

REPORTS FROM DR. DUNCAN MACKENZIE.

PETRA, ARABIA, *November 7th*, 1910.

YOU will be interested to know that we are still so far away on our journey as Petra. I had, indeed, hoped to be on our way back by the end of October, but the inevitable hitches and delays, incidental to a journey of this kind, made it impossible for us to reach our furthestmost point, which was Petra, within the limits of time I had set out in advance. We have also taken more time, apart from accidents, because we have seen more and done more than we ever expected; and this is very satisfactory.

In my last letter I informed you of my intention to visit Moab, in company with Mr. Newton, so as to fill up profitably the time that was likely to elapse pending the settlement of the question of the Commissioner. I also gave reasons for my anxiety to visit sites that might be on the *tapis* for prospective excavations of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Among such regions I understood that Moab and the Philistine coastland took the most prominent place in the estimation of the Committee. I took Moab first simply because climatic conditions happened to be more favourable there for the time of the year than in Philistia. I am equally anxious to visit unexcavated sites in coastland Philistia at the earliest possible interval in the coming excavations at Ain Shems.

During our expedition in Moab we have been practically cut off from communication with the outside world—it has been hardly possible to dispatch letters or to receive them—but I have arranged for letters to be forwarded, and hope to hear whether the question of the Commissioner has been settled within the next few days. In the case of such a settlement I shall arrange for getting back to Jerusalem with the least possible delay.

And now as regards our expedition itself. This has been beyond all expectation successful. As an indication of what we have been doing I may say that Mr. Newton estimates that it will

take him probably two months to work out all the plans and sketches of sites we have obtained. I should like to say something of these in their order and in some detail.

1. *Ammān*.—Here our very first discovery was a dolmenic tomb of very great interest, with four cellars, which afforded a clue to a whole series of early monuments, extending over a wide area about Ammān, of which Mr. Newton has obtained plans and sketches. The relation of the tombs to these habitations is quite apparent, and of all this I hope to have something to say in a paper about rude megalithic monuments in Palestine.

2. *Mudeba*.—In all this work we naturally avoided doing once more what had been sufficiently accomplished through the zeal and extraordinary diligence of Conder; but even at Maraighat, where Conder is perhaps at his strongest about the early monuments, we came upon evidence that our predecessors had overlooked. The wall of enclosure in the case of the dolmen type of tomb forms an element of construction that must not be left out of account, and of this I found more than one important instance at Maraighat.

3. *Dibān*.—To this site, as you may suppose, we paid very great attention. Mr. Newton has secured paced-out plans and contour sections, and I took copious notes of the whole. With Mr. Newton's plans I hope to be able to present a memorandum on the site of Dibān.

4. *Rabbath Moab*.—Our work at this great site was similar to that at Dibān and had a similar object in view—the prospects of excavation. Along with Mr. Newton's plan I hope to be able to present a memorandum like that on Dibān.

5. *The Kerak Region*.—Here our one discovery of interest was a megalithic site with adjoining menhirs which furnished an important link in the chain of evidence connecting dolmens, menhirs and megalithic settlements with each other all over Palestine. I hope to have some reference to this site in my proposed paper on Megalithic Monuments in Palestine. As we were on our way to Katraneh we could hardly do more than sketch and photograph the menhirs.

6. *Petra*.—Before we left Jerusalem (October 5th) we had heard that Prof. Dalman was preparing a paper for the Palestine Exploration Fund, dealing with perhaps the most wonderful

monument at Petra, the so-called Khasne or "Treasury of Pharaoh." From his conversation we gathered that a really thorough architectural drawing of the monument would be very desirable. This, however, we understood, would present enormous difficulties on account of the stupendous height of the tomb and the presence of an upper storey, which had never been scaled by anybody fitted to make a drawing of the tomb. I decided at once that we should have to rise to the occasion, and ordered a tall ladder in four pieces to be constructed and sent over Moab to the railway for Ma'an. The ladder arrived all right, and Mr. Newton is now busy with parts of it getting details of the lower storey, and all of this, in the accuracy we expect to attain, will be new work; but as to the upper storey Mr. Newton hardly has hopes for the moment of being able to accomplish the object for which the ladder was brought so far. Apart from that we have been able already to obtain many details about which Prof. Dalman was interested, so that our work has not been in vain. In my next letter I hope to be able to report on the success of the work we set out to accomplish this week at Petra.

The Committee will be pleased to know that our journey has so far passed off without any disagreeable incidents whatever. We have come as far as Ma'an without any escort, and nowhere did we receive the slightest impression that travelling was unsafe in Moab.

The Bedawin have almost invariably been friendly, and indeed at Rabbath Moab we established most amicable relations with the powerful tribe of the Mjalli which might turn to very good account were the Fund ever to excavate there. We were hospitably entertained at the tents of the chiefs and very cordial visits were interchanged.¹

PETRA, *November 14th, 1910.*

This is just a word in continuation of my last letter to say that contrary to all our expectations we have succeeded in getting the ladder into position, and ascending to the upper storey of the tomb. We have thus succeeded in accomplishing what had never been attempted before, and Mr. Newton has in this way been able to get what may be called a complete and final drawing of the monument.

[¹ Since this was written there have been serious massacres in the district.—*Ed.*]

It must be remembered in the first place that whatever has been done at Petra up till now has had to make shift either with a plan of the lower storey alone or with faked drawings after photographs such as form so prominent and lamentable a feature of even the most recent books dealing with Petra.

In the next place Mr. Newton is the first architect who has been able (by means of the ladder) to deal with the monument as a whole.

In my last letter I explained our reasons for wishing to deal with the "Treasury of Pharaoh" in a thorough way, and so making Petra the final if not the most important stage in our journey. Prof. Dalman, we had heard, was contributing a paper on the monument to be published by the Palestine Exploration Fund, and on my understanding how it was with the illustration of the monument, I suggested that a ladder, properly made, would be the best way of getting at the monument. I need not say that Prof. Dalman supported the idea very warmly indeed, urging us in this way to perform a true service to archaeological science.

What then was our surprise and pleasure, just as we had accomplished our object, to see Prof. Dalman turn up at Petra. We told him the good news of our success, and it put him in a very good humour indeed. We discussed many points about the monument together.

We are leaving Prof. Dalman behind and are just starting on our first stage on the return journey.
