

and sixth centuries B.C. The Assyrian King Sargon, in describing his campaign against Palestine in B.C. 711, states that Akhimit, whom he had made King of Ashdod, had been dethroned by his subjects (or more probably by Hezekiah of Judah), and "a Greek (Yavana) who had no right to the throne," had been made king in his place. It was this event which led to the siege of Ashdod referred to in Is. xx, 1, and it shows that Greek influence was already powerful on the Philistine coast. The Greek writer, Stephanus Byzantinus (s. v. 'Ιόνιον), tells us that Gaza was also called Iônê, while the sea between that part of Palestine and the frontier of Egypt was known as the "Ionian." All this points to Greek colonisation, possibly from Cyprus, which the Assyrians entitled the island of "the Ionians."

ON AN INSCRIBED BEAD FROM PALESTINE.

By the Rev. Prof. A. H. SAYCE.

THE perforated "bead" of reddish yellow stone which Professor T. F. Wright, of Cambridge, Mass., obtained from Jerusalem is exceedingly interesting. The inscription upon it is as follows:—

The letters are those of the alphabet of the Siloam inscription, and must therefore belong to the same period as the latter. They read N-TS-G, i.e., *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 *netseg*." The word *netseg* is not met with in the Old Testament, and is not to be found in the Hebrew lexicon.

The use of the word on Dr. Chaplin's weight led to the belief that it signified a particular weight which Dr. Flinders Petrie reckoned at 627 grains. Dr. Wright's weight, however, shows that this cannot be the case. His "bead" weighs only 8.65 grammes, so that we must either assume that there were two weights called *netseg*—which is very improbable—or else suppose that the word simply means "a standard weight." If Dr. Neubauer is right in connecting it with the root נצג, this latter signification would be very natural.

I ought to add that the forms of the letters are important, as they show, even more plainly than those of the letters in the Siloam inscription, that they have been imitated from forms traced by the pen on papyrus or parchment. The "tails" of the *nun* and *gimel* are shaped so as to resemble curves instead of straight lines. This is fresh evidence that the literature of Jerusalem was upon papyrus or parchment rather than

stone or metal. People who were accustomed to write upon the two latter materials would have made their letters angular, like the letters of the Moabite stone, or those which we see on Dr. Chaplin's weight.

THE SITE OF KIRJATH-SEPHER.

By Professor A. H. SAYCE, LL.D.

YEARS ago I urged that Kirjath-Sepher or "Book-town" must have been the site of a Canaanitish library, consisting, like those of Assyria and Babylonia, of tablets of clay, and that if its ruins could be discovered, the clay books it contained would be found still lying under the ground. The discovery of the tablets of Tel el-Amarna brought with it a partial confirmation of my opinion; the discovery of a cuneiform tablet at Tell el-Hesi has now rendered that confirmation complete. If once the site of Kirjath-Sepher can be determined, we may excavate upon it in full confidence that a library of ancient Canaanitish records will be brought to light.

The recovery of the site thus becomes of great importance. Unfortunately the indications we possess of the exact geographical position of the city are exceedingly vague and indefinite. It was destroyed almost at the beginning of the Israelitish conquest of Canaan, and its precise situation seems to have been forgotten. Beyond the fact that it was near Hebron, later generations remembered but little about it.

Nevertheless the discovery of its remains is so important to the student of the Bible and of ancient history that even an approximate determination of its situation will not be useless. Materials have recently come to light which seem to bear upon the question, and it is consequently less difficult now to examine it than it was a few years ago. It is true that the several links in the chain of reasoning are weak, but taken together they form a mass of presumptive evidence which is at all events the best at present attainable.

From the Old Testament we learn that Kirjath-Sepher was a name given to a city also called Kirjath-Sannah and Debir (Josh. xv, 15, 49). What Kirjath-Sannah means it is impossible to say; the ordinary explanation of the name as "the City of the Law" hardly deserves mention. The analogy of Kirjath-Arba would lead us to infer that Sannah was the name of a person or a god. Debir, however, signifies the "Sanctuary," and in 1 Kings vi, 5, is the word applied to the Holy of Holies in the temple at Jerusalem. It shows that the city to which it was attached was consecrated by the existence in it of one of the chief shrines of southern Canaan. We know that the clay libraries of Assyria and Babylonia were established in the temples, a room or rooms in the sacred building being set apart for their reception. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Canaanitish Debir was also the site of a library from