

CORRESPONDENCE.

The following five interesting letters (Nos. 1-5) have appeared in the *Academy*:—

1. THE NEW BILINGUAL HITTITE INSCRIPTION.

Dahabiyeh *Istar*, Cairo,
Dec. 28, 1891.

The Hittite cylinder, of which the Ashmolean Museum has become the fortunate possessor, is, next to the lost boss of Tarkondêmos, the most important monument of the kind yet discovered. It was found in Kilikia, and is of haematite. The figures and characters upon it are exquisitely engraved; indeed, from a merely artistic point of view, it is one of the finest cylinders with which I am acquainted. For me, however, the interest of the cylinder chiefly lies in the fact that the four Hittite hieroglyphs inscribed upon it are accompanied by three lines of cuneiform, and that this new "bilingual" confirms in a very gratifying way my system of Hittite decipherment.

The cuneiform characters, which resemble those found on certain of the Tel el-Amarna tablets, read "Indisilim the son of Serdamu, the worshipper of the goddess Iskhara." After the cuneiform inscription come the figures of the owner of the cylinder and of a deity. The owner stands with an offering in his hand; behind the deity, who is also standing with outstretched arms, are the four Hittite hieroglyphs of which I have spoken.

The last two of them occur on another haematite seal found in Kilikia, and now in the Ashmolean Museum, upon

which a paper of mine was published two years ago. I there showed that, if my system of Hittite decipherment is correct, they must represent the name of a goddess whose figure appears upon the seal. The cylinder of Indisilim proves that the name is that which was pronounced Iskhara in Assyrian.

Before the name of the goddess come two hieroglyphs, the second of which I cannot identify in spite of repeated examinations. It may be intended for the arm with a dagger in the hand, in which case it would signify "great." But it has more resemblance to the character which in Old Egyptian represented a "district." The first hieroglyph is the goat's head (*tarku*), which I have shown elsewhere must mean "prince," as it interchanges with the ideograph of "king." Now, in the *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* (xiii. 3, 4, p. 160), M. Bouriant has published a corrected copy of the treaty between Ramses II. and the Hittites, which was engraved on the walls of Karnak. We learn from this that the Hittite goddess, invoked by the side of the god Suteteh, was "Shashkhir, the regent of the mountains." A very slight change in the form of the first character of the name would give us *Âshkhir* instead of *Shashkhir*; and it must, therefore, remain doubtful whether the name of the Hittite deity was actually *Iskhara*, which is given in the cuneiform tablets as the equivalent of the Babylonian *Istar*, or whether *Iskhara* is a Babylonian name, which has been assimilated to the Hittite *Shashkhir* on account of the likeness of sound. In any case, in the goddess of the Kilikian seal we must see the Hittite goddess of the treaty; and since she is there called "the regent of the mountains," we may conjecture that the unidentified second hieroglyph on the cylinder denotes a "mountain," the whole inscription reading "the regent of the mountain-land, *Iskhara*."

From the *Academy*,
Jan. 9, 1892.

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