

## REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS AT TELL SANDAHANNAH.

By F. J. BLISS, Ph.D.

TELL SANDAHANNAH is situated one mile directly south of Beit Jibrin. Although the accumulation of *débris* is not great, ranging from 12 feet to 20 feet, yet the Tell is a prominent feature in the landscape as it covers a small natural plateau, from which several ridges radiate in various directions. Its summit is 1,098 feet above sea level. It is roughly circular, with a diameter of about 500 feet. In the spring, two shafts were sunk to the rock, and an examination of the pottery showed two distinct strata—the lower Jewish, the higher Seleucidan. Systematic excavation was begun June 5th, and was continued till August 28th, with the interruption of only one day, when the time was devoted to making casts of the objects unearthed. The average number of men per day for the 72 days of labour was 37. Never since the permit was available have we been able during so short a period, and with so few men, to attain such full results. Briefly, these are as follows:—(1) We have excavated the surface town almost completely, with its inner and outer walls, its gate, streets, lanes, open places, houses, reservoirs, &c., and have proved these constructions to date from Seleucidan times. (2) We have confirmed the existence of a lower town, dating from the Jewish period, by clearing to the rock, an area 50 feet by 30 feet. (3) A dozen tombs have been opened in the neighbouring cemetery, two of which had escaped rifling at any period. (4) A contoured survey has been made of the district, and the plan shows in detail the extraordinary system of souterrains, columbaria, cisterus, &c.<sup>1</sup> (5) Distinct advance has been made in the knowledge of the pottery of Seleucidan times, through the discovery of numerous whole specimens of lamps, jars, plates, vases, &c. (6) The other finds include a series of tablets of soft limestone, inscribed

<sup>1</sup> The publication of this plan has had to be deferred (*see* p. 338).

in Greek and Hebrew, a group of small figures in lead, representing bound captives, a large bronze lamp, a bronze cupid, an inscribed lead weight, &c. It should be noticed that in addition to the labour of excavation, the work of 72 days included the restoring of the surface of the Tell to the condition in which we first found it.

Before entering into the detailed description of the Selenucidan town it will be well to indicate the nature and method of the excavation.<sup>1</sup> The work was rendered easy by the fact that, as a rule, the ruined tops of the walls were covered with less than a foot of *débris*, while in many cases this was only a couple of inches thick. On the first day of the work I placed 10 diggers with their basket boys, in a line, east and west, just within the line of the city wall, with a distance of 20 feet between gang and gang, and directed them to dig trenches about 3 feet deep, directed towards the north. In some cases walls were found running in a line with the trenches; in others walls were struck crossing the trench lines. At the end of two or three days we had sufficient clues to make it more economical to abandon the method of parallel trenches, and a systematic tracing of streets and chambers was begun. The small size of many of the rooms rendered the disposition of the earth a difficult problem, and demanded that as little should be removed as possible. This was usually piled in the centre of the chambers, the trenches being dug around the walls. In most cases only two, or at the most three, sides of a room were excavated, the length of the remaining side or sides being determined by the excavation of the contiguous chambers. Only the outside walls of a few chambers were seen. This method, however, allowed us to discover whether any remains of doors existed. The majority of rooms were ruined down below the level of the door-sill, all signs of which had disappeared. On the plan are marked only such doors as were actually found. It may be noticed that in a given group of contiguous rooms perhaps only two are connected by a door. This is due either to the fact that the wall containing the door is less ruined, or that the missing door-sills were at higher

<sup>1</sup> See plan.

levels. An example of two adjacent rooms at two different levels and connected by a staircase, may be seen at *h*. In most cases where rooms showed any peculiar feature, such as cisterns, a plaster flooring, a vault, a solid pavement, &c., these were thoroughly excavated. It will be noticed that the lines of the chambers break off near the southern and western walls; this is due to the great ruin at these points and suggests destruction by war. This destruction appears to have been greatest at the south-west corner of the town. As in many cases clues to walls suddenly gave out, and in others a deep trench showed only one course of stones resting on *débris*, the entire excavation of this small area was abandoned for more important researches. To have completed it would have added much to the expense and perhaps little to our knowledge of the town, the greater part of which had been traced with so much economy of labour.

The excavation of the great quadrangular building, having one side open, in the east part of the town, was, however, a more costly affair. When the west wall of Street E had been found, several long trenches were pushed eastwards from it to determine the position of houses supposed to be on the other side of the street. No such houses were found, but in the line of all the trenches were large fallen stones of quite a different character from those found before. As these indicated the presence of some important building, we determined to excavate as much of the area as might be necessary by means of a large clearance, though this would involve employing the full force of men at this point. Not till the second day did any traces of walls appear, and meanwhile the work consisted mainly in breaking up and carrying away in fragments large stones, choking the *débris*, some of which were over 3 feet square. By this method the double western wing of the building was determined. From a point near the south-west corner a tunnel was driven eastwards, along the foundations of the south wall, under the fallen stones. As the ground slopes towards the east, we stopped the tunnel at a distance of 70 feet, and opening up from above, were enabled to trace the rest of the south wall to the south-east angle in an open

trench, thus proving the suspected identity of the east wall with the city wall itself. The excavation of the east wing was conducted rapidly and inexpensively by comparatively shallow trenches. The only point left undetermined was whether the south wing was further subdivided into chambers, but to settle this question would have involved another expensive clearance through the fallen stones.

