

DISCOVERIES IN PALESTINE SINCE 1939

By C. N. JOHNS

(Department of Antiquities, Jerusalem)

WITH the outbreak of war in 1939 the participation of other countries in the exploration of Palestine necessarily came to a stop. On the other hand, with the cessation of internal troubles, a new impetus was given to building and all forms of public works. The construction of a large series of police stations was put in hand almost at once, and as the war spread into the Mediterranean, more and more military establishments were created. All these works involving excavation, in a country so thickly studded with sites of ancient occupation as Palestine is, meant that archæological discoveries were made inevitably and in quick succession.

Under the Mandatory government it has fallen upon the Department of Antiquities, to watch such works, public or private ; to investigate discoveries, small and large ; and to record such information as it can, without unduly delaying the contractors.

We were kept very busy for two or three years with these chance discoveries. Latterly we had the help of some local archæologists, notably those on the staff of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and others of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society. It is their discoveries and ours, made since 1939, that I shall deal with chiefly (so supplementing G. E. Kirk's article in the P.E.Q. for July-October, 1946, pp. 92-102).

At the same time the Department has so far as possible pursued its own programme of work in clearing the ruins of the early Muslim palace near Jericho, and last year I was able to resume and practically complete our work at the Citadel of Jerusalem, to supplement the results which I described in the Quarterly for April, 1940.

Of the various overseas institutions who contributed so much in the pre-war years, only one, the French School of Archæology as represented by the Dominicans of Jerusalem, has undertaken fresh excavations, working to a scientific plan ; owing to greatly increased labour costs, their excavations are on a small scale but have been continued for a second season this year.

PREHISTORIC (TO EARLY BRONZE) :

Permit me to begin with Adam and the Fall, I mean that epoch-making step in human development which is summed up in the verse : “ to till the ground from whence he was taken ”. That crucial advance in the food quest, from the uncertainty of hunting animals to the security of some reserve of cultivated food, took place in the Middle East rather less than 10,000 years ago. It emerges in the latest of that very long series of Stone Age deposits which Miss Garrod so successfully investigated in the caves of Mount Carmel. It is continued in the lowest levels of the earliest fixed settlements or villages on sites such as Jericho, and Beisan, which are among the oldest in the world. We still have to formulate the transition from one to the other ; but I understand from Mr. John Waechter of the British School of Archæology in Jerusalem, who was with us this summer working on the subject, that a direct connection can be established, thanks to several excavations made before the war by Monsieur René Neuville. During the war Dr. Stekelis, working for the American School of Oriental Research, made soundings in other caves on the slopes of Mount Carmel which may contribute to the solution (see *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities, Palestine*, vol. XI, pp. 115-118).

At all events, the succeeding stage in which peasant communities had come into existence and a little metal was used for tools along with stone, *i.e.*, the Chalcolithic, has been well illustrated by recent work on two sites : Kh. Tell el Far'a in central Palestine and Kh. el Karak beside the Sea of Galilee. The former lies in the hills north-east of Nablus and at the head of the great Wadi el Far'a which runs down to

the Jordan. The French School have been making soundings here, and they have found successive levels of occupation lasting from the Chalcolithic well into the Bronze Age, *i.e.* from the 4th millennium until the 2nd millennium B.C. The lowest, Chalcolithic levels, are especially important here because they show that early pottery types at first thought to be distinctive of the north of Palestine, since they were first found there, *viz.*, the grey-burnished "Esdraelon" ware of Megiddo, Beth-shan and 'Afula (E. L. Sukenik, *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* XXI (1948) pp. 1ff, had in fact spread to the centre of the country at least (R. de Vaux, *Revue Biblique*, 1947, pp. 394-433, pls. X-XX).

At the other site, Kh. el Karak, which lies beside the Sea of Galilee between its present outlet to the Jordan and an older outlet some hundreds of yards to the north, a long section was cut right down to virgin soil at the southern edge of the mound. The Department of Antiquities imposed this condition before allowing the neighbouring Jewish settlements to build an agricultural school there; the work was done at their expense and carried out by the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society under Dr. Maisler of the Hebrew University (see *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*, vol. XI (1945), pp. 77-84). Here the lowest level was Chalcolithic, with the same grey-burnished ware; the succeeding levels were stages of the Early Bronze period (I-III). At the edge of the mound the trench crossed a massive rampart of mud brick which was found to date from the first Early Bronze stage (end of the 4th millennium B.C.). At this and the second stage there was evidence of contact with Mesopotamia and Egypt in successive periods: with Mesopotamia in the phase preceding the 1st Dynasty of Ur (the Jamdat Nasr phase, as identified by its peculiar stamped jar-sealings) and with Egypt at the time of the 1st Dynasty (from c. 3000 B.C., as shown by fine pottery of "Abydos" type).

Thus the settlement at Kh. el Karak was already a station on the trade route between those two early civilizations at that remote time, towards the end of the 4th millennium B.C.

when their first cities, the oldest in the world, were growing up. By its position at the Jordan outlet it commanded the ancient route which came down from the Hauran and Trans-Jordan, crossed the river here and climbed into the hills towards Nazareth before dropping down between Mount Tabor and Nazareth to cross the northern plain, traverse the pass of Megiddo and continue along the coastal plain southwards. Between the Jordan and Mount Tabor, its deviating course up the gentle ascent of the Wadi Fajjas to Lubiya and down to the plain via Dabburiya has been traced by the Finnish archæologist Saarisalo from a chain of mounds strewn with potsherds of the period. Until quite recent times the ascent to Lubiya was regularly used by the grain caravans from the Hauran on their way to Acre¹.

On another part of the vast mound of Kh. el Karak, at the north end overlooking the old outlet of the Jordan, the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society has made another excavation, again as a preliminary to building and this time under the auspices of the General Confederation of Jewish Labour. Here a remarkable building of the third stage of the Bronze Age (about the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C.) has been cleared and will be preserved. Its rubble foundations presumably carried a mud brick superstructure to contain a number of hollow circular pits or silos, perhaps nine in all, each 30 feet across and divided radially into four (Pl. I, 1; see also *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*, vol. XIII (1947), pp. 53-64). Was this a temple granary such as existed in the cities of Mesopotamia and Egypt such as Joseph may have used in Egypt a thousand years later?

Of the Early Bronze Age also, it appears, are the numerous dolmens which stand on the lower slopes of the Zerka valley, the ancient Jabbok, in central Trans-Jordan. On behalf of the British School of Egyptian Archæology in Palestine, Dr. Stekelis has examined a number of these megalithic monuments, the counterpart of those known in Egypt, and he has found that they contain not only potsherds typical of the period, but also remains of cloth. In many cases they are

¹ Saarisalo, *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, IX (1929), pp. 27ff.

surrounded by a wide circle of small field stones which, he suggests, may indicate former tumuli otherwise eroded away. His account of this novel enquiry has still to be published, and I am indebted to Dr. Stekelis for communicating these results.

In general this new work fits in with what had previously been done at Jericho, Beisan and Megiddo at low levels. However, after comparing results, Père de Vaux, the director of the French dig at Kh. Tell el Far'a, is of the opinion that it may now be possible to co-ordinate the sequence of cultures rather more closely than hitherto ; the differences in pottery and implements should be regarded, he thinks, not as a gradual strung-out sequence but rather as the impact of parallel, overlapping developments coming from different directions, such as English prehistoric students now postulate for the corresponding phases which took place in Britain over a thousand years later. Regarding the peopling of Palestine we still have much to learn for the long period preceding the period of Semitic predominance, which began only towards the end of the third millennium B.C.

