

injury was not done, but this is perhaps due to the conspicuous dress of the Europeans, especially Lieutenant Kitchener and myself, who wore white jackets, and stood in front of the party.

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This report was left unfinished by Lieutenant Conder when he was taken ill. It will, I think, inform the Committee of all the necessary particulars of the conflict. We retired next day to Mejdal Karum, and on Monday arrived here.

H. H. KITCHENER, Lieut. R.E.

## THE ARABS IN PALESTINE.

*(Read at the Royal Institution and reprinted from "Macmillan's Magazine.")*

THE labours of numerous explorers, and especially of the Palestine Exploration Fund, have thrown much light on Biblical archæology and topography, and many memorials and souvenirs have been found which help to make us in some degree familiar with the old world of Bible times; but of the country and its inhabitants, as they are at present, it is not too much to say, that but very little is known, especially as regards the light that may be thrown by them upon the past. It is to this modern Palestine—the Palestine of the Arab, as it may be called—that the following observations refer, and they have been made in the hope of showing how the attentive study of it may serve to light up and explain many a dim and misty page in the history of the Palestine of old.

The Biblical texts have been worked at by successive generations of commentators, until all that could be got from them has been extracted, and the periodical return of certain exegetical combinations shows that the series is complete, and the question, so far as they are concerned, exhausted. Next to the important facts which may result from future excavations, there are, in my opinion, two things required to lift Biblical archæology out of the vicious circle in which it has a tendency to turn, and to give it new life—viz., a thorough investigation of the writings of the various Mohammedan authors in the original Arabic text, and an exhaustive study of the manners, customs, and traditions of the sedentary fellaheen of Judæa. For both, a knowledge not only of literary Arabic, but also of the vulgar tongue, is absolutely necessary.

Up to the present time very little information as regards Palestine has been derived from Arabic historians and geographers; with the exception of four or five, and those not the most useful for our purpose, they have been almost entirely neglected. This is a mistake, for they contain a whole mine of valuable indications which may put us on the path of great discoveries, especially of the topographical kind, by adding to the chain of traditions the link, so difficult to seize, which connects the actual

names with the latest evidence of the authors of antiquity. An example taken from my own experience illustrates this, and affords a striking confirmation of one of my recent discoveries of this nature.

Biblical students have long been familiar with the name of Gezer, the city whose Canaanite king Horam was defeated by Joshua, and which became the western limit of the territory of Ephraim. Assigned with its suburbs to the Levites of the family of Kohath, it had the rank of a priestly city, and its primitive inhabitants, through spread by the Israelites, were massacred by one of the Pharaohs, who took the place and gave it in dowry to his daughter, King Solomon's queen. The Hebrew monarch reconstructed Gezer, which was certainly a place of great strategic importance, as is shown by the considerable part it played during the struggles of the Maccabees.

Much information as to the position of the city exists. We learn from many sources—the Hebrew books, the Apocrypha, Josephus, Eusebius, Jerome—that it was situated not far from Beth-horon, in the region of Jabneh and Jaffa, on the confines of the territory of Azotus, about four Roman miles from Emmaus, the site of which has been satisfactorily fixed at the modern Amwas. It is rare to find such precise indications of the position of any Palestine city, and yet the identification of Gezer remained up to 1870 one of the stumbling-blocks of commentators, and one of the *lacunæ* of Biblical topography, the more to be deplored, since in addition to the interest of the place itself, the discovery of its site would give the key to the junction of the territories of Dan, Judah, and Ephraim. Many conjectures have been hazarded. Most commentators, in despair, and supported by a superficial resemblance of names—a *mirage* which too often deceives explorers not familiar with Semitic tongues—placed Gezer at the village of Yazoor, west of Jaffa, and quite close to it: and though both philology and history were agreed that this identification could not be sustained, it was virtually accepted, no examination of the country producing any better solution of the problem. It was my privilege, however, to succeed where others had failed, and that too without ever having seen the place.

As an astronomer finds in space the position of an unseen planet, I marked on the map the exact spot where Gezer would be found, and a subsequent visit only confirmed the previous conclusion. Nor was this result due to exceptional penetration or sudden inspiration. It occurred in the most natural way in the world; and was an application of the method just indicate.

In reading the Arab chronicler, Mejr ed Deen, a writer known chiefly through certain very incorrect extracts given by M. du Hammer Purgstall, I lighted on an incident which took place in Palestine in the year 900 of the Hegira. The chronicler is speaking of a skirmish between a party of Bedaween brigands and a governor of Jerusalem named Jan Boolât, in the district of Ramleh; and in the course of the narrative he says—and this was the point that arrested my attention—that the cries of the combatants reached as far as the village of Khuldâ<sup>h</sup> (now well known),

