

RECENT DISCOVERIES, NOTES, AND NEWS FROM GALILEE.

Haifa.—Last month some natives working at the new road from Haifa to Nazareth discovered, at a distance of 2,300 metres from the ('Akka) city gate, a cave lying to the south of the road, in a rocky field. They came upon it whilst chasing a hare, which suddenly disappeared in a bush which was found to conceal the small opening of the cave. After having cleared away the earth about the entrance and a heavy stone which still partly closed the doorway, they found a chamber excavated in the soft Nâri rock, 5 feet 6 inches long in its direction from north to south, 7 feet 3 inches across its southern end, and only 5 feet 2 inches across its northern wall, in which is the door.

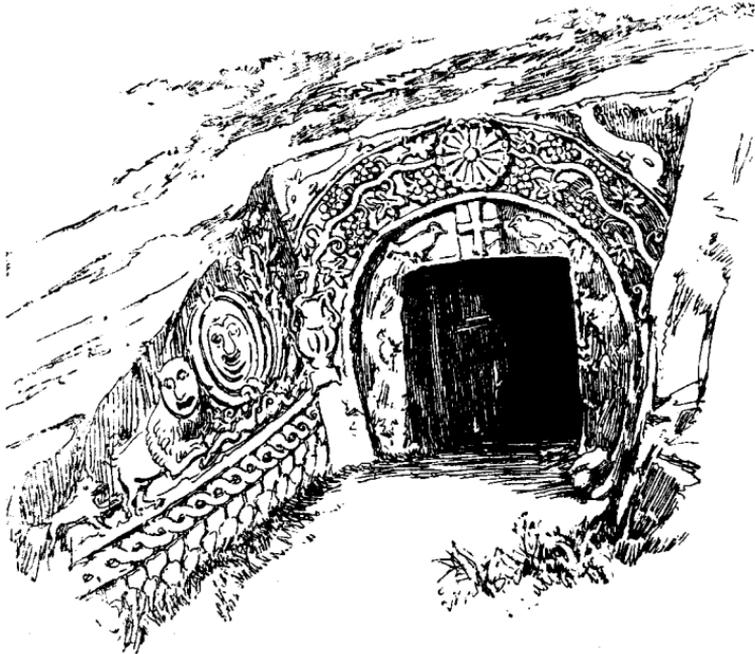
In the southern wall I found two kokim, each 5 feet 6 inches long, 2 feet wide, and 2 feet 6 inches high; in the eastern wall one koka of about the same size, and in the western wall also one koka, 6 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 3 feet high. The height of the room must have been 6 feet originally. There is a slanting vestibule, and the doorway is 2 feet high, 1 foot 6 inches wide on the top, and 2 feet 3 inches at the bottom; the stone which closed it was rectangular with rounded corners. When I visited the cave native curiosity had already rooted up the interior in hope of finding antiquities, and had carried away four sarcophagi which were found in the kokim, but I soon succeeded in finding three of them. They are made of pottery ware, very like that found at 'Abellin, and described by the late Mr. Laurence Oliphant, *Quarterly Statement*, April, 1886, p. 80. Each one has an interior length of 5 feet 4 inches, a width of 1 foot 2 inches, and a depth of $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches; the projecting upper rims were $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and about 2 inches thick. The lids were all broken into fragments; they were fitted into the coffin by small grooves, and had a simple line ornamentation on their upper surface. The cement of which the coffins were formed is of a very good compact quality, a mass composed of sand and "humra," or pounded pieces of jars and other earthenware, and lime; no influence of weather or time was discoverable, although the sides and bottom of the mass are but three-quarters of an inch thick. The fourth sarcophagus had, as before said, disappeared, but I happened to find its lid, broken into three parts; it measures only 3 feet 3 inches in length, 6 inches in width at one end, and $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches on the other, with a curved handle on the top, and ornamented with waving lines running parallel to the length of the lid. This coffin evidently was that of a child. Besides these coffins, a gutter of pottery ware, 1 foot 5 inches long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, was also found, for what purpose intended I could not make out; also a quantity of fragments of lachrymatories.

Whether any other antiquities worth mentioning were discovered besides those enumerated, the future may show; for the present the

discoverers are put under lock and key by the authorities. The vicinity of this cave seems to me to be an ancient forgotten site, probably the burial-place of *Palmarcea*, for all the rocky cliffs along the slope of Mount Carmel show indubitable signs of artificial caves with oval doors, cisterns and oil presses, quarries, circular holes in the flat rocks, &c. ; the terraces of this piece of ground, planted with olives, and called El Khalleh الخلة are bordered by old, strong walls. One of the cisterns shows an upper basin, 10 feet square, connected with a lower one, 7 feet square, by a canal ; close beside it the rock shows three steps, and on the flat top a circular hole, 1 foot 5 inches in diameter, and a little over a foot deep, with small channels cut beside it into the rock of the form of the Roman letters, M and K. The zeal of the natives in cultivating this portion of land, in hope of the coming railway to Damascus, may soon bring new discoveries to our knowledge.