CANAANITE (MIDDLE TO LATE BRONZE AGE) :

The subsequent period, better known as the Canaanite, is now fairly well known, thanks to the large-scale excavations of the last 25 years, especially at Beth-shan (Beisan) and Megiddo. This period began under Babylonian influence but came more and more under the influence of Egyptian civilization ; from the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. the Egyptians were rulers of the country until, with their decline, foreign invaders overran the country, the less civilized Philistines on the coast, the uncivilized Israelites in the hills. The country was then divided among the thirty odd petty kingdoms listed in the Book of Joshua, each with its capital town, " fenced cities " like Megiddo and Beth-shan. Some must have come into existence much earlier to judge from the early rampart at Kh. el Karak by the Sea of Galilee. Their material culture is well illustrated by the reliefs and

paintings in the Egyptian monuments made at the time of the Egyptian conquest. But for two or three centuries before that, during the Hyksos occupation of Egypt, the country was practically a part of Egypt since it was under the same rulers. Even then Egypt was making itself felt along the coast as is shown by some ivory plaques of the period which came to light in graves during quarrying near Nabi Rubin, south of Jaffa; they include both figure and animals of Egyptian type, which must date two centuries before the Egyptian conquest (J. Ory, *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities, Palestine*, vol. XII, pp. 38-40 and Pl. XIV).

Of much the same period is a small temple which was uncovered this spring at the Jewish settlement of Nahariya on the seashore north of Acre, again on a site "ripe for development". It was in use only for two or three hundred years yet it was rebuilt once in that time, while its floor level rose several times. In the photograph (Pl. I, 2), the slabs which footed the roof posts remain at the highest level, on pillars of soil which were left as the digging proceeded. What showed it to be a temple were the numerous miniature pots, like child's toys, which can only have been votive offerings; or again some clay models of doves, perhaps Astarte's doves. However, it was situated not in a grove but on the seashore. There was a well for water and opposite this, a short distance into the sea, a spring of fresh water wells up. Was it for this reason that the temple was placed here?

Of the next period, following the Egyptian conquest, when the country was thrown open, perhaps for the first time, to trade from overseas, from Cyprus and Crete, we have a single group of burials from another site in Wadi Rubin—Dhahrat el Humraiya, near El Jisr. There was typical pottery and jewellery of foreign type, which is to be published shortly in the Department's *Quarterly* by Mr. Ory, Inspector for that area (Vol. XIII, pp. 75-89).

PHENICIAN AND ISRAELITE ; JEWISH.

With the breakdown of Egyptian rule and the consequent Israelite and Philistine invasions, the country of course fell

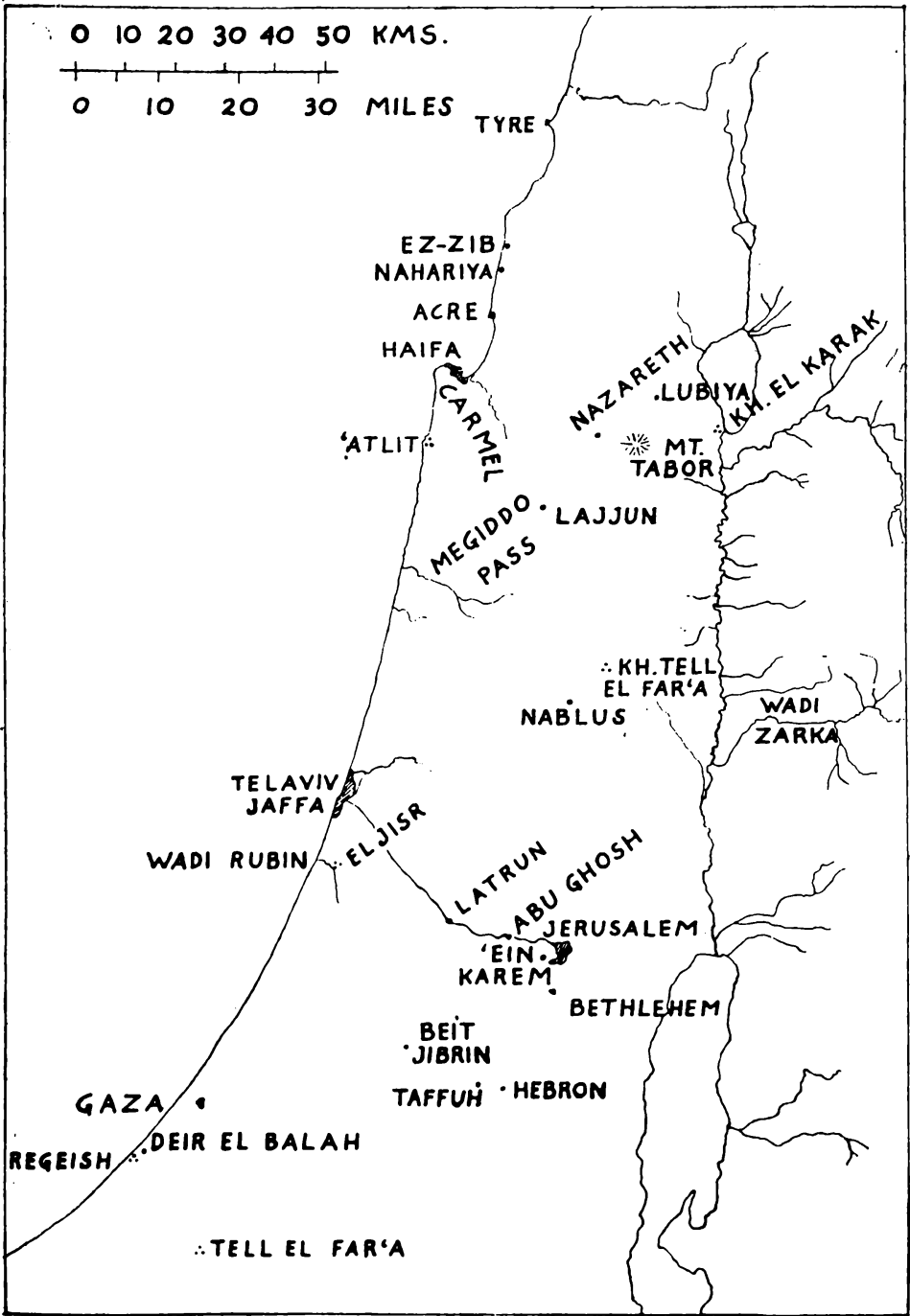


FIG. I

MAP SHOWING SITES OF EXCAVATIONS SINCE 1939

into two zones, maritime and upland, a division that persisted for the next thousand years, until Roman rule at last diffused Greek culture over most of the country. The remnant of the Canaanites survived on the coast from Mount Carmel northwards, launched out as traders and met the Greeks, who called them Phœnicians. Apparently they returned to the southern part of the Palestine coast as traders ; for their peculiar cremated burials were found by the late Sir Flinders Petrie at one of the mounds he dug inland from Gaza (Tell Far'a)¹ and have been found again on the cliffs south of Deir el Balah (between Gaza and Rafah), in a sounding made when it was proposed to put a coastguard station there. The burial urns (Pl. II, 1) strongly resemble those which occur on the sites of undoubted Phœnician settlements overseas, *e.g.*, at Carthage, and must date from around 800 B.C.