We may now go into the details of the town excavated. Though four-sided, it is by no means square. Its greatest length east and west, measured at a point through the gate, is about 520 feet, and its greatest breadth north and south, measured along the west side, is about 500 feet. It thus covers hardly 6 acres of ground. When we began to dig, long portions of both lines were observed at several places, flush with the surface. It is surrounded by two walls. The inner wall is found either at the edge of the Tell or a few feet down the slope. The wall has been drawn at a uniform thickness of 5 feet, as this is the average thickness at points on the north side where it is preserved above the level of door-sills of abutting houses, and along the east side where the ground level is determined by the gate. At two points on the north side we ascertained that it is thickened on the inside face by offsets below the ascertained ground level, bringing the thickness of the foundations to about 8 feet in one case and to about 10 feet in the other. An offset was also found at the east side. At the south side the thickness of the portion of wall remaining is 11 feet, and on the east side it ranges between 8 and 9 feet. A glance at the plan will show that owing to the ruin of contiguous houses, we had no criteria to determine the original ground level of the wall on three sides. As the masonry is here rough, we may assume that only the broad foundations remain. These consist of large and small roughly-coursed rubble, laid in mud, and proved at several places to rest on *débris* at a depth of only 4 feet below the present surface. Some of the towers are built of thin, brick-like blocks of soft limestone, dressed with a broad chisel, often used diagonally<sup>1</sup>; this is the characteristic building

<sup>1</sup> This dressing must not be confused with the fine diagonal cross-chiselling of the Crusaders.

material of the town. It is found in the part of the wall between the north-west tower and the offset which marks the position of an internal tower. The stones average about 21 inches in length, 6 inches in height, and 11 inches in thickness, the courses being laid in English bond, that is, a course of stretchers alternating with a course of headers. The internal tower is of irregular shape, and probably contained small chambers at different levels, though only one remains; the part of the tower blackened in was found solid, and represents mere foundation work. Eastwards from this point to the north-east tower, and southwards from this tower to the gate, the masonry consists of large stones, set in mud, with wide joints. These stones range in length from 2 feet 10 inches to 3 feet 9 inches, in height from 1 foot 6 inches to 1 foot 9 inches, in thickness from 6 inches to 9 inches, and are laid in English bond. They are roughly flaked, with no distinct dressing, though in some cases there has been a rude attempt to form a boss and margin. From the gate to the south-east tower the wall has been removed in recent times for building the house of the chief Sheikh in Beit Jibrin, but the line may be inferred from the direction of the great trench which is still open. According to the Fellahin who saw it destroyed, it consisted of large stones similar to those just described. Another break in the wall occurs near the south-west tower, where possibly a gate may once have existed, as the slope of the hill is here favourable to an approach. While searching for a clue at this point, we found the hoard of tablets, and the earth removed during the excavation was heaped up along the supposed line of wall. In attempting to explore the whole town and to excavate its treasures in the short space of three months, some sacrifice of detail was necessary, so the search for the wall at this point was sacrificed to the tablets.

Another break occurs near the north-west tower. This appears to have been a breach made in war and left open during the last years of the town, as remains of house-wallings (too detached to appear on the plan) run down the slope, crossing the supposed line. The wall is again entirely ruined at the point where it must have made a junction with the

north-east tower. This tower is also much ruined, but its face and south-east side remain. It is built of limestone "bricks."

As mentioned above, the inner wall runs either along the edge of the Tell or in a line slightly down the slope. The outer wall (hatched on plan) is, of course, still further down the slope. It was traced along the entire south side of the city, pieces were found at the west, and a section, 140 feet long, was excavated at the east. The shortness of our time prevented the search for the entire line, but enough was excavated to prove that it encircles the hill and to show its relation to the inner line. In places the space between the two walls is barely 15 feet, while in two instances the towers of the two systems touch each other. That the two walls are of the same period is proved by the fact that the face of one of the towers of the inner line is extended beyond the place for the true corner to bond into the outer line. It seems to me to be probable that the outer wall never rose to any great height above the surface, but merely served the purpose of a revetment to strengthen the upper wall which rested on *débris*. The outer wall also rests on *débris*. Its masonry shows the large and small rubble of the upper line, as well as the limestone "bricks," but the large well-squared stones are wanting, and in general the construction is inferior. It is about 6 feet thick.

