

THE SURVEY OF PALESTINE.

LIEUT. CLAUDE R. CONDER'S REPORTS.

XXII.

JERUSALEM, 1st October, 1874.

I SEND home a few notes on points of interest which I have noted on coming back to the country before recommencing our active work.

I landed at Jaffa on 20th September, having left England on the night of the 10th, and spent a Sunday morning in Bologna. This is about as rapid a journey as could possibly be made under existing arrangements.

Gezer.—On passing from Ramleh I made a *détour* by Abu Shusheh to visit Tell Jezer, and the place where the two inscriptions were found, Tell Jezer, which I have had occasion to describe previously, is a prominent mound, partly natural, partly artificial, commanding one of the main routes from the plains to Jerusalem. On the south are rough caves and tombs, some having names, as shown on the Survey. On the east, in the valley, is a fine spring 'Ain Yerdeh, and on the opposite slope is the ruin of the same name. It was on the top of this flat hill, rather more than a mile from Tell Jezer, that the two stones were found. The line which joins their positions (about 100 yards apart) runs approximately north-west and south-east. They seem to have formed portions of the integral rock, and were written on its flat surface, which renders the fact that one inscription has to be reversed to read the Greek more easy to understand. There are evidences of considerable work; round this part of the hill the rock is cut in various places, and some shallow troughs, looking like sarcophagi with the sides knocked off, are visible. Somewhat in the same line, farther north, I was shown a long, rough stone, with two large letters, about a foot high, cut at the end. It has fallen on another, in a manner which suggests the former existence of some rude monument or sarcophagus. I was told of the existence of another stone farther south-east, but did not see it. Of the two first found, nothing is visible beyond the chipped rock in the place where they were cut out. The first is in the Serai at Jerusalem, where it is to be seen, and a photograph and several sketches have been taken. The other is in the Serai at Ramleh.

Mr. Drake's Last Illness.—It is a melancholy consolation to find how kindly Mr. Drake was treated during his last painful illness. The kindness of all the English residents was marked and untiring, and all that skill and care could do was done. I fear I hardly did justice in my

memoir to Dr. Thévier, who had been ^{ctz (Em 1862)} so serviceable and kind in his former attack. The good doctor undertook, at a moment's notice, a long and tedious journey to Jericho. He lost his way, and suffered by the fall of his horse. He reached us in the middle of the night, and by his prescriptions afforded immediate relief to Mr. Drake. He never left us until we were all safely established in Jerusalem, when the immediate danger was over. During Mr. Drake's last illness he showed the same kindness and attention.

The behaviour of Mr. Hornstein was also worthy of the highest commendation. Nothing could exceed his care and thoughtfulness. During the long and trying period of forty-two days hardly any one in the hotel seems to have been able to take any rest, and Dr. Chaplin was finally quite worn out, and suffered very considerably for some time after.

Christian Work in the Mosque.—On the 25th inst. I visited, in company with Mr. Shick and Sergeant Black, the Haram enclosure, under a special invitation from the sheikh, to see certain new discoveries. The first of these was a small figure in bas-relief, lately uncovered on the side of the little table which supports the Shield of Hamzeh. The whole of the work of this piece appears to be Christian, as are also several of the capitals to the columns, such as those on each side of the Mirhab. The little figure seems to represent a saint in flowing drapery, with the aureole, and holding some indistinguishable object in the raised right hand.

Greek Christian Inscription.—The second discovery, made a few days ago, whilst renewing the pavement of the mosque floor, is of greater importance. One of the flags was found to have a well-cut and preserved Greek inscription on the under side. It contains a date, and the crosses show it to be of Christian origin.

As far as I am able to make out at a first glance, it is a memorial tablet, but part of the stone has been unfortunately lost, and I was only able to recover this part of the inscription by means of the cast made by the deep cut letters in the underlying bed of mortar. No doubt this stone will prove of great interest (see p. 56).

Mosaics.—The wooden frame which surrounds the sacred rock has been taken down, but nothing of importance was visible in addition to what is already known. The works are rapidly approaching completion, and the appearance of the interior and dome, now that the paint has been renewed and the mosaics washed, is wonderfully beautiful. The curious question of the method in which these mosaics are placed in the wall, we carefully investigated. There is no doubt that the gold tessera have been intentionally fixed in an inclined position, so that the rays directly reflected may be directed towards the spectators below, whereby the brilliancy is greatly increased. (See "Letters from M. Clermont-Ganneau, 1874," p. 138.) The pieces of other colours have not, however, been so placed.

In parts, where the mosaics are defective or dull in colour, a coat of oil paint has been supplied.

Arches.—The marble casing, in black and white, to the arches supporting the drum has never been removed, and we are thus still ignorant of the true form of the arch. The exterior has never, however, been correctly represented. The keystone of each arch has a horizontal soffit, so that the arches cannot be said to be either pointed or round.

Glass.—Mr. Shick is of opinion that the apparent resemblance in the glass mosaic of the windows to the method above described of placing the mosaics of the dome, is only the result of accident, or of clumsy mending at a former period.

The Passages north of the Kubbet es Sakhrâh.—On the 28th inst. I visited, in company with Sergeant Black, some of the great cisterns of the Haram, which are only dry just at the end of summer. We first descended No. 3, afterwards No. 1. These, as will be remembered, are under the platform to the north of the Kubbet es Sakhrâh, and the western one (No. 3) is inclined in such a manner that its production in a line north-east would intersect that of No. 1, at about the line of the north steps of the platform, so that a connection with the vault running east and west on that side, and supposed by Mr. Fergusson to be part of a basilica, may be conjectured. I had always suspected that the north side of these two passages would be found to be modern, but had feared that the plaster would hide the work. I was, therefore, greatly pleased, on descending No. 3, to find at the farther end a wall, evidently more modern, closing the passage, and built irregularly in an oblique line across it. The lower part was cemented, but above the work showed and proves to be irregular in size, with broad mortar joints. The passage, which is throughout about thirty feet high, is roofed with a semi-circular arch of fine masonry. The keystone of the arch is very narrow, and the voussoirs gradually increase in breadth as they approach the haunches. This character of work, similar to that of the twin pools of the Sisters of Zion, is probably Roman. The voussoirs are cut irregularly by the end wall, and there can be no doubt that the passage continues farther north. On descending No. 1 I made the same remark, although the masonry of the cross wall was not so easily seen, but the voussoirs of the roofing arch run beyond in the same way. The passages, though now used for cisterns, were probably cut first for another object, and communicated with the exterior (see Note, p. 11). There is a side chamber in No. 3, with a well mouth, which may very probably be the House of Baptism, or, more properly, Bath-room, mentioned in the Talmud.

The Zion Scarp.—Since Captain Warren left Jerusalem, no work has been undertaken equalling in interest and importance that which is now being carried out at his own expense by Mr. Henry Maudsley, M.I.C.E. This gentleman has undertaken various improvements in the Bishops' School on Zion, and in prosecuting these with a purely benevolent motive, he has contrived to carry his researches for stones and for cisterns in such directions as are best calculated to give results of archæological interest. The illustration of Josephus's account, furnished

by the present discoveries, is in the highest degree instructive, and all travellers should in future make a point of visiting the school and its grounds.

Mr. Maudsley kindly undertook to show me the whole of his work, which I will endeavour shortly to describe.

The Bishop's School grounds stand partly on rock, partly on made earth, brought down from above, forming a garden terrace which extends to the English cemetery, a length of about four hundred feet in all. Mr. Maudsley's excavations are exactly those which I recommended should be made in this part in one of my early reports to the society, and the results are those which I hoped to obtain. The dining-room of the school-house proves to be founded on a rock, buttress, or tower, some twenty-five feet square, and reached by a flight of rock-cut steps on one side. The tower, whose scarp has an average height of about twenty feet, stands on a second rock platform of about twenty feet width, beyond which line Mr. Maudsley finds a drop of more than twenty-five feet. On the north-west side the scarp is now traced back, and a line discovered running due north, with a similar scarp directed on the present south-west corner of the city wall (a discovery of the utmost value, showing the line of the old west wall of the city, and proving the tower in question to be the ancient south-west angle of the first wall).

