

III.—By W. H. D. ROUSE, Esq.

The word Κράτωνος in the inscription on p. 335 of the *Quarterly Statement* for 1900 is not the name of the dedicator, which must be in the nominative. The last letter of it (ς) appears just before Κράτωνος, "son of Craton."

RUGBY, October 14th, 1900.

JAR-HANDLE INSCRIPTIONS.

I.—By Professor THEODORE F. WRIGHT, Ph.D.

THE inscribed jar-handles which have been found in excavating Tell es-Sâfi and neighbouring sites could not receive adequate attention in the field while the work was going on, and should now come before students at their homes, especially if they have access to other handles of like character. I offer a few remarks on the subject, and hope that others will contribute what they know:—

1. This is not a new subject or a recent one. The *Quarterly Statement*, No. 7, 1869–1870, has on p. 372 an unsigned note which speaks of jar-handles found by (then) Captain Warren, "all of which were stamped with the same mark—apparently an eagle, rudely designed." They bore letters "similar to those of the Moabite Stone." Three of these handles were read by Dr. Birch, of the British Museum, and are given in English as "Le Me LeK ZePHa—LeK Shat—LeK," showing that they were similar to those found by Dr. Bliss as regards the first word. No doubt the author of "Underground Jerusalem" referred to this when he wrote on p. 422 of that work:—

"At this angle [the south-east corner of the wall, near bottom of the 80 feet shaft] were found those pottery jar-handles on which is impressed a winged sun or disc, probably the emblems of the Sun-God; around this are characters which denote that this pottery was made for royal use. Now this is the south-east corner of Solomon's Palace, and what more natural than that some of the pottery from the palace should here accumulate?"

The handles seem to have received little further study until an article of seven pages was printed by J. Baker Greene in *Quarterly Statement*, October, 1881, p. 304, with a very thorough study of the "vase-handles discovered some years since in the vicinity of the Temple wall at Jerusalem." Mr. Greene says that no satisfactory explanation has so far been given. He finds the characters "Phoenician and similar to those on the Moabite Stone." Taking up the most legible one he confirms the reading of 1870 as L M L Ch (K) Zs P H. He then considers M L Ch to mean Moloch, "the Sun-God," or Melech, king. He does not think that Zs P H refers to a person or place, but at length argues that Moloch Z P H means the watchfulness of the god, from צפה. The initial ל means "dedicated to," and he notes that in 1 Kings xi, 7, and in 2 Kings xxiii, 10, the same letters are used, meaning an altar "to Moloch." He concludes that the vases or jars were dedicated to Moloch the watchful.

Mr. Greene then considers "the dove with outstretched wings." Was this the emblem of the Sun-God? He does not show this, but argues that the prevalence of Baal worship before the exile justifies his inference.

2. The question of the exact meaning is not yet settled. The writers to whom reference has been made were working toward a conclusion, but presented only suggestions. To one the symbol was a dove, to another an eagle, to another a winged sun or disc, to Dr. Sayce it is a beetle, and he seems to regard it as the winged scarab (*Quarterly Statement*, April, 1900, p. 170). In the cut on p. 13 of *Quarterly Statement*, January, 1900, the beetle is clearly seen "with pronounced articulations," although Mr. Macalister registers a doubt on one point of the identification with the flying scarabæus beetle, namely, the curvature of the wing-case. It now seems to me that Dr. Bliss was not on the right course in seeking at first the names of individual owners in these inscriptions, and I feel with Mr. Greene that they were votive inscriptions to Moloch or Baal. That the final word is the name of a place, Hebron, Ziph, and the like, seems plain, as Dr. Bliss believes; but the symbol needs further study.

We know that these places were on the Philistine border and not far from Ekron, where the worship of Beelzebub flourished. The first chapter of 2 Kings shows Ahaziah looking to this god. The word זבוב is very little used, but the word ערב is more

common, and is regarded by some scholars as meaning the dog-fly (so the LXX), and by others as meaning a beetle (authorities in "Speaker's Commentary on Exodus," viii, 21, and appended essay on Egyptian words, p. 490 of vol. i). There is a suggestion here of the "Lord of Flies," which may merit further investigation.

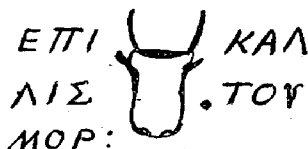
3. It would be useful to make as complete a study as possible of other jar-handles. The thickest part of the pottery, they have been well preserved when the rest was broken up, and have much to tell of early times. I have not been able to find so far in America any handles as old as those recently found by the Fund, but it appears from the first extract that the Fund had already in its possession a number as old, and others may have obtained them while in Palestine. Two have lately come under my eye, both originally procured by Dr. Selah Merrill, and both having Greek inscriptions.

A is in the Semitic Museum of Harvard University, Massachusetts, and has a circular stamp one inch in diameter.



The stamp overran the space at the lower side so that three or four letters are lacking. It seems easy to read ΟΜΕΓΑΣ ΙΕΡΕΩΣ, the common designation of the high priest of the Jews, as in Hebrews x, 21. The remaining letters may give the last half of the name of the high priest, but the first part is wanting. Possibly the Ishmael who preceded Annas may be meant. The symbol is either the bundle of palm, myrtle, and willow (Leviticus xxiii, 40), or the three ears of barley of the Passover.

B is in the museum of the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts, the home of Dr. Merrill. It is rectangular and, except for the break at the right lower corner, where the handle was bruised, is in excellent condition.



I read this ΕΠΙ ΚΑΛΙΣΤΟΥ ΜΟΡΟΥ, "for the sake

of the most fortunate destiny." The symbol seems to indicate the worship of the bull or calf which began for Israel with Aaron's apostasy and was established in the northern kingdom by Jeroboam.

The votive character of this inscription is evident. The other inscription bearing the title "high priest" is not remote from the idea of a gift to the Temple. It may be that the handles lately found by Dr. Bliss will prove also to have votive inscriptions, and to connect themselves with the idolatrous days of Israel.

II.—By Colonel C. R. CONDER, R.E.

The new inscription למלך ממשה appears to me to open up the question of translating the texts on the Hebrew jar-handles, discovered by Dr. Bliss, once more. The previous names, Hebron, Ziph, and Shochoh, were those of towns; but there is no town or ruin in Palestine now known bearing the name *Mamshath*. No such name of a place occurs in the Bible, or in any of the various lists, ancient and mediæval, that are known.

The word evidently comes from the root משה "to draw forth," as Moses was drawn from the Nile. It seems to me that, if the words למלך are explained "To Moloch," the meaning becomes clear, viz., "Dedicated to the Moloch who presides over the water that will be *drawn* by means of this jar." The other texts would be dedications to the local Molochs of Hebron, Ziph, and Shochoh, intended to preserve the jars from injury. The interest attaching to these texts—which otherwise only admit of rather forced explanations, since either the property of various local kings occurs in towns not belonging to them, or else the King of Jerusalem is mentioned on jars of a very ordinary description—will then consist in the late survival of Moloch worship (perhaps to 500 B.C.) in the country towns of Judea.