In Phœnicia proper, on the sea-coast north of Acre, we examined a number of graves in two cemeteries near Ez-Zib, the site of Achzib or Ecdippa. While the North Somerset Yeomanry were encamped there, they drew our attention to the plundering of ancient graves, and we had to excavate the undisturbed tombs then visible lest they should be looted also. Here, in the Phœnician homeland, inhumation was the rule ; the burial chambers were rock-hewn and were approached from a shaft with reserved rock steps (Pl. III, 1). The burials proved to be of the 8th or 7th century B.C. or later. The older graves contained decorated pottery typical of the urn burials at Regeish and of other Phœnician sites in the Eastern Mediterranean, both red-and-black painted ware and also lustrous red-slip ware, especially those highly polished juglets commonly decorated with horizontal bands and concentric circles in black (Pl. II, 2) such as the Swedish Expedition in Cyprus found at the site of Amathus (Gjerstad, *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition*, Vol. II, *e.g.*, Pls. XI–XII and CVI, 689) or such as was found with a group of cremated

¹ See *Beth-Pelet*, vol. I, p. 12 with list on Pl. LXVIII and pottery types 33 S, T, U, V 2 and 44, L 4 in Garrow Duncan, *Corpus of Palestinian Pottery*. Cf. *Ancient Gaza*, I, Pl. XLIII, 31 L 2 ; II, Pl. XXIX, 31 L 3.

burials at 'Atlit, south of Haifa (*Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, vol. VI, see pp. 130-141f. for parallels). There were also pottery figurines portraying women (Pl. III, 2 shows an example). Associated with the tombs in one of the cemeteries, which remained in use during the Persian and Hellenistic periods, were several inscribed stones, one mentioning "Ama the Smith", another "Amihud" (?), and these are noteworthy as the first Phœnician inscriptions to have been recorded in Palestine. Yet another cemetery, of Hellenistic date solely, was encountered nearer Acre, at Sheikh 'Izz ed-Din to the north of the town, during the excavation of sand ballast for the Army.

Of the contemporary Israelite occupation inland I have nothing definite to report. It is possible that the French site to the north-east of Nablus, Kh. Tell el Far'a, may be the site of Tirzah, the capital of the Northern Kingdom prior to Samaria; the site was certainly occupied at that time, but while the identification remains possible, it is too much to expect to prove it in the restricted scale of the present excavations. Culturally this was a backward period, with perhaps only two outstanding towns, the capitals of the two kingdoms, Samaria and Jerusalem. Both were small towns by later standards; thanks to the pre-war excavations at Samaria in which the Fund and the British School took part, we know more about the Samaria of the Kings than we do of Jerusalem, and by analogy with the size of Samaria then, I think we must revise our notions of the extent of Jerusalem under the early Kings. I submit that most of our Bible maps exaggerate it; the new American atlas, the "Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible" (Philadelphia, 1945), is the only one I have seen which seems to me to present a likely picture of the growth of the Jewish city.

We should all agree, I think, that Jerusalem originated, not on the western hill now known as Mount Sion, but on the eastern hill which, in consequence of the Fund's excavations there, has come to be known as Ophel (see plan, Fig. 2). This ridge, with the only permanent spring in the district, was the original "strong hold of Zion, the same is the city

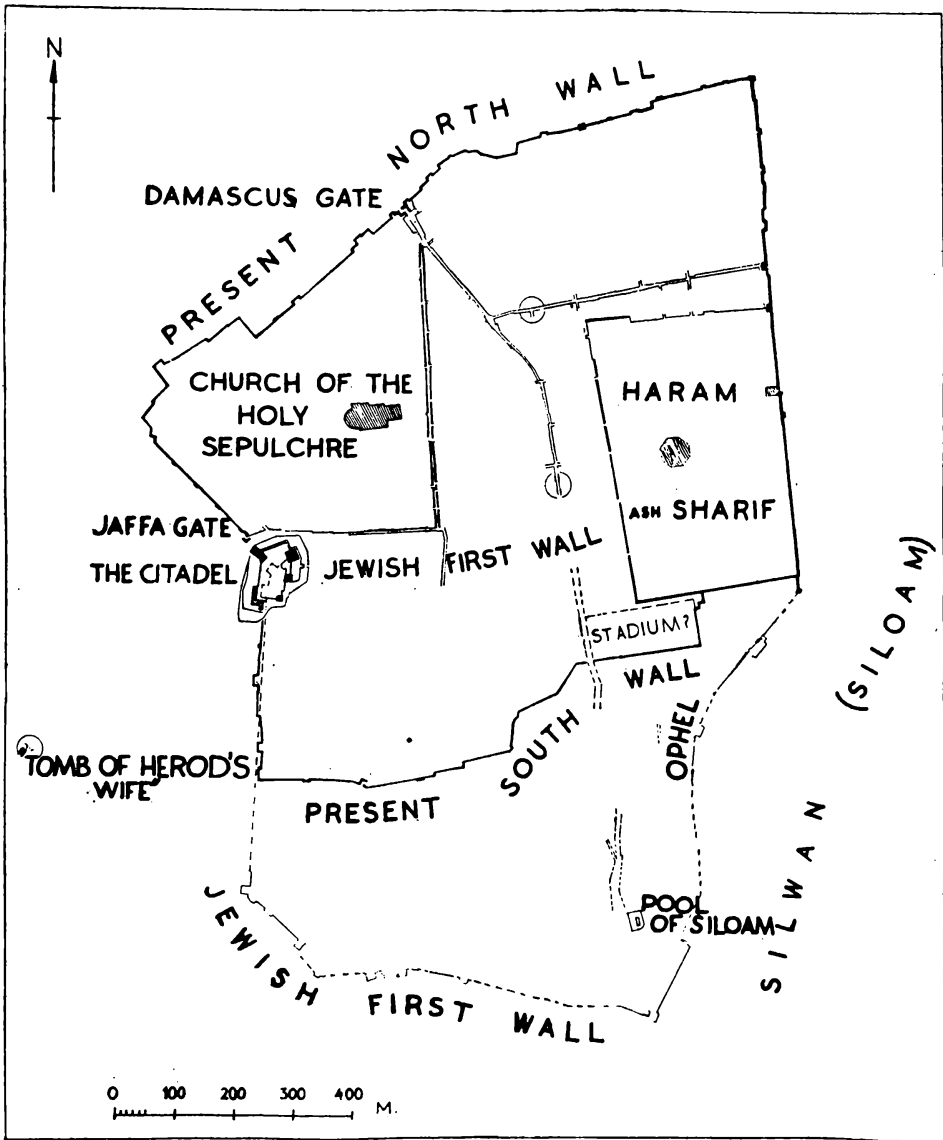


FIG. 2

PLAN OF JERUSALEM WITH THE KNOWN PORTIONS OF ANCIENT PAVING IN THICKENED OUTLINE, OR ENCIRCLED, OR IN BROKEN OUTLINE

of David" (II Sam. v, 7). To this King Solomon added the Temple on the north. But when was the western hill included in the same circuit of walls as the eastern hill and the Temple? We had hoped that our excavations at the Citadel of Jerusalem, on the western hill, would throw light on this question. Those who have seen my article in the 1940 volume of the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* will recall that in the courtyard of the medieval castle we uncovered portions of a massive stone wall with salient towers, one of which was the Herodian tower Phasaël, the enormous base of which still stands ("David's Tower"). We could see that its base was but an insertion in an older line of fortification, which had similar though smaller salient towers.

