

RECENT HITTITE DISCOVERIES.

BY PROF. A. H. SAYCE, D.D., QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD, ENGLAND.

Nearly thirty years ago, on a sunny morning early in September, 1879, I was riding across the plain of Sardes with my face set towards a mountain pass known to the Turks as Karabel. The objects of my journey were certain sculptures that had been discovered in the pass. One of them had been known for some time, and it had been recognized that it represented one of the two figures described by Herodotus as existing in this very neighborhood, and in which he saw the images of the Egyptian conqueror, Sesostris. The description of Herodotus, it is true, is not exact in details, but it corresponded sufficiently with the form and position of the figure to make it clear that the latter must be one of the two referred to by him. According to the Greek historian, an inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphics ran across the shoulders of the figure; as a matter of fact, there is an inscription in hieroglyphic characters which does not, however, run across the shoulders, but is engraved between the head of the figure and the spear which is carried in its hand.

The second figure had been found not many years before my visit. While the first figure is carved upon the rock wall of the cliff, and at a little height above the path, this second figure, which is on the south side of the old road, is sculptured on an isolated boulder on a level with the road. The figure in both cases is precisely the same. It represents a warrior larger than life-size, standing in a niche, with a spear in the hand, a bow at the back and a tiara on the head; he is dressed in a tunic which reaches to the knees, and wears boots, the ends of which are turned up like the snow-shoes still worn by the mountaineers of Asia Minor.

Herodotus had stated that the hieroglyphics accompanying the first figure were Egyptian, but a photograph of it had made it evident to me that in this he was mistaken, though what the

characters actually were was more difficult to determine. Shortly before starting for Asia Minor, however, I had made a discovery which has since materially changed our conceptions of ancient oriental history and art. The discovery was the identity of the peculiar art of the Kara-bel monuments and that of certain monuments found at Boghaz Keui north of the Halys and at Ivriz in Cilicia. At Ivriz the art is accompanied by hieroglyphics which the inscriptions of Hamath and Carchemish had already led me to conclude were those of the Hittites. I therefore published letters in the *London Academy*, announcing my discovery, indicating the various monuments of Asia Minor and northern Syria which I believed to be of Hittite origin, and inferring from these the existence of a Hittite empire in the age of the nineteenth Egyptian dynasty, which had its capital at Boghaz Keui, and which must have extended from the frontiers of Palestine to the shores of the Aegean. If my conclusions were correct, the hieroglyphics at Kara-bel would, it was obvious, prove to be Hittite, that is to say, would resemble those of the Hittite inscriptions of Cilicia and Syria; and I prophesied that such would be the case. Hence one of the objects of the expedition to Asia Minor which I undertook immediately afterwards was to visit the pass of Kara-bel and there take squeezes of the inscription that had been discovered in it.

The squeezes were taken and my prophecy was verified. There could no longer be much room for doubt that in the monuments of Kara-bel we had memorials of Hittite conquest or that the peculiar art of early Asia Minor was identical with that of the Hittite remains in northern Syria. The fact was at once accepted by the leading archaeologists of Germany and France, and was not affected by discussions which subsequently arose on minor points of detail. The next thing was to decipher the hieroglyphic texts which went hand in hand with Hittite art.

At the outset I was able to settle the values of one or two Hittite characters like the ideograph of deity and the suffix of the nominative, and I also brought to light a short bilingual inscription in Hittite hieroglyphics and Assyrian cuneiform. But here further progress was stopped for many years. Our

materials were scanty, and even these scanty materials, consisting as they did of eye-copies, were exceedingly untrustworthy. It was only by degrees that the stock of inscriptions was enlarged, so that, thanks to photographs and squeezes and above all the transport of the monuments themselves to European museums, it became possible to ascertain what were the exact forms of the characters upon the stones. After twenty years of baffled endeavor, I believe that I have at last solved the mystery of the Hittite hieroglyphic texts, and in a recent number of the *Proceedings* of the Society of Biblical Archaeology will be found transliterations and approximate translations of most of them.

But as our knowledge of the ancient Hittite world advanced it became evident that the hieroglyphic signs were used, as in Egypt, only for monumental purposes. For ordinary literature the cuneiform syllabary of Babylonia was employed. The Tel el-Amarna correspondence contains a letter of the Hittite king written in the Babylonian script and language, while there are two other letters written also in cuneiform though in an unknown language—that of Arzawa—which from the first I suggested were of Hittite origin. This suggestion was confirmed when some years later fragments of tablets were discovered by M. Chantre at Boghaz Keui which were in the same language and form of cuneiform writing. Like the rest of the oriental world, the Hittites had derived their early culture from the Babylonians, and of that culture the Babylonian script was an integral part.

