

problem is not a little complicated by the haziness of the early writers themselves. Samuel's great defeat of the *Philistines* led to peace with the *Amorites* (1 Sam. vii, 14); and if Capthorim replace the earlier Avvim (*cf.* Josh. xiii, 3), Anakim once survived in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod, and also in Hebron (Josh. xi, 21 *seq.*; xv, 14). Moreover, if we adopted the Septuagint reading of an awkward expression in Jer. xlvi, 5, the Philistines themselves were the remnant of the Anakim (reading ענקים for ענקים). One is tempted to find this name in the "land of . . . annaki" mentioned in the Amarna Letters as hostile to the King of Gezer (Knudtson's edition, No. 298). In this case later etymologising discovered "sons of Anak," *i.e.*, giants, just as the *Khōrim* or Horites, from *Kharu* the old name of Palestine, has been taken to mean "troglydites." Quite apart from this little speculation, however, the Amarna Letters themselves point to busy scenes in the Levant, and from what we know of "Sardinian" (*Sherden* ? from Sardis) and other mercenaries—*cf.* the later Carians or Carites—it is not at all improbable that there were foreign settlements on the coast before the first references to the Philistines themselves in external sources. Here we anxiously await the spade of the excavator.

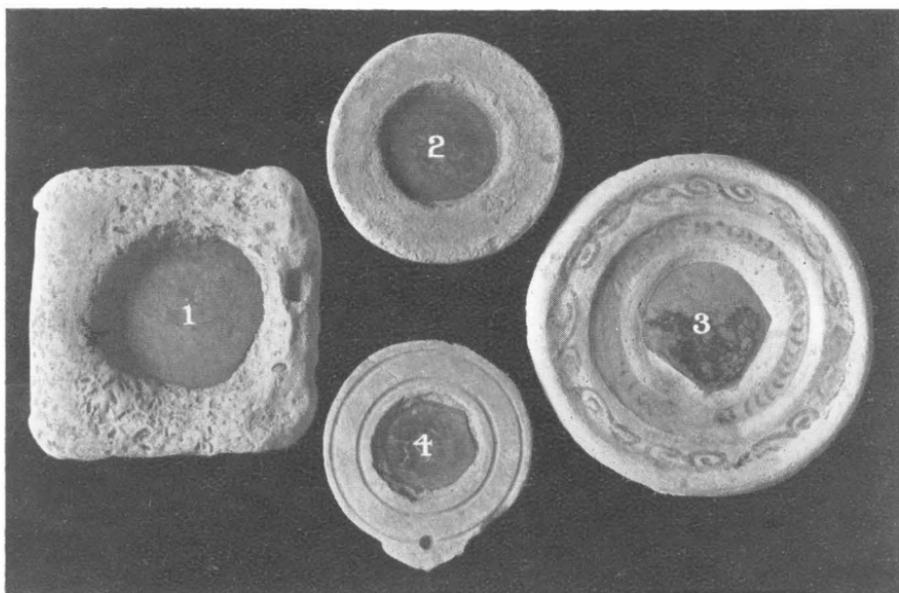
S. A. COOK.]

SOME ALLEGED PALESTINIAN PYXES.

By the Rev. PÈRE RONZEVALLE, S.J.

A FEW weeks ago, as I was glancing through pp. 70–86 of the *Annuaire of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem*, Vol. I, I was not a little astonished to see that Mr. W. J. Moulton attributed to a series of objects, apparently found in Palestinian tombs, the sacred character of Funerary Pyxes, which are, without exception, undoubtedly ordinary mirrors. I had already, before the war, put together some notes on the subject; which circumstances have prevented me from publishing till now; and I offer these hasty lines, the sole purpose of which is to set right a singular misconception.

In 1913 I happened to be at Homs, where I saw several dozens of these objects in the shops in the Suq; and acquired some of them



Palestinian Mirrors. Nos. 1-4.



