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THE EXCAVATIONS OF BETH SHEMESH, NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 1912

DUNCAN MACKENZIE,
SHLOMO BUNIMOVITZ, ZVI LEDERMAN
AND NICOLETTA MOMIGLIANO

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Duncan Mackenzie†, Shlomo Bunimovitz, Zvi Lederman and Nicoletta Momigliano

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PREFACE

In December 1909, Duncan Mackenzie succeeded R. A. S. Macalister as 'Explorer' of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), and from the spring of 1910 until December 1912 was engaged in archaeological fieldwork in Palestine, especially directing excavation campaigns at ʿAin Shems, identified with biblical Beth Shemesh, an important site in the Shephelah of Judah at the crossroads of Canaanite, Philistine and Israelite cultures (Figs 1.1–1.4). Mackenzie published the results of his researches in various issues of the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* and the Palestine Exploration Fund Annual (see Chapter 1, Introduction, with bibliography of Mackenzie), but a detailed publication of his last campaign at Beth Shemesh, conducted in November–December 1912, never appeared in print during his lifetime. In 1992, however, Nicoletta Momigliano, while conducting research on Mackenzie, rediscovered a manuscript concerning his latest discoveries at the site, which was in the possession of Alistair Bain Mackenzie, the archaeologist's nephew, and was subsequently given to the Palestine Exploration Fund (see *PEQ* (January–June 1993), *Notes and News*; Momigliano 1996a; 1999).

Meanwhile, in 1990 Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman started a new series of excavations at Beth Shemesh, to clarify some of the issues raised by Mackenzie's work and by the excavations conducted at the site by Elihu Grant (of Haverford College, Pennsylvania) between 1928 and 1933. The systematic work conducted since the 1990s by Bunimovitz and Lederman has inevitably changed significantly our understanding of the site, sometimes modifying or even disproving some of Mackenzie's most cherished ideas (e.g. the biography of the city's South Gate; the supposed Philistine dominance at Beth Shemesh during the early Iron Age; the reoccupation of the site after its final destruction by the Assyrians in 701 BCE, etc.). Yet the significance of Mackenzie's discoveries during his latest season at Beth Shemesh can arguably be better appreciated today, and this is one of the reasons that justify the publication of Mackenzie's manuscript more than a century after it was written. To give one example, his discovery of late Iron Age oil production at Beth Shemesh can be better understood in the context of more recent finds concerning the political economy of the olive-oil industry in Judah and Philistia.

Another reason why Mackenzie's manuscript deserves to be better known nowadays is that it is in itself an intriguing historical document which sheds light on the history of archaeology, and of biblical archaeology in particular, at a time when archaeology was beginning to become an independent and more scientific discipline. Mackenzie was the first scholar to use the three-age system consistently and with its modern meaning in the archaeology of Palestine (Chapman 1989). Moreover, as amply illustrated in the volume presented here, Mackenzie was an early advocate of open-plan excavations and a pioneer of stratigraphic methods. Indeed, it is likely that his explicit archaeological reasoning and detailed description of depositional processes would have been tedious and puzzling for most PEF readers at the time, and can be better appreciated today. Mackenzie's work also illustrates aspects of day-to-day digging, which have now largely disappeared, such as the extensive use of additional rewards as incentive for the workmen. What is interesting, and perhaps innovative in Mackenzie's practice in the context of his time, is the fact that his rewards were not given for the discovery of exceptional finds, but according to quantities of potsherds recovered in order to 'secure the result that everything is kept and

the excavator bound down to the principle that he has no right to throw anything away' (see p. 87 = original MS p. 158).

Since Mackenzie was neither a biblical scholar nor a biblical archaeologist it is not surprising that his work at Beth Shemesh was almost free of Bible-oriented interpretation, and that he left to others the spiritual feelings aroused by 'the archaeological invocation of a biblical site' (Vincent 1911). Given Mackenzie's minimal interest in the biblical side of the archaeology of Palestine, his quick adaptation to the archaeological discourse of this discipline is admirable. It should be remembered that prior to Beth Shemesh he had never excavated in the Middle East. His only experience in this field was limited to a week he had spent with Macalister at Gezer, and to short tours of various sites in Palestine. More important was his 1910 visit to G. A. Reisner's excavations at Samaria. There he had the chance to see monumental remains of the Israelite monarchy being excavated and to exchange views with the excavator, who was also a pioneer in excavation and recording methods. Such a cursory acquaintance with the archaeology of Palestine might have led Mackenzie to a professional fiasco at Beth Shemesh, yet his work at the site proved to be outstanding.

While showing pioneering archaeological reasoning and excavation methods, Mackenzie's work was also a typical product of his time, and this is especially evident in matters of broad historical interpretations. For example, one can observe a considerable dependence on written testimony, simplistic correlations between material culture and ethnicity, and a strong emphasis on migrations and invasions as explanatory tools for cultural change (see e.g. Mackenzie's references to 'Megalithic People'), all characteristics of the culture-historical approach predominant in the first half of the twentieth century.

