

Theology on the *Web.org.uk*

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Palestine Exploration Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_peq_01.php

£250 from the Marquis of Bute; one of £100 from "Anonymous"; and remittances from the local societies of Clifton, Bath, Tunbridge Wells, Falmouth, Nottingham, Plymouth, and Newcastle. The receipts for the first five months of the year amount, from all sources, and including the balance at the end of 1868, to about £2,150. The Committee beg their readers most earnestly not to let the work fail for want of funds. In providing them, at considerable expense, with this quarterly publication, the Committee invite them to use it in order to make their cause known. In all parts of the world interest is now aroused in the work, nor is it possible that England, were the work more widely known, would allow it to stop. But in their efforts to make the Fund national the Committee rely on the co-operation of their friends. If for a few years only these will lend their aid to raise each a small sum, no difficulty will be experienced. Meantime the shafts have to be closed for want of money to buy fresh wood, the workmen have to be reduced in numbers, and Lieutenant Warren is obliged to content himself with one or two excavations at a time. Some of the most interesting explorations—*e.g.*, that of the canals at Bir Eyub, have to be suspended; and this at a time when the most important results are being obtained, and we are apparently on the eve of solving the most interesting problems. The experience of four years has proved that to collect the small sum necessary for this work requires nothing but leaders, and that amount of activity requisite to start a local movement. Moreover, while the donations hitherto received have been chiefly of large amounts, it should not be forgotten that a good deal has been done, and that a great deal more might be done, by enlisting the interest of those who can give but little. And for these as well as for the larger subscribers, the following pages are printed.

June 24, 1869.

LETTER OF MR. EMANUEL DEUTSCH

ON THE CHARACTERS FOUND BY LIEUT. WARREN AT THE S.E. ANGLE
OF THE HARAM AREA.

SIR,—During a recent visit to the East I examined, at the instance of the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, all the excavations in progress at Jerusalem. I have further investigated various places

of archæological and antiquarian interest throughout Palestine and Syria, at which researches have already been instituted, or at which it is extremely desirable that they should be instituted, in connection with the objects of your Fund.

There is no particular need for me to recapitulate the results already achieved by the Fund. The reports published by your Committee from time to time dwell with accuracy and minuteness on these points. Suffice it summarily to recall the works at Ophel, Robinson's Arch, Wilson's Arch, the Fountain of the Virgin, and the other spots in the vicinity of the Temple enclosure. This, however, I would beg to emphasize, that all these labours cannot but be regarded as being in their infancy. Underground Jerusalem, such as it discloses itself within these shafts and galleries, driven into the *débris* of thousands of years, presents so wide a field for archæological and topographical research, that if a success really adequate to its prospects is to be achieved, the work ought to be placed on a far more extensive footing. You have been very fortunate in the choice of your superintendent, Lieutenant Warren, whose thorough efficiency and iron perseverance are only equalled by his zeal and enthusiasm. But, instead of having to discharge half his already trained workmen, as he had to do during my stay, he should be enabled to engage tenfold assistance. As far as the excavations themselves are concerned, one comfort, if it be a comfort to your Committee, remains; I mean that, with the interest already aroused throughout the world by the doings of the Fund, there can be little doubt that if the work is abandoned owing to the want of support in England, some other nation will take it in hand and carry it out vigorously to the end.

I must now speak somewhat fully on a subject which has engaged public attention for some time, and has already given rise to many conjectures—namely, the “Writings,” either painted on, or cut into, the stones, discovered lately on the bottom rows of the wall at the south-east corner of the Haram, at a depth of about 90ft., there where the foundations lie on the live rock itself. I have examined them carefully in their places—by no means an easy task. Neither is the ventilation at that depth favourable to free breathing; nor is the pale glimmer of the taper or the sudden glare of the magnesium wire calculated materially to assist epigraphical studies. To add to the difficulty, some of the characters are partly hidden by the framework, which, let me add by the way, is about to be removed to some other shaft *in order to save expense*, a process whereby the whole of these Graffiti will be buried again, if not totally destroyed.