and were distinctly heard at another village called Tell el Jezer—the Hill or Mount of Jezer. Now the word Jezer corresponds exactly with the Hebrew Gezer, especially if the initial letter is pronounced soft as in Egypt; and the tract of country was just the one in which to look for the lost site. But unfortunately, all the maps that I consulted were silent on the place, whose existence was nevertheless thus positively asserted, and corroborated by an Arab geographer of the thirteenth century of our era, Yakut, who speaks of Tell el Jezer as a strong place in the district of Falestin—*i.e.*, Ramleh. On consideration, it was clear that Tell el Jezer, being within hearing of Khulda, could not be very far from that place; even allowing the Bedaween a more than ordinary power of lungs. I therefore set to work within a limited radius, and after some search discovered my Gezer at less than three miles from Khulda, close to a village figuring in the map as Aboo Shushesh. Here I found the site of a large town presenting all the characters of a stronghold, and answering to every one of the required conditions. But it was not without trouble that the accuracy of my calculations was thoroughly established; for the name of Tell el Jezer, though familiar to the inhabitants of Aboo Shushesh, of which village the *tell* forms a part, was quite unknown to the people of Khulda, their neighbours, to whom I at first addressed myself. But just as I began to despair of success, an old peasant woman told me that it was at Aboo Shushesh that I must look for Tell el Jezer.

This, as I may almost call it, accidental discovery, which I announced at the time to the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, and which was received with some incredulity, met with the most unexpected confirmation four years afterwards—*viz.*, in 1874, when, on revisiting the spot in the service of the Palestine Exploration Fund, I discovered at Aboo Shushesh, in the exact locality I had fixed upon as the site of Gezer, bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Hebrew deeply carved upon the rock, with the Biblical name of Gezer written in full, and repeated twice, and marking without doubt the priestly limit, or Sabbatical zone, which surrounded the place.

It is needless to insist upon the inappreciable value of these inscriptions, the correct reading of which is now agreed on by the leading savants both of England and France, and which constitute undoubtedly one of the principal monuments of Jewish history. It will be sufficient to mention the principal gains they furnish to Biblical knowledge. They enable us, first, to know exactly what was the Sabbath-day's journey of the New Testament; secondly, to establish in a decisive manner the position of the city which was the dowry of Pharaoh's daughter; and thirdly, to fix the boundaries of Dan, Ephraim, and Judah. And, more than this, they justify in a most unexpected manner the use of the inductive method hitherto pursued in Biblical topography, and supply a written authoritative testimony which may serve to throw great light on other identifications obtained by the same method.

This one example is enough to show how far a single line of a third-rate Arabic writer may lead us.

But it is not Arabic texts only that must be consulted in order to advance the study of the Bible, it is even more important to examine the traditions preserved by the resident fellahen. I do not mean by this a few questions put to stupid and suspicious peasants as to the name of village, ruin, or valley, but close, minute, methodical observations of the manners, customs, legends, and superstitions of these peasants. Interrogation is in Palestine the worst of all possible means for getting at the truth. The art of questioning Arabs consists in knowing when to shut your mouth and keep your eyes and ears open—listening so as to draw them on to tell stories, and thus gradually extracting information, while carefully abstaining from asking questions calculated to suggest ideas to minds so credulous and so easily influenced.

The illustrious Robinson and his successors often made the happiest use of oral traditions for topographical purposes. We must, however, bear in mind that this fount of information, abundant as it is, if drawn upon daily will in time diminish; and, what is more serious, that its purity is often troubled by the suggestions of imprudent travellers, which a newcomer, inexperienced in the character of the natives, is liable to consider as so many spontaneous recollections and genuine traditions. If to this source of error, which reminds one of Antony's mystification by Cleopatra when he caught a salt-water fish in the fresh waters of the Nile, we add the want of philological knowledge in the questioner, of which many a pleasant instance might be cited, it is easy to understand that unlimited and exclusive credit must not be accorded to information acquired by a method which needs peculiarly delicate handling. There is something else to be got out of the fellahen besides a mere list of names; and it is to this point that I would invite the attention of travellers.

Few countries are more travelled in than Palestine; and in few are the manners and customs of the people less known. We may truly say that the population of Oceania, of the extreme East, of Central Asia, of India, of Egypt, and even of the Bedaween tribes beyond the Jordan, are now more familiar to us than that of this little corner of the earth, so often trodden by European travellers. Tourists, pilgrims, and savants pour into the country, but all, nearly without exception, for different reasons neglect to notice, and to render any account of, the only thing which is entirely fresh and untouched—the natives of the place. The reason of this may chiefly be found in the mode of travelling to which the European is condemned in Palestine. Nearly invariably he has to hand himself over to the mercy of the inevitable dragoman, an obstructive animal, peculiar to the social fauna of the Levant, and combining the functions of interpreter, *maître d'hôtel*, guide, and courier, whose acquaintance he has probably already made in Egypt. There, however, it mattered little, for not even a dragoman can spoil the effect produced by the splendour and magnificence of the temples and tombs of the Pharaohs. But while on the banks of the Nile he is kept in his place as

a servant, in Syria he becomes a master and a despot. An amusing picture might be drawn of the misfortunes of those who have become the prey of these gentry, but I will merely mention the great drawback to their presence—viz., that it hinders all direct contact with the peasants, and has the effect of a scârecrow on the suspicious people whose confidence is of supreme value to the investigator.

