

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY THE REVEREND J. W. JACK, D.D., GLENFARG, PERTSHIRE.

Houses, Streets, Gates.—In early Israelite times there appears to have been some system of street planning in a few of the larger Palestinian towns, such as Megiddo, Bethshean, Old Gaza (*Tell el-Ajjûl*), and a few others. At Ugarit (Ras Shamra), during the golden age of this town (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries B.C.), many of the streets were well laid out, running parallel to each other or at right angles. The houses appear to have been comfortable, with numerous rooms and excellent hygienic arrangements, and in some cases with a small interior court containing a well. In many cases a stair led up from a corner of the court to an upper storey, where the ordinary living-rooms were, while another led down either from the court or the ground rooms to a subterranean chamber used as the family burial vault. There were no such systematized arrangements, however, in Israelite towns. Indeed, it is almost paradoxical to speak of these conglomerations as towns, even when surrounded by a huge wall, or to give the name of streets to the bewildering maze of lanes twisting and turning here and there. In most cases the buildings were huddled closely together in disorder, as at Gezer. The only 'streets' were the narrow, tortuous passages, averaging not more than six to nine feet, left free between the irregular projections, and they often issued in some cul-de-sac or blind alley. Matters were even worse where the towns were enclosed with walls, for here the space was usually cramped, and the aggregation of dwellings interfered with the road immediately inside the ramparts, which was so necessary for purposes of defence. Many of the houses inhabited by privileged people stood against or actually on the wall, and their back windows looked out on the glacis. This had been the case at Jericho for over a thousand years before Joshua captured it, and it was because of the special position of Rahab's house on the wall that Joshua's spies were enabled to escape (Jos 2¹⁵⁻¹⁸). The Jericho of Joshua's time was surrounded by two walls, an inner and an outer one, with about fifteen feet of space between them, so that Rahab's house must have perched precariously over a sort of 'tunnel' running round the city. Like the others, it must have been built of mud-brick, and thatched with palm-leaves or reeds from the Jordan fens. The Israelite architects seem to have shown considerable negligence in

allowing the passage along the interior of the town walls to be obstructed with dwellings, and such undue stress from within to be placed upon the untrustworthy foundations.

The structure or 'make-up' of streets was as rudimentary as their 'lay-out.' There was no adequate paving or draining. At the very best there was nothing but a superficial covering of stones, such as has been found on the alleys and court adjoining the stables at Megiddo. There was no such thing as 'up-keep,' with the result that, in the summer heat, the dust accumulated thickly, and in winter the rains transformed the surface into large open sewers. Innumerable dogs searched for food among the street refuse, and wandered outside where they devoured the animal carcasses which had been thrown there, and where a veritable pestilence often reigned (cf. Jer 22¹⁹). As a rule, there were no open areas or 'squares' in a town. Indeed, the Hebrews, who designated streets by the word *ḥuṣah* (pl. *ḥuṣôth*), had no proper term for open places except *rehôb*, which according to its etymology signifies merely an enlargement of the street, like the Greek *πλατεία* or Italian *largo* (cf. Jer 5¹, Neh 8¹⁻³. 16 R.V., where Authorized Version has 'streets'). The fact is, that in earlier towns the broad place or 'square' was situated either outside the walls or more usually just inside them. In this latter case, it was simply the 'esplanade' or level space between the principal gate and the first houses of the town. It was the usual spot for gatherings of every sort. Here the people discussed public affairs and the children played. Here was the town market where products of all kinds were bought and sold (cf. Samaria, 2 K 7¹). In the time of Nehemiah, one of the north gates of Jerusalem, corresponding now to the Gate of Damascus, was known as the Fish-Gate, where Tyrian dealers had their stalls and made no scruple of doing business on the Sabbath (cf. Neh 13^{16f.}). It was in the area adjoining the town gate, too, that legal transactions took place, witnesses being easily secured from among the loafers and idlers who frequented the place. Here Boaz went in order to purchase Ruth the Moabitess and her possessions in the presence of the people (Ru 4), and here Absalom installed himself with the object of obtaining partisans (2 S 15²). The squalidness of the gate area in most towns was not one whit better than

