

and from the main line of communication throughout Syria, north and south by Damascus and Hamah.

"I may perhaps note that, in the opinions of engineers, a light steam tram is considered far better fitted in the first instance for a semi-civilised country than a heavy line requiring greater initial expenditure.

"Heartily wishing success to a scheme which appears to be founded on sound principles, and supported by influential and able men,

"I remain, your obedient servant,

"CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieut. R.E."

THE EMPIRE OF THE HITTITES.

Reprinted from the Times of January 23rd, 1880.

ONE of the most curious results of modern research has been a belief in the existence of a great and influential Empire in Western Asia, the very existence of which had been forgotten in the days of classical antiquity. Even the name of the people who founded it, the Hittites, was known only from a few stray notices in the Old Testament, and none suspected that it had once been a name of power and terror to the nations of the ancient East. We hear in Genesis of a small and obscure Hittite tribe which inhabited the south of Palestine in Patriarchal times, and whose literary character might perhaps have been guessed from the title Kirjath-Sepher, or "Booktown," given to their capital Debir, west of Hebron. Twice, again, in the Book of Kings is mention made of the "Kings of the Hittites"—once as purchasers of the horses imported from Egypt by the merchants of Solomon (1 Kings, x. 29), and once as the dangerous rivals of the Syrian Monarch (2. Kings, vii. 6). So little, however, was known of their history, so utterly ignored was their existence by Greek and Latin writers, that Professor F. Newman once urged these two references as evidences of the unhistorical character of the passages in which they occur.

But the very statements which Professor Newman believed to damage the truth of the Biblical narrative have been turned into arguments in its favour. The kings of the Hittites not only existed, but were powerful enough to threaten Assyria on the one hand and Egypt on the other, and to carry the arts and culture of the Euphrates to the Euxine and Ægean Seas. The Hittites, called Kheta by the Egyptians and Khatti by the Assyrians, first appear on the monuments of the Egyptian monarch Thothmes III., in the 16th century before the Christian era. Thothmes had reduced the greater part of Western Asia beneath his rule; Nineveh and Babylon paid him tribute, and the Hittites, who occupied the north of Syria, formed part of his empire. It is probable that they had but recently established themselves so far to the south; at all events their place is taken by the inhabitants of Aram-naharaim or Mesopotamia in the wars of Thothmes I., and by the Rotennu or

Semitic Syrians in the wars of Thothmes II. Henceforward for several centuries they are the most formidable antagonists of the Egyptian monarchy.

The two centres of their power were Carchemish on the Euphrates and Kadesh, the "Holy" City, on the Orontes. Amen-em-heb, an officer of Thothmes III., tells us how he had brought spoil and captives from the land of Carchemish and Aleppo, and how, during the siege of Kadesh, he had killed "a mare" sent by the King of Kadesh against the besieging forces, and had led the Egyptians through the breach they eventually made in "the new walls" of the town. The Hittites, too, took their share in the great confederacy which was defeated by Thothmes at the battle of Megiddo—an event which laid the whole of Palestine at the feet of the Egyptian conqueror.

The conquests of Thothmes, however, were not permanent. About two centuries afterwards, his successor, Seti I., was confronted by a formidable league of Syrian and Canaanite tribes, under the leadership of the Hittites. Once more the arms of the Egyptians triumphed, but the triumph was only momentary. Ramses II., the Sesostris of Greek historians, whose accession may be placed about 1400 B.C., found himself attacked in the fourth year of his reign by a wide-reaching confederacy of Asiatic nations, who all owned the supremacy of the Hittite princes of Carchemish and Kadesh. The Hittite monarch had gathered under his flag the tribes of Mesopotamia, of Western Armenia, and of Asia Minor. The story of the struggle has been recorded in a long epic by the contemporary court poet Pentaur. Ramses is there invested with the character and prowess of a divine hero; like the demigods of Homer, the gods fight on his behalf, and the fate of the whole war is made to depend on the might of his single arm. The battle raged round the walls of Kadesh till the Hittites, terrified by the superhuman deeds of the Egyptian monarch, fled precipitately and agreed to terms of peace. Such at least is the account of the epic writer; as a matter of fact, however, the contest was not decided till the 21st year of Ramses, when both sides, wearied out by the varying fortunes of a long war, determined to conclude a treaty. The Hittite text of this treaty was engraved on a silver plate and sent to Ramses by "the Grand-Duke of the Hittites, Kheta-Sira, by the hand of his herald Tartisbu and his herald Rames." The Egyptian translation of the treaty has been preserved, and we learn from it that an offensive and defensive alliance was formed between the rival monarchs, each of whom promised to come to the other's assistance in case of foreign attack, and to deliver up all political offenders or other criminals who may have fled from the one country into the other. The treaty seems to have been observed for about a century, when we find the Hittites and Egyptians again engaged in hostilities. Ramses III. (about 1280 B.C.) led the Egyptians as far as Carchemish itself, and returned home with spoil and prisoners from various Hittite towns. But the Hittites were no longer so powerful as they had been. The central authority had disappeared, and each of the chief cities was ruled

