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## ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.\*

THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES, ESQ., LL.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following elections were announced :

ASSOCIATE.—Mrs. Charles Chevenix Trench.

MISSIONARY ASSOCIATES.—Miss. L. G. Robinson ; Rev. W. S. Moule ;  
Edward C. Woodley, Esq., Principal of Lond. Miss. College,  
Calcutta.

The following paper was then read by the Secretary in the absence of the author :

*RECENT DISCOVERIES IN PALESTINE IN RELATION TO THE BIBLE.* By Dr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN.

**D**ISCOVERIES in Oriental lands are now accumulating so fast, and excavations are being conducted by so many societies and nationalities, that to keep pace with them requires vigilant and unremitting study, and to report them all would require volumes. There are few discoveries in ancient "Bible lands" which have not some bearing on the Holy Scriptures especially in as far as the Bible claims to be a true history of the progressive revelation of the one and only God. The bearing of all such discoveries may be looked upon as threefold, to confirm, to illustrate, and to interpret the language of the Bible. At one time the first was looked upon as the one thing of consequence, but to-day, to a large extent, the illustration of the Scriptures and its interpretation is generally recognised as at least as important. The kind of man "who will believe anything that is *not* in the Bible" is disappearing, and it is generally recognised that the Old Testament, as a collection of historical documents, has the highest claims to consideration by secular historians, while, on the other hand, we know that records in clay and stone are by no means free from mistakes and even wilful misstatements.

The position of Palestine with regard to all such investigations must ever be unique. In the first place all light thrown on

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\* Monday, May 13th, 1907

Oriental ancient history has made it increasingly evident how important was Palestine as a meeting place of all the great civilisations and races of the ancient world. The tendency of a few years back was to picture the patriarchs as unsophisticated bedawin in a land which was a kind of back water amidst the currents of the ancient stream of civilisation. Now all this has been altered. To quote the words of Professor George Adam Smith\*—

“Where formerly the figure of the ‘Father of the Faithful’ and his caravans moved solemnly in high outline through an almost empty world, we see (by the aid of the monuments) embassies, armies and long lines of traders crossing, by paths still used, the narrow bridge which Palestine forms between the two great centres of early civilization, the constant drift of desert tribes upon the fertile land, and, within the latter, the frequent villages, and their busy fields, the mountain keeps with their Egyptian garrisons and the cities on their mounds, walled with broad bulwarks of brick and stone.”

It was in no out-of-the-way corner of the earth that the race, through whom revelation came, was located by the Divine purpose, but in the very turmoil of the strife of nations, buffeted between the smaller nations in the immediate neighbourhood, the Philistines, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Syrians and the restless children of the Desert, and ground betwixt the interchange of blow upon blow between Assyria or Babylonia or Græco-Syrian Empire of the Seleucidæ and Egypt. How small and how weak a race they were in almost all their history we realise as they appear as two small states, among many others, in the monuments. And yet God prepared this race as He moulds the choicest individual characters of His saints—in the hot furnace of affliction. What they went through can be clearly traced, as we look back, as a purifying influence on their religion, so that—

“We are able to look at the history of the North Semites as one great connected series of events co-operating towards the making and discipline of Israel”†—

an explanation of the philosophy of history which we can understand if we recognise that—

“Judaism was incomparably the greatest gift to the world in ancient times.”‡

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\* *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament.*

† J. F. McCurdy, art. “Semites,” *Hastings Bible Dictionary*, ext. vol.

And yet though Palestine would at the first thought appear to be the most important land for those investigations which should illuminate the Scriptures there undoubtedly has been a tendency among archæologists to belittle the results of investigations there as compared with those of Egypt, Greece and Mesopotamia. It may be admitted at once that the contributions to the *general* history of mankind from these three latter sources are vastly greater than have been obtained by the comparatively scanty excavations which have been carried out in Palestine. But the light thrown directly on the Bible by investigations in the Holy Land have been out of all proportion to the extent of the excavations, and without doubt most important discoveries yet lie hidden there under the heaped up dust of many "tells." The earlier scientific explorers concerned themselves with surface surveys, and as a result of their labours the majority of place-names in the Bible has been identified through, in many cases, the survival of ancient Hebrew or Greek names, often under an Arabic form, and even at times translated into Arabic. It may, however, be added that the situation of several of the most important places such as Lachish, Gath, Gezer, Megiddo, Taanach and Mareshah which had been thus tentatively fixed, have through the work of excavators been now rendered certain. Thanks to this brilliant group of military engineers employed by the "Palestine Exploration Fund," the course of the great trade routes, and of conquering armies, and the sites of ancient battles are now carefully mapped out. The climate of Palestine is now known as well as that of England, and is much more easily comprehended; its study has thrown considerable light on many Scripture passages as it is substantially the same as in Old Testament times. The customs of the people of the Holy Land have been recently studied as never before. No people have kept up the primitive type of Oriental habits and customs so unchanged as have the Syrian bedawin—and at least a large proportion of the *fellahîn*. For our new knowledge of ancient customs and habits of life we are indebted to the recent explorers, Bliss, Macalister, Sellin, Schumacher and Benzinger; for recent information on the modern customs of the *fellahîn* and bedawin we are indebted to a host of workers. Among them the late Professor S. Ives Curtiss may be particularly mentioned for his special line of research on the survival to-day of PRIMITIVE SEMITIC RELIGION.\*

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\* *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, Prof. Ives Curtiss, of Chicago.

He has shown conclusively that among the modern inhabitants of Palestine and Syria there survive many primitive beliefs which are common to, and historically go back before, the organised religions—Moslem, Christian and Druze. Going to the land in the first instance a disciple of the late Professor Robertson Smith, and accepting his teaching that the sacrificial meal was the oldest form of sacrifice, three summers of investigation convinced him how primitive and ingrained was the institution of the bloody sacrifice and the belief in the need of “redemption.” He found that the putting of the blood of a sacrificed victim on the door-posts and lintel—even on the tent cords of the bedawin—survives all over the land to-day. When foundations of new buildings are dug it is common to make a “foundation sacrifice,” the blood being allowed to flow to the bottom of the trench. On one occasion, the explanation offered by a *Sheikh* standing by was as follows\*—

“Every building must have its death—man, woman, child or animal. God has appointed a redemption for every building, through sacrifice. If God has accepted the sacrifice, He has redeemed the house.”

In all parts there are “sacrifices for the dead,”—

“They kill animals for the dead in behalf of his spirit. They go before him as light, serve him as he approaches God,”†

as one man explained.

In the same way there are sacrifices in fulfilment of vows, sacrifices “between the feet,” the victim being killed while the man stands with his legs on each side of the animal, sacrifices (in the *Nablûs* district) when a reconciliation takes place between the avenger of blood and the murderer, and so on. The conclusion of Professor Curtiss is that the importance of the “shedding of blood” and the necessity of “redemption” belong to the primary religious instincts of the Semites.

A second series of investigations were concerned with the survival to-day of “High places” or local sanctuaries. Professor Curtiss found that among the ignorant *fellahîn* and bedawin, unaffected as many of them are by either Mahommedanism or Christianity, the conceptions of God are at the same primitive stage as it was among the Canaanites or earliest Israelites. On the one hand the ideas of God are anthropomorphic in the extreme; on the other far more reverence and respect is paid to the local shrines or “Welies” than towards God Himself.‡

\* p. 196, *loc. cit.*

† p. 178, *loc. cit.*

‡ p. 129, etc. *loc. cit.*

“The relation of the modern Semites to the ‘saints’ is entirely different from that to God. The people are in fear of them, and seek to secure their favour through gifts and to avert misfortune by timely and satisfactory offering. . . . They are the deities whom the people fear, love, serve and adore . . . practically many people know no other God. An oath by a *Wely* or a sacred tomb is often far more binding than one in the name of God. They will swear falsely by God when they dare not do so by the *Wely*.”\*

These holy places are all over Palestine and Syria, while sacred groves, marking ancient “High places,” are common everywhere. There is no part of the country without them and *they are revered to-day*. The spirit of some saint—or *jinn*—is supposed to reside in the grove, and he visits any injury to his property with death. Often at such shrines—or at sacred groves—articles are left in the safe keeping of the saint, such as ploughs, bundles of wood, jars, etc.; no one dares touch them, for the spirit of the grove, or of the saint, is guarding them. The “holy men” who guard some of these shrines usually have a hereditary right to the post; when sacrifices are made there the guardian “priest” usually receives the hide and one quarter of the sacrificed animal (*cf.* Deut. xviii, 3). According to Professor Curtiss many of the “holy men” at these shrines follow the example of the sons of Eli (*cf.* 1 Sam. ii, 22). Many go about half clad and are credited with a gift of prophecy. They also practice exorcism. Such then are some of the deepest beliefs of the uneducated *fellahîn* of the Holy Land to-day; as will be shown the earliest traces of religious belief found in the excavations point to much the same ideas thousands of years ago.

The most important recent additions to our knowledge of Ancient Palestine have come from the EXCAVATIONS OF THE PALESTINE TELLS.