It was found in building the school that this scarped block had formed the base of a pair of cisterns, with walls some six to eight feet thick, also rock-cut. Behind the tower, Mr. Maudsley has just lit upon a very large cistern, cut in the rock, and with a mouth about the level of the top of the rock platform. There is a communication between this large cistern and the base of the tower. No one reading this description can fail to see how exactly it carries out the description by Josephus of the smaller towers upon the first wall. They were twenty cubits (or about twenty-six feet) square, with steps leading up. They had a solid base twenty cubits high, not, as has been previously supposed, built so with large stones, but hewn, as we now see, in the solid rock. Finally, above this base were cisterns and rooms. The work, as now exposed in parts, is magnificent. The labour of hewing these great scarps, apparently with an instrument not more powerful than the modern picks used by the natives, must have been immense.

On the western side were found numerous fallen stones, many of which seem to me to be Roman work, with a draft of three inches broad. There are also voussoirs of arches evidently of considerable span, fragments of column shafts, some three feet in diameter, and the jamb and lintel stones of a great doorway. The stones were found principally face downwards, as though fallen from the tower above, or pushed over from within.

I have already described, in a former report, the system of cisterns which runs along the top of the scarp east of this first tower. Mr. Maudsley has now succeeded in clearing this great scarp, which faces south, and has reached the bottom of it. The total height is about

thirty feet, and it stands on a rock platform of unknown width. There would, no doubt, be another fall beyond this, but I doubt the existence of a regular second scarp below, for which there would be no real use. The rock is probably rough, and left in its natural state.

A curious buttress sticks out of this scarp, and forms a division between two large cisterns, which seem to have been of masonry on the other sides. An inspection of the cement used in these, leads me to conclude that the cisterns are Saracenic work applied to the ancient scarp of which they form no part.

We now arrived at a sort of tunnel driven by the workmen against the face of the scarp, and on the platform as a base. Following this we came to the foot of the set of rock-cut steps explored by Captain Warren, and marked on the Ordnance Survey. It proves to be, as Captain Warren supposes, the base of the scarp, and the total height presented to the enemy at this point is some thirty feet. At the top of the steps are two cisterns or baths, with rock-cut sides and a masonry arch. These were the earliest discoveries of Mr. Maudsley, and I noticed them in a report which was mislaid in England. Above and behind these are a brick-kiln, a cistern, and a wall, apparently more modern, but of good masonry.

In the portion of the scarp nearest the tower already described, is a rock chamber, containing a large water-trough, cut like a sarcophagus out of the rock, and beside it are two mangers also rock-cut. These were found during a visit by Mr. Drake, and are mentioned by him in his last report, which I have just sent home.

The explorations are rendered complete by the discovery of a second tower. It forms the corner of the cemetery, and its scarp juts out at right angles to the line already described, and has a height of upwards of thirty feet. In the corner thus formed, Mr. Maudsley has made a cistern so as to leave the discovery open and visible. This second tower has also a large cistern within, and the steps lead directly to it. The work of the scarp is magnificent, and the appearance it must have presented when standing with its towers above, is well worthy the eulogy of Josephus.

Further exploration has shown a counter-scarp, or opposite scarped side, giving a ditch some twenty feet wide, with a rough rock slope beyond. It is not certain whether this ditch is continuous, and there is certainly none at the western tower. The line of the counter-scarp, where laid bare, is not strictly parallel to that of the scarp. It is possible it may in places be intended to form an extra protection where the rock without the fortress stands higher. This ditch reminds one of the ditch or gutter which Joab crossed in David's siege of Jerusalem, but the side on which that attack was made is uncertain.

Two other interesting details may be mentioned. The method of moving the large stones has been always a matter of doubt. Mr. Maudsley showed me a voussoir, with a hollow cut in the top, similar to the square sunk holes in some of the temple stones. There was a strong

bar of some compound metal resembling lead, but harder, securely cemented across this, to which a hook or cord might be attached. In making his excavations, Mr. Maudsley also lit upon a curious stone die, with numbers not in regular succession. It seems to me to be clogged, by being of irregular shape, for on throwing it a great number of times, the majority read 12, the highest number.

With the boundary wall of the cemetery we reach the confines of Mr. Maudsley's field of operations. A huge mound of rubbish covers the opposite side of the tower. It would be in the highest degree interesting to pursue the work on this side according to the proposal I made in an early report, and the confirmation of my expectations on the west leads me to feel sanguine of results on this side also. There seems little doubt that a gate existed here. A double scarp is visible, and cisterns on the other side, with an artificial line terminating a rocky buttress, makes it almost certain that we should here uncover a third tower, flanking the gate on the east side as the second described does on the west.

From the junction of this tower we should be able, perhaps without mining, but at all events at a depth of less than thirty feet, to follow this rock scarp along from tower to tower over the south-eastern slope of Zion, and to determine the most interesting question on this side, namely, the manner in which the south wall was carried across the Tyropeon valley to that other fortification found by Captain Warren on Ophel.

But though this investigation has yet to be made, a great step has now been secured in the thorough investigation of the scarp, proving beyond doubt that we here see the south-west corner of the ancient Jerusalem. A very useful indication is also afforded in seeking for the position of the royal towers, for the solid bases mentioned by Jesephus must, in this case, also be supposed to consist of hewn rock; and the different heights of the bases, thirty, forty, and twenty cubits, would indicate their relative positions with regard to the level of the ground, without the tops of the scarps being naturally considered as upon the same level.

Seal.—A curious seal, lately found in the vicinity of Gaza, is in possession of Dr. De Hass, the American Consul, and he has kindly given me an impression. It represents a human figure with four wings, seemingly like those of a fly or bee, and with a large misshapen human head. In each hand the figure holds an animal resembling an ape, head downwards, being held by the hind leg. Dr. De Hass supposes this to be an effigy of Baalzebub, god of Ekron, to whom apes were sometimes offered. The seal is square, about one inch wide, and the figure in low relief, roughly cut. A similar seal was found some years ago, and is now in England. It represents a fly or mosquito, with an inscription, the equivalent of the Arabic "Allah," perhaps the symbolical effigy of the deity of Ekron.

NOTE (Dec. 2nd, 1874).—*The Vaults Nos. 1 and 3 Haram Enclosure.* Captain Warren's remark sent to me is as follows:—"Is the masonry at the end of the cistern above or below the line of the rock?" He points out that if it only forms the filling in of the arch, it is no proof that the cistern extends any farther. This sound criticism shows the necessity of accurate writing. The difficulty of seeing is so great without magnesium wire that I cannot speak with absolute certainty as regards No. 1, but as regards No. 3 there is no doubt. The rock walls are not vertical throughout, but curve over at the top, so that the masonry forms only the crown of the arch. The masonry in the cross wall at the northern end of the cistern is visible below the line of the rock, and the cement rendering is not so high as at the sides in parts. In addition to this, the wall is not built at right angles to the line of the cistern, in itself almost a sufficient proof, as it has no connection with the masonry of the voussoirs, which could not, if the cistern here was bounded by the rock, be continued, as they are irrespective of the cross wall. The southern end of each passage is covered with cement to the mouth of the entrance shaft, but there can be little doubt that they do not extend farther in this direction. It is, however, quite possible that the drain from the Sakhrāh, being of a cross section, 3ft. × 2ft., may lead into No. 1, and have been stopped and cemented over so as to leave no trace. I may remark that the masonry of the vaulted roof, which is very fine, is exactly similar to that of the double passage, the Twin Pools, and other passages near or in the Haram, but differs from that of the piers of Solomon's stables. C. R. C.

