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Grenville Temple

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XXXVI. *Copy of a Letter from Sir GRENVILLE TEMPLE, Bart., to Lieut.-General BENJAMIN FORBES, M.R.A.S., relative to a Phœnician Tombstone found at Maghráwah in Tunis, and presented to the ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY by Sir GRENVILLE TEMPLE.*

Read the 7th of December 1833.

Malta, 2d July 1833.

THE sepulchral stone with the Phœnician inscription,* I found at *Maghráwah* (مغراوة), a little village in the Beylik of Tunis, situated on the northern declivity of the range of hills, which separates *Muhadhar-al-Hammádah Walául Ayár* (محضر الحمادة اولاد عيار), the ancient *Tucca Terebenthina*, from the plain of *Zirrz* زرز inhabited by the *Beni Riss*, a branch of *Dthrídis*, and on which are seen the ruins of *Assura*, now called *Zanfúr* زنفور. I feel inclined to imagine that *Maghráwah* occupies the situation of one of those Libyo-Phœnician towns or villages which were never colonized by the Romans; for though we find several fragments of coarsely-executed bas-reliefs representing men and animals, evidently of a date anterior to the epoch when sculpture attained any degree of perfection, yet I saw not a single vestige of the workmanship either of the later Carthaginians or of their conquerors. Not the smallest fragment of either capital, frieze, or cornice is discernible. About an hour and a-half's distance from *Maghráwah*, in the direction of *Zanfúr*, is the small village of *Lheys* لهيس, where are found similar remains, mixed however with fragments of Roman inscriptions and sculpture.

The inscription, which I imagine to be written in one of the various Phœnician dialects, is valuable from its scarcity; for during a tour which I made through the whole of the interior of the Beylik, I only found seven or eight inscriptions which were not in Latin; and this one was all that I was enabled to bring away, the others being too large to be carried by a

* Vide the accompanying plate.

horse. It is I think a matter of astonishment that even these few have survived to the present day, when we recollect that the Romans did all in their power to obliterate, by the destruction of the institutions and monuments of the Punic power, all traces of the existence of that nation. The principle of ‘*delenda est Carthago*’ was not confined to the destruction of the capital, but extended itself through all the provinces as far as the vast *Sahára*, effacing in all directions every thing which could in itself be thought to carry down to future ages the proof of the existence of Rome’s greatest rival.

(Signed) GRENVILLE T. TEMPLE.