The word *tell* has become such a familiar one now in Oriental Archæology as to have practically been adopted into our language. It is applied by the Arabic speaking peoples of Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia to a hill of a special kind—a flat-topped artificial mound consisting, as a rule, of the crumbling remains of successive towns built one above the other. All over the East the process of the formation of such “tells” can be seen in the sites of modern villages, which stand to-day on the accumulated dirt and ruins of their predecessors of a few generations back. When such towns were destroyed

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\* This is true of Moslem, Christian and Jew.

or their sites deserted, the returning or new occupiers usually found it more convenient to start with entirely new house foundations and streets than to unearth the old. "Tells" are scattered all over Palestine but more particularly in, or on the edges of the great plains; towns built on steep rocky sites are frequently refounded on the rock, the old foundations being thrown over or utilised, but on level ground it was easier to build upon the old rubbish than to remove it.

The first work on the "tells" was begun at *Tell el Hesiy*, a site on the edge of the Philistine Plain, by Professor Flinders Petrie, on behalf of the "Palestine Exploration Fund," in 1890. In a six weeks' reconnaissance this explorer was able with the practised eye of an expert to lay down general lines with respect to the dating of the successive strata by means of the pottery, which with but slight modifications, have been followed by all the subsequent workers.

Dr. F. J. Bliss took up the work when Professor Petrie left it, until 1893. The results he published in a small volume entitled *A Mound of Many Cities*. After a spell of work at the walls of Jerusalem (see below) Dr. Bliss in conjunction with Mr. R. A. S. Macalister explored some of the "tells" of the Shaphelah or low hill country of Judea. The area in which the firman permitted work to be done included *Tell Zakareyeh* (perhaps Azekah), *Tell Judeydeh* (an unknown site), *Tell es Şāfi* (probably Gath), *Tell Sandahannah* (Mareashah) and *Tell Shuweikeh* (Socoh). Of these sites all but the last were attacked.\* At *Tell es Şāfi* little could be done through the hill-top being largely occupied by another village. This was the more disappointing as of all the sites this is the one most striking, its commanding situation at the very entrance to the historic Vale of Elah and its good and abundant water supply point to this as the site of an important place. *Tell Zakareyeh* and *Tell Judeydeh* did not yield very great results, though the work there was a necessary stepping stone to the understanding of that at Gezer. Of all places the uninhabited *Tell Sandahannah*—so called after the church of St. Anne, whose ruins lie in the neighbourhood—should have yielded a rich harvest, but unfortunately the "firman" expired before little more than the upper layer of what proved to be the Greek city of Marissa had been explored. The site is without doubt that of Mareashah, a city fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi, 8), the

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\* For full account see *Excavations in Palestine, 1898-1900*, F. J. Bliss and R. A. S. Macalister, Palestine Exploration Fund

locality of a battle between Asa and the Ethiopians (2 Chron. xiv, 9-10) and probably the home of the prophet Micah (Micah i). The remains of the ancient period still lie beneath those of the Greek city, waiting excavation. Advantage was taken of the opportunity to thoroughly explore the extraordinary labyrinths of caves lying in and around this *tell*. They are the most wonderful relics of the troglodyte "Horites" in the land, but have been used as refuges in several succeeding ages. With a new "firman" Mr. R. A. S. Macalister was engaged during 1903-4-5 in excavating, on behalf of the "Palestine Exploration Fund," *Tell el Jezer* (or *Jezerah*), the site of the important city of Gezer. The work of this period has proved so rich in results that this Society has just obtained another "firman" or Government permission to work two years more at this place. It is the ambition of the explorer and his supporters that the whole *tell* should be overhauled down to the primitive rock and that every foot of *débris* should be examined. As nothing like this has ever yet been attempted with any other *tell* in the land, it is highly desirable that it should be done now. The peculiar position of the *tell*, within easy reach of both high road and railway between Jaffa and Jerusalem, the fact that almost the whole of it is available for excavation—the modern village being on the south slope outside the lines of the ancient walls—and the circumstance that the *tell* is owned by Europeans, all combine to give this site advantages to the archaeological explorer which cannot be found elsewhere in Palestine.

While the English Society have been investigating these southern "tells" the German Palestine Society have carried on extensive excavations on the enormous *Tell Mutasellim* (lit. "Hill of the Governor") close to *El Lejjân* and at the entrance to the important and historic pass through the Northern Samaritan Hills from the Plain of Esdraelon to that of Sharon. Although *El Lejjân* (? = the legion) was long accepted by many authorities as the site of Megiddo, few who have seen the ruined foundations of the successive cities which for many centuries stood on *Tell Mutasellim*, and the position of the *tell* itself as viewed from any spot on the boundaries of the Great Plain of Esdraelon, will for a moment doubt that this, and not *El Lejjân*, is the actual site of the great fortress-city of Megiddo. The excavations at the spot were initiated in the spring of 1903 by Dr. Schumacher of Haifa, and were further carried on by Dr. Benzinger, the expenses of the later excavations being largely defrayed by a liberal donation from H.M. the German Emperor.

At a spot within sight of this work Professor Sellin of Vienna commenced in March, 1902, an independent excavation. This was at *Tell Taanuk*, the undoubted site of the fortified city of Taanach. Although the hill was small its situation was favourable, there being no modern buildings on the summit; the site, too, had evidently been entirely deserted since about 600 B.C. except for some scanty Arab remains of a thousand years back, easily removed. It seems probable to Professor Sellin that the destruction of the town occurred in 608 B.C. at the time of the battle of Megiddo, but two and a half miles away, when the pious King Josiah was killed (II Kings xxiii, 29-30, II Chron. xxv, 20-24). Going back from this time a continuous occupation of the hill from 1,500 to 2,000 years can be traced; no remains of Neolithic troglodytes were found there as at Gezer. At present there is a pause in the general activity, but several societies are making plans for renewed work;\* it is therefore a good time to review the general results. In doing this I shall refer to Gezer primarily, as the work there has been most systematic and most fruitful in results, and is the one I have most thoroughly followed by frequent visits, but the work at the other "tells" will be referred to throughout for the purposes of comparison.

It is manifest at the outset that no results can be of historical value unless the remains of the various superimposed civilisations can be approximately dated. An object found, say, a piece of jewellery, a sherd of pottery or even a skull, which may be intrinsically worthless, may be archaeologically a priceless relique if belonging to a certain period. In digging through a *tell* the depth from the surface will of course give some indication of relative age, though allowance must always be made for objects falling down crevasses, etc., to strata earlier than their own period. Unfortunately, the number of feet of rubbish which accumulates during, say, a century, varies so greatly that calculations based on that alone are most precarious. Another means of making a rough calculation regarding the age of any stratum of city remains is the presence or absence of metal. A "stone age," a "bronze age," and an "iron age," may be traced in Palestine as elsewhere. The first use of iron came in *about* the time, calculated from Bible data, of the arrival of the Hebrews; we cannot date the beginning of the use of bronze, it is found all over the historic period, but the farther back we go the less bronze and the more flint instruments occur, until at

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\* See note at end.

last we reach back to a prehistoric age when flints alone are used. We have fortunately one extremely valuable indication for dating the strata of the "tells"—this is the pottery. Though so friable, pottery is, unless deliberately ground up, practically indestructible, and even in small fragments has a sure tale to tell to the experienced judge. The making of pottery is also one of the oldest arts; jars of various kinds are found with the earliest remains of the stone age in Palestine. There have been changing fashions in pottery, both in the material and in the forms and decoration of the vessels. The use of many distinctive types was synchronous all over the known civilised world. Though commonly found in fragments there is no period which has not left perfect specimens of its pottery types in tombs or caves or cisterns, so that the experienced worker knows just where he is historically when he sees the pottery emerge. Even strolling over the surface of a *tell* he can judge very expeditiously the date of the last occupation by the Roman, Greek, or Hebrew sherds which lie exposed by every winter's rainfall.

All the workers in Palestine recognise one main series of types, following the lines laid down by the experienced Egyptian explorer, Professor Petrie, during his six weeks' work at *Tell el Hesi*. The chief differences of opinion are in the names which should be given to the types of certain periods. The designations vary somewhat with individual workers, but the dating of the types within a century or so is now fairly fixed. The following are in brief outline the chief classes recognised:

#### A. PREHISTORIC PERIOD.

Earliest primitive pottery, found so far only among the troglodytes of Gezer. It is roughly made and very porous. Date uncertain, certainly as far back as 3000 B.C., and possibly as 4000 B.C.

#### B. HISTORIC PERIODS.

I. (a) *Early Amorite* or *Early Pre-Israelite*: before 1600 B.C. Found at Gezer in Stratum III together with many Hyksos scarabs; probably as early as 2000 B.C.; found in the earliest remains at *Tell Ta'anuk*, *Tell el Hesi*, *Tell eš Şāfi*, and *Tell Judeydeh*.

(b) *Later Amorite* or *Late Pre-Israelite* (1600-1300 B.C.). Pottery showing a great advance in culture, analogous to that of Cyprus, Mykene, and Egypt, and, according to Sayce, showing Hittite influence. Found in all the tells except *Sandahannah*.

II. (a) *Phœnician influence predominant* (1300–1000 B.C.). Found in the fifth layer in Gezer. Macalister calls it "transitional." Period from Judges to Solomon.

(b) *Later Phœnician*—the most characteristically Hebrew; 1000–800 B.C.—and later. Iron now appears and begins to replace bronze and flint instruments. Cypriote pottery also marked. In S. Palestine jar handles with Hebrew stamps now appear.

III. (a) *Hellenic influences appear*—800–600 B.C.—at *Tell Ta'anuk* only. The terra cotta altar of incense with human and animal heads belongs to this stratum. Nothing answering to this period in S. Palestine.

