

THE FUND'S EXCAVATIONS AT 'AIN SHEMS.

SECOND REPORT.

By DR. DUNCAN MACKENZIE.¹

THE Second Report of the excavations of the Palestine Exploration Fund at 'Ain Shems, forwarded by Dr. Duncan Mackenzie, covers the period from June 7th to August 10th inclusive. Some delay was caused in June by the harvest, which led to an exodus of labourers to such an extent that it was deemed inadvisable to turn the remainder upon the delicate work of tomb-opening upon which Dr. Mackenzie has been chiefly employed. At the expiration of a week, however, it was found possible to reorganize a staff for the resumption of this work, and altogether forty-one men, women and boys were taken on. Unfortunately, Dr. Mackenzie himself also suffered some indisposition, but during the time that he was unable to exercise the usual supervision, delay was avoided by setting the labourers upon various necessary preliminary work, such as searching for likely tombs and clearing away *débris*.

The result of the two months' operations, in spite of these accidents, has been of great interest, and much new material has been brought to light illustrating the character and evolution of tombs; and when this material is compared with the evidence from other parts of the Mediterranean basin it seems very probable that much can be ascertained of the relative dates of the various forms of tombs, and of the historical influences that have shaped their development.

Dr. Mackenzie, in his report, deals with eight tombs which were discovered in "the north-west necropolis," thoroughly searched, and their contents carefully tabulated. They fall into two main types illustrated by Tombs I and II. The former, the earliest type of rock-tomb as yet observed, is the "troglodyte" cave-tomb of natural

¹ [Based upon the daily record of the progress of the excavations kept by Dr. Duncan Mackenzie, who is not responsible for the form these paragraphs take.—Ed.]

formation, with a natural entrance at the side which, however, is supplanted by a vertical well-like shaft sunk direct through the roof of the tomb. Tomb I, like some of the others, had been already pretty carefully ransacked, and its contents appear to have found their way into the market. Enough, however, remained to enable the excavators to prove that the tomb was relatively early, its latest period probably coinciding with the earliest of Tomb II.

Tomb I is a cave of enormous size, and apparently is entirely of natural origin. It is roughly of circular shape with two deep recesses. Many calcined bones were found in it, suggestive at first sight of cremation, but Dr. Mackenzie is inclined to associate this feature with the wide-spread conception of the tomb as the habitation of the dead, and since both tombs contained mutton bones he conjectures that they were the scene of ceremonial meals.

Tomb II had a cylindrical shaft like the preceding, and from it a narrow inclined tunnel descended into the chamber. This last was rectangular in shape with a divan arrangement and a separate façade entrance—a miniature door-shaped portal closed by a stone slab. It seems to have been customary to roll a stone cylinder against such slabs in order to keep them more firmly in position, and since similar cylinders were found elsewhere in the “north-west necropolis,” they may probably be regarded as characteristic of 'Ain Shems. Another curious feature is the use of a recess (also discovered in Tomb VII), used for storing up pottery and the remains of the earlier burials in the main chamber. Tomb II was fairly free of accumulated deposit, and contained skeletons which unfortunately were in a very bad state of preservation. Strangely enough there were few small objects discovered, but there were many examples of pottery of characteristic types indicating an advanced period, presumably contemporary with the Jewish monarchy. The lamps which were found were also characteristic; they were relatively later than the type in Tomb I, and showed marks of burning. It is probable that they point to some funereal ceremony in which lamps were lit. The pottery jars were nearly all one-handed, and Dr. Mackenzie draws attention to one vase in particular, remarkable for its elegance and refinement of shape, the section was almost “egg-shell” in its thinness, reminding one of a modern Chinese saucer, and the whole proves a perfection in ceramic art in which external influence, whether Aegean or indirectly through the Philistine peoples, may be recognized.

The interesting feature of Tomb II is the occurrence of this type of construction with a certain type of Semitic pottery. The rectangular form with façade entrance and divan is an imitation of a house-chamber, and has an extensive distribution throughout the Mediterranean area. This type in Palestine has usually been supposed to be of the Roman Age, but elsewhere it dates from an early period in the Bronze Age, and consequently, although through the influence of Imperial Rome it became more general throughout the Roman empire, it by no means follows that all rectangular chamber-tombs with façade entrance that occur in the empire are necessarily of Roman origin or date. Dr. Mackenzie remarks that Yusuf Kanaan, the foreman of the works, knew of nothing of this type at other sites where he had been employed. It was lacking at Gezer for the period to which it belongs at 'Ain Shems, "and, indeed, he could not conceal his surprise when he saw that the pottery contained in the tomb was entirely Semitic in character.

The idea of providing the dead with a veritable chamber implies conceptions quite distinct from those where cremation is practised; hence, the occurrence of cremation in chamber-tombs is evidently due to the fusion of different rites. The use of the shaft in Tomb II, also, seems to be no original feature, and it is not improbable that it is actually derived from the "troglydote" type. It is interesting to find at 'Ain Shems the appearance of the two distinct types of tomb, and this co-existence would explain the fusion exemplified in Tomb II. Dr. Mackenzie points out that the development involved can be paralleled by the artificial treatment of the "troglydote" cave-dwellings in North Africa, and, in the course of a careful discussion, he produces much interesting evidence illustrating the tendency of tombs to pass through stages of evolution: the evolution of the divan, for example, being clearly traced both at Petra and in the so-called "tombs of the kings" at Jerusalem.

Dr. Mackenzie's elaborate treatment of the lamps, pottery, etc., must be reserved for the present, and in the meanwhile it will be enough to draw attention to the fact that these tombs are not only of great importance for the study of Palestinian archaeology, but raise several interesting questions of historical and religious importance. Dr. Mackenzie reports the discovery of Astarte figurines in Tomb I, which, with other objects (figurines of Bes and Isis, scarabs, etc.), betray a distinct and dominant Egyptian influence with a conspicuous absence of objects suggestive of Babylonian or

Aegean connections. This feature, in contrast to the presence of Cypriote and Aegean pottery elsewhere on the site, is not without significance, and it is possible that Tomb I is evidence for the presence of Egyptians and the existence of direct Egyptian domination over 'Ain Shems at the period when it was used.

Tomb V is remarkable for two terra-cotta figurines, one female, the other apparently male. They seem to form a pair, and the male figure is noteworthy for its beak-shaped face. Here Egyptianizing influence is wanting, and the occurrence of this type in Tomb V, together with the characteristic divan arrangement (as also in Tomb II) points to changes in the internal history of 'Ain Shems which it is difficult at present to explain.

Finally, in Tomb VII, there was found an object of exceptional interest: a small one-handed jug, with flat base and the usual spout above, made to represent the torso and head of a man with a beard: "All the features including eyes, nose, mouth, and ears were rendered. The arms were held in the usual ceremonial way in front with the hands towards the bosom. Here was a funnel spout broken off, and represented as held by the hands which also were broken away." The body of the vase was wheel-made, the parts representing human features were modelled by hand. "The plastic part of this vase goes along with the two figurines representing a pair of divinities found in Tomb V, in showing nothing whatever of that Egyptian influence which we have already noticed as being so strongly marked in the case of the figurines of Tomb I."

THE BEDOUIN OF THE SINAITIC PENINSULA.

BY W. E. JENNINGS-BRAMLEY.

(Continued from *Q.S.*, 1911, p. 42.)

XXV. *A Native Account of Palmer's Murder.*

FOR my next journey I was lucky to secure the services as guide of Suleiman Ebn Amer, an uncle of the Sheikh of the Teacha. Ebn Amer is his surname, and his children will bear it after him, for the Arabs are beginning to find the constant repetition of a