The approach to the city is from the east, where a gate opens directly into the large open quadrangular building. In finding this gate I had the same luck which attended my discovery of the gate near Siloam. In both cases the walls in the immediate vicinity had been robbed of stones in modern times, and in the present case the gate appears to have escaped by a miracle, as the destruction of the wall extends to within 10 feet of it, and as it is covered by barely a foot of soil. As the gate is ruined down to the level of the outer sill, and as, moreover, it had been blocked up it might have escaped us had not the position appeared to have been the most favourable for an entrance to the city. My suspicions were aroused by a peculiar feature in the supposed ruined top of the wall, which

showed an inner course an inch or two higher than the facing course. A careful brushing of the latter revealed marks of foot-wear, and removing the inner course I found this to be merely a blocking up of the gate.

On the outside the gate is protected by a small tower, projecting 12 feet 8 inches from the line of wall, and having a face 17 feet in length. Its face and west side are ruined down below the level of the door-sill, so there is nothing in the construction to determine whether the outside entrance to the tower was to the east, that is opposite the inner gate, or to the north, at right angles to it, in the manner of the Jaffa Gate at Jerusalem; but as the north side would barely give space for a gate of equal width, one may assume the entrance to have been in the east wall. This tower rises from a platform, 35 feet wide, protected by a revetment, consisting of single slabs of stones sloped against the *débris* of which the platform is composed, and resting on *débris* at a level some 40 inches below the level of the gate-sill. The face of the revetment is much ruined, and though search was made for steps leading to it up the slope, no such steps were found.

The gate has an overall opening of 9 feet. The sockets for the door-posts measure 10 inches by 8 inches, and were filled with lead. As mentioned above, a row of stones had been built against the outer sill from within, one of which covered the north socket, suggesting either that the gate had been purposely closed, or that at some period its level had been raised. Though the tower before the gate and the revetted platform do not bond into the main wall, I see no reason to assume that they do not belong to the period of the gate, as lack of bond is to be observed in the town in parts of the same construction. Within the gate is a stone pavement.

The method of excavating the large quadrangular building, with one open side, has been touched upon, and we may now describe its nature. Its east wall coincides with the city wall. At the level of the pavements discovered within rooms of the western chambers the walls are about 5 feet thick, but the foundations are more massive, attaining in places a thickness

of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet. At one point where there is a slight deviation in the foundations to avoid the opening to a rock-hewn chamber, these are seen to rest on the rock. The coincidence of the east wall of the building with the city wall was not proved till near the close of the season, and it was not ascertained whether this wall rests on the rock or not. The east wing of the chamber contains six chambers, having a breadth of about 17 feet, and ranging in length from about 8 feet to about 35 feet. As mentioned above, the number of rooms into which the south wing was divided was not ascertained. Against the one cross-wall discovered were found indications of a built water-tank. The west wing is double, having two lines of chambers; the western line contains six chambers, with a breadth of about 13 feet, ranging in length from about  $13\frac{1}{2}$  feet to about  $18\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Owing to the fact that the walls were ruined to different levels, and that the foundations vary in thickness, measurements to the inch could not be taken. The eastern line has three chambers, the largest of which measures 55 feet by 17 feet. Portions of stone pavements are preserved in several of the rooms, but as the adjacent walls are ruined down to their level, we found no signs of doors connecting the chambers with each other or with the open court. The masonry *in situ* is similar in size and character to that part of the city wall where we find large stones. Among the *débris* covering the foundations were found still larger stones, ranging from 3 feet by 3 feet 4 inches to 3 feet 5 inches by 3 feet 6 inches. A small building with slighter walls was found to extend within the court at its north opening. Whether other such buildings exist within the court was not ascertained.

