

point of a site in relation to a passing roadway. Such considerations are particularly suggestive in the case of a site like 'Ain Shems. Only here a special clue may be afforded by the presence on this highest area of the Byzantine church referred to already. In such a case it will seem reasonable to have recourse to the general considerations of topography we have in mind, and begin the excavation of Rumeileh-'Ain Shems with the Byzantine church and the area between it and the roadway to east of it. On this would then follow the exploration of the lower lying west half of the site which conjecturally may be regarded as the Lower Town of Rumeileh. Alongside of this, in some quiet interval of excavation, such as is afforded by the operations of the harvest season, would come the investigation of the necropolis of 'Ain Shems.

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## THE DISCOVERIES AT SAMARIA.

By THE REV. PROF. S. R. DRIVER, D.D., M.B.A.<sup>1</sup>

PROF. KITTEL, of Leipzig, has just published in the *Theologisches Literaturblatt* (1911, Nos. 3 and 4) two articles on these discoveries, which, though not exhaustive, contain fuller and more accurate particulars than have hitherto appeared. His articles are based upon one by Prof. Lyon, of Harvard, in the *Harvard Theological Review* for January, which, in its turn, is founded upon a report made by the excavator, Prof. Reisner, himself. The statements may consequently be regarded as authoritative. The accounts which first appeared in this country, it is now clear, were exaggerated. The English newspapers reported correctly what was stated by Dr. Yahuda in the *Berlin Tageblatt* of January 19th; but Dr. Yahuda—who, by the way, is a learned and capable Jewish scholar—appears to have been in some way misled by his Jerusalem informant. Prof. Kittel refers to his mistake, but does not entirely explain it, all that he says being that he has seen the information received by

<sup>1</sup> From *The Guardian* of February 10th, 1911, with permission of the Editor and with the Author's revisions and additions.

Dr. Yahuda, and that it "is intelligible from it how he fell into the error." The inventory of Ahab's furniture, the letter from the Assyrian king, and the numerous contract-tablets seem thus, to our disappointment, to disappear. There remain, however, some seventy-five inscribed potsherds of the kind called technically *ostraka*, such as have been found recently in great numbers in Egypt; so that the discovery is still an interesting and valuable one. It might be going too far to say that nothing had been found beyond these *ostraka*, but before any further definite statements are made on the subject it will manifestly be prudent to wait till information is received which is known to be trustworthy.

The excavations at Samaria began in 1908; and in this year considerable remains belonging to the Graeco-Roman period were discovered—those who have visited the spot may remember how a number of columns belonging to a street carried by Herod round the hill are still visible above the ground. In 1909, buildings belonging to the Israelite period were discovered, and the remains of walls, gateways, etc., were found. In 1910, the excavations were carried further down till the rock was reached, and strata containing the remains of palaces were discovered, assigned provisionally to the reigns of Omri, Ahab (877–854 B.C.), Jehu, and Jeroboam II. The *ostraka* were found in close proximity to an alabaster vase bearing the name of Ahab's contemporary, Osorkon II of Egypt (874–853 B.C.). This fact forms a presumption that the *ostraka* belong to the same period. The *ostraka* are just broken pieces of pottery. In Egypt they are inscribed with texts of the most varied contents—letters, contracts, accounts, orders to pay, etc.; and they are so numerous and important that a new science—Ostracology—has sprung up for their study.<sup>1</sup> The *ostraka* from Samaria are of the same kind. Those which have been published seem to be connected with a store of wine and oil. Here are the twelve given by Prof. Kittel:—

No. 5. In the tenth year. (Belonging ?) to Shemaryau. From the hill. A jar with fine oil.

No. 6. In the tenth year. Wine from the vineyard of the hill. With a jar of fine oil.

No. 8. In the tenth year. From Saḫ. (Belonging ?) to Gaddiyau. A jar of fine oil.

No. 12. In the tenth year. From Yaṣat. A jar of fine oil. (Belonging ?) to Aḫino'am.

<sup>1</sup> Deissmann's *New Light on the New Testament* (1907), pp. 20 sqq.

- No. 13. In the tenth year. From Abi'ezer. (Belonging?) to Shemaryau. A jar of old wine for Asa. From the hill.
- No. 19. In the eleventh year. From Shemida'. (Belonging?) to Heles, Aphsak, Ba'alā, Zecher.
- No. 33. [In] the eleventh year. From Sarar. (Belonging?) to Yeda'yau, Maranyau, Gaddiyau . . . .
- No. 42. In the ninth year. From Shaftan. (Belonging?) to Ba'alzamar. A jar of old wine.
- No. 47. In the eleventh year. From Abi'ezer. (Belonging?) to Asa, Ahimelech, [and] Ba'ala. From Elnathan.
- No. 49. In the eleventh year. From Helek. (Belonging?) to Asa, Ahimelech, Ba'alā, [and] Ba'alme'oni.
- No. 50. In the ninth year. From Yaşat. (Belonging?) to Abino'am. A jar of old wine.
- No. 51. In the eleventh year. (Belonging?) to Badiyau (?Gaddiyau). The vineyard of the hill.

