

No. 5. Found at Konia, in Asia Minor. (See plate.)—This large scarabæoid gem, perforated lengthways for suspension, is formed of beautifully iridescent rock crystal. Upon it is represented the four-winged Assyro-Babylonian god Merodach, who, although the stone is slightly damaged, Professor Sayce considers is strangling in either hand the bird-demons. "This device," the Professor adds, "passed through Phœnicia to early Greece. Below Merodach, from which it is divided by double horizontal lines, is a bird, perhaps an eagle, on either side, divided by two vertical lines, the Egyptian symbol *Ankh*, the sign of life.

No. 7. Found at Beyrût.—A pierced scarabæoid. On it is a winged sphinx, with antelope's head, standing. Behind, a winged deity. This specimen is in poor preservation, but is remarkable on account of its material, which is malachite, a substance very rarely used by the ancients. Phœnician work.

No. 8. Found near Beyrût.—Scarabæoid of opaque white chalcedony. On it a bull, in front an amulet, perhaps intended to represent the solar disk. Good Græco-Phœnician work.

No. 9. From Beyrût.—Small scarabæoid of pale blue opaque chalcedony. On it a lotus flower; on either side, and facing it, a vulture with expanded wings. Beneath these a striated band. Below this a star, upon either side of which is a winged uræus, and again below, a scarab with expanded wings. Phœnician work.

No. 10. Coast of Syria. From the collection of M. Perétié. (See plate.)—This is a bead of white opaque gypsum. It bears an inscription of eight letters, the meaning of which has hitherto defied elucidation. Professors Wright, Robertson Smith, and Sayce are alike unable to interpret it, but the latter thinks it may be of Gnostic origin.

NOTES BY SELAH MERRILL, D.D., LL.D.

I.

A RELIC OF THE TENTH LEGION, CALLED "FRETENSIS."

I NOTICE in the list of antiquities in the possession of the Palestine Fund, that they have two imperfect specimens of tiles bearing the stamp of the Tenth Legion, and it may be of sufficient interest to state that I possess a perfect specimen, which I bought of some fellahin who had just dug it from its hiding place. The following are the dimensions of the tile; $7\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick. The oblong place for the letters is sunk into the tile, leaving the letters in relief, the surface of the letters

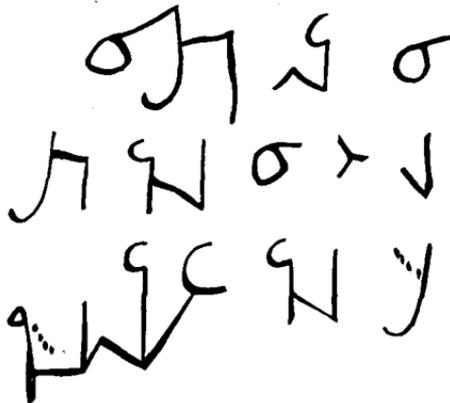
being of the same level as the surface of the tile. The oblong place itself is 4 inches long and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide. The length of the letters is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches.



II.

THE INSCRIPTION AT ARAK EL EMIR.

EVERY copyist, if he labours conscientiously, has reason to respect his own work until he is convinced that he is in error. I visited the place in question several times, and copied the inscription with care. My copy is quite unlike that which Captain Conder ascribes to Levy (*Quarterly Statement*, January, 1885, p. 12), and unlike that which Captain Conder gives as his own (*ibid.*), inasmuch as mine has a decided bar extending from the top towards the right as in the initial letter of the following inscription from Bozrah :—



In the first and second lines a letter occurs three times which is identical with the first letter in the Arak el Emir inscription. This letter I would read *Aleph*, and would transliterate the above inscription—

אמתא
לגאברת
--בר-מ-

This is one of a number of Nabathean inscriptions which I copied while at work in the Hauran, but I have never had time to classify them or to give them much study.

I have for years felt that there were a larger number of Nabathean inscriptions to be gathered in the desert east of the Jordan than scholars imagined, and that when these have been collected, materials will exist for a better understanding and a fuller knowledge of that once powerful and interesting people.

I make no attempt to translate the Arak el Emir inscription, but when I visit the place again I will take pains to re-copy it, or to take an impression of the letters.

III.

THE STATIONS OF DAVID'S CENSUS OFFICERS.

