

FOURTH REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS AT TELL ZAKARÍYA.

By F. J. BLISS, Ph.D.

ON resuming work at this site on September 11th I was fully impressed with the situation of affairs. The details of the fortress had been fully worked out, and no other important building had been found. Accordingly nothing remained for us to do but to put in practice the theory which I stated on p. 23 of the January *Quarterly Statement* for the current year:—“After several years of digging in Palestine I have come to the conclusion that, owing to many conditions that need not be detailed now, antiquities are exceedingly scarce, and that the only hope for finding these is, first, to choose a site that is proved to be ancient, and then to turn over great quantities of soil on that site.” Now the antiquity of Tell Zakariya had been amply proved by the objects found. Not to go into details, it seemed indisputable that we had found traces both of pre-Israelite and Jewish occupations. The lower stratum showed scarabs of the eighteenth dynasty and types of pottery of the same date, similar to those found in the stratum at Tell el-Hesi, which contained the cuneiform tablet. In the upper stratum had been found jar-handles and weights, inscribed in Hebrew, presumably of the time of the Hebrew monarchy. The reasons for turning over about half the soil in the interior of the fortress had been two: First, to determine the nature and number of periods of the structures within; and, second, if possible, to discover important inscriptions. The results of the first quest are shown in the plans and sections published in the July *Quarterly*. The results of the second were disappointing, for while the short inscriptions referred to above turned up, no important steles were found. Accordingly it seemed best to turn our attention to the lower plateau. A series of 16 pits sunk on this plateau during our first season had revealed a depth of soil ranging from 6 to 18 feet, which showed two strata: the lower, pre-Israelite; the upper, Jewish. Our main,

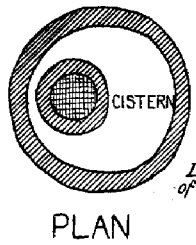
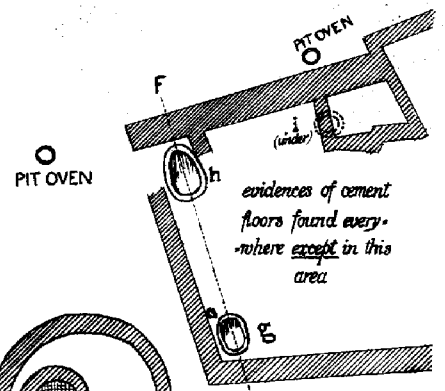
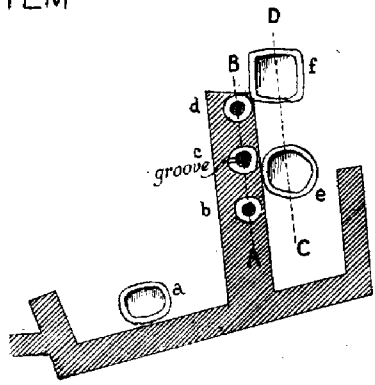
if not our chief, hope in beginning a large clearance was for cuneiform tablets in the lower stratum, tablets that might throw further light on the history of the land before the Jewish Conquest, and give us the other end of the Tell el-Amarna correspondence; and for Hebrew steles in the upper stratum which might have the interest attaching to the Moabite Stone, or to the Siloam Inscription. Incidentally we hoped to add to our knowledge of the pottery. In reporting that while this last hope was fulfilled the others were doomed to disappointment, I must not be held to discredit my theory of digging. Tablets may or may not occur in the unexcavated parts of Tell Zakariya, but the soil in which we were working is certainly the soil in which tablets may be looked for. Tell el-Hesi is very much smaller than Tell Zakariya, and Tell el-Hesi had its tablet, and the unexcavated portions may hold many more.

The plan of the plateau is given on the plate facing p. 16 in the January *Quarterly Statement*. It is in the form of a rude triangle trending north-eastwards from its base, the road from the valley striking the summit at the apex. The northern part of the plateau is fairly level, and has a distinct edge. On the south-eastern portion are superimposed the ruins of the fortress. At the south-west the surface is irregular, and shows an outcrop of rock, in which wine and olive presses have been cut. The most favourable portion for digging appeared to be along the line CD, in the centre of which had been found a quantity of early pottery. This point was taken as the centre of a large clearance to the rock, 80 feet by 60 feet, worked in sections each 30 feet broad, according to the method described before.¹ The rock lies at an average depth of about 14 feet. A third section, of the same dimensions, was begun, but deepened for 7 feet only, this depth representing the stratum in which Jewish inscriptions might be expected.

