

ON THE REMOVAL OF THE PORTAL OF A CHURCH AT ACRE TO CAIRO.

By the Rev. J. E. HANAVER.

THE "Egyptian Gazette" for January 21st, 1897, contained the statement that after the epoch of the Crusades the marble portal of the church at Acre (which church was not specified) was taken down and sent to Cairo, where it was re-erected and may still be seen opposite the Sebeel in the Bazaar.

On reading this statement I thought that I and perhaps, also, some other reader of your valuable periodical would like to know a little more about this portal, and so I wrote to my brother, who lives at Cairo, to be so good as to get a photograph of it for me, and also to find out all he could on the subject. The following is his answer:—

"I have found the portal and forward herewith a rough photo (*see* opposite page). The white line or band running obliquely across the picture is a stream of sunbeams. I hope to send a better photo on my return from Ismailia.

"His Excellency Herz Bey, Chief Architect of the Committee for the Preservation of the Monuments of Arab Art, has kindly furnished the following information, and volunteers to answer any further questions to the best of his ability:—

"Stanley Lane Poole (Cairo), p. 34, gives an incorrect account, which compare with El Makrisi, p. 382 of vol. ii.

"The portal was brought over by El Ashraf on Gemadi 17, 690 A.H.

"En Nasir purchased the portal of the Emir Baidera."

As I have not the authors above mentioned, it is not in my power either to verify or compare the references.

NOTES ON THE SEAL FOUND ON OPHEL, THE GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM NAZARETH AND KEFR ESH SHEMS, THE SILOAM TEXT, AND THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS.

By Prof. CH. CLERMONT-GANNEAU, LL.D.

(1) I AM obliged by the documents sent to me, especially for the excellent cast of the Israelite seal from Ophel. This cast confirms



THE SEAL FOUND ON OPHEL.



PORTAL OF A CHURCH AT ACRE, NOW IN CAIRO.

me in the reading I have proposed for the second name: *Pedayahu*, פדַיָהוּ, which is quite biblical,¹ instead of *Paryahu*, which is inexplicable.

(2) The Greek inscription given on p. 188 of the *July Quarterly Statement* had already been published and explained by me in my "Études d'Archéologie Orientale" (vol. ii, October number, 1896, p. 142). It is there pointed out that in the fourth line one must read the name of the famous city of Hippos in the Decapolis, the site of which (*Susieh*) I had before determined near the locality (*Saffāreh*) whence the inscription comes; the true reading is: σοφῆς δ'ἀφ' Ἴππου, "of the wise Hippos," not, as Dr. Murray read, Σοφῆς δ'ἀφ'ἵππου, "of Sophè, the horseless." The copy of Dr. Porter enables the first word of the last line to be amended in my previous transcription: **ZHCANT'** in place of **HCANT'**.

(3) The inscription on p. 195 should read—

Εὐλογητός κ(υρι)ός οτι εισηκούσεν τῆς φωνῆς τῆς δεήσεώς μου . κ(υρι)ός
βοήθος μου και υπερασπιστῆς μου, ἐπ'αὐτῷ ἡ δοξα . ἐπιηβῆ² (?) Βη(ι)αμην.

It is composed essentially of passages from the Psalms.

That on p. 194 should read **YC ΘEOC** = εἰς Θεος = "there is only one God."

(4) P. 204. *The Siloam Text*.—The novel and paradoxical theory put forth by Mr. Pilcher, according to which the Hebrew inscription of the Siloam tunnel would date from the epoch of Herod, appears to me to be inadmissible from a palæographic as well as a historical point of view. It rests essentially upon a material observation which, let it be said in passing, I was the first to make (see my "Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale," vol. i, p. 295, 1888), but from which one may draw quite different conclusions; it is that the Hebrew text is cut in a *large rectangular cartouche* of which it only occupies hardly the inferior half; above is a large empty space, which was evidently destined to receive something which has never been engraved there. Mr. Pilcher has supposed that this *something* may have been a Greek inscription, but, as I have expressly pointed out, one may suppose, with more probability, that it was, for example, a preamble to the inscription which in its actual state begins very abruptly; or, still better, a *bas relief* in the Egyptian or Assyrian manner, showing the miners at work at the psychological moment, when the two gangs, north and south, met in the middle of the tunnel. This last conjecture would agree well with the two words, otherwise very difficult to explain, with which the inscription begins:—"This is the piercing **וְהָהָה הַנִּקְבָה**, and this is the manner in which it was made" (the explanation follows). These two first words would be in some sort the legend of the scene which one proposed to engrave above the text.

As to the employment of the ancient alphabet of Phœnician origin

¹ 1 Chron. xxvii, 20, Pedaiiah. See also 2 Kings xxiii, 36; 1 Chron. iii, 18, &c., where the name is spelt פדַיָהוּ.

² ἐπίβησέ?

on the money of the Maccabees, it is due to a voluntary archaism, instances of which it will be easy to find in the coinage of other peoples. Would it not, for instance, be rash to conclude from the presence of Gothic characters upon certain English coins of the present day that the Gothic was the alphabet current in England in the nineteenth century? In the case of the Maccabees, moreover, we have perhaps to take another circumstance into consideration. It is this: The Asmoneans who came originally from Modin probably belonged to the northern group of Jews who had remained attached to the ancient Israelite alphabet, as is shown by the survival of this alphabet among the Samaritans. Nothing more natural, then, if they gave the preference to this alphabet upon their money; and thus, on the other part, are explained the palæographic affinities of this alphabet with that of the Samaritans which are so remarkable.

(5) I shall have many and important observations to present upon the question of the Tombs of the Kings raised by a passage in the report of Dr. Bliss (p. 180). I have communicated them to the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (of 30th July and 6th and 13th August), in a Memoir which will be published *in extenso* in the next number of my "Revue d'Archéologie Orientale" (§ 66).

THE TEMPLE AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

By WILLIAM SIMPSON, Esq.

MR. LETHABY'S communication in the January number of the *Quarterly Statement* reminded me that I have the report of an observation made as far back as 1874 on the relative positions of the Sakhra and the Church of the Ascension. I had asked Sir Walter Besant, who was then Secretary of the Fund, if he could get anyone in Jerusalem to note, either at the vernal or the autumnal equinox, where the sun appeared on the Mount of Olives to a person standing on a line with the Sacred Rock. M. Clermont-Ganneau was then, I believe, acting for the Fund in Palestine, and the communication was sent out to him. Here is his note in reply, which is worth publishing, as it may be of use to those who speculate about the site of the Temple:—

"Je n'étais pas présent à Jerusalem . . . de l'équinoxe d'automne: mais j'ai chargé mon ami M. Bertrand, Chancelier de notre Consulat, de faire à ma place l'observation recommandée. L'observateur placé devant le Sakhra a vu le soleil se lever à droite de la mosquée de l'Ascension, au dessus de l'établissement religieux du Pater Nostre: il a calculé que pour voir le soleil se lever au dessus du minaret de la mosquée de l'Ascension il fallait se reporter à environ 60 pas au Nord de la Sakhra."