

## EXCAVATIONS IN EL KHIAM

El Kham is a wind deposited terrace (Pl. XXXVII Fig. 1). next to one of the cliffs of Wadi Khareitun in the desert SE of Bethlehem: SMG 1151 1749. It is an important prehistoric site which R. Neuville excavated in 1933 opening two trenches. The results of this excavation were published by Jean Perrot in 1951 (1).

As on the one hand, the stratigraphy of the site was not completely ascertained, and on the other hand, the excavation seemed promising, this being one of the richest prehistoric sites of Jordan, we decided, with full agreement of the Director of Antiquities of Jordan, Dr. Awni Dajani Ph.D., to dig for one season during the spring 1962. Dr. Awni Dajani in his capacity of Director of Antiquities gave us all the assistance and official help we needed; we are glad to express here our heartfelt thanks.

The work began the 23rd. May, and ended the 20th. June. Our special purpose was the study of the stratigraphy of the site. The work was done by the Spanish Casa de Santiago para Estudios Biblicos y Orientales in Jerusalem, and the Instituto Arqueologico Municipal of Madrid; the economical means been supplied by both institutions. The Director of the excavation was the author of the present communication, assisted by Vicente Vilar, Emilio Olavarri and Miss Mercedes Mezquida, from the Spanish institutions, and Hasan Al Mamluk, from the Department of Antiquities (2).

The area excavated was one of 36 square meters, next to Neuville's Trench 1. A baulk 1.10 m. wide was left between Neuville's trench and our area (Pl XXXVII, Fig. 2) The digging Proceed 7 m. deep, revealing 12 geological levels, some of which can be subdivided:

- 1 - Light color earth with angular stones, 60 cm.: **Tahunian 1**
- 2-3 Darker earth with angular stones, 40 cm.: **Prototahunian**
- 4 - Deep gray earth with angular stones, 30-45 cm.: **Khiamian 11**
- 5 - Black earth with angular stones 30 cm.: **Khiamian 1**
- 6-8 - Brown earth with angular stones and large boulders, about 50 cm.: **Kebarian**
- 9 - Light brown earth with angular stones and boulders: 70 cm.: **Atlitian**
- 10-11- Lighter brown earth with angular stones and some boulders, respectively 0,95 and 1,80 m.: **Middle Aurignatian**
- 12 - Dark brown earth with clay pockets: sterile.

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1. J. PERROT, *La terrasse d'El Kham, cap X in Neuville's book Le Paleolithique et le Mesolithique du Desert de Judée, Arch de l Inst. Paleont. Humaine, Mem. 24 Paris 1951, pp 134-178.*
  2. *We want to express here our thanks for the scientific collaboration of the Ecole Biblique et Archaeologique francaise de Jerusalem and its Director F. R. de Vaux; of the Seminario de Historia Primitiva of Madrid and its Director, J. Maryinez Santa-Olalla; and of the Seminario "Santuola" (Museo Prehistorico, Santander, Spain), presided by M. A. Garcia Guinea.*

The Tahunian 1 of El Khiam is a very rich archaeological level, not only because of the abundant flints, among which some typical arrow-heads, but also owing to the building structures it revealed: a large wall, 1 m. wide, of dry masonry, in which two faces—filled up with rubble—can be distinguished, although with not much clarity. This wall follows a general direction N-S cutting through our excavation area. It recalls the walls of Jericho Prepottery Neolithic B, but we do not know if it was a defensive wall, intended to protect the settlement at the end of Tahunian 1 (we call it thus because of the extremely archaic character of the industry the wall was destroyed, the stones falling towards the East. Then some roughly circular fireplaces were built with middle sized stones.

It is not easy to establish a clear parallel among the Tahunian industry of El Khiam and that of Jericho Prepottery Neolithic B, because the former is much nearer to the Mesolithic Culture, the microliths being abundant in it. On the other hand it seems clear that a marked difference existed, regarding the life resources between the inhabitants of Jericho, dedicated predominantly to agriculture, and those of El Khiam, whose economy was probably founded on Cattle-raising and hunt.

Prototahunian, as the name implies, is a transition level between Mesolithic and Neolithic, where the industries which will develop greatly in the Tahunian can already clearly be seen. So, for instance, the arrow-heads.

The Khiamian is the period called until now Natufian III and IV, but only found stratified in the El Khiam site. Our excavation did ascertain that the Khiamian has not relation whatever with the Natufian I and II of other sites, but that is rather the product of another different evolutionary sequence, originating directly in a developed Kebarian. For these reasons we judge that it should not be named Natufian. The levels were rich in arrow-heads, stone-mortars and pestles.

The Kebarian of El Khiam is extremely interesting not only because of the presence of the traditional phase found in the Kebara Cave, but also because it shows us the later development of this culture, Kebarian II and III, where among the flints, the steeply retouched crescent can be seen.

The Atlitian appears with very peculiar features, which distinguishes it from the Atlitian of the El Wad Cave. The industry is rich in scrapers of little size, small blades with blunted backs and a new type of points with steeply battered basis.

In the Middle Aurignatian, two Phases should be distinguished, one more recent, corresponding to Phase IV of Neuville' Superior Paleolithic, and an older one, the so called Phase III. In the latter predominate the carinated steep-nosed core scrapers and the Font-Yves points.

The work enacted, apart from providing a rich material, seems to offer an important basis for readjusting the evolutionary sequence of Jordan Prehistory.

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