In short, this volume, presenting Mackenzie's more detailed discussion of the third and last excavation campaign at Beth Shemesh, fills a gap in the history of the PEF's involvement with this site and offers interesting information not only on the archaeology of Beth Shemesh, but also on the history of archaeological explorations in Palestine and the history of archaeology more generally, especially the development of stratigraphic excavations and observation of depositional processes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of our research in connection with this volume we have benefited from the help of many friends, colleagues and institutions. We would like to express our gratitude to the following and apologise in advance for any inadvertent omissions: the late Alistair Bain Mackenzie (who preserved many of his uncle's papers, including those published here); the late Roger Moorey (especially for his encouragement to NM); Rupert Chapman, Felicity Cobbing, Shimon Gibson, Ivona Lloyd-Jones, Susan E. Sherratt, Jonathan Tubb, the PEF and the University of Bristol.

Bunimovitz's and Lederman's excavations at Beth Shemesh are conducted under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University. Participating consortium institutions include Harding University, Arkansas, United States and the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. The research was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) (grant nos 898/99, 980/03, 1068/11), the Goldhirsh Foundation and by an Early Israel grant (New Horizons project), Tel Aviv University.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	*Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
Ausonia	*Ausonia: rivista della Società italiana di archeologia e storia dell'arte*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BSA	*Annual of the British School at Athens*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IAA	*Hadashot Arkheologiyot, Israel Antiquities Authority*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
Levant	*Levant: Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History*
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology* (formerly *BiblArch*)
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
PEF	Palestine Exploration Fund
PEFQ	*Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
Qedem	*Qedem: Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
Tel Aviv	*Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University*

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1. INTRODUCTION

If the P.E.F. is still thinking of D. Mackenzie may I say you could hardly hope to get a better man? He knows as much about scientific digging as any man alive, and is infinitely careful and trustworthy. He has a very wide reputation abroad. (Letter from David G. Hogarth to the PEF, 3 November 1909)

1.1. DUNCAN MACKENZIE'S LIFE AND WORK: A BRIEF OVERVIEW[1]

N. Momigliano

The Scottish archaeologist Duncan Mackenzie (Fig. 1.2) is best known for his work at the Bronze Age site of Phylakopi on the island of Melos (1896–99), and especially for his contribution, as Sir Arthur Evans's field director, to the famous excavations of the Palace of Minos at Knossos, where he worked from the spring of 1900 until 1929, with some interruptions. Between 1910 and 1912, he was engaged as PEF 'Explorer', and directed excavations at Beth Shemesh (Figs 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4); in 1913 he worked for the Wellcome expedition to the Sudan, before returning to his Knossian work until his retirement.

Unlike many of his predecessors and contemporaries, men of independent means with a keen interest in archaeology, such as Heinrich Schliemann, Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers and even Sir Arthur Evans, Mackenzie earned his living through digging, and was therefore one of the very first and very few professional field archaeologists at a time when archaeology was beginning to develop as an independent discipline. He was a first-rate excavator, totally devoted to his work, and a man capable of great personal loyalty and generosity. But he could also be oversensitive, difficult to pin down to rules and dates, impractical and unbusinesslike about money matters. In addition, he was not a particularly gifted or prolific writer. These weaknesses in his character and work habits often led to clashes with his employers, and especially with the PEF.

Mackenzie was born in 1861, in the Highlands of Scotland, in a poor family living in the small crofting village of Aultgowrie (Ross-shire), which is located about 15 miles from the town of Inverness. He was the fourth of nine children born to Alexander Mackenzie, a gamekeeper. After attending a local school in the nearby village of Marybank and a secondary school in Inverness, in 1882 he enrolled as a student of the Arts Faculty at the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated with an MA in philosophy in 1890. Subsequently, he studied philosophy and classical archaeology at the universities of Munich, Berlin and Vienna. In 1895 he received his doctorate from Vienna, after writing a dissertation on the *heroon* of Gölbaşı (ancient Trysa) in Lycia, under the supervision of the eminent archaeologist Otto Benndorf.

After completing his doctorate, in December 1895 Mackenzie became a student of the British School at Athens, and in the spring of the following year he took part in the school's excavations of a site south of the Olympieion and near the Ilissos river, which some have identified with ancient Kynosarges. It is possible that at this time Mackenzie made the acquaintance with Wilhelm Dörpfeld, who had worked with Schliemann at Troy and Tiryns, and was then the director of the German Institute in Athens and had shown an interest in the Kynosarges excavations. Most importantly, in the summer of 1896 Mackenzie started his connection with the British School's excavations on the island of Melos, especially at the important Bronze Age site of Phylakopi. His contribution here was crucial, as duly acknowledged by Cecil Smith and David Hogarth, who were the directors of the British School at Athens during this period (Hogarth succeeding Smith in 1897), and as recognized also by archaeologists

