

## NOTES ON GAZA COINS.

By ARCHDEACON DOWLING, Haifa.

THE coinage of Gaza in the fifth and fourth centuries, B.C., has been identified by M. Six, and consists of darics and smaller coins of Attic weight, and of various types.

In Nehemiah vii, 70, the Revised Version of the Old Testament reads thus: "The Tirshatha gave to the treasury a thousand darics of gold," whereas the Authorized Version has: "A thousand drams of gold."

The gold daric and singlos (silver shekel) are the first coins that can possibly have had legal currency in Palestine.

In the second half of the fifth century, B.C., the wealthy commercial cities on the Mediterranean Seaboard had begun to issue silver money under their native kings. The great maritime city of Gaza was among the principal trade centres of this period.

The influence of Athens at this date is strikingly shown by the coins of Gaza, which not only imitate the type and legend of the Athenian coins, but are struck on the Attic standard.

After the capture of Gaza by Alexander the Great, 332 B.C., regal coins were struck there with the frequent monogram,  $\overline{\Gamma A}$ , both under Ptolemy II (Philadelphus), 285-246 B.C., and Ptolemy III (Euergetes I), 246-221 B.C., and Demetrius I (Soter, of Syria), 162-150 B.C.

The autonomous bronze money of Gaza dates from an era commencing 61 B.C.

The Imperial coins of Gaza, from Augustus to Gordian, bear two different sets of dates: the first Gaza era beginning 61 B.C., the second beginning A.D. 129. The second era probably commemorates the visit of Hadrian to Gaza. On some of the coins these two eras appear concurrently.

These Imperial coins, with the inscriptions  $\overline{\Gamma A Z A I \Omega N}$ ,  $\overline{\Gamma A Z A}$ , etc., have usually the addition of the letter  $\eta$ , from which

the Swastica, the characteristic mark on many Gaza coins, is derived, the initial representing the divinity Marna. The temple of Marna was called the Marneion.<sup>1</sup>

“In the last days of paganism, the great God of Gaza, now known as Marna (our Lord), was regarded as the god of rains, and invoked against famine. That Marna was lineally descended from Dagon is probable, and it is therefore interesting to note that he gave oracles, that he had a circular temple, where he was sometimes worshipped by human sacrifices, that there were wells in the sacred circuit, and that there was also a place of adoration to him, situated, in old Semitic fashion, outside the town. Certain *marmora* in the temple, which might not be approached, especially by women, may, perhaps, be connected with the threshold which the priests of Dagon would not touch with their feet.”<sup>2</sup> I Samuel v, 5.

Herod Agrippa I became king of Judaea, A.D. 41, and possessed the entire kingdom of Herod the Great. Among the coins of Agrippa I, under Claudius, Madden,<sup>3</sup> reproduces a coin, which probably represents a ceremony taking place in the temple of the god Marna at Gaza. “There were in Gaza eight temples: of the Sun, of Venus, of Apollo, of Proserpine, and of Hecate, that which is called Hieron, or of the priests, that of the Fortune of the Life, called *Τυχεῖον*, and that of *Marneion*, which, the citizens said, is the Cretan-born Jupiter, and which they considered more glorious than any other temple in existence.”

Dr. Donald Coles, of Haifa, has in his collection an exceptionally interesting Gaza coin of Hadrian, A.D. 130, in excellent condition, re-struck under Simon Bar-cohab, A.D. 132-135. This Hadrian bronze coin is quoted in De Sauley's *Numismatique de la Terre Sainte*, p. 215, No. 1, and the re-struck coin during the Revolt of the Jews, A.D. 132-135, is reproduced on Plate XV, No. 4, in his *Recherches sur la Numismatique Judaïque*.

It was not unusual for some of these Simon Bar-cohab coins to be re-struck from those of Ascalon and other current Philistian coinage.

<sup>1</sup> Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 680.

<sup>2</sup> W. R. Smith, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, art. “Philistines,” pp. 755-6, Vol. XVIII, 9th edition.

<sup>3</sup> *Coins of the Jews*, p. 137, No. 2.

Among all the writers in the *Quarterly Statement*, from 1894-1901, on the SWASTICA, or Fylfot, not one of them seems to be aware that the Swastica is constantly found as the distinguishing mint-mark of Gaza, e.g., on Plate XI of *Numismatique de la Palestine*, Gaza coins, there are both the sign  $\Gamma$  of the *male* Swastica, and the less common  $\Upsilon$  *female* Swastica, revolving in the opposite direction on the reverse of coins of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Plantilla, Lucius Verus, Faasticia Junior and Lucilla, Julia Donna, Geta.

The Swastica is an eastern symbol of the sun, and is occasionally known as the Gammadion, and the mystic Fylfot. The latest idea formed regarding the Swastica is, that it may be a form of the old wheel symbolism, and that it represents the solar system. It is often connected with the sun, as in the Island of Melos, first colonized by Phoenicians. Its great diffusion in Eastern Asia is due to its being a Buddhist emblem—"the wheel of the law."

In the catacombs of Rome it is also known on the tunic of the Good Shepherd, and on the garments of the Fossones, a class of men employed in the offices of Christian sepulture, and in opening fresh graves and catacombs.

The Triskelia, or Three Legs of the Isle of Man, and some Syracuse coins in the reign of Agathocles, 317-289 B.C., and other Sicilian towns, are only variants of the Swastica.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF PUBLICATIONS.

*Archeology's Solution of Old Testament Puzzles: How Pick and Spade are Answering the Destructive Criticism of the Bible.* By the Rev. John Urquhart, Philadelphia. The Sunday School Times Company. 1906. (\$1.25 net.)

THIS small book, of some sixty pages, being—as stated on the title-page—"the Essay for which 'The Gunning Prize' was awarded by the Victoria Institute of Great Britain," may be taken as a useful little handbook for the ordinary reader of the Bible who desires to know something of the effects of modern excavations on