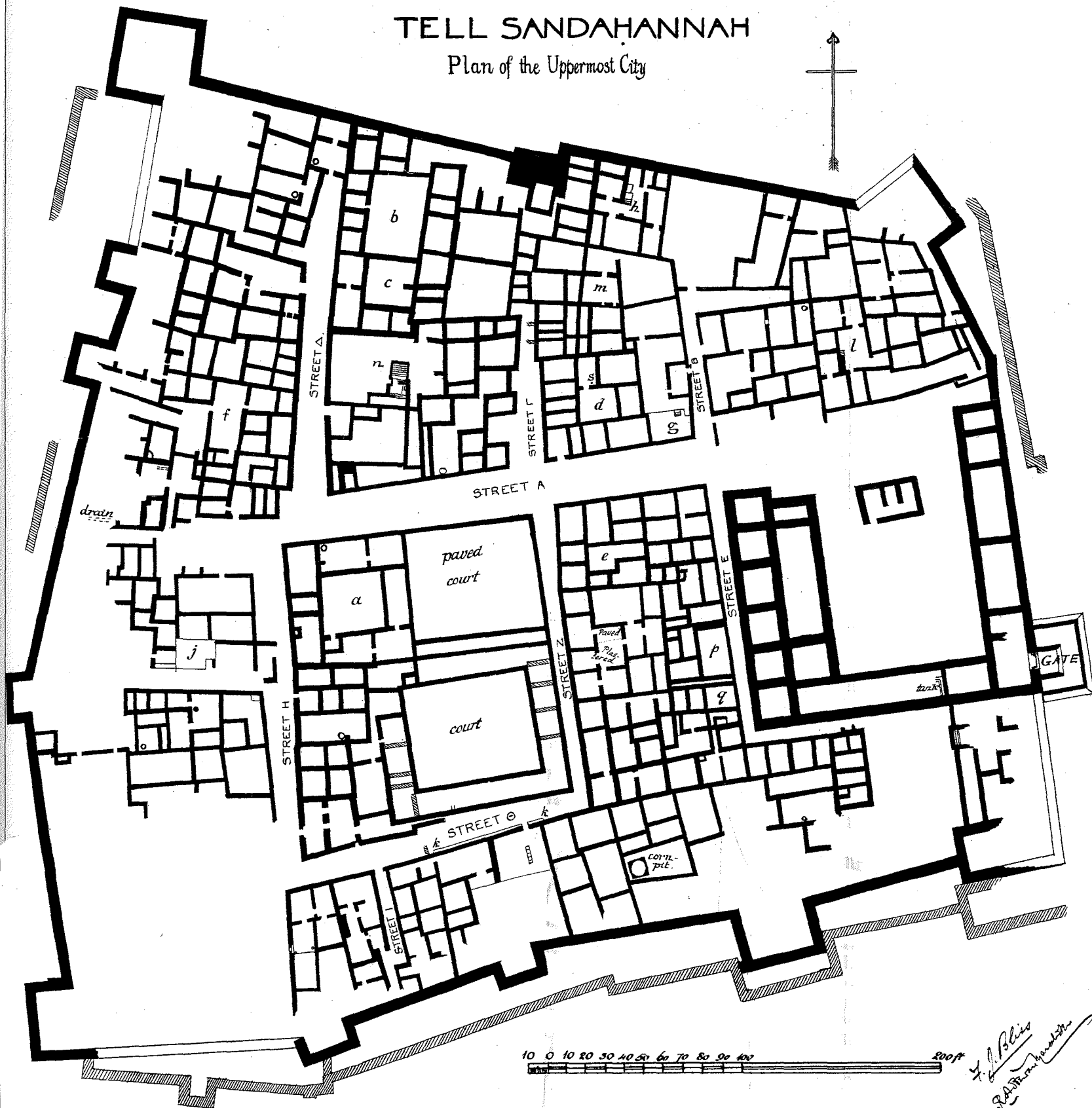
We are unable to speak positively as to the purpose and use of this construction. Its size, the thickness of its walls as compared to the rest of the town, and the regular disposition of its chambers prove it to have been some sort of a public building. Clearly it is not a temple. The facts that its east wall is coincident with the city wall, and that the only discovered entrance to the town is through it, suggest that it formed part of the fortifications, possibly the barracks.

Turning now to the main portion of the town, we notice



# TELL SANDAHANNAH

Plan of the Uppermost City



that this is in general built of soft limestone "bricks" of the same character and shape as those found at points in the city wall, but smaller in size. This masonry is set with wide joints and laid in mud. Occasionally we find masonry of larger, harder stones, chisel-picked and laid in mud, 18 inches in height, sometimes constituting the sole masonry of a given chamber, sometimes used indifferently in the same wall with the "bricks." The walls have an almost uniform thickness of 30 inches.

The town is roughly divided into blocks by streets (*see plan*). The most important is Street A, running east and west for a distance of 350 feet from the "barracks" to the houses along the west wall. It is paved in places with rude blocks of soft limestone, and has a maximum breadth of 20 feet. Several of the other streets are paved. Opening out of Street A to the north we have, first, Street B, 7 feet to 10 feet wide, which runs straight for some 65 feet, and then turns east for about the same distance, terminating in a *cul-de-sac*; secondly, the short Street F, of irregular width, also terminating in a *cul-de-sac*; and, thirdly, Street Δ, from 7 feet to 18 feet wide, and over 160 feet long, which does not extend to the city wall. The pavement is preserved only in some places; two of these occur within a short distance, and as they differ in level by some 3 feet, we assume that the street must have been stepped down. Opening from Street A to the south we find the narrow Street E, which bends around the "barracks," and Streets Z and H, which, with Streets A and Θ, enclose what appears to be the most important block of the town. This block, which, roughly speaking, measures about 140 feet square, shows signs of rebuilding, especially at the south side, and of adaptation to public uses. Immediately under the ground-level of the "Court" and "Paved Court" are found foundations of houses, which appear to have been destroyed when the block was unified, so to speak. I would suggest that these may have been pulled down when the block was adapted as the house of the governor. In its north-west corner we find the court *a*, surrounded by eight rooms, which may have constituted the private apartments. The large rectangular "Court" (50 feet

by 62 feet) is partly surrounded by a passage, which appears to have been divided into rooms in later times by the walls hatched on the plan. At the north this passage is separated from the "Paved Court" by still another passage. These courts may have been places of public assembly. The rooms at the south-western portion of the block may have been devoted to government offices.