that of the streets. Refuse of every kind abounded : ashes, broken pots, kitchen waste, and other debris. We need not wonder that the unsavoury name of Dung-Gate (*Ashpôth*, Neh 2¹³) was given to one of the gates on the south-west of Jerusalem, no doubt adjoining the spot known as *Bethsô* (*domus stercoris*) referred to by Josephus, and probably the same as the 'Gate of Potsherds' mentioned by Jeremiah (19^a R.V.m., cf. also Job 2⁸). It may have been at this spot that scenes of mourning or penitence took place (cf. Is 47¹, Jon 3⁶, Jer 6²⁶, Mic 1¹⁰, Ezk 27³⁰), reminding us of the Homeric story of Priam who 'rolled himself in the dung' on hearing of the death of Hector (*Iliad*, XXII. 414). The names given by the Babylonians and Assyrians to their city gates were certainly more attractive or symbolic than those adopted by the Palestinians. Cf. the names of the fifteen gates of Nineveh, and the name of Babylon itself which is a transcription of the ideogram KA. DINGIR 'Gate of the gods.'

RAS SHAMRA (UGARIT).

Europe and Palestine connected, c. 1900 B.C.—M. Claude F.-A. Schaeffer, who has now carried through about a dozen campaigns at Ras Shamra, describes further important discoveries in his latest report. Some of these may interest Biblical students. *First*, he has unearthed a vase, dating from the beginning of the second millennium B.C., in the shape of a hut with rounded conical roof and with a door that can be closed with a cross-bar. It so happens that this curious type of earthenware, which is unique in Syro-Palestine and indeed throughout the East, has been found in Crete, at Melos in the Aegean, in Greece, and in other places throughout Europe, including Russia, North Germany, and Italy. We have thus a further proof of the close connexion existing as far back as the days of Abraham between the western world and Palestine, probably through the intermediary of the Aegean. Ships from Crete, the Aegean, and other western centres landed their products at Tyre and Sidon for barter in Palestine and the East, while caravans from distant countries travelled south through Palestine, bringing valuable products and carrying on trade with the inhabitants.

Deadly Power of Ancient Arrows.—*Second*, in a family tomb used probably from the sixteenth century to the middle of the fourteenth, and containing a large accumulation of adult human bones, Schaeffer has found two vertebræ still joined together anatomically but pierced in between with a bronze arrow still in position. According to an X-ray examination by Dr. Jarry, the St. Germain

radiologist, the point of the arrow had penetrated to the centre of the medullary canal, causing a spinal wound leading to rapid death. The discovery is interesting as showing the penetrative force of ancient arrows. There is good evidence to show that an arrow, shot from a distance of well over a hundred yards, would enter about three inches into the body. We are reminded of Ahab's death through an arrow which pierced him between the joints of his armour (1 K 22³⁴), and of Jehoram's through an arrow which smote him between the arms and went out at his heart (2 K 9³⁴).

The Arsenal and Official Archives.—*Third*, further cuneiform tablets have been discovered in the buildings to the south of the Great Hall. These date from before the pillage and fire which occurred in the town about 1350 B.C. It is possible that the military commander's quarters were here, for one of the tablets is a letter in Akkadian cuneiform from the king of Beirût to his son, who was governor of Ugarit at the time. The fortress or arsenal of the town also seems to have been located at this part, for the largest of the tablets contains a list of weapons, including bows and slings, distributed to certain soldiers whose names are given (most of these being Semitic). From an accumulation of sling-stones found near the same spot, it is evident that many of the stones hurled by ancient slingers were of fairly large size. One of the bigger kind must have completely filled the 'pouch' or hollow in the sling (called 'palm' (*kaph*) by the Hebrews, cf. 1 S 25³⁹ R.V.), and a supply of them must have formed a heavy weight in the bag (cf. 1 S 17⁴⁰). Fresh tablets, grouped carefully together in packets of about ten, have also been unearthed in the rooms to the north of the Great Hall, and Schaeffer's view is that here at last he has lighted on the official economic and diplomatic archives of the kings of Ugarit. If so, we may receive most valuable information about Palestine at that distant age (c. 1400 B.C.). According to Virolleaud, there are lists giving the names of about ninety towns which formed the kingdom of Ugarit. One of the towns, *Halbi*, is stated to have been inhabited by Sa-Gaz (or Habiru), and these are equated with the 'Iprim' (*Ibrim*) or Hebrews, thus solving a problem which has long vexed Biblical scholars.¹

THE REPHAIM.

