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To end up with, little black stone cylinders with rudely cut designs occur in Palestine, as all over the Levant, especially in North Syria and Cilicia, while the small conical North Syrian seals occur in Palestine (*Quarterly Statement*, October, 1899, p. 332) and Cyprus.

HIGH PLACE AND ALTAR AT PETRA.

By SAMUEL IVES CURTISS, D.D.¹

THE student of ancient Semitic worship will find an abundant reason for a visit to Petra in the existence there of a high place and a remarkable altar, which, aside from a passing notice,² has been overlooked until it was recently rediscovered by Professor G. L. Robinson, Ph.D., of Chicago. The report of his discovery of the place led to a careful examination of it by the writer.

Situation.—A little north of the citadel on a ledge of rocks, about 520 feet long by 90 feet wide, are a high place and altar which have been hewn from the solid rock. The ledge, which rises to a height of several hundred feet above the Wady, runs very nearly north and south, with a slight inclination to the east. It is in the midst of an amphitheatre of hills and mountains, which are much higher, especially on the east and south, and conveniently near the old dwellings cut out of the rock. The ascent is now an arduous one, though once made easier at different stages for the ancient worshippers by steps hewn out of the rock, now much worn away. Other approaches, which once doubtless existed, have disappeared.

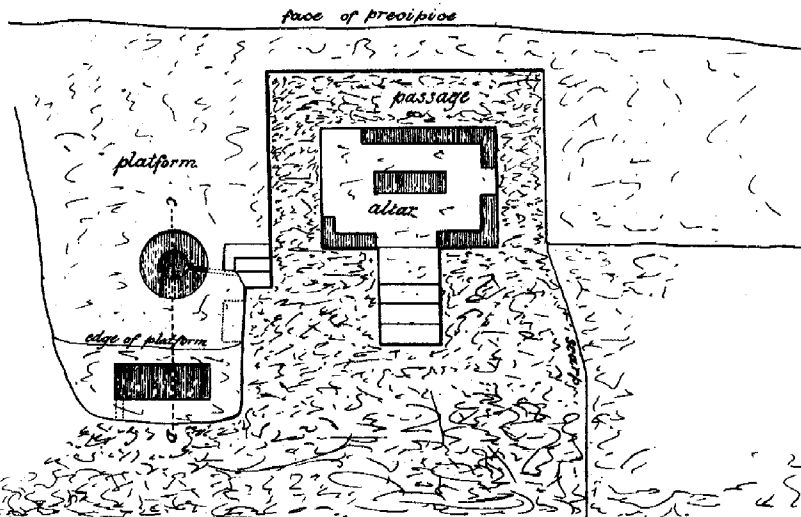
The top of the ledge is a plane surface, except for a slight natural dip from north to south. The objects most noticeable

¹ The writer is indebted to Mr. R. A. Stewart Macalister, of the Fund, for criticisms and suggestions, as well as for plans and drawings. The measurements were taken by myself on a visit to Petra, July 12th and 13th, 1900, with the assistance of Rev. A. Forder, of Jerusalem, who had visited the place during the month of May with Dr. Robinson.

