

them occur the words **ΧΡΗΣΤΗ ΧΑΙΡΕ**, and this spelling of the name of Christ seems usually to be earlier than the fourth century.

East of Jordan, Greek texts are also uncommon south of Bashan. The dedication of the temple at Philadelphia, and the two important texts at Gerasa (Christian) are among the earliest known. Prof. Ramsay has kindly translated the text which I discovered at Philadelphia.

"Aurelius Victorianus did honour to Gaius Julius Victor (Junianus?) of the tenth legion Fretensis Gordiana."

This is therefore one of the memorials of Roman officers, common in Bashan, and belongs to the third century A.D.

With exception of a few scattered letters, the only other text which I found in Gilead was at *Umm el Buruk*, where "Antonius Rufus set up to himself at his own expense" a winged tablet which is partly defaced.

The abundance of texts in Bashan, and in Syria, seems to show that about the Christian era the Decapolis must have had a much larger Greek population than existed in Western Palestine; and in the Byzantine age the Greek population seems to have been either stronger, or more civilised than that of Southern Palestine, both in Northern Syria and in Bashan and Northern Gilead.

NOTES ON TELL EL HESY.

By Major C. R. CONDER, R.E.

MR. BLISS has given us a clear account of his excavations, and has shown the antiquity of this site. The Tell occupies about two acres, and seems to have been the fortress of the town. The study of the inscriptions does not disagree with the dates assigned to the pottery, but seems to forbid the supposition that the place was abandoned in 500 B.C. If, as I have proposed, this be the site of Lachish, we have in the Onomasticon the statement that it was still a town in the fourth century A.D., and in the Book of Nehemiah we find it inhabited at least as late as 445 B.C. (Neh. xi, 30), while some of the pottery may be as late as 350 B.C. The Greek inscription appears to me to be clearly later than 300 B.C., and I believe Prof. Ramsey would assign it a yet later date. Anyone acquainted with the Greek texts of the time of Psammetichus (600 B.C., or later) will recognise how much later that found at Tell el Hesay must be, and the Hebrew jar handle should, I believe, be dated about 400 B.C.

The scarabs are evidence of the *earliest* but not of the *latest* date assignable. They may have been kept for centuries before they were lost, and one of Amenophis II (1540 B.C.) occurs much higher up than the Zimridi tablet (1480-40 B.C.). Such considerations lead me to propose some slight modifications in the dates proposed by Mr. Bliss, and to carry down the history of the Tell to at least the Hasmonean age, when the

Greek influence began to be so strongly felt in Palestine, and perhaps even later.

At the bottom of the Tell we have bronze implements of early date, judging from the percentage of the tin, and a tablet dating from the 14th century B.C., when the Canaanites inhabited the site. The layer of charcoal and lime dust may perhaps represent the burning of the city by the 'Abiri or Hebrews. Then follows a depth of 20 feet in which scarabs occur, from the 18th down to the 22nd dynasty, carrying the history to Solomon's time; and with these a Phœnician text which may be about the same date or later. Above this level the Greek pottery begins to appear, and the Hebrew text and the Greek, which carries us perhaps through the period of restoration under Nehemiah, and down to the third century B.C. The Greek pottery continues to some ten feet beneath the surface, after which only mud buildings seem to underly the Arab graves. The negative evidence of finding no coins might be contradicted by further excavation in the remaining two-thirds of the mound.

The discovery of the bones of a buffaloe (*jamás*) at great depth is curious. This Persian animal is generally thought not to have been introduced into Palestine until after the Moslem conquest of Persia. Either this conclusion is wrong, or the bones have been buried or worked down from above, or they belong to some other species, not that now found in the country.

Dr. Sayce appears to acknowledge that the Zimridi tablet is difficult to read, and that his translation is not certain. The reason why that which I have offered differs so much from his is, that my study of the cast led me to suppose that the signs were in many cases not those which he gives, as will be seen in the facsimile copy. His first line seems to me too long for the tablet, but these are points which study of the original, by a careful and experienced specialist, alone could decide.

The most remarkable of the scarabs is Fig. 115; and, having by the kindness of Mr. Bliss been enabled to study the original, I can bear witness to the faithful character of the copy. He appears to me to be probably correct in representing the lowest emblem in the middle row as a hawk with the double crown of Egypt, and the emblems above it would in this case be probably of Egyptian origin. But the emblems at the sides do not appear to be Egyptian, and are very like Hittite.



They occur vertically in the text, that here shown to the left being at the top, and they may be compared as follows, beginning from the left:—

No. 1 is like the tall hat, which I believe to have had the sound *Ko* or *Ku*, and the meaning "king" in Hittite.

No. 2 is just like the Hittite and Cypriote *Mo*, for the demonstrative or the first person singular in Hittite.

No. 3 is a bud as in Hittite, the Cypriote *Bu* or *Pu*—a demonstrative pronoun.

No. 4 is like the Hittite and Cuneiform emblem *Dim*, which occurs on the bilingual of Tarkondemos.

No. 5 is the tall vase not uncommon in the Hittite, to which I have proposed to give the sound *Pe*, and to regard it as the nominative definite.

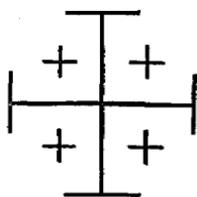
We should thus obtain the reading *Ko-mo bu Dim-pe*, "Of my king this (is) the seal." This would indicate a Hittite population at Lachish about 1500 B.C. or earlier, who were subject to an Egyptian overlord, and added a native inscription to the royal seal. There is nothing improbable in this view, when we remember that the Hittites lived not far off at Hebron in the time of Abraham, and that the Hyksos are thought to have belonged to the same stock, and adored the same God (Set) worshipped by the Hittites. This seal may be the oldest object found at Tell el Hesi.

4th June, 1894.

NOTES ON HERR VON SCHICK'S PAPER ON THE JERUSALEM CROSS.

By Major C. R. CONDER, R.E.

THE representation of the Jerusalem Cross is not correct. The crosslets are plain, and the crutches of the central cross are much longer.



It is not improbable that this cross was older than the Crusades, for it has the Greek not the Latin form.

A number of crosses of all forms will be found in the "Survey Memoirs," chiefly Greek, and taken from lintel stones in monasteries and chapels; but none of them have the crutch form. The Calvary Cross (*see* Deir ul Kal'ah) is not noticed by Mr. Schick, and I only found it once.

If the so-called *Cruz Ansata* of Egypt (the *Ankh* or symbol of life held in the hand of deities) be really a cross, it should not be forgotten that the Maltese cross  is found hung, with other charms, to the neck of Assyrian Kings, whose statues are in the British Museum. The Anchorites' crosses from Egypt have not the Jerusalem form. Of the