The Frank traveller passes through Palestine, along the beaten track, with an indifferent glance at the characteristic mien of the men, and a more approving one at the dignified bearing of the women as they walk light and erect beneath their heavy loads. He notices, too, perhaps, the picturesqueness of the costumes; and, when he has learnt from his dragoman that these are fellaheen Arabs, he is charmingly satisfied with the completeness of his information. Little does he suspect that he is in daily companionship with a race which, rude and rough as it is, affords the historian a study of the very highest interest.

The peasants of Judæa are commonly said to be Arabs; and I am willing to admit that they are so in the sense that they speak Arabic. But we must understand what is meant by this vague and deceptive term which is applied to so many distinct races and the heterogeneous remains of so many peoples. Since the predominance of Islam, the whole system of Semitic nationalities has followed the irresistible tendency to unity resulting from the pressure of linguistic conformity and political necessity; and all its numerous divisions, small and great, have poured their waters into this Arab lake, and have converted it into an ocean, in which every affluent loses its name. Looking at this immense Arab sheet, which extends beyond our sight over Asia and Africa, we may well say, "It is a sea." But it is the duty of science to inquire into the origin of this collective reservoir; and to track to its source, if need be along its dry bed, each one of its tributary streams.

The race which occupies Judæa, especially its mountainous part, a sedentary and not a nomadic one, with customs of its own, and a language full of peculiarities, is not, as I have before had occasion to state, that of the nomad hordes who came from Arabia with the Caliph Omar, and who are for the most part settled in the towns. The odd popular prejudice which obstinately believes that the Mussulman Arabs, who became masters of Syria after the defeat of the Greek troops, took altogether the place of the original inhabitants of the country, and are, in fact, the people whom we find there now, cannot be too strongly combated. No such change resulted from the Mussulman conquest; and it is important to insist on this point because it throws a remarkable light, at an interval of more than 2,000 years, on the conquest of Canaan by the *Beni Israel*, or "Children of Israel," as they are called in Deuteronomy.

The Mussulman Arabs, who founded their empire on the ruins of the Byzantine and Persian kingdoms, intentionally left untouched the civilisation which they found already installed and in use. They only added one thing—a dogma—or, to use a less positive term, a religious

enthusiasm: and while strong enough to take everything, were at the same time wise enough to destroy nothing. Conquest was to them a means of gaining easily at the point of the sword the power of sharing in the enjoyment of wealth and prosperity which if left to themselves they could have made no use of. They carefully abstained from meddling with the complex institutions of the Lower Empire. Masters of the marvellous, and to them incomprehensible, mechanism whose fascinations had excited their envy, these historically recent races and their successors declined to touch a spring which they were incapable of regulating, and thus the great pendulum set in motion by the impulses of Rome and Byzantium peacefully continued its oscillations under the Caliphate, and still continues them, marking with gradually diminishing force the already numbered hours of the Empire of the East.

Arab civilisation is a mere deception—it no more exists than the horrors of Arab conquest. It is but the last gleam of Greek and Roman civilisation gradually dying out in the powerless but respectful hands of Islam. A civilisation, be it remembered, cannot be produced spontaneously, or improvised, any more than can a patrimony; it is the hereditary accumulation of living forces—a treasure formed by the hoarding of ages, which a robber may take in a moment and dissipate in a day, but which his whole life would be insufficient to create. But the Arab conquerors, *parvenus* though they were, without a history and without a past, respected everything—administration, science, and arts—only turning everything to their own profit. They even went so far as occasionally to grant the privileged holders of this intellectual monopoly a concession, which, to the army, enlightened only by the flame of fanaticism, must have cost much—viz., a truly admirable religious liberty.

The basis of all finance being the revenue of the soil, it is the first business of a conqueror to reassure the vanquished by allowing those who have always cultivated the ground to continue doing so. And this the Mussulman conquerors, who, as regards agriculture, knew no soil but the sand of the desert, and no tools but the point of the lance, with rare good sense did. They retained in Syria the cultivators of the land in the same way that they retained the cultivators of arts and of knowledge. This arrangement was acquiesced in more readily by the peasantry than by the townspeople, though the latter made but a faint show of resistance. In fact, the whole population accepted by a large majority, not only the language of their conquerors, which was somewhat akin to their own Semitic dialect, but also their religion, in which they saw a slight but attractive resemblance to their own vague Christianity.

Of this phenomenon, however, a still earlier example may be cited in the history of Palestine. For who were the peasants whom the Mussulmans found on their entrance into Judæa, and who have become the fellahen of our days? Were they Jews? The wars of extermination waged by Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, and Hadrian, and the persecutions of the Christian emperors, left not one stone upon another of either political or

ethnic Judaism; they made it a *tabula rasa*, and cast the *débris* to the four winds of heaven. Jewish tradition, properly so called, is for ever lost in Palestine; and all the Jews now found there have, without exception, come to the country at a comparatively recent date. Were they Greeks? We know for certain that, during the period that elapsed between the dispersion of the Jews and the appearance of the Arabs, the villages of Judæa were occupied by a population speaking a Semitic dialect. If, then, these peasants were neither Jews nor Greeks, what were they? I answer that their origin may be traced to a far earlier period, and that if we examine into the question, we shall find very strong proof that the Mohammedan conquest was almost the literal repetition of the more ancient invasion of Joshua. The analogy between the two events is very striking; in both we have a people conquered and enslaved by masses pouring in from nearly the same regions, and impelled by the same necessities.

