

There is another point, perhaps not very important but yet worth noting. Josephus (who, however, had only the Old Testament to guide him) calls the Nameless City Ramah. This might be his rendering of Arim, the later form of Jearim (Ezra ii, 25). From Kirjath-Jearim the route which would most easily be followed is along the ancient highway which leads east to El Khudr, and joins the Hebron road near that town: thence Saul would go north and pass naturally by Rachel's tomb (1 Sam. x, 2). As to the return, it seems to me as clear as anything can well be that it was to Gibeah of Saul, called in full Gibeah ha Elohim, a sacred place where there was a "garrison" (Speaker's Commentary would render "pillar") of the Philistines. The word here is נֶצֶב as in 1 Samuel xiii, 3, and it is identical with the Arabic *Nusb*, which means in the Korân and in common use a menhir and nothing else. There was such a Netzeb at Geba as mentioned in the latter passage, and there seems no reason why the place should not be the same in both cases, viz., *Jeb'a* near Michmash.

Mr. Shapira's rendering of 1 Samuel x, 2 has no particular value, because it is not the meaning of the Hebrew. Mr. T. Saunders only reproduces very old-fashioned views as to Ramah founded on the facts that Samuel had an ancestor named Zuph, a man of Mount Ephraim (1 Sam. i, 1), and that Ramah and Bethlehem are connected in the New Testament (Matt. ii, 18). It is surely quite impossible to extend Mount Ephraim so far south as Mr. Saunders would do. The latter gentleman has, however, shown so little respect for either topography or philology in his theories that, in my opinion, he should not be cited as an authority. Mr. Birch's objections to this view as to Ramathaim-Zophim seem to me to be very strong.

C. R. C.

SUPPOSED NABATHEAN AND HIMYARITIC TEXTS FROM MEDEBA.

3rd August, 1883

THESE four inscriptions are preserved in the Latin Patriarchate at Jerusalem, where I saw and copied them in 1881. They had been sent by the Latin missionaries from Medeba, east of Jordan, and were discovered early in 1881. Visiting Medeba in August of the same year I was informed that they had all been found by excavation, or amid heaps of fallen stones, when the newly-established Latin colony, at this ruined city, was engaged in building up rude drystone enclosures for their cattle. It is possibly one of these stones which Canon Tristram saw in 1872, and which he mentions of an illegible Phœnician text (many of the letters being similar to those of the Phœnician alphabet). He saw also Latin and Greek texts, which seem to have been since removed or destroyed ("Land of Moab," p. 311).

These inscriptions are in characters quite different, as a rule, from the alphabet of the "Moabite pottery;" and it does not appear that they have ever passed through the hands of any person interested in the said

pottery. No. I is on a limestone slab of rude shape, cracked on the right, and measuring 15 inches in length by 12 inches in height, the text occupying about 5 inches by 8 inches. It seems nearest the Sinaitic.

No. I.

No. II.

No. III.

No. IV.

No. II is on another limestone slab, 20 inches long and 8 inches high. The text occupies 18 inches by 3 inches. This is perhaps the most curious of the four.

No. III is much better preserved than the two preceding, and the letters are closely like the forms of the Himyaritic or Sabean alphabet. The stone, also a slab of limestone, is 11 inches long and 8 inches high; the text occupies 9 inches by 4 inches.

No. IV, also well preserved, is on a slab 12 inches by 9 inches, and the text occupies 9 inches by 6 inches. It approaches Palmyrene.

The Latin ecclesiastics offered no opinion as to these stones, but were convinced that they were genuine inscriptions. They had not, I understood, shown them to any good archaeological authority, but most courteously allowed me to measure and copy the inscriptions, and said that they would be glad to be informed of their value. I forwarded a copy at once to England for the examination of scholars, but it would seem to have been lost in the post, as it excited no interest.

As regards the likelihood of the genuineness of the inscriptions, it should be noticed that Medeba was an important town in the second century, and as late at least as the fifth. The immigration of Arab tribes from Yemen, in the second century A.D., is well known to have led to the settlement of the Beni Ghassân tribe in the Hauran, and no doubt at the same time other Arab tribes would have invaded the Moab plateau round Medeba. There are many indications of Himyar and Sabean influence in the district,

including legends of the Tobba Queen Belkis, together with the survival of the word *Nejis*, used in southern Arabic and in Æthiopic for a king or ruler. There is a ruin called *Homrtyeh*, or "Himyarite," and another, *Kusr el Homrah*, which (as there is no red colour at the place) probably means the "Himyarite palace." This last name applies to a building close to Hesbân, on the north. These remarks apply specially to No. 3; for the others are nearer Nabathean than to Sabean.

