

explained also otherwise: agreeing that there *is* such a foss is enough for me.

I make these notes simply to show that objections to any suggestion, which at first sight look very striking, may dissolve into nothing when properly examined, as is the case with those here alluded to. My conviction is that *the question of the real Calvary will never be satisfactorily settled by controversy, but only by excavations.*

THE CUNEIFORM AND OTHER INSCRIPTIONS FOUND AT LACHISH AND ELSEWHERE IN THE SOUTH OF PALESTINE.

By the Rev. A. H. SAYCE.

THE importance of the discovery made by Mr. Bliss at Tell el Hesi cannot easily be over-estimated. The cuneiform tablet found in the Amorite stratum of the mound is the first record of pre-Israelitish Canaan which has been yielded up by the soil of Palestine, and it is a token and earnest that more are to follow. It is plain that Mr. Bliss has reached the entrance to the palace or the archive-chamber of the Governor of Lachish in days when it obeyed the rule of Egypt, and when the Israelitish invasion was still distant. The tablets found at Tell el Amarna have told us what we may expect to find when the archive-chamber is thoroughly explored. Not only will there be despatches and letters similar to the one which has been brought to light, but we may also expect to disinter among them other texts as well. Copies of Bâbylonian myths, as well as fragments of comparative dictionaries, have been met with at Tell el Amarna, and the analogy of the libraries of Babylonia and Assyria would lead us to infer that in Palestine we shall find histories of the Canaanitish States and the annals of their kings.

Besides the cuneiform tablet, Mr. Bliss has discovered other relics of antiquity which belong to the same age. Among these are Egyptian beads and scarabs of the period of the eighteenth dynasty. On one of the beads are the name and title of Queen Teie, the wife of Amenôphis III, and the mother of Amenôphis IV (or Khu-n-Aten), to whom the greater part of the Tell el Amarna correspondence was addressed. Another bead is of amber, and since beads of Baltic (and not Sicilian) amber were found by Dr. Schliemann in the prehistoric tombs of Mykênæ, we may conclude that the amber trade between the Baltic and the Mediterranean was already in existence in the time of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, and that the wealthy Amorites of Lachish adorned themselves with the product of the northern sea.

The following is my transliteration and translation of the inscription :—

1. [A-na am]ila raba ki-be-ma Ba-al (?) . . .
To the officer¹ say: Bal (?) . . .
2. a-bi
. abi
3. a-na sepâ-ka am-ku-ut.
at thy feet I prostrate myself.
4. lu-u ti-i-di i-nu-ma
Verily thou knowest that
5. tu-sa-tu-na D.P.² Ba-du (?) . . .
have brought (?) Badu (?) . . .
6. û D.P. Zi-im-ri-da
and Zimrida
7. bu-wa-ri ali û
the spoil (?) of the city, and
8. ik-ta-bi-mi
says
9. D.P. Dan-Hadad a-na D.P. Zi-im-ri-da
Dan-Hadad to Zimrida
10. [a]-bi al Ya-ra-mi
my father: The city of Yarami
11. [is]-ta-par-mi a-na ya-a-si
has sent to me;
12. [id]-na-ni-mi
it has given me
13. III (?) GIS-KHIR û III se-du
3 (?) pieces of green wood (?) and 3 slings
14. û III nam-za-ru-ta
and 3 falchions,
15. sum-ma-mi a-na-ku
since I
16. uts-ba-te-na eli mati
am perfect (?) over the country
17. sa sarri³ û a-na ya-a-si
of the king, and against me
18. in-ni-ip-sa-at
it has acted;
19. û a-di mi-u-ti maqatu-mi
and until my death is there fighting.
20. su-ut mu-ul (?) -ka
As regards thy . . .

¹ Literally, "great man;" a term used in the Tell el Amarna tablets in the sense of "governor."

² Determinative prefix.

³ *I.e.*, the Egyptian king. The phrase is of frequent occurrence in the Tell el Amarna tablets.