XXIII.

YUTTA CAMP, *November 5th, 1874.*

The Survey has now been in progress for a month on its sixth campaign, during which time we have completed 230 square miles and collected 460 names. The number collected from Hallūl, 258, was beyond any total yet obtained except at Bethlehem, where in about the same area 287 were noted, but in this case the main part were ruined sites, whereas at Bethlehem many were modern buildings. The country is indeed in this part more interesting than in any former campaign, from the number of sites and from the great completeness of the Biblical lists in the tribe of Judah, which as yet have hardly been touched by the Survey. Besides the four important identifications connected with the life of David which I have given in a separate paper, I propose here to give suggestions upon seven sites of more or less interest.

The progress of the work has not been so rapid as in the Jordan valley, but as I find myself unable to stand the fatigue of detail sketching, with all other duties in addition, the field sketchers are reduced to

three. Thus, whereas the monthly rate was seventy square miles per man it is now increased to seventy-six, partly because of continued fine weather and partly from greater practice, but perhaps principally because the country is easier riding and the distances traversed therefore greater. With the assistance of Lieutenant Kitchener, whom we are anxiously expecting, we may hope to reach, or perhaps even to exceed, the former rate of progress.

The health of the party has been fairly good, notwithstanding the very sickly season and the trying alternations of cold west breezes and hot east winds. The Jebel Khalil, where our work lies, is almost the only healthy part of the country just now; we shall remain in it long enough to allow of the first rains thoroughly purifying the lower lands, and then if all goes well descend to the lower deserts of Masada and Engedi, returning to Jerusalem before the heavy rains begin.

With this brief summary of progress I may proceed, first, to the new identifications as the subject of most interest.

1. *Alexandrium*.—The site of this important fortress, which was, Josephus tells us, near Coreæ, has been variously located. It has been already placed at Kefr Istuna, near to the village of Keriût, which lies north of it, and which has been identified with Coreæ. In June last Corporal Armstrong visited the site and discovered the foundations of an important building called El Habs. Two courses of its walls remain perched on a rocky scarp. The stones are all of a very great size, one being eighteen feet in length by three feet eight inches high—equal to the average of the Temple ashlar.

The Rock Etam.—In a former report from the camp there placed, I put forward the identification of Beit 'Atâb with the rock Etam, a most probable site, considering that the village lies in the limits of that small section of Palestine to which Samson's exploits seems to have been confined. Zorah and Eshtaol, his native country, lie on the opposite side of the great valley which here forms the boundary of the tribe of Judah to the north. The existence of a remarkable rocky knoll on which the modern village stands is also in favour of the site, as is its peculiar position, which, whilst really low compared to the main ridge at the watershed, is yet from its form and the surrounding lower hills a very conspicuous point: thus whilst on one hand it forms a strong defensive position, on the other it is perfectly in accord with the peculiar expression of the Book of Judges, that the men of Judah "came down to the Rock Etam."

In studying the subject further I find, however, another confirmation of the theory which has induced me to dwell upon it a second time. The word, which in the English version appears as top—"the top of the rock Etam," Judges xv. 11—has in reality in the Hebrew the signification of "a cleft" (see *Bible Dictionary*, "Etam"). At Beit 'Atab we found an unique style of rock excavation unlike anything we have met elsewhere; it was a rock tunnel running from the middle of the village eastwards for a considerable distance towards the principal spring. I

gave at the time some account of it, and full notes and measurements are now stored up in England. I cannot, therefore, here give details, as I depend only on memory, but I would suggest that this excavation which, from the lamp niches at its entrance and other indications, we judged to be very ancient, is the cleft or cave in which Samson took refuge, and which would so effectually have concealed him from all who were unacquainted with the place that he might have been sought on the very spot for a long time without any one lighting, except by accident, on the entrance of the tunnel. The identification will, I hope, lead subsequently to that of the famous spring of En Hakkore, the site of the slaughter of Philistines with the jaw-bone. It must, from the narrative, have lain in the lower and more open ground, where the Philistines could "spread themselves." It is, therefore, as yet, beyond the limits of the Survey.

3. *Chozeba*.—This town is only once mentioned in the Bible, in the curious list of 1 Chron. iv. 22. It here occurs between the neighbourhood of Mareshah (now Marash, on the borders of the Philistine plain) and the possessions of "Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab." From this indication we should be inclined naturally to place Chozeba in the hill country of Judah. It has, however, in default of information, been supposed identical with Chezib, and this again to be a form of the word Achzib, a city occurring in the list of the towns of Judah situate in the plains near Mareshah.

Whatever may be said as to the identity of Chezib and Achzib, for which I have a new site to propose, I would suggest for Chozeba a ruin of importance which we have lately found north of Halhûil, bearing the name of *Khîrbet Kueizibah*, which almost exactly reproduces the Hebrew name. It is a ruin of some interest standing on a hill side with the usual indications of great antiquity. It is, however, better preserved than most, and the walls of many of the houses are standing in parts to the height of eight or ten feet. The masonry is a fine ashlar of very square proportions, the stones being over three feet in height and three to four feet long. Each house seems to have formed a small fortress in itself, so strongly are the foundations built, and a fort or citadel dominates the town. The buildings are probably of Roman date, but the name no doubt preserves that of the city inhabited by "the men of Chozeba." This identification is of interest, as showing an extremely archaic name preserved almost unchanged. The passage in Chronicles says expressly, "and these are ancient things" (ver. 22); it also shows that even the obscurest passages of Scripture are capable of illustration by the Survey, owing to the wonderfully perfect condition in which the manuscripts of the Old Testament seem to have come down to us.

4. *Ma'arath*.—This town, the name of which is almost identical with the Arabic Mogharah (*a cave*), belonged to the list of places lying between Bethlehem and Hebron (Josh. xv. 58). It forms one of a

group of six, of which four are known occurring in the following order:—

Halhul	now Halhúl.
Bethzur	„ Beit Súr.
Gedor	„ Jedúr.
Maarath	„
Beth Anoth	„ Beit 'Ainún.
El Tekon	„

The list seems to give the three western towns going from south to north and then to return to the eastern towns. We should look, therefore, for Ma'arath near to Beit 'Ainún, and here we find that an ancient site occurs south of the last-named village. The valley above which it stands has the name of Wady el Moghair at this special point, though no caves were remarked, the name generally applied to the rest of its course being Wady Nusara. The site itself is scarce distinguishable except by a fine clump of olives, which often form a sure indication of former buildings, as notably at Ai. The site has no known name at the present day, but the local appellation of the wady very probably retains the old name of Ma'arath. This leaves only one of the six cities to be settled, but we have not succeeded in finding anything that answers to the requisites of this site. From position one would, however, be inclined to identify it with Tekú'a, lying in the same district and not mentioned in any of the lists except in the interpolated passage in the Septuagint mentioned in my last report. The Hebrew *Ain* is, however, a stubborn letter and not accustomed to be lost in any change of name. The matter seems to me, therefore, to remain doubtful.

5. *Arab*.—Among the cities of the group surrounding Hebron occurs one of the name of Arab. Unfortunately, out of the list of nine only four are identified, and one of these is very doubtful; the district seems to lie principally west of the capital, and many of the towns lie probably still outside the work as yet completed. East of Hebron a very ancient site was found by Corporal Armstrong, known as Khurbet el 'Arabíyeh (the Arab ruin). It is marked by the existence of many wells and cisterns, and lies near one of the main roads. It may be objected to this identification that the Hebrew *Aleph* is here represented by the stronger form of *Ain*, but we have a notable instance of a precisely similar change in the name of Ascalon, now 'Askelán, and the change is here all the more natural as it gives a meaning to the word in the modern Arabic language.

