

EIGHTEENTH QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE
EXCAVATION OF GEZER.

Fifth of the Second Series.

11 February—9 May, 1908.

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THE work¹ during this quarter has been confined to the Western Hill, on which another trench has been dug, west of that containing the great tunnel. The unusual depth of soil on this part of the mound has prevented further extension of the area examined. But just as this report is being written a trench 100 feet wide has been begun, which it is intended to run east and west, and to connect the clearances already made on the Eastern Hill and in the Central Valley. This will submit a very large proportion of the eastern end of the mound to excavation.

Though for a considerable part of the three months covered by the present report no "finds" were made that call for special notice, on the whole the past quarter has been among the richest of any in results of interest. Several most suggestive discoveries were made, among them one which, if my interpretation be correct, is of the first importance, and opens quite new ground in the early history of Palestine is general, and of Gezer in particular.

§I.—A REMARKABLE BUILDING STONE.

The stone represented in the photographic view (Fig. 1) was found associated with débris contemporary with the XIXth Egyptian

¹ In the last report, p. 106, line 27, for "*Fir'aur*" read "a daughter of *Fir'aun*," and on p. 109, line 6, for "is" read "are," and make a similar correction on the same page, line 5 from end.

dynasty. It is an irregularly-shaped block though the irregularities are due rather to injury than to intention on the part of the masons. The length is 3 feet 7 inches, the breadth 1 foot 10 inches, and the thickness 1 foot 9 inches. It was lying loose in the débris, not radically connected with any building; close by was a standing stone 4 feet 5 inches high, but the foot of the latter was sunk so deep in the ground that its head was flush with the top of

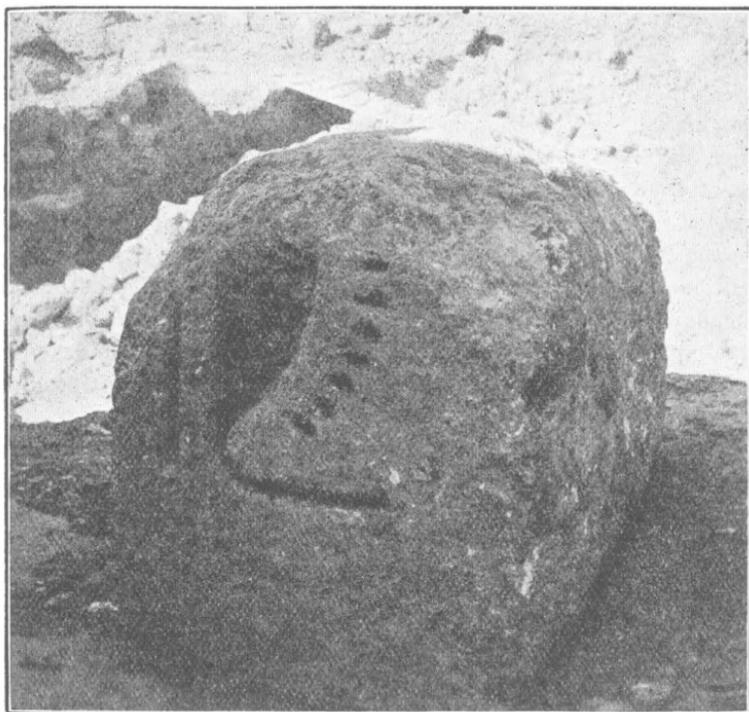


FIG. 1.—Building Stone with Hieroglyphic Character.

the block: so that in all probability the pillar stone belongs to a much earlier date.

When the stone was turned over to get it out of the way, in order to examine the underlying débris, it was found to have one-half of the hieroglyphic sign  nb ("gold") with a horizontal stroke over it, deeply engraven upon its end. These characters must have belonged to an inscription of monumental size. The stone, except for the chippings from the sides which have reduced it

to its present irregular form, is complete, and the other half of the sign must have been carved on another stone adjacent to it in its original position.

In short, we have here a building stone that must have belonged to some structure wholly or partially covered with hieroglyphics, like the temples of the Nile valley. We cannot suppose that this stone was imported from Egypt; its great weight, and the purposelessness of such an undertaking, exclude that hypothesis. The building to which the stone belonged must have been in Gezer itself.

Although the evidences of Egyptian intercourse, not to say domination, have been conspicuous throughout the whole excavation, and have been emphasized many times in the course of these reports, yet that a building covered with hieroglyphics should have existed in Gezer, or anywhere in Palestine, is an unexpected result of the Fund's researches. It is to be hoped that the excavation will be rewarded by the discovery of, at least, the foundations of the building itself. Most probably, however, the structure was treated as a quarry when it passed out of use, as the stones were evidently valuable, and consequently little or nothing of it can be expected to remain *in situ*.

