

Sixth Quarterly Report on the Excavation of Gezeh

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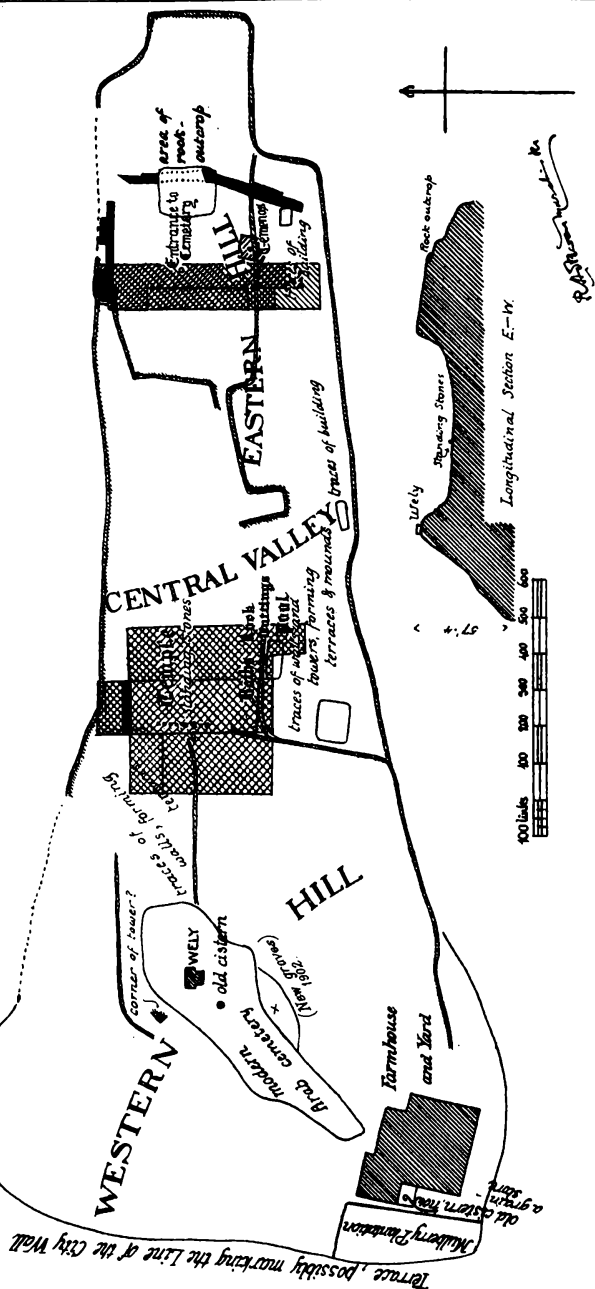
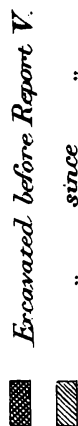


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PLAN OF THE SURFACE



SIXTH QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE EXCAVATION OF GEZER.

16 August—16 November, 1903.

By R. A. STEWART MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

§ I.—SUMMARY OF THE QUARTER'S WORK.

THE excavation has proceeded since the forwarding of the last report, with two interruptions—first, a three weeks' interval of rest which I gave myself and the labourers during September, and, secondly, a week in November, during which an attack of the fever that has been epidemic in the district throughout the summer prevented me from allowing the work to be carried on, as I was unable to attend to the walls or the objects unearthed.

The discoveries that have been made this quarter are not quite of such exceptional interest. This is due to two causes: partly simple chance, the soil turned over (though not less prolific than that examined in previous quarters) containing fewer exceptional objects; and partly the very considerable time occupied in the clearance of the large pool south of the rock-cut high place, the excavation of which had been commenced when the previous report was forwarded. I confess to have been doubtful at times as to the advisability of devoting so much labour to a work which, as the event proved, was not very productive in interesting antiquities; but it was, of course, impossible to foresee what might or might not lie concealed in the silt at the bottom—objects were as likely to be found there as anywhere else—and in any case it is satisfactory to have obtained the complete design of a very remarkable, and, perhaps, unique engineering work.

In addition to the clearance of this pool, the Seleucid necropolis of the city has been located and its examination commenced, and the trenching of the Eastern Hill has been continued.

§ II.—THE POOL.

The difficulty of clearing the pool will be realised when it is remembered that it was filled, not with earth, but with large heavy stones which had evidently been thrown into it, and that each of

these stones had to be carried out separately—many of them, indeed, had to be broken into several pieces with a sledge-hammer before they could be removed.

