

NOTE ON THE OBJECTS DISCOVERED BY DR. BLISS  
AT TELL ZAKARÏYA.

By Professor A. H. SAYCE, LL.D.

SEVERAL of the objects discovered by Dr. Bliss carry us back to the pre-Israelitish period of Canaanitish history, and raise the hope that cuneiform tablets may be found by him before long. Those of which casts have recently been sent home by him are as follows:—

1. A jar-handle, with a stamp representing an Egyptian deity, which at first sight looks like Thoth. A comparison of it, however, with the Sidonian seals of the Tell-el-Amarna age in the collection of M. de Clercq makes me believe that it is intended for Set, though, owing to a fracture, the ears of Set are no longer visible. From the Sidonian seals we may gather that in the time of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty Set was regarded as the patron deity of Canaan.

2. A jar-handle similar to those found at Jerusalem by Sir Charles Warren. In the *Quarterly Statement* for July, 1893, pp. 240-242, I proposed to see in the names which were written under the winged solar disc of the stamp the geographical names, Socho and Ziph. My view has been verified by Mr. Bliss's discoveries, the name of Hebron (חברון) appearing on one of the jar-handles he has found (*Quarterly Statement*, April, 1899, p. 104), while the one before us has Socho or Shochoh, written *plene* (שוכה). It is now plain, however, that I was mistaken in seeing in the words למלך, which are always written above the winged disc, the name of a god, Moloch; they must mean simply "belonging to the king," and indicate that the potteries from which the jar-handles have come were a royal monopoly. An explanation is thus afforded of the passage in I Chron. iv, 22, 23, where the corrupt state of the text has hitherto made both translation and interpretation doubtful. It tells us that the potters of Chozeba, of Moab (?), and of [Beth-]lehem worked for "the king," and the corruption of the text is doubtless due to the fact that "the account," as the Chronicler states, was derived from an "ancient" document.

It is curious that we invariably find להמלך instead of למלך with the definite article. The omission of the article was a characteristic of Phœnician. Does it imply that Hebrew was the language only of the court and the capital, and that the country population of Judah continued to speak the old Canaanitish language which we term Phœnician? However this may be, the inscription reads "[Belonging to the king]; Socho," the pottery being crown property and being situated at Socho.

3. A jar-handle with a picture of a horse in the Egyptian style of the eighteenth or nineteenth dynasty.

4. A jar-handle with the letters **למלך** "Belonging to the king" above the winged solar disc. Below is a *zain* followed by two letters, the first of which is the upper half of a *yod*, while the third shows the upper line of a *pé*. As one of the jar-handles from Jerusalem gives us the name of Ziph, it is clear that we must read **זיפ**, Ziph, here.

5. Eight Egyptian scarabs, none of which seems to be later than the age of the eighteenth dynasty. On (a) we have the goddess Sekhet and the god Sebek in the form of the lion and crocodile, with the disc of the Sun-god Ra above. On (b) is Sekhet in the form of a lion with a horizontal *ankh* or symbol of life. (c) Is one of the so-called *nub* scarabs which are generally assigned to the Hyksos period, and usually indicate, I believe, Syrian influence. Above the hieroglyph *nub*, "gold," is *suten net* (?), "king of Upper and Lower Egypt"; on the left-hand side is *ankh*, "life," and on the right *nefer*, "good," enclosed in a cartouche. On (d) is a blundered Ra-men-kheper or Thothmes III, followed by the name of Amon and the eye of Horus. Similar scarabs have been found elsewhere in Palestine, and are probably the work of Canaanitish artists, who copied the Egyptian hieroglyphs for ornamental purposes without understanding what they meant. On (e) we have Amon-Ra, but the workmanship again does not seem to be pure Egyptian. On (f) we have a similar blundered product of Canaanitish art. Ra-kheper is written instead of Ra-men-kheper between the two royal uræi, and underneath is a non-Egyptian ornament formed of three *t's* and six *hez's* (?). On (g) is the name of the god Ptah of Memphis, with the reed (a) by way of filling up the space on the right; (h) presents us with a modified form of an ornament which is characteristic of the time of the twelfth-eighteenth dynasties. All the eight scarabs appear to be of Syrian workmanship, and to belong to the age of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty.