6. *The Cliff of Ziz*.—This place is only once mentioned, 2 Chron. xx. 16, a passage which I illustrated in my last report. The Bedouin horde from east of Jordan advanced towards Jehosaphat from their camp near to Engedi: "Behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jernel," which may be properly paraphrased thus: "Behold, they come up by the going up of Ha Ziz, and ye shall find them at the head of

the wady." The word used is Ma'aleh, which in the case of Ma'aleh Akrabim and Ma'aleh Ha Dummin, has been given correctly by the English translators as "the going up." I have thought it worthy of notice that just south of our Yutta camp is a very large and important ruin known as *Khirbet 'Aziz*. It is a recognised law of change that the *Ain* and the *He* are interchangeable. We find in this, therefore, the name of Ziz preserved. The site is, it may be said, a long way from Engedi, and, indeed, the valleys lying directly east do not run down to the Dead Sea but to the Mediterranean. It is, however, to be noticed that Wady *Khuráara*, the main valley just south of Engedi, runs westward directly towards this ruin, to which the ascent from the Dead Sea shore would be by the course of this large watercourse. Although I do not overlook the difficulties of position, the similarity of name is sufficiently striking to make this worthy of notice. Were *Khirbet Aziz* an important town in the later Jewish times it is possible that the main valley leading up to it may have been called with propriety "the going up to Haziz" through its entire length of some twenty miles.

7. *Zanoah*.—There were two towns of this name: the one among the fourteen cities of the Shephalah, and identified by Robinson with the present Zanú'a; the other is also in the lot of Judah, and is mentioned among the ten cities south of Hebron. It occurs in the list between Juttah (Yutta) and Cain (Yekin), which it immediately precedes. Dr. Robinson has, however, placed it at Zanúta, to which identification there is an important objection, namely, that Zanúta is in quite a different group of towns immediately in the vicinity of places belonging to the royal city of Debir (now identified with El Dhoheriyeh).

We have, however, just found an ancient site which bears the name of *Khirbet Sá'nát*, the letter "a" in this case being an Aleph. Its position agrees well with that required for Zanoah, being situate immediately west of *Khirbet Yekin*, which is probably the ancient Cain.

The Limits of the Levitical Cities.—To this important subject we have paid considerable attention since the discovery of the stone at Tell Gezer. The towns of Yutta and Semú'a have been identified by Robinson with Juttah and Eshtemo'a, towns set apart for the Levites. We endeavoured, therefore, to discover traces of the boundaries of these towns as laid down in Numbers xxxv. 4 and 5. The explanation generally given of the passage is, I believe, that it refers to a double enclosure, the inner of which had a breadth or radius of 1,000 cubits, beyond which was an outer boundary measuring 2,000 cubits from the former on every side. This gives a square, the side or diagonal of which, as the case may be, would measure 6,000 cubits, the city being in the centre. The theory proposed by M. Ganneau and by the Americans I understand to be that it was the diagonal which was thus given, and that the four angles of the square pointed to the cardinal

points. We, therefore, scored these points on the traces and found, curiously enough, that in the case of both towns all the points were on hill tops. Our investigations, however, though conducted in the afternoon, when the slanting light is most favourable for seeing incised inscriptions, did not lead to the discovery of any single mark of important or distinct character at these points, and I feel convinced that no inscriptions ever existed there.

So far our efforts were without result, but I may mention an indication at the more southern town, Semú'a, which is not without interest. On the road to Semú'a a stone was pointed out to Corporal Brophy, called *Hajr el Sakháin*, forming the boundary between the lands of Semú'a and the lands of Yutta. It is a little more than 3,000 cubits of sixteen inches north of the centre of the village, but we are not certain that the measurement of the suburbs may not have been taken from the *outside* of the town, which would bring the distance more nearly correct. It is, however, a quarter of a mile east of the theoretical point. On visiting the spot I found two rude marks lately cut in the stone, which is a soft rock, standing upright, and about three feet high. I found three similar stones roughly in line west of the one in question, evidently making the boundary. If this modern boundary is considered to coincide with the Levitical, it follows that the corners of the square are not at the cardinal points, but that the four sides of the square face in these directions, an arrangement which would seem the more natural, especially as we have no recorded instance of the measurement of a diagonal in Jewish architectural descriptions.

To the list of these Biblical identifications we may add those of *Hareth*, *New Ziph*, the *Rock of Maon*, and the *Hill of Hachilah*, *Debir*, the royal city of the Canaanites, and the *upper and lower springs*, giving the respectable number of twelve new identifications of interest, and more or less certain made since we left Jerusalem. The fulness of the lists leads me to hope that we may add to this number a great many more before we leave the territory of the tribe of Judah.

In no part of the country yet visited have we seen so many large and important ruins. The state of preservation in which they are found is superior to that in other districts, which is due to a very simple cause. South of Hebron there are only four inhabited villages, viz., Yutta (our present camp), Semú'a (Eshtemoa), Dura (Adoraim), and the more modern large village of El Dhoheriyeh. The consequence is that fewer stones are required for building purposes, and the ruined sites are left undisturbed. We had, however, the other day a specimen of the manner in which these ruins are gradually disappearing, for no less than four camels were being loaded with stones from the fine ruin of Aziz, intended for the construction of a new house in Yutta.

The following ruins are those most worthy of notice:—

1. *El Rameh*, situate north of Hebron, the traditional site of Abraham's oak at Mamre in the fourth century. The tradition has now been shifted to the Ballútet el Sibta, nearer to the city. A very fine

building exists here east of the Hebron road, called Beit el Khalíl, or Abraham's house. It is an enclosure 214 feet long from east to west, and 162 broad from north to south. The walls are of splendid masonry, stones averaging three and a half feet in height, and some of them eighteen feet in length, whilst others are only fifteen inches in length. In the south-west corner is a well seventeen feet diameter, having a spring of water in it. The masonry is very good, the stones being curved to the form of the circle. Beside it are the remains of a trough, lined with excellent red cement, harder than stone. This large ruin has by some been supposed the remains of the Basilica here built by Constantine, but is rather to be looked upon as the market-place which existed near to the Basilica, and where slaves were sold. The ruin of the Basilica seems to have escaped notice; it exists about fifty yards farther east, but is hardly traceable. Its masonry is inferior to that of the large enclosure, but resembles other specimens of Christian early work in the country. Its breadth was thirty-three feet, and the length of the atrium thirty-eight feet. The apse, however, is quite indistinguishable, so that the total length cannot be ascertained. The corner-stones are rudely drafted and resemble in character those of the great convent which we discovered last year at Deir Kala'ah.

2. *Moghâret Suffa*.—From Halhúl I visited a very remarkable cavern, similar to that at Umm el Tuweinún. It lies near the ruin of Suffa on the side of a great valley leading to the Mediterranean. We had to cross a very difficult valley to reach it, and the native scribe, Na'amán, had a narrow escape of his life. Riding over the slippery ledges of slanting rock is always delicate work; at one point I planted my horse's foot in a bush and passed the slide safely. The native, however, was less careful, his horse slipped and reared, turning round in the air. He had just time to jump off when the beast fell and rolled over twice down the hill side. Though bruised he behaved very well and recovered his horse before it had time to escape. I have noticed since that he dismounts and leads his beast over similar places.