The length and breadth are given in the previous report (p. 321 of last year's *Quarterly Statement*) at 57 and 46 feet respectively. Amid many expressions of rejoicing on the part of the foreman and labourers, tired of the arduous work of transporting large stones, bottom was found at a depth of 25 feet 6 inches below the level of the rock, 41 feet 6 inches below the surface of the ground. Their satisfaction, however, after a few hours' further excavation turned out to be premature; for in the centre of the floor of the pool a second pool was found to be sunk, 27 feet long and 24 feet 6 inches broad,¹ which proved to be of about the same depth as the first. The excavation of this lower pool was less troublesome, in that it was almost completely filled with silt, and contained but few large stones; but as all its contents had to be carried up to the present surface of the ground, the work proceeded more and more slowly with every increase of depth.

The two pools are wholly quarried in the soft porous chalky limestone which forms the rock of the hill. The sides, which are irregular and have many hollows and projecting bosses, are covered with two coats of cement, each about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick, the outer coat being smooth and comparatively fine, the inner coat being gritty. As the work proceeded a careful search was kept up all round the walls for marks, graffiti, or inscriptions, but none were found. A flight of steps, the lower part cut in the rock, the upper part of masonry and now much broken, runs down the western side of the upper pool, and returns a short distance on the southern side; it is continued by a narrow flight, wholly rock-cut, running down the southern and eastern sides of the lower pool (Fig. 1).

A rough calculation shows that the pool, when full, would contain in round numbers some four million gallons of water. It is evident that it was excavated as a public work, to serve as a common reservoir for the use of the town, perhaps also to supply the two baths already discovered and reported upon,² which are close by. How the pool was filled with water is a problem on which the excavation has thrown no light whatever. No doubt

¹ These are the measurements at the top; it narrows toward the bottom.

² *Quarterly Statement*, 1903, p. 113.

surface and roof drainage was conveyed to it by some system of conduits, but no tangible trace of any such construction was discovered.

The question of the date to which the pool is to be assigned must now be re-examined. That it was open at the latest period of the occupation of the *tell* is shown by the entire absence of foundations and of antiquities in the soil that overlay its surface. It seems clear that when the site was finally abandoned, and devoted to pasture or tillage, this great chasm was recognised as

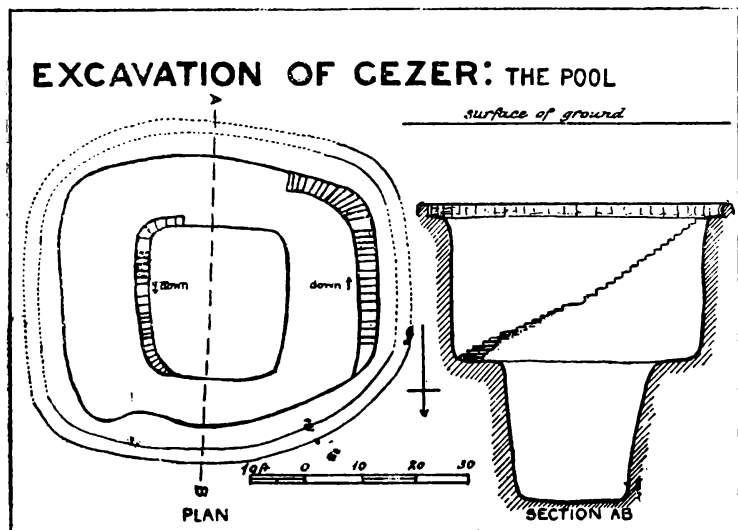


FIG. 1.—The Pool.

being useless and dangerous, and was in consequence filled up purposely with the large stones that no doubt at that time cumbered the hilltop in much greater quantities than at present. (Among these stones, it may be observed in passing, are several bearing coarse mouldings, also a fragment of a volute of an Ionic capital. No buildings have yet been discovered with which these remains can be associated.) Then vegetable soil gradually grew over the heap of stones, so that at last the hollow was filled up and the pool forgotten.

All the datable objects, with one exception, found within the pool belong unmistakably to the Maccabean period. The one

exception, it is curious to note, is the only jar-handle yet found on the mound bearing the royal stamp of the unknown town "Memshath."¹ The other objects discovered were potsherds and a few more or less sound vessels, undoubtedly Maccabean, handles and other fragments of Rhodian wine-amphoræ (including several with Greek stamps), a few small Ptolemaic coins, beads, and fragments of iron picks, possibly broken tools of the quarrymen. The great depth of silt in the lower pool seems to show that the reservoir was seldom if ever cleared out; and there is no reason to suppose that the relics found are merely the last accumulation, and that in previous cleansings of the reservoir earlier remains were removed. The Hebrew jar-handle (which might have been washed or thrown in at any time) cannot, I think, upset the unanimous testimony of the remaining objects as to the Maccabean date of the pool.