by an independent prince. Kadesh, too, seems to have passed into the hands of the Syrian, Carchemish from henceforth becoming the sole centre of the various Hittite tribes. Situated as it was on the Euphrates, it commanded the high road of commerce and war which led from Babylonia and Assyria into Asia Minor on the one side, and Palestine on the other. Driven back from the south by the rising Semitic kingdoms of Syria, the Hittites were forced to compensate themselves by conquests in the north and west. In the reign of the Assyrian monarch Tiglath-Pileser I. (B.C. 1130), they were still paramount from the Euphrates to Lebanon. They had subdued the Aramean tribes of Syria; Pethor, the home of Balaam, at the junction of the Sajur and the Euphrates, had become a Hittite city, and their sway extended as far as the Euxine. The Colchians and Urumians, who inhabited Western Armenia or Cappadocia, were tributary to the King of Carchemish and furnished him with troops, 4,000 of whom were defeated by the Assyrian invader. But from this time onward the power of the Hittites was on the wane. Threatened by the Arameans on the west and by the Assyrians on the east, they became more and more confined to the territory immediately surrounding Carchemish. The two Assyrian kings, Assur-natsirpal (B.C. 883—858) and his son Shalmaneser II. (B.C. 858—823), overthrew them and their allies, captured their cities, seized Pethor and the ford it commanded, and exacted an enormous tribute of gold, bronze, lead, precious stones and stuffs, and other objects from the wealthy inhabitants of Carchemish. After a respite granted by the temporary weakness of Assyria, the Hittites were once more attacked under Sargon; their last monarch, Pisiris, was defeated and slain (B.C. 717), and Carchemish made the seat of an Assyrian governor. The wars carried on by the Assyrians against Phœnicia soon afterwards caused the stream of trade to be diverted to the old Hittite capital, where merchants from all parts of the world met together. The maneh or maund of Carchemish became a standard of weight and money, and it was not until the fall of Assyria that the decline of the city can be said to have begun. At any rate, it was still considered the key of the countries beyond the Euphrates at the time when the ambition of Pharaoh Necho was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar. It seems to have been known in Greek times under the name of Hierapolis, the Sacred City of the Asiatic Goddess.

The site of Carchemish was long a hotly-debated question. Circesium was the spot usually selected, but the selection threw the geographical statements of the Assyrian inscriptions into hopeless confusion. M. Maspero next proposed Mumbij, the ancient Bambyce, a little to the east of Aleppo, but this site also, though better agreeing with the *data* of the inscriptions than Circesium, was not entirely satisfactory. The discovery of its real position is due to Mr. Skene, at that time British Consul at Aleppo, and the verification of the discovery was the last achievement of Mr. George Smith, the lamented Assyrian decipherer. On the western bank of the Euphrates, midway between the village of Sajur and Birejik, which now overlooks the ford over the Euphrates

traversed by the caravans, is a huge mound of earth, covering an area as large as that of Bloomsbury, and composed of the crumbling remains of the Hittite capital. The ruined walls and towers which still surround the mound, as well as fragments of masonry and sculpture found upon its surface, had struck Pococke and some others of our older travellers, and the ruins had been supposed to mark the site of Gerrhæ or Europus. We now know that they represent a far richer and more famous city than either of these, and that the relics preserved among them belong to a much more remote age than that of any Greek town. They go by the name of Jerabis, and the excavations which are at present being conducted in them under the direction of Mr. Consul Henderson have already resulted in the discovery of several interesting monuments, two of which may now be seen in the British Museum. A writer in the *Cologne Gazette*, quoted by us in our impression of January 1, says of the most recent excavations:—