It would be futile to speculate at length on the nature of the original building with nothing but one stone, bearing half of a single character, to guide us. The best known Egyptian structures covered with hieroglyphics are temples or tombs. The letter of the inscription that survives is almost too large to have belonged to a comparatively small structure like a tomb; a large building like a temple would be more probable. It would be interesting to know further whether the temple was dedicated by its Egyptian builders to local Canaanite divinities, or to Egyptian gods; the former would be the more likely, though the latter is not impossible—a letter from the town of Tunip,¹ which asserts that “the gods . . . of the king of Egypt, my lord, dwell in Tunip,” seems to show that the Egyptian deities had unusual ex-territorial privileges.

However, all we can definitely say at present is the one interesting fact, that Egyptian domination was so strong in Gezer that there existed a structure bearing a hieroglyphic inscription upon its walls in characters of great size. Even if the building itself be no

¹ Tell el-Amarna Letters, ed. Winckler, No. 41.

longer forthcoming the fact permits us to hope that the three Egyptian inscriptions already found, will be supplemented by others before the work closes.

§ II.—A NEW TYPE OF INTERMENT.

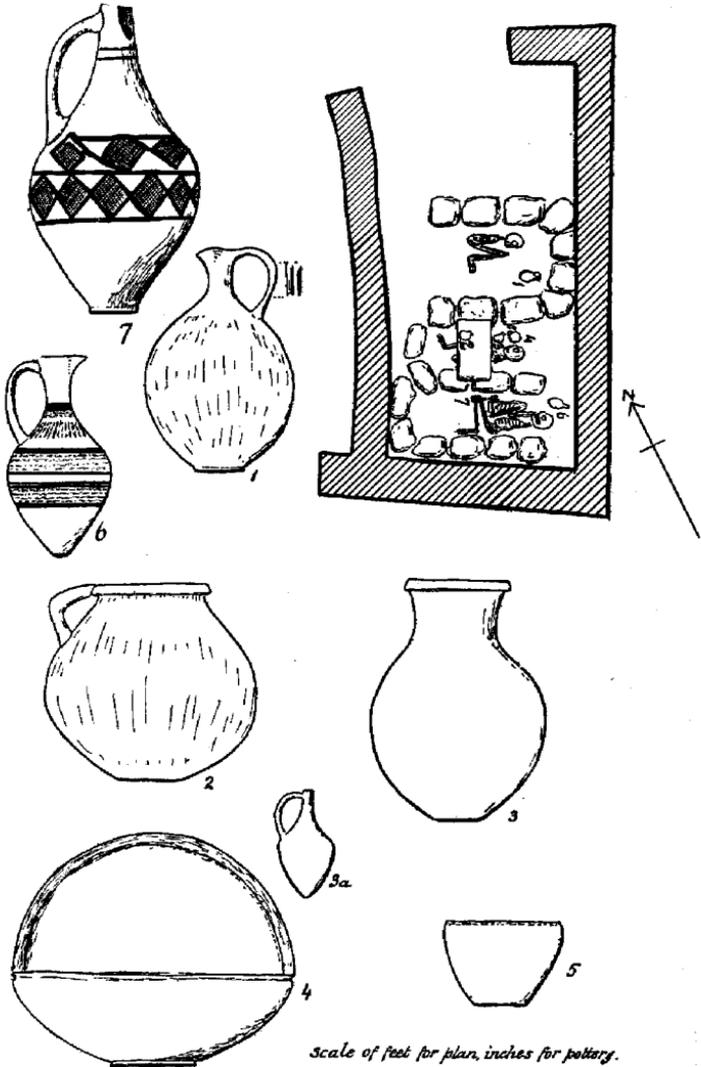
The three remarkable graves represented in Plate I were found in a stratum belonging to the first beginnings of the influence of Mycenaean civilization. Nothing like them has been found elsewhere in the city.

Inside a long and irregularly-shaped quadrangular chamber—the walls of which are represented in hatched lines on the plan—and beneath the level of the beaten earth that formed its floor, were two horseshoe-shaped enclosures, about 6 feet 1 inch long and between 2 and 3 feet broad. The open end of the horseshoe pointed eastward in the one, westward in the other. These two, and a rather narrower space that they intercepted between them, formed three graves, each of them containing a body. There was no evidence that the horseshoe graves had been covered with cover-slabs—if they had, these had been removed by later builders; one cover-slab spanned the grave in the middle, measuring 2 feet 4 inches by 1 foot 3 inches by 4 inches. The depth of the graves was 1 foot 9 inches. They were built of three courses of stones.

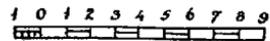
The northern grave contained one skeleton, male, lying on the left side in a crouching attitude, the head pointing eastward and the face turned southward. In one corner was the small jug, No. 1—a globular vessel, of fine homogeneous pottery, of a light cream colour, deeply scored with vertical strokes of a burnishing tool; the base flat and projecting very slightly; the mouth channelled or spouted; one handle consisting of two bars of pottery running side by side. This vessel was broken into small fragments by the pressure of the superincumbent earth, as was also the skeleton. The skull was in such small fragments that it was quite impossible to preserve it; before disturbing it I measured the length, 177 mm., the breadth about 140 mm. (about 7 in. by 5½ in.).