The original Hebrew is not quoted. The years are no doubt those of the reigning king, very probably Ahab. The precise sense of the inscriptions is not always clear. But they seem to be labels stating whence, or from whom, the oil or wine was sent, and what its destination was. Whether, however, the jars were sent from a merchant to his customers, or from the owner of the vineyard or olive-yard, as a due payable to the palace, is not clear. The "vineyard of the hill" will have been some well-known vineyard near Samaria. Vineyards, as is well known, were—as they still are—habitually planted on the sides of hills, and one thinks instinctively of the **קִרְן בֵּן שִׁמְעוֹן** of Isaiah v, 1. The expression rendered "(belonging) to" might, presumably, also mean "for"; but this hardly suits No. 13. Perhaps, if the whole series were before us, these points would be cleared up. Instead of speculation upon imperfect data, it will be wiser, as Kittel observes, to wait till the complete publication of the originals. The characters of the writing are those of the old Western Semitic alphabet, the same, substantially, as those in which Mesha's inscription (the so-called "Moabite Stone") (c. 850 B.C.), the Siloam inscription (c. 700 B.C.), and old Phœnician inscriptions are written. They exhibit, however, a more cursive hand than those inscriptions—no doubt due to the fact that they are not cut into stone, but written on the pottery with ink and a reed pen. Points and lines indicate the divisions between the words. The tetragrammaton in the proper names is

apparently always written יי, which Prof. Kittel would read *yāw*, or, preferably, *yāū*. The usual forms in the Old Testament are *Yēhō-*, or *Yō-*, at the beginning of proper names, and *-yāhū*, or *-yāh*, at the end.

That writing was known and practised in Palestine long before the time of Ahab is, of course, certain from the Old Testament itself, even upon a critical view of its origin and growth. David, for instance, wrote a letter to Joab; the older narratives of Judges and Samuel must have been written considerably before Ahab's time, besides presupposing, like the older narrative of the Pentateuch as well, considerable experience in the art of literary composition; the "Book of Jashar" is quoted in 2 Sam. i; and the compiler of Kings quotes as his authorities the "Book of the Acts of Solomon," and for the reigns of subsequent kings the "Book of the Chronicles" of the kings of Israel and Judah respectively. But it is interesting to be brought face to face with records actually written in the very heart of the northern kingdom, and either in the reign of Ahab himself, or, at least, not substantially later. It is significant also, especially in view of some theories which have been recently put forth, that both the language and the characters are Hebrew, and not Babylonian.

On the light which the inscriptions may throw on the history of the Hebrew language, not less than on many other questions of interest or importance, it is impossible to say anything until the original texts are published. But a few words may even now be said on the proper names found in the inscriptions. Many of these are, as might be expected, names already known from the Old Testament. Thus, in addition to some of the names mentioned in the inscriptions cited, there occur, for instance, Ela, "Elisa" (presumably Elisha), Joiada (in the Old Testament usually spelt Jehoiada), Jo'ash (as 1 Chron. vii, 8), Nathan, 'Abda, and 'Uzzah. More interesting historically, however, are the names formed from, or compounded with, "Baal"—Ba'alā, Abiba'al, Ba'alzamar, Ba'alāzachar ("Ba'alā<sup>1</sup> remembers": cf. Zechariah, "Yah remembers"), Ba'alme'oni (cf. the place-name, Ba'al-Me'on, Num. xxxii, 38, Ez. xxv, 9), Meriba'al. These names testify to the influence which the worship of Baal must have exerted in Israel at the time, and support the conclusion that the inscriptions date from before

<sup>1</sup> In this name Ba'alā is stated by Prof. Lyon to be written בעלל, supposed to be an error for בעלל.

the reformation of Jehu, and in all probability from the reign of Ahab. Meriba'al has been long known to have been the true name of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, "Ba'al," however, being originally intended in it not as the name of the Phœnician deity, but as a title of Jehovah ("owner," "master"). At a later date, when "Ba'al" had come to suggest too strongly the Phœnician god, the scribes substituted for it in most places a name compounded with *bōsheth*, "shame." In two seldom-read genealogies in the Chronicles (1 Chron. viii, 34; ix, 40), however, they neglected to make the correction, and Meribbaal (or Merib-baal) remains there to the present day. ("Eshba'al" was similarly everywhere corrected to "Ishbosheth," except in 1 Chron. viii, 33; ix, 39). *Maranyau* ("Yah is our Lord": cf. "*Maran atha*," 1 Cor. xv, 22) will have been the name of a Syrian settler in Israel who recognized Jehovah, the word for "lord" being Aramaic. The name "Egelyau" (compounded with *egēl*, "calf," or "young bull") will point to the worship of Jehovah under the form of a calf, or young bull, which, as we know, was current in the northern kingdom.

Prof. Reisner's discovery, it will thus be seen, though not as considerable as was at first supposed, is still an extremely interesting one; and it affords, moreover, substantial grounds for the hope that further systematic excavations may result in other, perhaps more important, discoveries in the future.

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## GLEANINGS FROM THE MINUTE-BOOKS OF THE JERUSALEM LITERARY SOCIETY.

By PROF. R. A. STEWART MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

(*Concluded from Q.S., January, p. 33.*)

### XXVII.

At the meeting of 28th March, 1851, Miss NICOLAYSON read a Paper on "The Revolt and Earthquake of Jerusalem in 1834."

In May, 1834 . . . the country was in sad confusion from the peasantry of the mountains of Hebron and Nāblus refusing to serve as soldiers. On the 18th May fighting had begun at Hebron, and