

ANOTHER PHŒNICIAN INSCRIPTION FROM THE TEMPLE OF EŠMUN AT SIDON.

By Rev. H. PORTER, Ph.D., Syrian Protestant College, Beirut.

THE following inscription is one of a series discovered during 1900-01 among the ruins of a temple in the environs of Sidon, which is determined by the inscriptions themselves to be the temple of Ešmun. A description of these ruins was published by Macridy Bey, who excavated them, in the *Revue Biblique* for October, 1902.¹ He published also in the same number of the *Revue* two inscriptions, which were edited and explained by M. Lagrange. Four other inscriptions from the same place, and of practically the same contents, were published by M. Ph. Berger in a *Mémoire* to the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* in 1902 (tom. xxxvii). A seventh of similar import was published in the *Jour. of the Am. Oriental Soc.*, by Dr. C. C. Torrey (vol. xxiii, first half, 1902).

All these inscriptions differ only in minor particulars, as will be seen by referring to the publications mentioned. The inscription which is here presented is shorter than the others but differs from them in some important points. I obtained the inscription in Sidon, in July, 1902. Whether it was discovered later than the others I am not able to state, as I had no communication with the discoverer, but there is no doubt of its origin from the temple or of its genuineness. I examined it thoroughly before I purchased it, and it has since been examined by Dr. Schroeder and by Dr. Rouvier, and both these gentlemen, who are well qualified to judge, regard it as genuine. The face of the stone and the letters exhibit unmistakable marks of antiquity, and the letters still show traces of the red ochre with which they were originally coloured. The stone is very friable, and was broken evidently in detaching it from the block of which it formed a part. The broken edges and the back of the stone show a freshness in marked contrast to the face. The block is 0.77 by 0.41 m., and the lines of the inscription are from 72 to 74 cm. in length. The beginning of the first line is broken and so

¹ [Some account of the present inscription appears in the July number of the *Revue Biblique*, pp. 417-419. Mr. Porter's article, it may be mentioned, was received at the beginning of May.—ED.]

damaged as to be indecipherable. The break is an old one, as the appearance of the surface there is similar to the rest of the face of stone. The height of the long letters is from 5 to 7 *cm.* The three lines taken together occupy about 25 *cm.* There are 16 letters remaining in the first line and space for six more, reckoning from the beginning of the second line, which contains 21 letters, and the third 19.

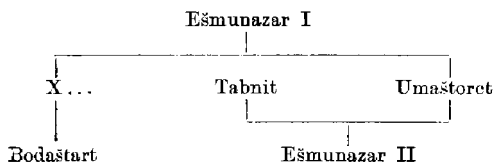
There can be no doubt about the reading of the letters which remain. The break at the end of the first line has probably carried away one letter, which may, however, be easily supplied. The reading in square letters is as follows:—

... הו בן צדקיתן מלך מלכב
 בן בן מלך אשמנעזר מלך צדנם
 הבת ז בן לאלנין לאשמן שר קדש

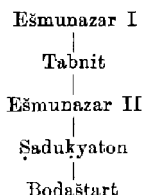
..... "son of Šaduqyaton king of kings
 son of the son of king Ešmunazar king of the Sidonians
 built this temple to [his] god, to Ešmun holy prince."

In the other copies of this inscription the first line has "King Bodaštart king of the Sidonians son of the son," &c., and the lacuna of the first line of the above would just contain this name, but the (ר) which follows presents a difficulty. If we read "Bodaštart and the son of Šaduqyaton," it will not correspond to the rest of the inscription, which requires a singular subject. It is difficult to construe the (ר) on any supposition, and I am inclined to regard it as an error of the engraver. The first line of the inscription is quite different from all the others as far as known to me, and it is altogether remarkable. We have here a new name in the list of kings of Sidon, presumably the father of Bodaštart, whose name is unmentioned in all the other copies. It has been inferred from this that Bodaštart's father did not reign, but if we have here the name of his father he not only reigned but assumed the title of "king of kings," not known to have been assumed by any other one of his dynasty. It must refer to a period when Sidon held the hegemony of some of the Phœnician towns, and it is difficult to reconcile this with the condition of things under the rule of the Persian kings or during the period of the Ptolemies, in one of which periods it has generally been supposed that the dynasty of Ešmunazar should be placed. If the title is not a mere vainglorious boast it

must refer to a revolt against the authority of Persia when a king of Sidon assumed the suzerainty of the Phœnician towns, or it may have been in the period previous to the Persian conquest, when Babylon was very weak, subsequent to the reign of Nebuchadrezzar. Sidon was then the leading state, as Tyre had sunk into the background after the siege it underwent in B.C. 598-585 by Nebuchadrezzar. This would, however, place the dynasty of Ešmunazar much earlier than has been supposed possible. The name of this king, *Šadukyatôn*, or *Šadikyatôn*, conforms in its composition to other names we have in Phœnician inscriptions (*cf. Pumiyatôn* and *Melekyatôn*, *C.I.S.*, i, 11), and if we have in him the father of Bodaštart we can fill out a gap in the dynasty of Ešmunazar. The succession as arranged by M. Berger in his *Mémoire* is as follows:—



If our *Šadukyatôn* was the father of *Bodaštart* we have the place of X filled. But it is conceivable that the Ešmunazar mentioned in the inscription is the second of that name, and in that case we should have the succession as follows:—



But it is difficult to find space for such a dynasty any time subsequent to the days of Nebuchadrezzar so as to accord with the known facts in the history of Phœnicia. We must await further light before definitely assigning the chronological position of these kings.