From the references to the Rephaim in various passages of the Ras Shamra poems, it is clear that

¹ An article on this subject by the writer is to appear in the July issue of the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*.

they were a group of beings who were in the service of Baal, and whose leader had the name of Rapha-baal, corresponding no doubt to Raphaël, the good angel of Tobit in Jewish tradition ('one of the seven angels before the Lord'). This is quite a different signification to that given to the Rephaim in the Old Testament, where they seem to have the double meaning of: (1) an ancient extinct race of giants (cf. Gn 14⁵, Dt 3¹³ R.V., etc.), the last of whom is stated to have been 'Og, king of Bashan (Dt 3¹¹ R.V.); (2) disembodied spirits or 'shades' (cf. Ps 88¹⁰ R.V.m.: 'Shall the Rephaim arise and praise thee?'). Perhaps the latter meaning originated from the former, as Schwally long ago suggested, for the 'giants' being dead and gone were regarded as inhabitants of the underworld. Probably the Ras Shamra signification, which goes back to at least the fifteenth century B.C., is the original and correct one. According to the poems, there were not more than seven or eight Rephaim, and their activity was largely confined to the events connected with the annual appearance and disappearance of Baal, whose throne stood on the summit of a mountain in Amurru. As these servants of Baal must have left only a very vague trace in Hebrew tradition, it is easy to see how they came to be regarded by Old Testament writers as extinct giants. According to skeletal remains, there were no men of abnormal size among the aborigines of Palestine. Indeed, before the third millennium B.C. Palestine man seems to have been somewhat less in size than in later ages. Probably the Israelite tradition of giants arose from the existence of the numerous megalithic structures, especially in the Transjordan, and from the Canaanite city walls some of which were built of cyclopean masonry nearly twenty feet thick (cf. those at Ai in the Early Bronze Age). Seeing also that the Rephaim played an important rôle in the ceremonies connected with the disappearance or death of Baal, it was natural that Hebrew writers should place them among the 'manes,' and look upon them as a kind of aristocracy in Sheol, not unlike the Arab *djinn*s. The Ras Shamra texts, it may be said, seem to confirm the view that the word Rephaim is derived from the Hebrew root *rāphā*, 'to heal' (cf. Raphaël, 'God heals').

THE NUZI TABLETS.

Marriage Customs.—The written records discovered at Nuzi (to the south of Nineveh), many of which are of a domestic nature, throw additional light on the rules regulating marriage among the Hebrews. According to Professor

Millar Burrows, of Yale, two of the tablets record the adoption or entry of young men into the house and family of their father-in-law in cases where the latter had no son. This was really the Akkadian custom of *errēbu*-marriage, according to which a young man entered (*erābu*) his wife's home, becoming legally subject to his father-in-law, and without receiving in full the ordinary powers of a husband. The arrangement was essentially a product of patriarchal society, and it explains Jacob's action in entering Laban's household when he married the daughters of the latter (Gn 29), and the restrictions and inferior position involved. It is true, Laban had sons (Gn 30³⁵ 31¹ J), but these were probably born after Jacob had entered the household (they do not come on the scene till twenty years later, Gn 31⁴¹). Further, the Nuzi tablets give us some illustration of the Levirate marriage in the Old Testament (Dt 25⁵⁻¹⁰), according to which a man was bound to marry the widow of his brother, if the latter died leaving no son. The Biblical reason given is so that he could raise up children to his brother, thus providing heirs for the latter's property and continuing his personal life, as it were (for a man lived through his children). But Professor Burrows points out that, according to the Babylonian tablets, there was a further important reason. The welfare of a deceased man was dependent on certain ancestral rights, such as water libations, being performed over his grave by his descendants, and if there was no son to do this important duty, the result was regarded as disastrous. This was a superstitious idea, however, which the Biblical writers seem to have wisely rejected, and hence Deuteronomy makes no reference to it.

