

(3) Writers to the *Q.S.* should be encouraged to enter more freely into controversy and speculation and endeavour to get the general public interested. Several experts who know their subjects should be asked to criticize, and those who are known to have vivid imaginations might be asked to give vent to them and to bring forward new theories. The mere knocking of them over, right or wrong, will help to bring out the truth.

(4) The objective of the P.E.F., always kept before the public in early days, should again be brought forward and adhered to, and the public invited to contribute short papers and notes.

(5) There should be various *corners* in each *Q.S.* for *Notes and Queries* and *speculations*, just as they have in *Nature* and other periodicals of a progressive character. I believe if this can be done there will be an increase of at least £1,500 to £2,000 during the year available for excavations at Jerusalem.

I sincerely trust that what I have said in this paper will not be agreed to by all, but that it will arouse the antagonism of many who may think my observations worth powder and shot. We want to be on the war-path to succeed. I consider that controversy is the breath of life to undertakings like the P.E.F.

As for myself, I am ready to fight on any of the theories I uphold, but how can one enjoy shooting if one's antagonists lie low or hold up their hands?

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## A LEADEN OSSUARY.

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THE Ossuary reproduced in the accompanying photographs is the property of Mr. Hughes, of Jerusalem, who has kindly allowed me to photograph and publish it.

It is made of lead, which is by no means of uniform composition, but is soft in parts and quite hard in others. This is perhaps to be attributed to the fact that the lead has not been refined, rather than to the mixture of some alloy.

The box of the Ossuary was cut out of a sheet of lead, the sides and ends being cut to the exact size of the pattern used, being afterwards doubled up into position and soldered together

at the corners with the same material. The soldering was done on the outside and is quite visible. It is rather roughly done. The ends are rounded on the top to accommodate the shape of the lid, which is similarly rounded. The lid is a more skilful piece of work. It is not only rounded, it is also concave in shape, sinking half an inch lower at the centre than at the ends. There is no trace of handles or hinges.

The Ossuary measures 13 inches long by 6 inches broad (outside measurements) and is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep. The lead averages about a quarter of an inch in thickness.

It was found by some workmen in making a road near Jericho. The exact spot is understood to be close to the cairn or heap of stones which, according to one popular tradition, is no less than that piled over Achan and his lawless spoil after he and his family were stoned to death (Josh. vii, 24).

This cairn is situated at the extreme east end of the valley, which has been identified as the Valley of Achor; and is passed close by travellers who journey to Jericho by the old road on the edge of the Wady Kelt. It was excavated, as I understand, some twenty years ago, but nothing was found in it.

The decoration is quite elaborate. The various details have not been punched out from the inside, but must either have been formed by pouring the molten lead into a mould, or by carving away the surrounding thickness, leaving the figures in relief. The irregularity of the design seems to point to the latter as the more probable.

One side (Fig. 1) has two rosettes, one above the other, at each end, with an Ionic fluted pillar close to them. Another similar pillar divides the intervening space into two equal parts; each part contains a double-handled cup with deep narrow base in the centre and a small rosette on each side of the base of each cup. Only one of these small rosettes remains perfect. Two are badly rubbed away, and one has completely disappeared, or was never there. Between the two upper rosettes from end to end of the side runs a carved cord about three sixteenths of an inch thick.

The other side (Fig. 2) has only one rosette at the centre of the left end, but has two at the right end. The three fluted Ionic pillars are similarly arranged; and the two cups are slightly more rubbed away. Between the centre pillar and each cup there is a rosette of the same size as those at the ends. If there were rosettes



A Leaden Ossuary from Jerusalem.

on each side of each cup, two have disappeared ; but it appears they never were there. There is the same cord design at the top.

One end (Fig. 3) has two of these pillarettes with two large rosettes between them.

The other end (Fig. 4) is quite different. It has the two pillarettes similarly placed, with one large rosette between them. The left pillarette has one large rosette above it. As there was not room for the rosette above the other, it has been placed a little to the right and down the side of the pillar.

This irregularity of the decorative design may be intentional, but it seems to point to the decoration having been carved out in relief, not cast in a mould.

The lid (Fig. 5) has a large rosette at each corner, and two diagonals of the cord design, crossing each other at the centre, join them together. At each end the triangle formed by the diagonals has a rosette at the apex, one at the centre of the base, and an Ionic fluted pillarette on each side of them.

The side-triangles are each bisected by a pillarette with a rosette on each side of it. The decoration shows the same want of regularity and symmetry.

There seems to have been a carved cord also running lengthwise along the edges of the lid.

The lid has a flange of three-quarters to seven-eighths of an inch depth, which overlapped the ends and sides of the box proper. On one side this flange is completely wasted away.

I saw no signs of an inscription. There is a lead urn shaped like a large vase or pottery jar in the Museum of the British School here, which is regarded as an ossuary. It has no decoration whatever.

The decoration of this ossuary here described assigns it to the Greek or Graeco-Roman period.

The pillarettes measure 3 inches in height, and about half an inch in breadth. The abacus is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches broad and about half an inch deep. The larger rosettes are  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches and the smaller  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter. The cups measure  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches across the handles.

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