

NOTES ON HEBREW AND JEWISH INSCRIPTIONS.

By Prof. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

I.



THE HEBREW INSCRIPTION FROM TELL EL HESY.

“I HAVE just read in the last *Quarterly Statement* (1891, April, p. 158) a note relating to the inscription from Tell el Hesy, for a squeeze of which I asked you some time ago, but have not yet received.

“I have had, on two occasions, to discuss publicly this very curious inscription, at a meeting of our Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, towards the end of the year 1890, and at the Collège de France, in my lectures upon “*Epigraphie et Antiquités Sémitiques*.”

“Major Conder, M. Sayce, and your anonymous correspondent have, in my opinion, quite missed the true reading of this little inscription. It is impossible to read, as these gentlemen propose, להנוד (Conder), or לסמך (Sayce), or להנוד (Anonymous). The true reading is לחשך; the letter *schin* is closely joined to the letter *khet*, but this accidental contact should not be taken into account in its deciphering.

“Four characters of an excellent form are obtained thus, the paleography of which is entirely archaic *Hebrew*; the hook of the tail of the *kaph* is, in this last respect, altogether demonstrative. חשך is a proper name of a man, derived from the root חשך, in the sense “to save, to preserve, to spare” (= post-Biblical Hebrew, חסך); the name should probably be vocalised *Hasoûk* (חש(ו)ך), and the inscription, as a whole, should be translated thus: “belonging to Hasoûk.”

“I repeat my request for the squeeze of this very interesting little text.

“I should like to know at the same time if it has been traced on the clay before baking, or cut afterwards in *graffito*.”

II.

JEWISH INSCRIPTIONS ON OSSUARIES.

a.

"The examination of the squeeze of the Hebrew inscription which I have made, confirms the opinion I expressed in my preceding note to you. It is unquestionably a Hebrew inscription in square cursive characters, bearing the greatest resemblance to those of the ossuaries from the Mount of Offence.¹ The first letter is certain, it is a *schin*. The second is most probably a *lamed*, the tracing of which has been interrupted by the slipping of the tool of the stone-cutter. The third looks like a *vau*; on the tracing you first sent me it was reduced to a simple vertical stroke, but the squeeze plainly shows its little triangular head, which removes any doubt one might have of it.

"The only doubtful character is the last; I am disposed to consider it as incomplete, and think that a final *mem* must be seen in it; the restoration [שלום] forcibly suggests itself. One may possibly see in the word thus read the substantive *Schalom*, "peace," or perhaps the proper name of a man, *Schalloum*, or, better, the proper name of a woman, *Schalom* = *Salomé*.

"I am inclined to think the last explanation correct, having already found on the ossuaries from the Mount of Offence, the woman's Hebrew name *Salome* so written. Moreover, another accessory particularly tends to show that the ossuary was destined to receive the remains of a woman rather than those of a man, namely, the triangular form of the lid. Generally this form of lid in Palestinian ossuaries and even in sarcophagi seems rather to point out the funeral monument of a woman.

"Here is the inscription as I read it from the squeeze :—



¹See my memoir, "Epigraphes Hébraïques et Grecques sur des Ossuaires Juifs inédits," Paris, 1883.

b.

Κρόκος.

“The stone cutter had at first written **KOKOC**, having omitted the **Ρ**, which he afterward superadded. The masculine proper name **Κρόκος**, of which the etymological meaning is *saffron*, has already been met with in a Greek inscription in Egypt (proscynème at Wad Fawakher, *Corp. Inscript. Graecar.* III, *Add.* No. 4716 d 44, p. 1197). One of the ossuaries from the Mount of Offence (No. 15 of the memoir before quoted), an ossuary remarkable for its small dimensions, apparently indicating that it was designed to receive the remains of a child, bears the Hebrew name קרקם. I had supposed that this strange name concealed a transcription of a Greek name such as *Κύρκος*, *Κούρκος*, *Κυριακός*, &c. I now think that קרקם is no other than *Κρόκος*; the transcription is strictly that which may be expected according to the rules of Hebrew transcription of Greek, and, on the other hand, we now have positive proof that the name of *Κρόκος* was really in use in the Greco-Jewish onomastics.

c.