The cave proved to be in the face of a precipice and not attainable by horses; leaving them I had therefore to scramble down some hundred feet and advance cautiously along a narrow ledge of rock to its mouth. The interior was full of flies, and the tunnel turned at right angles to the entrance and descended at a steep slope of about a quarter or one-fifth. My single candle scarce gave any light, the heat was oppressive, and I was in constant expectation of finding a pit-fall or a pool of water. After about forty paces (100 feet) the cave, which was only some seven to ten paces wide, turned again to the right. At this angle I left a light and proceeded cautiously, but now the rushing sound as of a great wind, and the squeaking of innumerable bats, was heard. They flew about my head and nearly extinguished the light. After sixty paces the cave became broader, and I found the pit I had been expecting from experience in other caves. It was, however, not more than twelve to fifteen feet deep, and some twenty paces across. I cautiously

descended part of the way and ascertained that the cave here ended. I was, however, told by the Sheikh of Halhúl that another passage, now choked, led from the pit, and that an iron ring hangs above it in the roof of the cave. The exploration and return to the horses occupied a full hour and proved very fatiguing from the heat and the sudden return to the hot sun and glare from a region of total darkness and bad air. Creeping along these tunnels one imagines oneself to have gone double or three times the distance, and thus the exaggerated accounts of the natives are easily understood.

3. *Umm el 'Amdán*.—West of Yutta, marked on Vandevelde, but apparently never before visited. This is the ruin of an early Christian Byzantine convent, standing in a very large ruin. The chapel is more perfect than usual. It had a nave separated from the side aisles by two rows of four columns. Three are standing on the south side, with an entablature of unmoulded blocks eight feet long in place above. The capitals and other details are very archaic and rudely finished, but evidently belong to an early Byzantine period. The convent occupied an area of about 100 feet square, and contained three good cisterns and some excavated cells in the rock beneath. Only the foundations remain. This site, in common with the three next described, has one peculiarity. In the middle of the ruin in every direction large caves are to be found, the entrance doors carefully cut, five feet broad and eight or nine feet high, with a long passage or shaft, with steps leading down. A semicircular arch occurs at the door in some instances, but the cave within is rough. In one of the largest I found a rock-cut feeding-trough, and am led to suppose that some are stables for cattle, which would have been remarkably plentiful in the district at the time when these flourishing towns existed, as indeed they yet are, and were in David's time, the Negeb, which extends north about as far as Yutta, being a purely pastoral district. Others of these caves are tombs and cells.

4. *'Aziz*.—About half a mile south of Yutta is an even larger ruin, which contains the relics of a church below the town on the east, to which a main street leads. It is marked on no map, and is hidden from view of the main road south, from which most of the sites in the district seem to have been fixed, with more or less hesitation on the part of former travellers. A colonnade leads at an angle in the direction of the church, and a large building with pillars is to be found on the top of the hill; a smaller chapel is also traceable south-west of the church. There is little doubt that the ruins belong to the same period as those of *Umm el 'Amdán*, but the date of that period has yet to be fixed.

5. *Susieh*, marked on Murray's new map, seems nevertheless not to have been visited. It is the largest ruin in the country, and seems to have been divided into two quarters, each containing a principal building. Though seemingly Christian, it is probably earlier than the former. Its lintel stones have more correctly classic mouldings, its capitals are more graceful in outline, and, curiously enough, nothing

of a church is discernible. The great western building seems to have been a hall or palace of some kind, fallen pillars, lintel stones, and capitals remaining. It measures in breadth from north to south fifty-one feet, and its total length is a hundred and sixty feet. We made, of course, detailed plans and sketches. South of this building is a wall of stones, much larger than most of the masonry, measuring nine and a half feet long by two and a half high, but not drafted. The building in the eastern quarter is the church, if any existed, but is too much destroyed to be traceable. It seems to have had a cradle vaulted roof, and the doors were surmounted by flat lintels having various ornaments upon them. On one is a Greek inscription, but so battered by age and weather that scarce a letter is distinctly traceable. 'Aziz must have been a very important place in early Christian times, but, like most places in the district, the water supply is derived merely from rain.

6. *Kh. Khoreisa*.—This ruin, which we have so curiously identified with the *Wood of Ziph*, was before entirely unknown, and we had some little difficulty in getting its name in a satisfactory manner. I may remark, however, as adding to the value of the identification, that it did not occur to me until after the name had been settled. Although evidently an ancient site, with bell-mouthed cisterns, which generally date long before Christian times, *Kh. Khoreisa* seems to have been an important town in the Christian period. The ruins of a church are traceable, a basilica, eighty-four feet long, including an atrium of fifteen feet six inches, the breadth being thirty-nine feet six inches, and the width of the nave sixteen feet, with two rows of three pillars. Only the foundations and fallen shafts remain, but there is a lintel eight feet nine inches in length, once over the west door, having an almost illegible Greek inscription on it. Our paper being very bad, we did not succeed in taking a proper squeeze. Corporal Armstrong, however, copied the letters on the day he discovered it, and I again made an independent copy, after carefully cleaning the stone. The result was as below,

ΑΤΗΙΗΙ
 ΗΤΟΥΚΤ
 ΙΟΥΔΙΚΑΙ
 ΙΕΙC ΔΕΥC
 TENAT IH

The most valuable part of the inscription, which seems to have been only a text or religious sentence, are the two letters IH, which occur in a corner, not on the tablet bearing the rest, but to the right, parallel with the last line. These are no doubt the date, and, when the era from which they are to be counted is determined, they will serve to fix, not only the date of this particular building, but also the century to which a large number of very similar ruins in Palestine is to be attributed—a period which I find, on visiting England, is still in dispute between eminent architects.

7. *Khirbet el Mintar*.—In addition to the ruins thus enumerated, a small basilica exists at this ruin, north-west of 'Aziz. The pillars are still standing, and the details of the lintels show the work to be of the same period.

Thus, within an area of some fifty square miles we find (including Kurmul) the ruins of no less than eight basilicas, all of which were previously unknown or unexamined. Northwards there are several more, and farther south there are others. We find evidence of an extensive Christian settlement at an early period, probably the fifth and sixth centuries, and of towns of considerable magnitude. Indeed, this district, which has hitherto been almost unknown, must then have supported a large population. Nothing is more striking than the large number of Christian ruins in Palestine; four-fifths of the total number of ruined sites in the country are probably to be attributed to Byzantine or Crusading periods. The general impression of great antiquity in the ruins of Palestine is certainly a false one, however ancient the localities may be. M. Ganneau's excavation at El Medyeh is only another instance of the probably late period to which remains supposed to be Jewish are to be attributed, and confirms, as do many other facts which I hope some day to bring forward, the theory as to the special form of tomb at El Medyeh which I advanced in an early report. In every case where indications of any sort are available these tombs have proved to be Christian.

8. *Kurmul*.—This interesting site, which has been hardly visited of late years, shows the ruins of a very important site of Christian times. There are no less than three buildings which might be churches. The first, to the north, is unmistakable. Its apses are clearly visible, and it measures seventy-seven by forty-five feet. Over the door was a curious lintel, with geometrical ornamentation more florid than usual. The second building is immediately east of the famous Crusading tower, the two are contained within the same *enceinte*, and are surrounded with a sloping revetment. This great building is within 3° of the true east and west line, and had two rows of columns one foot ten inches diameter. If a church, it was a very large one, compared with the others, being ninety-nine feet in total length. The Crusading tower requires no notice; it is of the ordinary character, and we carefully measured and planned it. Sixty-three by forty-eight feet exterior measurement, and twenty-four feet from the top to the *Chemin des rondes*. Its walls are seven feet thick. A round birket of masonry, twenty-eight feet eight inches diameter, exists on the north side. Farther south than the tower is a third colonnade building, measuring seventy by forty feet, apparently also a basilica with an atrium.