I have come to the following conclusions:—1, The signs cut or painted were on the stones when they were first laid in their present places; 2, they do not represent any Inscription; 3, they are Phœnician.

I consider them to be partly letters, partly numerals, and partly special masons' or quarry signs. Some of them were recognisable at

once as well-known Phœnician characters; others, hitherto unknown in Phœnician epigraphy, I had the rare satisfaction of being able to identify on absolutely undoubted antique Phœnician structures in Syria; such as the primitive substructures of the harbour at Sidon. No less did I observe them on the "bevelled" stones taken from ancient edifices and built into later work throughout Phœnicia. For a most striking and obvious instance of this I would point to the ruined citadel standing above Saida, the stones of which—old Phœnician stones to wit, immured in their present place at subsequent periods—teem with peculiar marks ("Fantasias") identical with those at Jerusalem. These signs have, to my knowledge, never been noticed before, as, indeed, I was the first to point them out to the very excavator of the famous Ashmunazar Sarcophagus himself—a Syrian gentleman resident at Saida, and well acquainted with all the extant remains. It may not be superfluous to add that, though I found extremely well-preserved painted frescoes in Phœnician tombs, all the stone-marks just alluded to were cut, not painted.

I think all attempts to determine the exact meaning of each and all of these technical signs would, at least at this stage, be premature. If the excavations are properly carried on, I venture to predict the occurrence of similar signs on corresponding rows of the wall—signs which, conjointly with those now discovered, may contain not only a full explanation of their own purport, but also solve perhaps some other vital question regarding the plan of the whole building. It may, however, be well to say a few words regarding my opinion as to the Numerals.

You are aware that the Phœnicians had special numerical signs (figures) which they not rarely added to the number written out in words (see the sacrificial tariffs of Marseilles and the British Museum, the tomb of Ashmunazar in the Louvre, the trilingual inscription on the Sardinian altar, &c.) The basis of this cipher system, probably derived from Babylonia, is the simple stroke. One perpendicular stroke stands for One, two stand for Two, and so on up to Ten. The ten is expressed by a horizontal stroke, either quite straight or curved. Two such strokes placed upon each other form twenty. Of this figure, however, there are many variations, according to the different positions and combinations of the two tens of which it is composed. It either appears as an oval more or less flat, with the ends either open or closed: or something like our own 3; or with the straight strokes placed perpendicularly and joined by a little slanting or horizontal line, as a Latin N or a Greek H, and so forth. A special sign for five had not as yet been found on our scanty Phœnician remains. It occurs, however, very frequently in Palmyrene, the figures of which are undoubtedly taken from the Phœnician, and it occurs among these signs on the wall. It consists of an oblique stroke divided by a smaller stroke—in other words, the ten halved. To give an easy and clear specimen, I would refer to stone B, in course 5, which shows the marks $\circ \gamma \circ = 20 \ 5 \ 20$. Whether these figures designate cubits or inches,

height or breadth, stones or courses, must be left to the future to decide. It seems superfluous to point out how much not only Phœnikology, but Semitic studies in general, would gain by an increase of similar epigraphical discoveries. Only, they must be preserved intact; since no drawing, however careful, can accurately render epigraphical monuments, and photography has in the present case proved a failure.