In the middle tomb was the body of a boy of about eight years of age. It is curious that the majority of the pottery was deposited with this child. The body was placed in the same attitude as the first, only that it was lying on the right side, so that the face turned northward. With it were placed the following vessels:—No. 2

TOMBS ON THE WESTERN HILL



Scale of feet for plan, inches for pottery.



(under the cover-slab¹ and between the tibiae and the wall of the tomb), a large clumsy globular vessel, with a wide mouth and one handle, in drab ware. No. 3 (in front of the shoulders), a pot without handle, of a brownish white colour, in very gritty ware. No. 3a (inside No. 3), a small graceful jug of burnished brownish-red ware, with pointed base, one handle, and long cylindrical neck. No. 4 (just north of No. 3), a bowl, broken, of dull drab ware, with a dark brownish-red line painted on the rim; the mouth is moulded; the upper surface has been grooved and furrowed with the burnishing tool, but the potter has not succeeded in obtaining the effect desired. No. 5, a smaller bowl, also of a dull drab ware, with a similar red line on the rim, was underneath No. 4.

The southern tomb contained the body of a man, but the bones were too far gone for trustworthy measurements to be taken. Like the boy, it lay on the right hand side, facing northward. Two vessels were deposited with it. But the most curious detail of this interment is the following: unlike the other two, in which the knees of the body are drawn up under the chin, the tibiae in this case are bent at right angles from the vertebral column: and, in the rectangular space thus obtained was deposited the complete body of a goat. The hands were drawn up, and the head was resting upon them. The two vessels with this interment were the choicest of the series; both were much broken. No. 6 (near the head) is an oval jug with small flattened base, and one handle, channelled mouth; the ware of a light Vandyke brown colour, with faint burnishing upon it in vertical lines, and adorned with lines in black, or rather very dark sepia, and brownish-red. There is a black line just at the base of the neck, with a red line beside it; then, on the shoulders, a series of short red vertical strokes: after which a black line, five red lines close together, a black line, another black line (double along part of its course), four red lines (the uppermost concealed by the black line next above for part of its course), and finally a black line. No. 7, which was near the knees, is a beautiful vessel in dark coffee-brown ware, burnished with vertical lines. There are two black lines painted on the neck: and, on the sides, two broad bands, separated by black lines, each containing a series of lozenges containing finely painted frets—all in black.

¹ In the diagram on Plate I this vessel is drawn as though resting on the slab. It was intended to draw it in dotted lines, to show it was lying under, but by an oversight this intention was not carried out.

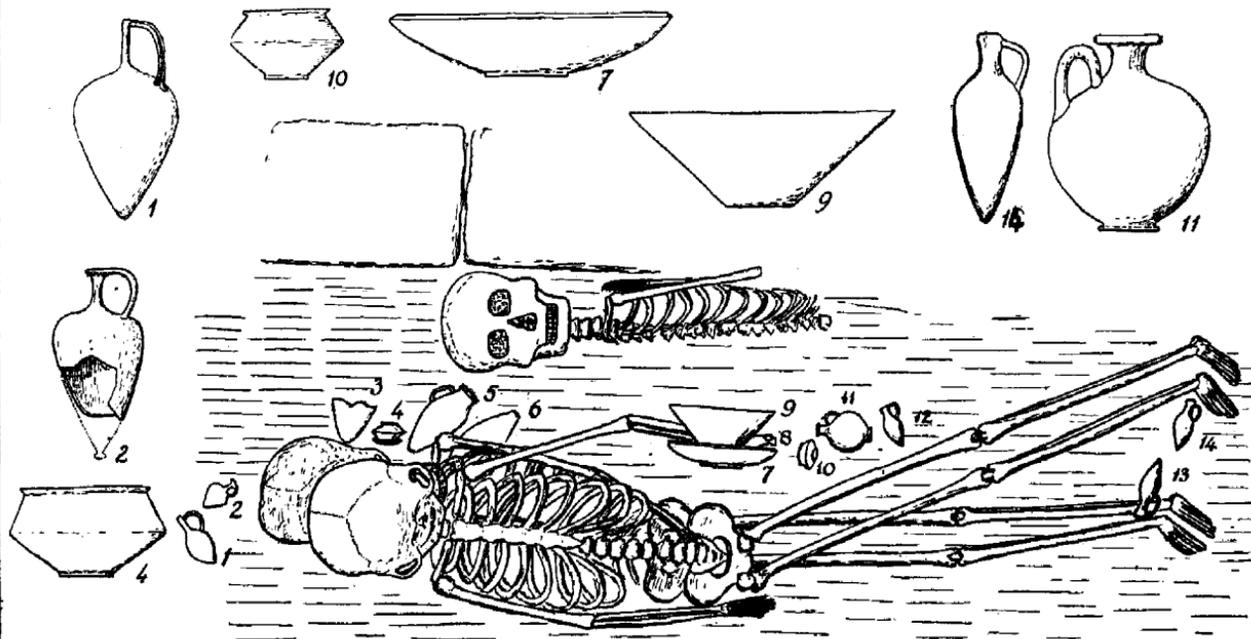
The only built graves with cover-slabs as yet found inside the city have been the group of four Philistine tombs unearthed in the central valley. These, however, differ radically from the graves above described, in date, in the attitude of the skeleton, and in the character of the deposits, though there is one curious point of resemblance, in the burial of a complete food-animal with the deceased, which was found to have been done in two of the Philistine interments. However, it seems hardly possible that the graves now described should be those of Philistines—they are rather too early for the probable period of the Philistine immigration. It is far more probable that we have an unusual type of Canaanite interment.