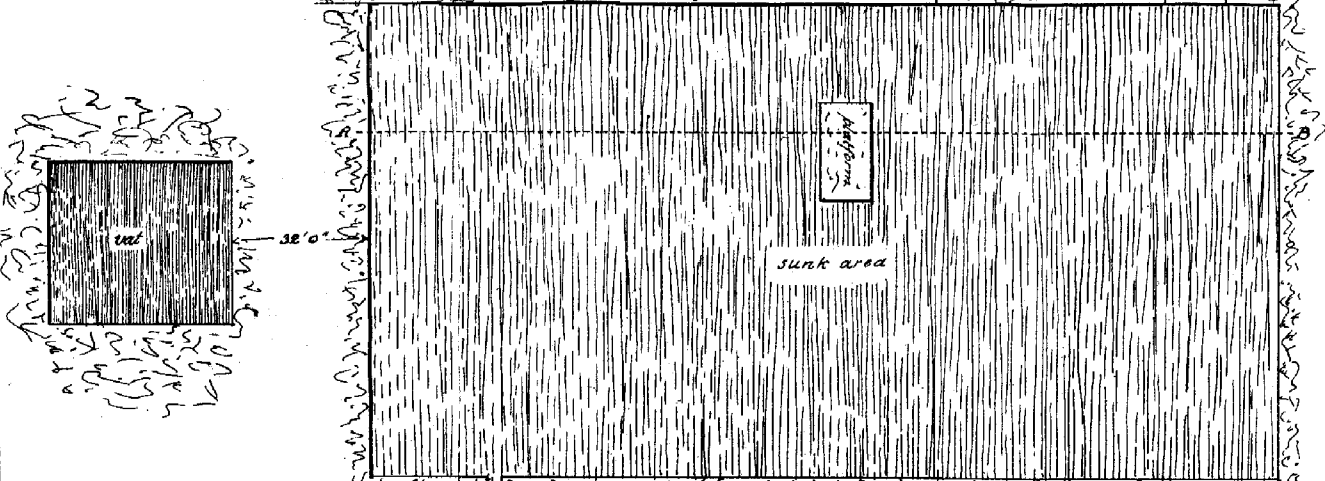
² Edward L. Wilson, an American, editor and proprietor of the "Photographic Magazine," seems to have been the original discoverer. He mentions it as "one of the 'altars in high places' consecrated to Baal." See his "Scripture Lands," London, 1891, p. 104.

PETRA

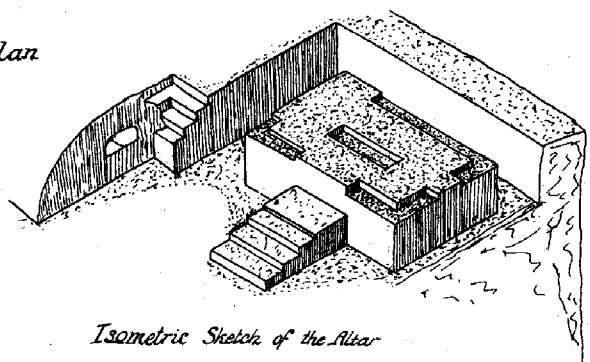
Rock-Cut Altar &c



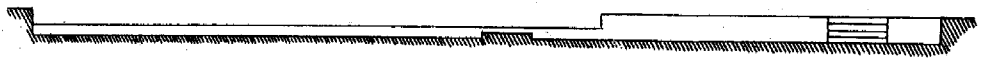
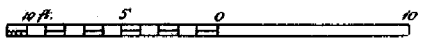
Section CD



Plan



Isometric Sketch of the Altar



Section AB

*Revised and
filled
from measurements
by Tammuz Pasa Carter.*

on this ledge are: (1) an altar on the west side; (2) a platform immediately south of this; (3) directly in front of the altar, toward the east, a rectangular sunken area, containing a small platform facing the altar; and (4) a little further south of the area a vat.

The Altar.—The altar is separated from the adjoining rock, of which it was a part, by a passageway on its north, south, and west sides. The height of the altar and of the adjoining rock is about the same. On the east side the ledge has been cut down so that it is on a level with the foot of the altar. This surface has been still further excavated, forming the rectangular area in front of the altar.

The dimensions of the altar are as follows:—Length, from north to south, 9 feet 1 inch; width, 6 feet 2 inches; height at the highest point, on the south-west corner, 3 feet.