Nomads like the first Mussulmans, and imbued like them with the irresistible force of religious conviction, the Israelites burst over the Promised Land, attracted by its natural wealth and by a civilisation, the existence of which may be inferred from the Biblical writings. In some parts of the country they speedily obtained a footing, though in others they encountered a more obstinate resistance than the Mussulmans did, the federative system of the Canaanites lending itself better to a prolongation of the strife, and the political conditions being different.

The problem of the permanent occupation of the country received the same solution as in the later invasion; the chief thing in both cases being to secure the proper cultivation of the ground. This fact has led to the remark, in itself a just one, that the Mosaic legislation was founded on agriculture. But shepherds could not have transformed themselves in a single day into agriculturists; they must at first have made those who understood it produce for them the fruits of the land which they had divided into tribe territories and family fiefs. It is true that they expelled from the country certain turbulent clans who, notwithstanding their forced submission, for a long time exercised on the intruders a pressure not unsalutary; and who finally, with characteristic elasticity, came back after the disappearance of the Jews to the places whence they had been driven. But the new occupants were obliged, whether they wished it or not, to allow the bulk of the primitive inhabitants to remain in the country; and the precautions of all sorts taken by the Jewish lawgiver to prevent the vanquished and the conquerors from mixing, lest the religious belief of the Jew should suffer by the contact, is itself a proof that they lived together side by side. That the aborigines, after troubling the religion of Israel a long time by their pagan superstitions, should end by adopting it, and by being mingled though not confounded with their conquerors, was natural enough; and opinions are still divided as to which of these two races, allied in speech, abandoned its own dialect and adopted that of the other.

The union was, nevertheless, not so complete as to prevent the

Assyrians from easily picking out for deportation the families of pure Israelite race; and thus depriving the country of its foreign aristocracy, while they left on the soil the serfs by whose labour it could be made to render tribute. For great empires did not carry on war for the barren pleasure of destruction (a pleasure insufficient even for barbarians), but to augment their wealth; and it is evident that such partial colonisation as that of Samaria would have been insufficient to repopulate Palestine.

The unstable amalgam of races which, on the return from exile, endeavoured to reconstitute itself into a nation and even acquired some cohesion under the energetic rule of the Hasmoneans, could not escape falling to pieces when brought into contact with Greek influences. The Hellenizing spirit against which those who were Jews by descent and conviction had to contend, and which found partisans even among them, marks the commencement of this dissociation. It made continual progress under the Herods, and was completed when the very name of Jew was struck out of the book of nations by the hand of Rome. Græco-Roman paganism had only to show itself in Syria to be accepted and loved. Endowed with a plastic tolerance which embraced with astonishing ease the religious forms of other nations, sometimes pouring itself into their moulds, sometimes melting down their monstrous idols and remaking them after its own images, this paganism—this extra-biblical monotheism of antiquity—brought with it, to those who welcomed it with rapturous submission, but one reforming element, that of æsthetics; it exacted but one sacrifice, that of ugliness; imposed but one discipline, that of pleasure, and one dogma, that of taste; and introduced but one revelation, that of the beautiful. Full of consideration for the religions which accepted its seductions, it exercised no violence except upon those which resisted them. The ancient Syrophœnician divinities, to adopt the term used in the Gospels, willingly consented to inhabit temples of exquisite architecture, where the only conditions of entrance were a Greek costume, and the assumption of one of the many names and attributes in the rich pantheon. Then it was that, under the stimulating action of the breeze from Greece and Italy, the dried-up *flora* of Semitic mythology burst into a thousand new perfumes and colours. Palestine had a large share in this reawakening, and from Dan to Beersheba regenerated polytheism soon obscured the very recollection of the austere law of Jehovah.

The political triumph of Christianity crushed this growth. The land where the seed of the Crucified Sower had so marvellously fructified; where grew the first ear of that corn which was to be multiplied infinitely, and to furnish the religious needs of the world for centuries with the bread of the Spirit; the nursery of a creed whose cradle was a tomb, and whose flag a gibbet—this little land became the object of a special adoration, a kind of topolatry, when the Church mounted with Constantine the throne of the Cæsars, and assumed the imperial diadem, after having worn so long the martyr's crown.

So great was this love of holy places, and so passionate the desire to expiate the cruel mysteries of which they had been the theatre, that during the whole Byzantine period Judæa was overrun by monks, and transformed into one vast convent. Everywhere local paganism had to give way to Christ returning as a master to the land of His birth; but, as a final protest against the persecution to which they submitted, the pagans, driven out from their temples, now transformed into churches, took refuge in the schisms and heresies of which Syria was always the grand manufacturer.