(b) *Later Hellenic*—Seleucidan pottery—after 300 B.C. Most of the pottery of *Tell Sandahannah* and some of that in upper layers at Gezer and on the surface at *Tell el Judeydeh* belong to this period.

IV. *Roman pottery*—found on the surface of "tells" all over the land. Many of the lamps found in tombs at Gezer belong to this class.\*

In addition to the indications enumerated there are happily positive indications which are of the greatest use in checking the results arrived at along other lines. These are objects which can be definitely dated, for example, cuneiform and Hebrew inscriptions, Egyptian scarabs and articles of jewellery, and, for the later periods, Greek and Latin inscriptions, coins and lamps. Of all these, the scarabs are probably the most practically useful; they frequently contain the names of well-known kings, others from their designs can with assurance be assigned to definite dynasties. At Gezer great numbers of Hyksos scarabs, mostly unnamed, have been found, pointing to an Egyptian influence in Syria 700 years earlier than is recorded on any Egyptian inscriptions. Among the scarabs with royal cartouches occur those of Khyan (about 3100 B.C.), Usertesen I. (2758–2714 B.C.) Thothmosis III. (1503–1449 B.C.), Amenhotep III. and Queen Tyi (1414–1379 B.C.), and others of later dynasties. On the topmost stratum was found a small slab of red sandstone with an inscription in which occurs the name Naifaaurud, the first king of the XXIXth dynasty (399–393 B.C.).† The cuneiform inscriptions are even more interesting, for example, the one

\* The above classification is a combination of those of Mr. Macalister and Prof. Sellin.

† Dates are quoted from Petrie's *History of Egypt*.

tablet found at *Tell el Hesj* was found to be one of the *Tell el Amarna* series and contained references to Zimirida, the Governor of Lachish (of which *Tell el Hesj* contains the remains) at the time of Amenhotep IV., while we learn from a letter of the same series from the governor of Jerusalem that this man was killed at Lachish by the servants of the Egyptian king. The collection of tablets found in a crumbling box at *Ta'anuk* belong apparently to the same period, but the two Assyrian contract tablets found at Gezer are very much later.

It is impossible to give here in any but this scanty outline the various data by which it is now possible to assign to their historic periods the strata of a *tell*, but it may be considered a settled question that the remains of a given city, belonging to any historic time, can be dated with assurance within a century.

In describing the main results of these investigations, as bearing on the Holy Scriptures, it will be convenient to do so under those headings—(I) The religious beliefs; (II) The condition of culture and social life; and (III) The light thrown on definite historical events recorded in sacred history.

### I. *The religious beliefs of the early inhabitants of Palestine.*

The evidence is gathered from two sources:—

- (a) the tombs,
- (b) the High places.

(a) All the facts we can gather from the early interments in Palestine point to a belief in the survival of the spirit after death. It is without doubt something very different from the "hope of immortality" and "a joyous resurrection," but it is evidence of a fundamental instinctive belief in the idea of an after-life. This is important, because some would maintain that the Israelites and their racial allies had no belief in an after-life until quite a late stage in their religious development. The first inhabitants of Gezer, in the prehistoric time, were a non-Semitic race,\* who, like the leading people of Babylonia in early times, cremated their dead. The crematorium which was unearthed was a cave skilfully arranged with a draught-chimney, by which cremation could be accomplished thoroughly and speedily. The

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\* As proved by the bones examined by Prof. Macalister, F.R.S. See *Q. Stat. P.E.F.*, 1902, pp. 353-354.

interesting thing is, that with the bodies, probably those of local celebrities, were deposited food vessels once containing food for the spirits of the departed. Some of the vessels appear to have been partially burnt at the time of the cremation. At the next period—that of the earliest Semitic peoples which we may for want of a better name call early Canaanites—the bodies, laid on the left side with the knees drawn up, are buried in caves. Here the arrangements for supplying the deceased with nourishment and drink were on an elaborate scale, more so than at any later periods. Large vessels with wide mouths and pointed bottoms were found carefully set up on end, evidently because they contained, when placed in the cave, some liquid, and smaller vessels, to be used as “dippers” (exactly as the *jellah* to-day takes water out of such a vessel) were found lying inside them. The food, of which mutton was, by the evidence of the bone fragments, one constituent, was laid on a large dish, and another dish was laid over it, to keep off the dust. In one case a bronze spear-head was put with the food apparently to act as a knife for cutting it up!

In one of these tombs no less than fifty pieces of pottery of different types were found as well as alabaster vessels, jewellery, silver pins, etc., together with scarabs of the XIIth dynasty, including one of Usertesen III. (about 2660 B.C.).

In the later Semitic tombs the bodies are laid in the same position. The offerings of food and drink are continued, but there is a tendency to make the custom a mere form; there are fewer large and valuable jars and many small “dipping jugs.” “Possibly at this period the fluid offerings were ceremoniously poured out.”† Many of the deposited jugs were injured, either having been broken “to liberate the ghost of the object”† so deposited, or simply from a spirit of economy, which becomes marked at a later age. In some tombs bronze weapons were found; in one a magnificent bronze scimitar 23 inches long, in another as many as 131 fine javelin heads.

In the Maccabean age the bodies were laid out flat in *kokim*, and after being allowed to decay, the bones were deposited in ossuary boxes. These boxes were then deposited either in special chambers or sometimes even packed into the *kokim*. At this period pottery is still to some extent laid in the tombs; it is often broken and is found inside a *kók* or ranged against the wall of the chamber.

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\* Macalister, *loc. cit.*

The food offerings, as represented by the pottery, become from age to age increasingly a form, until at length in Christian tombs\* a heap of broken glass, manifestly in fragments when deposited, is all that represents the custom. During this time, however, another interment custom becomes marked, namely, the deposition of lamps. They are few in the earlier tombs, but increase in numbers as the ages go on, until at length in the early Christian days we find crowds of lamps, mostly unused, deposited in the chief tombs. The change would seem to indicate a refinement of ideas; firstly, a crude semi-materialistic belief that the spirit needs food and drink and weapons as in life, and later, apparently, the idea that *light* is more necessary in the dark underworld. The latter belief, one may suppose, gradually became refined to a more truly spiritual symbolism in the case of the Christians, as is shown by the inscription on one of the lamps, "The Lord is my light."

The indications from the interments are dim, uncertain, and liable to many interpretations, but more important evidence of the primitive Semitic religious beliefs is obtainable from (b) THE HIGH PLACES.

The earliest "high place" found at Gezer—one unique of its kind—belongs to the troglodyte, non-Semitic† inhabitants. This consists of a great rock surface (90 feet north to south by 80 feet east to west), covered with those circular marks called "cup marks," which are so common over artificially levelled rock surfaces in Palestine. There is no actual *proof* that they are religious in their nature, but it is impossible to think of any practical use in domestic or social life to which they could have been put. The cup marks at this place number in all eighty-three—the largest is 8 feet in diameter and 9 inches deep, the smallest but a few inches across. In connection with this area there is an opening 1 foot wide—at the bottom of a cup mark—leading into a cave—one of three caves associated with this "high place." This narrow opening appears to have been a kind of "shoot" wherein could be poured sacrificial blood

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\* It should be explained that though on the *tell* no remains later than Maccabean were found, a great number of Christian tombs were opened in the environs; the remains of this and later periods lie probably underneath the modern village.

† It is impossible to be certain whether this "high place" was pre-Semitic, but it is suggestive that at the mouth of the pre-Semitic crematorium a cup mark was made which at a later period, when the cave became a burial place for the early Semites, was replaced by a *Massebah*.

and other offerings to the gods of the underworld. In the cave to which it led were found a considerable number of bones of pigs, which we know were sacred animals among the early Semites. What the "cup marks" represented, what their use, one cannot guess. They may have been symbolic of the sun or moon, or they may have had practical use in the details of the sacrificial rites.

The great Semitic (Canaanite) "high place" of Gezer, about 120 feet north of the last mentioned, occupied a prominent place in the centre of the hill. The temple, as now uncovered, consists of eight monolith pillars varying from 10 feet 9 inches to 5 feet 5 inches in height, but in line with these are the broken bases of two other pillars. These *Maṣṣebōth* (מצבֹּת)—to use the Hebrew name—are mostly roughly hewn masses of limestone, and all of similar rock to the local limestone, except one, the seventh, which, according to the distinguished geologist Dr. Blanckenhorn, is of a different formation, and is indeed of a kind found around Jerusalem. It has been suggested that possibly this *maṣṣebah* was brought from Jerusalem, and, if so, the others may have come from other shrines, trophies perhaps of victories.

In the middle of the series of monoliths—between stones V and VI—is a great rock-cut socket or trough over 6 feet long by 5 feet broad; it lies a little to the west of the alignment of the pillars. It is carefully squared and hollowed out, leaving an inside space (2 feet 10 inches long by 1 foot 11 inches broad by 1 foot 4 inches deep). It is difficult to decide with assurance for what purpose this could have been made. It may have been an altar hollowed out, like one found in Petra\* to receive the blood of the victims,† a trough to receive water for lustrations—an essential part of Semitic worship—or, as Mr. Macalister and several experts who have visited the spot think, a socket to hold the pole or *Ashērah*, which we know from the Old Testament was an essential religious symbol at Canaanite high places. If this last was its use, the *Ashērah* must have been an imposing piece of timber to need such a socket, and one not unworthy of standing beside the mighty monoliths. That the *Ashērah* was often large, is implied in Judges vii, 26, where Gideon offers a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the *Ashērah*.