A favourable opinion as to the value of the texts has been given by the Rev. Isaac Taylor, in a private letter to me; but he remarks (as I had also done in writing to him) that no recognised alphabet contains all the letters of either of the texts.

The discovery of inscriptions by Halevy in Yemen, concerning which many learned papers by Captain Prideaux will be found in the "Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology" (Vols. II, IV, V, VI), has thrown a flood of light on the history of the southern Semitic alphabet, and the present texts may perhaps serve to form some kind of link with the Nabathean and Palmyrene. A few notes are here hazarded, with a list of the symbols, which may be useful to any scholar who is able to decipher the inscriptions.

- 1  In No. 3, line 2, is perhaps the *Aleph*, as in Himyarite and in the Safa inscriptions.
- 2  In No. 2, line 2, and No. 4, line 3, is perhaps the *Beth*, as in Sabean, or perhaps *Tau*, as in Nabathean.
- 3  In No. 2, resembles somewhat the Æthiopic *Beth*, but is also like the Sassanian *Heh* of the fourth century A.D.
- 4  In No. 4, line 2, possibly the *Daleth*, as in the Haurân, or at 'Arâk el Emîr.
- 5  In No. 2, perhaps the *Gimel*, as in Æthiopic. It may, however, be a *Daleth*, as in Nabathean of the fourth century A.D.
- 6  In No. 3 and No. 4, appears to be the Nabathean *Heh*; the right hand form might, however, be a Nabathean *Shin*.
- 7  In No. 3, line 1. This is the Himyarite *Vau*. It is also a sign common in Cypriote and Lycian as *T*. The Safa *Vau* seems to occur as the last letter of No. IV.
- 8  In No. 4, might be the Nabathean or Sabean *Nun*; it is also possibly *Lam*.
- 9  In No. 2, line 1, resembles the Æthiopic *Zain* and *Dhal*, which are letters originally identical. It is not unlike the Palmyrene *Tzadi*.
- 10  In No. 1, No. 2, and No. 4, is the Nabathean *Gimel*. Also found in Palmyrene and other Aramaic alphabets. In Aramean, however, the *Yod* takes this form.
- 11  In No. 3, lines 2 and 4, is one form of the Himyarite *Yod*. It only occurs in this inscription, which is throughout nearest to the south Semitic types.
- 12  In No. 2, line 2, is not unlike the Æthiopic *Caph*. It may be a *Samech*, or may be the same as No. 2.
- 13  In No. 1 (possibly in No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4), seems to resemble one Himyaritic form of *Lamed*.

- 14  In No. 1 and No. 2, resembles the Nabathean *Lamed*.
- 15  On No. 3 only (line 2), is the very distinctive Himyarite *Mem*.
- 16  On No. 3 only (lines 1 and 2), is probably the Himyaritic *Nun*.
- 17  On No. 1 resembles the Sabean and Aethiopic *Nun*. It is, perhaps, the same as No. 8, though the top stroke is longer.
- 18  On No. 2, line 2, though like the early Hebrew *Caph*, is probably the *Heh*, as at Safa, and in Sabean.
- 19  In Nos. 2 and 3, is the Semitic *Ain* common to many alphabets distinctive as not Aramean. It is small and round as in Sabean.
- 20  (Compare 14) on No. 1, resembles a Nabathean *Peh*. But it is most probably a *Lamed*.
- 21  In No. 1, might be the *Koph*, or perhaps *Yod*, or even *Vau*, as in south Semitic alphabets.
- 22  No. 1, line 2, is like the *Resh* on Sassanian coins of the fourth century, or the *Vau* of the same alphabets.
- 23  No. 3 and No. 4, probably the Himyarite *Resh*, as in alphabets derived from the Tyrian.
- 24  No. 3 might also be *Beth* or *Koph* in Himyarite, or in Nabathean respectively.
- 25  No. 3 and No. 4 is the *Tau* in many Semitic alphabets. It is distinctive as not having the Aramean form.
- 26  On No. 1 (see 13). Might be the *Heh*, as in Aethiopic, or possibly the same as in line 2, a *Lamed*.
- 27  On No. 1, is something like a *Resh* in Himyaritic, differing from 23. This is a form on the Sinaitic inscriptions also.
- 28  Might be a *Trade* or *Shin*. There are several other letters of somewhat similar form, such as the Palmyrene *Zain*.
- 29  On No. 1, line 1, is most like a *Caph* in Nabathean, or might be perhaps a *Shin*. The ordinary *Shin* of the Sabean alphabet is not found.
- 30  An extraordinary form on No. 1. Perhaps a Nabathean *Shin*.
- 31  This approaches the *Beth* in Nabathean, and in Palmyrene. It may be a *Nun*, as at 'Arak el Emr.
- 32  Perhaps *Tsadi*, as in Palmyrene, and in Sassanian inscriptions.
- 33  Perhaps a rude *Aleph*. See Nos. 6 and 37.
- 34  Possibly a form of *Samech*, as in Tyrian alphabets.
- 35  Is nearest to the Aethiopic *Lamed*, or may perhaps be a *Gimel*, or a *Samech*.
- 36  Possibly another *Lamed*, or *Resh*, as in Sabean reversed.
- 37  In No. 4 (and perhaps in No. 1) might be an *Aleph*.