Last year we made a sounding against the surviving masonry at the front of one of these, which we call the "middle" tower, or "corner" tower (Pl. IV, 1). The stratification showed that this was not much older than the Herodian tower; so far as we can tell, without having cleaned and identified all the coins from the pre-existing deposits in front of the foundations, it is work of the end of the 2nd or the earlier half of the 1st century B.C.—of John Hyrcanus or Alexander Jannæus perhaps—as was the adjacent straight curtain wall to which Herod added his huge tower towards the end of the century. But from our previous sounding against this curtain wall we knew that it had been built on top of an earlier wall of clumsier construction, founded on the rock. We recognized similar masonry on nearly the same line at the back of the "middle" tower; most of it consists of roughly hewn stones laid in courses, but some of it of unhewn boulders which look still older (see *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 1940, Pl. VIII, 1). We dug down in front of this part also, hoping to trace it down to rock and so learn something of its age. Low down we encountered what remained of the closely packed blocking of the base of the 1st-century "middle" tower. We managed to penetrate several courses before the pit finally became too narrow. But although we did not reach the rock, I think we were pretty close to it where we left off; so close that it

seemed unlikely that any deposits would be found of sufficient depth to date the older wall, for it seemed that the rock had been fairly thoroughly cleared to make way for the foundations of the tower. Hence our sounding here proved inconclusive. Yet I am inclined to think that even this primitive-looking wall cannot be older than the Maccabean period, like the earliest wall to the north of it ; for the evidence we have found for an earlier occupation of the time of the Monarchy is of the scantiest.

More light on this question could no doubt be obtained by working across the line of the western city wall of to-day to the south of the Citadel, where digging would be less hampered by later building. It happened that when the Romans destroyed the Jewish city they preserved the Jewish city wall along here to cover the barracks of their garrison.

On the hill opposite the Citadel, close to the " King David " hotel, there is another Jewish monument, the so-called " Tomb of Herod's Wife " (see plan, Fig. 2)¹. It is a very fine rock-cut tomb lined with excellent masonry and closed with a great rolling stone (Pl. IV, 2). When the Army decided to turn it into an emergency signal station, we opened up the original shaft as an extra exit. With this one alteration it has now been restored to its owners, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. Was this Herod's tomb, the one he intended for himself and then used for his wife Mariamne, building himself another on that conical hill south-east of Bethlehem known as the " Frank Mountain " (Jebel Fureidis)? This latter is undoubtedly one of Herod's desert castles and would repay excavation and conservation.

ROMAN :

When the emperor Hadrian revived Jerusalem it grew on different lines, regardless of the ancient landmarks for the most part. No doubt it spread outwards from the legionary barracks on the western hill. It still retains much of its Roman lay-out, both in its streets and walls, and also, as we have discovered, it still uses one of the Roman sewers.

¹ See *Quarterly Statement*, 1892, pp. 115-120 ; 1901, pp. 397-402.

At a point west of the south-west corner of the Haram, not far from the "Wailing Wall" and "Robinson's arch" (at (III) on fig. 3), a blockage was reported owing to the dislodging of several cover stones, said to be unusually large. This was in 1941, when timber could not be spared for casing a shaft or gallery to reach the threatened point, therefore a large open excavation was made, over 20 feet

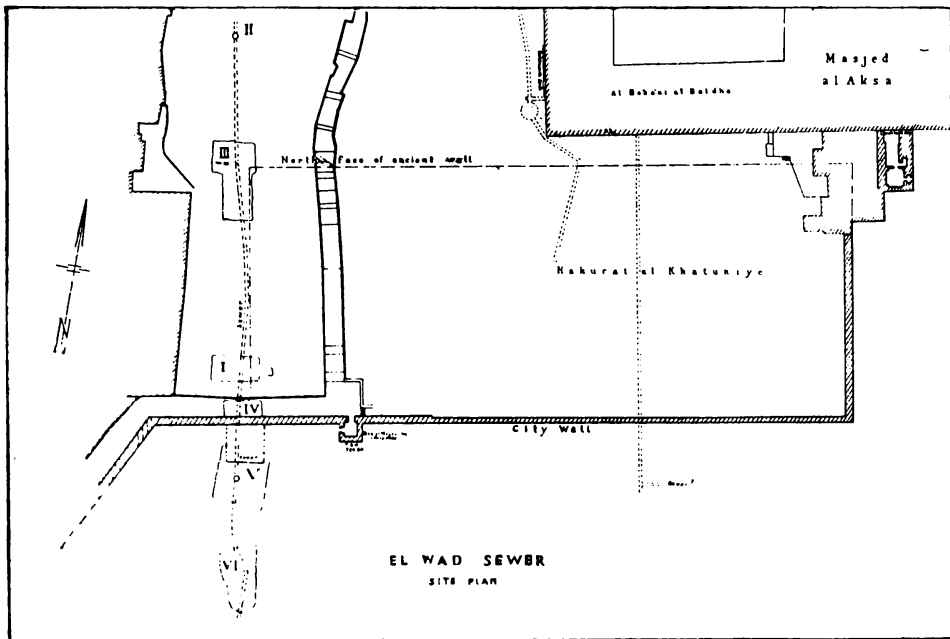


FIG. 3

PLAN SHOWING SOUTH-EASTERN PART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM WITH COURSE OF ROMAN DRAIN, FROM (II) TO (VI). THE STREET PAVING WAS FOUND IN II, III, V AND VI, UP TO 9 METRES WIDE. THE TOWER BUILT ACROSS IT AT (V) MAY BE ARAB OR CRUSADER

deep. So was it revealed that the dislodged cover stones were in fact the flagstones of a Roman Street to which the sewer originally belonged. It was a wide, well-paved street running north and south with the sewer about its centre (Pl. V, 1). A small coin of late Hellenistic type and some Roman sherds were found on lifting one of the paving stones.

Thus the street may have formed part of the eastern of the two diverging north-to-south streets appearing on the 6th-century mosaic map at Madaba church in Trans-Jordan (L.-H. Vincent and F.-M. Abel, "Jérusalem Nouvelle", album, Pl. XXX). Both streets are followed at a higher level by the two modern streets which fork not far inside the northern gate, Damascus Gate, the one running alongside the Haram¹, the other towards the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Fig. 2, as has been proved by the discovery of a similar paved street all the way from the fork to the south end of Khan ez-Zeit during reconstruction of the sewer there in the autumn of 1947).

The Roman eastern street was uncovered again just outside the city wall in front of the Dung Gate (Bab el Maghariba, at (V) and (VI), Fig. 3). Presumably it ran downhill towards the Pool of Siloam, following the fold between Ophel and the western hill, Mount Sion, that is to say, in the former Tyropœon Valley, and would have converged on the southern tip of the Ophel spur, possibly at the fork of a similar paved street discovered by Bliss and Dickie ("Excavations at Jerusalem", pp. 143 ff. and J3 on plan No. II, though the western arm was only 10 feet wide there). If so, it would have been joined there by another descending street which ran along the ridge of Ophel, doubtless on much the same line as the later Roman street discovered at the north end of the ridge by Mr. Crowfoot and Mr. FitzGerald (*Palestine Exploration Fund Annual V*, 1927 pp. 37 ff.).

Owing to the successive stages of rebuilding alongside the portion of the street opened inside the "Dung Gate", at only one point was it possible to identify a contemporary structure. This was on the east side (Fig. 2), an angle of a massive building constructed of large boss-and-margin blocks, obviously re-used since they were all damaged somewhere, at the edges or at the corners (Pl. V, 1 and 2). Similar blocks of the same unusual scale make up the lowest

¹ Buried paved streets have been found at two levels, see R. W. Hamilton, in *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities*, vol. I, pp. 97ff., 105ff.

courses of the city wall to the east of the "Dung Gate" (Pl. V, 3), and this unusually long straight stretch of the city wall running as far as the angle south of the Haram and returning thence to the Haram wall at the Aqsa mosque, runs at right angles to the line of the street and then returns towards the Haram parallel with the street (Fig. 3). Hence I suggest that these two arms of the city wall give two sides of a great enclosure which should be completed by joining their ends to the angle which we found alongside the Roman street inside the walls. Its length would be nearly 200 yards (181 metres outside measurement). Was this the Roman stadium which is mentioned in the Paschal chronicle, an account of Jerusalem in the 2nd or 3rd century A.D.?