Examination of the other blocks will show how these may be subdivided into houses, lighted not only from the street but from open courts within. For example, *b* appears to be an open court, surrounded on the west, north, and east by chambers, and touching on the south the house whose central court is *c*. Suggesting *d*, *e*, and *f* as similar open courts, we may leave the reader to subdivide the rest of the town for himself.

It will be noticed that very few of the rooms are perfectly rectangular, while many are of very awkward shape. This fact taken in connection with the nature of the excavation, which did not permit us to clear along the four inside walls of the chambers and thus to secure the dimensions to an inch, makes any attempt to reduce the standard of length futile. Attention should be called to the number of chambers barely 3 feet wide, though enclosed by walls over 2 feet thick. These appear to be closets. Chamber *g* is a raised platform, with steps, like a "mustaba" in an ordinary Arab house; *j* is also a mustaba. Chamber *h* is solidly paved with stone slabs from which a stairway ascends to the chamber to the west. A similar stairway may be seen in the court *l*. The small circles seen in many of the chambers represent pit ovens (made of mud) such as have been often described before. Portions of small drains with stone covers are found at various points, such as between chambers *p* and *q*, but the extent of the excavation prevented our examining the drainage system in detail. . . . .

Several architectural fragments, ornamental and constructional, were found in different parts of the city. A few of these, such as a triglyph built into the jamb of a door opening on to Street H, were re-used, but not one was found in its original position, and there is no evidence in the existing

remains of buildings to indicate the original position of any one of these stones. There is, for instance, no trace of a colonnade in the whole city, and such columns as existed must have stood upon dwarf walls, now ruined below the level of the bases. . . . .

Our main work was confined to an examination of the latest town, but the eastern half of the open space marked "Court" was cleared to the rock. As mentioned above, immediately under the surface we found a series of chambers which were proved to be independent of the "court" by the following facts:—(1) The wall of the court, which rests in *débris* at a depth of from 3 to 4 feet below the surface, crosses some of the ruined walls of these chambers; (2) other walls are broken off to make room for the court-wall; (3) the court-wall is in places built directly upon the chamber walls, the line of demarcation being clear; (4) the door-sills in the chamber walls are from 3 to 4 feet lower than the level of the court-wall, which is ruined below its door-levels; (5) pit-ovens within the chambers (which are usually sunk 3 feet below a given floor-level) are found to a depth of 5 feet below the ruined top of the court-wall.<sup>1</sup> These chambers appear originally to have formed part of the upper city, and to have been destroyed to give place to the court. The style of building is the same as that of the surface town, and the types of pottery identical. Below these rooms was found another series of chambers and a portion of a street with a small drain below it, connected with a larger vaulted drain. From the pottery, which, while showing in general the same type as above, includes a few earlier Greek types, we gather that this was an earlier Seleucidan occupation. At 10 feet there begins a regular Jewish stratum continuing to the rock, which is found at a depth ranging from 17 to 20 feet below the surface. There were no pre-Israelite remains. The houses are built of the same rough rubble as was found in the other Jewish towns we have excavated. The pottery showed the ordinary types of the middle Jewish period, including the

<sup>1</sup> These last two features, while confirmatory, are not conclusive, as differences of level between adjacent rooms have been observed elsewhere in the town.

Royal jar-handles with the four place-names occurring elsewhere—Hebron, Ziph, Shocoh, and Memshath.

One of the purposes in making this large clearance to the rock was to ascertain whether any souterrains, similar to those surrounding the hill, exist under the Tell itself, originally connected with the rock-surface at points where this is covered by the Tell accumulation. Such souterrains would, of course, be at least as early as the lowest stratum of *débris* proved to be Jewish. We found a series of three small chambers adjacent to each other, and connected by openings. We cleared out the first, which was completely filled with earth, and a rude staircase was seen to wind to the bottom. Walls and steps were plastered, showing either that the chamber was made for a cistern or adapted as such. The second and the third chambers are connected with the rock-surface by shafts, covered in by slabs. The third chamber contained very little earth, and when this was entirely cleared out it was proved to have no access to further chambers. A plan and sections will be given later in Mr. Macalister's series of the important souterrains of Tell Sandahannah, when comparisons may be made. At present I confine myself to the statement that we have now gained one solid fact as to the chronology of these mysterious chambers, for the discovery of bells, covered by 20 feet of *débris*, the lowest stratum dating from about 800 B.C., proves that the type originated at least as early as Jewish times.