9. *Semú'a*.—This is the most interesting of all the group here mentioned, and gives evidences of great antiquity. We had some little difficulty with the pious population, who took umbrage at Corporal Brophy's proceedings in booking the names of all objects in their vicinity. Seven strapping fellows suggested to him that he was a dog,

a pig, an infidel, and other objectionable similes, and made attempts to drag the guide from his mule. They seem even to have had some thoughts of stoning the corporal, as their numbers were superior, but he prudently produced a revolver, which had some effect, and retreated to camp to report the amenities which he had experienced. As good luck would have it, the sheikh of the village just then rode into Yutta, and I sent the native soldiers to capture him, and explained that he would have to proceed under escort to Hebron as surety for the appearance of the four chief offenders, whose names we got from the guide. The consternation produced throughout our village by this arrest was considerable, and the whole family of sheikhs came to beg off their fellow in misfortune; but it seems to me a rule, for the safety of the Survey party, to show not the least mercy in similar cases. The old gentleman, who was quite unconscious of the affair, did, however, succeed in making his escape from the soldier who kept him, and from whose wages I deducted the amount which I thought it likely the sheikh could afford as a bribe for his liberty; for the soldier did not respond to my proposal that he should confess the exact amount.

A letter to the Kaimakam of Hebron resulted in the immediate imprisonment of the four offenders, and I took the corporal to Hebron in case he was required as a witness. We found the Kaimakam a very civil little Beyroutine, and he showed us a French and English New Testament which he could read, and expressed a wish for an Arabic version. The only legal proceeding was his asking me how long I wished the culprits kept in prison, which I left to him to decide, knowing it to be only a question of their pecuniary condition at the time.

The next day we went down to Semú'a, and made some show of measuring up the ruins and writing notes in the centre of the village, keeping up an interesting conversation, and ignoring altogether the assembled villagers, who looked at us with mingled fear and sulkiness. On the next day but one we again visited the village, and did more measuring, the people looking on from the house-tops.

By these means I hope to have induced these good Moslems to believe that, whether pigs or dogs, we are strong enough to carry matters our own way, and to put a stop to any remarks or signs of hostility.

The site thus held precious in the eyes of its inhabitants impresses one as the most ancient and important we have yet seen; but there are two periods to its buildings, and it is not easy to say decidedly to which some of the buildings belong. The whole site stands on the summit of a hill, and spreads principally east and west. In the centre are the remains of a castle almost perfect, and used as a sheikh's house at the present day. The ashlar of its walls is fine, though small. It has an archway which is most properly described as elliptical. The general appearance is that of a Crusading or mediæval fortress of some description.

The main ruins lie west of the inhabited part of the village, but

throughout its extent the houses stand amongst foundations of noble masonry. The stones are of those peculiarly long and narrow dimensions which we are accustomed to consider as a mark of Jewish work; many of them are eight to twelve feet in length, but under three feet in height. Some are smooth dressed, others have large rustic bosses. One of the largest areas has on the east a doorway with a great lintel above, and a relieving arch of small masonry above it. This disposition seems a mark of early Byzantine work, but does not prove the large masonry to belong to that period. Two lintels we remarked, the first having the vine pattern, the second a very archaic form of two half circles, with pilasters of equally ancient design. These details resemble closely the ornamentation of the tombs near that of Joshua at Tibneh, and for this reason I was inclined to look on them as Jewish. It must not, however, be forgotten that the vine pattern is found in the Hauran and eastern ruins of a considerably later date. There are many rough cave tombs on all sides of the village, and one is peculiar, having a pointed masonry arch over its door. Several other tombs seem to have had buildings above them. The number of wells, or rather cisterns, for the only supply is rain water, is very great—there must be forty or fifty in all.

South-west of the village, at some little distance, is an interesting little monument called El Baniyah, a word which I am informed means a tomb in this southern dialect. It is a square building twenty feet side, standing on four steps, two feet tread and one foot six inches rise. Four attached pilasters are visible on each wall, with capitals which are not easily described, but which are probably early Byzantine. The total height is about eighteen feet, the roof either a dome, or more probably a cradle vault. From comparison with other ruins, I came to the conclusion that this building is a tomb resembling others in the north of Palestine. This is strengthened by the discovery of the foundations of a second similar building farther west, having its door on the north, and a rock-cut entrance to a vault beneath each of the other three walls. The disposition is therefore not unlike those of the tomb at El Medyeh.

XXIV.

EL DHOHERIYEH, 15th November, 1874.

THE Ordnance Survey has at length touched its southern boundary, and will, I hope, soon be extended all along it. An area of about 300 square miles lies beyond the southern limits of the Hebron and Gaza sheets to the line of the great boundary valleys, Wady el Seb'a and Wady Seyal. From our present camp we organised a small expedition to fill in the country between Tell el Milh (the ancient Moladah) and Bir el Seb'a (Beersheba). This area, including the two plains, Sahel el

Butin and Sahel el Fer'ah, has never been thoroughly explored. It is about 120 square miles in extent, and [Murray's new map contains *six names* within its limits.

The number which we succeeded in collecting reaches a *total of fifty-five*, so that it will be seen there was plenty of scope for the Survey, without mentioning the great inaccuracy of the maps, places being fixed many miles from their actual position. The work was attached to the rest of the Survey by means of two fine triangles, which fix the positions of Tell el Seb'a and Tell S'aweh.

In addition to this we took observations for latitude and time, both at Khirbet Bir el Seb'a, within fifty yards of the great well, and on the next day at our camp close to Tell el Milh. The principal sites of interest are seven in number, viz., Tel el Seb'a, Bir el Seb'a, El Meshash, Tell el Milh, El Ghurra, Sa'weh, and Hora. I propose to give an abstract of our notes on each.

Tell el Seb'a.—This large double tell, standing at the junction of Wady Khalil and Wady el Seb'a, is a point conspicuous on all sides, yet seems to have escaped notice. It has a well within one-fourth of a mile west of it, separate entirely from the wells of Beersheba, and situate on the south bank of the valley.

On the top of the tell are a collection of Arab graves, but lower down towards the east are traces of a considerable ruin. I would suggest that in this we have the solution of the difficulty found in the list of the towns of Simeon, where Sheba (Shb'a) occurs immediately after Beersheba, and between it and Moladah. The site of Tell el Seb'a is within two miles of Beersheba on the direct line to Moladah (Josh. xix. 2). There is a considerable dam, now ruined, across Wady Khalil below the tell, and traces of reservoirs to contain the water so collected.

Kh. Bir el Seb'a.—The site of these famous wells has never before been fixed with any amount of accuracy. The positions on various maps are as follows:—

Robinson . . .	Lat. 31°.14'	Long. 34°.56'
Vandevelde . . .	„ 31.16	„ 34.54.30"
Palmer . . .	„ 31.13	„ 34.48
O. S. . . .	„ 31.14	„ 34.47

Mr. Palmer's position is the most nearly correct, being only about half a mile wrong in longitude. In latitude he is one mile and three quarters too far south. From this it is evident that, whereas the compass angles of his route sketch come very nearly correct, the great distance of the starting-point has made the method of calculating distance by time give an appreciable error. The work, however, cannot fail to be considered very good of its kind, and contrasts favourably with Vandevelde, who is six and three quarter miles too far east in his longitude, and one and a half miles too far north in latitude.

The ruins at Beersheba are extensive. They seem to belong to early Christian times, and a church stood close to the dry eastern well, a

tesselated pavement being remarkably close to the bank of the valley. There are remains of hard burnt bricks—very thin and of red hard cement—in what appears to be a large cistern; but every ruin has been razed to its very foundations, and little of the town is to be seen beyond the heaps of rolled pebbles and flint, which are strewn on every side, with a few cut stones of the hill limestone.

The houses must have been made of these flints built up with some sort of mortar or mud, and were no doubt perishable structures. The place must, however, at one time have been of considerable importance.

The wells are three in number, two containing water. There are also some ruined cisterns for rain water, now filled up, but the Arabs did not know of more wells than those we saw, and the fourth near Tell el Seb'a.