“I have seen on the spot the following three monuments:—First, a large square limestone block; upon it is a high relief representing a lion stretched out at length, against which two persons are advancing. Secondly, the lower halves of two great basaltic blocks, representing in high relief the lower halves of three persons. Thirdly, a column-like stone of a similar kind, with an inscription on one side and on the other apparently the figure of a woman. The inscription is perfectly clear, and consists of the pictures of animals, animals' heads, and many other signs or characters which for the present are quite enigmatical. In spite of some similarities with the writing on the often-mentioned stones from Hamath, now preserved in the Stamboul Museum, the above inscription is not all in the same character or language as the latter. At first sight the costumes appear purely Assyrian, but on careful inspection numerous details are discovered which are not at all Assyrian. These monuments will probably soon be floating on rafts down the Euphrates, and then find their way over the sea to the British Museum. Mr. Henderson has broken new ground of the highest antiquity. We wish him every success in his further efforts.”

The recovery of Carchemish and the resuscitation of the Hittite Empire have led to results unexpectedly important to the history of Western writing and Western culture. Carchemish was a centre from which the art, the religion, and the civilisation of the East may have been carried through Asia Minor to the Ægean, and thence to Greece. Its inhabitants could further boast of belonging to a race which had achieved what it has been granted to but few to achieve—the invention of a system of writing. They used hieroglyphic characters for this purpose, some of which preserved their primitive pictorial forms, while others ceased to bear more than a faint resemblance to the objects they originally denoted. The characters are always engraved on stone in relief, from which we may infer that the first materials employed for writing were fusible tablets of metal, such as that on which the treaty of peace with the Egyptians was inscribed, or those which must once

have filled the niches observed by M. Renan in the cliffs of Syria. Among the clay impressions of seals inscribed with Egyptian and Phœnician legends which were found by Mr. Layard in the record chamber of Sennacherib's palace were some which bore characters unlike any ever noticed before. For many years these attracted little attention. In 1870, however, certain curiously inscribed stones (one of which had been observed by Burekhardt as far back as 1812) were discovered built into the walls of the bazaar at Hamah, the ancient Hamath, and partially published in the first statement of the Palestine Exploration Society. Squeezes and photographs of them were taken in the following year by Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, copies of which were published in Burton and Drake's "Unexplored Syria," together with an account of their history and character. Five short inscriptions were altogether brought to light, three of which are practically duplicates. In consequence of the discovery having been made at Hamah, the hieroglyphs of which the inscriptions consist were termed Hamathite, and it was found that they were identical with the mysterious characters on the seal impressions from Nineveh. Subsequently another inscription in the same characters was discovered at Aleppo, while a missionary—Mr. Davis—copied yet another, which was accompanied by a remarkable sculpture, in a wholly different part of Asia, the ancient Lycaonia. It thus became evident that the so-called Hamathite system of writing was not confined to Hamath and its neighbourhood, but must have been carried beyond the confines of Cilicia. This and other facts led to the belief that it was really of Hittite origin, and marked the presence of Hittite influence wherever it was found. The literary character of the Hittites was known from the Egyptian monuments, which, for instance, make mention of a certain "writer of books of the vile Kheta."

The discovery of Carchemish came most opportunely to confirm the belief. On the summit of the mound which covers its remains Mr. Smith noticed a broken statue, resembling in both dress and style of art the figures copied by Mr. Davis on the rocks of Ibreez in Lycaonia, and bearing an inscription in what we may now term Hittite hieroglyphs. Subsequent excavations on the same site have proved beyond question that these curious characters were the peculiar property of the Hittite race. The two monuments sent a few months ago from Jerabis to the British Museum are thickly covered with them, and show that the forms found on the stones of Hamath are later modifications, having somewhat the same relation to the older and more perfect forms of Carchemish that running hand has to printed type. What gives additional interest to these still undeciphered hieroglyphs is the probability that they are the source of the syllabary in the characters of which a large number of Cyprian Greek inscriptions are written as well as the legends on the inscribed objects found by Dr. Schliemann at Troy. This curious Cypriote syllabary, as it is called, must once have been widely used throughout Asia Minor, until superseded by the simpler Phœnician alphabet. The local alphabets of Lycia, Caria, and other districts, however, continued

to use some of the older characters, for which there were no equivalents among the Græco-Phœnician letters.

