

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY PROFESSOR A. H. SAYCE, LL.D., OXFORD.

PROFESSOR HILPRECHT has recently communicated some very interesting news to the *Sunday School Times* of America. In return for the services of the professor in gratuitously arranging and cataloguing the cuneiform collections of the Museum at Constantinople, the Sultan has presented him with the larger part of the thousands of inscribed tablets discovered by himself and the other members of the American expedition in the ruins of the ancient library of Nippur. The library was destroyed and buried in the age of Abraham; and Professor Hilprecht calculates that the task of examining its contents will fully occupy the next twenty years. It is needless to say that he has handed on the gift to the University of Pennsylvania, at whose expense the excavations at Nippur have been carried on. When the tablets arrive in America it will be possible to copy them at leisure, and we may feel sure that startling discoveries will be the result. A cursory examination of them has already shown that they relate to all the branches of learning that were studied at the time of their composition, history not excluded.

In addition to the excavations at Nippur, another American expedition has been endeavouring to obtain permission to excavate on the site of Ur, and Dr. Banks has been vainly applying for a firman on behalf of it for the last sixteen months. A compromise, however, seems at last to have been effected, and, instead of Muqayyar or Ur, Dr. Banks and his party are to be allowed to work at Tell Ibrâhîm or Kutha. Meanwhile the German excavators are steadily and systematically proceeding with their work at Babylon, where they have been joined by Professor Friedrich Delitzsch. They are now about to attack two other sites, Abû H'atab and Fâra, in southern Babylonia.

Professor Hilprecht also gives an account of Dr. Belck's latest discoveries in Asia Minor. While in the neighbourhood of Kaisariyeh he found one of the missing leaves of the Codex Purpureus, recently acquired by Russia, in the hands of a Greek; and near the village of Boghche, about 25 miles west of Kaisariyeh, he discovered a Hittite stela of pyramidal shape

and about 5 feet high, previously unknown. Its four sides are inscribed with Hittite hieroglyphs, each side being divided into four panels, each of which contains two lines of text. The inscription, it is said, is 'clear and well preserved.' Dr. Belck has visited Eyuk among other places, and believes the remains there to be those of a great Hittite temple belonging to the period 2000-1500 B.C.

Assyrian Deeds and Contracts.

Mr. C. H. W. Johns has lately published the third volume of his monumental work on *Assyrian Deeds and Documents* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, & Co., 1898-1901). I have called it monumental, for it is one of those works which we are accustomed to associate with German patience and minuteness of treatment rather than with the less elaborate scholarship of England or France. The labour that has been expended upon it is enormous, and can be fully appreciated only by those who have worked in the same field. The commercial and legal documents of Assyria, brought from the library of Nineveh to the British Museum, have been edited once for all; here and there additions may be made to Mr. Johns' work, or doubtful points cleared up and corrected, but the work itself need never be done again.

The first volume and part of the second contain copies of the original texts, among which are to be found amended readings of those which have been already published. I gather from certain remarks in the third volume that some supplementary copies of inscriptions are still to follow, including what seems to be a very interesting one, in which Sennacherib traces his genealogy back to the hero 'Gilgames, [the friend of] Ea-bani [and the conqueror of] Khumbaba.' One of the names in the genealogy, Egiba, is noticeable on account of Professor Delitzsch's view, that it is the biblical Jacob; another name, Assur-na . . . , must be completed as Assur-na[zir], which I have found on a fragment from Kouyunjik.

It is, however, not with royal genealogies, but with the so-called contract tablets, that Mr. Johns' volumes are concerned. They differ considerably

from the contract tablets of the second Babylonian empire in both character and phraseology, and Mr. Johns may be right in holding that they are of royal rather than of private origin. The chapters in which he analyzes and discusses their contents and the questions which arise out of them are a model of exhaustive treatment. Indeed the only fault I have to find with them is that they are too German in their thoroughness; the author gives us not only his results but also all the processes of his workshop, so that we assist, as it were, at the gradual formation of his conclusions as fresh evidence came before him. The consequence is that the reader is sometimes puzzled by finding different translations or interpretations of words and phrases in different parts of his work.

To me the most interesting of his chapters are those on the officials and on Babylonian and Assyrian metrology. The *satammu*, by the way, was the superintendent of the *sutummu*, or 'public granary,' and Mr. Johns will find the fact that the Sumerian *khal*, 'the divider,' is the Semitic *barû* or 'seer' stated in papers of mine more than twenty years ago. As regards the use of coined money in the Babylonia of Nebuchadrezzar, and probably therefore in the Assyria of the contract tablets, I am entirely at one with him; the employment of the Babylonian metrological system and the Babylonian word *mna* goes to show that Babylonia, and not Lydia, was its original home. But *anaku* must be 'lead,' not 'tin'; Asia Minor was one of its principal sources, and mention is made of it in the Cappadocian tablets.

Mr. Johns promises a chapter on chronology in a future volume. I hope he will also write on the proper names, of which the tablets are full. Many of them are of great interest. The geographical name Tarbúsiba, for instance, is the same as Tarbúsip, which Winckler has shown to be the native name of the city near Carchemish, which the Assyrians called Til-Bársip (in which I see the classical Barsampsé). Mr. Johns notes that the name is also written Tarbusé. It is the Tarbus and Tarbu of the geographical lists of the Egyptian Pharaohs, Thothmes III. and Ramses III. The final *-ip* is probably the Mitannian suffix *-ippi*, as in Tun-ip, by the side of Tuna, and Khal-ip, by the side of Khal-os. The foreign word *zalkhi*, or *zarakhi*, 'lead,' quoted by Mr. Johns at the end of his last chapter, is also Mitannian,

like other words ascribed by the lexical tablets to the language of 'SU.' Hence its variant spelling by the Assyrian scribes.