The direction of the altar is nearly north and south, with a slight inclination to the west. None of the dimensions, followed by the ancient workmen, are exact, judged by modern standards. Possibly this fact may be of importance in determining the age of the altar.¹

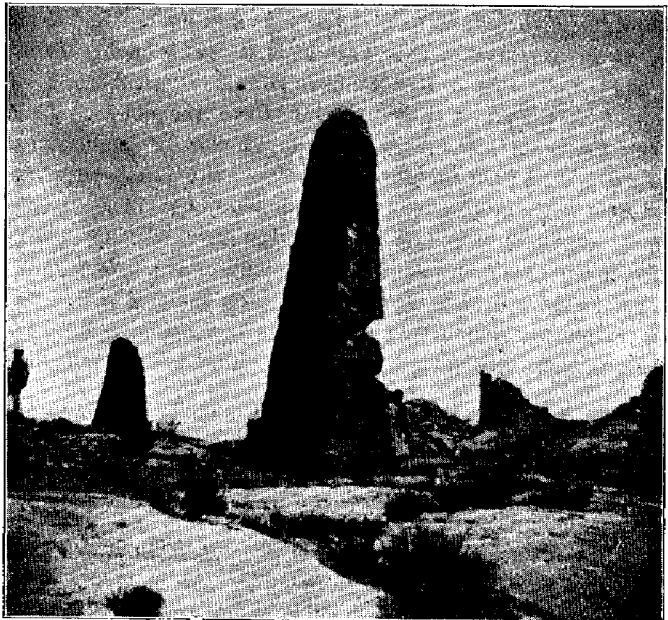
On the top of the altar is a rectangular hollow, or pan, perhaps designed for the fire,² 3 feet 8 inches long, 1 foot 2 inches wide, 3½ inches deep. This hollow is 2 feet 3 inches from the west edge of the altar, 2 feet 9 inches from the east, 2 feet 8 inches from the north, and 2 feet 9 inches from the south. There is another feature which might suggest horns of metal were it complete. It is not found, however, on the south-west corner. This feature consists in cuttings or depressions. The cutting on the south-east corner runs 1 foot 6 inches long, 8 inches wide, and 3 inches deep along the south side of the altar; 2 feet 11 inches long, 8¼ inches wide, and 1½ inches deep on the east side. On the north-east corner the cutting runs 2 feet 7 inches long by 9 inches wide along the north side; 3 feet long, 9 inches wide, and 4 inches

¹ Mr. Macalister says he has observed the same fact in the measurement of rock-cut tombs, which may be due to the difficulty of following exact details in excavating from the solid rock, but the Treasury of Pharaoh at Petra, not to mention other excavations, seems to afford an example of exact proportions.

² Similar pans for fires, used in the preparation of coffee, are found in the medafes of the Jebel-ed-Druse.



SUNKEN AREA AND ALTAR AT PETRA. *(From a Photograph.)*



MONOLITH AT PETRA. *(From a Photograph.)*

deep on the east side. On the west side, running north, is a cutting 6 feet 11 inches long, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, 3 inches deep. This leaves no cutting on the south-west corner.

Another interesting feature of this altar is in the steps on the east side leading to it. The top step, which is widest of all, forming a platform on which the officiating priest might stand, is 3 feet 3 inches long, 1 foot 11 inches wide, and is only $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the one below it; the breadth of each of the other steps is 12 inches, the second step is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the one below, the third step is 4 inches above the one below, and the fourth is the same height above the surface of the ledge. The passageway, on three sides, is in width 3 feet 1 inch on the north, 2 feet 9 inches on the south, and 2 feet 5 inches on the west. Besides the general plan and the isometric view of the altar on the accompanying plate reference may be made to the photograph for illustrations of these various details.

Platform.—Of almost equal interest with the altar and just south of it, separated only by the passageway, is a platform which seems to have been used for the preparation of sacrifices. It is 11 feet 9 inches long from north to south, 16 feet 6 inches wide, and is ascended by four steps in the north-east corner; the lowest is 1 foot 6 inches high from the ledge, 8 inches wide; the second is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, width the same; the third is 5 inches high, 9 inches wide; and the fourth is 5 inches high. The average length of the steps is 1 foot 10 inches, though they are longer at the top and shorter at the bottom. The height of the platform is 2 feet 9 inches.

On the top of the platform is a remarkable and suggestive feature with reference to its probable use in the preparation of sacrifices. This consists in two circular and concentric pans, with vertical sides, cut out of the rock, with a conduit leading from the lower pan which may have served to carry away the blood of the victim. The larger pan is 3 feet 8 inches in diameter, its depth is 3 inches; the second or lower pan is 1 foot 5 inches in diameter, its depth is 2 inches. The conduit is 3 feet 2 inches long, 2 inches wide, 3 inches deep (*see* plan of platform).

