

of textual reading far beyond that of any other living Assyriologist, and I therefore have no doubt that his reading is to be preferred. In Obverse, line 4, the cast certainly has *bit*.

The Assyrian phrase in Reverse, lines 3, 4, I should translate: "Seizure for the corvée for 100 days (during the year) is a perpetual obligation."

I confess to feeling some difficulty about accepting the statement of the workmen that the tablet was actually found at Gezer, since the seals are typically North Syrian, and the names of the witnesses which are not Assyrian are also Syrian and not Canaanite. The element 'Sih is found in the names from Harrau published by Mr. Johns. Dr. Pinches has already drawn attention to the Aramaic character of *Ḥuruāsi*, and *Bur-rāpīh* would correspond with an Aramaic *Bar-Rāphīa*, in which the second element has the same origin as the Hebrew *Rāphā* and *Rāphayyāh* (*Rāphīa*). It would not be very difficult for an Arab workman to obtain a broken Assyrian tablet at Jerusalem, and "salting the ground" is not unknown even in the East.

NOTE ON THE GEZER CONTRACT TABLET.

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HAVING been favoured with a view of the cast and photographs of this tablet, and also most courteously allowed to see Dr. Pinches' report upon it, I gladly avail myself of permission to add a few remarks as to my own impressions.

The most remarkable thing about the tablet is its *provenance*. There is not a word now preserved upon it which directly connects it with Gezer. The script and language and many of the proper names are pure Assyrian. Certainly several proper names are of a type which can be paralleled from Phœnicia, Palmyra, Syria, or Palestine, and are called West Semitic by some. Such names occur very frequently in documents found at Nineveh. Hence did we not know where it was discovered we might suspect that it was part of a tablet found in the ruins of Nineveh, or elsewhere in Assyria.

The document recorded the sale by two men, Marduk-erba and Abi-erba (if that is the way in which the signs *AD-SU* should be read) of certain estate, including houses, fields, and slaves, all described shortly as "the household," *bītu*, "of Mušētiḫ-aḫē" (if that is the correct reading of *LU-PAP-MEŠ*). This estate was sold without reserve, literally "to its entirety." In line 4, after *gi*, the traces of *mir* are certain, and the usual phrase in such a place is *adi gimārtišu*. The two sellers were each described as "son of" some one whose name has now disappeared. They bear Assyrian names; but, if they were inhabitants of Gezer, their fathers may have borne Palestinian names. If this had been the case, we should have had an interesting example, such as often occurred in Assyria itself, of the children bearing Assyrian names, while their fathers were of different nationality. The sellers are then called *šinu amēlē*, "two persons," *bēl*, literally "lord" of the sold estate. This marked them as legitimate owners with full right to sell, as contrasted with agents or leaseholders. How they were in a position to sell the estate of Mušētiḫ-aḫē does not now appear. He may have forfeited his property. The only person of that name known to me was sold as a slave a few years later in Nineveh, see *A.D.D.*, No. 178 (*i.e.*, *Assyrian Deeds and Documents*, vol. iii, p. 406). The names of the sellers are too common to give the least clue to their history. Thus the name Marduk-erba occurs at this period as borne by a commander of 1,300 men (*A.D.D.*, No. 855), or as a "governor," *bēl paḫāti* of Purammu (*A.D.D.*, No. 853). He may have been the Assyrian commander of a garrison at Gezer.

After the seals it is the rule for the scribe to set out a schedule of the property sold. Here he begins with a list of the slaves, as being persons, before he sets out the real estate. Unfortunately we have little preserved in this part of the tablet. The first slave named, with his wives, his son, and his own slaves, is Ṭūri-Aa. The name is not Assyrian, but we may compare the Palmyrene טורי and such names as Ṭūri, Ṭūri-baltu, Aa-ṭūri, Adūni-ṭūri, Si'ṭūri.¹

¹ [טורי is, indeed, the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew צור "rock," and that the form was widely known seems to follow from the fact that even the Greeks knew of the Phœnician city Ṣōr as *rūpos*. If the equation be correct, Ṭūri-aa, &c., would answer to the familiar Hebrew names compounded with Zur(i) (צורית), viz., Zuri-shaddai, Eli-zur, and especially Zuri-el. *Aprapōs* of Ṭūri-baltu (above), reference may be made to Jastrow's theory that Bosheth in Ishbosheth, &c., is a distortion of the divine name Baštu, and that it may have been a designation of the consort of Baal (*Encyc. Biblica*, vol. ii, col. 2209).—ED.]

