

it is to be hoped that future discoveries will reveal to us the order of the other changes, such as the fashion of bending the tails of the characters round to the left, and the addition of tags as essential parts of the letter. Neither of these refinements is foreshadowed in the Gezer writing; although, as Mr. Cook has noted, the scribe was inclined to tilt the tail of the *yod* sometimes up and sometimes down.

It being established that the text registers for us the first step in the alphabetic change, it would still be of interest to know the period when that step was made. For this we must rely upon the circumstances of its discovery, and we can only note that the carefully observed position of the relic in the excavations, and the associated remains, indicate the sixth century B.C. as the approximate date of the tablet.

Independently of its palaeographic value the Gezer text is a welcome addition to our growing knowledge of the social life of the ancient Hebrews. The climate and soil of Palestine render it very unlikely that we shall ever recover any ancient specimen of current writing upon parchment or papyrus; but the Gezer Tablet is to all intents and purposes a manuscript, for it has all the characteristics of actual handwriting. The fingers of the scribe were probably more familiar with the reed pen than with the stylus, and he has scratched upon this piece of limestone a valuable example of the fugitive, everyday, writing of his time and people.

GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM DAMASCUS.

By the Rev. J. E. HANAUER, M.A., with Notes by the

Rev. H. S. CRONIN, M.A.

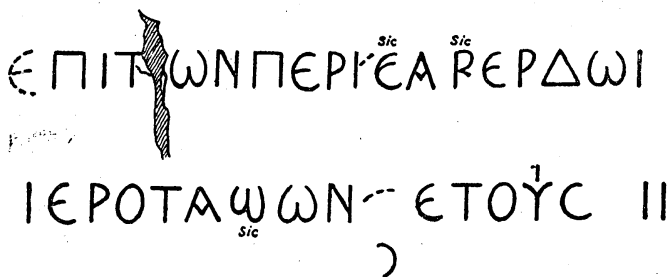
1. In a letter from Damascus, dated March 2nd, the Rev. J. E. Hanauer writes:

“Whilst making some alterations in the lower part of a house built on the northern side of the great eastern gateway in the ancient outer enclosure of the former Temple, where now stands the great Mosque, the northern end of the architrave and lintel over the small side gate has been partly exposed. It bears two inscriptions, of which, however, only the ends can be seen. One is

in Greek letters, the other, lower down, in interlaced ornamental Arabic letters. I enclose a copy, taken by candle-light, of the former. The position is not favourable, either for a squeeze or a photograph. I cannot tell if the inscription is much longer. The rest of it is, and will probably remain, covered up. Only the north end, and top of the north door-post can be seen. It is said that there is ancient writing in the upper part of the house, but, as yet, I have failed to get leave to look at it. A shaft, or well, has been sunk alongside the door-post, and the owner of the house tells me that the threshold of the gate was found at a depth of twenty *dra'as*. This is, of course, a vague statement, and I do not think that any reliable measurement was taken. The *dra'a* is 27 inches."

Writing on the following day, Mr. Hanauer reports :

"I wrote, yesterday, and sent a copy of a Greek inscription recently



found under the plaster on the stones above the side gateway, described by Mr. Dickie, on pages 274 and 275 of the *Quarterly Statement* for 1897.¹ He saw the Arabic inscription. I visited the place again this morning, and now send a corrected copy of the Greek letters, some of which are of a very curious shape, such as elsewhere, on loose slabs of stone, etc., would lead one to suspect a forgery. Here, however, there does not seem to be anything that would induce anyone to forge an inscription."

Subsequently (April 30th), Mr. Hanauer wrote that the inscription has again been covered up with masonry, "and will therefore, in all probability, not be visible again during this generation, at any rate . . . I feel certain that a corresponding inscription must exist on the little gate on the other side of the great central one,

¹ The inscription is on a stone just above the architrave, and between it and the sill of the niche.

the jambs only of which are extant. The side gate to which I refer seems to be still entire. Though buried, part of the architrave covered with plaster and whitewash peeps through the gloom of a butcher's shop on the side of the street opposite to that on which I found the inscription."

(For the text of the inscription, *see* below.)

2. A basalt slab with a funereal inscription found in the course of alterations in a Moslem house in the suburb of el-'Akeybeh.



(For the text, *see* below.)

3. A Greek inscription found, after the fire of 1893, over the left-hand doorway of the great triple gateway in the south wall of the great Mosque of Damascus. This doorway is represented in *Quarterly Statement*, October, 1897, Plate II, facing p. 272 (the extreme left-hand corner). The inscription stands close to the famous one "Thy kingdom, O Christ, etc," and consists of a quotation from Psalm lxxxix, 7. "The probability is that every single gate-way had some monumental writing over it. We must, however, wait patiently till favourable opportunities enable us to see those which still remain."

Drawings of the first and second inscriptions, made by Mr. Hanauer, were sent to the Rev. H. S. Cronin, Dean of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, who has kindly sent the following remarks:—

"*Inscription I.*—ἐπὶ τῶν περὶ (τὸν δαίνα) | ἱεροταμιῶν ἔτους ἡ *i.e.*, 'during the temple-stewardship of A. B. and his colleagues, in the eighth year.' For the general form of the inscription compare *C.I.G.*, 4513 (ἐπι ἱεροταμιῶν τῶν περὶ) Ἀντ[ώ]νινον), and 4516 (ἐπὶ τῶν περὶ M... εἰροταμιῶ[ν]), both of which suggest that the letters following περὶ are the letters of a proper name in the accusative, but what name I cannot say. Probably it is Semitic. Ἱερο]ταμιῶν occurs also in *C.I.G.*, 4512, which, with 4513 and 4516, comes from Damascus. The two strokes after ἔτους are much more probably part of H—or part of B_{X} —than the numeral two.

"*Inscription II.*—] ἐνθάδε κείμε | ἐτέων τ[ρ]- | ἰς εἴκοσι | Γαῦτος | Πόλλα λειτουργή | [σ]ας κείμε | ἐποχθόνιος.

"Here I, Gautos, lie at the age of sixty years having done much service I lie beneath the sod."

"This is an elegiac couplet of sorts, though neither the grammar nor the metre is above criticism. The first five letters are doubtful: they may be (1) an interjection, (2) Another name of Γαῦτος cf. *C.I.G.*, 4518, 4519 (both Damascus), or (3) a vocative—*ξυνάν* is possible but not convincing. I think *τρὶς εἴκοσι* is 60 (3 × 20) rather than 23; I don't think there is any difficulty in quantity in this kind of 'poetry,' and it is not only better Greek but suits *πόλλα λειτουργήσας* better. *κείμε* is a familiar *iotacism*."

RECENT HITTITE DISCOVERIES.

By Col. C. R. CONDER, LL.D.

PENDING the full publication of the great discovery, by Dr. H. Winckler, of tablets which were excavated at Boghaz-Keui ("the town of the pass") the ancient Pterium, on the borders of Cappadocia and Pontus, east of the river Halys, it seems necessary to be cautious as to the evidence that they will afford about the Hittite language. The recovery of the seal of a Hittite king, with native and cuneiform characters, has proved that Dr. W. Wright was right when he attributed these characters—usually called "Hittite"—to that race; but all the letters so far translated are in the Babylonian language. The recovery of some three centuries of Hittite political