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Palestine Exploration Fund

Quarterly Statement

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And by

Mr. Richard Bentley, 8, New Burlington Street

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(p. 20) STATEMENT OF PROGRESS,

DRAWN UP BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, THE DEAN OF WESTMINSTER,
AND PROFESSOR OWEN, AND READ TO THE MEETING OF JULY 23, 1866,

IN pursuance of the plan adopted by the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865, Captain Wilson, of the Royal Engineers—who had so successfully conducted the Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem, at the cost of Miss Burdett Coutts—was sent out, in company with Lieut. Anderson, R.E., with the view of making such a general survey of the country as would enable the promoters of the Fund to fix on particular spots for further investigation, and also to collect such special information as was compatible with the larger purpose of the expedition, and as would throw light on any of the points mentioned in the first programme of the Exploration Fund.

The expedition was constantly employed in the country from December, 1865, to May, 1866, and its results may be briefly stated as follows :—

1. *Topography*.—By accurate observations for time and latitude, made at forty-nine separate points between Beyrout and Hebron, and by a line of azimuths carried through the country from Baniyas to Jerusalem, a series of detailed maps has been formed, on the scale of one mile to an inch (the scale of the English Ordnance Survey), of the whole backbone of the country, from north to south, including the Lake of Genesareth and all the watercourses descending to its western shores.

Two debated questions have been definitely settled: the confluence of the Jabbok (Wady Zerka) with the Jordan, and the course of the Wady Surar. The nature of the country, especially in the south, is very unfavourable for rapid reconnaissance, as the numerous watercourses are so narrow, and have such tortuous courses, that it is unsafe to trust the eye, and lay anything down that has not actually been visited. Most of the errors in the existing maps seem to have arisen in this way. To remedy this defect has been the aim of the present map, and must be the aim of any completions to it hereafter.

2. *Archaeology*.—Materials have been collected for making about fifty plans, with detailed drawings, of churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, tombs, &c, amongst which are the plans of the cities of Beisan, Sebastiyeh, and Caesarea; of the Holy Place of the Samaritans, and the ruined Church of Justinian, on the summit of Mount Gerizim; of ancient churches at Baalbek, Yarun, Sebastiyeh, Beitin, Bireh, Cjosarea, Lydda, Beit Jibrin, Kuryet-elEnab, and Jerusalem; of seven Jewish synagogues; of the Grand Mosque

at Damascus, of a mosque at Nablus; of Temples at Deir el-Kalah, Mejd el-Anjar, and Kedes, and of numerous tombs in various parts of the country.

Inscriptions were found and copied at the Nahr el-Kelb, Der el-Kalah, Masi, Damascus, Tel Salhiyeh, Harran, el-Awamid, Baniyas, Kedes, Yarun, Nebartein, Kefr Birim, Kasyun, and Nablus; several of these are new, two of them in the Hebrew character, and others in the Samaritan. Squeezes were taken of the most important, including the tablets of Sennacherib at Nahr el-Kelb. The Hebrew and Samaritan inscriptions have been referred to Mr. Deutsch, of the British Museum, who has kindly undertaken to report upon their contents, age, &c. (p. 21)

The most interesting remains are those of the ancient synagogues at Tel Hum, Irbid, Kefr Birim, &c. To these attention has been called by Dr. Robinson in his "Later Biblical Researches." But the present expedition has furnished the first complete account of their arrangement and construction. They all lie north and south, have three gateways in the southern end, the interior divided into five aisles by four rows of columns, and the two northern corners formed by double engaged columns. The style of decoration does not always appear to have been the same. At Tel Hum (the strongest claimant for the site of Capernaum) and Kerazeh (Chorazin), Corinthian capitals were found; at Irbid a mixture of Corinthian and Ionic; whilst Kefr Birim, Meirou, and Um el-Amud have capitals of a peculiar character. The faces of the lintels over the gateways are usually ornamented with some device; at Nebartein there is an inscription and representation of the seven branched candlestick; at Kefr Birim the ornament appears to have been intended for the Paschal lamb; and at Tel Hum there are the pot of manna and lamb. A scroll of vine leaves with bunches of grapes is one of the most frequent ornaments.

