

just as in the fragment from Jebail. The symbols of lions and oxen are also found on the statue, though not in the same positions as in the fragment.

Is it not likely that the fragment, instead of being a mere pillar or caryatid, is part of a similar statue of the Ephesian Diana?

MONKTON COMBE,

21st May.

## GREEK INSCRIPTIONS IN WESTERN PALESTINE.

By Major C. R. CONDER, R.E.

I HAVE had occasion to remark how much Western Palestine differs from Syria and the country east of Jordan in the matter of rude stone monuments and of ancient pagan bas-reliefs. Little pottery images of Ashtoreth, at Gezer and Lachish, are almost the only Canaanite remains found in the West until Roman times, and the dolmens occur only in Upper Galilee and at Banias. The same is remarkable as to ancient Greek texts. In Bashan we have many dating back to the first century A.D. Those collected during the course of the Survey in the West were few, and appear to be mostly of the Byzantine and mediæval periods. It may be convenient to collect them together.

1-4. At *Banias* are four well-known texts (Waddington, 1891-1894), that of Agrippa dating from 222 A.D., while another (1893) speaks of the Priest of Pan, and the two others (1891-1892) of the son of Lysimachus.

5. At *Deir Dughiya*, with Maltese crosses, is in honour of John the Baptist, perhaps as late as the twelfth century.

6. At *Shakra*, with the Jerusalem cross, is by a deacon, in honour of Holy Procopius, and seems clearly to be of the twelfth century.

7. At *Masûb*, in honour of the Prophet Zachariah, by certain canons, has been imperfectly copied, but is also mediæval.

8. At *Martin er Râs*, is too badly copied to be read.

9. At *Shefa Amr*, on a Christian tomb, "Lord Christ help Sal . . . and have mercy on his child." This is, perhaps, early, as the name of Christ is spelt **ΧΡΕΣΤΕ**. *acc 1 203*

10. At *Sheikh Ibreek* over a tomb, Παρθενος.

11. At *Bel'ah*. Looking again at my original note book I find that there are traces of the letter **X**, so that it reads **ΕΙΣΘΕΟΣ ΜΟΝΟΣ ΧΜΓ**. The last three letters are not, as Mr. Drake thought, the date, but the monogram peculiar to Syria, "Christ born of Mary," which was used before the fourth century. This tomb also is, therefore, Early Christian.

12. At *El Habs*. "In memory of George," is mediæval, and belongs to a hermitage.

13. 'Akrabeh, is partly defaced, but clearly Christian, and apparently funerary.

14. At *El Mughâr*, appears to be Byzantine, and is too fragmentary to read.

15. At *Tell Jezar* **AAKIOY** is believed to be ancient, occurring with the Hebrew text of the Hasmonean age.

16. At *Shafat*. The milestone, with the names of Trajan and Nerva, has the mile distance from Jerusalem in Greek.

17. At *Amwâs*, on a church pillar, **ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ ΜΟΝΟΣ**, with the Samaritan text, "Blessed be His name for ever," is of the Byzantine age.

18. At *Kuriet Saïdeh* the dedication of Martin the Deacon with a Greek cross, appears to be of the twelfth century A.D.

19. At *Deir el Kelt*. Greek-Arab bilingual, dedicating the monastery. Also twelfth century. I do not here add the mediæval painted texts at Kuruntul and Kusr Hajlah, which I copied, and have given in the memoirs. The writing in this case is twelfth or thirteenth century work.

20. At *Deir Belah*. Dedication by Apollodorus at his own expense—Byzantine, belonging to a chapel.

20a. *Gaza*. "Domesticus to the son of Domesticus"; a funerary text.

21. *Gaza*, translated by M. C. Ganneau, records the facing of some building with stone by Alexander the Deacon, and begins with the verse: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm xxiv, 1). It was discovered in 1877.

22. At *Sheikh Râshed*, a fragment, apparently a mediæval Christian tomb.

23. *Hebron*. The well-known text in the mosque: "Holy Abraham help thy servant . . . and Agathemeros, and Ugia, and . . . and Tomasia, and Ablabia, and Anastasia."

24. *Hebron* outer court **NENYO ABPAMIOY MANOYΣ**.

25. *Khoreisa*. "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter in thereat" (Psalm cxviii, 20), over the door of a chapel. Byzantine period.

26-34. *Jerusalem*. Given in the memoir, are all Christian, and, in two cases only, seem earlier than the fourth century. To these a few more have been added of late from the Northern Cemetery—Jewish and Byzantine, none older apparently than the fourth century.

35-39. In *Wâdy Rabðbeh*. Texts of the monks and nuns of St. Sion, and that of Thecla Augusta (about 890 A.D.).

40. The inscription on the mediæval font at Bethlehem, dedicated by "those of whom the Lord knows the names."

At the site of Abila I copied in 1873 several inscriptions which were not, I believe, previously known. They are tombstones with the names of Lucius, Archelaus, Phêdistus, and Antonia and Philander. On one of

them occur the words **ΧΡΗΣΤΗ ΧΑΙΡΕ**, and this spelling of the name of Christ seems usually to be earlier than the fourth century.

East of Jordan, Greek texts are also uncommon south of Bashan. The dedication of the temple at Philadelphia, and the two important texts at Gerasa (Christian) are among the earliest known. Prof. Ramsay has kindly translated the text which I discovered at Philadelphia.

"Aurelius Victorianus did honour to Gaius Julius Victor (Junianus?) of the tenth legion Fretensis Gordiana."

This is therefore one of the memorials of Roman officers, common in Bashan, and belongs to the third century A.D.

With exception of a few scattered letters, the only other text which I found in Gilead was at *Umm el Buruk*, where "Antonius Rufus set up to himself at his own expense" a winged tablet which is partly defaced.

The abundance of texts in Bashan, and in Syria, seems to show that about the Christian era the Decapolis must have had a much larger Greek population than existed in Western Palestine; and in the Byzantine age the Greek population seems to have been either stronger, or more civilised than that of Southern Palestine, both in Northern Syria and in Bashan and Northern Gilead.

## NOTES ON TELL EL HESY.

By Major C. R. CONDER, R.E.

MR. BLISS has given us a clear account of his excavations, and has shown the antiquity of this site. The Tell occupies about two acres, and seems to have been the fortress of the town. The study of the inscriptions does not disagree with the dates assigned to the pottery, but seems to forbid the supposition that the place was abandoned in 500 B.C. If, as I have proposed, this be the site of Lachish, we have in the Onomasticon the statement that it was still a town in the fourth century A.D., and in the Book of Nehemiah we find it inhabited at least as late as 445 B.C. (Neh. xi, 30), while some of the pottery may be as late as 350 B.C. The Greek inscription appears to me to be clearly later than 300 B.C., and I believe Prof. Ramsey would assign it a yet later date. Anyone acquainted with the Greek texts of the time of Psammetichus (600 B.C., or later) will recognise how much later that found at Tell el Hesy must be, and the Hebrew jar handle should, I believe, be dated about 400 B.C.

The scarabs are evidence of the *earliest* but not of the *latest* date assignable. They may have been kept for centuries before they were lost, and one of Amenophis II (1540 B.C.) occurs much higher up than the Zimridi tablet (1480-40 B.C.). Such considerations lead me to propose some slight modifications in the dates proposed by Mr. Bliss, and to carry down the history of the Tell to at least the Hasmonean age, when the