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\* See article on the "High Place at Petra," *Biblical World*, Jan. 1901.

† The bones of many victims, human and animal, were found thrown pell-mell into a cave close by.

The open-air enclosure in which these sacred emblems stood was paved with stones, and under the pavement at the foot of the stones—to the west—were found large jars containing the remains of newly-born infants. Similar jars with infants' bones were found both at *Tell el Hesry*, at *Tell Mutasellim* and at *Tell Ta'anuk*; at the last mentioned the infant burials were in close association with a very ancient rock-cut altar. There can be no doubt that we have here evidence of the rite of infant sacrifice, and almost certainly it was the custom of the sacrifice of the first-born as carried out by the pre-Israelite Semites. In many of the jars were deposited, with the infant remains, small articles of pottery, possibly food and drink for the infant soul.

In close association with the Temple, and evidently used in connection with its worship at some period, was a cave, so constructed as to be connected by a secret passage, through which a man could just squeeze with difficulty into a second inner cave. It seems very probable that this was used for the giving of oracles and other forms of priestly jugglery. To the east of the Temple area was found a large circular pit, for which no evident use could be assigned until on clearing out the bottom a small "brazen serpent"—in other words, a well-shaped cobra-form serpent of bronze, was found. We know from cuneiform inscriptions that serpents were kept in Babylonian temples, and we read in II Kings xviii, 4, that the children of Israel worshipped a brazen serpent, which is ascribed by tradition to the time of Moses, which Hezekiah had to destroy. Further, the Uraeus or cobra was a guardian serpent, the patron of royalty, and was kept in the temples of Egypt. It is, therefore, a probable theory that this circular enclosure at Gezer was a pit to hold the sacred serpents. Whatever views may be taken with regard to the "oracle cave" or the "serpent pit," the Semitic high place itself is a discovery of the greatest importance, and one which throws a flood of light on many questions connected with the religious beliefs of the Caananites and early Hebrews. There can be no doubt whatever from the character of the *masses-bōth* which are unlike anything unearthed in the other Palestinian excavations, that the shrine at Gezer was one of special sanctity and one of the most important in Palestine. What was the worship connected with these emblems? It is highly probable that there was originally at Gezer but one standing stone in the "high place," shaded, may be, by a sacred tree—the forerunner of the *Ashērah*. Of all the series, the second, and the shortest, stone is most probably the original one. This has its bluntly pointed top polished by the frequent anointing, rubbing or

kissing of the devout. This was the primitive "Beth-el," the dwelling-place of the local god. Gradually, it may be surmised, other stones were added, until the perfect number (seven) was reached—it is quite clear that the eighth stone was added at a considerably later period. At the outset this idea of the presence of a deity in the stone was the one which made the place sacred; it is one common to the most primitive stages of stone worship among the Semites. Later on, but still at a time of remote antiquity, a new idea arose, and the pillars came to be viewed as phallic images. This, though it might be inferred by the shape of some of the older unhewn stones, is made much more probable through the enormous number of roughly shaped phallic emblems, mostly natural size, found scattered through the débris all around the Temple area. There is no possibility of mistaking these objects, and the connection of these with the *massobōth* is clear; in the immediate neighbourhood of the pillars they are specially plentiful.

Here we have indubitable evidence of the character of the religious ideas which came gradually to be associated with the Temple. When the eighth pillar was erected its form is so pronounced that all can see it was deliberately fashioned to be a *simulacrum priapi*. Now scattered about the Temple and elsewhere in the city, specially in the fourth stratum, are found numbers of earthenware plaques representing a nude figure of *Ashtarte*, the Babylonian Istar—the goddess of fertility. At *Tell Ta'anuk*, similar plaques of *Ashtarte* were found in considerable numbers in the later "Amorite" city—during the Hebrew occupation a new type seems to have here come in. These plaques were most in use in the land about 1600 B.C. Similar figures are found in Babylonia, Susiana, Phœnicia and Cyprus. The most interesting of all those found at Gezer are those in which the goddess is supplied with two horns (one of the figures is of metal and the horns are indisputable); this is no doubt the representation of the much-discussed "Ashteroth Karnain" or Ashteroth (*Ashtarte*) of the two-horns—a place-name in Gen. xiv, 5. Most of the plaques are found broken across the middle; indeed so constantly was this the case, that it has been suggested that they have been broken purposely—ritually. The character of the figure on these plaques is in most cases of such a nature as by rude exaggeration to make the sexual element pronounced, and it is impossible to refrain from associating them with the Temple ritual which seems at this very period to have been concerned with worship of the procreative powers. Now this opens up the question whether the

*Ashêrah* may not have been the female counterpart of the male *Maşsebah*. Originally a tree, and as such the dwelling-place of the deity—like the stone—the idea of fertility may have been increasingly connected with it, so that where the *Maşsebah* became a phallus, the pole (Ex. xxxiv, 13, Judges vi, 25, etc.) may have been marked with some conventional sign (such as may be seen in places in Palestine to-day) for the female equivalent of the phallus.

At a still later period the pole itself may have been roughly shaped into a form somewhat similar to that seen on the plaques. That the "grove" or *Ashêrah* was at one time, even in the time of the Hebrew Monarchy, shaped into an image of some kind, seems implied in 1 Kings xv, 13, and this is admitted by Winckler.\* The *Ashêrah* appears, too, to have been draped (II Kings xxiii, 7). In 1 Kings xv, 13, we read of an image which was erected by Maakah as a horrible or grisly thing for (or belonging to) an *Ashêrah*. "Grisly thing" (R.V. "idol") may here be a substitute for a word which moral or religious delicacy forbade the later scribes to write.† It need hardly be pointed out that there is no philological connection between the words *Ashtarte* and *Ashêrah*, but the latter, the writer would suggest, came gradually to represent the former. *Ashtarte* was "the goddess of fertility and reproduction," as appears strikingly in the myth of the descent of *Ishtar*. The *Ashêrah* from the first seems to have represented the same ideas—fertility, and later on reproduction; so that unless there was, as is possible, a connection even earlier, the *Ashêrah* gradually became the actual sign of the goddess—the *Ba'alat*, as the *Maşsebah* was the sign of the *Ba'al* of the locality. This view has been greatly strengthened, according to Winckler, by the finding in the *Tell el Amarna* correspondence the name 'Ebed-*ashêra* (slave of the Ashera) where the word *ashêra* has the determinative sign signifying a divinity. The very name *Ashêrah* seems, then, to have been somewhat loosely used instead of the goddess' name *Ashtarte*. This mention of the name belongs to the period when we should judge the cult of *Ashtarte* and of the "grove" (*ashêrah*) to have been at its fullest development. At a later time, that of the Hebrew monarchy, the names appear to have been often used interchangeably (compare Judges ii, 13, x, 4; 1 Sam. vii, 4, with Judges iii, 7; 1 Kings xvi, 32; II Kings xxi, 3).

\* In *Keilmshriften v. das A. T.*, 3rd ed., p. 276, on II Kings 21.

† Prof. G. R. Smith, *Expositor*, March, 1905, p. 231.

If these inferences are correct we can picture the chief elements of "Baal" worship in the pre-Israelitish times and later. It was a worship of a Ba'al—the owner or possessor of the locality—who among the Canaanites was specially the Ba'al who gave increase of the land and who thus came to be the god of fertility and to be connected with symbols of procreation. Side by side with this was the worship of the ba'alat, the proprietress of the place who all over the land was identified with Ashtarte, the goddess of fertility and reproduction. She, too, in the *Ashêrah*, at this stage was symbolised by emblems of the reproductive organs—as she certainly was on the terra-cotta plaques. In connection with these emblems we find the sacrifice of the "first born" [or at any rate of new-born infant,] buried at the foot of the *Maşsebah* probably when they were erected, human and animal sacrifices at the altar, and a system of religious prostitution, for which perhaps the cave under the Temple was adapted. This last we know to have accompanied this cult and evidences of it surviving to a late period are found in various passages in the Old Testament (*cf.* Amos ii, 7, Deut. xxiii, 18).

Accepting these views the language of Old Testament writers regarding the abominations of the "heathen" or the Canaanites will not appear too strong. G. F. Moore,\* while by no means accepting all the above views, writes, "There is no doubt, however, that the cultus of Ashtarte was saturated with these abominations." How much of the religious process of the Israelites was one long struggle against the *Maşsebah* and *Ashêrîm* is evident by a reference of their whole history down to their captivity. There was an *Ashêrah* at Samaria (II Kings xiii, 6), at Bethel (II Kings xxiii, 15), and even in the Temple at Jerusalem at one time (II Kings xxiii, 6). It by no means follows that the Israelites took on at once all the sanctuaries; in many cases in the first zeal of their invasion it is quite possible that many were destroyed, though, perhaps, in some cases restored; but at Gezer we have a special reason for accounting for the old *Maşsebôth* being allowed to remain undisturbed. We read (Josh. xvi, 10) that the Israelites did not turn out the Canaanites, but became amalgamated with them. But though the pillars stood, the Temple appears to have lost some of its ancient sanctity, for now at the stratum dated for this period we find the Temple area, previously so sacred, becoming built

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\* Art. "Ashtoreth," *Erc. Bib. Col.*, 338.

over by the dwellings of the people—doubtless greatly increased in number by the invasion of the Israelites.

