtless the place here meant; for other places in the same neighbourhood are mentioned immediately afterwards.

*Amk.* Still, says M. Pognon, el-'Amk, a low and marshy tract, south and south-east of the Lake of Antioch, a few miles north-east of the town. See the map at the end of Sachau's *Reise in Syrien und Mesopotamien* (1883), where it is marked.

*Gurgum.* Mentioned in Bar-rekub's inscription (Cooke, 62. 15), and also by Shalmaneser II (*K.B.* i. 156, 172). It
must have been somewhere in the Amanus district; see Mr. Cooke's note, p. 179, and the map at the end of KAT, where it is marked on the north of Zenjirli and Sam'al.

Sam'al. Bar-rekub, in one of the inscriptions found at Zenjirli, styles himself "king of Sam'al" (Cooke, 63. 2); it was thus no doubt the country about Zenjirli. It is also mentioned by several of the Assyrian kings, in connexions pointing to the same region (see the note ibid., p. 182; and the map just referred to). Of Malaz nothing is known.

they. As in Egyptian Aramaic (Cooke, 76 B 4, and the papyri edited by Sayce and Cowley), and in the Aramaic of Ezra (in Daniel the form used is אברא). ָל these (so ii. 12). As Ezr. v. 15 Qrē. In Nabataean, Cappadocian, and Egyptian Aramaic, and in Jer. x. 11 the form used is הלא (see Oxf. Heb. Lex., p. 1080).

Hazrach. Apparently a fortified city belonging to Zakir. Is Hazrach, M. Pognon asks, rather than Hatarikka (Delitzsch, Paradies, p. 279; DB., or EB., s. v. Hadrach), the Hadrach (הדרך) of Zech. ix. 1?

And I lifted up my hands unto . . . and . . . answered me. Both thoroughly Biblical expressions, the words, even to the "waw consecutive," being actually the same: see Ps. xxviii. 2, and Ps. iii. 4 Heb., cxx. 1. This is the first time that the "waw consecutive" (though used in Moabitish) has been found in Aramaic; but the Aramaic of this district was known before, from the inscriptions found at Zenjirli and Nérab, to be curiously coloured with words and forms otherwise characteristic of Hebrew (see below). There is another instance of the waw consecutive in יחיאל, "and he said," in l. 15 (and doubtless also in l. 13). The perfect with the simple waw is, however, more commonly used in the inscription.

by the hand of seers. It is interesting to find that there were "seers" in Hamath as well as in Israel. The word
is the same (except in form) as that used in Hebrew: Isa. xxix. 10, xxx. 10; Amos vii. 12, etc.

דָּוֶד. A word of unknown meaning. An error for דְּיָד ("by the hand of helpers")—ר and ר being almost as similar in the old characters as in the square characters—might be thought of: but some more distinctive term would rather be expected.

13 בָּא not (ומ). So in Panammu's inscription (Cooke, 62. 22, 23, 29), and thrice in Daniel. Common in Hebrew, but not used in ordinary Aramaic.

Fear not. מָרָא, corresponding to the ordinary Aram. מָרָא: the d of ordinary Aramaic becoming in this dialect (as in Hebrew) צ (so צי, "which," for "דִּי," etc.: see Cooke, p. 185). So once in Hebrew, Job xxxii. 6. The usual Hebrew for "fear" is a different word altogether (מִרְּא).

14 deliver. מָלָא—apparently the same as the Hebrew מָלָא (Ps. l. 15, lxxxi. 7 [Heb. 8], etc.), and perhaps an error of the stone-cutter for מָלָא. This root is not, however, known to occur in other Aramaic with the meaning "deliver."

15 מָלָא. In Syr. מָלָא is to strike: in Hebrew the word (with the נ consonantal as here) occurs three times of striking (i.e. clapping) the hands (Ezek. xxv. 6; Isa. lv. 12; Ps. xcviii. 8). מָלָא can hardly be anything but the Hebrew מָלָא circumvallation, siege-works: so the use of מָלָא with this is peculiar. M. Pognon compares the Syr. phrase מָלָא קָרּ, "bellum intulit."

יִמָּר. With waw consecutive, exactly as in Hebrew.

ii. 5, יִמָּר. The mark of the accus., spelt as in Phoenician. In Hebrew יִמָּר; in ordinary Aramaic (very rare in Syriac) יִמָּר. So ll. 10, 11, 15, etc.

