

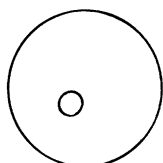
Exploration and Discovery.

A NEEDED DUPLICATE FOUND.

IN the year 1892 the writer received from a friend in Jerusalem a letter in which occurred the following words :

I send you a small stone with an inscription upon it. It seems to be the end of a string of beads, and was lately found in a tomb near Anathoth. I have never seen anything like it. I received it direct from the hand of the peasant who found it.

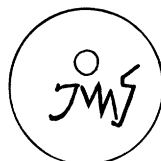
The object was examined as soon as received, and was shown to others. A lapidary expressed the belief that the hole had been made in recent times. The inscription indicated an antiquity as great as



BASE



SIDE



TOP

that of the Siloam inscription, but it did not make itself plain. The bead was transferred to the London office of the Palestine Exploration Fund to receive the attention of European scholars, and they were soon heard from.

Professor Sayce, as usual, was the first in the field, with a letter published in the P. E. F. *Quarterly Statement* for January, 1893, p. 32. He pronounced the bead "exceeding interesting" :

The letters are those of the alphabet of the Siloam inscription. They read N-TS-G, *netseg*. Now, in the *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1890, p. 267, an account will be found, by Dr. Chaplin, of a hæmatite weight he obtained at Samaria, on which is an inscription in letters of pre-exilic form, which Dr. Neubauer has interpreted as meaning "a quarter of a quarter of a *netseg*." The word *netseg* is not to be met with in the Old Testament and is not to be found in the Hebrew lexicon.

Professor Sayce dwelt somewhat further upon the weight of the bead and the letters upon it.

More deliberately, Professor Clermont-Ganneau printed a note in the *Quarterly Statement* for July, 1893, p. 257, and expressed his belief that the characters should be read, not *netseg*, but *keseph*, "silver." He believed it to be a weight which had been "pierced by a Mussulman

who put it in a necklace as an amulet." He asked for the weight, estimated before the hole was made, and was told that the weight now is 134 grains, but was originally about 156 grains.

Professor Robertson Smith in *Quarterly Statement* for July, 1894, p. 231, criticised Dr. Sayce's reading, declaring, with some bitterness, that it could not be *netseg*, and taking the ground that the word is *netseph*, but not interpreting it.

Professor Sayce was then heard from in *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1894, p. 284, holding to his reading of *netseg*.

The next writer was Mr. Ebenezer Davis, whose paper in *Quarterly Statement* for April, 1895, went over the whole subject, declaring the bead to be very old, and siding with Dr. Sayce as to the reading.

At this point the matter rested, but not for long, because one of the earliest finds of Dr. F. J. Bliss in Tell Zakariyeh was a duplicate of the disputed bead, now seen to be a weight. It had no hole, showing the truth of Professor Ganneau's theory. It was in shape and inscription precisely alike, as may be seen on Plate VII in *Quarterly Statement* for April, 1899. On p. 107 Dr. Bliss describes it as "a small dome-shaped weight of reddish stone with flat base, inscribed in three Phœnician characters." He reads *netseph*, but adds that Père Lagrange reads *keseph*, "silver." Thus, apparently without knowing the previous decipherments, they repeat the work of 1893. Resuming the subject in July, 1899, p. 183, Dr. Bliss says that he has found two more specimens, reading *netseph*, "one of white limestone, the other of a light reddish color."

Writing upon the first duplicate, Professor Ganneau in *Quarterly Statement* for July, 1899, p. 208, retracts his reading *keseph* and accepts *netseph*, and remarks upon the Arabic *nisf*, "half." Noting the weight of 156 grains (approximately), he finds the Chaplin weight to read "quarter of *netseph*," and to weigh 39 grains. Thus he feels firm ground under him. At the same time Professor Sayce, p. 211, admits that he was in error in reading *netseg*, and accepts *netseph* as equivalent to the Arabic word for "half."

Thus the finding of a duplicate has solved a problem which had been apparently hopeless, and this experience may lead us to hope that further excavations will bring to view duplicates of the Chaplin weight—the subject of a still more bitter controversy—and of many other objects now puzzling us because they are unique.

THEODORE F. WRIGHT.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.