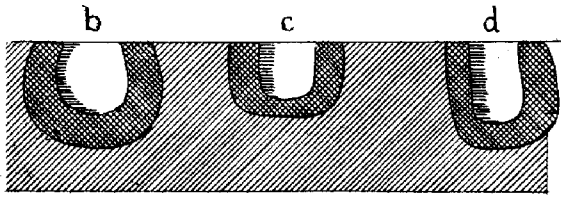
Immediately under the surface we found many walls enclosing small rooms. They are built of rubble, and range in breadth from 2 to 4 feet. As the pottery found within these walls was Jewish or earlier, including many whole examples, with no admixture of Roman or Arab, it appears to be proved

¹ See p. 98, April *Quarterly Statement*.

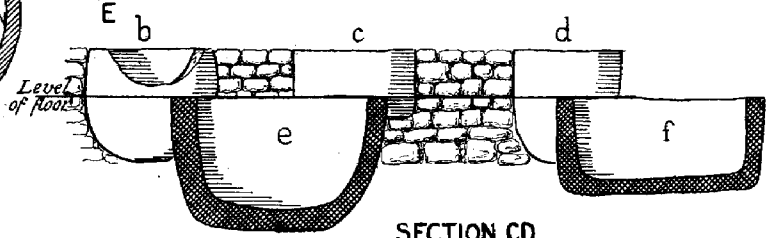
TELL ZAKARIYA EXCAVATION VAT-SYSTEM



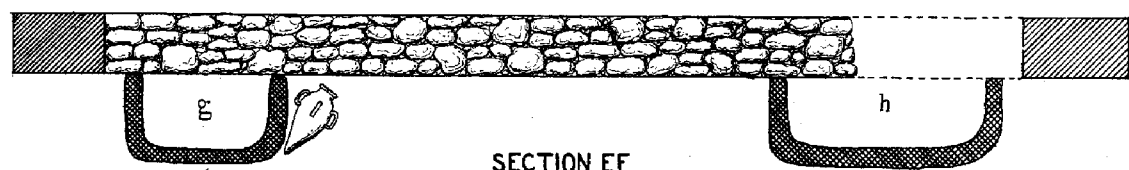
PLAN



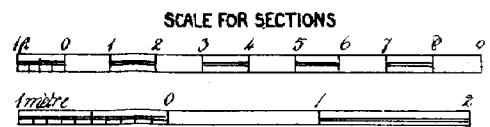
SECTION AB



SECTION CD



SECTION EF



Handwritten signature:
 F. P. Bliss

that this part of the Tell has not been rebuilt since the Jewish period. The walls stand nowhere for more than 3 feet, and they rest immediately on the *débris*. They are much ruined, many are in their present condition isolated, and nothing would be gained by publishing a full plan, which without much reconstruction would be unintelligible. We submit, however, a plan of a portion of the remains, which contains a system of stone vats (*see* Plate I). The three small vats, *b*, *c*, and *d*, globular in shape, are sunk in a dwarf wall 3 feet high. One foot below its top there is a cement flooring, flush with the rims of the vats *e* and *f*, as seen on section line CD. There is no direct means of connection between the higher and the lower system, and the liquid (wine, oil, or treacle) must have been transferred manually from the vats in the wall to the vats in the floor.

In passing a yard at Beit Jibrin the other day I noticed a system of vats not unlike those just described. A man and wife were scooping out oil just pressed from the olives, and pouring it into another. The internal depths of vats *b*, *c*, and *d* are 18, 15, and 22 inches respectively; the diameters at the mouth are 14, 14, and 12 inches respectively; all-over diameters across top, 30, 31, and 33 inches. Vat *c* has a small groove near the top. The two lower vats, *e* and *f*, are 28 and 18 inches in depth respectively; diameters at mouth, 44 and 49 inches; thickness of sides, 4 to 6 inches. Vat *a* probably belongs to this same system.