In favour of this conclusion may be advanced another consideration. As I have just said, it is evident that the reservoir was a great municipal work, designed to supply the town with water, especially in the case of a siege. In earlier pre-Captivity times the same end was attained by the numerous cisterns scattered all over the surface of the hill. These cisterns had all been closed up and forgotten before the Maccabean period; this follows from the almost total absence of Maccabean pottery among the numerous sherds recovered from the débris within them. Had they been in use this great and expensive work would have been unnecessary. The only time when they were not in use was the Maccabean period, and it follows that this is the most probable period to which to assign the excavation of the pool.

An argument which I brought forward in the last report, before the excavation was complete, drawn from the dip of the lower strata towards the pool, and which I relied upon to indicate that the pool was a more ancient work handed down and used by many generations of the inhabitants, is evidently invalid. The dip of the strata may merely indicate that there was a natural hollow in the ground, the existence of which possibly determined the choice of the site for the excavation.

¹ [Hommel has suggested that ממשא is the *Mampsio* (Μαψίς) of the *Onomastica* (Lagarde, 85, 3; 210, 86), on the road from Elath to Hebron, one day's journey from *Thamara* (*Expository Times*, xii, p. 288; 1901).—ED.]

§ III.—BUILDINGS.

All the walls uncovered during this quarter have been ordinary house-walls, or rather their foundations; most of them in a state of extreme dilapidation. Some additional sections of the city walls

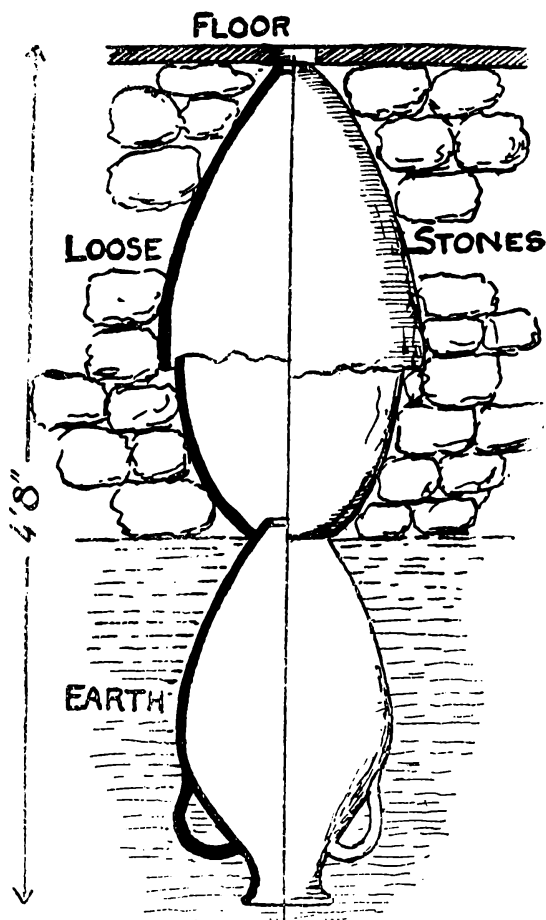


FIG. 2.—Drain of Jars.

have been excavated, and I hope later to report further on these constructions; for the present I shall only say that some of the provisional theories respecting them contained in previous reports will probably have to be revised.

Of the domestic structures none need be referred to here, with the exception of a row of small chambers belonging to the lowest stratum of building (Stratum II, Stratum I being the rock-cut dwellings). These chambers contained burnt grain—in one barley, in another wheat, in a third a mixture of these grains, in others various species of vetches (peas, &c.). Another contained chopped straw. Evidently the series formed a grain magazine or market that had been destroyed by fire. The first two of the chambers were found in 1902, just before the work was transferred to the neighbourhood of the Canaanite temple; the excavation of the entire row has now been completed.

In this section I may also refer to a curious erection of fragments of jars found under the floor of the corner of a room of the second stratum. The room was paved with a plaster layer, in which a round hole had been cut; underneath this was the lower half of a jar, inverted, with an aperture cut in the base. There were two other portions of jars underneath the first. The accompanying figure represents the elevation and section of this construction, which was no doubt a drain meant to carry away water from the floor; compare the drain figured p. 20 of last year's *Quarterly Statement*, and the much more elaborate Babylonian example figured in Hilprecht's *Excavations in Bible Lands*, p. 365. The drain here described did not lead to any conduit or cesspool, but merely conveyed water downwards so as to be dispersed through the soil under the foundation of the house. Two more drains, of almost identical pattern, have been discovered during the writing of this report.

§ IV.—STONE, BRONZE, AND IRON OBJECTS.

The only objects in stone calling for notice here are, first, a flint arrowhead $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long which has just been found in the fourth stratum during the writing of this report. It is the only flint arrowhead with barbs that I have seen from Palestine. Barbed *bronze* arrowheads have not appeared in the Fund excavations before the Seleucid period (seventh stratum at Gezer). Secondly, a fine mould for casting bronze daggers, chisels, axeheads, and celts (third stratum).