- 38 | In Nos. 2 and 4, is a numeral (No. 1) in Sabean texts. It might also be a form of *Zain*, as in Palmyrene.
- 39 | Perhaps a careless *Zain*, as in Palmyrene.
- 40 | Perhaps a careless *Yod*, but is now probably a *Gimel*. In No. 4, lines 1 and 3, a somewhat similar letter with the cross strokes rising, is, perhaps, the Aramean distinctive form of *Ain*.

Some margin must be allowed for carelessness, for the inscriptions are not very well executed on the whole. No. I seems nearest to Nabathean, and No. III to Sabean, and each text must of course be considered separately. As the genuineness of the texts may possibly be called in question it should be noted that forms 6, 15, 21, 24, 31, occur on the Moabite pottery. They were pointed out during the controversy as showing the pottery to be forged; because they were there found, not as in the present instance with the Himyaritic and Aramean forms, but with the alphabet of the Moabite Stone, which was considered impossible.

The inscriptions should also be compared with the Palmyrene, and (as Rev. Isaac Taylor points out) with the Proto-Pehlevi. Forms 2, 4, 10, 14, 31, 32, and 38 have much in common with the Palmyrene, and with early alphabets of the second century A.D., from which modern square Hebrew is supposed to have developed (although perhaps earlier than is sometimes admitted). In Zend and in Pehlevi there are also forms worthy of consideration, as resembling Nos. 5, 22, 32.

The situation of Medeba gives great interest to the inquiry; for on the one hand we have the inscriptions of Sinai and of Arabia to compare, and on the other those of Palmyra, and the Sâfa, from the first to the third centuries A.D. As far as I have been able to ascertain no such inscriptions have before been found in the Belka, though Nabathean inscriptions of the Hauran were recovered by De Vogüé. We have a good many Greek inscriptions at Jerâsh and elsewhere, and to these the Moabite Stone and the Tyrus inscription must be added;¹ but as yet we have no relics of the great age of the Beni Ghassân and of Queen Zenobia, which we should naturally expect to be represented by inscriptions in Moab. If scholars are satisfied of the genuineness of these four inscriptions, casts can no doubt be procured, but as they are very legible on the whole, I believe the copies will be found fairly accurate.

It should be noted that the Palmyrene and Iranian alphabets and square Hebrew come from the Aramean branch of the Semitic alphabets, with Nabathean, Thamudite, and the scripts of Petra and Sinai. The Sinaitic inscriptions are as late as the fifth century A.D., and are very like the present inscriptions Nos. I, II, IV. The south Semitic alphabets were

¹ The Tyrus text is of great value, being probably dated as 176 B.C. It only contains five letters, the first of which is the Phœnician *'Ain*, and the fourth the Phœnician *Yod*. The second, third, and fifth letters are, on the other hand, of the Nabathean, Palmyrene, or square Hebrew type. Thus the inscription seems to blend the two branches of the Semitic alphabet together, which may also prove the case in the present text, No. II.

EGYPTIAN.

HITTITE.

EGYPTIAN.

