

THE SYNAGOGUE OF UMM EL AMUD.

August 15th, 1875.

THE only synagogue of the interesting group in Galilee first explored by Major Wilson which the survey party have as yet examined is that of the ruin of Umm el 'Amud on a hill east of the Buttauf plain. I have not found this mentioned in any of the early travels in Palestine which serve to identify and date many of the other synagogues, and, indeed, the name of the site is lost, being replaced by the modern title, meaning "Mother of the Column."

The synagogue is much ruined, and a part has been removed to build a sort of small keep or fortress south of it, near the Roman road. There are, however, traces of four rows of columns, and the plan seems to have been identical with that of others, namely, five walks, three doors to the south, and a double column (as described and sketched in Major Wilson's paper, *Quarterly Statement*, April, 1869), at the north end of the two outer rows of pillars. Of these outer double columns the greater part of that on the north-west corner is here standing *in situ*; the other has fallen and lies near to its original position. The bases of the two most southern columns, flanking the middle walk, are also *in situ*. Thus we have the means of ascertaining both the length and the width of the synagogue. The measurements thus obtained give a striking indication of the standard used, which seems to me to be clearly the medium cubit mentioned by the Talmudical writers, which was used in the measurements of buildings, and which from actual measurement of the unit (the barley-corn), of which it contained 144, has been fixed by some writers at 16 inches.

Measurements taken.	Feet.	Cubits.
Length of colonnade 53ft., approximately .	(53' 4")	equals 40 cub.
Breadth of two walks 26ft., do.	(26' 8")	,, 20 ,,
Base of a column measures	2' 4"	,, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$,,
Upper diameter do.	1' 8"	,, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$,,
Total height of pillar (abacus to base incl.).	13' 4"	,, 10 ,,
Height of pedestal and stylobate	1' 4"	,, 1 ,,
Capital of attached pilaster.....	8"	,, 0 $\frac{1}{2}$,,
Lintel main door, length.....	8' 4"	,, 7 ,,
Do. do. height	2' 4"	,, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$,,

The decayed state of the ruin prevented the two main measures from being taken within a few inches, but they are near enough when taken with the exacter measures of the details.

The outer wall of the synagogue has disappeared beneath rubbish, but the entire plan of the building can perhaps be recovered by comparison with more perfect specimens. Thus in the width we have five walks ten cubits broad, giving fifty cubits interior measurement.

The length of the colonnade is 40 cubits, which with 6 columns

1½ cubits base gives an intercolumniation of 5·9 cubits, or about 7' 10", being very nearly the same as that of the synagogue of Arbela, which is exactly 6 cubits = 8 feet. Adding 6 cubits on either end of the building (in imitation of the plan of the Tell Hum synagogue); we obtain a total interior length of 52 cubits, being 4 cubits short of the length of the great synagogues of Tell Hum and Kerazeh.

The capitals of the pillars are of a very simple character. Attached pilasters seem to have been built against the walls either in or outside. A stylobate of simple moulding, identical with that of the pedestals on which the pillars stood and sixteen inches high, ran round the building.

In the little keep I found, besides pillar-shafts of dimensions identical with those of the synagogue, three lintels which probably belonged to the three southern doors of the synagogue. The longest, 8' 4" by 2' 4", represents two lions flanking a base, which may perhaps represent the pot of manna (see Photograph No. 73, old series). They are boldly though roughly cut; the stone is broken in two. The other two have sunk centres with a surrounding conventional border of a very effective twisted pattern.

It would be very interesting to know the date of this building, but of this we have no positive evidence.

It is known that Rabbi Simeon bar Iochái built twenty-four synagogues at his own expense. Among these were the synagogues of *Kefr Birim*, *El Jish*, and *Meirán* (where he is buried), visited by Major Wilson, also one at *Etham*, of which we have, I believe, found the site, with two others as yet unknown at *Tiria* and *S'asa*. This famous doctor and builder, called "the great light," and also "the spark of Moses," is said to have been the author of the cabalistic book *Zohar*. He lived about 120 A.D.

The six synagogues enumerated above date, therefore, from the very commencement of the second century. It is extremely probable that the synagogue of Umm el 'Amed may be attributed to the same date and the same builder.

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THE STONE OF FOUNDATION AND THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE.

[*The substance of this paper has already appeared in the ATHENÆUM.*]

I.

THE question whether the "stone of foundation" was a portion of the solid rock or a movable stone is one of considerable interest in connection with the topography of the temple. If the former, it will be easy to fix with all but absolute certainty its position, and from it as a starting-point, to lay down the sites of the temple, altar, and courts; with no