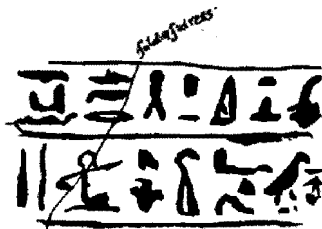


## THE EGYPTIAN STATUETTE FROM GEZER.





By F. LL. GRIFFITH, M.A.

THROUGH the kindness of the Hon. Secretary, I have had the pleasure of examining a cast of the beautiful little Egyptian statuette found by Mr. Macalister in a pit on the western hill of Gezer, and figured in the *Quarterly Statement* for October, p. 317. The inscription is roughly and carelessly engraved. The hand-copy gives, I think, all that is essential, as shown in different lights,



but is not a facsimile. The characters should be of equal height in each line. It may be read:—



The title of the man in the second line is the most puzzling part. The  is obscured by being engraved along the dividing line, and   "taster of the department," is ill written. The following sign, which must read  $\int$  *Hg*, in the man's name, is extraordinarily deformed; there can be little doubt that the scribe or engraver here began the word  "bread" or the like to complete the title, and then, as often happens in Egyptian inscriptions, changed his mind either through inadvertence or because

he was exceeding the space allowable, and superposed the  $\text{?}$ . Egyptian "tasters" (*dpw*) were commonly of the "department of bread" (baking) or the "department of beer" (brewing), and they might belong to the staff or household of a king, or governor, where a large household, or even an army of soldiers, would have to be paid by, or supplied with, provisions and rations of bread and beer.

The scribe has hesitated also in the first line between the full formula with  $\text{𓄏}$  "may he give (bread, beer, oxen, geese, &c.," and the abbreviated formula  $\text{𓄏} \text{𓄏}$  "to the *ka* of," so producing a hybrid reading  $\text{𓄏} \text{𓄏}$  or  $\text{𓄏} \text{𓄏}$

We may now translate the text:—

"May the king give an offering, and (the god) Ptah-Sokar, to the *ka* of the taster (of the bakery ?) Heqab, justified."

This formula is usual on statuettes dedicated in temples or tombs, or perhaps for the cult of ancestors within the house. The workmanship is of the kind found in Egyptian figures of soft steatite. The man is represented seated with his legs crossed in front of him, and the inscription is engraved upon the robe over the lap.

Heqab is a name scarcely to be found later than the XIIth dynasty, the date of which is variously estimated at *c.* 1900 B.C. or *c.* 2300 B.C. In the discovery of this little monument, taken in conjunction with the burials in the cave and the stela of Didi-Amûn (*Quarterly Statement*, 1903, p. 125), Mr. Macalister has secured the best proof yet attained of an entirely new view, that at the time of the XIIth dynasty Southern Palestine about the coast road to Syria comprised a settled Egyptian colony or population, with Egyptian officials, and keeping up Egyptian customs. The absence of embalming noted by Mr. Macalister on p. 316 is in accordance with contemporary usage in Egypt itself. It remains to be seen whether such records can be explained as belonging to members of expeditions who died on their journey, and were buried in a foreign land; anyhow, the clue is most promising, and we may trust the activity and acuteness of the explorer to develop greatly our knowledge of Egypt in Palestine by his fruitful researches.