If the origin of the Cypriote syllabary is to be sought in the hieroglyphs of Carchemish, the presumption arises that Hittite influence must once have extended into Asia Minor. This Mr. Sayce has lately proved to be the case. He has pointed out that certain remarkable sculptures at Eyuk and Boghar Keui (possibly the ancient Pteria), on the Eastern bank of the Halys, are shown by their style, dress, and general characteristics to be of Hittite derivation. What is more, they are accompanied by inscriptions in Hittite characters. The Hittite sculpture discovered by Mr. Davis in Lycaonia has already been noticed, and two more Hittite monuments are now known to exist in the same locality. The silver mines near which they are found were probably the attraction which brought their engravers to the spot. Another Hittite monument was met with by Perrot, forming part of an old fort which commanded the ancient road from Pessinus to Ancyra. But the most remarkable discovery of all still remains to be mentioned. The famous figures sculptured above the roads from Ephesus to Phocæa and from Smyrna to Sardes, which Herodotus (II., 106) believed to represent the Egyptian Sesostris, turn out to be memorials of his enemies, the Hittites. The figures were set up at the place where the two roads met, in a ravine now called Karabel, and the spears they had in their hands served as signposts, the one pointing to Ephesus, the other to Smyrna. One of them has been known for more than forty years; the other, which is the one more particularly described by Herodotus, has been but recently brought to light. Both, however, are equally Hittite, and the inscription which still remains on the first of them is written in Hittite hieroglyphs.

Here, then, we have evidence that the Hittites once made their way as far as the Ægean. We can trace them by the monuments they have left behind to the Black Sea on the one hand, and to Lydia on the other. In moving westward they followed two paths, the northern one along which Croesus afterwards marched against Cyrus, and the southern one subsequently traversed by Xenophon and the Ten Thousand. Both met in Sardes, and here in the capital of Lydia was the centre from which Hittite influence in the west may have radiated, if it ever did so at all. But of this there can be no doubt. The peculiar art of Asia Minor has long excited the interest and curiosity of archæologists. It is based on the art of Assyria, but has undergone certain changes and modifications which give it a very special form. In the opinion of some its origin has been discovered. They allege that it was introduced by the Hittites, and that the spot where it first took its peculiar shape was the Hittite capital Carchemish. Here Assyrian and Egyptian styles met together, and were modified by the genius of an alien people. The sphinx and solar disk were borrowed from Egypt, almost all else from Nineveh. Perhaps one of the most curious inventions of the Hittite artists was the double-headed eagle, which may be seen among the sculptures of Eyuk and Boghar Keui, and which after becoming the symbol of the Seljuk Sultans is now the crest of two Teutonic Empires.

But the influence of Hittite art was not confined to Asia Minor. It spread from thence to the islands of the Archipelago and to Greece itself. There is much in the art of early Greece, more especially as displayed in objects lately found at Mycenæ and elsewhere, which cannot be derived from a Phœnician source, and it is just this element which resembles the Hittite art of Asia Minor. The old legends which brought Pelops and his riches from the banks of the Pactolus had, after all, a grain of truth at their bottom. The germs of Greek art may have all come from Assyria; but they came by two different paths, partly through the hands of the Phœnicians, partly through those of the Hittites.

What they were in race and language is still unknown, and can only be determined when the excavations at Jerabis have been carried further, and the discovery of more inscriptions has furnished us with means of deciphering them. Mr. Dunbar Heath, indeed, fancies that they spoke an Aramean language, but their proper names as recorded on the monuments of Assyria and Egypt are, as Brugsch Bey has already observed, not Semitic. An inspection of the inscriptions, however, seems to show that they marked the relations of grammar by the aid of suffixes, and beyond this we cannot at present go. It is possible that, like the dialect of the mysterious cuneiform inscriptions of Van, the language they spoke belonged to a family of speech now represented by Georgian. In the words of an eminent Egyptian scholar, "future discoveries will afford convincing proofs" that this Empire, "in the highest antiquity, was of an importance which we can now only guess at."

ERRATA—"QUARTERLY STATEMENT," 1879.

- P. 128, line 26, for "haroob" read "karoobah."
 P. ,, ,, 39, after "fixes" read "in."
 P. ,, ,, 41, for "risk" read "the risk."
 P. 129, ,, 36, for "best" read "first."
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