Outside Jerusalem, Roman or Early Christian remains are our most frequent discoveries, and I can give examples only. At the beginning of the war, but really as the outcome of the Arab rebellion, a widespread series of police posts were erected in the towns and along the main roads. Some of the sites chosen were almost the same as those of Roman or Crusader places which must have served much the same purpose. Perhaps the most striking example was at Lajjun, near Megiddo. The name Lajjun, which it is generally agreed comes from the Latin "*legio*" or "legion", now applies to a village situated near the famous pass. But the new police post commanding the cross roads at the mouth of the pass proves to be on the Roman site, not of the Roman fort perhaps but of the settlement below it. Incidentally a coin of Londinium was found here, of nearly the same period as the Peutinger map where the cross roads is shown as Caparcotnei. Later, in a neighbouring valley to the north of Megiddo, a Roman altar was reported and acquired for the Museum. It was erected by a "primipilus" or chief centurion of the 6th legion, Ferrata (see *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, vol. XII, pp. 89-91).

Again at Latrun, where the Jaffa road begins to enter the Judean hills, one of the new police posts was planted on a small hill near 'Amwas where epitaphs of soldiers of the 5th legion, Macedonica, have been found, and opposite another small hill where ruins of a Crusader fort exist.

At Nablus, itself a town of Roman foundation, the new government building lies outside the town to the south, near the site of the ancient Shechem, but on a site which proved to be part of a late Roman suburb. Nablus itself still retains its Roman plan of straight streets intersecting at right angles, very different from the winding streets of most Arab towns; but the present level is at least 15 feet higher than the Roman. So close is the alignment of the present streets to the ancient that when foundation shafts were being sunk last year for a new building at a street corner just outside the built-up area, at the very corner a marble column shaft was found some 15 feet down. It was inscribed in Greek "To the (God) Apollo" and almost certainly came from one of the ancient street colonnades. To the east and west of Nablus where the Moslem cemeteries are, the Roman cemeteries lay, as recent discoveries have proved. At the east, beside the main road, when foundation shafts for a new mosque were being sunk, Roman tombstones appeared at the bottom; one is carved with the figure of a mounted man and commemorates a trooper of the Moorish cavalry, by name Augindai. (See *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, vol. XII, pp. 93-94).

CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM :

Passing to the Early Christian or Byzantine period, our discoveries are so frequent that I can illustrate only one, *i.e.*, the mosaic pavement of a small church found on a farm near Beit Jibrin in the foothills west of Hebron¹. The central panel looks like a picture of Jonah's boat attacked by the great leviathan (Pl. VI, 1); the surrounding panels had animals, all damaged. Only the lion (Pl. VI, 2) survives in another part of the floor.

Another Early Christian discovery that I must not omit to mention is of a Byzantine monastery commemorating the fast of St. John in the Wilderness. Early tradition placed

¹ See Kirk, "Recent Archæological Activities" in *P.E.Q.*, July-Oct., 1946, pp. 97-8.

this, not at 'Ein Karim west of Jerusalem, but in a lovely if remote valley to the west of Hebron, near Taffuh on the old road to Gaza. The ruins were somehow missed by the Palestine Exploration Fund Survey Party, for they are not listed in the "Survey of Western Palestine". They were rediscovered by a German scholar, the Rev. Dr. Clemens Kopp, who had been studying the narratives of the medieval pilgrims ; he walked out to the place they indicated and, to his delight, found the ruined chapel and baptistry, and on the hill above, a monastic cell or watch tower with the lintel, carved with the cross flanked with alpha and omega, still above the entrance doorway. Both sites have been excavated by the Dominicans and described by Père de Vaux in the *Revue Biblique*, vol. LIII (1946), pp. 554 ff. A spring traditionally known as 'Ein el Ma'mudiyya, "spring of the place of baptism", once more fills the ancient baptistry. I should add that the Franciscans have been working at 'Ein Karim and have established the Early Christian origin of their church in the village there, for it is here that tradition places the birth of the Baptist. Their work here has been described at length by Father Sylvester J. Saller in a volume printed at their press in Jerusalem.

DISCOVERIES AT ST. JOHN'S, 'EIN KARIM, 1941-2.

The Dominican Père de Vaux, director of the French School, was responsible also for some interesting excavations alongside the Crusader church at Abu Ghosh (Qiryat el 'Enab) on the Jerusalem-Jaffa road, in the grounds of the Benedictine monastery whose members now tend the church. Here an Arab khan or inn was unearthed, which latter became part of a Crusader hospice. Most surprisingly, Père de Vaux infers that the Crusader church itself was built in a Roman reservoir, once filled, he thinks, by the spring which now wells up in the crypt of the church. In the church wall there is an inscription by a detachment of the 10th legion, Fretensis, the legion which garrisoned Palestine after the fall of Jerusalem to Titus, and this tablet, Père de Vaux suggests, may well be in its original position, celebrating the

work of that legion in building the reservoir (see his report in *Revue Biblique*, vol. LIII (1946), pp. 125 ff.).

MOSLEM :

Of the Department's own excavations in the Early Moslem ruins, Kh. el Mafjar, near Jericho, doubtless the site of a residence belonging to a caliph of the 'Umayyad dynasty early in the 8th century A.D., you will already have heard from Dr. Mayer. We are now concentrating on the northern building, which was evidently a stately bathing establishment. It was in working round the outside of this building that we came upon the fine mosaic pavement which was illustrated in Mr. Kirk's article (*P.E.Q.*, July-Oct. 1946, Pls. IV, V). This scene is composed in delicate, almost natural tints of carefully graded stones; the animals are in cream, fawn and brown, the tree is in three receding planes created by the use of two shades of green, one yellowish, the other bluish, with deep blue-grey for the shadows. The technique is Byzantine at its best, comparable to the mosaic paving of the Great Palace of Constantinople (see the coloured reproductions in the report on the excavations carried out on behalf of the Walker Trust (University of St. Andrews), *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors*, chap. III). But the realism of the picture is rather Sassanian or Persian. We find that the room containing this pavement adjoined the hot rooms.

The carved stucco which is to be seen on the circular wall around the pavement once continued right up to the vault and into the dome which lit the room, a dome of Byzantine skull-cap form on a high drum pierced with windows. The photograph on Pl. V of Mr. Kirk's article shows the stucco decoration of the skull-cap seen upside down, as reconstructed from the fallen fragments; the heads are alternately male and female, and the florid foliage is typical of the carved stucco found in both blocks of the palace (see *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, vol. XIII, pp. 1 ff.). Some of the windows have been reconstructed similarly and can be related to the dome. Unlike the residential block

to the south, these baths were entirely roofed over; the scheme should emerge in the course of the coming season's work, but already it seems probable that it resembled a domed Byzantine church of the period.