The names of the gods Adûni, Si', are West Semitic. There is still considerable difference of opinion as to the reading of the divine name written here *AN-A-A*. It used to be read, on very slight grounds, Malik or Malkatu. Now it is often read Aa or Aya. But the scribe may have used his Assyrian ideogram to denote some Palestinian god, or goddess. Perhaps the name ʾTuri-baltu may give the clue. Baltu may be for Baštu, or disguise a Western female Baal. We get another piece of a name on the edge of line 9, which ended in *ikkar*, a very characteristic form. The corresponding Assyrian would be *ikkar*. Dr. Pinches has already pointed it out. So far as these slight indications go, the slaves sold may have been natives of Gezer.

It is vexatious that the tablet is defective just where the scribe undoubtedly gave the situations of the houses and fields which were sold. According to all analogy he not only stated where they were, but gave the names of the owners of the surrounding property. This might have fixed the situation as being in Gezer. If the rest of the tablet is ever found, or even the flakes that have broken off here, we may learn more.

When we pass to the list of witnesses we find ourselves in an equally unfortunate position. We expect the most important witnesses to be named first. Now, the fifth witness is said to be a *harānu*, or "mayor." Undoubtedly the scribe said of what town he was "mayor." If this transaction took place at Gezer there can be little doubt that he was "mayor" of Gezer. Just here, then, we have lost a most important piece of information. His name, commented upon by Dr. Pinches, is not Assyrian. It could be read Hurwaši. There are a few other names which seem to be compounded with a divine name Hur, or Hûru. Hurltibû seems to be the same as 𐎲𐎠𐎲𐎠, on an ostrakon from Elephantina, which De Vogüé thought was neither Aramaic nor Egyptian (*C.I.S.*, p. 140, B, l. 3). Assurbanipal's scribes write Hursiaêšu as the name of the king of Šabnûti in Egypt. This name is identified by Steindorff ("Beitr. z. Assyriol.," I, p. 350) with Egyptian H̄r-si'-'is(t), the Greek Ἀσιήσις, "Horus, son of Isis," a common name in Saitic times. With this name we may compare Hursiou (*A.D.D.*, No. 590). We also have a name Pûdi-Hûru in a list of captive slaves (*A.D.D.*, No. 763). Further Pisan-Hûru was the name of a king of Nathu in Egypt (see Steindorff, *B.A.S.*, I, p. 347). So we may have in Hur-waši a compound of Horus, or of

a Semitic god called Hur. Whether the second element *waši* can represent any Egyptian word I cannot decide. But it is very likely that Hurwaši was a native of Gezer, if it is true that the tablet was drawn up there. Most probably he was the *ḥazānu* of Gezer. It is very unfortunate, therefore, that we cannot settle this definitely.

Now if such was the real state of the case we may ask, why was Hurwaši not placed at the head of the list? Clearly because the first four were more important persons. The first name Zaggi is not known to me as occurring elsewhere, but Tebetai ("one born in the month Tebet," like Simanai, "one born in Sivan," &c., cf., Shabbethai, Haggai), Bêl-apli-iddin, Marduk-nâsir, are pure Assyrian names. It is obvious to suppose them to be prominent officials.

The next witness was the *tanḳaru*, or "merchant," the intermediary in the bargain, who doubtless had found the purchaser for the property, whose name must have occurred on the lost part of the tablet. The name of this merchant is not Assyrian. I think we should read it Bur-rapi', and compare names like Bûr-Anati, Bûr-Ramanu. It is a question whether we may not compare also Bîr-Atar, Bîr-Dadda, Bîr-Iâwa, Bîr-Šamaš, and read here Bîr-rapi'. But Bûr or Bîr may be a Divine name. For the second element we may compare Rapi', the name of a *nasikku* of Hindana, and such names as Rapâ, Rapai, Rapaia, and the Palmyrene רפי, רפא. The very singular ברפא¹ may be our name here. For further references see *A.D.D.* Index of Proper Names and Lidzbarski *Nordsemitische Epigraphik*.

The next name is pure Assyrian, Zêr-ukin, clearly the son of the second witness. The first sign of the name in line 12 may be *u*, the ideogram of Adadi. The name would then read Adadi-tadin, another West Semitic name. Names with Si' are common. Si' was the Ḥarran form for Sin (*A.D.D.*, p. 43). Zêrûtu is a common Assyrian name.