§ III.—A FOUNDATION DEPOSIT.

The deposit represented in Plate II, which is contemporary with the XIIIth Egyptian dynasty, is one of the most striking examples of foundation sacrifice that has come to light. An examination of the plate will sufficiently show the character of the deposit, with but few words of description. Two men were laid at length, on the right side; the feet of the one behind, of the other above, a couple of small jugs, one of them inverted. Around and above the bodies were a number of vessels; the principal pieces are drawn to a larger scale on the same plate. The hand of one of the skeletons was placed in bowl No. 7 (which also contained a small one-handed jug and another bowl, as the diagram shows) as though helping itself to food. Above these vessels was half of the skeleton of a boy of about seventeen years of age who had been cut in two, like the girl of about the same age, whose mutilated body was found in a cistern on the Eastern Hill in the first year of the excavations. The division had been made between the ribs and the pelvis, and (as in the previous case), only the upper part of the body had been placed in the cave. This suggests that the mysterious case of the girl, which has till now been a complete puzzle, was also an example of foundation sacrifice, deposited in an old cistern that happened to be near the building for which a blessing was desired. The skeleton was lying on its back, with the forearms crossed on the breast; the head had fallen sideways. The foundations of the building, which was almost entirely destroyed, were above the deposit, but to the side and not vertically above it.

FOUNDATION DEPOSIT

M. 0 1 2 3 4 5



It may not be amiss to mention that the drawing of the skeletons in the plate has no end other than to show diagrammatically their attitude when found. The instructed reader will probably detect many anatomical solecisms for which I cry mercy!

§ IV.—ANOTHER “ZODIAC” SEAL.

The opinion of those scholars who considered that the “Zodiac tablet” (as I may call it for convenience) was sealed from a cylinder that belonged to an earlier archaeological context than that in which the tablet itself was found, has received confirmation. A seal of similar type has been found in a much earlier stratum, namely, about the time of the erection of the inner city wall, which I ascribe to *circa* 2500 B.C.

The seal has been impressed with a cylinder, on a lump of black clay that evidently was the stopper of a vessel. Unfortunately it is not so clearly impressed as the first seal; but, on the other hand, the clay is well baked, so that it will be possible to send home good casts, which was out of the question in the case of the tablet.¹ A small piece has been broken from the right-hand edge, but it is possible to restore this partly with the aid of an imperfect impression of the same portion of the cylinder, which is to be seen at the left-hand side.

Commencing at the broken part, and proceeding towards the left, we have first a human figure. The imperfect impression of the same sign towards the left shows that the figure is seated, but it is not clear what it may be seated upon. Beneath is a horned animal, which may (if the signs be zodiacal in character) be *Aries* or *Capricornus*; probably the former, as with *Capricornus* is most likely to be identified an animal with long curved horns, looking backwards, behind the seated figure. The first of these two animals seems to be winged, as is also a more indefinite creature immediately behind it. Above *Capricornus* is a bird, which the seated man is holding in his hand; this, like the bird in the other tablet, is extra-zodiacal. Behind all these is a very conspicuous *Taurus*, with *Amphora* below and *Spica* between the horns. The remainder of the seal was unfortunately rubbed before it was baked, and the few traces of the other signs that it bore are to me unintelligible. The vertical bar like a palm-branch is probably meant to be a divisional line between

¹ [An illustration will be given in the following number.]

successive impressions of the cylinder. On the whole this object, though containing in its design several zodiacal symbols, partakes rather less of the character of a "zodiac" than does the tablet first discovered. It must be remarked that it seems to confirm the conclusion of those who held that the first tablet was not essentially zodiacal in character.

§ V.—SOME MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS.

Among the miscellaneous objects I have to mention¹ :—

(1) A flat tablet of light brown pottery, measuring $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches long by $1\frac{5}{8}$ inch broad by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. It bears on one side the impression of the left foot of a child of about three years of age. That the clay has been prepared especially to receive this impression is beyond question. It is roughly shaped to the outline of the foot and after the impression was made it was carefully baked hard, which would scarcely have been done had the child trodden accidentally upon a chance fragment of earth. The child had had the misfortune to sustain a severe stone-bruise on the sole of the foot; the mark of this injury clearly remains as a small lump on the impression. It is not easy to imagine for what purpose this impression was secured; or rather, it is not easy to choose between a number of explanations that present themselves. Quite possibly it may have been desired to preserve a keepsake of the child itself; after all, we are ultimately dealing not with museum specimens but with human beings, having the elementary human instincts, and it is just to children of the tender age of the owner of this foot that the modern Semitic parents show themselves effusively affectionate. It must be freely granted, however, that, so far as my observation has gone, the conception of the sentimental value of a "keepsake" is wholly foreign to the mind of the modern Arab. Again, the model may have been required by a sculptor or a shoemaker. It is also not inadmissible that the tablet may be an *ex voto*, or may have some magical purpose—possibly enemies of the child's parents desired to hurt them by spells worked on the child.