7. Rude Canaanitish seal on which I can throw no light.

8 and 9. Weights each inscribed with the Phœnician letters, **חצף**. The same weight with the same name was obtained by Dr. Chaplin from the site of Samaria, and has been described by myself in the *Quarterly Statement* (where, following Dr. Neubauer, I have erroneously read the last character as a *gimel*). The weights found by Dr. Bliss, however, prove that it is really a *pé*, and M. Clermont-Ganneau is doubtless right in connecting the name, **חצף**, which we thus obtain, with the Arabic *nusf*, "half."

10. A mould of blue glass with the representation of a chariot and horse which is galloping over the body of a fallen foe, while another foe is depicted behind the chariot in the attitude given by Egyptian artists to a prisoner. Inside the chariot are the driver and a warrior who are divided from one another by a forked stick,<sup>1</sup> while above the horse is the

<sup>1</sup> This forked stick resembles the two-pronged spear carried by the "Lykaonian" soldier, with Hittite boots, discovered at Ikonium by Texier ("Description de l'Asie Mineure," II, Pl. 103), but since destroyed.

creescent moon with the old moon between its horns. As in the Hittite chariots, the wheel of the chariot has eight spokes. The whole representation is taken from a common Egyptian *tableau* of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties.

12. Another jar-handle with the words **למלך שוכה** : "Belonging to the king : Socho," written above and below the winged solar disc.

13. Babylonian seal cylinder, of white limestone, and of archaic type (B.C. 3000-2000). In the centre two winged sphinxes are arranged face to face in the heraldic fashion, which passed from Babylonia, through Asia Minor, into Greece. Above them are a lion and a deer, reminding us of the devices on the Hittite cylinders. The rest of the field of the cylinder is occupied by Merodach with his curved scimitar, the prototype of the Greek Perseus, with Tiamât in the form of a nondescript animal facing him, and a worshipper behind, while above is a composite animal, half hare, half stag.

14. A seal cylinder of black stone, with figures of men before two animals. It belongs to the class of early Syrian imitations of Babylonian cylinders, which are quite as rude as the archaic cylinders of Cyprus.

15. Blue porcelain ring, with the cartouche of Amen-hotep IV, Khu-n-Aten, to whom most of the Tell el-Amarna letters are addressed (B.C. 1400). The colour and *technique* of the ring show that it is contemporaneous with the king whose name is inscribed upon it.

The jar-handle discovered by Dr. Bliss at Tell-es-Sâfi is of great interest, though unfortunately the mixture of objects of various periods in the rubbish heap in which it was found does not allow us to fix its date. The stamp upon it is divided by the double line characteristic of Israelitish, Jewish, and Moabitish seals. The impression, however, is not sufficiently good to allow me to read the inscription with certainty, but it seems to be (1) **לרפתי**, (2) **ידואל**, "Belonging to the Rephathite Joel." The name of Raphah is found in 1 Chron. viii, 37, and the Rephaim are called "the children of hâ-Râphâh" (2 Sam. xxi, 16, 18). Mr. Bliss makes the last character but one in the first line an *aleph* instead of *taw*; if so, we should have the name of the Rephaim, who, we are told, were settled in Philistia. Ishbi-benob, Saph, and the six-fingered champion of Gath were all Rephaites or Rephathites (2 Sam. xxi, 16, 18, 20). If Mr. Bliss's reading is correct, the last letter but one in the second line could not be *aleph*, and would rather represent a *kaph*; this, however, would give us a name which I cannot explain. The name of Joel indicates a period when the Philistines had been thoroughly Judaised.