On a review of the whole evidence we may conclude that it is quite consonant with the theory that at this time Gezer was held by an Assyrian garrison, or a colony of Assyrians who were the dominant class. At each point where the tablet, if complete, would naturally have given definite information, we are left in

¹ ברפא, also בורפא, has hitherto been taken to stand for בול רפא, "B. heals"; the new suggestion seems preferable.—Ed.]

ignorance. On the other hand, nothing inconsistent with the theory is preserved. It is very difficult to see what could have brought a contract drawn up at Nineveh to Gezer. Nothing on the tablet, however, is inconsistent with its having been drawn up in Nineveh.

The phrase *šibit bennu ana méat úmé, sartu ana kal úmé* is usual in sales of slaves (whether accompanied by real estate or not). It is discussed in *A.D.D. (Assyrian Deeds and Documents)*, vol. iii, p. 391, *sqq.* The probability seems to be that *šibtu* and *bennu* are two dreaded diseases. That *šibtu* specially means some sort of "seizure" is most probable from the phrase *šibit pí*, for "dumbness," used in *Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse*, vol. i, p. 110, l. 38. The *bennu* is often referred to in contracts of the First Dynasty of Babylon, as also in the Code of Hammurabi, § 278. In the latter case if a man sell a slave, and before the month is out the *bennu* fall upon him the seller has to take back the slave and return his purchase money. The time allowed to elapse, within which a purchaser might repudiate his purchase for this cause, was a month, as usually in contracts of the period of the First Dynasty. In Assyrian times a hundred days was always allowed. The question whether *šibtu* really differs from *bennu*, for which it is given as a synonym, II, R. 35, *cf.* 41, is hard to decide. This passage looks as if we ought to read *šibit benni*, "a seizure of *bennu*." We also find *šibti benni* in Assyrian contracts. Elsewhere we read *šibtu bennu*, which may be rendered "a seizure, a *bennu*." The *sartu* probably denotes "a wrong," perhaps also "an injury," or "a defect." That might be made a plea for repudiation at any time.

The Assyrian contracts give the time within which a plea of *sartu* could be set up, as *kál šanāti*, "for all years"; *kál úmé*, "for all days," *arkát úmé*, "for after days." These are evidently equivalents, and mean "at any time." Thus a slave owner, who knew his slave to be sickening for the *bennu* and sold him, could be called upon to take him back if the buyer wished to repudiate his purchase, within a fixed time. Any undisclosed defect would invalidate the sale at any time.

A curious parallel to the singular manner of dating the tablet occurs on Sm. 701 (*A.D.D.* No. 213), which is dated in the "Eponymy after Nabû-šar-ušur, Šaknu of Mašaka." That we know to be the eponymy of Nabû-aḫē-ēreš. This tablet is dated on the 5th of Airu, and on the 12th of the same month another

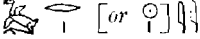
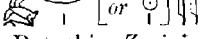


tablet is dated by the name of the proper eponym for the year. Hence it seems that in B.C. 681, doubtless while Esarhaddon was establishing his claim to the throne, it was not known at once who was to be eponym for the year. This may have been due to the unsettled state of affairs at Court. Our tablet may witness to an equally disturbed condition of affairs in B.C. 649, when, as the number of enquiries of the oracles made by Assurbanipal show, that king was in deep anxiety as to the issue of his war with his brother. On the other hand, it is tempting to suppose that the manner of dating is due to the scribe's distance from Nineveh. That the Assyrians should have had a colony, or a garrison, at Gezer, is not surprising. They had often gone down the coast to meet the forces of Egypt. Tiglath Pileser III, in B.C. 734, took Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza. Sargon deposed Azuri of Ashdod and set Ahimiti in his place. A rebellion under Iamâni led to an Assyrian expedition, when Ashdod, Ashdudimmu, and Gath were captured, B.C. 722. Sennacherib put down a rebellion in Ekron, where the rebels had captured their king, Padi, and sent him in chains to Hezekiah. Tiglath Pileser had set up Rukipti as king in Ashkelon, but his son, Šarru-ludâri, had been expelled, and a usurper, Zidka, set in his place. Sennacherib stormed Ashkelon and captured Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Beni-berrak, Azuru, and Azekah. He met the Egyptians at Eltekeh, and drove them back, took Timnath and Ekron. Forty-six fortified cities of Judah fell into Assyrian hands and were shared between the vassal kings of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza. Sennacherib held Lachish, Jerusalem was threatened. It is difficult to suppose that Gezer was not captured by the Assyrians then. But Sennacherib's annals are too defective for us to be sure of its fate. Esarhaddon must have held all the strongholds along the coast to have invaded Egypt as he did. Whether he held Gezer we do not know. Assurbanipal did not succeed in holding Egypt; but he claims Manassah of Judah as his tributary, also the kings of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Ashdod. We now have reason to think that he held Gezer as late as B.C. 649.