In bronze the majority of the objects found have been of the usual types—arrowheads, pins, needles, spatulas, chisels, rings,

axeheads, and a spearhead. These are found in all strata indiscriminately, except, of course, the Neolithic first and second. A copper knife-blade from the third stratum, and a small bronze squatting figure of an animal, found in a cistern belonging to the fourth, are perhaps worth mention.

The principal iron objects have been much corroded and broken fragments of picks and hooks, perhaps quarrymen's tools, found in the large pool.

§ V.—RELIGION AND FOLKLORE.

Numerous specimens of Astarte plaques, presenting an interesting variety of types (a full discussion of which must be postponed till



FIG. 3.—Figure of Astarte.

the concluding memoir) have come to light. These have all been found in the fourth stratum. The most interesting yet found is here illustrated (Fig. 3); it is remarkable, in the first place for being unbroken, and in the second for the thoroughly Egyptian

equipment of the figure; it might almost be taken as a representation of Hathor. As a general rule any distinctively Egyptian features are conspicuously absent from these plaques, unless we count the lotus-flower which the figures are frequently represented as grasping in their hands.

In Fig. 4 is shown a very curious conventionalised plaque (reduced to half size). Here the human figure has degenerated to two discs, a larger and a smaller, the larger having a circular notch cut out on each side. The upper surface bears rows of indented dots round the edges and down the middle; some of these are emphasised with a spot of red paint.

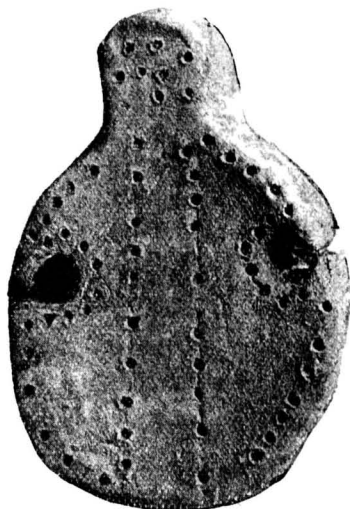
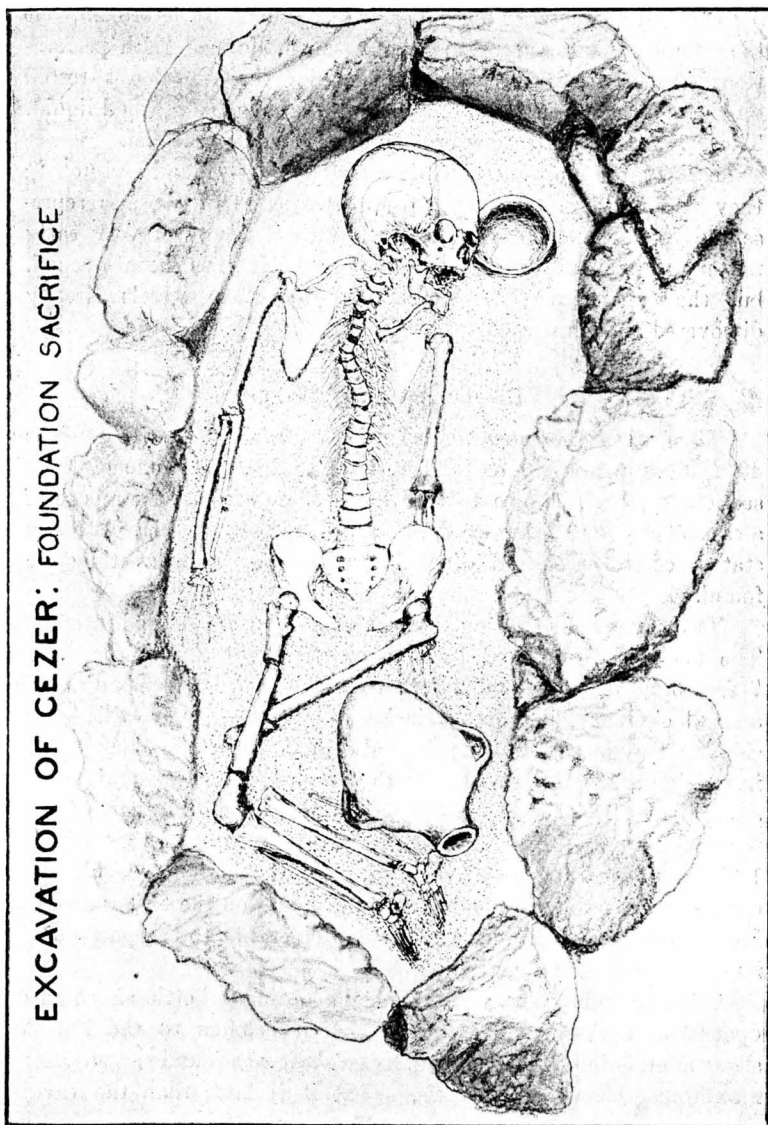


FIG. 4.—Conventionalised Astarte Plaque.