The central well was the one at which we camped. The distance to the water we found to be thirty-seven feet, and the diameter of the well twelve feet three inches. It is well built, of regular courses, with stones from eight inches to eighteen inches in length, which have their faces cut to the curve of the circle. There are numerous channels worn in the lip of the well by the constant friction of the ropes drawing buckets for the watering of flocks, herds, and camels. It is curious that no former traveller appears to have noticed an inscription, built in evidently its proper place, in the fourteenth course of the masonry on the south side. The form of the letters approaches more closely to modern Arabic than to Cufic. The word *Allah* is distinct, and seems followed by *Mohammed*—a sentence probably containing the expression "Apostle of God Mohammed."

An Arabic 5 and a cypher, and probably another 5 (though imperfect) occur above, giving 505 AH. This would place the date of the present masonry in the twelfth century, thus sadly contradicting the romantic fancy that the great furrows may have been first traced by the ropes of the followers of the first Patriarch, who dug the well.

The other well, on the west, is much smaller (five feet in diameter). The dry eastern well we found to be nine feet two inches in diameter, and twenty-three feet deep, the bottom being filled with large stones.

Beersheba was a considerable place in the time of Jerome, and later on an episcopal city under Jerusalem. The ruins are probably attributable to this period.

El Meshash.—The course of Wady el Seb'a seems never to have been followed, for on no other supposition can I account for the loss of such an important site.

El Meshash is about three miles west of Tell el Milh, and lies at the foot of the white chalk peaks of El Ghur. It is hidden in the valley and by the rolling ground, and thus not visible even a few hundred yards away. We came upon it suddenly, and found besides the ruin, which is considerable, but resembles the others, in this part of the country, two wells, each full of water, and surrounded by great crowds of thirsty animals.

El Meshash has a meaning in Arabic of "the finger joint." Dr. Robinson, who however never heard of this site, gives another meaning of the word, a "water pit" or small pool. The word is not uncommonly used among the Arabs with [this signification, and applied to several other localities, as Wady Meshash, 'Ain Meshash, &c., &c., whence one is led to suspect that the name is the corruption of some ancient title, as the site is evidently old and important. The list of Simeon in this part of the country contains the following names:—

Moladah.	Hazar Shual.
Hazar Gaddah.	Sheba.
Heshmon.	Beersheba.
Beth Palet.	

For all of these, except Beth Palet, which is doubtful, we may, it will be seen, now propose identifications; some new, some confirmations of those already proposed.

It will be seen that only one site, and that probably on the hills at El Ghurra, intervenes between Heshmon and Moladah. Moladah being undoubtedly Khirbet el Milh, the site of Heshmon would be very well placed at El Meshash, and the similarity of the names seems to me sufficiently near when the fact of the Arabic being twisted into a word of ordinary signification is borne in mind.

Tell el Milh.—This is a large and important site, a tell conspicuous in the middle of the Sahel Fer'ah, having Arab graves on the summit, whilst an extensive ruin stretches on the south, consisting of mounds, some with hewn stones, some strewn with flint blocks, others merely of earth. There are two wells, one dry the other containing water at a depth of more than forty feet. The Arabs here, almost naked and without any head-dress, drawing water furiously in time to a rude chant, were some of the wildest fellows we have yet seen; but, although at first they demanded backsheesh, they soon got tired of being completely ignored, and went back to their work of water drawing, or driving off the immense flocks which seem to thrive on nothing in these broad plains, destitute in the autumn, when we visited them, of even a single green leaf.

The water proved to be slightly brackish, perhaps from layers of salt in the strata, or perhaps from the filthy condition of the mud round the wells, through which the spilt water filters back into the porous rock, and so again into the well.

El Ghurra.—This appears to be El Jurra on Vandevælde's map, but is not shown by Professor Palmer, who places S'aweh nearly on its site. El Ghurra is visible from Tell el Milh, but S'aweh, which is three miles north on another range, is not visible from any point in Professor Palmer's second route. From its position close to Tell el Milh, we should be inclined to place at this important site the town of Hazar Gaddah. This identification was first proposed by Mr. Grove for the Jurrah of Vandevælde, and he remarks that the change of D into R is not uncom-

throughout its extent the houses stand amongst foundations of noble masonry. The stones are of those peculiarly long and narrow dimensions which we are accustomed to consider as a mark of Jewish work; many of them are eight to twelve feet in length, but under three feet in height. Some are smooth dressed, others have large rustic bosses. One of the largest areas has on the east a doorway with a great lintel above, and a relieving arch of small masonry above it. This disposition seems a mark of early Byzantine work, but does not prove the large masonry to belong to that period. Two lintels we remarked, the first having the vine pattern, the second a very archaic form of two half circles, with pilasters of equally ancient design. These details resemble closely the ornamentation of the tombs near that of Joshua at Tibneh, and for this reason I was inclined to look on them as Jewish. It must not, however, be forgotten that the vine pattern is found in the Hauran and eastern ruins of a considerably later date. There are many rough cave tombs on all sides of the village, and one is peculiar, having a pointed masonry arch over its door. Several other tombs seem to have had buildings above them. The number of wells, or rather cisterns, for the only supply is rain water, is very great—there must be forty or fifty in all.

South-west of the village, at some little distance, is an interesting little monument called El Baniah, a word which I am informed means a tomb in this southern dialect. It is a square building twenty feet side, standing on four steps, two feet tread and one foot six inches rise. Four attached pilasters are visible on each wall, with capitals which are not easily described, but which are probably early Byzantine. The total height is about eighteen feet, the roof either a dome, or more probably a cradle vault. From comparison with other ruins, I came to the conclusion that this building is a tomb resembling others in the north of Palestine. This is strengthened by the discovery of the foundations of a second similar building farther west, having its door on the north, and a rock-cut entrance to a vault beneath each of the other three walls. The disposition is therefore not unlike those of the tomb at El Medyeh.

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Palmer . . .	„ 31.13	„ 34.48
O. S. . . .	„ 31.14	„ 34.47

Mr. Palmer's position is the most nearly correct, being only about half a mile wrong in longitude. In latitude he is one mile and three quarters too far south. From this it is evident that, whereas the compass angles of his route sketch come very nearly correct, the great distance of the starting-point has made the method of calculating distance by time give an appreciable error. The work, however, cannot fail to be considered very good of its kind, and contrasts favourably with Vandevelde, who is six and three quarter miles too far east in his longitude, and one and a half miles too far north in latitude.

The ruins at Beersheba are extensive. They seem to belong to early Christian times, and a church stood close to the dry eastern well, a

tessellated pavement being remarkably close to the bank of the valley. There are remains of hard burnt bricks—very thin and of red hard cement—in what appears to be a large cistern; but every ruin has been razed to its very foundations, and little of the town is to be seen beyond the heaps of rolled pebbles and flint, which are strewn on every side, with a few cut stones of the hill limestone.

The houses must have been made of these flints built up with some sort of mortar or mud, and were no doubt perishable structures. The place must, however, at one time have been of considerable importance.

The wells are three in number, two containing water. There are also some ruined cisterns for rain water, now filled up, but the Arabs did not know of more wells than those we saw, and the fourth near Tell el Seb'a.

The central well was the one at which we camped. The distance to the water we found to be thirty-seven feet, and the diameter of the well twelve feet three inches. It is well built, of regular courses, with stones from eight inches to eighteen inches in length, which have their faces cut to the curve of the circle. There are numerous channels worn in the lip of the well by the constant friction of the ropes drawing buckets for the watering of flocks, herds, and camels. It is curious that no former traveller appears to have noticed an inscription, built in evidently its proper place, in the fourteenth course of the masonry on the south side. The form of the letters approaches more closely to modern Arabic than to Cufic. The word *Allah* is distinct, and seems followed by *Mohammed*—a sentence probably containing the expression "Apostle of God Mohammed."