We may now turn to the objects unearthed during the last season. These belong mainly to the Seleucidan period. The coins, which number over 75, are much worn and corroded, and await more complete examination, but the specimens thus far identified are all to be relegated to this period. The finds in pottery were unusually rich and especially valuable, as they illustrate a period about which little has previously been known. The overlapping of certain types originating at an earlier Jewish period has been ascertained, as well as the early use of certain types of lamps which extended, with some variations, into Byzantine and Arab times. The specimens include, in round numbers, 30 large jars and pots, 60 vases, 160 bowls and dishes, and 150 lamps. A large part of these were

found immediately outside the inner wall of the city, where they were evidently thrown, though it is curious to find so many unbroken. The ruin of so large a part of the town below the ground level explains the comparative paucity of finds within the walls. Over 350 stamped jar-handles of Rhodian make were discovered, principally on the surface of the land surrounding the Tell, from which they had probably been washed down by the rains. These are treated in a separate paper by Mr. Macalister. The treatment of the rest of the pottery must be reserved till later.

I may here emphasise the fact, which is to be inferred from my previous reports, that during the present campaign we have been gathering the data for a fairly complete history of the pottery of Southern Palestine from early pre-Israelite times to about the Christian era. In the reports written while the work was in progress, our account of the pottery has been necessarily confined to brief summaries of types found at given sites and to illustrations of specimens of peculiar interest. As we rightly anticipated that each Tell would add to our knowledge of one or more of the periods in question, to have attempted a detailed treatment before the close of the work would not have tended to edification. When the time comes to render a full account of the pottery, the types selected for illustration will cover a minimum of 50 sheets.

On the morning of June 14th, while searching for the city wall near its south-west angle, in the *débris* covering a rude mud flooring within the line of wall to a depth of from 2 to 3 feet, one of the men came across a minute fragment of limestone incised with Greek letters. Later in the day, in the presence of the foreman, he discovered, at the same place, a portion of a tablet  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, made of the same material and also inscribed in Greek. Associated with the rubbish were fragments of limestone, showing the markings of draught-boards. As the man who made the discovery was one of the most careful of the workmen, he was retained at the place, and, later, another careful digger was associated with him. I spent a good deal of time watching them dig, and saw several specimens turned out. The excavation was an extremely

delicate and slow affair, as the tablets were so friable that a blow of the pick might easily destroy them, and the incisions were so slight that often the earth and dust had obliterated all signs of lettering. Sieves could not be used, lest the jolting of the small fragments together should result in their fracture. All stones, of any shape or size, were carefully dusted, and in doubtful cases were laid aside to dry before they were finally decided upon. The carefulness of the diggers was stimulated by increased *bakhshesh*. This excavation was continued for seven days, and extended for some distance beyond the circumference within which the tablets were scattered. The search was not abandoned till the nature of the soil was found to have completely altered. The inscribed stones, including those which show only faint traces of a few letters, number 50. Of these, four are in Hebrew, while all the rest appear to be Greek, though the slight remains upon some render these doubtful. Owing to the extraordinarily soft nature of the material, the question of cleaning and casting was difficult. In cleaning we relied, first, on the sun to harden the stones, and then on a fine camel's-hair brush. In casting, the fear was lest the process of pressing into the mould should injure the tablets. Accordingly we proceeded with caution, and I chose 27 of the hardest stones, with the result that 20 perfect casts were obtained, while practically no damage was done to any of the stones.

These 27 casts, which include all but two of the best-preserved fragments, have been sent to London, and duplicate casts of the seven which did not satisfy me, will be forwarded later. I shall probably be able to make casts of 21 out of the 23 remaining stones. Of the other two, which are too fragile for such an attempt, one is small, and, as the lettering is clear, can be easily copied, while the other, the largest of the whole series, has been photographed in two different lights. The photographs, which are a trifle under the original size, are excellent, and from them the inscriptions can be studied almost if not quite as well as from the stone itself. In fact, many of the letters appear clearer on the photograph. . . . .

On the plate are 16 figures of captives which were found

1 inch 0 1

F. J. Bliss  
R.A. Brown made

Photo Lithographed & Printed by James Axeman, 5, Queen Square W.C.