There is another period of history when we might expect that the Temple would be destroyed; this is long years later, when the iconoclastic Simon Maccabæus captured the city from the Syrian general Bacchides. Why did he not then throw down the *Maššebōth*? The answer is simple. At his time almost all the pillars were covered with accumulated débris of many centuries of occupation. Only three could have been visible, and these three he, or someone at this time, threw down. Two have been broken up and only their bases remain; the third was found prostrate and has been re-erected—it is the phallic-looking number VIII.

There is another obscure but very interesting religious rite, traces of which have been found not only at Gezer but also in the Galilean “tells”—the foundation sacrifice. In the earliest times\* infants were either buried *in* the walls or buried in jars† *below* the house foundations, specially the corners. In one case the body of an old woman, showing advanced rheumatic arthritis, was buried under a house corner—along with food vessels. But this is quite exceptional. At a later stage, specially in the fifth stratum at Gezer, which is probably the first city under Hebrew influence, we find the human victim *replaced* by a lamp. That is, instead of the sacrificed infant in a jar, we find lamps between bowls buried under the house walls. It would seem as if the lamp, in some way not apparent to us, represented the human victim.

The usual arrangement is a bowl above and one below and the lamp between, but, however arranged, the lamp is evidently the protected thing, and, as such, is placed centrally. Here, then, as in the other religious customs, we have an evolution in religious ideas. But though with the Hebrews the rite of foundation sacrifice became thus modified, yet it survived in places as late as the Monarchy. The story of Hiel the Bethelite is a case in point. He, in the days of Ahab, laid the foundations of Jericho (perhaps the fortifications only) at the cost of (the life of) Abiram, his first born, and set up the gates

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\* In the early Semitic strata at Gezer and *Ta'anuk*. At the latter places several *adult* foundation sacrifices were revealed. At *Tell Mutasellim* several infant remains in jars were found under the foundations of the earliest city walls.

† The use of fine jars and the insertion of other articles of pottery in the large jars with the infant remains make it clear that these are no mere murders but real sacrifices.

thereof at the cost of (the life of) Segub his youngest (1 Kings xvi, 34).

Mention must also be made of the two curious altars found at *Taanuk*. The first was a rock-cut altar for libations going back to about 2000 B.C., found at the bottom of the earliest stratum. The other is an extraordinary terra-cotta altar of incense found in fragments in the topmost stratum. It must date about 700 B.C. The altar has one "horn" surviving on the right side, and up its side alternately three animals with human heads and two lions; the paws of the lions rest on the heads below. The human heads are of a type analogous to very early Greek, and the altar is evidently a product of Hellenic influence if not an actual importation.

*(b) The light thrown by the excavations on the condition of culture in Palestine in Old Testament times.*

The excavations at Gezer show that that city had at least three independent walls at different periods. Of these the earliest was a rampart of earth faced inside and outside with stones; it was founded upon the original rock surface of the hill, the whole summit of which it enclosed. So primitive a work must have belonged to the earliest inhabitants; it represents a very low state of civilisation. With a good deal of confidence this structure may be assigned to a date earlier than 3000 B.C.

Inside this is a well-built wall enclosing the whole hill. It is much ruined, and in many places has been used as a quarry by later builders, but its original thickness must have been about 14 feet; it appears to have had long narrow towers of short projection at intervals of 90 feet on its course; the masonry, where unruined, is very good. At one point on the south side a massive brick gateway with a passage entrance 9 feet wide and 42 feet long was found. Two massive towers, about 28 feet long and standing still to the height of 16 feet, flanked the entrance. The passage way was paved with stones and a step at the inner end is still polished by the tread of feet. At the N.W. corner the remains of another gate—now much destroyed—were found. The southern gate affords important indications for dating this second wall. The great brick gateway after falling into ruins became covered with houses, and the new wall of the succeeding age was constructed further out. Now the stratum of city *above* the ruined gate can be certainly dated, because every datable object goes back to Amenhotep III.

of Egypt, *i.e.*, about 1500 B.C. This gate we may then conclude was, with the wall to which it belonged, ruined and useless at that time, and the depth of the strata makes it probable that it was constructed a thousand years earlier. This, then, is a most important historical fact, that the city of Gezer between 1500 and 2500 B.C. was a large and powerfully fortified city. If we may judge by the fine masonry work of the wall, the Gezer people must at that period have enjoyed a very considerable degree of civilisation. It may further be gathered from the remains that they were an agricultural people owning cows, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys. The streets were narrow and crooked, and the houses had small rooms—little indeed but sleeping places, life during most of the year being passed in the open air, as with the *fellahin* to-day. Some of the larger rooms had roofs supported by wooden posts set on stone bases.\* Many of these bases have been found *in situ* lying in a row down the centre of the room.

The third wall is by far the most important historically. It must have been built immediately after the destruction—probably by Thuthmosis III. of the second wall about 1500 B.C. It lasted down to about 100 B.C. Before it must have appeared the Khabiri when besieging the governor Yapahi, and through its gates passed the adventurer Lapaya.† Again, in the reign of Meremptah these walls saw and yielded to an enemy.‡ Here, too, came the children of Israel under Joshua, the governor of the city having been defeated and slain at Lachish (Joshua x, 33). Later on, a Pharaoh, having captured the city and slaughtered its inhabitants, presented its ruined walls to his daughter, the wife of Solomon, who re-fortified it (1 Kings ix, 16). Again, in later Jewish history, the walls are the scene of a siege. Bacchides, after having been defeated by Jonathan Maccabæus, fortified Gezer (Gazara) for a siege (1 Mac. ix, 53.) It was besieged, captured, and purified by Simon Maccabæus, who built himself a palace and re-settled the city with faithful Jews. What of all this long history may be traced in the remains of these long-buried walls?

Firstly, the walls are a curious patchwork of good and bad masonry. Only one gate on the south has been found, and that not so imposing as the great brick-gate of earlier times. There

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\* Perhaps its architectural feature may explain the last heroic feat of Samson (Judges xvi, 29). See Macalister, *Q. Stat. P.E.F.*, 1905, p. 196.

† Tell el Amarna Correspondence.

‡ "Gezer is taken," occurs on a stele of this monarch.

is no definite arrangement of the towers, thirty of which have been uncovered, all but two of which are later insertions of superior masonry; they join on to the wall by a straight joint going right through the wall. Evidently a section of the wall has been removed at these points, and the tower built in the cleared space. In the case of the two remaining towers the masonry is the same as the wall and is bonded into it. Near the west end of the north side, for a length of 150 feet, the masonry, though inferior to the towers, is of the same general character. It is reasonable to infer that the wall has for this length been breached by some hostile invader and afterwards repaired and strengthened.\* Further, seven of the towers show later additions to their structure in the form of rough masonry with a sloping face covering their bases. Two of these towers are the important eastern corner towers, and the buttressing is clearly added to strengthen them, possibly against undermining. Mr. Macalister suggests that the great break in the wall 150 feet long and the other injuries to the wall requiring extensive repair were the result of Pharaoh's siege, and that, if so, the additional towers and the repaired break is Solomon's work. The hasty and incomplete additions of buttresses of rough masonry in the seven towers may, then, be the work of Bacchides, who commenced to strengthen the fortifications to resist the approaching army of Simon Maccabeus. This may be somewhat speculative, but of this we may be certain, that Gezer was a city with magnificent and imposing defences when the children of Israel came, and cities so defended—and there were many such—were not so inaptly described in Oriental language as "walled up to heaven" (Deut. i, 28). For tribes fresh from the desert like the Israelites, the capture of cities like Gezer was no small feat.

The fortifications of Megiddo at *Tell Mutasellim* have not been so exhaustively examined, but a great wall of sun-dried brick encompassing the whole hill, the lower courses of which have been exposed in many places, is considered by Dr. Schumacher to be the oldest wall and at least as ancient as the first *masonry* wall of Gezer. This must have been the fortification besieged by Thuthmosis III. of Egypt in 1480 B.C. (Petrie). The capture of Megiddo was a great event, recorded very fully in the annals of the King, and the magnificent plunder witnesses to what a height of civilisation the people of Syria had then attained. Indeed, Professor Petrie suggests† that it was the capture of so

\* All these facts are from Macalister, *Q. Stat. P.E.F.*, Jan., 1905

† *History of Egypt*, vol. ii, p. 146.

many objects of art, and more particularly so many skilled workmen, which led to the great artistic development which arose in Egypt just after these military conquests.

The walls of Lachish (*Tell el Hesay*) were examined by Professor Petrie and Dr. Bliss, and though not followed round their whole circumference proved to have been no mean defences. The earliest wall was dated by Petrie as certainly before 1700 B.C., and probably it was considerably earlier. It was 16 feet thick, with massive towers of sun-dried brick. Above this were many re-buildings and repairs. We read that Rehoboam (II Chron. xi, 9) rebuilt and re-fortified Lachish, but there must have been many destructions and restorations in the stormy years that followed; the excavations show us that this was the case. At last came Sennacherib, who, as we learn from that wonderful bas-relief in the British Museum, captured and destroyed the city. Of this event there are abundant traces in the scattered rude buildings which, for a time, alone occupied the site. The walls were once again raised, probably by Manasseh (660 B.C.), to resist Egypt, but were finally overthrown (590 B.C.) by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxxiv, 7), after which the site was left for two and a half millenniums to the wandering bedawin. More interesting than the walls, because much more definite in date, is the great layer of ashes, in places 5 feet thick, which, according to Petrie, represents the long desertion of the site between the arrival of the Israelites when, as we read in Josh. x, 32, "the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day and smote it with the edge of the sword and all the souls that were therein," and the rebuilding in the days of Rehoboam (II Chron. xi, 9). Everything found in these cities, Gezer, Megiddo, and Lachish, confirms what we know about them from the Scriptures, and the greatness of their walls and fortifications can only be described as astonishing.

