

If the Assyrian statements are read by the light of this determination of date, it will be seen that their accordance with the Hebrew Scriptures is fair and credible. There may arise a question, at times, as to the dynastic or personal name of a king; but careful investigation has removed so many apparent difficulties, that no apprehension need be entertained as to the final establishment of entire accuracy, both of decipherment and of date.

THE HAMATH INSCRIPTIONS.

To the Secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

DEAR SIR,—During the three months that have elapsed since I had the pleasure of presenting you with my proposed arrangement of a portion of the Hamath Inscriptions, I have no event to report bearing upon the discovery of fresh matter in this department, unless indeed I be allowed to mention the large door-post, or lintel, from Moab. The authenticity, however, of the latter has been denied in England, so I will merely remark that it is impossible that the Hamath Inscriptions in their proper form can have been known to the supposed forger of the Moab door-post, but that nevertheless about five out of the nineteen characters on that post are identical with the Hamath ones. A small inscription from Aleppo, in your hands, has also been shown me. It reproduces some of our Hamath forms, and throws light upon the proper grouping of one or two compound forms, which I had supposed to be single. No progress at all has been made towards decipherment.

In this second batch which I now forward you, the three first lines are all on the same stone—the first on the north side, the next two on the west side of the No. 4 stone, named by Captain Burton and Mr. Drake. The fourth line I have reproduced from your last journal in smaller size, for purposes of comparison with the new matter. It will be observed that I have made the arrows now point upwards, having, in fact, turned the whole inscription round bottom upwards, without, however, altering the arrangement of the symbols among themselves. My principal reason is, that I take one of the signs to be a palm-tree, whose fruit and foliage I naturally prefer to place upwards. The sign of the human foot is also thus seen to have the sole downwards.

Between the lines where I believe the kings' names to appear, I have written the word king. In the second line where I have written this the symbols are purely Egyptian. In the third line they are only partly Egyptian.

The writing, I presume, should be read from right to left. All the inscriptions together produce about forty-five distinct characters, and, *prima facie*, such a number would indicate a syllabic alphabet, as in the Cypriote. The stage of syllabism is, of course, less advanced than that

of the consonantal alphabet with independent vowels. If Cyprus took the one and Greece the other from Phoenicia, it is well for the world that Greece should have been unready in the Thothmes age for the less perfect gift.

The state of the stone No. 4 is such that many parts of what I now send are far from trustworthy. I have bestowed a great amount of labour on the comparison of different parts of your squeezes, but am far from satisfied in some parts of the result. I conclude with saying that I see a railway survey is said to be in hand from the coast to the Euphrates, and your journals will, I hope, be forwarded to the officers and men engaged on the work.

Yours very truly,

DUNBAR ISIDORE HEATH.

ESHER, SURREY, Nov. 20, 1872.

JERUSALEM.

Mr. Conrad Schick, the Imperial German architect at Jerusalem, who has recently been engaged in making measurements for the construction of models of the Kubbet es Sakhra and Haram es Sherif, for the Turkish Government, has kindly forwarded to the Palestine Exploration Fund plans and sections of certain cisterns and buildings which have not been previously described.

Anything which adds to our knowledge of the "sacred area" cannot fail to be of value, and the following notice of Mr. Schick's discoveries will be of interest to many of the subscribers to the Fund.

1st. At the north-east corner of the platform three rock-hewn cisterns,* not previously visited, have been examined, and plans made of them. Like the well-known "great sea" in the southern portion of the Haram, they are hewn out of the soft "malaki" rock, and the overlying stratum of "missae" has been left to form a roof. The only passages noticed as entering the cisterns were the ducts for leading in the surface drainage. The cisterns are from 28ft. to 45ft. deep, and the natural rock lies close below the surface.

2nd. Mr. Schick has made a minute examination of the eastern side of the platform, and found two closed openings into it, one near the north end, which appears to have been a small door leading to a chamber under the platform, the other south of the steps in front of the Dome of Chain. This, which is almost covered by rubbish, also led to a chamber, and on each side of it is a closed window, 6ft. high and 2ft. 6in. wide. From the steps to the south-east corner, there were at one time buttresses, 1ft. 11in. thick, at intervals of 9ft. 7in. Traces of five still remain, and the position of the others can be seen on a careful examination, though the broken faces of the stones which bonded them to the

* Two of these cisterns are numbered 2 and 34 on the Plan of the Haram, in "Recovery of Jerusalem;" the other Mr. Schick has numbered 35.