

with three panels, coarsely carved, the central panel containing a genius, the two outer panels a bust. The top, with acroteria, remains. The diagram (Plate I, Fig. 10) shows the detail of the ornament.

(26) Close by the latter, fragment of a sarcophagus with a panel having triangular tags and a wreath (Fig. 7).

(27) Near the south end of the ruin a straight channel in the rock, 2 feet wide, now full of earth—perhaps part of an aqueduct. It is about 30 feet long.

Beside one of the telegraph posts, among a large number of sarcophagi which are quite plain, there is one bearing a palm-branch on its side.

THE GREAT WATER PASSAGE OF KHIRBET BEL'AMEH.

By DR. G. SCHUMACHER, Haifa.

WHILE laying out the carriage road which is now in course of construction between Jinîn and Nâblus, I halted at *'Ain Senjal*, and explored the "cave" of which, on the previous day, my native companions had given me such attractive accounts. The inhabitants of Jinîn spell the name of the spring *'Ain* or *Bir Senjal*, or *Sinjil* (سنجل). A Bedouin shepherd, to whom I always fly when in dialectic difficulties, called out *'Ain Senjar* (سنجر), which probably is the more correct. Sheet VIII of the Great Map of the P.E.F. spells it *Bir es-Sinjib*. Guérin, *Samarie*, I, 341, writes *Bir es-Senjem*; Baedeker's Map of Palestine gives *Bir Bel'ame*.¹ It is situate one mile and a quarter south of Jinîn, on the left hand of the narrow valley Wâdy Bel'ameh, close to the ancient and modern main road.

A doorway, opening towards the east, covered with a pointed arch vault of 3.50 metres (about 11½ ft.) in height, 3 metres (nearly 10 ft.) wide, and still 11.20 metres (nearly 37 ft. long), connected the main road with the water-place, and protected it from *débris* rolling down the hill side (Fig. 1). The present level of the spring is about equal to that of the dry summer bed of Wâdy Bel'ameh: the vaulted passage may, therefore, once have served as a canal connecting both; heaps of earth and of pottery are now

¹ So in *P.E.F. Mem.*, Vol. II, p. 51, quotes Guérin.

accumulated before the spring, over which we step in descending to the water. The latter is good and very plentiful, and although large flocks are being constantly watered, the surface does not sink any lower.

The arched doorway is partly fallen. The masonry seems to be Arabic and the foundations probably of the Crusading period. Among the pottery excavated by a road-cutting close to the spring I found Roman *terra sigillata*, Roman glass, Israelite and pre-Israelite fragments, layers of ashes, parts of a human body, including an



FIG. 1.—Entrance to Cave at Khirbet Bel'ameh.

infant's skull, and, near the surface, masses of Arabic jar fragments. My overseers found a few broken Roman pottery lamps and a haematite seal-stone without any carvings.

The natural limestone rock overhangs the spring, and its eastern surface ends just above the water.¹ *Débris* and small building

¹ On this surface I remarked a horizontal draft cut into the rock which runs across the rock lintel, and which once bore an inscription. The draft is 8 centimetres high. The totally defaced letters seem to have been Latin or Greek, *a* (and **I**) *v* being visible. This inscription seems to be contemporary with the foundation-masonry of the arch, but is certainly not as old as the tunnel.

stones surround the spring; to its right a low passage of not more than 2 feet in height gives access to the interior, which, immediately behind the spring, opens to a height of 4·20 metres (nearly 14 ft.), and a width of 3 metres (nearly 10 ft.). By aid of candle-light and burning thorn bushes, we were able to trace this remarkable subterranean excavation, which has a striking resemblance to the great tunnel discovered at Gezer, which Prof. Macalister was good enough to show me in the autumn of 1907. The accompanying plan illustrates the *mughāra*, or "cave," which, according to the statements of the neighbouring fellahin, leads up to Khirbet Bel'ameh (بلعمة), a ruin situate on the top of the mountain, at the foot of which 'Ain Senjal is found.