Perhaps the most surprising and pregnant of facts which the excavations, especially those at Gezer, have revealed is the intimate connection which existed at an early period between Canaan and Egypt. The *Tell el Amarna* tablets have disclosed how close was the link during the XVIIIth dynasty, and we have abundant evidence for dynasties that followed, but this earlier connection belongs to the days of the mysterious Hyksos, or shepherd kings, who are supposed to have been themselves of Syrian origin. More Hyksos scarabs have been found than any others, and almost the last discovery made before the enforced closure of the work at Gezer was that of an Egyptian cave cemetery dating from the Middle Empire, say, about

2500 B.C. All the excavations point to the same conclusion—a prolonged and intimate connection between Palestine and Egypt. As to a North Arabian *Muzri*, about which so much has been written, no single archæological fact from Palestine can be brought forward to support this theory, which on geographical grounds alone appears so fantastic.

With regard to Babylonian influence, the discovery at *Tell el Hesi* of one tablet, which is really part of the *Tell el Amarna* correspondence, and the finding at *Tell Ta'anuk* a small library of other cuneiform tablets, consisting of communications between Palestinian towns at much the same period as the above mentioned correspondence, both witness to the wide diffusion of cuneiform writing, and to the once great predominance of Babylonia in the affairs of Canaan. The two cuneiform contract tablets found at Gezer, relating to the local sale of estates, can be absolutely dated to the years 651 and 649 B.C. through the names of the Assyrian Eponyms. They are witnesses to the unexpected degree of organisation of the government which Ashurbanipal had established in his recently conquered territory. With regard to DISCOVERIES THROWING LIGHT ON DEFINITE HISTORICAL EVENTS, reference has already been made to the sudden increase in the size of the population of Gezer at a time when from Bible facts we should date the arrival of the Israelites. At a later period it was found that there was a stratum of remains at Gezer in which the buildings by no means covered the whole area within the walls; in other words, the population of that period was much reduced. The date of this time, from the pottery and other remains, brings us to the time of Solomon or thereabouts, and the inference is that the reduction of the population was due to Pharaoh, his father-in-law, capturing the city and slaughtering the inhabitants.

The repairs of the walls in the Maccabean period have already been referred to, but a much more interesting and definite relique of that age is the great palace built by Simon (1 Macc. xiii, 43-53), the walls of which have been excavated. Although surmised to be this place when its massive walls were laid bare, the finding of an inscription made the surmise a certainty. This inscription was a rough graffito scrawled on the outer wall—

πάμπρα (ς) Σιμώνος κατεπάγη (?) π(ῦρ ?) βατιλειον

which seems to mean "Pamphras, may he bring down (fire) on the palace of Simon." The words "Palace of Simon" are sure, so that the identity of the building is beyond question.

An inscription of a different character found on a jasper seal at *Tell Mutasellim* is exceedingly interesting; it may be the earliest Hebrew inscription of known date. In the centre of the seal is a lion, above and below which is an inscription which runs:—

לשמע  
עבד ירבעם

“To Shamâ the servant of Jeroboam.” It is extremely probable that this Jeroboam was Jeroboam II., son of Joash, king of Israel, so that we have, what so far has been so lamentably rare, a Hebrew inscription contemporary with one of the Hebrew kings.

There is another source of inscriptions. This is the inscribed jar handles which have been found in increasing numbers in the excavations in South Palestine. These are in two languages, Hebrew and Greek. The latter, the more plentiful, belonged largely to Rhodian wine jars, and are of the Seleucidan period. Their variety is very great, but of no special interest to the Bible student. The Hebrew inscriptions occur in the strata of the later Hebrew occupation. The names occurring on them have long been a puzzle. One whole series of these handles are adorned with a sign generally accepted to be the flying scarabæus and with למלך—*le malak*—“to the king” above and a Hebrew name below. In the first two of these, found in the earlier Jerusalem excavations, twenty years ago, the names seemed to read *Zepha* and *Shat*, and it was supposed that they must be the names of some unknown kings in Palestine. Later on in the next excavations more names were found, but in this particular series—with the scarabæus and “to the king”—only the following four names, Ziph, Hebron, Shocoh and Memshat. (It need hardly be explained that the vowels are not expressed in the Hebrew, and are only guess-work.) Two theories were started to account for these names. Professor Sayce suggested that they were the names of towns in which were situated the royal potteries (three out of the four *were* identical with the names of known towns). M. Clermont-Ganneau on the other hand, thought that these jars were stamped with the names of the towns from which were paid taxes of oil, wine, etc., “to the king.” Against the first theory it may be urged that the earthenware of the jar handle is all of exactly the same kind, and does not show those varieties in composition which it certainly would if the jars were made at different places. Against the latter theory

is the fact that no other but these four names have been found.

Now, besides these specially stamped handles with "to the king" on them, a great many other jar handles with Hebrew names have been found, which names have from the first been taken to be (as with the Greek jar handles) those of the potters who made them. Why should not these others be the names of the *Royal* potters? After an exhaustive study of the genealogies in the early chapters of I Chronicles, Mr. Macalister comes to the conclusion that this is the case; he recovers all the four names of the "royal" potters, and connects them with I Chronicles iv, 23, when we read—

"These are the potters and those that dwell among plants and hedges (or in Netaim and Gederah); there they dwelt with the king for his work."

Not only do these names occur, but also most of the other names on the jar handles can be found in close connection in the Biblical genealogies. It is impossible to follow out here all the arguments and deductions which Mr. Macalister makes from these discoveries, but it is most interesting to find the same names in the contemporary pottery and in the Hebrew text of the Bible; thus it lends support to the older view, that the names in the genealogies are personal rather than place-names, and are taken from genuine contemporary records. It is an encouragement to hope for more discoveries which may illuminate difficult passages in the Bible.

During the period of time covered by the just mentioned excavations, a good deal of light has, from various sources, been thrown upon the problem of the ANCIENT TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM, resulting in a very general reversal of the views held a quarter of a century ago. Then it was practically unanimously admitted among students of the subject that Zion and the City of David occupied the summit of the western of the two parallel hills into which the site of the Holy City is naturally divided. Such a view seemed to have the support of Josephus, and certainly has all the weight of ecclesiastical tradition since the fourth century on its side. In recent years, and particularly in the last decade, almost all the leading scholars\* have come to the conclusion that the original Zion

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\* Among the adherents of the new view may be mentioned, Birch, Stade, Robertson-Smith, Sir Ch. Wilson, Prof. G. A. Smith, Socin and Benzinger, Ryle, Bp. of Winchester, Canon Driver and Sir Ch. Warren.

and the City of David was upon the long narrow spur, usually called "Ophel," which runs south of the "Temple area" and terminates just above the "Virgin's fount," opposite the village of *Silwân* (Siloam). The arguments by which this newer view is maintained may be briefly reviewed under two headings: (1) Those from the site as compared with similar sites in Palestine, and (2) those from direct statements in the Bible.

(1) When Jerusalem first appears in secular history, under the name Urusalem, in the *Tell el Amarna* letters it is as a walled and fortified city, the chief town of a district and as a place which, it may be inferred, was of importance to the king of Egypt (Amenhotep IV.) to hold if he wished to retain the country. Indeed, in Letter II from Urusalem (Petrie's arrangement) the Governor Abd Khiba writes: "The King has set his name in Urusalem for ever, he cannot surrender his territory." This is interpreted by Winckler to mean that the King, who with his change of religion had assumed the name Akhen-aten (Glory of the sun disc), had made this city a shrine of Aten or the Sun-disc, and had in that sense placed his name and staked his reputation in the place. This is speculative, but it would be interesting if it could be proved that the one Egyptian creed which came nearest to monotheism should have been enshrined in the place from which the belief in one God went forth in a later age as a precious gift to the world.

More important for the present argument is the fact that in the before-mentioned correspondence are many references also to Gazri (Gezer) and to Megidda (Megiddo), and from them there can be no doubt that in this era both these cities were larger, better fortified, and more important than Urusalem. The hill on which the modern view now locates the original Zion and David's City is just the kind of hill which we find selected everywhere for fortified towns. Those who have visited the really ancient sites such as Gezer, Socho, Merashah, etc., will be at once struck with their similarity of the original site of "Zion." It was surrounded on three sides by deep valleys, and was almost without doubt separated by a depression from the higher hill to the north. The sides of the hill must in many parts have been perpendicular rocky scarps. At the foot near the southern extremity was the one true spring of Jerusalem, known in later times as Gihon and to-day as '*Ain umm ed deraj*' (the Spring of the Mother of the Steps) or "the Virgin's fount." The presence of the spring—for Judæa a very copious one—at the foot of this hill makes it certain that the original settlement must have been in the neighbourhood; it is inconceivable and

contrary to all we see in the land, that the first settlers could have established themselves on the western hill far away from the water supply. In spite of the suitability of the site, it is a difficulty to many that an area which now appears so small—it is to-day scarcely inhabited—could have been the locality of Zion. Here the recent excavations help us. Professor G. A. Smith has pointed out a wall surrounding the top of this hill "Ophel" would be from 3,800 to 3,900 feet long, whereas the length of the great outer defence of Gezer, now almost entirely recovered, is, according to the measurements of Mr. Macalister, but 4,500 feet. In other words, Zion might have been entirely restricted to this one hilltop and yet be nearly as large as the great fortress city of Gezer, which, as has been said, was considerably more important.