At this troubled period, while the country was agitated by the conflict between the new propaganda and the old beliefs, a new element appeared on the scene. Islam is in fact a form of Christianity, most schismatic, most heretical if you will, but still Christianity, for many a sect of so-called Christians differs more than Mohammedanism does from certain established axioms of Christianity. The new dogma, Christian in doctrine, Jewish in ritual, made up of laws and regulations suited to the wants of wandering Arab tribes, owed its escape from the ignominious extinction which befell similar sectarian creeds, to certain political causes. The secret of its wonderful success was that it placed itself in opposition to Byzantium, and became the heart and soul of the struggle against official Christianity. This it was that gave it strength and life, and enabled it to rally to its side those populations who had only renounced paganism and accepted Christianity under compulsion, and who welcomed the Mussulman conquest, and the supremacy of the faith of Islam, as a means of protesting against the politico-religious tyranny from which they had suffered.

These *Kooffars*—an appellation derived from their living in *Kefrs*, the Arabic for villages, just as the similar term *pagani* is derived from the Latin *pagi*—would have returned to their old heathen creeds when once withdrawn from the Christian yoke; but on this point the Mussulmans were inflexible; they tolerated the Christians and the Jews as being their own spiritual forefathers, but they had inherited against the pagans the implacable hatred which animated Christianity, and which utter extermination could alone satisfy.

Resigned Mussulmans under the Mussulman rule, bad Christians under the Christian rule, after having been fervent pagans and mediocre Jews, the land-tilling mountaineers of Judæa, sons of the soil and the rock, are ready to become afresh whatever their masters of to-morrow may demand, if only they are allowed to remain on the land. It is this extraordinary attachment to the soil which has made and still makes them willing to endure everything rather than leave it.

If this race has thus been able to resist, or rather to survive conquest; if this stratum of humanity has been unchanged by the other strata which have been laid upon it, *a fortiori* has it been little effected by the many ephemeral invasions, the human deluges, which have overrun Palestine from time to time. The wave swept away everything that tried to stop it, but could make no impression on this impermeable stratum

over which it ran foaming, and which emerged intact as soon as it had passed. The invasion which most resembled a conquest, and at one moment threatened to reverse the destinies of Palestine, was the occupation of the Crusaders; but it was too shortlived to have any effect on the Arab ways of thought and feeling already impressed upon the people. It merely left here and there what may be called an anthropological trace of its passage; and the yellow hair and blue eyes which sometimes even at the present day the astonished traveller may see beneath a Bedaween kefeeyeh or a fellah turban, are the sole legacy of the Crusader to the people of Syria.

I have, therefore, arrived at the conclusion that the fellahcen of Palestine, taken as a whole, are the modern representatives of those old tribes which the Israelites found settled in the country, such as the Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Philistines, Edomites, &c. In what proportion these various tribes are now represented, and whether they were preceded by a still older autochthonous population—Ankim, Horites, &c., are questions which, in the existing state of science, it would be useless to enter into. But though this race, or rather conglomeration of races, which may be designated, for want of a better, by the vague title of pre-Israelite, still survives beneath its Mohammedan exterior, it has not remained uninfluenced during the lapse of centuries by the many events and circumstances that have happened in Palestine. Each successive change in the social and political condition of the country has more or less affected it in various ways; and we must not be surprised, when studying the fellahcen, at finding Jewish, Hellenic, Rabbinic, Christian, and Mussulman reminiscences mingled pell-mell and in the quaintest combinations, with traits which bring us back to the most remote and obscure periods of pre-Israelite existence.

It is very difficult to sift this farrago, and determine to what epoch each part belongs; the more so because chronology, the perspective of history, is as entirely ignored and even hated by the popular mind, as was ordinary perspective by the primitive artists, and the difficulty is increased by the fact that the same tradition has often—like those re-stamped coins which are at once the joy and the despair of numismatists—received impress after impress from the successive coiners who have left their effigies on Palestine.

Although criticism is at present unable thoroughly to analyse these complex products, we must not cease collecting them, remembering that all the changes in a tradition are in themselves the surest proof of its antiquity and of its spontaneous development. It may be that in ascertaining the difference between the written story and the legend we may be able some day to calculate, by a sort of ideal triangulation, how far they are both from the truth. Meanwhile science is fortunate in having ascertained the fact that there still exists in Palestine, not only some remains of the old Semitic polytheism—as I urged six years ago in the *Revue de l'Instruction Publique*, and which no one will deny now—but also that there are relics, still to be recognised, of Biblical tradition, just as in our fairy tales are found fragments of the Aryan mythology.

The astonishing way in which the peasants have preserved the names of places is a good instance of this, and is also a proof in favour of the argument that they themselves are unchanged. It is worthy of remark in passing that the *ethnic* name—that is, the name by which the *inhabitants* are known, and which is derived from the locality—is very often more archaic in form than the name of the *place* itself. There are many examples of this interesting fact which may prove very useful in testing the accuracy of proposed identifications.