An Arabic 5 and a cypher, and probably another 5 (though imperfect) occur above, giving 505 AH. This would place the date of the present masonry in the twelfth century, thus sadly contradicting the romantic fancy that the great furrows may have been first traced by the ropes of the followers of the first Patriarch, who dug the well.

The other well, on the west, is much smaller (five feet in diameter). The dry eastern well we found to be nine feet two inches in diameter, and twenty-three feet deep, the bottom being filled with large stones.

Beersheba was a considerable place in the time of Jerome, and later on an episcopal city under Jerusalem. The ruins are probably attributable to this period.

El Meshash.—The course of Wady el Seb'a seems never to have been followed, for on no other supposition can I account for the loss of such an important site.

El Meshash is about three miles west of Tell el Milh, and lies at the foot of the white chalk peaks of El Ghur. It is hidden in the valley and by the rolling ground, and thus not visible even a few hundred yards away. We came upon it suddenly, and found besides the ruin, which is considerable, but resembles the others in this part of the country, two wells, each full of water, and surrounded by great crowds of thirsty animals.

El Meshash has a meaning in Arabic of "the finger joint." Dr. Robinson, who however never heard of this site, gives another meaning of the word, a "water pit" or small pool. The word is not uncommonly used among the Arabs with this signification, and applied to several other localities, as Wady Meshash, 'Ain Meshash, &c., &c., whence one is led to suspect that the name is the corruption of some ancient title, as the site is evidently old and important. The list of Simeon in this part of the country contains the following names:—

Moladah.	Hazar Shual.
Hazar Gaddah.	Sheba.
Heshmon.	Beersheba.
Beth Palet.	

For all of these, except Beth Palet, which is doubtful, we may, it will be seen, now propose identifications; some new, some confirmations of those already proposed.

It will be seen that only one site, and that probably on the hills at El Ghurra, intervenes between Heshmon and Moladah. Moladah being undoubtedly Khirbet el Milh, the site of Heshmon would be very well placed at El Meshash, and the similarity of the names seems to me sufficiently near when the fact of the Arabic being twisted into a word of ordinary signification is borne in mind.

Tell el Milh.—This is a large and important site, a tell conspicuous in the middle of the Sahel Fer'ah, having Arab graves on the summit, whilst an extensive ruin stretches on the south, consisting of mounds, some with hewn stones, some strewn with flint blocks, others merely of earth. There are two wells, one dry the other containing water at a depth of more than forty feet. The Arabs here, almost naked and without any head-dress, drawing water furiously in time to a rude chant, were some of the wildest fellows we have yet seen; but, although at first they demanded backsheesh, they soon got tired of being completely ignored, and went back to their work of water drawing, or driving off the immense flocks which seem to thrive on nothing in these broad plains, destitute in the autumn, when we visited them, of even a single green leaf.

The water proved to be slightly brackish, perhaps from layers of salt in the strata, or perhaps from the filthy condition of the mud round the wells, through which the spilt water filters back into the porous rock, and so again into the well.

El Ghurra.—This appears to be El Jurra on Vandeveld's map, but is not shown by Professor Palmer, who places S'aweh nearly on its site. El Ghurra is visible from Tell el Milh, but S'aweh, which is three miles north on another range, is not visible from any point in Professor Palmer's second route. From its position close to Tell el Milh, we should be inclined to place at this important site the town of Hazar Gaddah. This identification was first proposed by Mr. Grove for the Jurrah of Vandeveld, and he remarks that the change of D into R is not uncom-

mon in Semitic words, in addition to which we have the extreme similarity of the two letters in square Hebrew, and a certain amount of likeness in Aramaic, either of which would account for an error of transcription.

The point which is most strongly in favour of the identification is the character of the site. Hazar means an "enclosure," and may therefore be supposed to refer to a walled town. El Ghurra stands on a high, almost isolated marl peak, with precipitous sides.

The ruins include three reservoirs, two caves, and buildings of large blocks of flint, and the whole site is surrounded by a wall built also of blocks of flint, thus fully meriting the prefix Hazar.

S'aweh.—This also is a similar site on a high bluff, with an isolated tell north-east of the ruin. It has been identified with Hazar Shu'al, and a confirmation of the identification here also exists in a city wall surrounding the site, as at Ghurra, and built also of large flint blocks. The list of identifications stands, therefore, thus:—

Moladah	Tell el Milh.
Hazar Gaddah	El Ghurra.
Heshmon	El Meshash.
Hazar Shual	S'aweh.
Sheba	Tell el Seb'a.
Beersheba	Khirbet Bir el Seb'a.

El Hora.—This important site corresponds in name to none of the towns in the list of Simeon, or of the southern cities of Judah. From position it might very well be Beth Palet, "or house of flight," a name appropriate either from its being beyond the plains, or, as will be seen, from its strongly fortified character, but if so the name seems lost. The signification in Arabic of its present title is connected with the drawing of water, for the place is remarkable for the number of its cisterns and reservoirs. The buildings are of flint throughout, the pieces being rudely squared. They average three or four feet in length, and are no doubt of the natural thickness of the flint layer which here lies at the top of the white marl.

How they were cut there is nothing to show, but they may possibly date from very early times, being almost imperishable. There is nothing distinctive about the character of the buildings, but one peculiarity in the site not noticed by former travellers I have never remarked in any other ruin in Palestine. It consists in five small outlying forts which surround the town. Hora stands on a low, white marl hill, and the outer forts, at a distance of less than a mile, are placed also on low eminences.

They are called by the natives Kasúr el Meháfseh.

Adadah.—I may add to this report a valuable identification as giving an indication of the district where a large number of unknown sites are to be found. In the south of Judah ten cities are mentioned (as correctly counted) between Kabseel, the first on the whole list, and Kerioth (probably the present Kuretein). Adadah stands sixth, or about the middle

of the group. According to Smith's dictionary it has never been traced. Murray's new map gives the ruin of 'Ad'adah, exactly corresponding with the Hebrew word, as near Tuweirah el Foka. I find from the Arabs that this town does really exist, though marked on the map as doubtful. It is, no doubt, the ancient Adadah, and this leads us to look for the group in their proper place, the district west of the southern part of the Dead Sea.

Some of them may probably come within our limits in the district round Tell Arad. This identification makes the fifth either newly discovered or confirmed by the Survey out of the list of towns in the lot of Simeon, without counting the probability of identity between Beth Palet and Hora.

Geology.—The Beersheba plains consist of a rich marly soil, which, with irrigation, would become extremely fruitful. The climate seems healthy, and a great field for civilisation might be found in the colonisation of this remote district, in preference to the stony hills of Judæa, which generally attract more attention. The strata here all belong to the white marl, and the hills are capped by dark flint bands. On the southern slopes of the spur, which terminates in Tell el Ghur, we found the same brown limestone which throughout the Jordan valley caps the marl. The high hills of the Debir district, the Negeb, or dry land of Ziph, Maon, and Eshtemoa, consist of the soft, white, porous limestone, with flint nodules, so often before noted.

The unconformity with the chalk is well marked in a north and south section from Hebron to Moladah, confirming what I have formerly written on the subject.

The dry character of this district is entirely explained by the thickness of the porous strata which forbids the existence of springs.

The value of the Survey work in these districts, now including the recovery of some twenty biblical sites, as yet unknown or very doubtfully identified, cannot fail to be generally appreciated.

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieut. R.E.

MR. TYRWHITT DRAKE'S REPORT.

XIX.

CAMP, JERUSALEM, *May*, 1874.

[The following was found among Mr. Drake's papers after his death]:—

The Ghor or Jordan valley is now happily finished. It was one of the districts where we might have experienced considerable difficulties, both on account of the climate, the unsettled population, and the difficulty of procuring supplies. The exceptionally cool season was much in our favour, though the frequent rains somewhat delayed us. The abundant herbage served as fodder for our horses and mules—no slight item, when