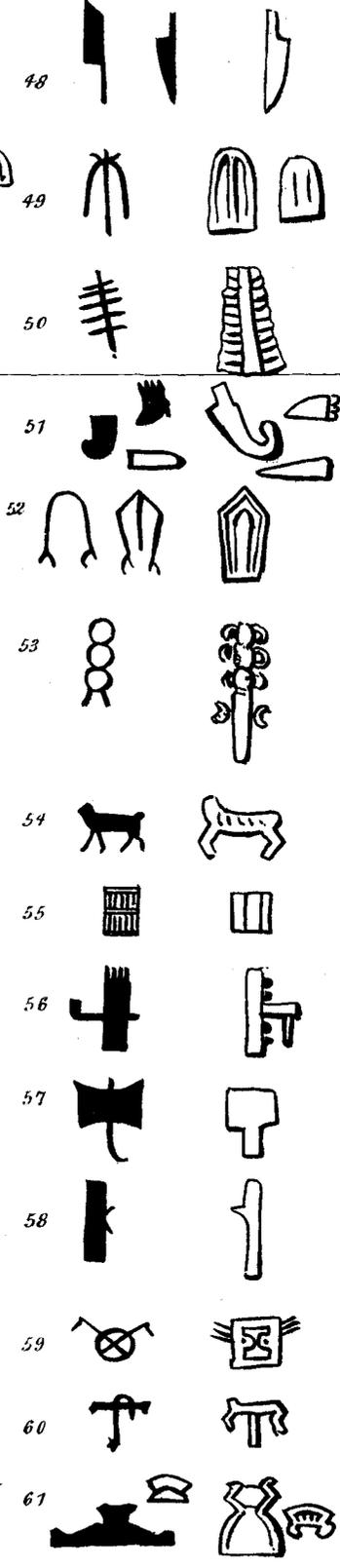
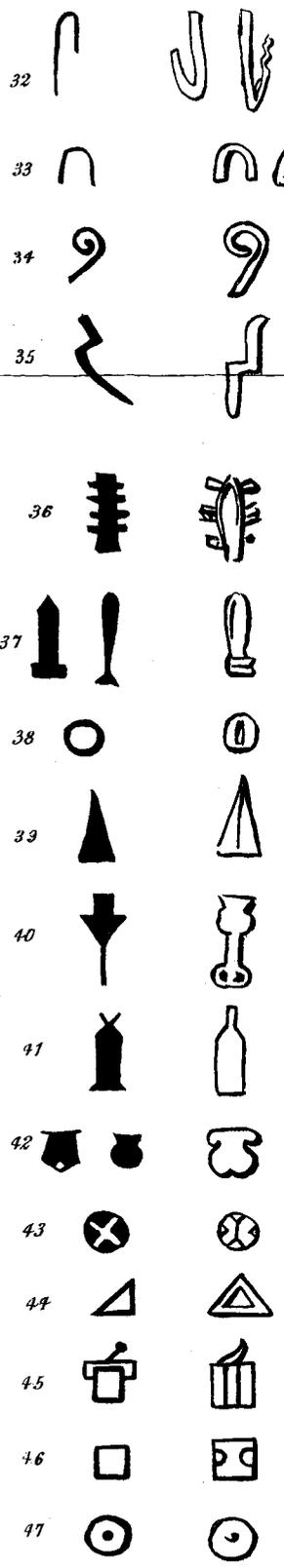
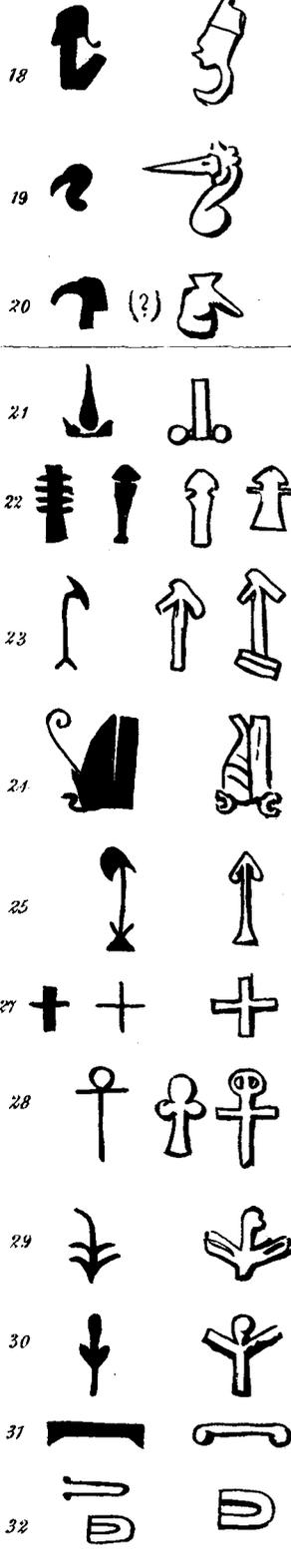
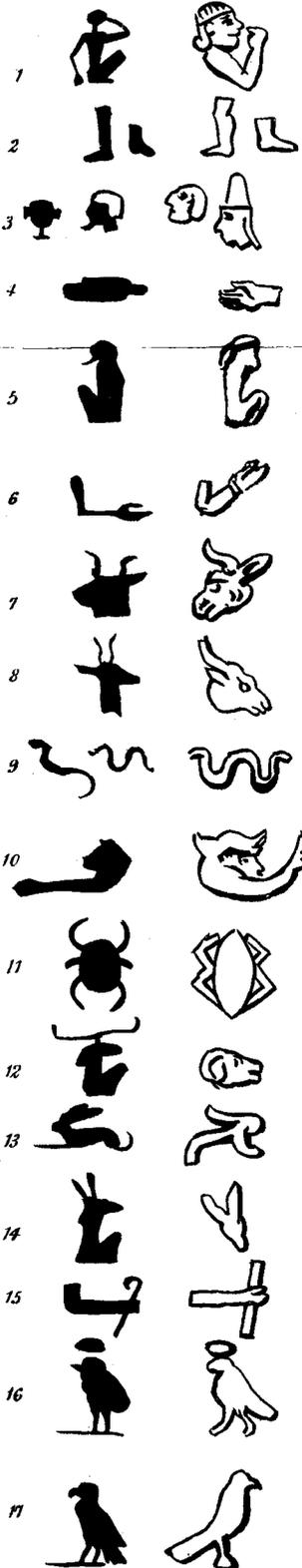
HITTITE.

