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## V. Notices of Books *Die Hetitischen Inschriften*. Ein Versuch ihrer Entzifferung. Von F. E. Peiser, Priv.-Doc. A.D. Universität Breslau. (Berlin, 1892.)

O. C.

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Society published a superb volume, containing the original photographs, the copy of the inscription taken from them at Peking, and the Berlin translation, and presented it to Prof. Schlegel, who responded with a new translation and the article which has been republished by Mr. Brill, of Leyden.

Professor Schlegel's description of the monument is conducted with the greatest pains and with much critical skill, and the general meaning of the inscription may be considered as finally determined. He has exposed the errors of the German translation with a bold decision, but not in a carping spirit. It may be possible to point out some flaws in his own version, and in his proposals to replace the blurred characters; but the scope of the record cannot be misapprehended again. The relations between the Government of China and the rude tribes of the north, before what we call our "Middle Ages," stand out clear and distinct. Many of Prof. Schlegel's remarks on the qualifications necessary for the correct interpretation of Chinese monuments, and on the absence of anything akin to the grammatical marks of inflected languages from the composition and speech of the scholars and people, are calculated to be very beneficial to all students of Chinese. But it is not likely, however, that many of them will accept his advice in full :

"Jetez vos Grammaires Chinoises au feu. Lisez, lisez, lisez—traduisez, traduisez, traduisez des auteurs Chinois jusqu'à ce que vous soyez entrés dans l'ordre d'idées Chinois, et que vous pensiez comme eux."

J. L.

DIE HETITISCHEN INSCRIFTEN. EIN VERSUCH IHRER ENTZIFFERUNG. VON F. E. PEISER, Priv.-Doc. A.D. Universität Breslau. (Berlin, 1892.)


The linguistic and archæological problems presented by the strange hieroglyphic inscriptions of Northern Syria and Lesser Asia have already given rise to a formidable mass of historical speculations and hypothetical decipher-

ments. The would-be interpreter generally starts from the ambiguous data of a small electrotpe, taken from a supposed antique which has mysteriously vanished, the so-called Boss of Tarkondemos, which Sayce, in the first enthusiasm of discovery, grandiloquently designated "The Rosetta Stone of Hittite decipherment." But, unfortunately for the progress of "Hittite" studies, hardly any two investigators are agreed upon the values to be assigned to the half-dozen unknown symbols exhibited by this cast of a doubtfully authentic and undoubtedly perplexing relic of the past. There are, moreover, irreconcilable differences of opinion about the right order and readings of the Cuneiform characters that adorn the periphery of the Boss. The very name "Bilingual" involves an assumption. We do not know that the one inscription simply reproduces the other in a different language. All that is certain is that the Boss displays examples of two dissimilar modes of writing. There has been much talk of the "Hittite language," but so far we know nothing whatever about that language. Not a single word, not a single sign of the supposed Hittite inscriptions has yet been identified with scientific certainty. Neither the age nor the origin of these curious monuments has been determined; and the designation "Hittite" is still in the position of an unverified hypothesis.

Dr. Peiser, who has done good work in the field of Assyriology, professes to make an entirely new start, in vigorous independence of previous researches. At the outset of his book a sentence occurs which indicates with perfect accuracy the reason of the general failure (not excepting his own) to solve the riddle of these inscriptions. "If one wanted to try to read a hitherto undeciphered script, one had first to find a key, by help of which the sounds of some few symbols might be determined." The fact is indisputable; but the golden key still remains undiscovered. Dr. Peiser indeed believes the contrary. He has found the key to open this unusually complicated lock in "The determination of the sign for *mí* [?] from the Bilingual," and in the legerdemain by which he manages to read the names of Kuštašpi of Kummukh and Pisīriš of Carchemish

on some clay seals<sup>1</sup> impressed with "Hittite" characters, which Sir A. H. Layard brought from Kuyunjik in 1851.

It is not worth while to follow Dr. Peiser through the process of elimination by which these two are selected out of some twenty names of "Hittite" princes recorded by Tiglath-pileser III. and Sargon. His conclusion is vitiated by the fact that he has taken the "Hittite" symbols of the seals Nos. 6-8 in the wrong order. This is evident from the inscription JJ. 4, where the crook-symbol twice occurs, and is to be read *towards the opening*, not reversely, as Peiser assumes. If this be so, his statement that the *last* "sound or syllabic value" of the seals Nos. 6-8 is the same as the *first* of No. 5, is erroneous, and his fabric of inference falls to the ground. Further, Dr. Peiser's assumption that No. 2 may be restored so as to yield the same symbols as Nos. 6-8, but differently arranged, is highly questionable, considering the shape of the second of the two symbols which alone survive unimpaired. But, indeed, a not unreasonable sceptic might feel impelled to ask the previous questions: how did Dr. Peiser ascertain (1) that the mystic characters of these seal-impressions represented in each case a single royal name; and (2) that the four characters of Nos. 6-8 and 5 were to be read Ku-uš-taš-pi and Pi-si-ir-ri, for all the world as though these uncouth hieroglyphics were simply Cuneiform syllables in disguise?

Although Dr. Peiser actually has the confidence to discuss "Hittite" grammar and syntax, and to compare his paradigm of the "Hittite verb" (!) with that of the modern Osmanli Turkish, he makes no attempt to identify his new-found vocables generally with the roots of any known linguistic stock. When he decided that the ass-symbol must be read n-m, was he thinking of the undeniable relation of the ass to the *houyhnhnm*, or was he unconsciously influenced by the Egyptian  n-m? Seriously, while we are glad to recognize the comparative moderation of the author's suggestions about the probable age of the inscriptions, we fail to discern a shadow of probability in his elaborate essays at decipherment.

<sup>1</sup> These seals were copied and published by Mr. W. H. Rylands in TSBA. VII. plate v.

THE INVASION OF INDIA BY ALEXANDER THE GREAT, AS DESCRIBED BY ARRIAN, Q. CURTIUS, DIODÔROS, PLUTARCH, JUSTIN, AND OTHER CLASSICAL AUTHORS. With an Introduction, containing a Life of Alexander, copious Notes, Illustrations, Maps, and Indices. By J. W. M'CRINDLE. 8vo. Pp. xii. and 432. London: Archibald Constable and Co., Westminster. 1893.

This book is the fifth of a series, by the same author, on ancient India, as described by the Classical Writers; the previous books issued contained the Indica of Ktesias, the Indica of Megasthenes, the Indica of Arrian, the Periplus of the Erythraian Sea, and Ptolemy's Geography of India. A sixth book is promised, containing parts of Strabo's Geography, describing India and Ariana. The introduction contains a good and comprehensive sketch of the life of Alexander, and a list of the original authorities from whom subsequent writers derived their knowledge of Alexander's Asiatic Expedition.

The translation, from the works mentioned in the title of the book are clear and literal, without losing the sense or force of the original. The arrangement of short notes with the text and the longer ones in an appendix is convenient; they contain a quantity of useful information about various matters connected with India, its people, natural history, etc.

A biographical index of persons referred to, and a good general index, complete the book, which is well illustrated, and has two good maps showing Alexander's routes.

O. C.

THE EUROPEAN ADVENTURERS OF HINDUSTAN, FROM 1784-1803. By HERBERT COMPTON. 1892.

Mr. Compton gives us in this book biographies of those three remarkable men, De Boigne, George Thomas, and Perron, who rose by their own abilities and courage from more or less humble positions to the command of large disciplined armies, the rule of kingdoms, and the possession of great wealth and power in the beginning of this century;