

NOTES BY MAJOR CONDER, R.E.

I.

THE LACHISH TEXT.

It is curious to observe that the three scholars who have treated of this text all (no doubt for the sake of brevity) speak with equal certitude as to the reading, but fail to agree, except as to the first and last letters. One may be pardoned in consequence for having put forward yet a fourth suggestion.

M. Clermont-Ganneau gives a solution which would make the text even later than I suggested, but the difficulty seems to me to be that he

also suggests a letter  which cannot be paralleled as far as I can find on other texts. If he could give us examples in which the *Cheth* takes the form he supposes, that might settle the question in his favour.

Also it is to be remarked that the personal names *Samak*, *Hamak*, or *Hasak* do not recall any known historical names. If the name is a personal one, the owner must apparently have chosen his pot before it was baked (and it is curious that such a piece of pottery should have been so much valued), unless the letters can be shown to have been cut on the baked clay. M. Clermont-Ganneau has seen the importance of this point.

II.

THE LACHISH RUINS.

The Greek inscription, mentioned by Mr. Bliss, will be of importance to the determination of the dates of buildings at Lachish; for if only a few letters remain, yet these letters will show the date approximately of the text.

Mr. Petrie considers that the site was not occupied after the 5th century B.C. I should have judged from the descriptions and mouldings that the site was certainly occupied about the Christian era, and probably in the Byzantine age, and that the masonry with drafted edges, ascribed to the 8th century B.C., may turn out to belong to the 5th century A.D. This conjecture is strengthened by the account given by Mr. Petrie of the tooling of the stones.

Every letter of inscription which can be obtained is therefore of value.