The object is perfect, save for a slight chip from the upper left hand corner, which has carried away the tips of the three smallest toes.

¹ [Illustrations of Nos. 1 and 2 are held over, with descriptions of a small hoard of ornaments (date of XIIth dynasty or of the Hyksos) and of an olive press.—Ed.]

The only analogy I can recollect at the moment of writing this report, is a scarab in the Cyprus Museum bearing the representation of a footprint; it is figured in the Catalogue of Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter.¹

(2) Some embarrassment has been caused by the problem of explaining the purpose of small circular holes cut in the sides of vessels near the rim. In some cases, when these are close to the edge of an old fracture, and a second hole appears to correspond on the edge of the adjacent fragment, they are certainly rivet-holes; in others this explanation will not serve, and the hypothesis set forth in Vincent's *Canaan*, p. 313, that they are intended for receiving cords by which the vessel was suspended, is sufficient and satisfactory. This is certainly the explanation of perforated ledge-handles, such as that figured, *op. cit.*, p. 314. But a vessel, discovered this quarter, shows that another purpose is to be sought in some cases. This is a vase, cylindrical, but with an entasis, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. It was found in association with XVIIIth dynasty objects, but looks rather older, and I am inclined to regard it as a chance survival from earlier times. It is of the drab yellowish gritty pottery, the broken section of which resembles thick oatmeal porridge more than anything else I can suggest, that is associated with the First Semitic period. It is hand-modelled, not wheel-turned. The rim slopes obliquely inward so as to receive a flat disc of pottery as a cover for the vessel. From the middle of the lower surface of this disc a flat tongue projects, with a perforation through it, corresponding exactly with two similar perforations through the side of the vessel itself, just below the rim. The purpose of these perforations is perfectly clear. They are evidently meant to receive a rod running through them, by which the cover was kept from falling from its proper position. It is satisfactory thus to arrive at a complete and simple solution of a long-standing puzzle. The "suspension" theory is by no means ruled out even in such a case as this; for the cord might be, and probably was, tied round the projecting ends of the rod. This is the more likely as the vessel possesses no handle of its own.

¹ Compare, however, the footprint cut on the wall of the cave described later in this report. Rudely-cut models of feet (not prints) have been found from time to time in the excavations. The table of offerings figured in Vincent's *Canaan*, p. 251, is not unlike two conventionalized footprints, side by side.

(3) In the excavation of Megiddo a fragment of a fine Egyptian incense burner, in pottery, was found; it is figured in Vincent's *Canaan*, p. 181 (after Fig. 17 in *Mittheilungen und Nachrichten* of the *D.P.V.*, 1904). The Megiddo example consists of the cup at the top, and a capital consisting of two bands of pendant lotus

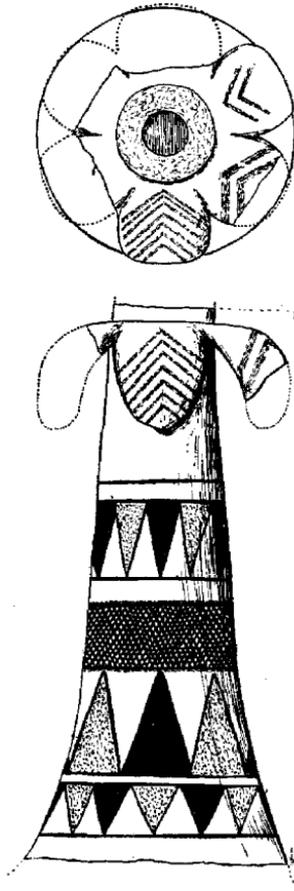


FIG. 2.—Egyptian Incense Burner.
(Present height $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches.)

leaves. An analogous object was found during the last quarter at Gezer, in débris of about 1000-600 B.C., and is represented in Fig. 2. It consists of the stem and one row of lotus leaves; the base and the top have both gone. Besides the fractures of the

upper and lower ends, the object is much injured. Nearly all of the six pendant lotus leaves that surround the present top are wholly or partly broken away, and the whole surface is covered with a cream-coloured wash, on which the coloured decoration was applied, and this, not being impervious to damp, has nearly all perished. Indeed, though the scheme of decoration is very simple—simpler, apparently, than in the Megiddo example—it needs very close study to make the pattern out. The colours used are black

