

NOTES ON GREEK INSCRIPTIONS.

By Dr. A. S. MURRAY.

In the *Quarterly Statement* for July, 1898, p. 157, Professor Clermont-Ganneau animadverts on certain Greek inscriptions which had been published in the January number. As regards the inscription of *Wady Barada*, the reading Δά [ΥΨ]ίστωρ was not mine, as he assumes. He appears to have overlooked the heading of the communication and the fact that my note was printed in brackets, professing no more than to give some recent information on that epithet. From the photograph of the stone Professor Clermont-Ganneau reads Δά Μεγίστωρ, which is right so far as it goes; but he takes no notice of the two letters **C W** at the end of line 1, which appear to me to have survived from the word Σωτήρι, so that the full phrase would have been Δά Σωτήρι Μεγίστωρ. For this combination of epithets compare C.I. Gr. 3949.

With Professor Brünnow's transcript before him of the inscription at *Jerash*, made while the stone was still unbroken, Professor Clermont-Ganneau remarks that my "attempted restoration wanders far away from the original text," so easy is it to be wise after the event!

 THE METALS USED BY THE GREAT NATIONS OF ANTIQUITY.

By Dr. J. H. GLADSTONE, F.R.S.

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PALESTINE.

BETWEEN the great territories of Egypt and Assyria lies a narrow strip of country, small in extent, but very important in the history of civilisation, commerce, and religion. During the period of which we are speaking it was occupied by a succession of different nations. It formed part of the possession of the great Hittite people. We cannot read their inscriptions, and we know little of their history. We have, however, bronze and silver seals that are supposed to belong to them, and curious bronze figures. They seem to have had abundance of silver, probably from the mines of Bulgardagh, in Lycaonia. We read of Abraham purchasing a piece of land from Ephron the Hittite, for which he weighed out "four hundred shekels of silver current money with the merchant." He was, in fact, rich in silver and gold, and among the presents given to Rebekah were jewels of silver and jewels of gold.

The first notice of metals in Palestine to which we can give an approximate date is in connection with the invasion of that land, and other countries further to the eastward, by the great Egyptian king Thothmes III. He led his army through the Plain of Esdraelon, and gained a victory at Megiddo, and amongst the spoil were chariots inlaid with gold, chariots and dishes of silver, copper, lead, and what was apparently iron ore. This took place about B.C. 1600. The original of the long treaty of peace and amity between Katesir, King of the Hittites, and Rameses II is said to have been engraved on tablets of silver.

When the children of Israel left Egypt they were, of course, acquainted with the metals used in that country. They borrowed the jewels of silver and gold of their oppressors, and of these the golden calf was afterwards made. We read, too, of the "brazen serpent,"¹ and of elaborate directions for the use of silver, gold, and brass in the construction of the Tabernacle. Lead is mentioned once, but iron seems to have been unknown to them, the word never occurring in the Book of Exodus; and though it is occasionally mentioned in the later Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, it is always with reference, not to the Israelites, but to the nations they encountered. Thus we read of the Midianites having gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, and lead, which were to be purified by passing through the fire; of the King of Bashan, a remnant of the Rephaim, who had the rare luxury of an iron bedstead, which was kept afterwards as a curiosity at Rabbah; and of the spoil of the Amorite city of Jericho, comprising gold, silver, copper, and iron. Later on the Canaanites were formidable with their "nine hundred chariots of iron"; and later still the Philistines, whose champion, Goliath of Gath, was clad in armour of bronze, and bore a spear with a heavy head of iron. Among the materials collected by David in rich abundance for the building of the Temple were gold, silver, bronze, and iron; but the best artificers in metals were furnished by Hiram of Tyre, at the request of Solomon. During the reign of the latter there was an immense accumulation of these precious metals in Jerusalem. The comparative value of the different materials is indicated by the words of the prophet in describing the Zion of the future: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron" (Isaiah lx, 17). Another prophet (Jeremiah vi, 29, 30) uses the simile of the refining of silver by the process of cupellation.

The great mound of Tel el Hesi affords a very perfect example of the *débris* of town upon town during many centuries, and of the light that these mounds throw upon the progress of civilisation. When Joshua, after the decisive victory of Bethhoron, led his troops to the plain in the south-west corner of Palestine, he besieged and took Lachish, a city of the Amorites. It then became an important stronghold of the Israelites;

¹ The word "brass" at the time of the translation of our Bible was used indiscriminately for copper or any of its alloys. In the Old Testament it never refers to the alloy of zinc, to which the term is now confined.

its vicissitudes are frequently mentioned at various dates of the sacred history, as well as on the Tel el Amarna tablets. The mound has lately been explored by Messrs. Petrie and Bliss; and in the remains of the Amorite city (perhaps B.C. 1500) there are large rough weapons of war, made of copper without admixture of tin; above this, dating perhaps from 1250 to 800, appear bronze tools, with an occasional piece of silver or lead, but the bronze gradually becomes scarcer, its place being taken by iron, till at the top of the mound there is little else than that metal. The Palestine Exploration Fund has kindly lent me specimens of these finds for exhibition. About B.C. 700 Lachish was the headquarters of Sennacherib, during his invasion of Palestine. From it he sent his messengers to Hezekiah, and at the same town he received the peace-offering of the Jewish king, 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, to raise which he had to despoil his palace and the Temple. In Sennacherib's own version of the transaction the silver is given as 800 talents, and the gold 30. Lachish was finally deserted about 400 B.C.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

By Lieut.-Colonel CONDER, LL.D., R.E.

THE pictures of social life in the Book of Job are often illustrated both by antiquarian study and by the customs of Arab tribes in our own time. These methods do not, it is true, cast any definite light on the date of the work, since the civilisation described was of great antiquity, but they often serve to bring out the precise meaning. The following notes refer to language, geography, civilisation, religious ideas, and natural history.

Language.—In general character the Hebrew of the book is that of the time of the prophets between Amos and Jeremiah, but so terse and idiomatic in structure as to make the Book of Job perhaps the most difficult in the Old Testament to translate. The Septuagint translators seem to have found this, and often did not apparently understand their text. Jerome was, perhaps, the first to remark that the Arabic sometimes best explains the meaning of words used in this book, and later scholars have observed Aramaic forms and meanings, which indicate a dialect such as that of the Nabatheans or of the Syrians, influencing the writer. These peculiarities do not, however, render it necessary to suppose a late date now that we know from the Moabite Stone and the Samalla texts that outlying dialects of Hebrew, as early as the ninth century B.C., were strongly Aramaic in character. It was probably the speech of the neighbouring land of Uz, which influenced the language of the unknown author. No Persian or other later imported words appear to be used, and in some particulars the language might be thought archaic.

Geography.—It is very generally allowed by scholars that the scene is laid in or near Edom, and not (as Christian tradition held from the fourth