The tenacity with which old religious customs have been kept up is another remarkable circumstance. Not only have the fellaheen, as Robinson conjectured, preserved by the erection of their Mussulman *kubbehs*, and their fetishism for certain large isolated trees, the site and the souvenir of the hill sanctuaries and shady groves, which were marked out for the execration of the Israelites on their entry into the Promised Land; but they pay them almost the same veneration as did the Canaanite *kooffars*, whose descendants they are. These *makoms*, as Deuteronomy calls them, which Manasseh rebuilt, and against which the prophets in vain exhausted their invectives, are word for word, thing for thing, the Arabic *makams*, whose little white-topped cupolas are dotted so picturesquely over the mountain horizon of central Judæa.

In order to conceal their suspicious origin, these fellah sanctuaries have been placed under the protection of the purest Mohammedan orthodoxy, by becoming the tombs or shrines of *sheykhhs*, *welys*, and *nebys*—elders, saints, or prophets—deceased in the odour of sanctity. But there are numerous indications of their true origin beneath this simple disguise. For instance, the name given to them is often the same as that of the locality, and is not merely a simple name, but a personification, or deification, if I may say so, *of the place itself*; for many legends show that, in the eyes of the peasants, the *neby* or *prophet* has given his own name to the *place*.

This close connection of names and places is found in the Phœnician and Canaanite mythology, which is remarkable for the number of its local divinities, and it helps to explain why Moses, not content with ordering the destruction of the pagan sanctuaries, insisted upon the *abolition of the names*. A methodical search for these *makams* is, therefore, of the greatest importance, because their names will enable us to fix the site of cities of which not only the ruins, but the very remembrance has disappeared.

Another point of religious resemblance is the worship of female divinities which we know was common among the Canaanites, and is still practised, many modern *kubbehs* being consecrated to women. In certain cases there is duality: the *wely*, or the *neby*, being venerated in conjunction with a woman, who passes generally for his sister or his daughter. This relationship, originally conjugal, which has been changed by the Mussulmans into one of consanguinity, offers an equivalent of the sexual symmetry of those Phœnician couples so clearly brought to light by M. de Vogüé.

Many of these sacred places are open to the sky, and nearly surrounded by a wall of stone—a veritable *haram*. Others are in natural or artificial caverns. One evening, for instance, I was most positively refused permission to stable my horse in a grotto consecrated to Sheykh Madkur, because the wely would infallibly have shown his displeasure by killing the beast. The Aboo N'sair venerate, not far from Mar Saba, a great stone—Hajar ed Dawâère—which they say was once metamorphosed into a camel in order to carry across the desert the father of their race. This practice of worshipping an animated stone—the *betyle*—is confirmed by certain modern practices analogous to those formerly in use—*e.g.*, the liturgic unction which is still performed with henna over the porch of a *kubbeh*, the fellaheen touching the lintel respectfully, and asking the wely for *destoor*—*i.e.*, permission to enter. Some even avoid profaning the threshold by stepping over instead of on it, like the worshippers of Dagon when entering his temple.

These rustic sanctuaries are crowded with rude *ex-voto* offerings; and the sacred trees, loaded with rags tied to their branches by pious hands, are familiar to every traveller in Palestine. In the *kubbehs* are placed lighted lamps, a practice alluded to in the sixth chapter of the Book of Baruch: while the various points on the surrounding hills whence the *makam* is visible are marked by *meshâhids*, small pyramids of stone which are the *mergamas* (acervi Mercurii) of Proverbs.

The fellaheen attribute to these local divinities a supernatural power of working miracles altogether contrary to the principles of Islam. Not only do they adore but they dread these holy personages, and have for them that *horror sacer* which is the mark of true religious adoration. A *makam* is a place of inviolable sanctity. No one would dare to touch a thing or person on its sacred soil. An infidel may sleep there in perfect safety, provided he does not break through any of the required religious observances. I have often, when travelling, for the sake of economy, without tent or baggage, taken advantage of this prerogative, and experienced, after a long and fatiguing day, the delicious sensation—from an archæologist's point of view—of passing the night on the bare but holy floor of one of these Arab sanctuaries, haunted and guarded by the shades of the Canaanite Baals and Ashtoreths.

But the best proof of the religious character of this feeling, and of the deep hold it has upon the fellaheen, is to be found in the oaths most commonly used by them. The word *Allah* (God) is for ever on their lips, and the formula "*wa haïat Allah*," based upon the Hebrew *hai Elohim*, is used to attest truth or falsehood without the slightest hesitation. They swear fluently, and perjure themselves without scruple, by the light, by the life of their souls, by their heads, by the heads of their companions, by the Temple of Jerusalem (*Uaram esh Shereef*), by the *Sakhra*, or sacred rock on which stood the altar, &c.; oaths which were lavished with equal prodigality by the Jews, and bitterly censured by our Lord. But, and this is the remarkable point, if we wish to bind them by a serious oath, it is sufficient to make them take it on their local sanctuary, and then it is extremely rare to find them faithless or bearing false witness.

