

NOTES AND QUERIES.

1. *A Roman milestone from ez-Zib.*¹—A Roman milestone of the usual type was recently discovered on the outskirts of ez-Zib, and is now deposited in the local museum which is being formed in the Citadel of Acre.

The inscription, which is quite legible, is as follows :

IMP
CAESARDIVI
VESPASIANIFDOM
ITIANVSAVG
PONT
MAXTRPOTIMP
III.PPCOSIXTATI
LIORVFOLEGAVG
PROPRCCIV

“The Emperor Caesar, son of the divine Vespasian, Domitian, Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, [in the IIIrd year of his] Tribunician powers, and in the IIIrd year of his reign, Pater Patria, in his IXth Consulship, [set up this Stone] when T. Atilius Rufus was propraetorian Legate of Augustus.

304 [miles].”

The date is A.D. 83. With reference to Atilius Rufus, Père Vincent kindly sends the following note : “Ce légat de Syrie-Palestine est d'ailleurs connu. Sa carrière en ce pays a été assez courte car il a du arriver après 81 et il est mort en 84.” From what point is the mileage reckoned? Père Vincent suggests the Egyptian frontier or some Romanised Egyptian city.—Antioch, as he points out, would seem to be too near, since the Peutinger Table gives a total of 215 or 220 miles between that city and

¹ [Ez-Zib is usually identified with the Biblical Achzib.—Ed.]

ez-Zib. He thinks, moreover, that in the time of Domitian Antioch would hardly be in a position to be taken as the starting-point for a mileage system.

The point must for the moment remain undecided, though the present writer is still disposed to look to the north rather than to the south, and to Antioch the capital of the province of Syria rather than to any other city. It should be remembered that in the early days of Roman domination the main road from the capital southwards would take the ancient and less direct route through Hama and Homs to Tripoli and Beirut. By this route the mileage from Antioch to ez-Zib would be at least 280 English miles, which is a fair equivalent of the Roman 304.

W. J. PHYTHIAN-ADAMS.

JERUSALEM,

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2. *The Greek Inscription, Q.S., p. 35 sq.*—In the Greek inscription published in the last number of the Quarterly the name of the person commemorated has raised some discussion. There is no doubt that the first letter of the word which I read as Godeos or Thadeos is doubtful. Père Vincent has made a suggestion to me and given me permission to discuss it. He thinks the engraver first wrote **IOΔEOY**. Then seeing his mistake changed it to **POΔEOY**, intending it to be read as **TOYΔEOY**, meaning "Aeneas, the Jew." He also suggests other points, such as *παραμενος*, nominative for genitive, as indicating that it was written by a Jew who was not well acquainted with Greek. The unusual spelling of the name of the month might also be regarded in the same light. As for the closing expression, it is found quite frequently on Jewish inscriptions. And he would bring the date of the inscription down to the fourth or fifth century A.D.

The difficulties about this are :—

1. that there seems no reason why the engraver should have added a tag to the letter **Y** and joined it on to **I**; and

2. that the **Y** is thus not intended to obliterate the **O**, for it is not carved down the centre of it, but down the left side; and

3. that the **Y** ought to come after the **O** and read **IOYΔEOY**.

The junction of this supposed **Y** to **I** is as deeply cut as any letter on the stone.

It is a very clever suggestion, but does not seem to remove the difficulty of the lettering nor of the date. The Inscription came from the South end of the Dead Sea, from the district of es-Safi, and if we could discover more of the ruins of the town, or cemetery from which it came, we might find out what was the era likely to have been used there.

As for the lettering, perhaps we are apt to dogmatise a little too rigidly in assigning one form of letter to the second century, and another form of the same letter to the fourth, and so on. Surprises are rather the rule, than the exception, in archaeological work.

J. GARROW DUNCAN.

OPHEL,

12th March, 1924.