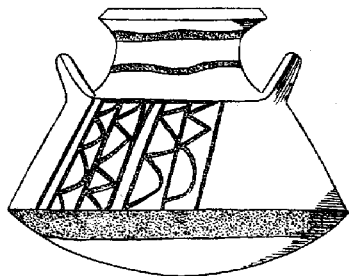
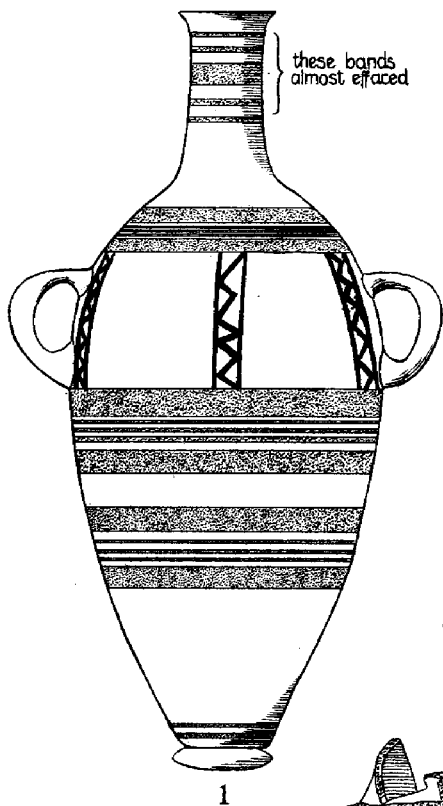
Vats *g* and *h* were sunk below the level of the flooring, and their tops are flush with the base of the adjacent wall. The flooring, however, is ruined, though traces of it remain immediately along the line of the wall. The large jar with four handles, near vat *g*, appears to be a foundation deposit. The measurements of vats *g* and *h* are as follows:—Depths, 19 and 21 inches respectively; thickness of sides, 4 to 6 inches; large internal axis, 36 and 48 inches. Vat *i* lies under one of several dwarf walls, only 1 foot high, which divide a plaster floor into compartments, probably used as vats. Vat *i* is, of course, earlier than the compartments. It is 16 inches deep, and 18 inches across the mouth. The bottom was broken out, and

has been repaired with a fine white cement. On its surface signs of pock-dressing appear.

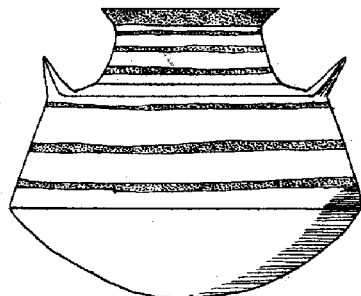
The cistern shown on the plan consists of a natural cavern, with a shaft built up to the present surface in two rings of rude masonry, not concentric, with a rough filling in between them. The top was covered over with large slabs immediately under the surface, though the existence of the shaft did not seem to be known to the Fellahin.

In the lower or pre-Israelite stratum was found another series of very rude constructions, too ruined to form a coherent plan. Signs of two periods were observed; for example, a circular brick construction had been broken into by the foundations of a later wall. This resembled a large pit-oven, but, as the usual signs of burning on the interior surface were absent, it must have served some other purpose. Its over-all diameter was about 4 feet, the walls being 7 inches thick, consisting of sun-dried bricks, white with red facing, both inside and out. Signs of a small opening appeared about 2 feet from the bottom. On the floor inside was a layer of ashes, containing small fragments of pottery, stones with traces of severe firing, and human bones, also burned, including a radius, a pelvis, a bit of a tibia, and a fragment of a sacrum. That these had not been burned within the construction is proved by the absence of firing on its walls. If similar constructions containing burned bones be found in the future we shall be better able to settle the question whether the bones were deposited on purpose or whether we have here an ordinary receptacle for grain into which bones had been accidentally cast. Another possible explanation occurred to us while the construction was being cleared out. Above the ashes it was filled with *débris* containing fragments of brick, which appeared to be parts of the ruined walls of the construction itself. Three of these contained circular channels, of about 1 inch diameter, which suggested the *tuyères* found in the furnace excavated at Tell el-Hesi (see my "Mound of Many Cities," p. 46), which, however, showed a much larger chamber, having a diameter of 7 feet. The absence of firing in the Tell Zakariya construction appears to militate against one supposing these channels to be

