



The Hittite Language

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as well as the half-bred descendants of Esau. It is clear, from the monuments and from the account of Abraham's transactions with the Hittites of Hebron, that the mixed population of Canaan was in an advanced state of civilisation. There were cities and landowners, traders, architects, and metallurgists in Canaan at a time when the Hebrews were yet nomadic, and the Hittites, long before Joshua, almost equalled the Egyptians in culture and power. In later times the word Canaanite appears to have been thought equivalent to merchant (Job. xli, 6 ; Prov. xxxi, 24). The importance of the great Altaic stock, of which the Canaanites were a branch, is becoming more and more evident. There seems to be reason to suppose that Altaic tribes reached Egypt and left their mark on the Egyptian language. Thus the Philistines in the Bible are said to have been of Egyptian origin, and, on the other hand, appear to have been Pelasgic or Altaic. The same stock existed in Italy as Etruscans, in Spain as Iberians. The Siculians, Ligurians, Aquitainians, and Silures, belong to the same stock, as do the early tribes of Asia Minor. In Europe the Aryans drove out or absorbed these early Turanian tribes, and in Western Asia the Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, and Hebrews, partly exterminated, partly absorbed, the Altaic tribes known as Akkadians, Sumerians, Kassî, Hittites, &c. Yet, to the early civilisation of these very tribes they themselves owed in great measure their own advance in literature, in trade, in metallurgy, and in many other elements of primitive civilisation.

C. R. CONDER.

THE HITTITE LANGUAGE.

DURING the last quarter my attention—as far as professional work leaves me time—has been directed to the one objection to the proposed identification of the Hittite language as Altaic, which can be considered important. It has been urged that the sounds attaching to cuneiform emblems do not represent Akkadian words, but only syllables forming part of Akkadian words, just as in Egypt the syllables were derived from words not monosyllabic. That, for instance, the syllable *Ma* attaching to the emblem for “country,” is not to be taken as a word, but as a syllable derived from the word *Mat*. Lenormant held a different opinion. He regarded *Mat* as a contraction of *Mata*, a derived word composed of the old *Ma*, “country,” + *ta*, a suffix, and it is certain that the root *Ma* forms the word for country in many Altaic languages.

In order to ascertain how far it is possible to make sure of the pronunciation of the ideograms and of the existence of monosyllabic words in Akkadian, it appears to me that the only safe way is to carry on that comparison with living languages on which Lenormant relied, and which Dr. Isaac Taylor successfully applied to the case of Etruscan. For this

purpose I have prepared an index of some thousand Akkadian monosyllabic sounds, which are supposed to represent word-roots, and have gone on to compare these with the monosyllabic roots in Finnic and in Tatar languages. It appears that the large majority of these monosyllables exist, either in Tatar or in Finnic, and a great many are common to both branches of the Altaic languages. In addition to this a certain number have been found by Prof. T. de Lacouperie in the oldest known Chinese about 900 B.C., and others are recognisable in Etruscan. In Basque others may be easily recognised, and a certain small proportion of Egyptian words are identical in sound and meaning with the Akkadian.

The result of this comparison—not as yet complete—is to show very clearly that the monosyllabic sounds attaching to the cuneiform emblems are real and complete word-roots in a very large number of cases, and that they include both “open syllables,” like Ma, Ku, &c., and “closed syllables” like Tak, Tin, &c. In addition to this, I find that the majority of the sounds recoverable from the Cypriote in Hittite may thus be shown to be Altaic words.

In many cases the Susian and the Proto-Medic words are radically the same as the Akkadian, especially as regards post-positions. Such an inquiry shows how widely spread are the affinities of the Akkadian, and thus serves to justify the use of Akkadian as a basis for decipherment of the Hittite texts.

I have further prepared an analysis of the geographical lists of the Hittite country, the original hieroglyphics having been kindly supplied to me by Rev. H. G. Tomkins. This, with other lists from the same part of the world, serves very clearly to enforce the same lesson as to the character of the Hittite language.

There remains, however, a good deal to be done before this work is fit for publication.

The objection which may be raised to such an inquiry is that the results will be too general, but it appears to me that if it is shown that the Finns, Hungarians, Lapps, the Siberians, the Chinese, the Etruscans, and the Egyptians even, used the same monosyllabic roots which we find in Akkadian and in other languages of the cuneiform inscriptions, the case is further strengthened in favour of these roots having existed in the Hittite dialect.

It is, however, by the grammar rather than by word roots that the affinities of the Hittite language are to be best traced. One of the main objections to the classification of Akkadian as a Turanian language lay in the differences between its grammar and that of the living Finnic languages. Lenormant has said that the nearest approach to the older construction is to be recognised in the Mantchu Tatar, especially in the formation of the verb, which resembles that of the Akkadian. It will, I think, be clearly provable to any who will inquire closely into the matter, that the grammatical construction of the Hittite texts is that of the earlier Altaic languages, not that of the modern Turanian tongues. The same is observable to a certain extent in the geographical lists; and, although I

have never said or held that the Hittites spoke Akkadian, I think it will prove that Akkadian is the most valuable guide we can follow in decipherment.

As regards the subject of the texts, it has been disputed that they are likely to be charms or magical sentences. On this point I have at present only to point out the frequent repetition of the names of deities and the occurrence of the peculiar heads with horns or long ears and protruding tongues, which appear to me certainly to be intended to represent demons. Among the Chinese, we have representations of demons often with protruding tongues and with short horns on the head. The "Gorgonian heads" in Etruria have a protruding tongue, as has the head of Medusa in archaic Greek representations. The protruding tongue is common to the Indian infernal deities, to the Mulge of Phœnicia, and to the Egyptian Bes. The Etruscan infernal deity, Charun ("the evil god") is represented with open mouth and huge square ears. It appears, therefore, that among Turanian peoples the idea of a demon is commonly denoted by horns or long ears and a protruding tongue. It does not seem very evident what other idea can be presented by such an emblem. The text in question must, therefore, bear reference to gods and to demons.

In conclusion, I would note that pigtailed came to China from the Tatars, and that the ordinary representation of a Chinese shoe is not unlike the Turkish, Etruscan, and Hittite curly-toed shoe, which has been called a "snow shoe"—a somewhat misleading term. The true comparison with the shoe of Asia Minor has been suggested by Sir C. Wilson. The two-headed eagle has been regarded as one of the most distinctive of Hittite emblems—occurring in Cappadocia; and it is, therefore, important to note that Etruscan representations of this curious fowl may be found figured in Dennis' Etruria. If the eagle alone were sufficient evidence, its testimony would be that the Hittites were an Altaic people like the Etruscans.

C. R. C.

SAMARITAN CUSTOMS.

THE first answers yet obtained to the "Questions" as to the natives of Syria come from Shechem (Nablus), and relate to one of the most interesting of the mixed nationalities of Palestine, viz., the Samaritans. The Rev. C. Fallscheer, to whom I wrote, is on very friendly terms with the present Samaritan High Priest, Jacob, and I attach the more value to his notes because they are in great part derived from the best Samaritan authority.

Some of the most interesting replies are here detailed, with an occasional note, showing relative value or due to personal observation.

Feast of Tabernacles.—"Is celebrated every year, on the 15th day of the seventh month. On the first day of this feast every Samaritan father