

April 14.

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It is Friday, and out of respect for the religion of the majority of the people in Aqabah, we are not working today. This morning, however, we went out to the tell, to look over the site again, and to study some of the problems. A mean wind was blowing, that drove the sand into one's eyes, and every time we touched a wall, a cloud of dust covered us. This same has been blowing since yesterday noon, with a wind almost as bad prevailing yesterday morning. One of the great advantages of living in town, is that we are able to get out of this terrible wind and the sand that comes with it, - something we were not able to do last year. On the other hand, we lose good bathing facilities, for it is not easy to bathe in town, and the best beach on the shore was directly in front of our last year's camp. Yesterday noon, looking back from our house towards Tell el-Kheleifeh, we could clearly see the dark cloud of flying sand hovering over the tell, and moving out towards the sea. "And a cloud shall lead them by day, and a pillar of fire by night". If we, however, were to follow the direction of the sand moving over Tell el-Kheleifeh, ours would soon be the same fate that overcame the Egyptians when they pursued the Israelites upon their departure from Egypt.

It was impossible to do any planning with the plane-table and the tapes yesterday and today. We did a little levelling today, and will do some more tomorrow. I am going to use all the men tomorrow to clean up in so far as possible the rooms we opened up last year, and get the levels, if possible. It will probably take more than one day to get the rooms ready for levelling. In the street 26 we opened up last year, there are large sand drifts, which, however, we shall be able to move rapidly. Several problems with regard to walls which we could not solve last year, can be answered this year, because the bricks have sufficiently dried out to enable us to see things that were not formerly visible.

The ideal thing to do would be to remove level after level during the course of the excavations. We could not do this last year, because we were working mostly on the slopes of the mound and were not sure which levels were which. As a result of the levelling which we have done recently, and as a result of the new walls which have appeared during the excavations of the last three days, we know much more about the various walls that we did formerly, and will soon be in a position to make a comparatively complete town plan of especially the town of Period III, which seems to be the best preserved one. Even in places where the various levels, or parts of them are clear during the four stages which seem to cover the history of the town, are clear to us, we lack the time, money, and staff to carry out the removal of all the top levels, that is to remove level IV to get to Level III and etc.

Another very large copper nail came up on the very surface of Room 25 A today, which, together with the other portions of similar nails found, would seem to indicate the extensive use of such nails. The most obvious purpose for which such nails would be used, would seem to be the construction of small boats, which during the EI Age plied the waters of the Red Sea, (the Gulf of Aqabah) in large numbers. In addition to these nails, a piece of asphalt was picked up on the surface of Room 53, which in all likelihood, was used for the caulking of boats. Quantities of copper fragments keep coming up from the various levels, particularly the III and IV levels, and thus far, the best copper finds seem to have been made in Level IV. On the top of Room 53, I found another black glazed Greek sherd of about the fourth-fifth century B.C.

In the levelling of Rooms 35 and 35 A, it was clear that there were four levels, the first two being little more than noticeable, the IIIrd, being the best preserved, and divided into IIIA and IIIB, and the ~~fourth~~ IVth on top being in most places less well preserved. Period III is generally speaking the best preserved. To it belong the Qosanal seals in IIIA.