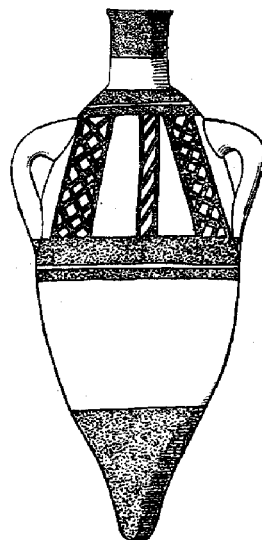
TELL ZAKARÏYA EXCAVATION PRE-ISRAELITE POTTERY



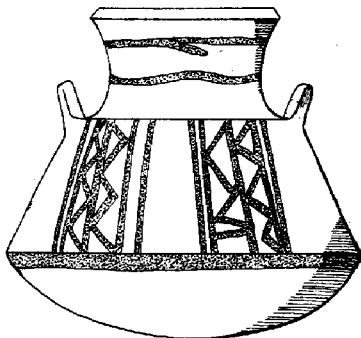
2



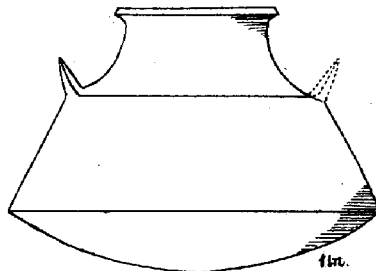
3



4



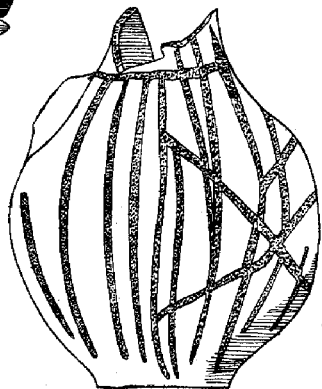
5



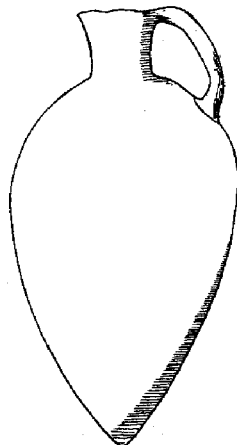
6



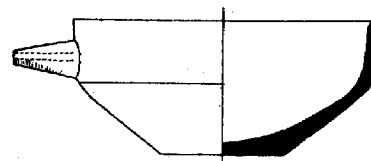
1



7



8



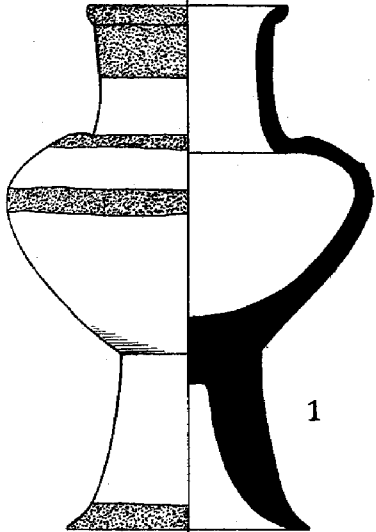
9

F. J. Bliss.
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

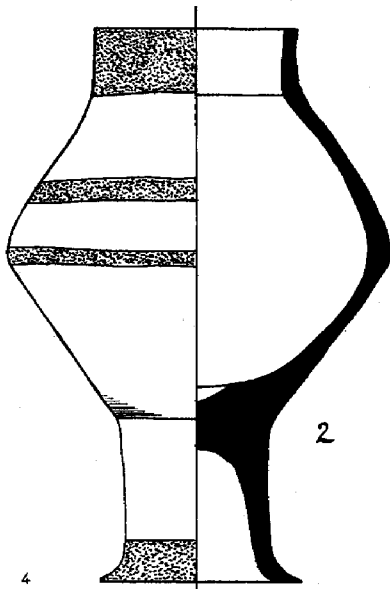
in height, the body is oval, it has a slightly convex disc base, two loop handles, and long cylindrical neck, slightly expanding at the mouth. No. 4 is of the same general type, but it is smaller and the ornamentation is different. The vessels 2, 3, 5, and 6, are of one type, having convex bases, wide mouths, and small ear handles. They all show painted ornament except No. 6. No. 8 is a jug with the characteristic pointed Phoenician base. Nos. 7 and 9 are uncharacteristic, but being found near the rock are placed on this plate. On Plate III a mark of query is put after the title "Jewish" as some of the forms are uncertain. Nos. 3 and 6 are clearly late. Nos. 1 and 2 were found on the dividing line between the two strata; they have the painted bands characteristic of the earlier ware, but their clumsy shapes suggest the time when degeneration had set in. They both spring from a trumpet-shaped hollow foot, as shown in section. No. 1 has a cylindrical neck with roll-moulded mouth. The neck of No. 2 is very short, producing an unsymmetrical effect. No. 5 was found near the surface and is of a type new to us. It is a small jug with very thick side, and having a long, heavily-moulded neck, all out of proportion to the size of the vessel. The handle is broken off. No. 4 is of the Pilgrim-bottle type.

