

PALMYRENE INSCRIPTIONS.

By Lieut.-Colonel C. R. CONDER, R.E.

THE publication, by Professor D. H. Muller of Vienna, of 40 new Palmyrene texts, has raised some discussion as to details of translation. Like the previously known examples, they present a strange admixture of Greek and Latin loan words, which causes some of these inscriptions to contain more foreign than native terms. The Palmyrenes adopted Roman names, and Greek titles of official dignity, and Greek architectural terms, showing—like the language of the Mishna or the Greek texts of Bashan—how strong was the civilising influence of the empire in the first, second, and third centuries A.D.

In one case the words following the date of the text have been much discussed, but the real meaning seems to me to have been missed. This text reads as follows:—

ג' תנכא	עתיכא
טצמט	בר מלכו
הצל שנה	חבל שנה
לכ-אבנה	ספרא 513
זמנ	רומוני

"Eutyches, son of Malchus. Alas! Year 513, Roman reckoning."

The Palmyrenes, and the Romans in Syria, used the Seleucid era, and the date is 202 A.D. This era was not, strictly speaking, Roman, but was used by Romans. Even to the present day the word *Rūmi* in Syria means "Greek"—the Eastern Roman Empire.

NOTES ON THE "QUARTERLY STATEMENT."

By Lieut.-Colonel C. R. CONDER, R.E.

Tell Zakariya.—The general plan of the fort at this place (p. 91) is similar to that of the Byzantine fortresses, especially those built by Justinian, and the masonry is similar to that found throughout Palestine belonging to buildings of the Byzantine period. The place, however, was clearly an ancient town, and lay within the area conquered by Thothmes III, whose name is found on a scarab at the site. The little idols may be of late date, as compared with those found in Phœnicia, at Gaza, and elsewhere. The most interesting find is the inscription on a jar-handle belonging to the "King of Hebron." David is the only known Hebrew King of Hebron, but the forms of the letters show that the text cannot

be older than about 700 B.C. Possibly at this time a small local king may have established himself, as Sennacherib speaks of the Philistine kings west of Judah in that age; but the text might be yet later, and belong to the period of the captivity. The inscription on the weight seems to me to read 𐤊𐤍, or "standard," and the second letter has the same form found in the Siloam text, and is as yet peculiar to Southern Palestine.

The Tomb near Calvary (p. 130).—It does not appear to me that the crosses found in this tomb are ancient. The double, or "Patriarch's," cross is known in the end of the ninth century, on coins of the Emperor Leo VI, and was commonly used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but as far as I know it is not found in any early work. Both the crosses in question are Patriarch's crosses. The Greek letters, **A** and **Ω**, accompanying these crosses do not of necessity indicate Greek origin, or early date. They occur in the frescoes of the mediæval monasteries, near Jericho, and elsewhere.

THE STANDING STILL OF THE SUN UPON GIBEON.

By the Rev. W. COLLINS BADGER, M.A.

I HIGHLY esteem Colonel Conder for his work and interest in Scriptural interpretation. While not agreeing with his remarks in your *Quarterly Statement*, 1899, p. 161, I feel sure that he will welcome an exhaustive examination of Joshua x, referring to the miracle. A little 1s. book, published by Messrs. J. Nisbet for me 10 years ago, contains all that can be said about it. Now I make my remarks as brief as possible, only premising that the Bible, if possible, should be its own interpreter. Acting on this presumption I give the meanings of the word translated "Stand still," or, as the Colonel, "Be dark." This word, then, *Dōm*, Taylor's "Heb. Concordance" renders "to be silent, quiet, wait"; so Hab. ii, 19, silent or "dumb idol"; 16 times in our Bible it is translated "silence," as Psalm xxx, 12; five times, at least, "Be still," Psalm iv, 4; Levit. x, 3, "Aaron held his peace"; Psalm cxxxi, 2, "Quiet oneself"; 1 Saul xiv, 9, "Tarry"; Psalm lxii, 5, "Wait"; Psalm xxxvii, 7, "Rest."

But never "Stand still," except in Joshua x, and never an allusion to darkness. To put the matter beyond doubt let any one substitute "Stand still" in these texts; why it would be "the stand still idol." Aaron stood still, "kept his feet still, not his tongue"; "Rest in the Lord," would be "Stand still in the Lord," or, "Be dark" in the Lord. "Praise waiteth for Thee," would be "Praise standeth still," or "is dark." Jer. xlvi, 6: "Sword of the Lord—be still," would be "Stand still." I leave it to others to follow out these impossible renderings, only observing that "Stand still" or "Be dark" are utterly *unwarranted and misleading*. Another important word is "midst," which ought to be