Shoes as Legal Symbols.—According to the Hebrew law, if the surviving kinsman refused to take the widow, a formal declaration was to be made before the elders of the city, and she was to disgrace him publicly by taking off his shoe and spitting in his face (Dt 25⁹). This custom, in which shoes were used in a legal and symbolic way, was common not only throughout Israel, but in other parts of the Near East, and finds illustration in some of the Nuzi Tablets. The explanation of the custom is apparent. Seeing that one enters upon the occupation of a property by treading upon it with his shoes (cf. Ps 60⁸), the pulling off of the shoe indicates the intention of *not* carrying out this occupancy (cf. Ru 4⁸, where the kinsman renounced his right to Ruth's property by drawing off his shoe). In other words, when any one gave up a claim or title, he took off his shoe or sandal as legal evidence (in place of a formal

deed), and handed it to the purchaser (cf. Ru 4⁷; perhaps also Am 2⁶ 8⁶). No doubt the transference of the shoe sometimes occurred without the seller receiving his full payment (perhaps no payment at all), or in order to circumvent legal obstacles, and this abuse of the custom explains the words of Samuel (1 S 12³) in his farewell address to the people, where the Septuagint reading, which is probably the correct one, says (cf. R.V.m.): 'From whose hands have I taken a ransom and a shoe? Answer against me and I will return it' (ἐξίλασμα καὶ ὑπόδημα; ἀποκριθήτε κατ' ἐμοῦ).

MUMMY OF SOLOMON'S FATHER-IN-LAW.

It is interesting to note that the black granite sarcophagus (containing a mummy case of solid silver seven feet long) of Psusennes II. (c. 976-947 B.C.), the last Pharaoh of the Twenty-first Dynasty (Tanites), whose daughter king Solomon married, has been discovered recently by Professor Montet of Strasbourg University at *San el-Hagar*, the site of the ancient city of Tanis (Biblical Zoan). We find (1 K 3¹) that 'Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt,' and 'he brought Pharaoh's daughter into the city of David,' until he had finished the temple of Yahweh and the palace. As Solomon commenced the temple in the fourth year of his reign (*i.e.* about 965 B.C.), the marriage must have taken place about 964 B.C. or a little later. Living and reigning not far from the Delta, Solomon would naturally be sensitive to frontier politics,

and by taking Pharaoh's daughter as a wife, he would hope to retain Egypt as an ally, or at least to restrain any opposition from there. There was peace on the borders at the time, and traffickers flourished by exchanging the valued wood of Lebanon, the spices of Araby, and such-like things for the linen yarn and other products of Egypt. The Pharaoh, however, who claimed a suzerainty over Philistia, seems to have broken the peace, with the Philistines at least, by putting the city of Gezer to fire and sword (it had revolted from him), and then presenting it as a wedding gift to Solomon. This was an action which greatly benefited the latter from the commercial standpoint, for it gave him control of the great highway or trade-route from Egypt to Syria and beyond, by way of Gezer, Megiddo, and Hazor. Unfortunately, Montet found that the Pharaoh's mummy inside had been practically destroyed by the humidity of the air, and only a small quantity of bones remained, but there was a pure gold mask like Tutankhamün's, and he found twenty-one gold bracelets, some gold necklaces and other jewellery, a pair of slippers in gold, numerous weapons, and various precious objects (some of these with valuable historical inscriptions). Tanis has long been regarded as the repository of many unknown events in Hebrew history—it is believed to have been the Avaris of the Hyksos—and for that reason the excavations being conducted there by Montet are being watched with the closest interest.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

'Quisling.'

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'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith.'—1 Co 16¹³.

A THING is known by the name which we give it, yet there are many things which are called by names that appear to have no connexion with the thing whatsoever. We know what a mackintosh is, but why should we call it a mackintosh? If we had never known a mackintosh should we guess what it is like from its name? We learn that it is given

this name because it was the name of the man who invented this particular type of garment. When we go for picnics in the summer we take not only our mackintoshes but also some sandwiches. Why call them sandwiches? Because a certain Earl of Sandwich first thought of them! Many of you wear wellingtons in the rainy season, but that word doesn't convey the idea of waterproof foot-wear, does it? Those useful articles got their name from the famous Duke of Wellington who made them popular.

Now there is a new word which is becoming current speech: it is the queer little word 'Quisling.' It doesn't sound a nice word, and it hasn't got a nice meaning! It is a word which in future will