THE account of the numbering of the Israelites by David contains some interesting geographical notices, two of which, at least, have always been puzzles to scholars. It will be a help to remember that only Israel and Judah were to be numbered (see 2 Sam. xxiv, 1). The command was, "Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba," and leads us to suppose that aliens and subject peoples, whether within or without the limits of the kingdom, were not to be reckoned in the census of the Jewish people themselves. This is confirmed by verse 9, where the sum of the men of Israel and Judah only is given.

King David's officers crossed the Jordan and pitched first in Aroer near Jazer. They went thence to Gilead. Their third camping place was "the land of Tahtim Hodshi," their fourth camping place was Dan Jaan, and their fifth was Sidon. They went thence to the "stronghold of Tyre," and thus southward to Beersheba, keeping within the limits of the territory as defined in verse 2. The Hebrew of verse 6 is as follows:—"And they came to Gilead, ואל-ארץ תחתים חדשי, and they came דנה יצן." The Septuagint renders verse 6—"And they came to Galaad, and into the land of Thabason which is Adasi, and they came to Dan Idan and Udan, and compassed Sidon." The Targum on Samuel has after Gilead, דרומא חדשי

וּלְהַרְצֵיָהּ, that is, "and to the district south of Hodshi." Eusebius has, Ἰθῶν Ἀδασαί, and Jerome, "Æthon Adasai pro quo Symmachus posuit inferiorem viam."

Numerous suggestions have been made in explanation of the words Tahtim Hodshi. The Septuagint regarded them as two names belonging to one place. Zunz, whose high rank among Jewish scholars all admit, regards them as two distinct places. Boettcher resolves the word Tahtim, תַּחְתִּים, into תַּחַת יָם, below the sea. Fuerst is inclined, I judge, to favour this change, which is true of some other scholars. In that case יָם would refer to the Sea of Galilee (compare Numb. xxxiv, 2; Josh. xii, 3; viii, 27), and Hodshi would have some connection with Chinnereth. Besides these hints there should be mentioned an important Hebrew tradition, found in the Midrash on Samuel, chapters xxx and xxxii, which connects Tahtim Hodshi with Beth Yereh.

There were two places, Tarichea and Sennabris, which Josephus locate at the southern end of the Lake of Tiberias, and both are extremely distant from the City of Tiberias, namely, thirty furlongs ("Life," xxxii; "Wars," III, ix, 7). Josephus states that the great plain of the Jordan commenced at Ginnabrin [Sennabris] ("Wars," IV, viii, 2); while the Talmud states that the Jordan did not receive that name until after it left Beth Yereh (בֵּית יֶרֶחַ, Talmud Bab. Bechorot, 55a). It would seem that the point where the plain of the Jordan commenced (according to Josephus), and the point where the river Jordan began to receive that specific name (according to the Talmud) were practically identical. But, further, the Jerusalem Talmud mentions Beth Yereh and Sennabris together as the names of two towers, שְׁנֵי אֲבַטְלִיּוֹת, or fortified places on the Lake of Gennesareth (Megillah, i, 1, Gemara). This passage might be rendered, "The . . . was divided into two parts like Beth Yereh and Sennabri." The Aruch explains the words שְׁנֵי אֲבַטְלִיּוֹת (אֲבַטְנִיּוֹת) as meaning "two castles in a place where there is a bridge for water, but there is no water between them." There can be little doubt, I think, that the Beth Yereh of the Talmud is the Tarichea of Josephus, of which the modern representative is *Kerak*. This place has long since been identified as Tarichea, and a knowledge of the nature of the ground compared with Josephus's detailed description of it makes such a conclusion almost if not absolutely certain.

It is difficult to decide whether Tarichea, Beth Yereh, or Yereh was the original form of the name, or whether the place bore two names, as was not unfrequently the case. The Hebrew name might have been written בֵּית יֶרֶחַ or בֵּית תִּירַח, and this would easily come to be written בֵּית יֶרֶחַ. The name Tarichea is also a good Greek word meaning salting-station, from τὰριχεῖω, which has reference to preserving bodies by artificial means, whether salting fish or embalming mummies. The name is thus supposed to be derived from the business of preserving fish which was carried on at this place (compare Strabo, xvi, 2, 45).

The long bluff at the extreme south-west corner of the Lake of Tiberias, which is called at present *Kerak*, was originally connected with

the mainland by a dry bridge or causeway. On the mainland at or near the end of this bridge we suppose that the place called Sennabris should be located. These suggestions, if valid, would illustrate and confirm both Josephus and the Jewish writings. The statement of the Aruch, for instance, made probable without any knowledge on the part of the writer of the ground at the south end of the Lake, could not have been more accurate than it is, and Josephus also would be correct in stating the distance of Tarichea and Sennabris from Tiberias to be the same and in the same direction.