Shefa 'Amr.—In a former report I mentioned the discovery of some caves near Shefa 'Amr. I have since come across them again, and although they had been turned into cisterns and were full of rain-water, and therefore could not be planned, I give a sketch of the curious rich ornamentation above the entrance and on both side walls of the rock-cut

TOMB AT SHEFA 'AMR.



FROM A PHOTO BY WM SIMPSON, AUG 1889

vestibule. A part of this ornamentation is weather-worn. The cross

above the door lintel proves their Christian origin; also the Λ and Ω aside of it. The doorway, facing north, is 2 feet 4 inches high and 1 foot 9 inches wide, and closed by a stone gate, still working; a frame around it contains vine leaves and berries, growing out of a pot, and birds. The vestibule in front of the door is cut out in a slanting form from the rock; each of the corners formed between arch and sides are filled out with a fish ornament. The side walls have allegorical figures, a curious human face (probably the sun), to the side of it a lion, followed by a smaller animal, probably a jackal; birds fill up the small empty spaces; next to the pot above mentioned we find a tree with two fruits like pomegranates; a wreath ornament is placed below the human face. These ornamentations are framed by a double cornice at the bottom of the cut, which seems to represent in a primitive manner the egg and arrow-head ornament of the Greeks. Several steps lead from the surface down to the bottom of this rock-cut vestibule, which has a length of 4 feet 10 inches, a height of 3 feet 5 inches at the door, and of $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet near the steps, and a general width of 3 feet 7 inches. As in the other tombs near by, the slant of the face of the rock was used to form the vestibule. In the "Memoirs" of the Palestine Exploration Fund (vol. i, pp. 340, 343) similar caves and ornamentations near Shefa 'Amr are mentioned, and attributed to the Byzantine period.

'Ain es Sufsáfeh.—The heavy rainfalls of last winter washed away the earth around 'Ain es Sufsáfeh, a spring near Nazareth, in the Wády M'alúl, and brought to light a broken sarcophagus, built into the wall of the well, at a depth of 3 feet below the former surface of the surrounding ground, where it had doubtless been used before as a trough to water the flocks. The sarcophagus, as far as it can be seen, has a width of 2 feet 3 inches on the outside, and a height of 2 feet 5 inches, it is made of a hard limestone, has simple ornaments on the top and bottom, and a weather-worn wreath ornament on one of the exposed sides.

Mughâret rabá' Jessás مغارة رباع جساس. This was the name given to a cave supposed to be in the neighbourhood of the Kubr ez Zír, an ancient tomb about 500 yards north-east of el Harbaj (see sheet V of large map) in the Kishon plain. The Zír زير was, according to local Arab traditions, the head of the mighty Bedawín tribe called Beni Halál بنى هلال who lived at or about the time of the Prophet Mohammed, in the country between Nazareth and Haifa; and here and there in Galilee we come across a spot to which his name is attributed, as Kusr ez Zír, at M'alúl, near Nazareth (Memoirs, vol. i, p. 322); Tell ez Zír, a mud mound close to the palm groves east of Haifa, &c. The tradition relates that Zír had a brother named Kleib, كليب and a cousin named Jessás, جساس who was the head of the tribe of the Beni Murra, بنى مرة and made war upon his cousins, by whom he and his tribe

were entirely destroyed, and that the bodies were buried at the cave mentioned, near the village of Harbaj, which still bears the name of Mughâret rabâ' Jessâs, "the cave of the comrades of Jessâs." Near el Harbaj an ordinary Bedawîn grave, 10 feet long and 3 feet across, surrounded by rude, large stones, is shown as that of ez Zîr himself, and the Bedawîn have used the venerated spot as a general burial place. About 150 yards north of it two beautiful terebinth (*butm*) trees mark the spot which by others is considered to be the real grave of ez Zîr. Below these trees we see a singular rock, in which steps seem to have been hewn, with a flat top about 2 feet square; time and weather have split the soft limestone rock into two pieces. Immediately adjoining it a number of perennial springs rise and form the head of the small Wâdy Harbaj, which joins the Kishon; coloured rags mark the terebinths as holy *fakîri* trees, which point to a period of Arab pagan history, for I do not hesitate to believe that the singular rock, with traces of channels, and holes and steps, once served as an altar for pagan worship. Some 600 yards due east of the Kubr ez Zîr, at the foot of a rocky slope, near where Sheet V of the large Map marks a small ruin called Abtûn, the renowned cave of Jessâs, the site of which had been nearly forgotten by the neighbouring Bedawîn and Fellahîn, was discovered again during last winter. A Bedawy led me to the spot, which I found closed up again by large, unhewn stones; after having moved them away, I crawled on hands and body into the cave, but had to break my way first through heaps of human skulls, with which the cave was partly filled; a quantity of other bones of the human skeleton were lying about in disorder, but it seemed to me not corresponding in number to the 60 skulls which I counted lying in my immediate neighbourhood. The skulls are still in a good state of preservation, only the jaws were mostly fallen off, and the teeth gone. The interior of the cave seems natural; no signs of an ancient tomb, but it may have been widened out of the soft and crumbling rock; it is entirely dry, which fact accounts for the preservation of the human remains for so long a time. Returning towards el Harbaj, the Bedawy guide took me most secretly by the hand, led me round the hill and then a little way up the slope, and just in front of the village, showed me a recently opened second cave, which I entered, and found a large number of human skulls, in about the same condition as those of the cave above described. Near its natural entrance, formerly closed by a single rough slab, I found the skeleton of a Bedawy woman, still partly clothed with the characteristic blue linen wound around her head, like that of a mummy. This skeleton is evidently of a later date. This cave also seems natural. My guide attributed to both of the caves the name of Jessâs. On my second visit I found them closed up again by the Bedawîn. On a stone of the Bedawîn cemetery near the Kubr ez Zîr, I remarked the following ancient *Wasm*, or tribe-sign , but I could not find out by which tribe it is, or was, used. By this discovery, Arab tradition with regard to the "brave and giant Zîr" is again awakened among the native population of