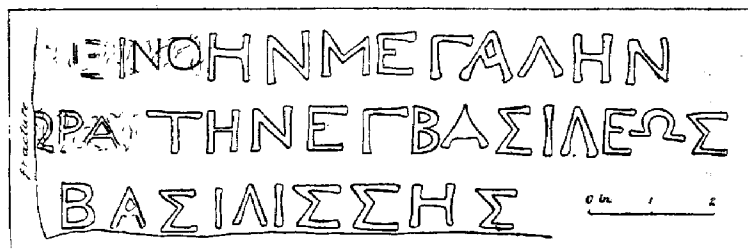


scattered in the *débris* in the large building we have called the "barracks" at about the level of its flooring. They are made of lead, but the fetters or ropes binding them are represented in lead, iron, or bronze. They range in length from 2 inches to 3 inches. The majority are mere strips of lead cut into shape and slightly thickened and rounded at the head. In No. 1 there is no attempt at facial detail, but dots represent the breast and navel; the arms are bound behind the body with a rope of bronze, as shown in positions *b* and *c*. In No. 2 the features are roughly indicated; the hands are bound in front with a fine lead wire, and a similar fetter was found around the ankles but in such a rotten condition that it has crumbled away. The contortion observed in No. 3 is part of the original design, not the result of accident, and represents extreme humiliation; it was probably once elaborately bound like the similar figure, No. 16, but the fetters are now gone. Nos. 4 and 5 are incomplete strips, the fetters missing.<sup>1</sup> In No. 6 there is an attempt at moulding. The figure is of a seated woman, the arms outstretched in supplication, the hands clasped; hair and features are indicated; the ankles are bound with an iron rope or chain. No. 7 is made of a somewhat thicker strip than is found in specimens 1-5; two dots indicate the eyes, and a line shows the mouth; the hands are bound behind with iron fetters. The female figure, No. 8, is the best moulded of the group: the face is worn but the features were probably well formed; the hair is gathered in a knot and bound with a braid or fillet; the arms are tied behind with a strip of bronze, part of which hangs down; a portion of the fetter which bound the legs also remains; part of the right leg is worn away. Nos. 9, 10, and 11 are mere fragments. No. 12 is unique, as it is the only figure which is clothed; the features are pinched out, and the arms crossed on the breast and bound with a lead fetter. Nos. 13 and 14 are very thin strips. The arms of No. 15 are tied behind and appear to be fastened to some object, conceivably an instrument of torture; the nature of the binding is shown

<sup>1</sup> No. 4 may represent a captive purposely mutilated by an amputation of hands and feet.

in the various positions drawn. No. 16 is similar to No. 3, but there has been some attempt at moulding. The figure, which is in a seated attitude with bent head, is most elaborately bound with a lead rope. As, in addition to the rope, the prisoner is weighted down by iron spikes (now covered with rust) driven between the arms, the exact method of binding is difficult to make out, but the following appears to be the best explanation:—The rope is coiled first around the left leg, then around the right leg, and, passing between them above the knees, binds the right hand, passes along the right breast, and, winding about the neck, comes down the left breast, binding the right hand and probably the two hands together.

Apart from the incised tablets, three inscriptions were found. No. 1 occurs on the quarter of a column, whose radius was about  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The fragment was built into a mass of masonry under the foundations of Room G, and thus appears to antedate this part of the upper city. The inscription, which occurs near the top of the column, is broken off at the left as



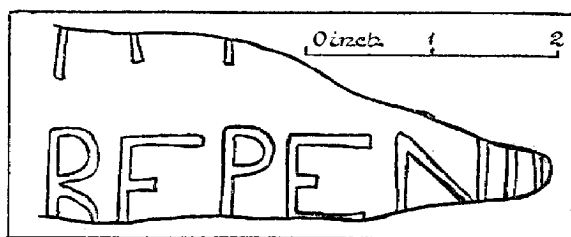
INSCRIPTION NO. 1.

well as at the bottom. The left part of the inscription was hammered in breaking up the stone, and the second, third, and fourth characters are uncertain. The second may be the left bar of a letter, and the third and fourth (NO) are interpolations made after the stone was defaced, as they are thinner in character than the rest of the inscription, and are sharply cut over traces of other letters. The inscription mentions a king and queen, probably the local sovereigns; the name of the queen is missing; the name of the king is an indeclinable word; if this followed the Semitic trilateral law, it was Τήνϋ, in

which case the preceding three letters represent the termination of some Greek word, such as *χώρα*, on which the genitive depended. A thorough but unsuccessful search was made for the rest of the inscription.

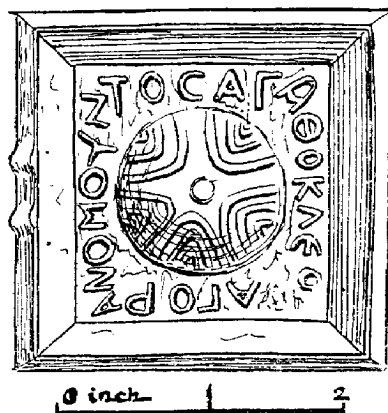


No. 2.



No. 3.

Nos. 2 and 3 were found loose on the slope of the Tell. No. 2 occurs on part of the base of a colossal statue of an

LEAD WEIGHT (*see next page*).

eagle, of which only one claw remains. It is possible to infer that this was a votive offering of one Crato to the god Apollo. No. 3 appears to mention the female name Berenice.

In the *débris* covering the "barracks" was found a beautiful bronze lamp, perfect except for the lid covering the oil-hole. A lead weight of 145 grammes<sup>1</sup> was found near the centre of the town. The back is ornamented in plain lozenge diaper. On the face an inscription in relief surrounds rosettes, also in relief. An ordinary winged Cupid of bronze, about 4½ inches long, was also found.

