

89 BIRCH (Samuel) Various Papers I, &c. INAUGURAL Discourse, 1866—TRANSLATION of the Hieroglyphic Inscription upon the Altar of Nechtharhebes, 1874—INSCRIPTION of Haramhebi on a Statue at Turin, *ib.*—ON a Granite Altar at Turin, *ib.*—ON some Cypriate Antiquities, with the Tablet of Anteface II., *plates*, 1875—ON a Mummy opened at Stafford House, July 15, 1875, *ib.*, the 6 8vo,

INAUGURAL DISCOURSE,

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THE section, over which I have the honour to preside, is so extensive in its range that I approach the subjects which fall under its consideration with diffidence; for although primæval antiquities, history, and architecture are specially represented elsewhere, yet the subject of general antiquities extends all over the civilised portions of the globe, both in the Old and New World, and embraces all the smaller remains of the handiwork of man from England to China in the East, and to Mexico in the distant West; in a word, all the vestiges of Eastern and Western civilisation. By archæology is understood the study of the monuments of antiquity of all times and places, and it divides itself into several branches, as palæography, or the study of the forms of letters and inscriptions; epigraphy, or the consideration of their contents; and the study of figured antiquity, or of the shapes and meaning of sculpture, painting and symbolical representations. The main objects of archæology are to preserve from destruction the precious relics of the past, and to aid in the development and discovery of historic truths. History itself is dependent on the existence of contemporary monuments, and the annals of some nations, as the Egyptians, Assyrians, Phœnicians and other Semitic races are preserved on monuments alone; their other literature having entirely perished in the wreck of ages. Archæology also aids in the formation and cultivation of public taste by directing it to the selection of the good and

useful which has escaped the ravages of time, and to the employment of such portions as are capable of being so used in the wants of modern civilisation. All, however, that is old is neither good as to its art nor useful for application, but a judicious selection is no slight element in the cultivation of the beautiful in art, and of the useful in manufactures. Still more than all this, archæology strives to diffuse, by writing and engraving, the knowledge of what has come to light, and to preserve the recollection and the very image of remains that would otherwise be lost. This object has particularly been had in view by the Archæological Institute, which has nobly fulfilled its duty to science in this respect, as it has also done by its meetings, which awaken an interest in the diffusion of archæological knowledge and the preservation of ancient remains. After the fall of the Roman Empire the study of archæology lay dormant till the revival of the arts and literature in Europe, when the discovery of objects of ancient art gave a new impulse to sculpture, painting and architecture; and archæology was discovered to be most important for understanding of the meaning and application of those arts. At Florence the De' Medici collected such remains as they could obtain, and which had escaped the destruction of the Goth, or were found amid the ashes of Western civilisation. Their example was followed by the rest of Europe; but archæology was conducted without much critical or accurate knowledge till the two last centuries, when Winckelmann and Visconti created the school of students who combined a careful examination of ancient remains with the study of Greek and Roman literature. The study of topography indeed, a branch of archæology, flourished at an earlier date, but it is only in the last century that the improvement of engraving has enabled copies of monuments sufficiently accurate for study and comparison to be produced. The museums of Europe are the arsenals of archæology, and from them the student draws materials for his study. In them is preserved all that has escaped the destroying process of time. Yet, large and important as these institutions are, and amply as they seem to be stored with objects of all kinds and ages, it may be considered how little has really been preserved when it is remembered that all the museums of Europe combined could not arm a Roman company for

battle or equip a pair of gladiators for their fatal fray. The museum of this metropolis takes the very highest rank amidst these arsenals and treasuries of antiquity, and nowhere will the student of archæology find at his disposal so many remains, not only of Greek and Roman art, but of Egyptian, Assyrian and other nations; nowhere else can he observe so closely and accurately the progress of ancient civilisation.

