

stones, and sometimes in such numbers as to have the appearance of inscriptions.

The German Palestine Society published a number of these tribe marks in 1879 with the title *Inschriften*, including many of the marks above given. The distinction between real inscriptions and collections of tribe marks is, however, simple, because Nabathean and Himyaritic inscriptions are written in regular lines.

It is natural that some of these marks should originate from a southern Semitic alphabet, because the stronger Arab tribes which exist in a nomadic condition in Syria originate from Yemen and the Nejed. They began to push northwards a little after the Christian era, and have gone on migrating in this direction ever since. We should naturally expect inscriptions in the same character east of Jordan, and, as mentioned in another paper, four such inscriptions have recently been found, but these belong probably to the time of the semi-civilisation when Zenobia ruled in Palmyra; for the majority of the Bedawin share the peculiarity of which Muhammed was proud, being quite unable to write or read. The list of tribe marks is by no means as perfect as could be desired, but it is sufficiently long to indicate clearly the origin of these signs. It is noticeable, however, that while the 'Adwân and Beni Sakhr marks are letters of the south Semitic alphabet, the Ausâm (pl. of Wusm) of the Ajermeh and other old Belka tribes are nearer to the Nabathean and Thamudite. The Belka tribes are probably of the old Nabathean stock, but the dominant tribes—Beni, Sakhr, and 'Adwân—immigrated from Arabia some three centuries ago. The distinction is thus natural and very instructive.

C. R. C.

APHEK.

THIS word in Syriac is said to mean "springs." At Afka on Lebanon magnificent springs occur, as also at 'Ain Fiji, and at Fikieh. The Aphek east of the Sea of Galilee is also in a situation with water, and the derivation seems thus to suggest that other Apheks would be at or near springs.

In Judah we have an Aphek, or Aphekah (Josh. xii, 18; 15, 53; 1 Sam. iv, 1), which some writers have conjectured to be the present Kustul. There is no connection of name, and nothing beyond an insignificant land spring, at that place. The Aphek of Joshua xii, 18 may be a northern Aphek near or on Gilboa, perhaps Fukû'a (1 Sam. xxix, 1), or Fûleh, near the well-watered valley of Jezreel. The Aphek of Joshua xv, 53 was not far from Beth Tappuah (Tuffûh, near Hebron) and Humtah (perhaps Khamasa). The Aphek of 1 Samuel iv, 1 was on the way from Mizpeh to Philistia. It may perhaps be thought to be the present Wad Fukîn, the Pekiuin of the Talmud, which is close to Khamasa, and situated in a remarkably well-watered valley beside one of the main high roads

from Philistia to Jerusalem. It is curious to note that there is a Fikieh near Bâb el Wâd, on the road from Ramleh to Jerusalem, and a convent of El 'Azar east of it near Abu Ghosh. These may represent an early tradition of the episode of 1 Samuel iv, being sites respectively for Aphek and Ebenezer; but the Christian origin of the latter site, and the fact that Fikieh is not near any spring, seem to preclude the acceptance of these sites as genuine. If, however, a line be drawn from Neby Samwil through Deir el 'Azar south-west it nearly strikes 'Aslîn, which has been thought to be Ashnah (Josh. xv, 33), a name very close to Shen. Ebenezer was between Mizpeh and Shen.

No real trace of Ebenezer has yet been found, and the whole topography of the episode is vague. Deir el 'Azar occupies a very prominent site looking down towards the plain of Sharon. The ruins, which I revisited in 1881, present heaps of stones and large cisterns. It seems to me probable that it was once supposed to be the site of Ebenezer, and that the Philistine camp was then supposed to have been in the Merj Fikieh at the bottom of the pass. I have pointed out that Jerome places Ebenezer at Dier Abân, no doubt supposing 'Ain Shems to be Shen; but this tradition seems far less probable than even the localisation now suggested. The evidence is perhaps hardly strong enough to allow of our considering Deir el 'Azar to be the real Ebenezer, but its claims ought not to be forgotten, as 'Azar and Ezer are the same word.

C. R. C.

HAZOR.

THIS name, so common in the old nomenclature of Palestine, signifies "enclosure," and has been thought to refer to cattle-yards. The aboriginal Avim "dwelt in Hazarim" (Deut. ii, 23), but the name Baal Hazor suggests a religious enclosure. In the vicinity of Kefrein we found a Tell Mahder, the name of which is radically the same as the Hebrew Hazor. The top of the Tell is surrounded by a great wall of stones piled up in a circle. Many such circles, some of great size, occur on the plateau above, and appear to be very ancient. It may be suggested that the name Hazor applied to such circles, and that they had (as in other lands) a sacred origin.

C. R. C.

DIBLATHAIM,

"THE two cakes," or discs, was a town of Moab (Jer. xlvi, 32), and Diblath (now *Dibî*) of Galilee (Ezek. vi, 14). The name is a very curious one, and occurs on the Moabite Stone. Now in Moab we discovered immense stone discs resembling millstones, but not pierced in the middle, and