It is of great interest, despite the silence of Assyrian history respecting Gezer, that a town which we might expect to have been garrisoned against Egypt, now furnishes a proof that such a deduction was probably correct. We might have equally well expected that exploration would furnish relics of the Tell el-Amarna period,

as Lachish has done. For Gazri plays no unimportant part in that unique collection of dispatches. It certainly was a place worth holding then. We may learn once more that the silence of history is no argument for or against an opinion.

The seals are of interest. The rough figure of a tree branch is a design likely to occur at any time. It occurs on several tablets in the British Museum from Nineveh. The other is of more interest. The design of two persons facing each other and holding up their hands in adoration is also found. The winged disc here is very similar to the figure usually supposed to represent Ašur. As a rule an altar or incense holder stands between the figures. Here the object seems to show Egyptian influence. Whose seal was it? Usually the seal impressed is expressly said to be that of the seller, as here; but when a seal was not at hand a nail-mark served the purpose. The same person does not seem to have always used the same seal. There is some evidence to show that the notary lent his seal on occasions. By his position on the tablet Zêrûtu was probably the notary. Was the seal that of the *ḥazanû*, Ḥurwaši? If so, the style of its design would support the view that he was an Egyptian.

Such are some of the interesting questions which this little fragment suggests. It only serves to whet our curiosity and raise our hopes that Mr. Macalister will be able to find more such traces of an Assyrian occupation. If complete, few documents would be better calculated to throw light on the nature of that occupation than contracts.

[In answer to an enquiry whether Egyptology could throw any light upon the names in the tablet, Professor Petrie courteously writes:—“The name *Huruwaši* (*Hur-waši*) seems as if it might be a very common name at that date—Hor-za ‘eye of Horus’ (*ḥr-wdʒ*), but exact equation of Semitic to Egyptian is not to be expected, nor should it stand in the way of reasonable possibilities. *Ṭûri-aa* might be a name found in the Abbott papyrus (p. vii, line 7), see *Records of the Past*, xii, 115. It is written  [or ] = , and *aa* might be  = *ny* ‘great.’ But this *Zari* is possibly a Syrian name in Egypt. The name Bur-rapi is certainly not Egyptian; *b-r* openings are very rare and, what there are, are all Baal names. I do not see anything Egyptian in the seal. The

so-called *ankh* is more like the usual altar placed between two figures on Syrian stones, and the winged disc is of the Perso-Assyrian form rather than the Egyptian.”]

NOTES ON OBJECTS FROM GEZER.

By Professor W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE, D.C.L., F.R.S.

I. *Fifth Quarterly Report.*

As the Egyptian objects found at Gezer give the dating of the strata, it is most desirable to make full use of them by naming the periods whenever possible. In Mr. Macalister's paper of October, p. 301, Plate II, the Fig. 2 is the usual hinging toilet-knife of the XVIIIth dynasty; see the form in *Illahun*, Plate XIX, 33, the earlier form of the XIIth dynasty having a much smaller blade, see Plate VIII, 4, 5. The use of this tool has long been in question, but it seems likely that it was for trimming the hair (scissors being unknown); and the hinging back of it was for stretching little ringlets, wound upon it, on the same principle as a glove stretcher, so as to keep the ringlets in curl. The hinge and groove is often invisible owing to corrosion; and the knife seems then merely to have a spike on the back.

Plate II, Fig. 3, is a usual form of rasp in the XVIIIth dynasty, probably used for rasping dried bread, or possibly for carpentering.

Plate II, Fig. 5, is like a modelling tool of Roman age; but it might be a form of netting needle, the thread being wound round the middle. It is unlikely that arrow heads would be cast tang to tang, as the tang was always the filling neck of the mould.

Plate II, Fig. 10, is a well-known furniture knob of late period, for the top of the legs of stools or couches; the "solid rod of bronze," p. 302, seems as if it might be the connecting core-rod by which the rings which built up the legs were held together. Until we can have the dating of levels with these objects it will be difficult to settle their use. Such composite legs of furniture are not usual before the Greek period.

Plate II, Fig. 12, is the usual late Greek form of weight in Syria; half the Sandahannah example would be 72·5 grammes, and