

THE PHENICIAN INSCRIPTIONS ON THE VASE
HANDLES FOUND AT JERUSALEM.

By Rev. Professor SAYCE, LL.D.

IN my article in the *Quarterly Statement* on "The Cuneiform and other Inscriptions found at Lachish and elsewhere in the South of Palestine," I promised to return to the inscriptions on the clay vase-handles discovered at the foot of the Harâm wall at Jerusalem. These inscriptions, it will be remembered, are—(1), [L-M-L-K] SH-T; (2), [L]-M-[L]-K SH-K-II, and (3), L-M-L-K Z-PH. They are inscribed above and below the figure of the winged solar disk.

The meaning of the first word is clear. It signifies "belonging to Melech," or the "King." The use of the preposition 𐤋 in this sense is common on seals and similar objects, and ought to be followed by the name of the owner. But it is impossible in the case of the handles to believe that each of them belonged to a different individual, and yet that each of the names of the individuals began with the same element—*melech*.

Now Z-PH and SH-K-II represent the names of two localities in Judah, Ziph (2 Chron. xi, 8) and Socho (Josh. xv, 35), neither of which was very far distant from Jerusalem. Melech (or Moloch, as it was punctuated by the Masoretes) is the well-known title of a deity who was worshipped in Canaan as well as beyond the Jordan, and accordingly, in Melech-Ziph and Melech-Shochoh, I propose to see the local names of a god. They would be analogous in formation to the name of the chief god of Tyre, Melech-Qiryath—"Melech of the City"—which was subsequently contracted into Melkarth. Such combinations of a local name with the divine titles Melech and Baal were not uncommon in Palestine.

In Melech-Sheth we shall have to look for a compound similar to Melech-Ziph and Melech-Shochoh, "the Moloch of Ziph" and "the Moloch of Socho." We are at once reminded of the fact that in the prophecy of Balaam (Numb. xxiv, 17) the Moabites are called "the children of Sheth." Some years ago I endeavoured to show in the pages of *Hebraica* that in Gen. iv, 7, there is perhaps a reference to an old proverb in which the name of a god, Seth, was mentioned—"If thou doest well, it is Seth, and if thou doest not well Khattâth (Nergal in Babylonian) crouches at the door." However this may be, the Egyptian god Set came to be regarded as specially the god of the numerous Semites, who were settled in the Delta where he was worshipped, and the Egyptians identified him accordingly with the Semitic Baal. We now have evidence that he was actually adopted as a deity by the Canaanites. In M. de Clercq's collection of seal-cylinders there are two of peculiar interest.¹ On each of them is a cuneiform inscription,

¹ "Collection De Clercq, Catalogue méthodique et raisonné," I, p. 217 (1888).

one reading: "Addumu, the citizen of Sidon, the crown of the gods," and the other: "Anniy, the son of Addumu, the citizen of Sidon." The forms of the characters, as well as the use of the determinatives and the way in which the name of Anniy is written, show that the cylinders belong to the age of the Tell el Amarna tablets, when the cuneiform syllabary was employed in Palestine for writing purposes. On the cylinder of Addumu—whose name, like those of so many Canaanites in the Tell el Amarna tablets, is compounded with the name of the god Hadad—the owner of the seal is represented as standing in an attitude of adoration before the god Set, while behind him is the lightning-god Resheph. Set has the long ass's ears with which Egyptian art provided him, and holds in his hand the "uas" sceptre. On the cylinder of Anniy there is a procession of three deities, Resheph, with his battle-axe held aloft; the Sun-god, with the solar disk above the hawk's head of Horus; and Set. Set is depicted as on the cylinder of Addumu.

The Canaanite worship of Set with the ass's head is doubtless the origin of the stories which declared that the people of Palestine, and more especially the Jews, adored the head of that animal (see Tacitus *Hist.* v, 4; Diodorus Sic. xiv, 1; Josephus, *Cont. Ap.* ii, 7; Plutarch, *Symp.* iv, 5). The belief lingered on to a late date, as in the great French *Description de l'Égypte* (iii. pl., 64 *Ant.*) there is reproduced the figure of a man with the head of an ass, and on his breast the word *Séth* in Coptic letters.