On the east side of the platform, running north and south, is a trench resembling a rock-hewn grave, 5 feet long, 1 foot 8 inches wide, 2 feet 8 inches deep on the west side, 1 foot $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep on the east side. At the bottom, on the east side of it, is a circular

hole, evidently designed to drain off whatever liquid might be put into it (see Section CD). On the north side is an arched opening 2 feet 2 inches in length, 1 foot in depth and width, and 10 inches high, with a trough in its floor 7 inches deep.

The Rock North and West of the Altar.—The rock towards the passage, remaining at the north of the altar, is of the same general height, but of smaller superficial dimensions, than the platform. There is no indication of the purpose, if any, for which it was used. The rock on the west side is quite narrow. It is a continuation of that on the north and the platform on the south. It really walls off the west side of the altar from the brink of a precipice about 30 feet deep, and this may have been the reason why it was not cut away.

The Sunken Area.—A short distance east of the altar is a sunken area, the shape of a parallelogram, which has been cut in the rock. It is 47 feet 4 inches long, 24 feet 4 inches wide. Its depth, except as mentioned later, is 15 to 18 inches. In this area is a small platform 21 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the north side of the area, 23 feet 6 inches from the south, and 5 feet from the west. Its dimensions, running east and west, are 5 feet in length, 2 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in width, and 4 inches in height from the bottom of the area. The west side of the area is not of uniform height; 2 feet 10 inches from the north-west corner is a rectangular depression 3 feet 1 inch long, connecting with four steps on the upper part of the west side of the ledge. South of this depression the average height of the west side of the area continues 11 feet 10 inches, and then the side has been cut down 8 inches to a lower plane. All the rest of the way to the south side the average height of the side of the area is about 10 inches. The other sides vary, as indicated, from 15 to 18 inches in height.

On the east side 6 feet 1 inch from the south-east corner is a drain 8 inches in width and 18 feet in length, running down the east side of the ledge. As to the purpose of this sunken area, the suggestion of Mr. Macalister that it was the place set apart for the worshippers in front of the altar seems probable, and is strengthened by a consideration of the steps leading up to it from below. It may be that the little platform was the place occupied by the one bringing the victim. A general view of this platform is shown in the photograph.

Vat.—32 feet south of the area is a vat 9 feet 9 inches in length from north to south, 8 feet 6 inches in width. It shows signs of old cement. The average depth of the vat to the soil with which it is partially filled is 3 feet.

Monoliths.—South-east of the citadel is another interesting feature which may have been connected with ancient worship. The rock here has apparently been quarried away for the sake of building material, leaving two monoliths resembling immense menhirs. They are perhaps 100 feet apart. The one towards the west, which on its north side rises from the brink of a precipice, has the following dimensions at its base:—West side, 10 feet 8 inches; south side, 7 feet 3 inches. The monolith to the east has a measurement on the south side of its base of 5 feet, on the west side of 6 feet 4 inches. These monoliths seem to be about 18 feet in height, and to have a diameter at the top of about 2 feet 6 inches. They are shown in the photograph.

JERUSALEM, July 24th, 1900.

REPORTS FROM GALILEE.

By Dr. G. SCHUMACHER.

BEISÂN.

ON the ancient high road leading from the Jâlûd Bridge, near Beisân (Bethshean), westwards towards Zer'ain (Jezreel), we came across a number of sarcophagi scattered about and partly overturned, from one of which I copied a Greek inscription, and enclose a squeeze. With the kind assistance of Messrs. Monahan and Foord the following three lines were deciphered, the other parts being obliterated:—

... ΘΟΔΙΟΓΕΝΙΚΑ ΙΟΥΛΙΑΝΟ
 ... ΝΟΥΥΙΟΙ ΙΙΝ ΝΥΙΝΑ
 ... ΧΛΑΧΟΥ ΜΙΝΙΡ