In the second stratum was found the first example of an *adult* human foundation sacrifice as yet discovered on the site. This was the skeleton of a woman of advanced age, deposited in a hollow under the corner of a house. The body was lying on its back, the legs being bent up (but not doubled); at the head was a small bowl, and between the femora and tibiae a large two-handled jar—no doubt food-vessels. The exact disposition of the skeleton is shown on Plate II. Pathologically the skeleton had some interest, the right arm and shoulder having been distorted by some rheumatic affection.

EXCAVATION OF GEZER: FOUNDATION SACRIFICE

§ VI.—POTTERY.

No new forms have come to light except a curious filter, 5 inches in diameter, from the third stratum. It is broken, but the complete plan can be made out—a small bowl, with perforations in the bottom, having a wide rim that no doubt rested on the mouth of the vessel intended to receive the purified liquid. There was one handle, now broken off, attached to the rim.

A few more lamp-and-bowl deposits have been found and noted; they add nothing, however, to our knowledge of the site represented by them. A cave containing several pieces of very early pottery deposited round the wall (*see* § VII) has been opened, but the types have been represented by other vessels already discovered and illustrated.

§ VII.—CAVES AND CISTERNS.

The area of the mound is being excavated in successive sections 40 feet wide and 80 or 90 feet long, and scarcely one of these sections is carried down to the rock surface without the mouth of a cave or a cistern being exposed. These are all, as I have already stated, carefully cleared of their contents as soon as they are found.

Two caves found during the past quarter are of special interest. The first¹ is approached by a downward slope cut in the rock, 7 feet 3 inches long and 2 feet 10 inches across, terminating in a small circular cell 5 feet 6 inches in diameter. From this cell a side doorway leads into the principal chamber, which is about 8 feet in maximum height; about half the area of the floor is raised by a step 2 feet 9 inches above the other half. The lower part of the floor is covered with a series of shallow cups, most of them about 10 inches deep and 1 foot 6 inches across. It is these which mark out the cave as unique among those yet found on the tell, and raise interesting, but at present insoluble, problems as to the purpose of its excavation.

Close by this cave a cistern of the ordinary bottle shape was opened at a later period. This cistern belongs to the lowest stratum of building on the tell, as no shaft was found carrying its mouth up through the débris. That it is later than the cave,

¹ [Plans and photographs are held over until the final memoir.]

however, is shown by the great length of the shaft of the cistern—rather more than twice the ordinary length; the reservoir had to be cut below the level of the cave in order to avoid breaking into it.

The second cave contained two chambers connected by an unroofed passage scarfed in the rock. Access to the first (southern) chamber was gained originally by a stepped passage of the usual sort; a wall had been built across the entrance leading to the unroofed passage. On the surface of the earth, with which the chamber was more than half filled, were deposited, evidently in ordered arrangement, the fragments of two large jars broken longitudinally in halves and lying on their sides; they contained

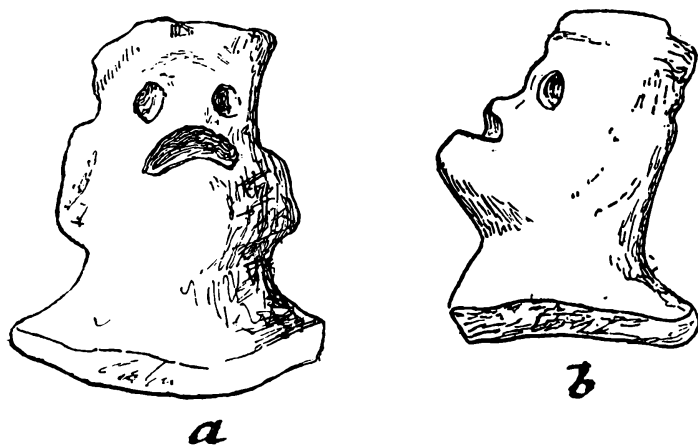


FIG. 5.—Pottery Head from Troglydyte Cave.

much decayed bone debris. There were also three saucers, two jugs, and one spouted vessel lying beside the walls of the chamber. The pottery was all of the type found in the burial cave described in the first of the present series of reports. There were also a fragment of the occipital region of a skull, and splinters of a much-decayed femur. Under the surface of the earth were found many fragments of the characteristic cave pottery and pieces of cow bones; there was also a part of the lower jaw of a child of about six years, and some fragments of an infant's skull. The most interesting object, however, was a very singular human head in pottery, probably the oldest attempt at modelling yet found in the tell. It is here illustrated (Fig. 5) as a unique example of troglodyte

art. The marked prognathism, which probably reflects a characteristic of the race to which the artist belonged, will not escape notice. It is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

The floor of this chamber, like that of the cave already described, had two cup-marks. Part of its area was covered with a pavement of lime, underneath which was nothing but one or two rude flaked flint knives.