Ever since it became known that cuneiform tablets existed at Boghaz Keui, scholars have been looking towards the site with longing eyes and hoping that the day was not far distant when it would be possible to excavate there. That hope has now been fulfilled. Thanks to the personal efforts of the German emperor, the whole site is now being subjected to thorough exploration, and in the spring of 1906 Professor Winckler, of Berlin, made a preliminary examination of it. He was at work for only a few weeks, but the results have far exceeded expectation. The fragmentary tablets which had been picked up by previous visitors had all been found on the part of the

site known as the citadel. Professor Winckler's excavations, however, were made in another part of it called Buyuk-Kaleh. Here he disinterred no less than about twenty-five hundred tablets, some perfect, but the greater number broken, many of them being in the Babylonian or Assyrian language, though the larger portion are in the native Hittite language of the country. Many of the tablets are letters, but among them is a document of the highest importance—nothing less than the Hittite version of the famous treaty between Ramses II of Egypt and “the great king of the Hittites”. Fortunately for the decipherer, the treaty is in Assyrian, the language of international diplomacy, the actual Hittite text having been engraved in hieroglyphic characters on a silver plate. As had already been suspected, the Egyptian version of the treaty turns out to have been made from the Assyrian. The newly-discovered tablet is of considerable value for the reading of Egyptian proper names, and so serves to settle the question of the transliteration of the Egyptian characters. The name of Ramses II, Miamon, for example, is written Ria-masesa, Mai-Amana, Wasmua-Ria, Satepua-Ria. My old contention that the name of the Hittite king, read Mauthenar by the Egyptologists, should be transcribed Mutallu, is verified, the name appearing on the tablet as Mutallu.

Another treaty, also in the Assyrian language, enumerates the obligations and duties of Sunassura, the king of Kizzuwadna, toward his suzerian, the Hittite monarch, and refers to the conquest of a district of northern Syria which lay on the sea and the river Samri. A portion of the spoil was handed over to “the Sun-god”, as the Hittite king is termed, who, on his side, recognized the sovereignty of his “brother”, the vassal king of Kizzuwadna. In another tablet a list of the Hittite states is given, which were all under the suzerainty of “the great king of the Hittites”, whose capital was at Boghaz-Keui or “the city of the Hittites”, as it is called. Among them was Arzauwa, the Arzawa of the Tel el-Amarna tablets, from which one of the leaders of the Hittite free-lances in southern Canaan had come; another was Carchemish on the Euphrates. The inscriptions show that the Hittite empire must have extended

from the frontiers of the Egyptian empire in Palestine to the shores of the Aegean.

The Hittite kings mentioned in the texts are those whose names were already known to us in an Egyptian text from the treaty with Ramses II. Khattu-sil II, who made the treaty, was the son of Mur-sil, the grandson of Subbi-luliuma, and the great-grandson of Khattu-sil, who is entitled "King of Kussar", from which we may perhaps infer that the Hittite empire was founded by his successor. In a fragment Subbi-luliuma is described as having been raised to the throne in consequence of a prophecy.

Among the letters is one from Mitanni or Mesopotamia, the *Aram-Naharaim* of Scripture; another is from Arzawa; another again from Komana. A very large number, however, came from Egypt and proved how intimate the relations between the Egyptian and the Hittite courts must have been. Almost all the letters are in the native language of the country.

While Professor Winckler has thus been excavating a Hittite library in the heart of Cappadocia, another collection of Hittite cuneiform tablets has been discovered somewhere in northern Syria. One of these has found its way into the hands of Mr. Randolph Berens, and has just been published by myself in the *Proceedings* of the Society of Biblical Archaeology. It shows that exactly the same Hittite language was spoken in both Cappadocia and Syria, the Hittite words and grammatical forms met with in the North Syrian tablet being identical with those of the Boghaz-Keui texts. It also shows that the literary language of the people was a curious anticipation of Pehlevi, since it is full of Assyrian words provided with Hittite suffixes. The tablet throws an interesting light on Hittite theology and the worship of the sacred tree, references to which I had already found in the hieroglyphic inscriptions. Hittite religion was primarily a worship of nature. The earth-goddess was the center of the cult, and the ritual gathered round the story of the growth of vegetation. With the introduction of Babylonian culture, however, the old fetiches were to a large extent replaced by the anthropomorphic deities of Babylonia, and trinities were formed consisting of god, goddess and divine

son. From the first the Sun-god had been associated with the earth-goddess, whose forms were as manifold as the Hittite states with which she was identified. At Boghaz-Keui, for instance, she was Khattu "the Hittite", the state in which the earth-goddess was, as it were, embodied, being regarded as a deity. We learn from the hieroglyphic texts that there were nine of these deified states, which together made up the confederacy of the Hittite empire. One result of this deification of the state was that the king was a high-priest as well as a king.