I have, in the course of my journey, frequently had occasion to feel grateful for the series of photographs taken under your auspices by Captain Wilson and Lieutenant Warren. Thus, to allude to one fact only; when two years ago I was enabled by one of your photographs fully to decipher the probably oldest Samaritan stone in existence, now immured upside down in the ruined mosque of Nablus, I could not but be surprised at the fact that no investigator, however competent, even among those who had copied the stone on the spot, should have been able to decipher it fully, and without conjectures, before. When on the spot myself I soon perceived that the photograph showed what the stone itself did not show, at least from the position in which the decipherer is necessarily placed; hanging as he does, at some height in the middle of a ruined tower, over an unstable ledge, and straining towards some blurred and indistinct Samaritan letters standing as it were on their heads. In the same way I have found it much easier to read the Hebrew inscription on the lintel of the ruined synagogue at Kefr Birim ("Peace be upon this dwelling-place," &c.) in the photographs than at the place itself. And let me add another rather melancholy advantage these photographs offer; they record what magnificent remains there were in the land two years ago. It was with real pain that I noticed how much of these has since been carried away to be burnt into lime, had been wantonly mutilated, or utterly destroyed, at such places as Kedesh Naphthali, Tel Hum (whence also the remarkable Phœniko-Hebrew stone described by Lady Strangford has disappeared), at Kefr Birim, at Meiron (the traditional burial-place of Shammai and Hillel), &c. Some fine remains brought to light by your expedition seem to have been destroyed the instant the explorers left the spot, so that it might perhaps have been better to leave them in buried safety.

Lieutenant Warren has promised to send home reproductions of inscriptions from Jerusalem, some of which I was fortunate enough to discover—among them one in Hebrew with "ligatures," near the well-known tomb of the Bene-Chezir (misnamed St. James's tomb), in the Valley of Jehoshaphat; another new Hebrew inscription on a column in the double passage underneath the Akse; a cufic one in the Haram Area, in which I was enabled, through Mr. Warren's influence, to spend a considerable time utterly undisturbed. Accurate reproductions of these and similar remains will form no unworthy additions to our knowledge of the epigraphical monuments of the Holy City.

It would be more than idle at the present stage of the Fund to speak

of an extension of your researches to Phœnicia itself, a country so intimately connected with the history and culture of Palestine. Thus much only I would, from careful personal investigations on the spot, beg to place on record—that the French Expedition of some years back has been far from exhausting the field of research.

I ought not to omit that, in the course of an interview I had with the Pasha of Jerusalem, His Highness repeatedly assured me of the great interest he took in the objects of the Fund, and promised to do the very best in his power to forward the operations.

EMANUEL DEUTSCH.

G. Grove, Esq., Hon. Secretary, Palestine
Exploration Fund.

NOTES ON JEWISH SYNAGOGUES IN GALILEE.

BY CAPTAIN C. W. WILSON, R.E.

DURING the late expedition to Palestine, the remains of several undoubted Jewish Synagogues were examined, and it is proposed in the following paper to give some account of their arrangement and construction as shown by the existing ruins. The synagogues visited, nine in number, are situated in the district north of the Sea of Galilee at Nebartein, El Jish, Kefr Birim, Meiron, Um el Amud, Irbid, Tel Hum, and Kerazeh. Some other remains of the same description were said to exist in the hills above Tyre, but that part of the country did not come within the work of the exploring party.

In choosing sites for the synagogues in the different towns, the builders have by no means selected the most prominent positions. That at Nebartein lies below the old town, at Meiron a site has been excavated in the rocky side of the hill, and at Irbid the building is awkwardly situated in the lower part of the town, some distance down the northern slope of the hill, which has been partly cut away for it. Little is left of any of the synagogues. The stone has been carried away for more recent erections, and with the exception of Irbid, Tel Hum, and perhaps Kerazeh, they have not been made use of by the races who have occupied Palestine in later times. Those at Tel Hum and Kerazeh have possibly been turned into churches; that at Irbid, where the door is on the eastern side, has been used as a mosque. The entrances of the others being at their southern ends, which would have obliged a Moslem on entering to turn his back on Mecca, seems to have rendered them unsuitable for this purpose.

The buildings are always rectangular, having the longest dimension in a nearly north and south direction, and the interiors are divided into five aisles by four rows of columns, except in the small synagogue at Kefr Birim, where there have been only two rows of columns and three aisles. The masonry of the walls is well built and solid, of native lime-