Many other significant facts might be brought forward; such as the propitiatory sacrifices made by the fellaheen, the ceremonies attending which seem borrowed from the Phœnician ritual; their superstitions about the moon; the amulets, magical hands, the eyes of Osiris in Hebron enamel, made after the method of the Phœnician glass-workers; their fêtes, their parables, their tales, their old songs in strange Arabic, the peculiarities of their dialect, in which the vocalisation strangely resembles the Masoretic punctuation of Hebrew, &c. But I will pass on, without dwelling upon these, to one or two examples of what may be called veritable echoes of the Bible.

Here is the history of Samson as it is told to-day at Sar'a, Ain Shemés, and Artoof, that is to say, on the very scene of the exploits of that hero:—Aboo Meizar, called by some Abool Azem, but known to all under the name Shamshoun el Jebbar, originally of Sar'a, and brother of a certain Neby Samet, whose monument is shown in those parts, was purblind. In the Rumeyleh, the old name of a part of the city of Ain Shemés, stood a church. Aboo Meizar said to his compatriots, "What will you give me if I destroy the church and kill the Christians?" "The quarter of the revenue of the country," they replied. Upon this Aboo Meizar went down to the Rumeyleh, entered the church where the Christians were assembled at prayer, and crying, "Ya Rabb!" (O Lord!) gave a great kick to the column which supported the edifice. Down it fell, burying beneath its ruins Aboo Meizar and the Christians. The inhabitants of Sar'a came to look for his body, and easily recognised it because, as he had told them would be the case, he was stretched on his back, while all the Christians lay face downwards. His *makam* stands on the very spot at Sara where they buried him; and the Sheyhk attached to its service, who resides at Beit Atab, still receives a quarter of all the olives grown between Deir Eban and Ain Shemés—indeed a fellow who once refused to pay these additional dues is reported to have pressed blood instead of oil from his olives:—while it is even now a common saying among the old people of the village that "between Sar'a and Bayt el Jemal was killed Shamshoun el Jebbar." It may be remarked, in passing, that this saying, if compared with the verse in the book of Judges which places the tomb of Samson between Zorah and Eshtaol, would tend to fix the site of the latter city, hitherto undiscovered, at Bayt el Jemal. Another fragment of this same legend has lighted on the head of a certain Neby Hosha, venerated at Eshou not far from Sar'a. This neby, born at Bayt Nabala, being one day pursued by a troupe of his foes the Kooffars, took refuge at Eshou, and crying, "It is here that I am doomed to die," sat down, threw his *ihram* over his shoulder, and expired. A wooden sabre, with which he is said to have slain his enemies, is still shown at the *makam* at Eshou. This story may be compared with an incident in the travels of a Jewish pilgrim of the middle ages, Isaac Chelo, who saw at Sar'a the tomb of Samson, where they still preserved the ass's jawbone with which he killed the Philistines.

Turn next to the modern legend in which are embodied confused but

undoubted traces of the taking of Jericho by Joshua, and the standing still of the sun. It varies in many curious ways from the Bible-story; but the following is the pith of it as told to me in the plain of Jericho:—Not far from the site of the City of Palms are the ruins of the *City of Brass*, so called because it was once surrounded by seven walls of brass; and a little farther off is the *makam* of the Imam Ali, son of Aboo Taleb, a sanctuary open to the sky, and the object of extraordinary veneration, in the surrounding country. This city, then belonging to the Kooffars, was besieged by the Imam Aboo Taleb. Mounted on his horse Meimoon, he made the round of the city and overthrew the seven walls of brass one after another by blowing upon them. Then began a terrific combat, and as the day was drawing to a close, and the infidels were about to profit by the darkness in order to escape, the Imam Ali cried out to the sun, "Return upon thy steps, O thou blessed one!" Immediately, with the permission of the Most High, the sun, which was about to set behind the mountain, came back to the east; whereupon the Imam Ali ordered his servant Eblal, who at that moment was on the opposite mountain, at the foot of which is now situated the *makam*, to sound the call for the morning prayer, and proceeded to complete the rout of the pagans with great carnage, and to utterly destroy their city; those who escaped the slaughter being annihilated by wasps. Since that time the two mountains which figure in the story bear respectively the names of the Mountain of the Return, and the Mountain of Eblal the Muezzin.

Lastly, listen to the tragic history of the Levite of Ephraim and his wife at Gibeah. This is how it was told me by an old fellah on the very place itself, which is still called Jabá:—A Christian of Bethlehem was on his way with his wife or his daughter to Tayyibeh, and stopped, as night was beginning to fall, to sleep at Jabá. While they slept certain men of the town came to the house and violated the woman, who was found dead in the morning. The Christian cut the corpse into two pieces, and sent one to Tayyibeh, and the other to Mukhmas, to the people of his own religion. These rose immediately. One band came from the east, the other from the west. The first, pretending to fly, drew the people of Jabá out of their town; and thus caught between the two hosts, they were all slaughtered. The massacre took place in the plain called El Merj fil Moonká, between Jabá and the commencement of the Wady Bab esh Shab. To this day the wheat grows to a great height on this accursed spot, but produces no grain.

