

better nor worse than transliteration in accordance with any other of our living languages, and the same difficulty will be experienced till we adopt some scientific and uniform mode of transliteration. Thus, the words *Sciankalla* and *Sciuro*, given as ethnical names equivalent to each other, though the first one really means "negro" in the Galla language, ought to be written *Shangala* and *Shuro* for an English reader. Lepsius' system is, I think, very imperfect, and the best of those hitherto employed is Bishop Steere's, at least for African languages and English readers. I have myself adopted, especially for the sake of comparison, a new scientific system, which I hope I shall soon be able to present to the English reader.—CAPT. T. G. DE G.

P.S.—I may add that the third volume of Cecchi's work (linguistic part) can be had from the publisher (Ermanno Loescher, in Rome), and indeed at a very cheap rate, viz. ten shillings; also from Messrs. Sampson Low and Co., in London.

The following letters came too late for insertion among the Correspondence.

2. THE BABYLONIAN ORIGIN OF THE CHINESE CHARACTERS.

(*Suum cuique.*)

SIR,—My attention has been called to several inexact statements concerning me, and conceived in anything but a lenient spirit, by Mr. G. Bertin, in his article on the *Origin and Development of the Cuneiform Syllabary*, published in this JOURNAL, October, 1887, Vol. XIX. pp. 625–654.

I shall only put to right a few of them.

In answer to the variously-repeated accusation that I have taken up views of other scholars, such as our lamented François Lenormant and Dr. Hyde Clarke, I must say that I have as yet never heard of, or seen, any paper or book in which has been forestalled in any way my discovery, put forth in 1880, that the Chinese writing was derived about 2500 B.C. from that in use at Babylon, through the intermediate country of Elam. The views entertained were—either as François Lenormant thought at one time, without any attempt at proving it, that the Akkadian and Chinese

writings had a common origin east of the Aral Sea—or, as I have learned recently, Dr. Hyde Clarke's opinion in 1878, amidst the flights of fancy which have made famous the meetings of the British Association—that the Chinese, Egyptian, and Akkadian writings were related in pre-historic times. Both these views are altogether different from that to which I was led by my studies. My discovery was made public in *The Times*, 20th April, in a lecture before the Royal Asiatic Society, 10th May, and in a lecture published in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 16th July, 1880, vol. xxviii. pp. 725-734. Writing several months afterwards in the same Journal, p. 791, Dr. Hyde Clarke, in an amiable note which I have only seen lately, accepted my discovery and mentioned his communication, not yet seen by me, at Dublin two years before, on the pre-historic relations of the three writings. On the 20th of June, the late François Lenormant had written to me from Bossieu some congratulations on "mes découvertes de premier ordre." My lecture from the Journal of the Society of Arts was reprinted separately, with the addition of a plate of Akkadian and early Chinese characters; the plate was bad, and Mr. G. Bertin was right in criticising it (p. 654), though, if I judge from the opinion of many scholars of eminence, his criticism goes beyond the mark, when he infers from that imperfect plate that my discovery had not as yet been scientifically established at the time of his paper (October, 1887). To be able to say so, he ought to have refuted the large amount of circumstantial evidence, including the most conclusive proof given by the shifted cardinal points, which I have piled up in several of my works, and which have received a wide circulation. A resumé, entitled *Babylonia and China*, had appeared in *The Babylonian and Oriental Record* for June, 1887. Since then I have published on the subject: §§ 197-208 of my book on *The Languages of China Before the Chinese* (1887, D. Nutt), *The Shifted Cardinal Points, from Elam to Early China* (1st art.), and *The Old Babylonian Characters and their Chinese Derivates*, in *The Babylonian and Oriental Record* of January, pp. 25-32, and of March, 1888, pp. 73-99.

Mr. G. Bertin finds fault with several of my statements about the writing from which the Chinese characters were derived, as seen through an examination of these characters, which were published in this JOURNAL in 1883, Vol. XV. pp. 278–280. I have had occasion lately to revise them carefully, and I must say that I shall be obliged to maintain nearly every one of them. The cause of this difference arises from the fact that the Babylonian writing had undergone several changes before the oldest state that we know of it. I shall discuss the matter in my paper “On the Kushite Origin of the Babylonian Characters,” which I shall give out as soon as leisure and health permit.

With reference to the latter hypothesis, which I put forth for the first time in my paper *The Kushites, who were they?* published pp. 25–31 of *The Babylonian and Oriental Record* for December, 1886, which Mr. G. Bertin criticises unmercifully without quoting it, and where I gave as my opinion that the Egyptian, Babylonian, and Hittite writings may have sprung from a former system still unknown, and brought into Babylonia and Hittite lands by the Kushites, I must say that I had never known the theory to have been started by any one before, and that I am still in the same state of ignorance. The above-quoted paper of Dr. Hyde Clarke, of which I have only heard through Mr. G. Bertin’s article, would bear out a part only of the theory. I am indebted to Mr. G. Bertin for having put right a wrongly-applied quotation from Pritchard, which I had cited from Professor G. Maspero without rectifying it; but the matter is of little importance, as I have advocated that the Kushites had been a mixed population in very remote times. As to a list of ten or twelve Egyptian and Babylonian characters, which Mr. G. Bertin criticises from me, *I have never published such a thing.*

TERRIEN DE LACOUPERIE.

The Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.