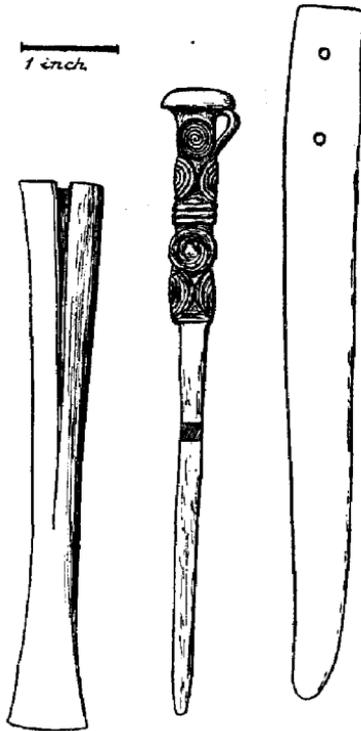


FIG. 3.—Miscellaneous Bronze Objects.

and a dull brownish-red, the latter is represented in the diagram by dots. Black lines are used to divide the field into horizontal compartments, but above and below the band of fret-pattern in the middle a red line is added along side of each of the black lines. In the bands of triangles the colours alternate, but the red triangles are always edged with black. Apparently all the lotus leaves were

ornamented with red chevrons, but only one of these preserves the decoration complete. The present height of the object is $7\frac{2}{3}$ inches.

(4) Worthy of passing notice are three fine bronze objects, dating about 1450 B.C. One is a socketed chisel, the other a knife with rivet holes for hafting. Specially interesting is the fine and, so far as Gezer is concerned, unique pin, with a square shank and a head elaborately ornamented with spirals in alternating bands, separated by raised groups of ridges (Fig. 3). The head is flat and expanding, and slightly undercut. There is a loop at one side, doubtless to receive a chain or cord by which this valuable object was secured from accidental loss.

§ VI.—A CAVE WITH ROCK-SCRIBINGS.

The discovery now to be described ranks among those of the highest interest that Gezer has so far yielded. Several caves have been opened during the past quarter; one of them was a very early place of sepulture. Another had the floor covered irregularly with cup-marks, and, in the middle, a great slab of stone also bearing a small cup-mark. When this was raised it was found to cover a shallow well, from which a series of three small circular chambers, one behind the other, opened out. Notwithstanding the care with which these chambers had been closed, they were quite empty, which was rather disappointing. For the present it is unnecessary to say more about these excavations. But a cave which was close by the second of them, and due west of the mouth of the great tunnel, calls for careful description. This cave is hollowed in the rock under a depth of about 30 feet of débris, containing eight strata. Of these, three are subsequent to the destruction of the inner city wall, about 1450 B.C., three lie intermediate between that date and the erection of the same wall, about 2500 B.C., and two are earlier than the wall referred to. Assuming a uniform rate of accumulation, this leads us back to somewhere between 3200 and 3500 B.C. as the minor limit of date for the cave now to be described. The line marked "Limit of Excavation" on the plan (Fig. 4), shows the side of the pit containing the cave. It will be impossible to extend the excavation westward till after the harvest, which as I write is imminent. The place chosen for the cave is the south end of a knoll, which rises fairly steeply to a height of about 3 feet above the adjacent rock. Just south of the entrance of the cave there is an appearance as

though rude steps had been cut to make the ascent of the knoll easier : but I am inclined to think these natural.

The following cuttings surround the mouth of the cave. They are indicated by reference letters on the plan. (A) A hollow (only half excavated) scarped in the rock to a depth of 18 inches, 7 feet in diameter. At the south side the rock fails, and its place is supplied by a row of three stones set on edge (with probably more beyond the limit of excavation) completing the circle. A wall is built over this hollow, set back a little behind its edge all round, to a