21. sa u-sa-at is-tu nakri
which I brought (?) from the enemy
22. . . -a . . . ũ us-si-ir
. and I have sent
23. Bel (?)-bani-la (?) ũ
Bel (?)-bani-la (?); and
24. . . ra-bi-ilu-yu-ma-[khir]
. . rabi-ilu-yuma[khir]
25. [is-ta-] par akhi-su
has despatched his brother
26. a-na mata an-ni-tam
to this country
27. a-na [da-na-ni-sa ?]
to [strengthen it].

Quite as interesting as the beads and scarabs are the seal-cylinders which were found along with them. One of the latter is an imitation in Egyptian porcelain of a Babylonian original, which must have been manufactured in Egypt, and would of itself point to a close intercourse between Egypt and Babylonia. Some of the cylinders were imported from Babylonia, and belong to the period B.C. 2000-1500, but the larger part of them are rude copies made by Western artists in imitation of Babylonian models. Precisely similar copies have been found in the prehistoric tombs of Cyprus, more especially in the neighbourhood of Nikosia, as well as in Syria, and Mr. Bliss's discovery now enables us to fix their age.

The cuneiform tablet remains in the hands of the Turkish Commissioner, but careful squeezes and wax impressions of it were sent to England last June. I awaited the arrival of them with almost breathless impatience, as I had promised the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund that sooner or later cuneiform tablets would be found at Tell el Hesi, and the fact that several cuneiform inscriptions on slabs of stone have been forged of late years in Palestine, made me fear that a disappointment was in store for me. When Mr. Armstrong brought the impressions to Oxford, and we had unpacked them together, my relief was great. The cuneiform inscription was not only genuine, the tablet on which it was inscribed was just one of those which I had long believed were lying buried under Palestinian soil.

In size and shape it resembles the tablets sent from the south of Canaan which have been discovered at Tell el Amarna. The forms of the cuneiform characters, moreover, which appear on it, are those which we now know to have been used in Southern Canaan about B.C. 1400. Lastly, the formulæ and grammatical forms are identical with those employed by the scribes of Southern Canaan when writing to the Egyptian kings. We find them in the tablets of Tell el Amarna as well as in the tablet of Lachish.

The fact that the original is not accessible has made the copying of

the cuneiform text somewhat difficult. Indeed, it is sometimes impossible to tell from the impressions what exactly are the characters at the edges of the tablet or where the surface of the tablet is worn. Hence the lacunæ and indications of uncertainty which exist in my copy of the inscription. A translation of the text has been further rendered difficult by the existence in it of words which have not been met with before, and which are, therefore, of doubtful meaning. Fortunately, however, enough is clear and certain to show us what the letter—for such it is—is about, and to what period it belongs.

What makes this letter so particularly interesting is that we already know something about Zimrida, who is twice mentioned in it. Zimrida, or Zimridi, as he is also called, was Governor of Lachish in the reign of Khu-n-Aten, and a letter from the King of Jerusalem to the Egyptian Pharaoh informs us that he was murdered at Lachish “by servants of the (Egyptian) King.” One of the despatches discovered at Tell el Amarna was sent by him to Egypt, and runs thus: “To the King, my Lord, my Gods, my Sun-god, the Sun-god, who is from Heaven, thus (writes) Zimridi, the Governor of the City of Lachish, thy servant, the dust of thy feet, at the feet of the King, my Lord, the Sun-god from Heaven, bows himself seven times seven. I have very diligently listened to the words of the messenger whom the King, my Lord, has sent to me, and now I have despatched (a mission) according to his message.”

That the first tablet discovered at Tell el Hesi should contain the name of Zimrida, or Zimridi, is the best proof we can have that Dr. Flinders Petrie was right in identifying the *tel* with the site of Lachish. The discoveries of Mr. Bliss have further proved that he was right in his chronological arrangement of the successive strata of the *tel*, the lowermost layer representing the Amorite period before the Israelitish conquest of Canaan. We can now, therefore, accept without misgiving his views in regard to the relative ages of the different kinds of Palestinian pottery, as well as of the buildings he disinterred at Tell el Hesi itself.