The position of Chorazin at Kerazeh, a couple of miles north of Tel Hum—which had been indicated by the Rev. G. Williams in 1842, now seems to be fixed with tolerable certainty, by the presence of extensive remains, including those of a synagogue.

The ancient system of irrigating the plain of Genesareth can still be traced, and may help to throw light on the site of Capernaum. From the streams which descend the three wadys of Hammaui, Rubadiyeh, and Amud, water was carried to the right and left by small aqueducts, and beyond these towards the north-east the plain was watered by the spring of Tabighah. The Round Fountain seems to have irrigated a comparatively small extent of ground between W. Rubadiyeh and W. Hammam, the aqueducts from both of which can be traced nearly up to their sources, the latter one being still in use. By carefully using the water derived from these sources the entire plain was perfectly irrigated, and from the richness of its soil must have been of great fertility. Neither Ain et-Tin nor the Round Fountain answer to the account given by Josephus of the Fountain of Kepharnome; they are too small, and hardly come into the scheme of irrigation—the former not at all; but, supposing it to be Ain Tabighah, his allusion is at once explained by the copiousness of the supply, and the excavated channel through the rock above Khan Minyeh, by which the water was carried into the plain; the fertilizing powers of the fountain are still attested by the rank vegetation around the mills, more noticeable there than at any other point on the lake.

Near the mouth of Wady Semakh, on the eastern shore of the lake, some ruins called Khersa were visited, possibly those of the ancient Gergasa, and between this and Wady Fik (opposite Tiberias), appears to have been the scene of the destruction of the herd of swine; indeed no other point on that side of the lake is so suitable. From the eastern

plateau the ground slopes steeply, in a few places almost precipitously, down to the level of the lake, leaving a margin of fertile land from half a mile to a mile broad between the base of the hills and the water; but at this particular point, and only at this, a spur runs out to the shore ; there is no " cliff," but a slope sufficiently steep to fulfil the requirements of the Bible narrative.

Excavations were made in three places in the mound of Tel Salhiyeh, apparently an Assyrian monument, near Damascus, during which the sculptural slab mentioned in Porter's "Five Years in Damascus" was re-discovered. Owing to the badness of the weather it was not advisable to persevere with the exploration at that time: but it has been since resumed by Mr. Rogers, Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, to whom a sum of X50 has been voted by the Committee for that special object. (p. 22)

Besides determining the general form of the authentic synagogues, the excavations made at Kedes confirm the conjecture that the supposed synagogue there was a Greek temple, of about the same age as those at Baalbek. At Jerusalem, the gate Gennath, so-called, was found to be of comparatively modern construction; and the continuation of the passage from the Bab el-Burak of the Haram, was discovered; the vault is of massive, well-built masonry, and there seems no reason to doubt that it is one of the original entrances to the Herodian Temple.

On Mount Gerizim numerous excavations were made, under the direction of Lieut. Anderson. Within the ruin known as the "Castle," the foundations of an octagonal church were laid bare, probably the one known to have been built there by Justinian. On the eastern side of the church is an apse, on the northern side the main entrance, and on each of the others doors leading to small side chapels. In the interior are the piers of a smaller octagon, apparently intended to carry a dome. The church and castle were found to be built on a rough platform of large stones laid together without mortar, and of this—which may possibly be that on which the Samaritan Temple stood—the so-called " twelve stones" form a portion. No trace of large foundations could be found on the southern portion of the small plateau on which the castle stands. Close to the Holy Rock of the Samaritans a number of human remains were dug up, but no clue could be obtained to their age or nationality.

(p. 24) For the Committee,
W. EBOR.

A. P. STANLEY.

RICHARD OWEN.

5, New Burlington Street, *July 23rd, 1866*

(p. 35) V.