The passage connecting the chambers contained some further specimens of troglodyte pottery, and a collection of remarkably fine flaked flint knives. The second chamber contained nothing but potsherds and a fragment of a stone mortar.

§ VIII.—EGYPTIAN OBJECTS.

The only Egyptian objects catalogued in this quarter's journal, beside the scarabs tabulated below, are the lower part of a small figure in grey friable paste (between Strata III and IV), and a Horus-eye and small pendant plaque with a seated female figure in relief upon it, both in green enamelled paste (Stratum V).

As in previous reports, I catalogue the scarabs in tabular form :—


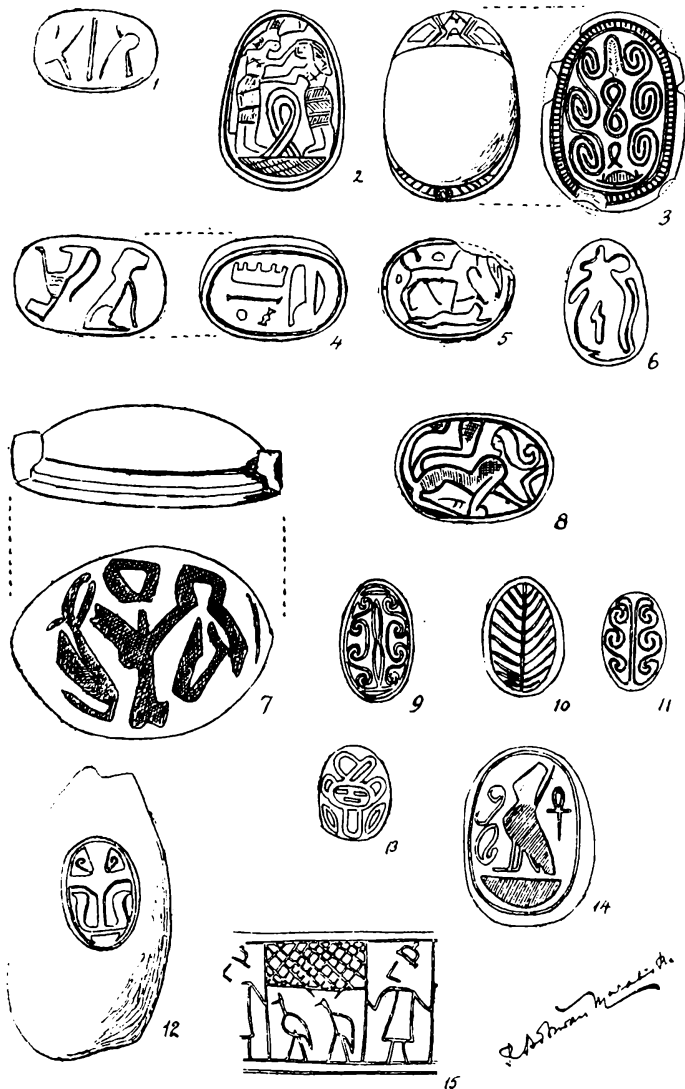
No.	Fig. on Pl. III.	Stratum.	Material.	Device.
1	—	III	Hæmatite ..	Scaraboid—no device.
2	—	III	Jade ..	No device.
3	—	III	Paste (much decayed).	Illegible.
4	1	III	Steatite ..	Defaced. A symmetrical arrangement of <i>m'l</i> feathers (?).
5	2	Between III and IV.	Steatite ..	Two figures with a knot between them.
6	3	III-IV	Diorite ..	Spirals.
7	4	IV	Blue enamelled paste.	Scaraboid; on one side two lions, on the other nb'Imnti, "Lord of the Other World."
8	5	V	Steatite ..	Lion and crocodile.
9	7	V	White limestone	Unintelligible.
10	6	V	Green enamelled paste.	Figure of Bes (?).
11	8	From a cistern	Steatite ..	Sphinx.

Among the objects on Plate III mention should be made of the cylinder, No. 15 (Stratum V), and the scarab-stamps on jar-handles

EXCAVATION OF CEZER

SCARABS (1-8) & SCARAB SEALS

1 inch

(Nos. 9-14). No. 12 represents a small rudely modelled vessel in black pottery with a scarab stamp on the side from Stratum IV. The scarab-seals are of the ordinary type—geometrical and spiral devices arranged symmetrically, except No. 14, from Stratum IV, and the palm-leaf (No. 10), two specimens of which were found, also in IV. No. 11 is a conjectural restoration of a much defaced example.