How largely influenced Canaan was by the Hittites during the Mosaic age we are but beginning to learn. Apart from the fact that it formed the boundary-line and battle-field between the Hittite and Egyptian empires, an improved philological knowledge of the Tel el-Amarna tablets has shown that in the age of the Eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, if not before, it was overrun by bodies of Hittite mercenaries who sold their services to the petty princes and governors of the country or received pay from the Egyptian government. From time to time one of the Hittite leaders seized a city or district for himself and transformed it into a Hittite principality. From the language of Ezek. 16:2, it would seem that this had happened at Jerusalem itself. In the south of Palestine the sons of a Hittite free-lance from Arzawa made themselves particularly conspicuous in the closing days of the Eighteenth dynasty, while, in the north, Kadesh on the lake of Homs was wrested from Egyptian hands, and although Eta-gama the Hittite leader professed to be the obedient servant of the Pharaoh, his acts belied his professions. The Khabiri, who have been identified with the Hebrews in defiance of history, turn out to have been Hittite bands who appear to have established themselves in the neighborhood of Hebron, from whence they made raids on the adjoining towns, sold their services to the highest bidder, and professed their devotion to the Egyptian court when it was convenient to do so.

Like David at a later period, the Canaanitish princes surrounded themselves with a body-guard of foreigners. So far as we can judge from the evidence of the Tel el-Amarna tablets,

a large proportion of these foreigners were Hittites from beyond the Taurus. The Book of Genesis, therefore, is justified in making Heth the leading nationality in Canaan, which is named immediately after the first-built Canaanitish city and before the other tribes and nationalities of the country. The influence which these domineering foreigners had on the beliefs and customs of Canaan must have been considerable, and as we come to know more about their theology and social life we shall doubtless find that much which we have hitherto supposed to be purely Canaanite was more or less of Hittite origin. The institution of cities of refuge, for example, as has long since been pointed out, was characteristic of Asia Minor rather than of the Semitic peoples. Archaeology is already able to indicate one important evidence of Hittite trade and influence. The painted pottery found in the pre-Israelitish strata at Lachish and Gezer has been traced by Mr. J. L. Myres to the Hittite region north of the Halys, from whence it made its way to the south of Palestine. In the ancient world, trade and military expeditions went hand in hand.

It is probable that this pottery goes back to the Abrahamic age. One of the earliest kings of the Twelfth Egyptian dynasty is stated on a stela now in the Louvre to have destroyed the Hittite settlements in southern Canaan, and so familiar must the name of Hittite have already been to the Egyptians that it is assimilated to an Egyptian word, just as in Gen. 23 it is assimilated to a Hebrew word which means "terror". The astrological tablets of the time of Khammu-rabi or Amraphel in Babylonia mention "the king of the Hittites", whose movements excited a good deal of interest at the Babylonian court. The Hittites, in fact, were already included in the "concert" of civilized powers.

The cause of this was the metalliferous wealth of Asia Minor. The gold of the Sixth Egyptian dynasty, with its percentage of silver, has been traced by the analysts to the northern part of that country, and I have recently shown in my Rhind Lectures on Archaeology that the bronze of Assyria and Palestine must have originally been brought from the same region. Indeed, the earliest specimens of bronze at present known were found

in the Troad. Lead and silver were also exported in ever-increasing quantities from the Taurus mountains, and an Assyro-Babylonian trading colony was established near Kaisariyeh in Cappadocia as far back as about 2000 B. C. Large numbers of cuneiform tablets from the site are now in the museums of Europe and America, and throw a flood of light on the social life of the place and time.

It was through colonies such as this, as well as the traders who traversed the high-roads from Asia Minor to the Euphrates, that Babylonian culture was introduced into the Hittite region. The cuneiform system of writing formed an essential part of this culture, and so made the educated Hittite classes familiar with Babylonian theology, art and law. In Asia Minor the foreign elements received a native coloring, and there thus arose a Hittite—or, as I should prefer to call it, an Asianic—school of art and religion. With the descent of Hittite traders and free-lances into the fertile plains and valleys of Syria the art and religion of the north found their way to the Semitic population of Palestine, and must have exercised there an abiding influence. The mother even of Solomon had been the wife of a Hittite.