



see Hamath Inscriptions
 number 9. Heath showing the
 character except in the King's name
 is Phothmes III, and the
 phis I. No system of
 Egyptian has hitherto been
 aware of this unique system
 of writing.

captive the Queen of Arabia and the gods of the country, and returned to Assyria in triumph.

In the year B.C. 681 Sennacherib was murdered by two of his sons, and after a contest for the empire, Esar-haddon, a younger son, ascended the throne B.C. 680. When he had arranged the affairs of Babylon, Esar-haddon marched to Palestine, where Abdi Milkutti, king of Zidon, was in revolt. He captured and destroyed the city of Zidon, and then gathered the kings of Palestine and Cyprus who were subject to him. The rulers of Palestine were—

Bahal, king of Tyre; Manasseh, king of Judah; Kemosh-gabri, king of Edom; Muzuri, king of Moab; Zilli-bel, king of Gaza; Mitinti, king of Askelon; Itusamsu, king of Ekron; Melek-asaph, king of Gebal; Kulubabal, king of Arvad; ~~Abibabal, king of Samaria~~; Puduil, king of Beth Ammon; Numelek, king of Ashdod.

Esar-haddon afterwards passed through Palestine on several occasions, but there are no details of any interest respecting these expeditions.

Esar-haddon appointed his son Assurbanipal king of Assyria in B.C. 668, and soon after died. Assurbanipal, who was the Sardanapalus of the Greeks, directed his first expedition against Egypt, and on his way received tribute from the kings of Palestine who had formerly submitted to his father.

After his second conquest of Egypt, Assurbanipal besieged Bahal, king of Tyre, who had revolted, and the Tyrians, after a long blockade, submitted. Yakinlu, king of Arvad, then gave tribute, but Assurbanipal afterwards deposed him, and placed his eldest son Azibahal on his throne.

During the troubles of the rebellion of Saul-mugina in Babylon, B.C. 651—648, the Arabs under Vahta invaded Palestine and overran Edom, Ammon, the Hauran, Moab, Zobah, and other places. From most of these they were driven out by the forces of Assurbanipal, and a portion of the Arab army under Ammuladin, king of Kedar, was defeated by Kemosh-halta, king of Moab, who sent Ammuladin in chains to Nineveh. In order to chastise the Arabs for their incursions, Assurbanipal sent an expedition to Arabia and made Damascus the basis of his operations. He afterwards punished the cities of Accho and Hosah on the coast of Palestine for revolting against Assyria. These events, which happened about B.C. 640, are the last referring to Palestine given in the Assyrian annals; but many portions of Assyrian history are still unknown to us, and when renewed excavations have supplied the rest of the Assyrian records, we may hope to have much more information on the geography and history of Palestine.

THE HAMATH INSCRIPTIONS.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

Esher, Surrey.

DEAR SIR,—In answer to your request for some brief explanation of the three remarkable inscriptions which appear in your present number,

I have great pleasure in putting before your readers the following few facts.

The whole of the first line is almost exactly what appeared as three short lines in a late number of your journal; the actual characters are almost identically the same. A close inspection, however, shows that your three short lines were never meant to be read as we should naturally read them, viz., all three from left to right, or all three from right to left. To those who are accustomed to these things the fact is evident that two were read one way, and the middle one a different way. What I have done is, in fact, to transpose the direction of the characters in the middle line. I have also considered that about an inch and a half of the stone (on your scale of printing) has been cut away on one side, and a gap of three inches (on the same scale) will therefore have to appear when the three lines are brought into one. The reason for affirming the existence of this gap will be very evident to any one who considers the third line of your present publication. This line is from another stone altogether. By arranging the whole as in the former case, so as to read it all from left to right, a much smaller gap is here found necessary; but a gap is obviously required in each, as the inscriptions are obviously composed of corresponding elements, which must be arranged one under the other.

Whether the third short line of this third inscription is wanting at Hamath, or has been lost on the transit home, I know not. So precious is every sign in these most important documents that I trust the originals will be examined once again by the light of my arrangements, with a view to the most perfect accuracy and fulness attainable in the transcripts.

The middle line now published your Society has, unfortunately, nothing to do with; why or wherefore I cannot say. I take it altogether from Captain Burton,* with emendations when obviously necessary. An accurate squeeze of the king's name would probably go far to decide whether my theory of these inscriptions is correct or not.

This theory is that the third set of symbols after the gap in the first line contains quite plainly the Egyptian title of Thothmes III. This spot will be seen by any one who has carefully realised the whole of the above description, to be exactly in the centre of the original stone before the mutilation.

In the second line, exactly under Thothmes, is another Egyptian character which occurs in a king's title of the same dynasty as Thothmes.

The third line in the same central spot has also Egyptian symbols.

Should these views stand the test of criticism, the stones will be 600 years earlier than the famous Moabite stone of Mesha.

I am, yours faithfully,

Sept. 20, 1872.

DUNBAR ISIDORE HEATH.

* "Unexplored Syria." Burton and Drake.