§ IX.—THE SELEUCID NECROPOLIS.

That, at least, part of the tombs referable to the Seleucid period of occupation are to be looked for on the northern slope of the hill south of the tell is shown by the existence of a number of tombs which have been rifled at some former time and left open. These open tombs are not many, and they are sufficiently far apart to raise the hope that unrifled tombs will be found interspersed among them. During the coming quarter I hope to prosecute a search for these.

The opened tombs have evidently been broken into many years ago—this is indicated by their being almost all filled up with silt. I have commenced operations on the necropolis by clearing out two of these tombs completely in order to recover their plans and to test the chance of finding objects left behind by the marauders.

The result has been encouraging, at least in the case of one of these tombs. I prefer to hold back the plans until I have more nearly completed the examination of the necropolis, when all can be collected and published together. The first tomb examined is a single chamber which had evidently been closed by a rolling stone; on each side are arcosolia, and, at the inner end, a group of sunk bench graves. Nothing was found in this tomb except a few bones. The second proved much more important. It was evidently the tomb of some family of distinction, and was an elaborate and costly work. A square vestibule sunk in the rock, and now open to the sky, gives access to two chambers, one on the southern, the other on the eastern side. The eastern chamber contains arcosolia; the southern has sunk bench graves round the wall, and strewn on the floor were found a few fragments that evidently formed part of a carved sarcophagus which probably stood in the middle. South of this chamber is a second, smaller apartment, also containing sunk bench graves. Over the door:

leading to this inner chamber are rudely carved two bulls' heads (one of them badly chipped) and a wreath, in low relief (Fig. 6).

The edge of the rock surface round the open vestibule is related, obviously for receiving the foundation of some structure of the type of the Herodian monument at Jerusalem, commonly called "Absalom's Pillar." Not one stone of this building remains, so that it is useless to speculate on its architectural details. But it is quite clear from the cuttings around other tombs that have not yet been submitted to examination, that when the Maccabean city of Gazara was flourishing, the hill-side facing it was ornamented with a number of monuments whose general style no doubt resembled the well-known erections still remaining in the Kedron valley.

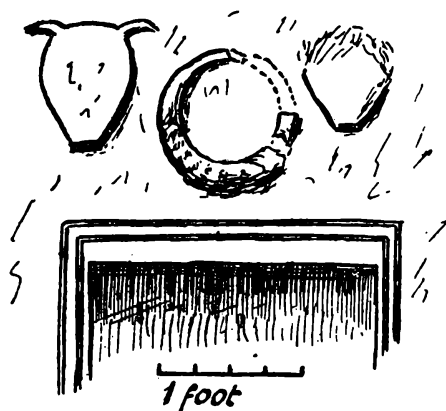


FIG. 6.—Ornament over Inner Door of Seleucid Tomb.

A narrower passage, also cut in the rock and once covered over by building, leads into the vestibule of the tomb. In the eastern side of this passage is a door giving admission to another chamber having arcossolia round the walls.

The earth with which the chambers, vestibule, and entrance passage of this tomb were almost filled was cleared out and sifted carefully. There is always the possibility of finding objects which to tomb-thieves seem of no value, and are consequently neglected by them. These tombs were probably rifled long before the great development of tourist traffic created a demand for antiquities of pottery and glass; consequently such objects, being at the time

unsalable, would have been left behind and nothing but the deposits of gold and other precious material stolen. This argument proved valid in the present case, for a number of lamps, some prettily ornamented, and one with a Greek inscription, a considerable quantity of beads, a small bronze bell, and a remarkable portable altar in soft limestone came to light. The lamps are of

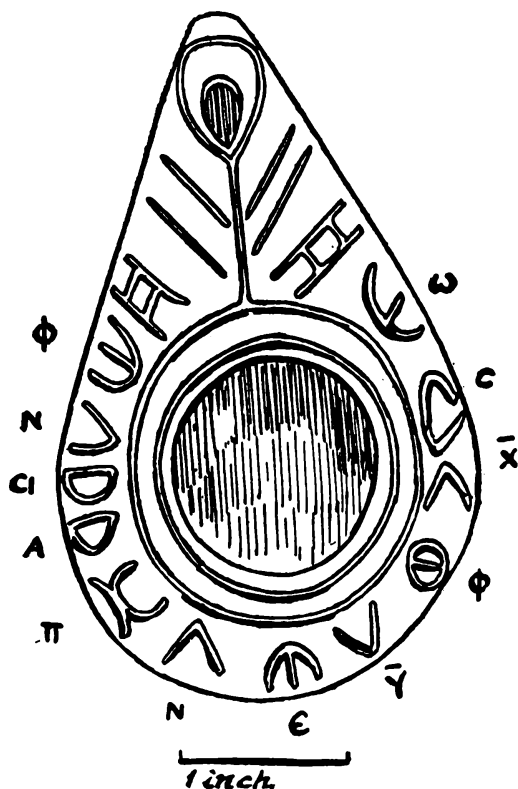


FIG. 7.—Inscribed Lamp from a Tomb near Gezer.