The main passages in the Old Testament which have a bearing on the position of Zion are those referring to the famous Siloam tunnel. This is the rudely constructed and winding rock-cut channel, 1,700 feet long, which conducts the water of the Virgin's Fount (Gihon) through the hill "Ophel" to the Pool of Siloam in the Tyropæan Valley. The famous "Siloam Inscription," describing how this work was completed, was found at its western end in 1880, but unfortunately it was undated. There can, however, be little doubt about the identity of this work with that described in II Ch. xxxii, 30, where it states the Hezekiah closed the issue of the waters of the Upper Gihon and "brought them straight down (or underneath) to the west of the City of David." From this it is clear that the tunnel passed underneath the City of David and came out on its west side. What clearer evidence could be given regarding the position of Zion?

There are other incidental references which strengthen this position. In II Chron. xxxii, 14, we read that Manasseh built a wall on the west side of "Gihon in the valley" of the Kidron, *i.e.*, immediately above the fountain, and encompassed about "Ophel." Even stronger is the statement in Neh. iii, 15-16, when we read of the "stairs which go down from the City of David" in close connection with Siloam.

Zion appears to have been the old name for the same rocky height\* which was afterwards called the City of David. "David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the City of David." But while what had been called Zion was now renamed "City

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\* According to Prof. G. R. Smith (*Expositor*, Jan., 1905), the most probable meaning of Zion is a protuberance, shoulder or summit of a ridge.

of David," the old name gradually spread northwards as the city grew and "finally became synonymous with Jerusalem as a whole."\* Thus in Solomon's time the name remained in its old locality. Solomon (1 Kings viii, 1f) gathered together all the tribes to bring up the ark out of the City of David, which is Zion, to the Temple. The Temple at this stage lay above Zion, on the point which dominated the whole of this eastern ridge. The expression is always *up* from the City of David, or from Zion, to the Temple. David, for example (II Sam. xxiv, 18) went up from his house in his city to the threshing floor of Araunah—the site of the Temple.

But gradually the name Zion spread. It has been suggested that the "name accompanied the ark"† from the City of David to the Temple, and thence it spread to include the whole city, becoming a synonym for Jerusalem itself. In Isaiah's time the Temple Hill is clearly called Zion, and also in the writings of Amos, Micah and Jeremiah.

What the Western Hill was called in the Old Testament we do not know, but that the city spread early to it as the population increased may be considered certain. Professor G. A. Smith has shown how from many reasons the population of Jerusalem must have greatly increased soon after David took up his residence there, and we may suppose that suburbs under the shelter of the west walls sprang up in the Central Valley and also up the nearer slope of the west hill. The great building king, Solomon, crowned the summit of "Moriah" with the Temple and around it built his palaces.‡ They all together covered an area considerably smaller than the *Haram* in Jerusalem to-day. But he also built "the wall of Jerusalem round about" (1 Kings iii, 31, etc.) It is very probable that Solomon built the "first wall" of the city,‡ *i.e.*, a wall running on the line of the first wall described by Josephus. This ran from the "Temple area," where it must have joined a wall to protect the buildings there, due westwards to the site of the present Jaffa Gate; thence it ran south to the great rock scarp now included within the present "Bishop Gobat's boys' school," known as "Maudslay's Scarp." It has been argued that no king except Solomon could during all the monarchy have had

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\* G. A. Smith, *loc. cit.*

† "His own palace, that of the daughter of Pharaoh, the Throne Hall, the Pillared Hall, the House of the Palace of Lebanon," G. A. Smith, *Expositor*, Feb., 1905.

‡ Josephus, B.J., v, vi, 2.

the means to undertake this enormous work. From this point the excavations of Messrs. Bliss and Dickie\* help us to pick up its course. From the Maudslay Scarp the ancient course of the wall can be followed as it passes north of the Anglo-German cemetery. Immediately to the east of this, Dr. Bliss excavated the base of a great tower, and on the east side found the wall running in two directions; in one direction the ruined foundations could be traced running north-east, in the other south-east. It is possible that the first of these was the line of Solomon's wall. It ran high up along the edge of the west hill towards the present ruined remains known as *Burj el Kebrît* and thence crossed the valley (El Wad) to the "City of David." The point of crossing *may* have been the Millo or "filling up" fortified by David.

If these conclusions are correct the fortifications of Jerusalem must have been more than doubled in length during Solomon's reign. As he had at his command the wealth of a large district, and workmen from far distant parts, there seems nothing against this; indeed it must be supposed that Jerusalem was left by Solomon extremely strongly protected for it to have held its own when in the next reign more than half the Hebrews severed themselves from her, and became her active enemies, a state of war which existed for sixty years.

The other line of wall, followed throughout by Bliss, after branching off at the point mentioned ran down the hill on the edge of the cliffs above *Wady er Rababi* (Valley of Hinnom) as far as the Pool of Siloam. Here it at one period apparently† surrounded the pool following the line of the rocky scarp, at another it crossed the valley by a great dam. The former line must have been the more primitive. From here traces were lost, but it is supposed that it ran along the edge of the Kidron valley, following the scarp visible at places, and was connected with the great piece of wall discovered by Sir Charles Warren running south-west from the south-east angle of the Temple area. The traces of foundations on the west hill clearly showed two distinct periods of construction. The first, the lower, Bliss supposes, belonged to some time in the later Jewish monarchy, the one nearer the surface would then be the wall of Nehemiah, which professedly followed the lines of the wall destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Unfortunately, nothing was found by which

\* *Excavations at Jerusalem*, 1894-97, 98, by Bliss and Dickie.

† The scarped rocks along which it ran are visible, but all the stones have been removed because they lay unburied.

these remains could be positively dated. For want of information on the subject, it would be quite open to believe that Solomon himself constructed the wall on the wider lines running down to the Pool of Siloam, and that the other line of wall may have belonged to later times. The present writer considers the former theory the more probable. In addition to the walls Bliss found three gateways, one of which, a little south-west of the Pool of Siloam, clearly showed successive changes of level over three periods, each represented by a new door sill. In association with a Roman street running out here was a great rock-cut drain, 6 feet high, which shows that Jerusalem was not always the insanitary and ill-drained city it is to-day. The drain was Roman work, and may have been in use in New Testament times. During the progress of the excavations the ancient limits of the Pool of Siloam were defined. The original pool was found to have been a rock-cut excavation (71 feet north to south, and 75 feet east to west), and round the four sides there was a covered arcade (12 feet wide and 22½ feet high), probably Herodian work; if so it was in use in New Testament times, and to this very arcade came the blind man (John ix, 7). On the west side of the pool a flight of stone steps was found which led up into the city, probably on the line of the very stairs mentioned in Neh. iii, 15.

There are many questions of Jerusalem topography yet unsolved. The south-east corner of the Temple which was so long pronounced with such positiveness to be Solomon's work, is now very generally considered Herodian; it was certainly built to admit of a great extension of the Temple area, and not the original limits. The exact course of the second and third walls is still a matter of dispute, and is hardly likely to be settled without excavation, but on the whole the opinion seems to be gaining ground that the present northern walls follow the general line of the third wall. The fact now demonstrated by Bliss's excavation, that the city extended so much further southwards than at present, makes it more believable than it once was, that the walls of the city at the time of the Crucifixion did exclude the area now covered by the "Church of the Holy Sepulchre." So good an authority as Sir Charles Wilson admits that there is nothing in the topography against the view; but whether the question will ever be cleared up on scientific evidence is doubtful.

Ancient inscriptions are unfortunately rare in Jerusalem on account of the softness of the local limestone and the destructiveness of man; one, therefore, which can be certainly dated and

refers to an historic character is of value. Such was a Greek inscription, with two words in Hebrew, on an ossuary box discovered recently in a complicated and extensive tomb on the Mount of Olives. The inscription records the name of the family whose bones had been stored there as that of "NICANOR, THE ALEXANDRIAN, WHO MADE THE GATES." M. Clermont Ganneau describes,\* this discovery in its historical interest as "of the first rank," for he has proved that this Nicanor is the man who made the famous door in Herod's Temple known as the "Gate of Nicanor." This was probably the gate which, though it required twenty men to move it, is said to have spontaneously opened at midnight as a sign of the coming destruction of the city and Temple.† The gate was of Corinthian bronze covered with thick plates of gold and silver, and was 50 cubits high by 40 wide. The Talmud describes this Nicanor as of Alexandria.