NABLUS (Shechem), *March 11th, 1860.*

Before commencing an account of our work since leaving Nazareth, I must acknowledge the receipt of your last letter, of the 26th of February, with its enclosures, five circular notes for £100 each, on the Union Bank of London, which reached me on the 14th March.

Typography.—The positions of Nazareth, Zerin, Lejjun, Beisan, Jenin, and Nablus, have been fixed astronomically, and a one-inch sketch made of the eastern portion of the plain of Esdraelou and Valley of Jezreel down to Beisan; a reconnoissance sketch of the

road from Jenin to Nablus; sketches of Beisan and Sebustiyeh on a scale of six inches to a mile; a chained survey of the summit of Gerizim, on the 1-500th scale; and a sketch of Ebal and Gerizim, with the valley between, which is now in progress. A base line has been chained for this, so that the distance between the two mountains will be obtained with the greatest accuracy.

Archaeology, Excavations, &c.—At Zerin some small excavations were made near the large square building in the village, but without result. In and around the village are more than 300 cisterns or subterraneous granaries for corn; a number of these were visited at various points, in the hope that some remains of the old town might be found in them, but neither there nor in the large accumulation of rubbish round the village could any foundations or remains be seen of sufficient importance to justify the commencement of excavations on a large scale. The examination of the mound is quite practicable, but would require some time and a large sum of money. Lejjun, Taanuk, and other places around, were visited, and notes made on their ruins. Descending to Beisan we were much struck with the isolated appearance (p. 35) of the hill on which Kumieh stands, apparently the "hill of Moreh, in the valley" (Judges vii. 1). At Beisan we were utterly at a loss where to dig, and the disturbed state of the district made it difficult to find labourers; over the greater portion of the area the rank grass and vegetation reached nearly to the shoulders, so that the character of the foundations could not be seen; and it was only by stumbling amongst the loose hidden stones that the existence of a great portion of the ruins was detected. Most of the columns standing appear to have at one time ornamented a street which ran from the Gadara Gate round the Acropolis. A plan was made of the Theatre; two rock-hewn tombs and several sarcophagi were found. Whilst at Beisan a visit was made to Sukkat. The name seems to be applied to the district as well as to a small tel, on which are some inconsiderable ruins; there is no very marked feature such as would answer to the expression "Valley of Succoth;" the district is rich and well watered, and was, when visited, occupied by over 200 tents of the Sukr Bedouin, who are now at war with the Adotian. The river being unfordable, the fighting has been confined to an exchange of Arab abuse and a few long shots across the river; some four or five men have been killed. Excavations were carried on simultaneously at Sebustiyeh and Gerizim; at the former some excavations were made at the Church of St. John and two of the temples. A plan was made of the church, and the grotto, which seems to be of masonry of a much older date than the church. There are six loeuli, in two tiers of three each, and small pigeon-holes are left at the ends for visitors to look in; the loeuli are wholly of masonry. The northern side and north-west tower arc of older date than the Crusades; I think early Saracenic; in the latter there is a peculiarly arched passage. The church is on the site of an old city gate, from which the "street of columns" started and ran round the hill eastwards. The old city was easily traced; plans were made of the temples; they are covered with rubbish from ten to twelve feet deep, to remove which with Arab labour would take some three or four months. Anderson took charge of the Gerizim excavations, and opened out the foundations of Justinian's Church within the castle; in many places but one or two courses of stone are left: the church is octagonal, on the eastern side an apse, on five sides small chapels, on one a door, the eighth side too much destroyed to make out, probably a sixth chapel; there was an inner octagon, and the building without the chapels must have been a miniature "Dome of the Rock." A few Roman coins were found. The southern portion of the crest has been excavated in several

places, but no trace of any large foundations found: in an enclosure about four feet from the Holy Rock of the Samaritans, a great number of human remains were dug up, but nothing to tell their age or nationality; we have since filled in the place and covered them up again; the Amran says they are the bodies of those priests who were anointed with consecrated oil, but may more probably have been bodies purposely buried there to defile the temple, or rudely thrown in and covered up in time of war. An excavation was made at the "twelve stones," which appear to form portion of a massive foundation of unhewn stone. M. de Saulcy is quite right about the name of Luzah being applied to the ruins near the place where the Samaritans camp for the Passover. They are not of any great extent; by far the most important remains are on the southern slope of the peak, where a portion of the city wall can still be seen and the divisions of many of the houses. Whatever its name or date, there was certainly :it one time a large town surrounding the platform on which the wely and castle now stand.