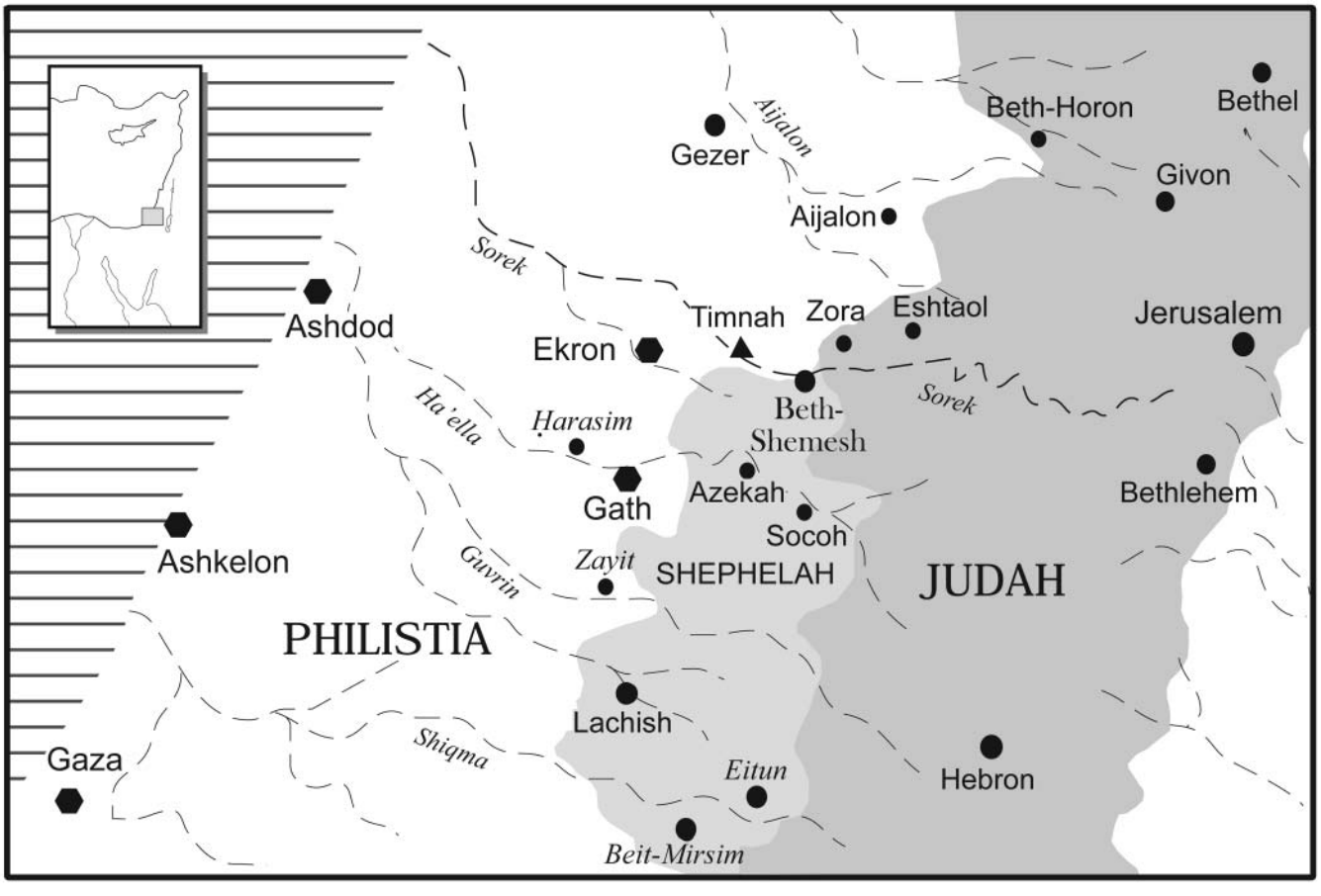

FIGURE 1.1. Map showing location of Beth Shemesh.

who later worked at this site, such as Colin Renfrew. At Phylakopi, between 1896 and 1899, Mackenzie effectively acted as field director, and was the only archaeologist who was present throughout the dig. In addition, he kept an important excavation record. Mackenzie's Phylakopi excavation daybooks, like those he later kept at Knossos, Beth Shemesh and in the Sudan, are mines of unpublished information; they also show a precision in the recording and an attention to problems of methodology and interpretation which are remarkable for the period. Suffice here to observe that, in 1963, Renfrew produced an unpublished transcription of Mackenzie's Phylakopi daybooks, and in his introduction remarked that they

> are outstanding examples of systematic archaeological reasoning, produced at a time when scientific principles of excavation had not yet been established. Duncan Mackenzie was one of the very first scientific workers in the Aegean, and his Daybooks have therefore a considerable historical value.[2]

The same applies to the daybooks he kept while working on his subsequent excavations. As mentioned above, Mackenzie was not a very prolific or gifted writer. He did publish a few seminal papers, such as his chapter on the 'successive settlements' or 'cities' of Phylakopi (perhaps modelled on Dörpfeld's Trojan 'cities'), or the articles he wrote on the Minoan pottery of Knossos, in addition, of course, to his valuable volumes on Beth Shemesh. But his various excavation daybooks are arguably his greatest contribution to archaeology. These daybooks, quoted extensively and sometimes without acknowledgement, formed the basis for important publications by others. Although some of Mackenzie's own