The Lost Ruins of Quraiya

H. St. J. B. Philby


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for readers and good natural lighting, has also been greatly admired. In his
Presidential Address for 1929 Sir Charles Close spoke of the “distinction and
originality” of the plans prepared by Kennedy and his partner, and in the
following year could refer to the “striking building which is approaching
completion” on the site to the north-east of the old house.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE LOST RUINS OF QURAIYA

1951, in the course of an article under the above title, I claimed to have been
the first to visit Quraiya. My attention has recently however been called by
my friend Dr. George Rentz of the Arabian American Oil Company to the
existence of a work entitled ‘Arabien’ by Bernard Moritz, published at
Hanover in 1923, and purchased for the Society’s library in the same year.

The author’s main concern is the discussion of various matters relating to
the physical and historical geography of Arabia; and he tells us virtually
nothing about Quraiya, though he specifically states that he visited it and
another ruin in the same neighbourhood (“die von mir besuchten Ruinen
Grêje/siehe Tafel 14/ und ‘Aijênât’). The plate to which he refers contains two
easily recognizable photographs of the ruins and the ridge; and there can be no
doubt whatever that he did in fact visit the site, and was thus the first European
to do so. The journey, in the course of which he must have seen it, apparently
took place in 1906, and the ruins were described by him in Mélanges de la
Faculté Orientale de Beyrouth, III, fascicule I, p. 433, quoted by the RR. PP.
Jaussen and Savignac in a note on p. 56 of their ‘Mission Archéologique en
Arabie’ (1909). In Arabien, Moritz himself tells us that all the results of his
expedition (diaries, maps, some hundreds of photographs and other collections)
were irretrievably lost during the war. The fortunate survival of these two
photographs of Quraiya fully establishes the fact of his visit, though he does
not seem to have been aware that he was the first European to see the ruins.

London,
September 1954

H. St. J. B. Philby

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19 July 1954

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