But I must pass from this topic, however alluring, to tell you something of the progress and condition of archæology, and of some of the principal discoveries which have been lately made, discoveries of which, I believe, you will like to hear. I shall begin with those relating to Egypt. A wonderful advance in the knowledge of Egyptian monuments has taken place in Europe during the last fifty years, and in hieroglyphical interpretation during the last twenty years. This has been accomplished by the labours of MM. de Rougé, Chabas and Devéria, in France; MM. Lepsius, Brugsch, and Duemichen, in Prussia; Mr. Goodwin, Dr. Hincks, Mr. le Page Renouf and others in this country. The structure of the language, the meaning of the words and texts are now thoroughly understood, and the contents of all documents can be interpreted. For not only has the easier and more objective portion of the language been discovered, but even the grammatical forms and particles involving a much greater progress. Egypt may, in fact, be considered to be subdued and fallen under the arms of science,—a conquest which has been effected by the application of induction and logic to the interpretation of extinct languages, which have left behind them neither traditional grammars nor dictionaries to facilitate the progress of the inquirer.

You have, no doubt, lately heard of the discovery of a bilingual tablet of calcareous stone, nearly 8 ft. high, at San or the ancient Tanis, by Professor Lepsius, on the occasion of his visit to that spot. His letter on the subject, dated the 21st April, addressed to me, was communicated to the Athenæum. Since then twenty lines of the Greek, and as many of the hieroglyphic version, have been published in the *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, at Berlin. It is like the Rosetta stone in its general purport, for it is a decree of the priests assembled in a synod at

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Canopus, and is dated the ninth year of Ptolemy Euergetes I., on the seventh day of the Macedonian month Apellæus, showing it to have been drawn up from the Greek original. Its date is B.C. 238, or about fifty years older than the Rosetta stone, and its object nearly the same. It records the benefits conferred by the monarch Euergetes I. on Egypt, the priests and the people, the restoration of the statues taken away from Egypt by the Persians, and the alleviation of the misfortune of a deficient Nile and impending famine by the generosity of Ptolemy and his consort Berenice. In one point it is of the highest interest to the chronology of Egypt. It mentions that the priests, aware of the disturbance of the due celebration of the festivals, by which those which ought to have been held in the summer fell in the winter, decreed the institution of a leap year by the addition of a day to be added every fourth year to the five *epagomenæ* or intercalary days. This day was to be dedicated to the festival of the monarch, and the year thus created anticipated the so-called Julian year of the reformed calendar of Sosigenes, B.C. 45, by nearly two centuries.

When this tablet was discovered, Egyptology, or the science of Egyptian interpretation, was said to be put upon its trial, as the Greek inscription on it would either confirm or contradict the results of recent researches, and Egyptology comes out triumphant from that trial. Not only have the proper names of Cleopatra and Berenice been found, which were considered by some sceptics to be a missing link in the chain of evidence, but (I speak from a careful examination of the published portions) the body of the text, words, grammatical forms and inflections agree with what had been predetermined by Egyptologists, and only some trivial modifications of the sense of a few words will result from the discovery of this tablet. The value, in fact, of these bilingual tablets to science, in its present state, is not so great as might be supposed. They have a greater value as replies to the attacks and doubts which have prevailed against the truth of hieroglyphical discovery. Besides the tablet of San, some other monuments of great interest have been lately exhumed in ancient Egypt. One is a new tablet of Abydos. The visitor to the British Museum will recollect the old tablet of Abydos placed on the east wall of the northern gallery. Now what the Rosetta stone was to Egyptian philology, the Abydos tablet was to the

chronology of Egypt,—the key, the answer to the riddle. Last year, M. Duemichen discovered at Abydos, on a wall of the temple which had been laid bare by directions of M. Mariette, a list of seventy-six royal names, commencing with Menes, the first monarch of Egypt, and ending with Sethos I. of the nineteenth dynasty. For the first six dynasties the list is consecutive, after that it is more difficult to identify with Manetho. The rest of the series coincides with that of the table of the British Museum. M. Mariette had previously discovered at Sakkarah another series of royal names, inscribed on the walls of a private tomb. These extend over the same space of time, but are by no means arranged in so regular a sequence, their order being much transposed; and consequently this list of Sakkarah cannot have so much weight in the consideration of the chronology of the period.

I must here call your attention to the difference in historical value of public and private monuments. The public monuments of a country are made under official supervision, and are subject to public criticism. They are, therefore, more correct and trustworthy than those made for individuals; which were liable to the same errors, changes, and caprices in remote times, as at the present day. In reference, therefore, to historical interest, the tablet of Abydos must, from this consideration alone, rank higher than the tomb of Sakkarah. As the most important point about Egypt is its chronology, its helping to determine the relative age of civilised man on earth, these tablets have a powerful interest, and their contents and bearing will have to be weighed by the two rival schools of chronology—the long chronologist, which expands the period of the Egyptian dynasties to a high antiquity; the short chronologist, which would contract and make them synchronise into other systems.