the late Byzantine type, and no doubt belong to the last interments in the tomb; the legend on the inscribed lamp is a singularly blundered copy of the common formula, $\Phi\omega\varsigma\ \chi\bar{\rho}\iota\varsigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ ($\chi\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$) $\Phi\epsilon\bar{\nu}\ \Pi\alpha\varsigma\iota\bar{\nu}$, and thus definitely connects the interments in the tomb with Christianity. This, it may be remarked, is the first evidence of a settled Christian population at Gezer or its immediate

neighbourhood. The Φ of ΦEN is interpolated between the X and Y of the preceding abbreviation.

An illustration of this lamp is subjoined. By itself the inscription would, I believe, be absolutely unintelligible; I confess that it completely baffled me till I happened to see in the *Mittheilungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (1903, p. 22) a figure of a very similar lamp in the possession of the German Archæological Institute at Jerusalem, illustrating a paper by Professor Dalman. The inscription on this example is evidently identical with that on the Gezer lamp, but is much easier to decipher, the letters being more regularly formed.

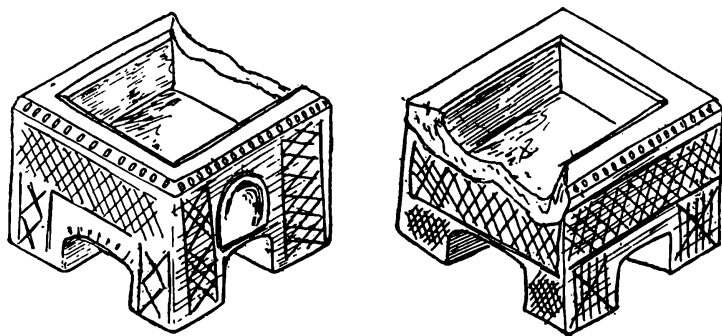


FIG. 8.—Altar from a Tomb near Gezer.

The altar (for such I suppose it to be) was found in fragments in the vestibule of the tomb. An illustration of this interesting object also is forwarded (Fig. 8). It will be remembered that a somewhat similar relic was found in a tomb opened by the Fund officers at Beit Jibrin, and is illustrated in *Excavations in Palestine*, Plate XC, Fig. *g*.

The Gezer example is a box of soft limestone, 6 inches square and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep, standing on four legs. The outer surface is ornamented with rude linear ornament, shown in the figure. It is not unlike an ossuary in appearance, but of course its shape and small size quite preclude that explanation of its purpose.

The other objects from the tomb need not be illustrated at present; they will be described in the concluding memoir with the final account of this necropolis.

A clue to the date at which the tomb was rifled is perhaps afforded by an unexpected discovery made in one of the side

chambers. This was a couple of brass tokens, one of them being a specimen of the well-known coinage of Hans Schultes, the "Rechenmeister," or money-changer and banker, of Nuremberg. Of the many types of token issued by this person, which I have examined from time to time, I have never seen a dated example, and am not aware whether his date has been accurately determined; from the costume of a figure represented on a specimen in my own possession—doubtless intended for Schultes himself—I should conjecture him to have lived in the earlier half of the sixteenth century. By what channel his token reached a chamber in a Palestinian tomb, and how long the journey occupied, it is of course impossible to say, but if we conjecture that the tomb has been opened for at least 150 years we shall, I think, allow a liberal time for the token to travel from Nuremberg to its singular destination.¹

GOLGOTHA AND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

By Major-General Sir C. W. WILSON, K.C.B., F.R.S., R.E., &c.

(*Concluded from p. 249.*)

IN the concluding section of these notes I propose to consider some of the views of those earnest Christians of all denominations who, for various reasons, find themselves unable to accept the traditional sites as genuine.

The situation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre within the modern city is, in itself, almost suggestive of doubt. Educated pilgrims to the Holy City are often sorely perplexed when they visit the "holy places" for the first time. They know that Christ suffered without the gate. They find Golgotha within the walls of a small Oriental city and in close proximity to its thronged bazârs. They may realise that the Jerusalem of Herod was not a large city, and may believe that the ground upon which the church stands was outside the walls at the time of the Crucifixion; but at the same time there lingers in their minds an uneasy feeling

¹ There are two slight misprints in the last Report which require correction. At the end of the first paragraph, *foremen* should be *foreman*; and on p. 321, line 3, *profanus* should, of course, be *profanum*.