It would seem, therefore, that the second element in the compound Melech-Sheth is not the name of a locality, of which there is otherwise no record, but of a divinity who was borrowed by the people of Canaan from Egypt. The compound accordingly will be similar to the compound Hadad-Rimmon, where the names of two deities are combined together. We may also compare names like Malchiel and Malchijah.¹

The vases to which the handles belonged must have been dedicated to the service of Melech, or Moloch, in his various local forms, and it is possible that the winged solar disk may have been regarded as his symbol. It is worthy of notice that the pottery was found in what, as will be seen from former papers of mine in the *Quarterly Statement*, I believe to have been the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom, where in later days children were burnt in honour of Moloch (2 Kings xxiii, 10).

In the article in which I refer to the inscriptions on the vase-handles I have stupidly failed to decipher the inscription on the flat dish discovered at Lachish. It is of course the Hebrew בלע, "Swallow!"—an appropriate inscription for a dish. The form of the *bêth* is particularly interesting, as it supports the theory which would derive the so-called Phœnician alphabet from the Proto-arabic alphabet, which has been

¹ On the other hand we must not forget that the Hebrew Sheth would correspond to the cuneiform 'Sute, or Bedouin nomads. In the Tell el Amarna tablets the 'Sute are identical with the Sati of the Egyptian texts, who specially haunted the deserts and mountains east of the Jordan. Just as Ammi was the god of the Beni-Ammon, so Set may have been the god of the Beni-Sheth or Bedouin.

preserved in the alphabets of Southern Arabia. The forms of the Phœnician *bêth* hitherto known do not bear a very close resemblance to the South Arabian *b*; on the other hand, the new form which has been disinterred at Lachish is identical with it, if turned on its side, as is necessary when we compare the Phœnician and the South Arabian forms of the letters. Like the South Arabian *b*, it then is also identical with the old hieratic form of the Egyptian hieroglyphic for "house." And *bêth*, as everyone knows, signifies "a house."

METEOROLOGICAL REPORT FROM JERUSALEM FOR YEAR 1882.

By JAMES GLAISHER, F.R.S.

THE numbers in column 1 of this table show the highest reading of the barometer in each month; of these the highest appear in the winter, and the lowest in the summer months; the maximum for the year is 27·721 inches, in January. In column 2 the lowest in each month are shown; the minimum is 27·108 inches in April; the range of readings in the year was 0·613 inch. The numbers in the 3rd column show the extreme range of readings in each month; the smallest, 0·197 inch, is in July, and the largest, 0·517 inch, is in April. The numbers in the 4th column show the mean monthly pressure of the atmosphere; the highest, 27·516 inches, is in January, and the lowest, 27·272 inches, is in July. The mean pressure for the year is 27·398 inches; at Saronā the mean pressure for the year was 29·856 inches.

The highest temperature of the air in each month is shown in column 5. The highest in the year was 99°·5, on August 28th, on which day the maximum temperature at Saronā was 89°; the temperature reached or exceeded 90° in every month from May to October, with the exception of July; the first day in the year the temperature reached 90° was on May 12th. In June there were 7 days when the temperature reached or exceeded 90°; in August, 11 days; in September, 7 days; and in October, 2 days, the 1st and 2nd, these being the last days in the year of such a high temperature as 90°. Therefore the temperature reached or exceeded 90° on 28 days during the year. At Saronā the temperature did not reach 90° till September 24th, and reached or exceeded 90° on only 8 days in the year; the highest in the year at Saronā, viz. 93°, took place on November 1st, on which day the maximum temperature at Jerusalem was 74°.

The lowest temperature of the air in each month is shown in column 6. The lowest in the year was 28°·5, on both the 3rd and 12th of February; the temperature was below 40°, in January, on 18 nights; in February, on 25 nights; in March, on 1 night; and in April, on 2 nights; the last night in the year the temperature was below 40° was April 16th.