Four jar-handles with Royal stamps were found. The first shows the four-winged symbol, with the inscription **למלך שוכה**, similar to those previously published. The second is interesting from the fact that the body of the four-winged creature is found for the first time with pronounced articulations. One possible objection suggested by Mr. Macalister to the proposed identification of the symbol with the flying scarabæus beetle is the outward curvature of what would, according to this theory, represent the *elytra* or hard wing cases, which is exactly the reverse of the natural curvature. A facsimile drawing is submitted. The place-name is greatly worn, but the first letter is clearly **י**, the last is probably **פ**, and the long bar of the **י** appears in the middle letter. Mr. Macalister also recognises traces of the crossbars as dotted in on the cut. This gives **זיפ** (Ziph) (Cut I) for the reading. The name of this city is probably found on Example No. 9, Plate V, July

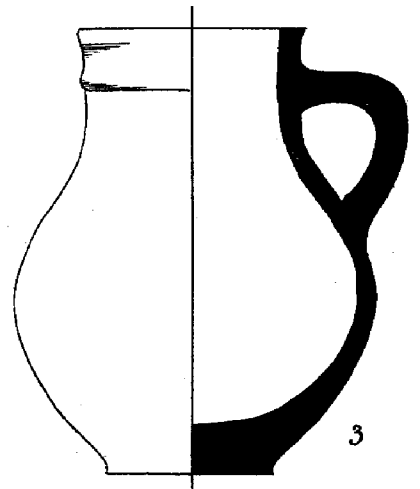
TELL ZAKARIYA EXCAVATION ?JEWISH POTTERY



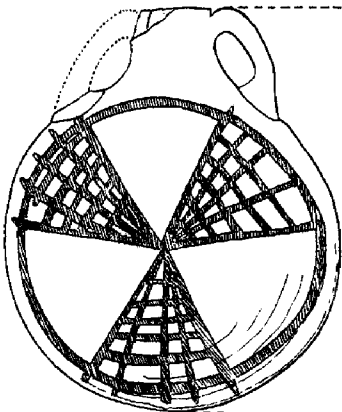
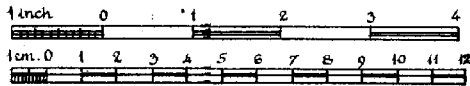
1



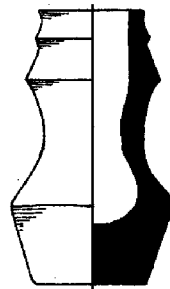
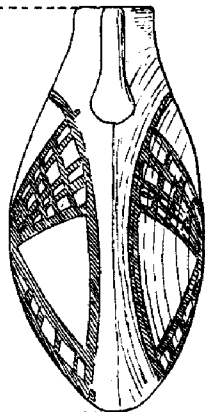
2