I have been able to follow the tunnel to a length of about 30 metres (98 ft.), and can vouch for its continuation in the direction of Khirbet Bel'ameh, or Bil'am (بلعام), as others pronounce it. To the left of the tunnel entrance we found a staircase 1·20 metres (3 ft. 11 in.) wide, the steps being cut out of the rock and having a height of 18 centimetres (about 7 in.) and a width of 30 centimetres each (nearly 1 ft.). These stairs form a sideway of the main tunnel, which evidently led to a now hidden entrance, and a little above 'Ain Senjal. The top of the staircase is blocked with stones and débris.

The main tunnel shows, in its part nearest the spring, traces of rock-cut steps, now covered with heaps of skeletons of bats; these creatures abound in the cave, and fly wildly about us as we disturb their abode. Eleven metres (about 36 ft.) from the spring the tunnel turns at A to the south-east, at an angle of about 120 degrees; at this bend we see in the ceiling an air-hole of about 60 by 70 centimetres (24–27 in.) in width, leading to the surface of the hill slope, but now blocked with stones; our guides call it *rôzany*, and pretend that iron rings or hooks are fastened into the masonry lining the top part of the air-hole. This designation was also given to the air-holes of the subterranean city of *Dera'ah*, in Haurān (cp. *Across the Jordan*, p. 135 sq.). The heaps of remains of animals, bones and ashes increase as we continue, and we sink into them to our knees, the rock steps disappearing consequently. The next nine metres lead us to remains of masonry on the right side of the tunnel; here, at B (cp. sketch), it turns again to the left at an angle of about 110 degrees, and continues for ten more

metres to C, where, again, masonry appears and now completely blocks the tunnel. The angle to the left at C is of about 100 degrees. The masonry seems to be Arabic, and may have formed an abode for highwaymen of the days of Jerrâr, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Wâdy Bel'ameh was renowned for its

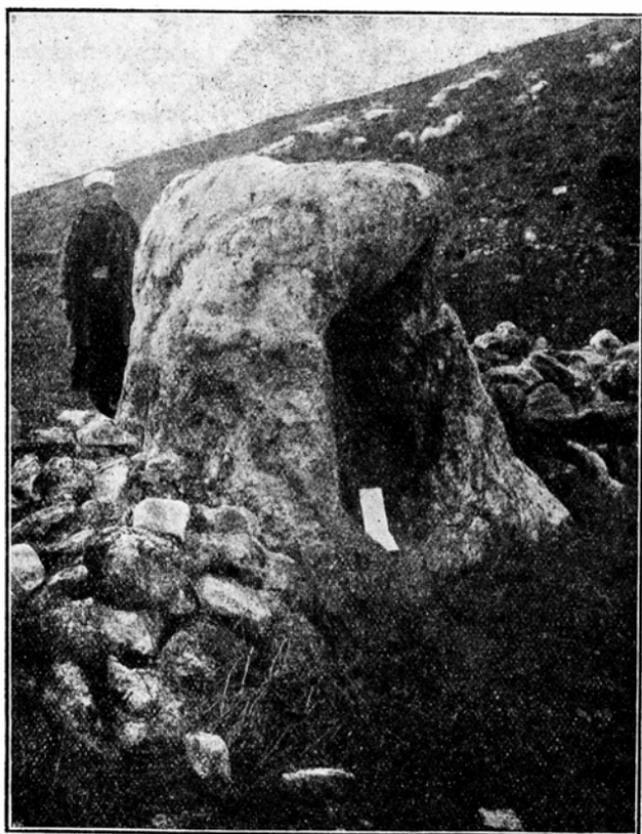


FIG. 2.—Monolith in the Wady Bel'ameh. View from the East.

hiding places for men of that profession, as it still is at the present day.

In the sides of the tunnel lamp holes are carved out of the rock, some (*l*) are 15 centimetres high and 20 centimetres wide; others (*o*) are as much as 60 centimetres deep.

Excavations would certainly result in interesting discoveries, but we can already learn from the above description that Khirbet Bilâm may date back as early as Gezer or Tell el-Mutesellim (Megiddo), for I feel certain that the absence of large cisterns will finally lead to the discovery of a similar subterranean waterway at Megiddo, as it has at Gezer.