Palestinian Mirrors. No. 5.

for the Louvre. The essential characteristic of all of them was a piece of very thin blown glass (*ballon de verre*), roughly shaped into a circle and set in a flat mounting more or less ornamented, and either round or square, of plaster (Nos. 1-3) or of stone (No. 4). A few months later some more specimens of the same kind were for sale by the dealers of Beirut, and the *provenance* was again said to be the region of Homs. Finally, I was able quite recently to take photographs of Nos. 5 and 6, which, with several others, come from the neighbourhood of Mo'arret en-No'man.¹

These few illustrations, which I could easily multiply, will doubtless be sufficient to establish: (i) the close connection between these *bibelots* and those which Mr. Moulton has published; and (ii) their purely secular purpose and their character as mirrors pure and simple. No. 6 would convince the most incredulous.

In the dealers' shops of Homs and Beirut, these artless, or rather childish, mirrors were associated with terra-cotta lamps of the late Roman or Byzantine period, and with various stone and alabaster articles of domestic use, such as little mortars, vases for cosmetics, etc., etc. They are generally of small dimensions; those in Plate I are reduced only by a half; No. 5 in its present state is 17 cm. in length; No. 6, 11.5 cm., including the handle. They are sometimes perfectly preserved; so much so that in some of them one can still see one's reflection, despite the iridescence which the lapse of centuries has caused in the glass. A lining of lead was applied to the interior surface of these convex circles (*rondelles bombées*), in order to increase their reflecting powers. In No. 5 the frame is kept upright by two plaster pats (*plattes*), by which it is attached to the body of the figurine; but there is no frame (*placage*) to the glass, which thus stands absolutely free.

That these figures were "Astartes" of a kind, goddesses of female beauty, is a fact of which there can be no doubt, as Mr. Moulton himself has clearly recognised (p. 85), and it is equally certain that the sacred figurine reproduced on p. 83 carried a little mirror, as in our No. 5. Another example, from Cyprus, is to be seen at the Louvre.² These portable tabernacles, enshrining domestic idols (usually female figures), were in common use in the Roman period, more especially in the *lararia* of Syro-Palestinian houses;

¹ [No. 6 is not reproduced.—Ed.]

² Cp. *Le Musée du Louvre depuis 1914: Dons, legs et acquisitions*. Paris, Demotte, 1920, fol., t. II, Pl. 74, note by M. Edm. Pottier.

I hope to publish some of them upon another occasion. In short, there is no reason for emphasising facts which ought, as it would seem, to have prevented the drawing of any comparison between these objects and Eucharistic Pyxes intended for the dead. In any case, this collection of little antique objects demonstrates categorically that whether we have before us a circular or a polygonal plaque, of stone or of plaster, whether the glass, with or without a lining, be set in the body of a cock, a dove or a peacock, or placed in the arms or upon the knees of a figurine—we are in every case dealing with mirrors—as the merchants of Jerusalem quite correctly stated (p. 71).

Moreover, I would say in conclusion, all this has long been known among archaeologists—Kisa, in Vol. II of his work *Das Glas im Altertume* (1908), pp. 357–61, had touched rapidly upon the subject. It was taken up again by M. Etienne Michon in his excellent study entitled *Miroirs antiques de verre doublé de plomb*, 1909,¹ and M. de Ridder has recalled this masterly work in the article which he has devoted to mirrors in the *Dictionnaire* of Saglio-Pottier.² According to M. Michon, these glass mirrors lined with lead are met with throughout the Roman Empire, from Egypt, through Asia Minor and South Russia, to Gaul. It may be that some of these played the part of amulets rather than of mirrors properly so-called, that others served as domestic ornaments, and that others again received a short inscription and became votive offerings, but a very large number were nothing but children's toys. This is equally my conclusion for the Syro-Palestinian group.

Beiruth, 2nd May, 1921.

¹ *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques, etc. (Ministère de l'Instruct. publ.)*, 1909, pp. 231–250.

² *S.v.*, "Speculum," p. 1429, b.