No direct light was thrown by the excavations on the question of the identification of Tell Sandahannah with any known ancient site. Barely three-quarters of a mile to the north-west is Khurbet Mer'ash, which has been identified with Mareshah or Moresheth-Gath. Mareshah is mentioned in Joshua xv, 44, and appears to have had a continuous history from pre-Israelite times till it was attacked by the Parthians in 44 A.D. Josephus calls it an important town. In the "Onomasticon" it is spoken of as desert. Dr. George Adam Smith ("Hist. Geog. of the Holy Land," p. 233) notes that it was an important town as long as Beit Jibrin was unheard of, when it disappears, and he suggests a transference of the community, though not of the name. I have called attention before to the danger of taking an identification upon a name without taking into consideration the nature of the ruins. Those at Khurbet Mer'ash are not extensive, there is scarcely any depth of *débris* on the rock, and a pavement of tesserae appears to date the ruin at Roman times at the earliest. It is evident to me that no important city ever existed here. Tell Sandahannah owes its present name to the neighbouring ruined church of Sandahannah (St. Anne). Our excavations were confined to the walled town crowning the Tell, but remains of ruins in every direction show that suburbs extended outside the walls. The site occupied by Khurbet Mer'ash may have been one of these, and may have been the name of the town when the chief portion was christened by the name of the church. To the north of Tell es-Sâfi and to the south of Tell

<sup>1</sup> The two little knobs at one edge may indicate that the weight contains double the standard.

ej-Judeideh are isolated ruins, apparently of Roman date, bearing the names Khurbet es-Sâfi and Khurbet Judeideh respectively. I would very tentatively suggest an amendment to Dr. Smith's theory, by proposing to place the main part of Mareshah at a site where the remains correspond more closely with its extended history. Tell Sandahannah contains no remains too late to fit into this theory, though I am bound to point out that the earliest remains found by us do not date further back than 800 B.C. However, we hardly more than touched the lower stratum of the Tell, and it is possible that pre-Israelite remains exist at points unexplored by us.

In former reports I have referred to the rifling of ancient cemeteries which has been going on near Beit Jibrin in recent times. A few such tombs have been rifled on the slopes of Tell ej-Judeideh, and our unsuccessful search for others has been chronicled. A group of tombs has also been rifled on the hill to the east of the Zakariya road, about a quarter of a mile south of the second Roman milestone from Beit Jibrin. Two very large cemeteries have been systematically excavated, one to the east of the road from Deir-en-Nakhkhas, where it enters the olive grove, and the other to the west of the road from Zakariya, where this enters the grove. Two large cemeteries also exist to the south of the town. One is on the hill to the west of the road leading to Tell Sandahannah, at a point not far from the well at the entrance to the valley. This appears to have been thoroughly rifled, the contract having been let for eight napoleons to local speculators. The other is further up the valley, and not only extends on both sides of the road, but the road itself is honeycombed with rifled graves. Fortunately, the planting of our tents at Tell Sandahannah arrested the excavation, though the majority of tombs had already been rifled, as the Fellahin feared to pursue their unlawful digging under the eye of the Imperial Commissioner and under the shadow of the Turkish flag. Our search for tombs in this cemetery was begun August 11th, and continued for 10 days, at the end of which time the area appeared to be exhausted. We opened 12 tombs which had escaped rifling by the Fellahin, but discovered to our chagrin that 10 of these

had been robbed at some earlier period, unknown to us as well as to the natives themselves. From them we learned that only about 10 per cent. of the tombs opened by them were discovered intact, a fact which not only alleviated our disappointment, but explained the comparatively small number of objects which have found their way to the archæological market. . . .

Amongst numerous articles found was a female figure in terra-cotta, of which photographs in two positions are sent. On the head is a bonnet or head-dress, under which the hair is gathered in a knot behind. From the shoulders depends a cloak, which leaves the upper part of the body bare and is held up in front by the left hand. The right hand clasps the left breast.

In the other unroofed tomb are five hollow bench-graves, closed in by covers. In one case only these were cemented together. Within the graves were two gold earrings and two nails, one iron the other bronze. . . .

JERUSALEM, *September 10th*, 1900.

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## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROCK-CUTTINGS OF TELL SANDAHANNAH.

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

ON the contour plan<sup>1</sup> accompanying Dr. Bliss's Report the plans of nearly all the artificial caves on Tell Sandahannah are laid down. There are a few which (having deep perpendicular entrance shafts that required a longer crane rope than we possessed) could not be entered: two or three others within the limits of the plan which were not measured for lack of time (so far as explored, these add nothing to our knowledge of the subject), and a few outside the limits of the plan (of these only two are of special interest, and they have been planned separately). As some 50 cuttings remain after these are excluded, it may reasonably be claimed that sufficient material for the study of the Tell Sandahannah caves has been collected.

<sup>1</sup> Publication of this plan is deferred (*see* p. 319).