“I was unable to make anything of the tracing you sent me, but the squeeze which I now have before me enables me to arrive at the following reading which I consider as almost certain :—

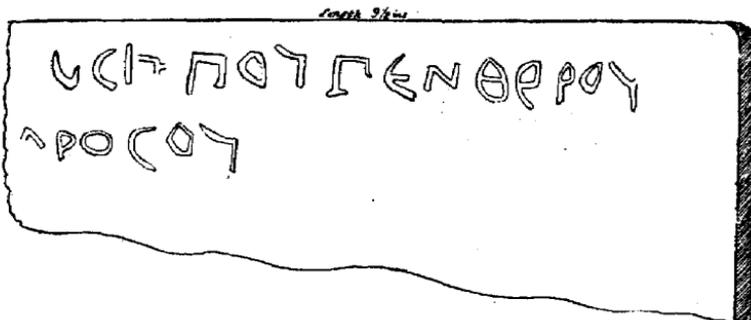
[Ιω]σήπου πενθεροῦ
[Δρ]όσου

(*belonging*) to *Joseph*, father(?)-in-law of *Drosos*.

“The inscription is incomplete on the left by reason of a fracture of the monument which cuts off the commencement of the two lines. On the first line the fracture has caused the whole *I* to disappear and part of the *ω* of the name *Ἰωσηπος* (genitive case), an exact and well-known transcription of the Hebrew name *Joseph*. I have often met with the letter *η* under this cursive form in Greek inscriptions on Jewish ossuaries. The *υ*, in spite of the singular form that it affects three times, is not doubtful; this form is interesting for the history of Greek paleography.

“The word *πενθερός* indicates in Greek a relationship with parents by

alliance which is variable: generally it is father-in-law, the father of the wife, sometimes also it is the son-in-law, or even the brother-in-law



"The reading of the second name Δρόσος is partly conjectural, the Δ and the ρ are disfigured by a fracture, but I believe I have recovered them by a careful examination of the squeeze.

"The man's name, thus obtained by restoration, has good guarantee = Δρόσος (Orelli, No. 1260 K). Compare the feminine names Δρόσιον and Δροσίς. I am inclined to think that Δρόσος is meant for Δροῦσος, an ordinary transcription of a well-known Roman name *Drusus*; similarly Δρόσιλλα (Nicet. Eng., I. 74-353) is for Δρούσιλλα, *Drusilla*, a woman's name derived from *Drusus*. (cf. Δρόσυλα, on an Umbrian vase, *Raoul-Rochette, lettre à M. Schorn*, 15).

"The names of Drusus and Drusilla, which were borne by many Romans belonging to the "gens Livia," appear, from the records, to have been in favour among the Jews about the time of Herod Agrippa I. This prince, desiring to flatter the Romans by taking the names of the imperial family, gave that of *Drusilla* to one of his daughters (who afterwards married the procurator of Judea, Felix, and is mentioned in the History of St. Paul, *Acts xxiv*, 24), and that of *Drusus* to one of his sons, who died before attaining the age of manhood. (*Josèphe, Antiq. Jud. xviii*, 5 : 4.)

"Consequently the name of *Drusus* was rather in vogue among the Jews in the first century of our era, which would well accord with the probable date of our ossuaries, and render so much the more probable the reading I propose for the mutilated name, Δρόσος = Δροῦσος = *Drusus*.

"There is mention in the Talmud (j. *Joma*, IV., 41d., j. *Schabb*, I., 4a, &c.) of a *Rabbi Derosa* or *Derosai* (דרוסא, דרוסה, דרוסא) whose name appears to be the Hebrew transcription of the Greco-Roman name Δρόσος. It is known that the use of these foreign names was very common among the ancient rabbis, even those who were most attached to their religious faith."