Regarding the identification of this place with Bileam (1 Chron. vi, 70), see *Memoirs Palestine Exploration Fund, Samaria*, Sheet VIII, Section B, p. 51. Guérin, *Samarie*, I, p. 341, gives a short account of the "Souterrain." It is certainly worth while being explored.

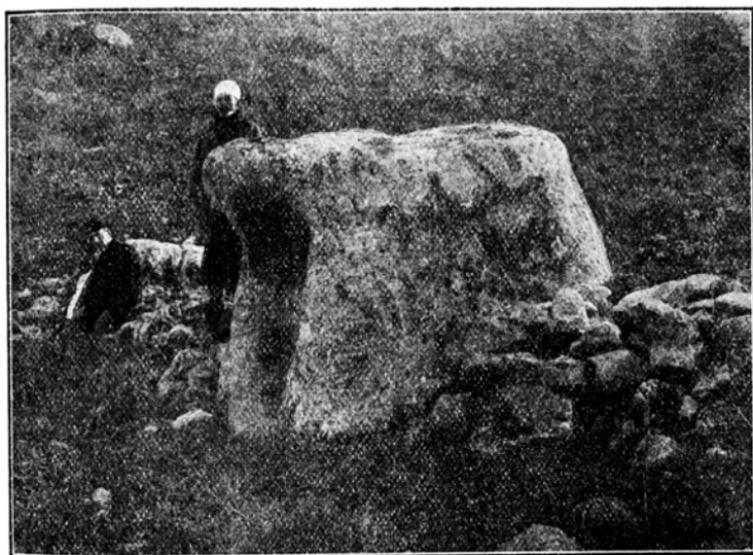


FIG. 3.—View of Monolith from the West.

About four hundred paces up the valley from 'Ain Senjal, a remarkable large limestone monolith is embedded in the Wâdy Bel'ameh, called *Hajr el-Atrash*, "The Deaf Stone," *cp.* Fig. 2, view from the east, and Fig. 3, view from the west. The monolith has still a height of 1·80 metres to 1·90 metres (5 ft. 11 in. to 6 ft. 2 in.), its flat top measures 2·40 metres (about 7 ft. 9 in.) across, and contains two oval cups, each 23 centimetres long, 12 centimetres wide, and 11 centimetres deep (about 9 in. by 4½ in. by 4¼ in.). A peculiar projection appears on the northern part of the

large stone, and overhangs a niche cut into the northern face of the rock. The niche has a height of 1·30 metres, a width of 1·15 metres, and a depth of 0·50 metres (about 4 ft. 3 in. by 3 ft. 8 in. by 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.). The great block, which attracts one already from the distance, is said to have been a place of worship, "of the days of el-Kuffār" (the un-believers, the idolaters), as its name signifies. It seems to me to have been an altar, the niche probably containing an idol, or being left empty to receive offerings; it may also represent an Israelite boundary stone.

A CAUSEWAY ACROSS THE DEAD SEA, AND A MOABITE MONOLITH.

By A. FORDER, Jerusalem.

It is not long since that I returned from a tour among the Arabs of Moab and the eastern shores of the Dead Sea, and probably some of the things I saw and learned will be of interest to the readers of the *Quarterly Statement*.

Whilst in the Ghôr es-Sâfieh, I made enquiries about the causeway that once connected the Lisân with the western shore of the sea. I was assured that such a thing had really existed, and was remembered by many of the men to whom I talked. One old man said he was willing to take me to the spot from which this causeway once started, and, as he assured me that he had many times traversed the road himself, I agreed to accompany him and see for myself what there was to substantiate such a report.

Leaving the camp one morning at nine o'clock, mounted on mules, we made off due west across the Lisân, and in exactly two hours reached the water's edge at the narrowest point. On the way we passed the remains of what my guide told me were once guard-houses for the protection of the caravans that traversed and traded between Moab and Hebron. All the way from the camp to the water's edge was a well defined road consisting of many tracks, well preserved, because of the little rainfall and the non-use of the track in these days.