At the same time the piecing together of balustrades of carved plaster from the galleries of the residential courtyard has gone on. Over thirty different patterns have lately been illustrated in the *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, vol. XIII, pp. 1-58. They have either endless repeating patterns consisting of stylized foliage on a geometrical basis of interlacing work, or else a central medallion of such work surrounded by free foliage. The design as well as most of its elements seem to derive from the Græco-Roman tradition of Syria, but some features are distinctly Sassanian, while the technique is altogether Mesopotamian, since plaster carving is unknown in Syria prior to the Moslem conquest. There are close parallels with the stucco decoration of another 'Umayyad palace of Syria, Qasr el Heir between Damascus and Palmyra, which has been excavated by the French and proves to be of the reign of the Caliph Hisham, 724-743 A.D. (see reports in *Syria* 1927, pp. 302-329, 1931 pp. 316-318, 1934 pp. 24-32, 1939 pp. 195-373). These panels are indeed a revelation of that kind of intricate and elaborate pattern made of floral elements on a geometrical ground which Islam has made its own, as we acknowledge by calling it arabesque.

Here it is seen in the freshness of its beginning, and is to be compared with similar carvings perhaps almost as early, but in wood, which have been taken down from the roof of the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem during its recent rebuilding. Used as wall plates for the great rafters of the nave (Pl. VII), they were first recognized and photographed by Professor Creswell of Cairo (see his *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. II, pp. 127-137 by G. Marçais). Now they have been treated in the Department's laboratories to remove a thick coating of modern paint, and will be exhibited partly in the Haram Museum and partly in the Palestine Archæological Museum in Jerusalem.

In the course of the present reconstruction, by no means the first that the Aqsa Mosque has undergone, much new information has come to light, and it is now possible to identify and date the earlier phases of the building. Contrary to the frequent assumption that it was built upon the ruins of a church, it has become clear that it was not, although its structure contained much re-used materials from one or other of the early churches of Jerusalem. This appears not only in the masonry, but also in some of the timber re-used in the roof, *e.g.*, the carved strip shown in Pl. VII, 1, which is to be compared with the architraves still in position in Justinian's Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem (Vincent and Abel, *Bethléem*, Pl. XIII), as well as with the early 'Umayyad plaster carving from Kh. el Mafjar. Another plank from the roof bears part of a Greek inscription recording the foundation of a church by a Patriarch of Jerusalem in Justinian's time (*Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, vol. X pp. 162-165). For all this I must refer you to a memoir by Mr. R. W. Hamilton, which it is hoped to publish soon.

I conclude this mixed bag by illustrating some discoveries of Crusader date which have been made in the church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. For Christmas 1944 the crypt or grotto was cleaned for the first time for many years and in removing the accumulated soot from the half dome over the Altar of the Star we disclosed a charming if mutilated mosaic of the Christmas scene, done in the Byzantine style but under Crusader auspices, as the Latin inscription proves (Pl. VIII, 1). Then last year, encouraged by Professor Boase, then of the Courtauld Institute, we cleaned the Crusader paintings on the marble pillars of the nave colonnades. They form a series remarkable for the fact that it combines the figures of saints distinctive of both Europe and the East, with inscriptions in both Latin and Greek. Thus St. George and the Desert Fathers are represented as well as Pope Leo the Great, the Irish bishop of Taranto, St. Catald, and the kings Canute of Denmark and England and Olaf of Norway, both of whom were saints of the Church. One of the paint-