Photographs.—View of Fountain at Nazareth.

Two views of town at Nazareth.

Cliff behind Maronite Convent, Nazareth.

View of Zerln with Mount Gilboa.

Two general views of Ruins at Beisan.

(p. 36) Old Roman Bridge, Beiaan.

Theatre, Beisan.

Three views of Church of St. John, Sebustiyeh,

General view of Sebustiyeh.

Street of the Columns, Sebustiyeh.

Ruins on Mount Gerizim from south.

Sacred rock of the Samaritans.

Interior of castle, with Ebal in the distance.

The twelve stones and west wall of castle.

View of ruins of Mount Ebal.

Supposed scene of assembly of twelve tribes under Joshua.

Geology.—The only peculiarity noticed was the construction of Jebel Duhy (Little Hermon), which is composed of u a conglomerate of trap fragments, flints, and portions of hard limestone. The highest point where the wely stands is entirely of basalt, as is also an isolated conical-shaped hill, Tel Ajal, lying between Endur and Nein, aud these appear to have been the centres of eruption for the basalt which covers the country as far as Beisan.

We hoped to have been able to leave Nablus on the 19th, but a return of rainy weather will probably delay us another day or two, as I am anxious to get plans of those mosques in the town which have been Christian churches. We shall not be sorry to leave, as there has been more trouble here than in any other place. Attempts have been made to rob the tents on four separate nights, and on one occasion they managed to break in and steal a few small articles out of the tent in which Anderson and I were sleeping; last night there was a gang of six or seven who made two separate attempts, but found us on the alert each time; we gave them a volley, but it was too dark to take certain aim; the other evening an attempt was made to stone Anderson; fortunately he got off unhurt. The Mudir (governor) has been very civil and given us every assistance; the secret of the whole thing seems to be an absurd report which has become circulated among the

natives, that we have dug up a great quantity of treasure on Gerizim. We intend on leaving this to go to Tubas, and thence, if matters can be arranged with the Bedouin, by Wady Ferrah to Jisr Damieh, where we shall be able to check Lynch's astronomical observations, and sketch in a portion of the Jordan, at the same time fixing the position of Wady Zerka; we shall then return by Zanun to Awertah, where I hear there are some inscriptions in the Samaritan character, and tradition places the tombs of Eleazer, Fhinehas, and other priests; from Awertah we go to Selinn and Bethel, thence by Tibneh to Kefr Saba, and if time allows, on to Cresarea and Athlit. The season will be too late to do much in the way of excavation at Jerusalem, but there are several small things left undone hist year from want of time and means, plans of some of the smaller mosques, and the tracing of the aqueducts between Solomon's Pools and Hebron. The Jordan valley is in such an unsettled state this year, that our visit there is doubtful ; we are going to make the attempt, and see what a little bakhshish will do. Excavating is far more troublesome than I expected; one of us has to spend his whole time on the ground to ensure any work being done, and this, of course, throws other work in arrear; wages are high, from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per day, and it takes at least five men to do the work of an English navvy. I am afraid you must not look for any great discoveries; this part of the country has undergone too many changes, and been ransacked too often, to leave much chance of any. As far as I can see at present, we shall leave Palestine by the mail of the 4th or 14th May: Corporal Phillips will go direct, Anderson and I by Naples and Rome. I wish I could send you the photographic negatives, as they give me a good deal of anxiety on these rough roads, but I cannot see any way of managing it,
C. W. WILSON.

(p. 38) VII.

JERUSALEM, *May 2nd*, 1866.