Leaving Egyptian archæology, I will now proceed to speak of the discoveries and progress made in the interpretation of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian inscriptions, which have also yielded to the inexorable force of philological logic. In the year 1800, Groterfend, in Hanover, made the first attempt at the decipherment of the cuneiform character, by a beautiful and intricate chain of reasoning. The study languished, however, for want of texts, although the

Persian inscriptions attracted the attention of Lassen and Burnouf, till Sir H. Rawlinson made so great an advance that his interpretation of the monument of Darius I. at Behistoun may be considered as fresh discovery. Here your attention should be directed to the fact that the power of interpretation depends in a great degree on the supply of monuments and texts accessible to the interpreter. Thus it has been reproached to the modern school of archæology that it professes to make out the remoter monuments of Egypt and Assyria, while it is unable to solve the inscriptions of Etruria, which flourished at a period more recent, and was connected with races and languages better known. But the paucity and poverty of Etruscan inscriptions, which are mere repetitions of sepulchral formulæ, and a system of writing, like the Latin monuments, in contractions, have impeded the progress of the inquirers.

But to return to Assyria. The discoveries of Botta in 1842 and of Layard in 1845, and the subsequent excavation by Loftus, Rassam, and Rawlinson, of the palaces of Nimroud, Khorsabad, Kouyunjik, and other localities, built by Sargon, Ashur-bani-pal, Ashur-izir-pal, and Sennacherib, are familiar to you by the archæological trophies which adorn the Museum. To Mr. Layard this country and the world are under the deepest obligations for the impulse given to Assyrian philology and archæology, by initiating the discovery of such treasures. While in Egypt the passive climate did not destroy the monuments, in Assyria the circumstance of a nation using by preference baked clay instead of parchment and papyrus to write upon, has preserved its annals and its literature. Thousands of fragments of terra cotta tablets, deeds, annals, petitions, from the archives of Kouyunjik, now in the Museum, enable the decipherer to discover their hidden meaning by the opportunity of comparison which they afford to his sagacity. They are inscribed in cuneiform characters, a style of writing in use from the earliest origin of the Babylonian kingdom till the age of the Seleucidæ, or the second century B.C. To Sir Henry Rawlinson, Dr. Hincks, Mr. Fox Talbot, in England, and M. Oppert in France, we are indebted for a knowledge of their contents. This cuneiform writing was used for several languages, the oldest of which, the so-called Accadian, is referable to the Turanian family,

while the Babylonian and Assyrian are allied to the Semitic, the Median to the Turanian, and the Persian to the Zend. It is impossible here to detail to you the varieties of these inscriptions, relating as they do to history, science, language, and laws. Amongst them may be particularly mentioned the obelisk of Shalmaneser, on which is represented the tribute of Jehu; and the tablet of the same monarch discovered at Kurkh, near the head waters of the Tigris, from the description of it on a cuneiform tablet, interpreted by Sir H. Rawlinson, on which is found the name of Ahab. Not less important are the historical cylinder, prism, and inscriptions from Khorsabad recording the campaign of Sennacherib against Judæa. A consideration of such monuments is essential to an understanding of the contemporaneous history of the Old Testament, and their language, affiliated to the Hebrew and Chaldee, is the most important of all contributions to Semitic palæography and philology.

Next in point of time to these two great branches of the Semitic and Hamitic families are the Phœnicians, through whom the civilisation of the East passed to the Greeks. The remains of the Phœnicians are to be sought for rather amongst those of other nations than upon their own soil. For the haughty monarchs of Babylon and Nineveh they worked in bronze and ivory, and recent examinations have discovered Phœnician inscriptions on the bronze vessels and ivory fragments of Nimroud. The same language has been discovered on the clay cuneiform tablets of Kouyunjik, elevating the antiquity of the writing above the age hitherto assigned to it from the inscriptions found on Asiatic or European sites, or the Phœnician coins of Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece. Their galleys ploughed the purple waters of the Mediterranean, descended to the Egyptian Naucratis, threaded the isles of the Ægean, trafficked in the ports of Spain, and probably passed Gibraltar. They carried their wares, principally ivory, glass, and silver plate, to the refined and curious Greek, to the voluptuous and indolent Etruscan. Elegant vases of glass for the toilets of the beauties of the past, transported by their trade from their own furnaces, or those of Egypt, are found in the sepulchres of the Greek isles, in Greece itself, and Italy. In their ancient settlements in Rhodes and Sardinia, numerous remains of their art in gold, porcelain, and glass have been discovered

