

with tubes are found on monuments of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. Plows similar to the one found in this seal impression are in use in Syria at the present time. The plow on the Museum tablet, here discussed, is the earliest known, being about a century earlier than the one on the boundary stone belonging to the reign of Meli-Shipak.

piece of modern machinery does, in that it combined the processes of plowing and sowing.

A. T. C.

A VASE OF XERXES.

As early as 1762 Count Caylus published an account of a marble vase in the Cabinet des Médailles de Bibliothèque Na-

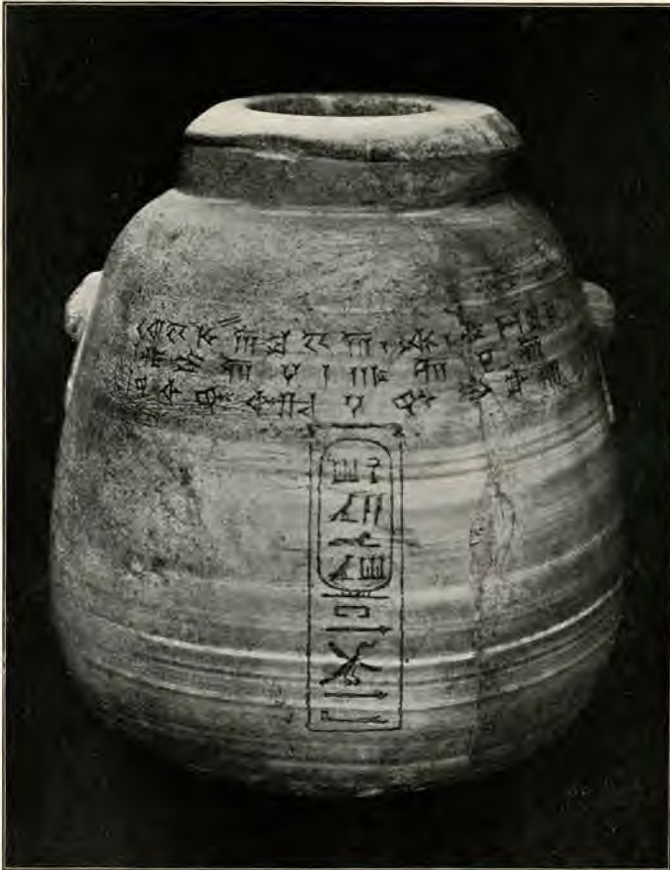


Fig. 2—Alabaster Vase of Xerxes the Great.

It is also interesting to note that one of the latest inventions of our Western civilization whereby the grain is sown by machinery was already anticipated by ancient Babylonians at least thirty-three centuries ago. In fact the simple Babylonian device accomplished what no single

tional, at Paris, inscribed with cuneiform and hieroglyphic characters. But at that time it was not possible to read the inscription.

After some progress has been made in the decipherment of the cuneiform script, through the important investigations made

by Grotefend, Abbé Saint-Martin, who had devoted considerable time in studying his results, felt that he was able to read the name of the king inscribed on the vase. Champollion, after he had found the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics, suggested to the Abbé that they decipher the inscription independently. The test proved conclusively that progress had been made in the decipherment of the cuneiform and the Egyptian hieroglyphs and that their methods were correct, for their results confirmed each other's progress. It was found that the inscription read: "Xerxes, the Great King." It was, however, only determined in later years that the three different cuneiform inscriptions found on the vase represented the Persian, Elamitic and Babylonian forms of writing.

A number of similar vases and fragments belonging to the same king have since made their appearance. Loftus, in 1853, found several fragments of a similar vase in the ruins of Susa. These were deposited in the British Museum. Newton, in his excavations of the mausoleum of Halicarnassus, an ancient Greek city of Asia Minor, discovered in 1856 another vase of the same king, which found its way to the British Museum. Less important fragments were also discovered by Dieulafoy at Susa, which are now in the Louvre.

Through the instrumentality of the late E. W. Clark, Esq., of Philadelphia, a similar alabaster vase, with the same quadrilingual inscription, was purchased in 1888 from Joseph Shemtob, an antiquity dealer in London. The provenience of this vase is unknown. It measures nine and seven-eighth inches in height and eight and fifteen-sixteenth inches in width. It is now in the possession of the University Museum, and is on exhibition among its treasures (Fig. 2).

The upper line of cuneiform writing shows the Persian script; the second line

is in Elamitic; the third is in Babylonian, and the vertical column underneath gives the same inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphics, XERXES, THE GREAT KING.

A. T. C.

MEDITERRANEAN SECTION.

MR. SEAGER IN CRETE.

MR. RICHARD B. SEAGER continued his excavations in Crete during the late winter and spring and has been successful in locating the cemetery of Gourná, the Mycenaean town cleared by Mrs. Harriet Boyd Hawes in 1904. The excavation of this cemetery has occupied Mr. Seager during the season just closed. It dates mainly from the third Middle Minoan period (2500-1800 B. C.) and the first Late Minoan (1800-1600 B. C.). The bodies were placed in large terra cotta jars, of which more than 150 were exhumed. The bones were very well preserved, and hence from the standpoint of physical anthropology this is one of the most important excavations ever made in Crete, since the skulls found at other sites are few and in bad condition. Some of the jars are painted, but the style of decoration cannot yet be described, since they have not been cleaned and examined. These are the first burials dating from the first Late Minoan period that have come to light in Crete, and Mr. Seager's discovery is therefore of special interest to students of Cretan archaeology.

G. B. G.

CASTS FROM THE ARCH OF TRAJAN AT BENEVENTUM.

Among the objects which first attract the attention on entering the Mediterranean Section of the Museum are the casts from the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum. The original was erected in the year 114 A. D. by the Senate and People