To me the discovery of the tablet is especially pleasing. Years ago the name of Kirjath-Sepher, or “Book-town,” coupled with other considerations, led me to the belief that pre-Israelitish Canaan possessed its libraries of clay tablets like Assyria and Babylonia, and after my first visit to Southern Palestine in 1880, I was anxious that the Palestine Exploration Fund should excavate in some of the large *tels* I had examined there. I felt convinced that cuneiform records upon clay would be found beneath them, and that in these old monuments of a past civilisation we should, as it were, dig up the sources of the Book of Genesis. The discovery of the tablets of Tell el Amarna, followed by Dr. Petrie’s identification of Lachish, went far towards confirming my belief and encouraging me to hope that before long we should have before us an ancient Canaanitish library. What an important bearing this must have upon the criticism of the Old Testament need not be described.

It is sufficient to know that we are on the eve of discoveries such as could not have been dreamed of a few years ago. What has been already

found has shown us that in B.C. 1400, when Palestine still obeyed the tottering Government of Egypt, letters upon imperishable clay were being stored up in the archive-chamber of Lachish. The time has come when the buried records of the past are about to speak once more, and tell us, it may be, of days when Abram, the Hebrew, pitched his tent in the neighbourhood of Hebron, and paid tithes to the King of Jerusalem.

Lachish, however, is not the only place in Southern Palestine where memorials of the Egyptian domination have been found. Last spring certain objects were discovered by the natives at or near Gaza, on which was an inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphics. Mr. Bliss took an impression of the inscription, which he sent to the Museum of the Fund. The inscription consists of a cartouche containing the prænomen of Amenôphis II (Ra-âa-kheperu) of the eighteenth dynasty, and beneath it are the words, "the Temple of Mut." It seems probable, therefore, that the object on which the inscription is engraved comes from a temple of the goddess Mut which was built by Amenôphis II at Gaza. Amenôphis II was the son and successor of Thothmes III, the Conqueror of Canaan.

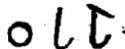
Egyptian pottery, inscribed with the mutilated cartouches of Ramses II, "the giver of life," was found at Namus, near the Jebel Hadîd, many years ago, and has long formed a portion of the collection of antiquities in the possession of the Palestine Exploration Fund. But this pottery belongs to a later period than the age of the Tell el Amarna tablets. Ramses II, the Pharaoh of the Oppression, belonged to the nineteenth dynasty (B.C. 1348-1281), and the pottery disinterred at Namus is an evidence only of the temporary restoration of Egyptian power in Canaan, which took place in his reign. Of a different character is an ivory plaque found on "Ophel," which has also long been in the possession of the Fund.

This is ornamented with the following pattern  The same pattern surrounds the cartouche of Thothmes III on a scarab now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and we are thus justified in regarding it as characteristic of the age of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty.

The same pattern is also found on two of the clay vase-handles (Nos. 42 and 68), which were discovered at the foot of the Haram wall at Jerusalem, and about which Mr. Baker Greene has contributed an article to the *Quarterly Statement* of the Fund (1881, pp. 304, *sqq.*). On one of them (No. 68), the concentric circles have been stamped (while the clay was still soft) over a representation of the winged solar disk, below which are the two Phœnician characters SH-T. Another vase-handle shows that above the winged disk was originally the word L-M-L-K (*lê-melek*). Above and below the disk we have on other handles [L]-M-[L]-K SH(?)-K-H (No. 69) and L-M-L-K Z-PH (No. 70). The latter inscription is, accompanied by the concentric circle pattern. I hope hereafter to write more fully upon these interesting specimens of early Phœnician epigraphy.

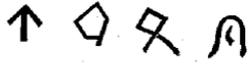
At present I must return to Lachish. Here certain fragments of Amorite pottery have been found incised with potters' marks, similar to those discovered by Dr. Petrie at Gurob in the Fayûm, and at Tell el

Amarna. Three of these marks are W X and , the first two of which have the same forms as the *shin* and *taw* in the early Phœnician alphabet.