Khandapî of the city of Khubaba is another interesting name, as the parallel names Tarkhundapî and Sandapî show that it is Hittite. Perhaps the name of his city throws light on the Kh-1-b-b of one of the Sinjirli texts.¹ Another name from the Hittite region may be Maganizi, the Egyptian Magnas and classical Tel-menissus. On the other hand, Adunaiz is certainly the Greek Adonais.

It only remains to say that the excellent indices Mr. Johns has added to his volumes are a priceless boon to the student.

The Anzanite Inscriptions.

The third volume of the results of M. de Morgan's excavations at Susa has been printed, containing the 'Anzanite' or non-Semitic inscriptions of the Elamite kings, which have been edited and translated, with notes, by Dr. Scheil.² Nearly all of them have been found in the ruins of the ancient capital of Elam. They add considerably to our knowledge of the agglutinative language of Elam, as well as of the history of the country itself, and Dr. Scheil has shown his usual ability and philological penetration in the decipherment of them. That in many cases his renderings of particular words or grammatical forms would be questioned by other scholars, goes of course without saying; in fact, in his Preface he points out how provisional and uncertain much of the translation must be. At the same time the amount of material collected by M. de Morgan, and the analogy of the Semitic inscriptions published in a preceding volume, allow the general sense of the texts to be determined with certainty, and the historian of the ancient East accordingly has a large amount of new and interesting matter now placed at his disposal.

At the end of the volume the rock-cut inscriptions of Malamir, to the east of Susa, for which we have hitherto had to depend upon the imperfect eye-copies of Layard, are given from squeezes and casts. Many of Layard's readings are corrected, and uncertain passages restored. On the whole, however, Dr. Scheil has not been so suc-

¹ Panammu i. 3, 9. It is read Khulbábâ by Sachau.

² *Délégation en Perse: Mémoires*, iii.; *Textes élamites-anzanites*. Paris: Leroux, 1901.

cessful in dealing with the decipherment of these Malamir texts as he has been with that of the more purely Susian ones. He does not seem to have seen my Memoir upon them in the *Transactions* of the Sixth Oriental Congress, and, though my readings and renderings must now be given up in many cases, there are others in which he would have done well to follow them. From time to time he rides rough-shod over Anzanite grammar, making the participial genitive *takhhha-na*, for instance, a first person singular, and he has never gone for help to the trilingual Amardian or 'Neo-Susian' inscriptions, which, after all, constitute the only sure basis for decipherment. In place of these, he depends too much upon the existence of Semitic loan-words in the agglutinative texts. It is certainly true that many such loan-words are to be found, but Dr. Scheil discovers them everywhere, and is sometimes led astray by the meaning of an Assyrian word which, without any reason, he believes to have been borrowed by the non-Semitic Elamites. Nor has he always recognized the ideographs that occur in the texts. Thus 'the river Pirin' is turned into 'the country of Amespirin'; and 'the god Kirissa, the lord of the Little River,' into 'Kirissana, Tepti, the fathers, the sons.'

But we must not be ungrateful to a work which has put into our hands the rich stores of linguistic and historical spoil obtained by the excavations of M. de Morgan, and has placed them before us with French lucidity and conscientious labour. The photographic reproductions of the inscriptions leave nothing to be desired, and the elaborate index of words enables us to control without difficulty the translations proposed by the editor. M. Jéquier has added a description of the site of Malamir, where, however, he is mistaken in saying that it was from here that the Elamite contracts, now in the British Museum, have come. I suppose he alludes to those which I have published in the *Recueil de Travaux*, since the British Museum contains no others; but all these were found at Kouyunjik.

Discoveries in Eastern Palestine.

IN the *Sitzungsberichte der Kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*, vol. cxliv., Professor Musil has published the first instalment of his account of

his exploratory journeys on the eastern side of the Jordan. It is mainly occupied with a description of the very interesting fortress called Quseir 'Amra which he discovered in the desert, eastward of Moab and the Pilgrims' route, and to which he paid two visits. The walls and domes of the chambers inside it are decorated with well-preserved and really artistic frescoes, photographs of some of which are given. From their subjects it would seem that the fortress belongs to the later period of the Roman empire, when art was passing into its Byzantine phase, but was still pagan. The fact is of considerable interest, as Quseir 'Amra forms one of a series of fortresses which have been carefully examined by Professor Musil. He notes that they constitute a chain which once separated the cultivated land from the desert, and in the architecture of some of them Perso-Byzantine influence may be detected. His own view appears to be that their builders were 'the powerful chiefs of the Beni Ghassân.'

In any case, a most interesting group of structures has been made known, the wonderful state of preservation of which is explained by their situation. In one of them, that called El-Kharâni, Professor Musil found remains of Greek inscriptions. The discovery and exploration of them, however, was attended with considerable danger and hardship. The country is infested by mutually hostile tribes of Bedawin, and only a scholar like Professor Musil, who can travel as an Arab, and is in fact 'blood-brother' of an Arab chief, could have ridden through it.

The journeys to 'Amra and its sister fortresses formed only part of a systematic exploration of the whole unknown or little known district which lies to the east of Moab. The work of exploration was commenced by Professor Musil in 1896, and it is still unfinished, as the old Midianitish territory of El-Ḥegr has still to be explored. But meanwhile the desert between the Dead Sea and El-'Arish in the north and El-'Aqaba in the south has been mapped out, and this first instalment of the traveller's results will be followed by two more volumes on Moab and Edom, illustrated by maps, plans, and photographs. Future volumes will deal with the ethnology of Arabia Petraea and the Nabathean inscriptions.