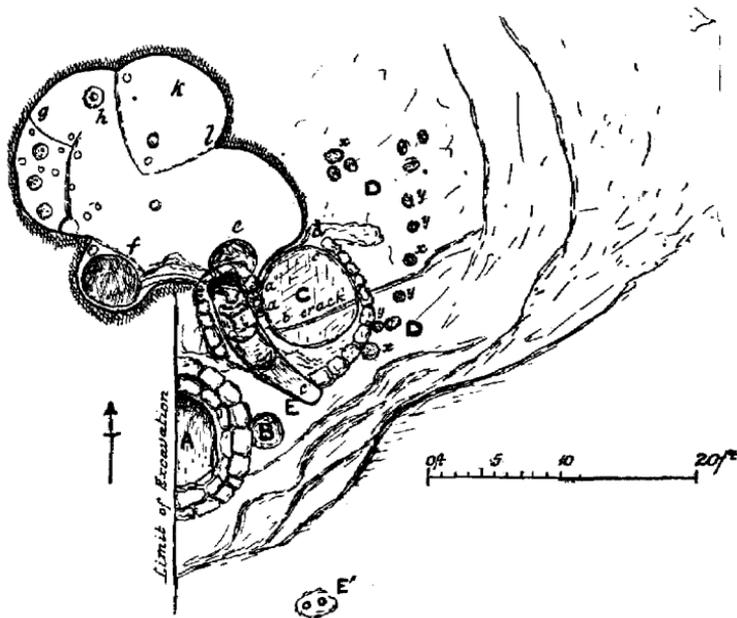
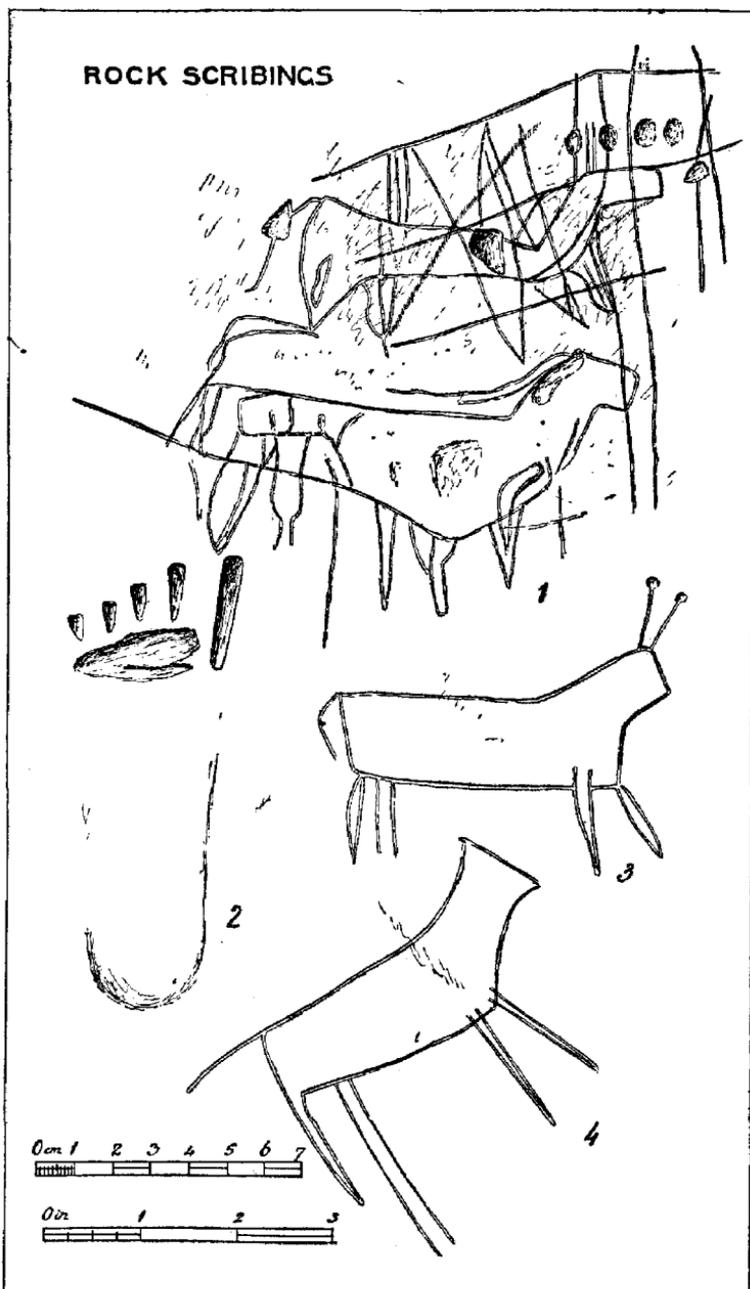


FIG. 4.—Plan of Cave containing Rock Scribings.

maximum height of 3 feet above the rock. (B) A hollow, 2 feet deep and 3 feet 3 inches across, with vertical sides and rounded base. This lies partly under the wall that surrounds A, indicating that the latter was built subsequently. (C) A hollow, circular, 6 feet in diameter, and of a maximum depth of 1 foot below the level of the rock. At *a a* the rock fails, and its place is supplied by masonry. At *b* it rises to its maximum height above the bottom of the hollow, so that the space *a b* appears to be a channel. This appearance, I think, is accidental. A curved wall, *c c*, partly surrounds the

hollow, but does not follow its contour exactly. Owing to the irregularity of the rock contour there is an appearance at *d* of another channel leading into, or out of, this hollow. This also I take to be accidental. A crack runs across the hollow from west to east. As it reappears outside the hollow to the east, disappearing on the edge of the rocky knoll, it is probably a natural flaw, not impossibly caused by an earthquake. (D) A group of cup-marks, thirteen in number; those marked *x* are shallow circular basins, with breadth greater than the depth; those marked *y* are also circular, but with the depth greater than the breadth. The others are oval depressions. Beside these there are two conspicuous cups (both similar to those marked *y*) on a small knob of rock south of the knoll containing the system under description, they are marked E¹. The largest of these cups is the southernmost of those marked D, which is 2 feet broad and 9 inches deep. The diameter of the others ranges between 1 foot and 18 inches. The deepest cup is the cup marked *y*, next to the southernmost, immediately under the wall surrounding the hollow C. This is 14 inches deep. The entrance to the cave is marked E, E. This is a long narrow opening in the rock. Round the northern end rude masonry is built, as the surface of the rock is not of the required height. The floor of the entrance slopes downward, and access to the cave is gained by very rude steps—little better than footholds—cut in the rock.