I have several times had occasion to speak of the Jordan Valley on the east of the river, from the Lake of Tiberias as far south as the Zerka or Jabbok, as being exceedingly fertile because of the numerous mountain streams which water it. The first stream below the Lake is the Yarmuk, or Hieromax, called at present the *Menadireh*. It is an interesting fact that the region along this river, after it leaves the hills, is called *Ard el 'Adasiyeh*, عَدَسِيَّة. The *Menadireh* is, in that portion of it, called *Wady 'Adasiyeh*. At the point where the road approaches the river in order to enter the mountains there is a ruin of considerable size, which bears the common name of *Ed Deir*, and the portion of the valley of plain immediately north of it is called the Plain of Dueur. Still farther to the north, and but a short distance from the mountains, are the "hills of the foxes." On the shore of the Lake are the ruins of Semakh, and to the north-east is the place known as *Khurbet es Sumrah*. Down the valley to the south, a short distance from Ed Deir, and near the *Menadireh*, is a fountain and a ruin called Yagana (Yagana, Yag'na, or Yak'na, يَا قَانَا or يِقْدَه). Since the letter *Heth* readily interchanges with *Ayin*, may it not be possible that 'Adasiyeh represents the ancient Hodshi?

In my judgment there was a very natural reason why the census-takers should visit the broad and fertile valley which stretches to the south from the lower end of the Sea of Galilee. They had completed their work in Gilead, and were on their way northward towards Sidon and its vicinity. As only Israel and Judah were to be numbered the region of Damascus would not be visited, but that just below the Sea of Galilee would be on their direct route as they went north. This was the meeting place of two great thoroughfares between the country on the east and that on the west of the Jordan, even as it is to-day. The road from Beisan to Damascus, which crosses the Jordan by the *Jisr Mejamia*, and the road from Tiberias to the Hauran and Gilead (formerly a fine bridge supported on ten arches, led over the Jordan just below the Lake), intersect on this plain now called *Ard el 'Adasiyeh*. If any point on their route, as the officers were going from Gilead northward, was suitable for a place of public assembly, none more suitable than this could have been chosen. Their object was not to get into a large city, but to pitch their camp in the place that was most central and most easily accessible for the largest number of the inhabitants.

One of the truest remarks ever made in the long discussion as to the site of the Holy Sepulchre was that of Lieutenant Conder, namely, that "Fortifications" (referring to the line of the walls) "follow the hills and not the valleys." Again, with regard to the site of Capernaum I have often urged, in opposition to those who advocate the claims of Tell Hum, the unreasonableness of supposing that a custom house would be located at a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the main route of travel, which it was designed to accommodate. In like manner in endeavouring to trace the route of David's census-takers is it unfair to claim that the most natural suppositions should receive the first consideration? It is on this principle that attention is now called to the district or Plain of 'Adasiyeh below the Sea of Galilee. Similarly the region about Aroer near Jazer (I locate Jazer at *Khurbet Sar*) has been the battle ground and the meeting place of the tribes living in that section of the country for generations, and why may it not always have been so?

If the census-takers chose for their work the most central and convenient points, we should expect one near Lake Merom. Dan, if it were chosen, would accommodate all the people residing north of the Sea of Galilee, and south of Mount Hermon. The great road from Damascus to the sea coast divided at Dan into two branches, one following the present route by Shukf to Sidon, and the other, that farther south, past Hunin to Tyre.

If Dan stood alone in the text there would never have been a doubt that one of the census stations was near this ancient and well-known site. But having the word Jaan with Dan has seemed to make the matter of identification a difficult one. We must remember that we are dealing with a Hebrew record of a very early date, when Phœnician influence was especially strong in the north of Palestine. Baniyas, the modern name found in this region, is commonly thought to be a corruption of Paniaas or Paneas, which commemorated the worship of the god Pan in this once famous grotto. But Baniyas is probably a corruption of a much older name, Balinas, composed of two Phœnician words, Bal and Jaan, or Yaan.

I notice in the "Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology," Vol. VII, Part 3, page 394, an attempt to identify Thatim Hodshi with Kadesh on the Orontes, which seems to me to be wholly without foundation. Why should the census-takers go more than 100 miles north of Palestine when they were directed to confine themselves to numbering the tribes of Israel within their several tribal territories?