of late years. To the poor and distant Britons they sold beads and trash-goods, called "rôpé," or rubbish, by Strabo, in exchange for the tin and other products of our isle, and recently glass beads of opaque and veined glass, resembling those found in the tumuli of the Celts, have been brought from Tyre itself. Not less important than Phœnician art was the system of writing which they invented. The Phœnicians were a commercial and practical people, and discarding the cumbrous modes of writing in use by the Egyptians and Assyrians, they adopted a simple alphabet of a few letters, which represented all the sounds required. But, like all Semitic nations, they omitted the vowels, leaving a certain ambiguity and difficulty; and the perfection of the alphabet was reserved for the Greeks, who, by the introduction of the vowels, brought it to the state of completeness it possesses at the present day. The metrical system of the Phœnicians was also of great importance, and their weights have been found in the palaces of Nimroud and the tombs of the Troad.* The study of their inscriptions and palæography continues to advance, and an account of Semitic palæography will be given on occasion of the present meeting by Mr. Deutsch.

Semitic antiquities have received of late considerable attention from the investigations of M. Renan in Syria, the Count de Vogué and Mr. Waddington in the Hauran. The subject of Hebrew antiquities has also excited great interest. The researches of the Duc de Luyne in Palestine, and M. de Saulcy at Jerusalem, have been succeeded by those of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The inscriptions found in Palestine throw considerable light on the disputed age of the square Hebrew character; unfortunately, they are not older than the third century of our era. It is, however, to be hoped that future excavations on the site of Jerusalem may help to settle the disputed points of the topography of that city, and the actual position of the Temple and the Holy Sepulchre. Of other Semitic antiquities, the bronze plates with Himyaritic inscriptions found in Southern Arabia, and presented by General Coghlan to the Museum, and the century of Punic inscriptions discovered by the Rev. N. Davis at Carthage, all of which

* The principal monument of this people discovered of late years is the sarcophagus of Ashmunaser, found at Cyprus.

have been published, have added considerably to our knowledge of Semitic philology, as the excavations of M. Beulé on the site of the Byrsa or Citadel of Carthage, have to the topography of that city. Still more considerable have been the discoveries in Greece and Asia Minor; the excavations of Mr. Newton at Halicarnassus having exhumed the Mausoleum, and added to the examples of Greek art a brilliant series of sculptures and reliefs of the later Athenian school, which flourished about 350 B.C. The more archaic sculptures of the Hiera Hodos, or Sacred Way, at Branchidœ, near Miletus, removed by Mr. Newton to England, have formed an important contribution to the known examples of Ionic sculpture, as the inscriptions from the same site have done to Greek palæography. Important examples of antiquities have been procured at the Rhodian Camirus, by M.M. Salzmann and Biliotti, consisting of jewellery, vases, and other objects, many of which prove the early settlement of the Phœnicians on the spot, and illustrate the wares they carried to the island. Amongst them may be particularly mentioned a Greek vase of great beauty, of the style of the decadence, representing the well-known subject of Peleus and Thetis. It is not necessary to dwell on the discovery by Lieutenants Smith and Porcher of five temples in the Cyrenaica, the sculptures of which, principally of the age of the Antonines, have enriched the galleries of Roman art, but still more recent researches by Mr. Dennis, in the same locality, have discovered more vases of the class of Panathenaic amphoræ, one with the name of the Athenian archer Polyzelos, B.C. 368, contemporary of Alexander the Great. Another of these vases has the name of Kittos, also Athenian, that of the potter who made it, showing that they were imported from Athens to the coast of Africa, and not imitated there from Athenian originals.

The predecessors of the Romans in the civilisation of Central Italy were the Etruscans, whose costume and type bear an oriental impress, and exhibit some peculiarities of Asiatic art. They chiefly excelled in mechanical execution, and were celebrated in antiquity for their works in bronze, a remarkable example of which, an archaic Aphrodite, has been discovered in Southern Italy. Rome, it will be remembered, previous to her conquest of Greece, obtained the statues of her gods, the *signa Tuscanica*, from Etruria.