Since my last note, astronomical observations

(p. 39)Anderson returned yesterday, 2nd, from Nablus, with a valuable addition to our photographs; he was opposed, from the moment of his arrival, in every possible way by Yacoob es Shellaby, who has behaved very badly throughout, and brought the Samaritans down from the mountain whilst the old roll was being photographed, and tried to make a disturbance. Fortunately the negatives and camera were preserved. Anderson's account of his visit is very interesting, and the negotiations were conducted with great skill and judgment. The Amram was his friend throughout, and the greatest assistance was kindly given by Mr. FaLscher, the Protestant Missionary at Nablus. A descent of Jacob's Well was made, and a few additional excavations on Mount Gerizim, showing the castle and church to have been built on a rough masonry platform.

Photographs.—The following have been added to the list:—

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Samaritan Camp on Mount Gerizim.

View showing conical hill north of Gerizim.

View of masonry platform (so called twelve stones).

Place of sacrifice on Gerizim, with wood and kettles prepared.

Samaritan inscription in tower (S. W. end of town).

View in gardens at Nablus (for specimens of trees).

Two views (panorama) of Ebal and Gerizim from Jacob' Well.

Two views of old silver case containing Peutateuch.

(p. 40) One photograph of interior of old roll.

Two photographs of an old Pentateuch (the book wrapped in shawls and mentioned in your note), one photograph is of the portion with the name of the scribe, the other of the Ten Commandments.

A photograph of the portion of the oldest roll, containing the name of the scribe could not be obtained.

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C. W. WILSON.

(p. 41) LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS

TAKEN IN PALESTINE BY THE FIRST EXPEDITION, NOVEMBER, 1865—MAY, 1866, UNDER THE CHARGE OF CAPTAIN WILSON, ROYAL ENGINEERS.-
CORPORAL H. PHILLIPS, R.E., PHOTOGRAPHER

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83. Sebastiyeh (Samaria), Church of St. John, northern face.

84. Sebastiyeh, Church of St. John, western and southern faces.

85. Sebastiyeh, Church of St. John, interior, with Cupola over Tomb.

86. Sebastiyeh, from the south.

87. Sebastiyeh, Street of Columns.

88. Mount Gerizim, Ruins on southern slope.

(p. 43) 89. Mount Gerizim, Sacred Rock of the Samaritans.

90. Mount Gerizim, Ruins of Church and Castle, Mount Ebal in the distance.

91. Mount Gerizim, Ruins on, from the west. Twelve stones (10 called) in foreground.

92. Mount Ebal, Stone Enclosure.

93. Mount Ebal, Recess in, from the corresponding one in Mount Gerizim.

94. Nablus (Shecem), Gateway of Mosque.

93. Nablus, Panorama No. 2, from the west.

96. Nablus, Panorama No. 1, from the west.

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12r. Mount Gerizim, Samaritan Camp. Wely and Ruins in the distance.

126. Mount Gerizim, Mound on Northern Spur.

127. Mount Gerizim, Twelve Stones (so called), showing excavation.

128. Mount Gerizim, Samaritan Place of Sacrifice, shortly before Passover.

129. Nablus, Samaritan Inscription.

130. Nablus, Ruined Church and Garden. Traditional site of the receipt of Joseph's coat by Jacob.

131. Ebal and Gerizim from Jacob's Well, Panorama No. 2.

132. Ebal and Gerizim from Jacob's Well, Panorama No. 1.

.....(p. 44)

160. Nablus, View of old silver case, containing Samaritan Pentateuch.

161. Nablus, the same, but the other side.

162. Nablus, interior of Pentateuch in silver case.

163. Nablus, Portion of an old quarto Pentateuch.

164. Nablus, another portion of the same.

These Photographs (9 in.+ 6 in.) are sold to the public at 1s. 6d. each, and to the subscribers to the Fund at 1s. A discount of 10 per cent. is given to persons taking entire sets.

(p. 45) List of Subscriptions Already Promised
(Too large see [link](#))

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

This reference is not known to be located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005