3

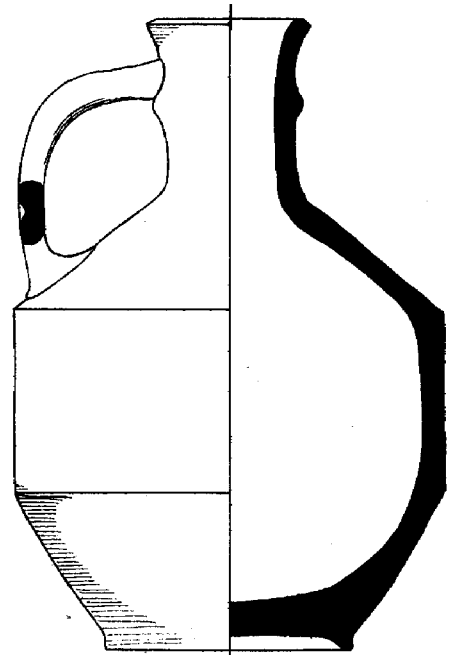


4



5

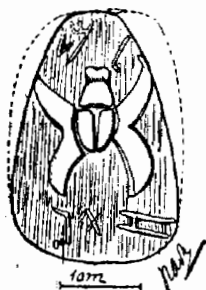
6



F.A. ...
F. C. Bliss

Quarterly Statement. The third was imperfectly stamped, and shows only the lower half of the oval, but the figure was clearly of the four-winged type; the place-name is probably Hebrew, as the first two letters, ה and ב, are clear. Of the other letters no traces remain. The fourth specimen shows the symbol of the two-winged type; it is so badly disintegrated that even the symbol is faint, and not a sign of lettering remains in either line.

In the upper, or late Jewish, stratum, only 2 feet under the surface, was found a jar-handle of dark red ware, with a pronounced rib in the centre, above which is the impression of a seal. The stamp is enclosed in an ellipse (see No. 1 in Cut II, p. 18), and is divided into two parts by a horizontal line separating



I.—Royal Stamp.

two lines of writing. The letters were coarsely cut on the seal. The four letters forming the upper line are perfectly clear, and read לעזר. The large size of the 'ayin and its oval shape are to be remarked. In the lower line the first letter is plainly cheth and the last yod. The main vertical line of the central letter is clear, but the top part is somewhat obscure, and at first we were doubtful whether it were a vau or resh. In the first case we must read הרי, in the second הרי. Careful microscopic examination, however, revealed the salient features of the resh. Accordingly we have for the reading of the stamp: "Belonging to 'Ezer, 'Hori." 'Ezer is found as a proper name in Num. xiii, 5, 1 Chron. xii, 9, and Neh. xii, 42; in the first reference we find mention of 'Hori, son of Shaphat, of the tribe