FIG. 1

KH. EL KARAK, DETAIL OF EARLY BRONZE AGE BUILDING AT NORTH
END OF MOUND SHOWING CIRCULAR EMPLACEMENT



FIG. 2

NAHARIYA, NORTH OF ACRE, SHOWING RUINS OF CANAANITE TEMPLE

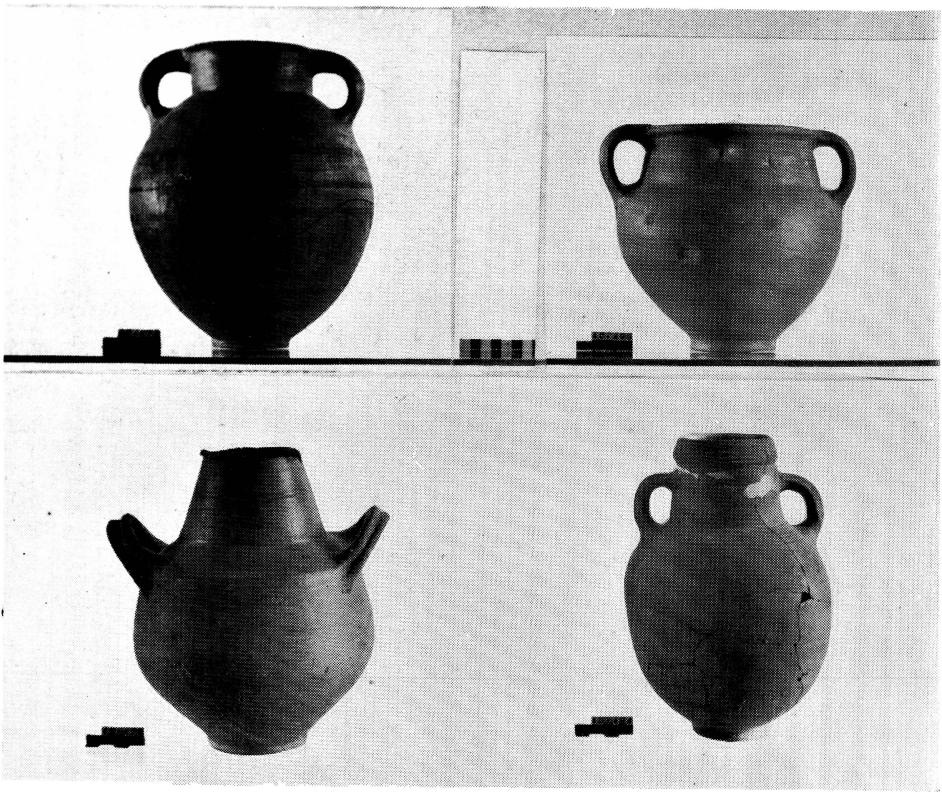


FIG. 1

PHOENICIAN URNS FROM ER-REGEISH NEAR DEIR EL BALAH ; OF BURNISHED RED OR BUFF WARE, ONE PAINTED WITH BLACK BANDS

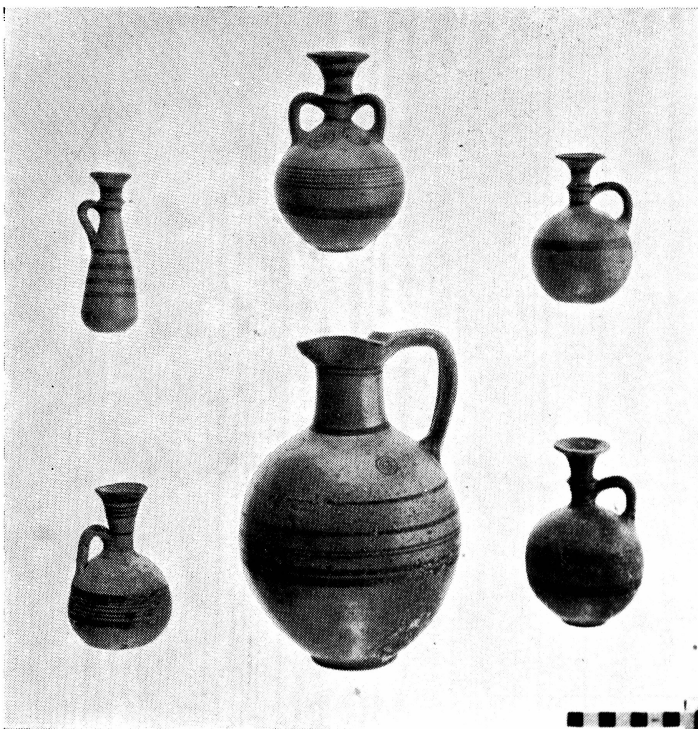


FIG. 2

CYPRO-PHOENICIAN POTTERY FROM EZ-ZIB, NORTH OF ACRE ; LUSTROUS RED WARE PAINTED IN BLACK

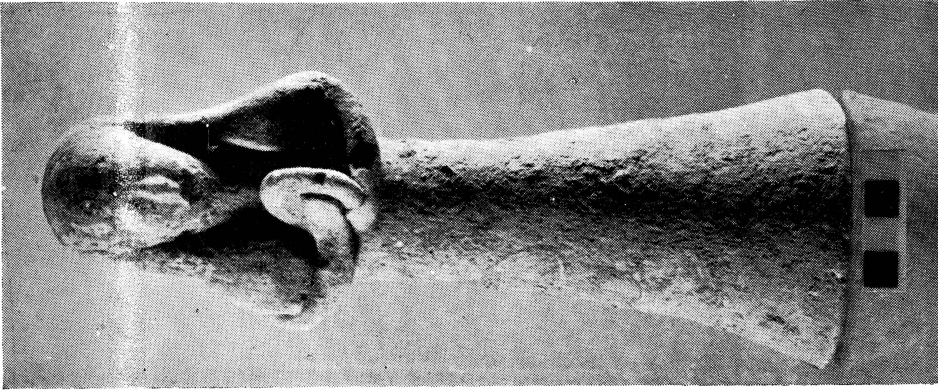


FIG. 2
POTTERY FIGURINE FROM Ez-ZIB

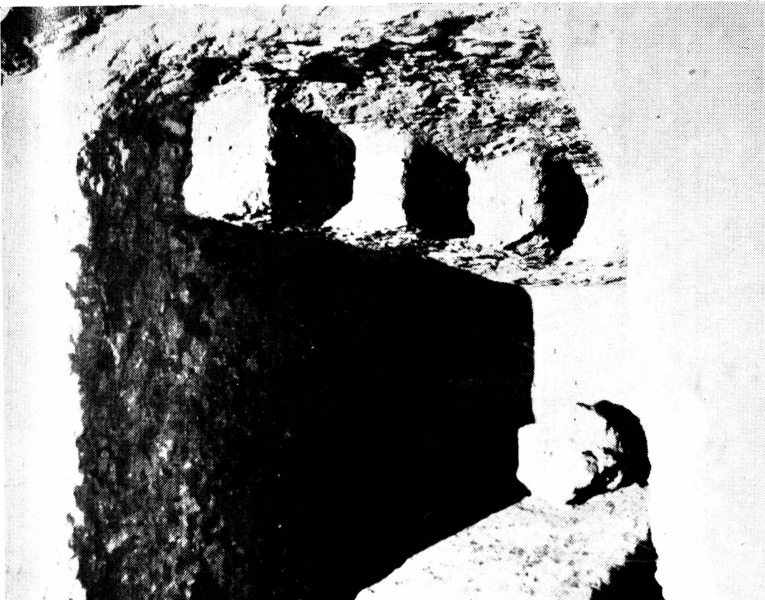


FIG. 1
CAL ROCK-CUT TOMB SHAFT AT Ez-ZIB

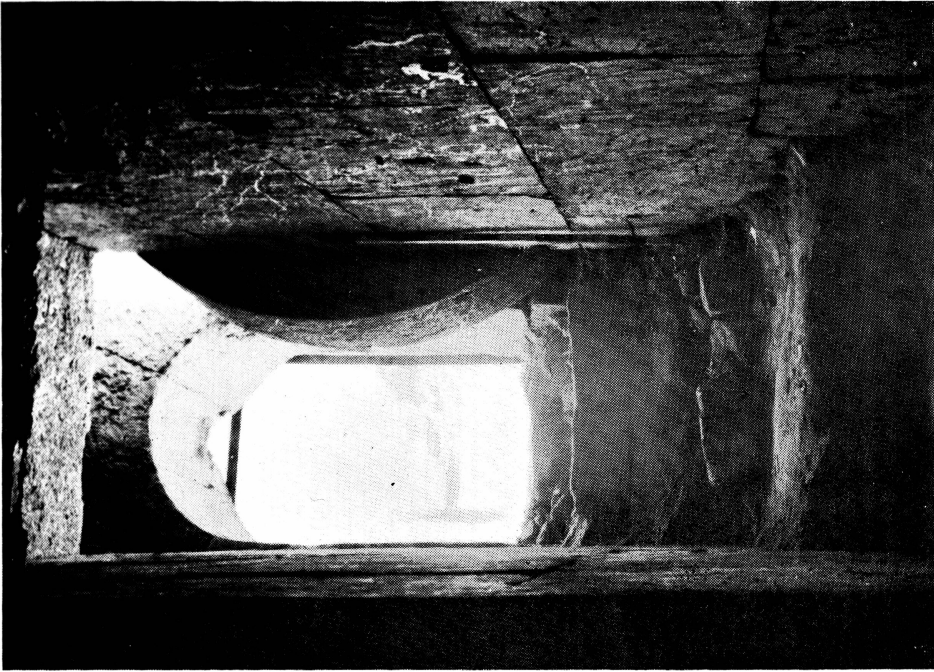


FIG. 2

“TOMB OF HEROD'S WIFE,” JERUSALEM ; ROLLING STONE
AT ENTRANCE FROM THE INSIDE



FIG. 1

FRONT OF THE MIDDLE ANCIENT TOWER IN THE CITADEL COURTYARD,
JERUSALEM



FIG. 1

ROMAN STREET UNCOVERED WEST OF SOUTH-WEST
ANGLE OF THE HARAM, JERUSALEM ; LOOKING
EAST, THE SEWER IN FRONT

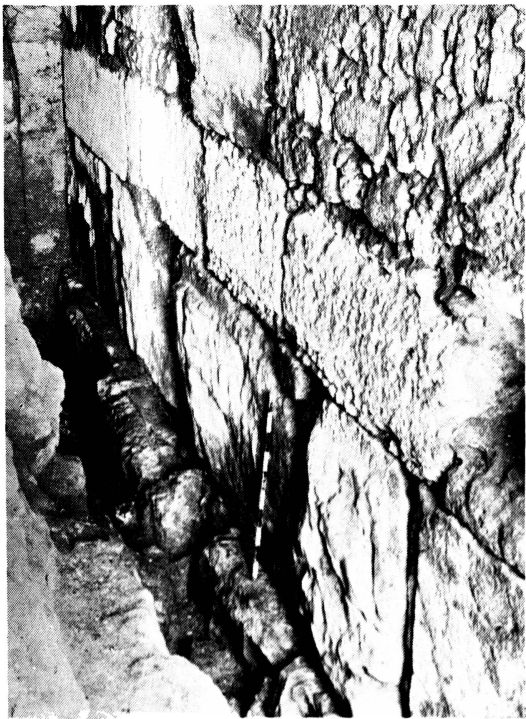


FIG. 2

INSIDE THE VAULT SEEN IN FIG. 1,
LARGE MASONRY EXTENDING FROM
CORNER BESIDE STREET

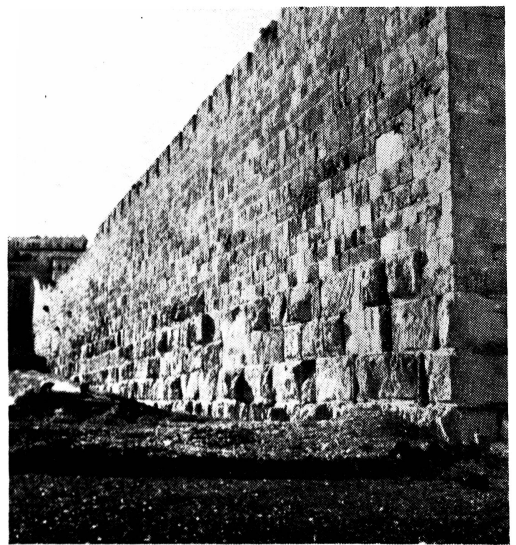


FIG. 3

THE SOUTHERN WALL LOOKING TOWARDS
DUNG GATE (BABEL MAGHARIBA), WITH
RE-USED BLOCKS IN LOWER COURSES, CF.
FIG. 2

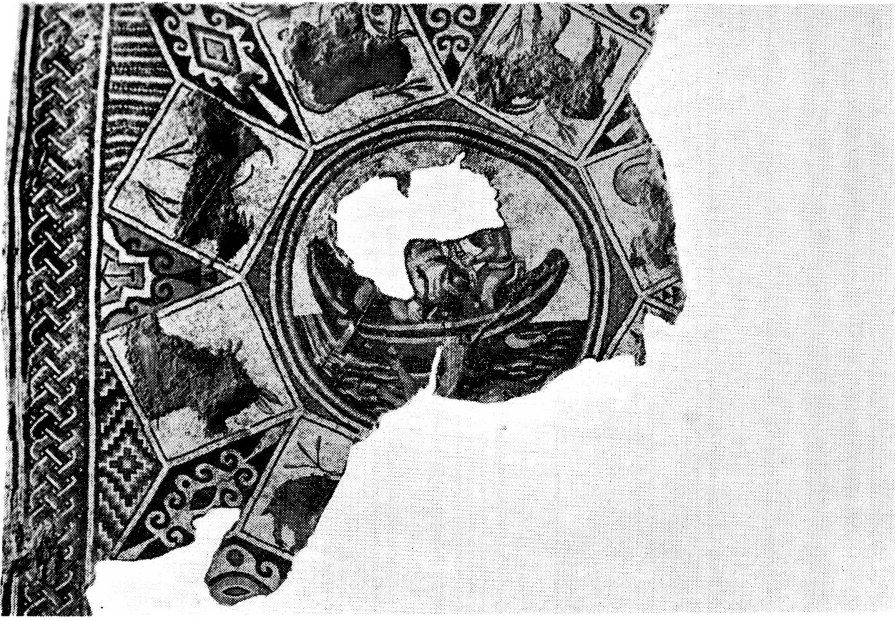


FIG. 1

MOSAIC PAVEMENT OF EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH NEAR BEIT JIBRIN



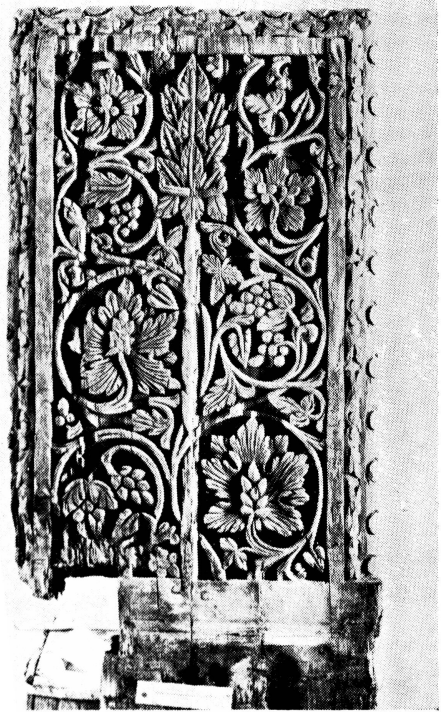
FIG. 2

DETAIL FROM THE SAME CHURCH



FIG. 1

EARLY CHRISTIAN WOOD-CARVING FOUND RE-USED IN THE ROOF OF THE AQSA MOSQUE, JERUSALEM, WITH EARLY MUSLIM PANEL AT RIGHT



FIGS. 2 AND 3

OTHER EARLY MUSLIM PANELS FROM THE SAME

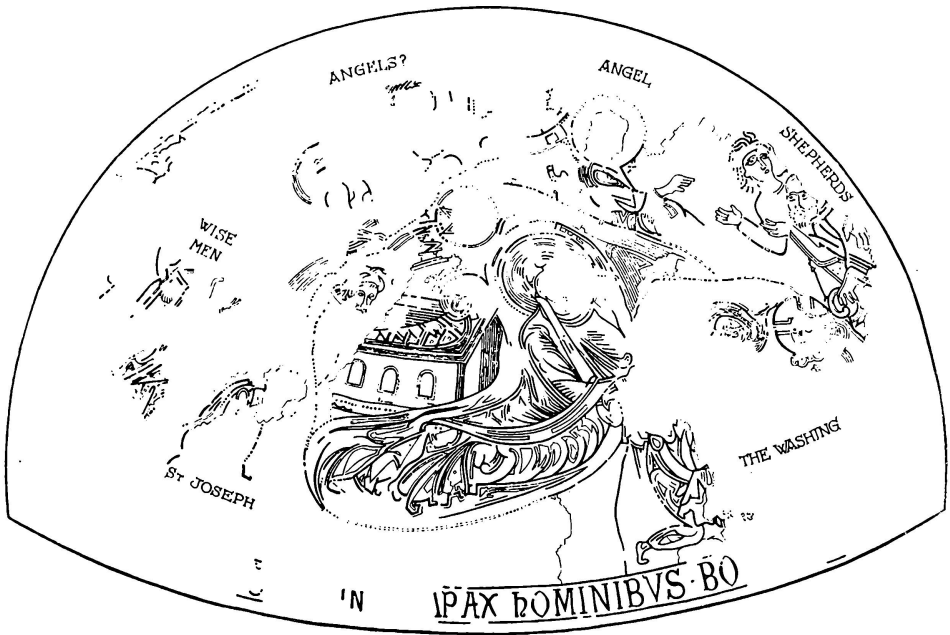


FIG. 1