Discoveries of the greatest interest are common in Palestine, and in recent years occur with augmented frequency, but they cannot all throw a *direct* light on the Bible history. It is tempting to dwell on the Mosaic map of Palestine found at Madeba, or to describe the marvellous Græco-Phœnician tombs found by Messrs. Peters and Thiersch at Maresha,‡ or to show how much may be learned from the recent German excavations at Baalbec and the Synagogues of Galilee, but time does not permit. It has been only possible here to briefly touch on a few of those subjects which have come under the writer's personal observation, and which appear to him fruitful in the illumination of the Holy Scriptures.

A hearty vote of thanks, on the motion of the CHAIRMAN, was passed to the author for his communication.

NOTE.—During the present spring three Societies have started work in Palestine under new firmans. Mr. Macalister, under the P.E.F., has resumed excavations in Gezer; Prof. Sellin, on behalf of an Austrian Society, is excavating Ancient Jericho; and Prof. Reissner is working at *Sebasteyeh*—ancient Samaria. Great results may be anticipated from the examinations of three such historic sites.

\* *Q. Stat. P.E.F.*, 1903, p. 124.

† Joseph, B.J., vi, 5, 3.

‡ "Tombs at Marissa," *P.E.F.*

## DISCUSSION.

Professor H. LANGHORNE ORCHARD.—This Society is to be congratulated on the contributions to archæological science brought before us by papers, in immediate succession, from such high authorities as Professor Sir William Ramsay and Dr. Masterman. It will be the hope of us all that the Palestine Exploration Society will obtain the firman\* for which they have applied to enable them to continue their important work on Tell el Jezer.

We find that the more the statements of Holy Writ are honestly and carefully examined the greater is the illustration afforded of their reliability. To no thoughtful mind can it seem mere coincidence that whatever be the matter inquired into, whether places, situations and names, or the beliefs, works, and customs of peoples, the ascertained and final results of investigation are, always and invariably, attestations to the truth of the Bible; attestations that it is indeed the Word of God. As Professor Sir William Ramsay has pointed out, “in one detail after another the evidence of truth and minute accuracy accumulates.”

J. D. CRACE, Esq.—As representing the Honorary Secretary to the Palestine Exploration Fund I am glad of the opportunity of expressing my thanks to Dr. Masterman for writing such an admirable summary of the results of the more recent explorations in Palestine, not only our own but those undertaken by other countries. These all are helpful to one another and afford valuable means of comparison. It is a pleasure to point out that the writer is a member of our own General Committee, and a frequent and valued contributor to the pages of our quarterly publication. Dr. Masterman's long residence in Palestine gives so acute an observer, who is also deeply interested in the subject, great opportunities of studying such local discoveries or accidents as serve to illustrate Bible history. His local observations have among other things extended to the meteorology of Palestine, and I observe that he remarks that the climate

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\* An announcement was afterwards made, by a representative of the Palestine Exploration Society, that the firman has now been obtained.

of Palestine is now as well known and *better understood* than our own. I am sure that most of the audience who have spent the last week in London will readily believe Dr. Masterman's assertions.

It should never be forgotten that the Palestine Exploration Fund was founded and exists for the purpose of discovering and recording facts—facts of all kinds which may prove useful to a more thorough knowledge of the country and its people, past and present, and which cannot but help to explain its history and those incidents of which it was the scene, as recorded in the Bible. It places the facts before the world to be made use of ; it does not, as a Society, attempt to apply them to the views of any one religious body. These facts have been gathered by able scientific men ; and in this meeting it is but gracious to remind you that one of these explorers was your own Secretary, Dr. Edward Hull, who made a Geological Survey of the country, recorded in a volume which forms a part of the great Survey Memoir.

Dr. Masterman has very ably brought together the results of recent discoveries which could otherwise only be found scattered among the records of the several societies in different languages, and I very cordially join in the vote of thanks to him for his paper.

HENRY PROCTOR, H.M.C.S., M.R.A.S.—I should like to add a few remarks to Dr. Masterman's paper on "Recent Discoveries in Palestine." In this excellent paper a good deal of fresh light is thrown on the religion of the early inhabitants of Palestine. We are already familiar with the fact of the almost universal prevalence of the worship of the heavenly bodies. It is clear that in Palestine, as in Egypt and Babylon, as well as among all the nations subject to them, the principal objects of worship were the sun and moon. But the most recent researches all tend to show that phallic worship was almost if not quite as universal as sun-worship. This throws a good deal of light on many passages of Scripture. For instance, if such was the religion of Sodom, we can scarcely wonder at the depravity and downfall of the Cities of the Plain, at the action of the daughters of Lot, and at the enticement of Israel into this kind of sin through the worship of Baal-Peor. Here too, we find a full and satisfactory reason for the great number of enactments against nameless sins in the Mosaic Law. This, no doubt, constituted what was most abhorrent to the God of Israel, in the worship of

Canaan, and the reason why every trace and symbol of their religion was ordered to be exterminated. Dr. Masterman clearly shows us that the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth was not merely that of the heavenly bodies, but also that of the phallus and yoni, just as certainly as was that of ancient Mexico and Peru.

All this tends to show the immense superiority of the religion of Israel over that of Babylon, and that of the nations of Canaan which they displaced, and furnishes a valid reason for the apparent severity of the commands for their utter extirpation, together with every symbol of their degrading worship.

Mr. MARTIN L. ROUSE.—In this admirable paper we have the very clearest proofs that the Canaanites, as the Bible would lead us to suppose, were a numerous race, well acquainted with many arts of civilisation, when the Israelites invaded their land, and that they had, as the Bible specifically states, powerfully fortified cities; but that, as Holy Writ again declares, their morality and humanity were at the lowest ebb, their worship itself being full of licentiousness and murderous cruelty.

I would further ask whether the fact that the numerous "plaques" on which Ashtaroth is portrayed at Gezer are constantly found broken in twain does not point to a time when a God-fearing Israelite leader suppressed idolatry there?

As regards the length of the chronology before the Exodus, its figures are mainly based upon the supposition that the Hyksos kings held an undisputed sway in Egypt for five hundred years. But, as we know from the account of his royal ancestry given by Captain Aahmes in the reign of his namesake King Aahmes I., who overthrew the Hyksos, the so-called XVIIth dynasty reigned concurrently with them as more or less vassal kings: while the average of thirty-three years that Brugsch gives to the reigns that followed and to those said to have preceded the Hyksos, is proved in the following ones, and so may be inferred in the preceding, to be far too long; for the same Captain Aahmes records that he was a naval commander at the beginning of his namesake's reign, and yet mentions casually that he outlived that king and the two kings next after him.

Again I believe that the capture of Gezer by the Khabiri was one and the same thing with its capture by the Israelites, or, in other words, that the Khabiri of the Tell Amarna tablets are the Hebrews.

That "*Khabiri*," or more properly "'*Abiri*" (written with an initial *ayin*), is not equivalent to *Habiri* confederates, is clear enough, as Conder remarks, from the fact that the northern Amorites and Zidonians, who, as the tablets tell us, sided with the Hittites against Egyptian suzerainty in the north, are nowhere called *Habiri*, nor, on the other hand, are any of those northern confederates mentioned as joining with the *Khabiri* in the south, where alone these are mentioned as invaders. Moreover, the King of Jerusalem calls the *Khabiri* once "a race" and three times "a tribe" (Conder, *T.A. Tablets*, pp. 140, 144, 147, 148). He says that they have "fought all the lands that are at peace with him" (147), have seized all the land of which the Pharaoh is suzerain (145), and that they have destroyed all the rulers (142); he laments the recent withdrawal of Egyptian troops, asks why the *paka*, or Egyptian residents, "tremble before the chiefs of the *Khabiri*," and entreats his suzerain to send a fleet with fresh troops (145, 147); he speaks of a leader who bears an Israelite name, Ilimelec, as "cutting off all the king's land," and he says that "the king's land is rebelling to the chiefs of the *Khabiri*," instancing one city, Beth Baalatu, a name curiously like one of the cities of the Gibeonites (Baalah), which made peace with Joshua.\* Finally this king writes on a tablet of different clay, "And truly we are quitting the city of Jerusalem," which reminds us that a king of that city, after Joshua's greatest battle, was found hiding in the cave of Makkedah. Was not this last letter, then, sent from this very retreat? The Bible represents a King Japhia as having also fought against Israel at that time, and the tablets include letters from Japhia, King of Gezer, wherein he beseeches the Pharaoh to deliver his region "from the power of the people of the desert lands." The Bible, it is true, styles Japhia King of Lachish; but it further tells how when Japhia had been killed in the cave and the Israelites presently attacked the city of Lachish, Horam, King of Gezer, came to its aid; which tends to show that there was a special tie between the two cities, and that Gezer had been a vassal town subject to Japhia also. One may add that another letter of about the same date states that the enemy had destroyed "thirty temples of the gods in a single month," which is just what the Hebrews would have done, but what

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\* *Cp.* Jos. ix, 17, xv, 9, 60; 1 Chr. xiii, 6, etc.

other invaders, especially other Canaanites, would not have dared to do.

The date of the letters from Jerusalem, Gezer, and Lachish is in the reign of Amenophis IV., or about 1450 B.C., which is just that of Joshua's invasion according to the ordinary Hebrew chronology, making the exodus about 1490 B.C. The more recent date adopted for the exodus in the reign of Mineptah has been utterly discredited through the finding of a record of this king, in which he speaks of invading Phœnicia and the land of Israel, and laying them both waste at the same time, thus proving that the Israelites had long been settled in Caanan, when he came to the throne.