Of later date is the mark  found on the inner side of the bottom of a white vase, which resembles the Phœnician *lamed*. But the most interesting piece of early pottery is one that was dug up in 1891, from a depth of 300 feet. This belonged to a flat dish, on the inner side of the bottom of which is the incised inscription . The two last characters  present no difficulty, but I am unable to identify the first. It can hardly be intended to represent *l*, since there is no such word as . Whatever may be the interpretation of the inscription, however, it is the oldest example of Phœnician writing which has as yet been met with.

I must not conclude this brief paper without a reference to a remarkable circular stone weight, numbered 283 in the collection of the Fund, which is figured on p. 492 of the "Recovery of Jerusalem." After a long hunt through the correspondence received from Sir Charles Warren by the Committee of the Fund, Mr. Armstrong and myself have found that it was discovered under the pavement of Robinson's arch at Jerusalem, though unfortunately there is no record of the exact depth at which the workmen came across it. It bears an inscription on either side, hitherto supposed to be in "Phœnician letters." A slight inspection of it, however, showed me that the characters are really those of the Cypriote syllabary, and that in the weight we accordingly have evidence of intercourse between Cyprus and Jerusalem at a comparatively early period.

The inscriptions are as follows:—

- (1) On the front : 
- (2) On the back : 

The first inscription reads *Ti-ya-ro(?)-vo(?)*. The third character may, however, be *po*, and the last cannot be identified with certainty. It may possibly be intended for *re*. The first two characters are fortunately certain, and represent some Greek name beginning with $\Delta\alpha$ -. The inscription on the back is *Ta-ve-ri*, the Greek $\delta\alpha\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\iota$.

The existence of this Cypriote inscription, coupled with the discovery of early Greek pottery at Lachish, goes to show that there must have been a considerable Greek population in Southern Palestine in the seventh

and sixth centuries B.C. The Assyrian King Sargon, in describing his campaign against Palestine in B.C. 711, states that Akhimit, whom he had made King of Ashdod, had been dethroned by his subjects (or more probably by Hezekiah of Judah), and "a Greek (Yavana) who had no right to the throne," had been made king in his place. It was this event which led to the siege of Ashdod referred to in Is. xx, 1, and it shows that Greek influence was already powerful on the Philistine coast. The Greek writer, Stephanus Byzantinus (s. v. Ἰόνιον), tells us that Gaza was also called Iônê, while the sea between that part of Palestine and the frontier of Egypt was known as the "Ionian." All this points to Greek colonisation, possibly from Cyprus, which the Assyrians entitled the island of "the Ionians."

ON AN INSCRIBED BEAD FROM PALESTINE.

By the Rev. Prof. A. H. SAYCE.

THE perforated "bead" of reddish yellow stone which Professor T. F. Wright, of Cambridge, Mass., obtained from Jerusalem is exceedingly interesting. The inscription upon it is as follows:—

The letters are those of the alphabet of the Siloam inscription, and must therefore belong to the same period as the latter. They read N-TS-G, i.e., *netseg*. Now, in the *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1890, p. 267, an account will be found, by Dr. Chaplin, of a hæmatite weight he obtained at Samaria, on which is an inscription in letters of pre-exilic form, which Dr. Neubauer has interpreted as meaning "a quarter of a *netseg*." The word *netseg* is not met with in the Old Testament, and is not to be found in the Hebrew lexicon.

The use of the word on Dr. Chaplin's weight led to the belief that it signified a particular weight which Dr. Flinders Petrie reckoned at 627 grains. Dr. Wright's weight, however, shows that this cannot be the case. His "bead" weighs only 8.65 grammes, so that we must either assume that there were two weights called *netseg*—which is very improbable—or else suppose that the word simply means "a standard weight." If Dr. Neubauer is right in connecting it with the root נצג, this latter signification would be very natural.

I ought to add that the forms of the letters are important, as they show, even more plainly than those of the letters in the Siloam inscription, that they have been imitated from forms traced by the pen on papyrus or parchment. The "tails" of the *nun* and *gimel* are shaped so as to resemble curves instead of straight lines. This is fresh evidence that the literature of Jerusalem was upon papyrus or parchment rather than