

and to unknown sites (Berothah, Sibraim, and Hazar Hatticon), the last of which was the "middle town," as the name signifies, on the borders of Damascus. Finally, this north border of Israel is generally defined as being "from the sea to Hazar Enan (*Râs el 'Ain*) the north border, north of Damascus, and the border of Hamath." It appears, therefore, that a line from the head of the Eleutherus River to Hazar Enan marked the division of the lands of Israel and Hamath, and that the country east of the Anti-Lebanon, as far north as Zedad, belonged to Damascus. This leaves Kadesh in the Hamathite region, as well as Argana (*Arjûn*), between Kadesh and Riblah, a place where Shalmaneser II (in 854 B.C.) fought his great battle against the Syrian allies of Hamath. The line of the north border of Israel thus presents no real difficulty, and all the notices agree.

In this connection it may be noted in passing that the site of Tamar (*Ezek.* xlvii, 19), on the south border, seems never to have been fixed. The line runs "from Tamar to the waters of strife in Kadesh." Kadesh being (as in *Joshua* xv, 3) the south-eastern corner town—near Petra according to Jewish statements—Tamar would be the south-west town, and may therefore very well be identified with *Tumrah* about seven miles north of Gaza.

(*To be continued.*)

AUSTRIAN EXCAVATIONS AT TAANACH.

By Sir CHARLES WILSON, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., &c.

DR. SELLIN, having decided, whilst travelling in Palestine, to explore the buried remains of one of the towns of Northern Palestine, selected Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo. The selection was a happy one, for the excavations have shown that the isolated hill, *Tell Ta'anek*, upon which the town stood, was unoccupied for some 1,500 years (B.C. 600 to A.D. 900). The buildings of the Amorite and Israelite periods are, consequently, in a better state of preservation than they are at Gezer, a place that was occupied continuously, and changed hands more than once during the stormy times of the Maccabean wars. Supported by Government grants, which were supplemented by private contributions, Dr. Sellin was able to do much in a short time. The report on his

excavations during 1902-1903 has recently appeared,¹ and, as they were the first to be carried out on the site of a town of the ancient kingdom of Israel, it will be interesting to compare the results they have yielded with those obtained by Mr. Macalister at Gezer.

There is no trace at Taanach, excepting perhaps some empty caves, of the Neolithic cave-dwellers, whose existence was first made known to us by Mr. Macalister. The hill was occupied about B.C. 2000 by the civilised people called Amorites, or Canaanites, who seem to have taken possession of Palestine between B.C. 2500-2000. These people were not at first dispossessed by the Israelites; the town remained Canaanite for centuries. The occupation by the Hebrews was gradual, and apparently, as at Gezer, those who settled in Taanach adopted Amorite manners and customs. The excavations have revealed no true break in culture, but rather a gradual development. At a period when the influence of Greek civilisation had become very marked, but not dominant, the town was completely destroyed. The date of the catastrophe is uncertain. The pottery indicates that it was later than B.C. 722 when the kingdom of Israel came to an end, and the complete absence of glass and of the characteristic "Seleucid" ware shows that it could not have been later than B.C. 400. There is some reason to suppose that, when Israel was carried away captive, the site was occupied for a time by people of a different race; and Dr. Sellin suggests that the town may have been destroyed about B.C. 608 by the Egyptians after they had defeated King Josiah at Megiddo, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant, and in full view. In Roman times there were no buildings on the hill, and its surface was cultivated, as at present. But a small town, which is mentioned by Jerome, grew up at its foot. Some time before the Crusades an Arab town and castle were built on the top of the hill. These appear to have been destroyed by the Crusaders, and the site has since lain waste.

Dr. Sellin, adopting the method of classification introduced by Professor Petrie, divides the sherds of pottery found in the débris into four art strata, or periods, and each of these he subdivides into two sections. In the earliest section (1a) of the first, or Amorite, period (B.C. 2000-1600) there is little trace of foreign influence, but a curious Babylonian-Egyptian seal cylinder shows that it was not wholly absent. The pottery is identical with that of the earliest Amorite period of Gezer, and it seems certain that these early inhabitants of Northern and Southern Palestine had reached the same stage of civilisation, and were of the same race. In the second section (1b) of the Amorite period (B.C. 1600-1300) a great advance in culture is apparent, and the pottery is analogous to that of Cyprus, Mykenæ, and Egypt. To this section belong the cuneiform tablets found near the fragments of the terra-cotta

¹ *Tell Ta'annek: Bericht über eine mit Unterstützung d. kais. Akad. d. Wissens. . . . unternommene Ausgrabung in Palästina, von Dr. Ernst Sellin, nebst einem Anhang von Dr. Fr. Hrozny: "die Keilschrifttexte von Ta'annek"* (Denkschr. d. kais. Akad. d. Wissens. in Wien; Band 50; Vienna, 1904).



(Photo. : Dr. Sellin.)

INCENSE ALTAR AT TAANACH.

box in which they were stored (*cf.* Jer. xxxii, 14). The letters show that Taanach was dependent upon Egypt when they were written, and that the local *meleks*, or "kings," used Babylonian cuneiform in their correspondence and kept official lists in it about B.C. 1400-1300.

To the earliest period belong a rock-hewn altar, intended for libations and not for burnt sacrifice, and several jar-burials of newly-born infants near it, similar to those at Gezer. The Semitic cult of sacred pillars was as marked as it was at Gezer, and infant and adult burials in connection with foundation rites were also found.

In the first section (2a) of the second period (B.C. 1300-1000) Phœnician influence is still dominant. The town is Amorite, but a castle built towards the close of the period to overawe the people marks the advent of a ruling (Israelite) power. In the second section (2b) of this period (B.C. 1000-800) Taanach is Israelite, but foreign influences, especially Cypriote, are very marked. None of the jar-handles with royal stamps, which are found at all sites in Southern Palestine, have been discovered.

The third period is that of Hellenic influence, but only the first section (B.C. 800-608) is represented at Taanach. The art stratum (3a) is more sharply and distinctly defined than in Southern Palestine. To this period belongs the curious altar of incense in terra-cotta which was found in 36 fragments (p. 390). The altar has one handle, or "horn," remaining, and on its right side are, alternately, three animals with human heads, and two lions whose fore-paws rest on the heads of the composite figures beneath them. The human heads have hairless faces, and sharp aggressive noses, a type having analogies with that of the very early Greeks. The head is in each case covered by a skull cap with projecting ears, an incised decorated border, and two tassels on the left side.

The buildings at Taanach show that it must always have been a large *fellah* village, with houses of mud and stone, amongst which there was here and there the house of a sheikh or official. The art was that of a country town with a simple but progressive civilisation. Here, as at Gezer, the principal divinity of the hill seems to have been Astarte. In the earliest Amorite deposits no figure of the goddess was found, but from B.C. 1600 onward the images are common, and do not disappear until the stratum 3a is reached. During the Israelite period a new type seems to have come into fashion, and Dr. Sellin suggests that although the general type was the same throughout Palestine, each city had its own variety.