8 יִמָּר. Wing, fig. side; cf. in Palest. Syriac, Payne Smith, Thes. Syr. col. 764.

18 יִמָּר. A word recurring in l. 19, but otherwise unknown.

20 יִמָּר. So in the Aramaic of Nērab (Cooke, 64. 5, followed,
as here, by “from its place”; 65. 8, 9); but not otherwise known.

21 רֵ֔חַן. As ibid., 64. 8. In ordinary Aramaic, “place” is רֵ֔חַן; for the ש, see Cooke, p. 185.

24 Shamash. The sun-god, mentioned also in the inscriptions of Zenjirli and Nērab (ibid., 61. 2, 3, etc.; 62. 22; 64. 9).

Sahar. The moon-god (in the Aram. of the Targums, and in Syriac, са־ה means the moon; cf. in Hebrew sahārōn, moon-shaped ornament, crescent, Judges viii. 21, 26; Isa. iii. 18), mentioned also in the two Nērab inscriptions, ibid., 64. 9 (beside Shamash), 65. 9, which are themselves sepulchral inscriptions of two priests of Sahar (64. 1 f., 65. 1). In Assyrian the name of the moon-god was Sin (in “Sennacherib,” i.e. Sin-ahe-erib, “Sin has increased the brothers,” and in all probability in “Sinai.” Sin was largely worshipped by the Assyrians; and especially, among other places, at Ḫaran, where he was called Bel Ḫarrān, “lord of Ḫaran” (cf. “My lord Baal-ḥaran” on a bas-relief of Bar-rekub in the Berlin Museum, Lidzbarski, Nord-Sem. Epigraphik, p. 444): from Ḫaran his worship may have been introduced into Zenjirli, Nērab, and Hamath (cf. Cooke, pp. 187, 188). No doubt the illegible parts of ll. 22–27 contained words stating what the gods named were desired to do to any one who injured or removed the stelē: cf. Cooke, 64. 5–10, “Whosoever thou art that shalt remove (?) this image and couch (sarcophagus) from its place, may Sahar and Shamash and Nikal and Nusk pluck thy name and thy place out of life, and kill thee with the death of one worthy of effacement,* and cause thy seed to perish.”

26 פֹּ֖רֶנ. In ordinary Aramaic פֹּ֖רֶנ. The same form is, however, found in several other Aramaic dialects, and in

* Nöldeke, Zeitschrift für Assyr., 1908, p. 205,—at least with a ?
The Aramaic verse Jeremiah x. 11: see Oxf. Heb. Lex., p. 1083; and, on the phonetic equation which the variation implies, Cooke, p. 185 (where other examples are quoted).

The Hebraizing features in the inscription are מַלְאָכָה (a feminine form, not as in Hebrew a masculine), camp, host, l. 5–8 (so Cooke 62. 13, 16, 17; in ordinary Aramaic מַלְאָכָה); מְזוּר, circumvallation, l. 9, 15; בַּר, trench, l. 10 (Dan. ix. 25); בָּשָׁ, to lift up, l. 11; בָּא, to, l. 12; בָּא, not, l. 13; בַּ, for, l. 13; בָּא, deliver, l. 14; the sh for th in התו, II. 21; and the waw consecutive.

M. Pognon hopes at some future time to be able to discover the rest of the stele; and hence the reason why he will not state where the part which he has found is. He gives (Preface to Part i.) a lamentable picture of the ignorance of the natives. The Arab and Kurd peasants believe that stones with inscriptions contain gold, or at least that the inscriptions state where treasures are concealed; so they break in pieces any inscription in which they see a stranger to be interested. In 1899 M. Pognon took squeezes of some beautiful Hittite inscriptions near a village on the Euphrates; when he revisited the spot a few years afterwards he found the inscriptions all destroyed. At Eski-harran it was believed that inscriptions were deeds giving Europeans a title to property in Syria, which it was feared they would come and claim; so another excuse was found for destroying them. The country about Zenjirli abounds in mounds promising much to the excavator; and systematic exploration would certainly bring to light more Aramaic inscriptions of the same interesting kind as those which have been already discovered: it is thus earnestly to be wished that such exploration could be speedily resumed.

S. R. Driver.