

NOTES AND QUERIES.

Hebrew Inscription at Fik.—The small Hebrew inscription at Fik, referred to in the *Quarterly Statement*, 1902, January, p. 26, is here reproduced through the courtesy of Professor George Adam Smith from his article in the "Critical Review," 1892, pp. 55 *seq.* It is figured upon a small basalt column, underneath the conventional seven-branched candlestick.

אֵנָה יְחִירָה חֲזָאנָה

As Professor Clermont-Ganneau has pointed out to the present writer (in a private communication), the last three characters, like the first three, are doubtless to be read אֵנָה. The inscription would accordingly run:—

אֵנָה (‡). הַ יְחִירָה הַ אֵנָה
"I am Jehudah, the (‡) (am) I."

It is very difficult to make anything of the doubtful letter. On the assumption that it is imperfect, it is conceivable that the character should be read ת (*i.e.*, הַתֵּאֵנָה, "the fig tree"¹), or better, ק or צ. In the latter eventuality it might be conjectured that הֵץ or הַק are abbreviations respectively of הַצְדִּיק, "the righteous," or הַקְדוֹשׁ, "the holy," But all this is pure conjecture.

As regards the palæography, we need only note that the turn given to the lower part of the נ² approximates to the ligature found in the inscription of the Benê Hezîr (Mount of Olives). The slightly diverging forms of the ה do not altogether form an insurmountable difficulty in the reading proposed.

Finally, as regards the translation, the objection has been raised that in a Hebrew inscription אֵנִי would have been expected for the pronoun "I" in place of the Jewish-Aramaic form אֵנָה. This criticism would, of course, hold good if it were certain that pure Hebrew was spoken in the Jaulân in, let us say, the second century of the Christian era. But when we find Aramaisms in the Mishnic Hebrew of the same period, and later in the Samaritan

¹ See below, note 7, p. 186.

² The *nin* in the first word resembles that in the last more closely than appears in the above reproduction.

dialect,¹ the translation adopted above will, I think, appear perfectly defensible. Besides, it is of course not unlikely that the inscription is really Jewish-Aramaic. At all events, it is not easy to see what other plausible rendering could be ascribed to the word אנה. A derivation from the Hebrew אנה, "to lament," has, indeed, been suggested, but this, like the Palmyrene חבל, "alas!" is to be expected only upon a funereal inscription.

The seven-branched candlestick which is figured above this little inscription is too familiar a motive in Jewish art to need comment. We may, however, note that the branches are not necessarily curved, and that the artist will often allow himself considerable latitude in his representations.² Occasionally, too, the candlestick has nine branches, though this seems to be quite exceptional.³ This motive can scarcely be severed from that of the palm tree, which is found varying from the plainest outline (*e.g.*, *Quarterly Statement*, 1893, p. 217, *cf.* p. 216) to the more artistic designs, such as that found by Schumacher at er-Rumsan'ych.⁴ In fact, it may perhaps be laid down as a rule that the candlestick and sacred tree inevitably tend to merge into one another,⁵ and the present writer has elsewhere suggested that the idea of the famous temple candlestick was derived in the first instance from the sacred seven-branched tree of Assyria and Babylonia.⁶ In addition to the evidence there adduced, we may point to the parallel between the candelabrum, with its lights, and the custom of hanging lamps upon the sacred tree, and it is worth noting that the arms of the candlestick instead of ending in a straight line, as is usually the case, are occasionally represented as tapering off, thus presenting to some extent a faithful outline of a tree.⁷

S. A. COOK, M.A.

¹ Thus, to give an example bearing upon the question at issue, the pronoun of the first person in Samaritan has the four forms אנה (Heb.), אנה (Aram.).

² Compare, *e.g.*, Schumacher, "The Jaulân," p. 115, Fig. 23.

³ Compare *op. cit.*, p. 71, Fig. 7; p. 116, Fig. 27.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 234, Fig. 123; p. 235, Fig. 125 (both nine-branched); *Madden "Coins,"* p. 71, *cf. also Quarterly Statement*, 1900, p. 113.

⁵ Compare Robertson Smith, "Religion of the Semites," 2nd ed., p. 488.

⁶ "Encyclopædia Biblica," Art. "Candlestick."

⁷ The fig tree, as well as the date palm, was a sacred tree. It is not proposed, however, to associate this circumstance with the conjectured reading, הרהנה, "the fig tree," in the inscription from Fik.