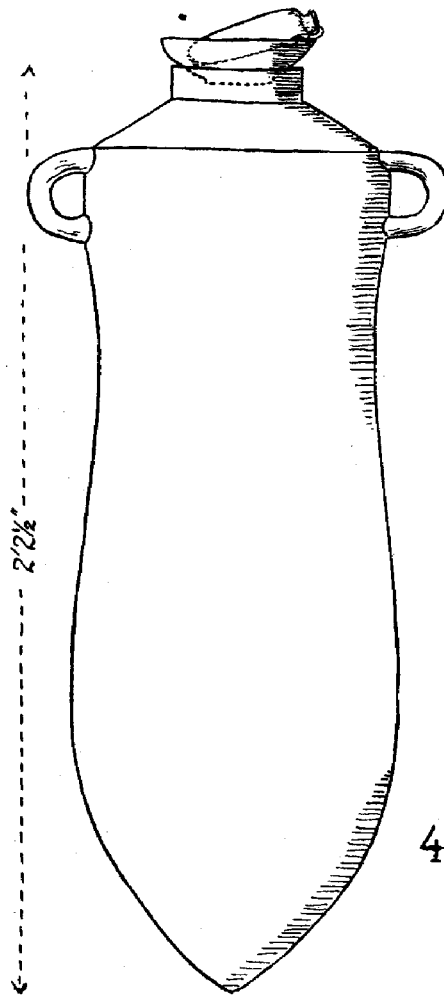
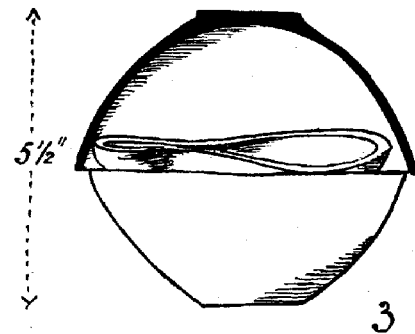
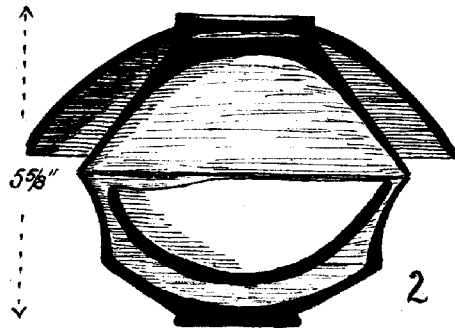
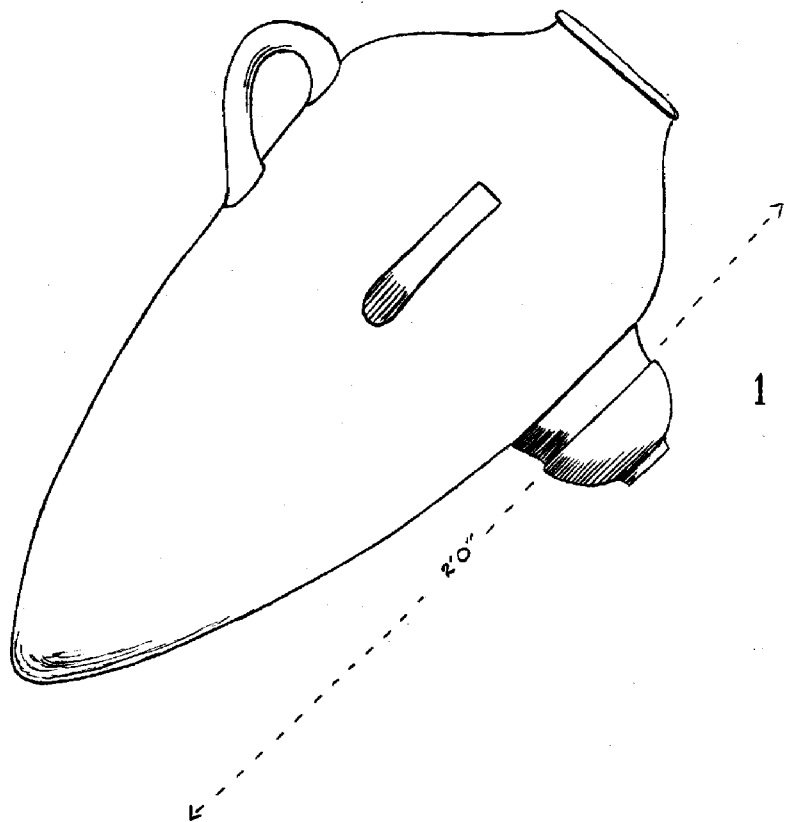
of Judah. The absence of the article in the stamp seems to forbid our reading the word as Horite, for with this meaning the article is indispensable. This fact strengthens the case against חורי , as there is no example where this word is used as the name of an individual; it is always employed generically, חורי , *i.e.*, the Hivite.

Stamp No. 2 (p. 18) was not found on the plateau but near the edge of our large clearance pit inside the fortress, which was abandoned last spring. The letters are exceedingly fine, and the jar-handle was probably overlooked by our workmen, who may have taken it for a mere finger-print, which is a common feature on jar-handles. I may mention incidentally that in case we find that anything important has been overlooked, such visions of lost *bakhshesh* are presented to the workmen that anything bearing the slightest resemblance to the recovered object is subsequently treasured up for our inspection. One compensation for having to fill up the excavations is the fact that the soil has to be re-handled. I am glad to say that the increasing care of the workmen is proved by the lack of finds in the course of our latest filling up. This jar-handle is of red ware, similar to No. 1, but has two pronounced ribs. The stamp is elliptical in form, the two lines of writing being separated by two parallel bars like the example figured on p. 198 of the *July Quarterly*. In stamping the pressure was unequally applied, so that the lower right corner of the ellipse does not appear. The upper line reads לְצַפְנָה . Owing to a small cavity in the surface the lower end of the פ is not traceable. Between the last two letters occurs a short vertical mark, which does not extend to a second small imperfection found below it. That this mark is not accidental is indicated by the following considerations:—(1) The relief is precisely similar in character to the relief of the letters. (2) If we ignore it, the distance between the last two letters appears to be a trifle too great. (3) Similar marks may be seen in examples 7 and 9 of the stamped jar-handles figured on Plate V facing p. 184 of the *July Quarterly*. The lower line reads מַעֲזִי , but these letters do not occupy the centre of the line, place for one letter remaining before the ז . Now this word, signifying