the district, and story-tellers take advantage of the long nights of Ramazan to repeat to breathless listeners the stories connected with the great Bedawy warrior.

'Akka.—A Maronite gentleman of 'Akka brought me lately a fine antique head carved out of the marble-like white limestone of *Jdlus*, near 'Akka. The head, which measures 7 inches in height, has a Greek profile; the chin is partly broken; around the forehead a string of jewels is wound, and held together by a rectangular ornament representing a precious stone, with tassels hanging down to the eyebrows. This jewelry resembles the ornaments now worn by young Arab brides at their wedding. The workmanship of this head, though not peculiarly fine, is nevertheless good. It is said to have been found among the *débris* very near the city gate of 'Akka. The same man showed me three other antiques: a small marble head, with a negro profile and curled hair, partly spoiled, 4 inches high; a little horse, 4 inches long, made of copper, with holes on the sides evidently to fasten the figure of the rider, which is lost; and a small idol, 3 inches long, representing a Salamander on one side, and (probably) a young frog on the other, apparently of Phœnician origin. The stone of which this is worked is very hard, black, and has a shining surface, even a sharp knife makes no scratch on it. These also were found in and near 'Akka.

Tantûra.—Very near the rock-cut passage which connects the shore of Tantûra with the inland plain, due east from the old tower of Tantûra, at a rocky spot in which numerous caves are cut (see "Memoirs," II, Sheet VII, p. 11), I discovered an apse cut into the rock. The apse is 1 foot 2 inches, more than semi-circular; the semi-diameter of the interior is 10 feet 3 inches; two steps lead up from the present floor to the surface of the rock, each measuring 1 foot 7 inches in width and 1 foot 3 inches in height, so that the radius of the outer circle is 13 feet 5 inches.

At each end and in the middle of the interior semi-circle I found a square hole, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and 6 inches deep, evidently intended for pillars to be built in. The bearing of the main axis is E. 18° S. To the west is a quarry with stones not quite broken out of the rock, and I therefore believe that the work is an unfinished Basilica.

Dustrey.—Near *'Athlit*, on the eastern cliffs of Khurbet Dustrey, a little north of the rock-cut passage, on a nearly inaccessible cliff, I found the following marks engraved in the rock, which I do not find mentioned in the "Memoirs." Is this a gigantic "wasm" of an old Bedawin tribe, or is it



a mason's mark? The engraving is 2 or 3 inches deep and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches

wide, and the length of the principal character is 3 feet 4 inches. These marks very easily escape detection owing to their height from the ground.

Umm el 'Alak near *Bureikeh* (Sheet VIII).—Here the following Greek inscription on a small marble slab was shown to me, it had been dug out of an old *Bedawin* (?) cemetery near :



G. SCHUMACHER.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.

SARONA, 1885.

THE numbers in column 1 of this table show the highest reading of the barometer in each month ; the maximum for the year was 30·162 ins., in December. In the years 1880, 1881, and 1884 the maximum was in January, in 1882 in February, and in 1883 in December, as in this year ; the mean of the five preceding highest pressures was 30·224 ins.

In column 2, the lowest reading in each month is shown ; the minimum for the year was 29·482 ins., in April. In the years 1880 and 1884 the minimum was in April, as in this year, in 1881 in February, in 1882 in July, and in 1883 in January ; the mean of the five preceding lowest pressures was 29·518 ins.

The range of barometric readings in the year was 0·680 inch ; the mean of the five preceding years being 0·706 inch.

The numbers in the 3rd column show the range of readings in each month ; the smallest was 0·192 inch, in October, and the largest, 0·710 inch, in September.

The numbers in the 4th column show the mean monthly pressure of the atmosphere ; the greatest, 29·950 ins., was in December. In the years 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1884, the greatest was in January, and in 1883 in February ; the smallest, 29·657 ins., was in August. In the years 1880, 1882, and 1883, the smallest was in July, in 1881 and 1884, in August, as in this year.

The highest temperature of the air in each month is shown in column 5 ; the highest in the year was 103°, in May. In the five preceding years, viz., 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, and 1884, the highest temperatures were 103°, 106°, 93°, 106°, and 100° respectively. The next in order was 98° in October, and 94° in September. The first day in the