These examples of what may be called phantoms of the past are enough to show how much the peasant of Palestine, in preserving his own identity, has done for the past history of his race and nation. But living side by side with this obstinately conservative peasant, there is, paradoxical as it may appear, a class yet more conservative who defend even more vigilantly, and guard with greater attachment the ancient forms and beliefs—I mean the women. This curious circumstance has often been remarked in other countries, but nowhere is it more strongly

marked than in Palestine. There the women have continued to be the depositaries of old memories which you would vainly seek for among the men. They are indeed behind their husbands by several centuries: and the disdain with which a fellah, if you speak to him of certain curious customs among the women, replies, with a shrug of his shoulders, "*Shoughl nisouán!*" (women's affairs), is itself enough to show how true this is.

It would be extremely interesting to examine closely these daughters of Canaan, to study their special customs, their funeral dances, their marriage and mourning songs, their prejudices, their peculiar legends, their habitual forms of expression, and a variety of other matters, down to the details of their toilet, which Isaiah denounces as the arsenal of idolatry. Besides, it is among the women—in the often charming patterns with which they tattoo themselves; in the simple paintings with which their pious hands love to decorate the walls of the sacred monuments; in the marvellous embroidery of their veils and robes; in their elegant, shield-shaped dishes, made of coloured and twisted straw; in the forms of the vessels for water and grain, the fabrication of which has retained their monopoly; in the patterns of their jewels and their painted boxes, which they have perpetuated religiously in the bazaars by refusing to buy any other kind—that we shall find what artistic traces yet remain of a people who never really possessed any art but of the most rudimentary kind.

Ample indeed is the harvest which one might hope to reap upon this feminine soil. But unfortunately the explorer has to encounter the almost insurmountable obstacle of sex. Nothing is more difficult for a European than to associate in the slightest degree with the fellah woman, although they do not, like the women of the towns, cover their faces with a veil, but merely draw their long blue sleeve over the mouth. It is no question of modesty or morality; these are sentiments which have always been, and are still, but little known in the East. It is rather an instinctive feeling of mistrust towards a stranger, than any shyness of him as a man. And yet they do not seem to avoid him designedly; they will often readily render him small services, and address him as "my brother," and will willingly enter into conversation in certain cases; but let him make the slightest attempt to put any question, or betray ever so discreet an inclination to get behind the scenes, they take fright at once at a curiosity which they do not understand, and their confidence, gained for a moment, takes wing like a frightened bird. It requires a woman to approach this wild flock; and a European woman prepared to penetrate, without the aid of an interpreter, into the—what shall I say?—the harem of their ideas and their traditions, would carry off a load of scientific plunder far more precious than anything to be found in the uninteresting seraglios of Constantinople and Cairo.

There are in certain corners of the globe races which have had the unenviable privilege of undergoing no change, not even for the better.

These the historian would like to preserve for his own purposes, in their archaic integrity, as fields of study, if not of experiment, and as a kind of laboratory in which he could observe at leisure the phenomena of human evolution. But, unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, such day-dreams are always destined to be upset by the progress of civilisation, which everywhere, sooner or later, sweeps away the ruins of the past to make room for the future. Palestine, so long spared, is already undergoing the common lot. A strong current of immigration from central Europe has for some time set in upon it, and a few years will do what centuries have not been able to effect.

There is no time to be lost. Already the first note of menace has been sounded, and a projected railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, warns us to make haste and accomplish the laborious task of exploration, and perfect a complete inventory of the historic and scientific treasures of this unique country, before it has been deprived of every relic and memorial of the past. It will be too late when, on the spot where the cry of Rachel mourning for her children still lingers, we hear in mocking echo the shrill scream of the railway whistle, and the loud shout of "*Bethléhem ! Dix minutes d'arrêt ! Les voyageurs pour la Mer Morte changent de voiture !*"

## THE SITE OF HIPPOS.

BY C. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

(From the *Revue Archéologique*.)

I HAVE, on several occasions, insisted on the importance of reading Arabic literature in the interests of Biblical topography. I have been enabled to prove the utility of this study by discoveries of importance,\* and to show that it not only offers a method of control, but also, in certain cases, a *point de départ* for real discoveries.

I have now to offer a new fact establishing the importance of the geographical information furnished by oriental texts. It concerns a place outside the limited area of my own researches—another reason for advancing it, because it will be easy for the first traveller who explores the shores of the Sea of Galilee to verify my suggestion on the spot.

The Decapolis, connected with the gospel narrative by three passages only (Matt. iv. 25; Mark v. 20, and vii. 31) is the least-known part of Palestine. We are neither agreed upon the general limits of this district, frequently mentioned by profane authors, nor on the very names of the ten cities which composed it—"in quo non eadem omnes observant," as Pliny says.

There are, however, some as to which there is no doubt at all. Among these is Hippos. Hippos, according to Eusebius and Jerome, formed, with Pella and Gadara, the centre of this privileged confederation.

\* By this means, for instance, I found the royal Canaanite city of Gezer.