PALESTINE EXCAVATIONS GROUPED POTTERY DEPOSITS



Bottom of Foundation



F. J. Bliss
RASPERS MASADITH

anger, is found as a personal name in 1 Chron. ii, 27. The quadrilateral צפנא, however, presents difficulties. The root צפן occurs in the personal name צפניה—Zephaniah, which signifies "Jehovah protects." As a possible solution, I would propose to restore a letter in the vacant space before the מ, to regard the small vertical mark between the last two letters of the first line as a mark of separation between two words, and thus to read לצפן א-מעץ. In the case of the Royal stamps, mentioned above, this vertical mark seems to serve the purpose of a hyphen between two parts of the same word separated by the symbol, whereas in the present case we assume it to be equivalent to the modern printer's dash. Possibly the lost letter may be a ב, in which case we would have the word אבמעץ, "the father of wrath," a name analogous to אהימעץ (Ahimaaz), "the brother of wrath" (see 1 Sam. xiv, 50). As neither צפן nor אבמעץ occur in Scripture, our suggestions are offered with considerable hesitation.

Stamp No. 3 (p. 18) was found at Tell es-Sâfi. The oval is divided into three parts by two vertical lines. In the central division we have seven symbols. At the bottom are two identical symbols side by side; these two are also found at the top but reversed in position. The three symbols found between these two pairs appear twice repeated in the right division of the oval. The left division is much worn, but signs of a similar double repetition appear, the symbols, however, being inverted and the order changed. Three of the symbols found on this stamp appear on Scarab No. 3, Plate VI, in the October *Quarterly*.

On Plate IV are shown various groups of pottery deposits. Nos. 1 and 2 are from Tell Zakariya, the rest from Tell es-Sâfi. Nos. 2 and 3 are the most common. In group No. 2 we have four vessels: A bowl containing a lamp, filled with fine earth, covered by a second bowl, inverted, above which is another inverted bowl. Where the vessels do not fit closely the intervening spaces are also filled with fine earth. No. 3 differs from No. 2 in having but one inverted bowl. These were found buried near the bases of walls. Similar deposits were very common at Tell el-Hesy, in Cities IV and Sub-IV, which

are dated from about 1400 to 1000 B.C.¹ The position of group No. 1 with reference to the base of a wall is shown on the plate. Here we have two vessels, first a small bowl (similar to the lowest bowl in group No. 2), somewhat tilted; second, a large jar with four handles, also tilted on its side, so that one handle rests within the bowl. For a somewhat similar combination of jar and bowl, *see* Plate IV, *July Quarterly*. In group No. 4 we have a long cylindrical jar, placed upright on its pointed bottom; the mouth is closed by a bowl, not inverted, on which rests a small jug. The shape of the jar is new to us, but the associated vessels appear to be early Jewish. Another form of jar-burial (obtaining also at Tell el-Hesy) was found at Tell es-Sâfi. A large jar was found resting on its side, the mouth broken away to admit of the insertion of two jugs and a bowl, which were found within. It was packed with fine earth and contained small bones, apparently of birds. The report from Tell es-Sâfi will refer to a jar-burial antedating the examples just mentioned.

TELL EJ-JUDEIDEH, *December 4th*, 1899.

THIRD REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS AT TELL ES-SÂFI.

By F. J. BLISS, PH.D.

THE Tell es-Sâfi excavations were resumed October 9th and continued to November 22nd, when preparations were begun for moving camp to Tell ej-Judeideh. During this period an enormous quantity of soil was turned over, but unfortunately with very few results. In my report in the *July Quarterly*, p. 191, I called attention to the difficulties attending excavations on this site:—"The south end is occupied by the modern graveyard, the modern village rules out the north portion, while another graveyard is found over a great part of the narrow plateau extending to the north-east. We are thus

¹ *See* "Mound of Many Cit'cs," p. 84.