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distinctly derived, and No. III is more distinctly of Southern origin. No. IV seems nearest Palmyrene. No. II contains Aramean forms, together with the older form of the 'Ain, which is not Aramean. The Aramean 'Ain occurs in No. IV.

I would note, finally, that the Moabite Arabs use Himyaritic and Nabathean letters as *Ausdm*, or tribe marks (as I hope to show in "Heth and Moab"). These must not be mistaken for inscriptions, where they are found (as is often the case) cut in numbers on some monument or sacred stone. It is not difficult to make the distinction, partly because the tribe marks are cut irregularly and not in lines, partly because they are generally recent and very rudely cut. Nevertheless this mistake has been made by more than one traveller in Moab and in Arabia.

C. R. C.

THE HAMATHITE INSCRIPTIONS.

1st September, 1883.

IN the last *Quarterly Statement* (p. 133) I ventured to draw attention to the similarities of the Hittite and of the earliest Egyptian hieroglyphics. I have since been encouraged to pursue the comparison further, and to draw up a list of sixty-one Hittite symbols, for which a parallel may be found in Egyptian. I am aware of the comparisons made by Professor Sayce between the Lycian, Cypriote, and Hittite symbols; but it seems possible that the suggestion, to which I am now anxious to draw the attention of Egyptologists, will not ultimately conflict with these comparisons. I am also aware that the Hittite symbols have been compared with hieratic, without any very useful result; but it seems more likely that the key of one monumental system should be found in another, than that the monumental Hittite symbols should resemble that literary character which derives from the hieroglyphic or monumental Egyptian.

Among the symbols compared many of the Egyptian are ideographic signs, or determinatives, while others are well-known alphabetic forms; but as these occur together in Egyptian they may perhaps do so also in Hittite, and the comparison does not therefore seem to be vitiated. It is true that many normal Egyptian forms (such as the *Mem*, the *Caph*, the *Resh*) are not apparently traceable on the Hittite texts; but, on the other hand, the signs commonest in Hittite seem, as a rule, to be equivalent to common Egyptian symbols. The comparatively small number of signs used in Hittite reminds us of the selection by Thothmes III of a few of the commonest Egyptian symbols in his transliteration of the names of Semitic towns in the Karnak lists.

A few notes may be added as to some of the most interesting of these comparisons, but first I would note that all the Hittite texts as yet published appear to be written *boustrophedon*, or in lines alternately from left to right and from right to left. This has already been remarked in