MOSAIC IN SEMI-DOME ABOVE THE ALTAR OF THE STAR AT THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, BETHLEHEM



FIG. 2

PAINTINGS IN SOUTH AISLE OF THE CHURCH



FIG. 3

FIGURE AT LOWER LEFT-HAND CORNER OF THE PAINTING OF THE MADONNA, FIG. 2

ings, a Madonna, was found to be dated in Latin, apparently 1130 of the Incarnation (Pl. VIII, 2, the date written MC TR); another has a prayer in Greek. The former, like some of the other subjects has supporting figures (Pl. VIII, 3), probably representing the donors who, we may imagine, gave the pictures as a thank-offering for a pilgrimage safely accomplished.¹

Of the discoveries I have alluded to in this rapid review of several years' work, it is to be noted that many were incidental to works of construction or restoration, such as we must expect in a country that is developing as fast as modern Palestine is. I need hardly stress then that it is more than ever necessary that there should be a permanent archæological institution of the character of the Department of Antiquities in Jerusalem, to hold a watching brief as it were, to investigate what the builder or engineer turns up and sometimes to arrange that an important site is to be examined before it is built over. At the same time, I am glad to say that local interest in the antiquities of the country shows signs of growing, and that this year both Arabs and Jews have organised congresses that gave serious attention to the history and archæology of the region and were keenly attended.

¹ For other illustrations and a list of subjects, see "Guide to the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem," by R. W. Hamilton, 2nd ed., Department of Antiquities, Jerusalem, 1947; correcting some of the identifications given by Vincent and Abel, *Bethléem*, Paris, 1914.