The outline of the cave itself is represented on the plan by a hatched line. It will be seen to be oval, with a series of irregular apses round the sides. On entering, the most conspicuous feature are two deep hollows, one on each side of the entrance staircase: the first of these, marked *e* on the plan, is 3 feet across and 1 foot 10 inches deep: this is just under the entrance, and in fact is partly cut out of the staircase. The second, marked *f*, occupies an apse to the left of the staircase. These hollows are evidently meant to intercept rainwater, and prevent it flooding the cave; the second, *f*, is connected with the staircase by a channel, cut on the top of a projecting shelf of rock. It is 3 feet 11 inches across and 3 feet deep. The apse, *g*, at the inner end of the cave has part of its floor raised 10 inches above the floor of the cave: and this raised step bears three shallow cups measuring 10 inches to 1 foot across, with five smaller hollows, disposed as shown in the diagram. There are also seven other cups in this part of the cave, one of them, *h*, a double cup, of maximum diameter, 1 foot 9 inches. The floor of



the apse, *k*, is *sunk* 10 inches below the level of the floor of the cave. It contains three cups. There is, in addition, one cup almost in the exact middle of the cave area. The total length of the cave is 18 feet 7 inches; the height is, with fair uniformity, 5 feet 5 inches. There is a tether-hole cut through the projecting angle *l*.

We now come to the feature that gives this cave its unique interest and importance. To a height of about four feet above the floor the walls are rough. Above this, however, there is a frieze of smoother rock, and all round the cave this frieze is occupied with rude scribblings; a few similar scribblings are also to be seen on the roof. These scribblings are of three kinds: (1) arrangements of lines, grouped apparently at random, though in some they cross vertically and horizontally as in a draughtboard; (2) arrangements of circular dots, nearly all reducible to one scheme—a square of four, or a row of three dots, with a circle of dots surrounding them; and (3) drawings of animals. Most of the latter are childish attempts—a rectangle with four strokes below and one above, to denote body, legs, and head respectively; but some show much more advanced skill, as the specimens illustrated on Plate 3 will indicate. Of these, the two marked 1 are just on the south side of the cusp *l*; the two marked 3, 4, are in the apse *k*; and the footprint (2) on the cusp dividing *k* from *g*. This (for reasons of space) is here drawn to half the scale of the other figures. It is the only attempt at illustrating any part of the human body in the cave. The rest are all figures of quadrupeds—when recognisable, cows, and perhaps stags and buffaloes—with one exception, which is close to the "footprint." This drawing is $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. Possibly it may be a crude attempt to represent the very common black millipede which is to be seen in thousands all over Palestine, and is, indeed, by its very commonness, one of the most conspicuous types of Palestine fauna. A drawing of it will be found in Clermont-Ganneau's *Archaeological Researches*, to illustrate, if I remember aright, some interesting speculations on its modern Arabic name.

These drawings, whatever their origin, are beyond all question the oldest works of art that Palestine has yet produced. They strangely recall the Palaeolithic sketches that have been found in various places; but I hesitate to commit myself to the theory that they are actually of a date so remote, although there is plenty of evidence for the existence of Palaeolithic man within five miles of Gezer. Casts, and a complete set of drawings and photographs will

be sent home for study as soon as possible: and, for the present, judgment may be suspended regarding them. There is, however, one lesson that they teach most emphatically, which we need not delay in learning—that there is absolutely no limit to the possibilities of surprise that the mound of Gezer has in store, and that it is the duty of all concerned to take the fullest advantage of the fast-waning permit.

THE GEZER TUNNEL.

By the REV. HUGUES VINCENT, O.P.,

École Biblique et Archéologique, Jerusalem.

THE Palestine Exploration Fund wins honour and gratitude, as much for its prompt communication of the chief results of the excavations as for the zeal with which these are pursued. Thus it is with the great tunnel discovered at Gezer in the Autumn of 1907, an account of which is given in the January number. This account is supplemented by a postscript, dated 30th November, announcing that the tunnel ends with a spring, which appears to have been, if not its only, at least its *principal* purpose; and, Mr. Macalister concludes: "It appears as though the excavation is less important than its imposing nature at first gave grounds to expect" (p. 25). On the other hand, I, for my part, am tempted to assert that the tunnel, in consequence, exceeds the original expectations, and I propose to state my reasons for my belief.

In the course of a visit, in company with my colleague, Father H. Pope, then in Palestine, I had the pleasure of examining the first section of the tunnel when it was exposed, and both of us were much struck with the imposing character of this gigantic passage hewn out of the solid rock. The novelty of the thing, its mysterious nature, and the problem of its destination, naturally conspired to emphasize our first impressions. Even comparisons with analogous works did not diminish the astonishment we felt; and now that the object of this great enterprise has been discovered, Mr. Macalister's