Without, however, pronouncing whether the Etruscans or Rasenæ descended from the Rhætian Alps, or landed as colonists on Italian shores, a careful examination of their language, which is written in Greek characters with modified forms, must bring conviction to the mind that it was a declined and inflected tongue, resembling in its general structure the Oscan, Latin, and other dialects of Central Italy. Such at least is its contribution to that historical problem which future investigations must eliminate. For the present the excavations in Etruria have ceased, and no great additions have been made to the important examples of Etruscan remains. Enough has been found to show in how great a degree the Romans were indebted to the Etruscans for their principles of art. Few examples of Roman art are as old as the days of the Republic; the greater portion belong to the period of the Empire. Roman antiquities have an especial claim upon our attention, as they are extensively diffused all over Britain. The evidences of Roman art are found scattered throughout western Europe, and are constantly appealed to as proofs for defining the topography of the former Roman provinces, and the extent of the empire. The most common, the best known of the smaller objects of Roman art is the red pottery, or so-called Samian ware, and is familiar to us all. This was preceded by the red ware of Arezzo or Arretium, the Aretine ware, and some of the red ware found in Britain appears to have come from the potteries of Capua, Cuma, and other Italian cities. The place of fabric of the red ware is, however, as yet undetermined, although the name of Gaulish, and other barbarian potters, found upon it, go far to prove that its fabric may have been in ancient Gaul and Germany. It is the connecting link in art between the beautiful vases of Greece, which at their close substituted reliefs for paintings, and the local potteries of the Roman provinces, and was produced from the first to the third century of our era. Besides this ware there were local kilns in this country of the Anglo-Roman wares of Castor, Upchurch, and Crockhill. The legionary tiles, excellent specimens of which, belonging to the second and ninth Legions are in the Museum at York, and others of different legions, discovered in Britain, enable us to trace the stations of the Empire. On a recent occasion the Congress of the Institute was inaugurated in the Guildhall, in the centre of

the Roman London, on a spot formerly a British village, afterwards a Roman city, and now the metropolis of a mighty empire. This site was near that of the palace of the pro-prætor, as appears from the tiles discovered near the spot. There, in the old city of London, at the depth of 18 ft. are found, from time to time, Roman mosaics, pottery, arms and implements; a few feet nearer the surface lie the remains of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, while the pavement of 1666, two centuries back, is 6 ft. below the level of the present streets.

I shall not enter upon the subject of British art, nor upon that of mediæval art, its diptychs, ivories, illuminations, enamels, seals and gems. These subjects are constantly brought under the notice of the Institute, and the state and progress of our knowledge upon them is well known from the memoirs which appear in the Journal of the Institute. So, too, the subject of numismatics, which would require not one but several lectures to explain, for it is a branch of archæology which has been more minutely studied than any, and it is impossible, on the present occasion, to make more than a few remarks. Yet I cannot forbear from calling your attention to the fact that it is desirable more attention should be paid than has been hitherto done to coins considered in reference to the monetary systems to which they belong. The types of coins have been minutely studied in reference to their subjective interest to history and mythology. For example, the numerous small brass of the latter days of the Empire become of greater interest, when it is known that they are the washed and copper *denarii* which superseded silver, ceasing to be current after the reign of Gallienus. The Roman treasury issued them in its payments, or rather promises to pay, for they are the prototypes of a paper currency, but would only receive gold in payment of the taxes. They circulated at their nominal value till the reign of Aurelian, who in his grand monetary reform or revolution, for thousands of moneyers were killed by his legions in the streets of Rome in consequence, would only take them at a depreciated value, or rather reduced them to their intrinsic value of 525 to the *aureus* or gold coin. In the subsequent alteration of Diocletian, a larger brass coin called the *folles*, equal to four *denarii*, appears along with the copper *denarii* and the still smaller *assaria*. Mr. J. F. de Salis, than whom no one is better acquainted

with the coins of the latter days of the Roman Empire, will give you a memoir upon the mint of Roman London, commencing in the reign of Carausius and terminating with that of Magnus Maximus, in which some of the numismatic points I have referred to will be treated at a greater length.