

NOTES AND QUERIES.

1. *A new Tell el-Amarna Tablet.*—About the same time that two cuneiform dispatch tablets were discovered by Dr. Sellin at Taanach, two more of the well-known Tell el-Amarna series of documents came to light in Egypt. They have been edited by Father Scheil, whose translation is as follows:—

“To the King of the land of Egypt, says Assur-uballat, King of Assyria, to thee, to thy house, to thy wife, to thy chariots and soldiers, salutation. I have sent a messenger (envoy) to visit you and your country. Things which aforetime my fathers never forwarded to you, see here. I send you a splendid chariot and pair of horses; and further, a *uhina* in pure lapis, as presents for you I forward. As to my messenger, receive him well, let him come and return to me.”

The word *uhina* denotes some kind of carving, a small pillar or votive object. The Tell el-Amarna tablet collection in the Cairo Museum already possessed a letter from Assur-uballat.

The second dispatch is from a Palestinian governor, whose name, Yabisar, is new, reminding us of two previous patronymics on the tablets, Yapi-Adda and Yaditira. This official says:—

“To the King, my Lord, says Yabi-Sarru, thy slave, seven and seven times at your feet I bow. What the King has ordered me, I have performed. Full of fear is all the land before the King’s soldiers. I have levied my troops; ships are at the disposition of the King’s soldiers, and whosoever is a rebel, no house or hope (of life) is left in him. See I have safeguarded the position that the King my lord (has confided to me). “The face of the King my lord be toward his servant, who is devoted to him.”¹

JOSEPH OFFORD.

2. *Inscription at Janiah.*²—In the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xxii, Part I, p. 30, the Rev. John P. Peters, D.D., publishes the

¹ [It is worth mentioning that the suggestion has been made that Yabi-sarru signifies “Yahwè is king” (*Revue Biblique*, 1904, p. 141).—ED.]

² [Janiah or Jāniyeh, about half a day west of Ramallah, overlooking the plain of Sharon.]

following inscription, "found at Janiah in the old mosque on a stone serving as a window-sill" :—

MNH 
 ΥΣΟΥΠΡΟΚΟ
 ΚΙΩΑ  ΙΝΟΥ

If the ends of the lines are perfect, the first line would require about six letters, and may be restored thus—

ΜΝΗΜΑΔΟΥΛ

In the last line, **E** may be supplied. The inscription would then read—

Μνημα δουλου σου Προκοκιου αεινου.

For the proper name, Procopios seems likely. I do not find the inscription in Waddington or Clermont-Ganneau, and send it on for improved reading.

T. F. WRIGHT.

3. *Hebrew Inscription from Fik* (*Quarterly Statement*, 1903, p. 185).—Professor Clermont-Ganneau writes that he inclines to the reading—

אנה יהודה חקאנה
 "I Judah have engraved."

חקא is perhaps for חקק, as is sometimes the case with verbs ע"ע, and the participle would then be followed by the personal pronoun in accordance with Aramaic usage.

4. *The Origin of the Cuneiform Syllabary*.—In answer to a correspondent who has asked for a brief account of the above, it will be sufficient to draw upon the statements in recent Assyrian grammars by Fried. Delitzsch and L. W. King.

The groups of wedges used by the Babylonians and Assyrians were not of their own invention, the system was bequeathed to them by the earlier dwellers in the land, to whom the name "Sumerians" is generally given. "During the last 20 years excavations have been carried on in Southern Babylonia which have brought to light thousands of Sumerian inscriptions dating from the period between 4500 and 2500 B.C. The

great majority of these are written in cuneiform or wedge-shaped characters, very similar to those employed by the Babylonians and Assyrians, but the earliest among them are not written in cuneiform, but in 'line' characters, *i.e.*, the signs employed in these early inscriptions do not consist of groups of *wedges* but of groups of *lines*, and a careful examination of them proves that the Babylonian system of writing was in reality very similar to that in use among the Egyptians. Each had a *pictorial origin*" (L. W. King). It is very interesting to observe that in many cases it is not difficult to see in the groups of lines the objects or hieroglyphs which they actually represent; thus in the earliest forms the sun is represented by a four-sided lozenge, "God" or "heaven" by a star with eight rays. In a few cases the resemblance to natural objects becomes more obvious when they are viewed from their present right-hand side, on which account it has been suggested that the signs were originally written perpendicularly. This would find an analogy in Chinese, where, also, the characters have undergone a modification from a system of primitive hieroglyphs just as has happened in the history of the cuneiform. The development from lines to wedges finds its explanation in the material used in Assyria and Babylonia. The Egyptians adopted papyrus, upon which it was easy to draw hieroglyphs, but the Sumerians had no papyrus plant, and fashioned tablets from the clay with which the land abounded. The writing-implement or stylus was four-sided, and when the end was pressed into the soft clay, it penetrated deeper than the rest, with the natural result that the stroke became gradually thicker, whence the characteristic *cuneus*.

For fuller information reference may be made to the grammars referred to. We may add that according to one theory the parent alphabet of the Semites, Greeks, Romans, &c., was derived from the cuneiform, but in the present state of our knowledge this is merely a theory and has not very much in its favour. The cuneiform has the great advantage over all the Semitic scripts that the vowels are regularly and faithfully represented. On the other hand, it was unwieldy and laborious, and in later centuries (eighth-fourth B.C.) Aramaic was used side by side in business documents, and possibly as the language of the lower classes. Finally, the Susians reduced the hundreds of Babylonian signs to some 112, retaining the same signs for the same or for similar sounds, whilst the old Persians who followed, contented themselves with adopting from their predecessors three kinds of wedges (perpendicular, horizontal, and the double wedge), and rejecting all determinatives, formed a real alphabet of 36 signs, none of which is identical with or even a modification of the sign expressing the same sound in the Babylonian or the Susian scripts.
