

“MIDDLE CITY”—“SECOND CITY.”

To the Editor of the Quarterly Statement.

SIR,—The difficulty felt by your correspondent “H. B.,” when he asks what is the exact meaning of the expression, “the Middle City,” in 2 Kings xx. 4, and of “the Second City” in 2 Kings xxii. 14, Neh. xi. 9, and Zeph. i. 10, seems to have been shared by our translators when they rendered the former *middle court* and the latter the *college*. The critics have been in similar perplexity when they have explained the middle city to be Zion city, and the second city to be the lower city. The confusion serves to show the need of thorough topographical investigation, such as that carried on by the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, without which such references to local features will never be understood.

Some topographical features of the site of Jerusalem are indicated in Psalm xlvi. 2, which should be rendered:—

“Beautiful for height, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion—on the thighs of the north is the city of the great king.”

Jerusalem, says Josephus, was built upon two hills, which are opposite to one another, and have a valley to divide them asunder (*Wars* v. iv. 1). On the north of Jerusalem is a mountain plateau, and these two hills stretch down from it like two legs or thighs, with the Tyropæan Valley between them. The western thigh is the higher, and would be the site of the Upper City; on the eastern thigh would be the Lower City and the Temple; and when eventually the valley between them became occupied with houses, this would constitute the Middle City. The Hebrew word means “middle” in the sense of the divided part. In the parallelism of Hebrew poetry the second line does not simply repeat the idea of the first, but repeats it with some expansion, addition, or variation. In the present instance we have the eastern hill in the first line, and the whole of Jerusalem in the second. A parallel passage is Isaiah xiv. 13: “I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the thighs of the north.” The mount of the congregation is the temple hill, the thighs of the north include the whole city.

Assuming this to be so, let us look at the texts referred to by “H. B.,” and see if any light is thrown upon them. In 2 Kings xx. 4, Isaiah goes out from the presence of Hezekiah, and “afore he is gone into the Middle City” the word of the Lord comes to him. The royal palace, there is every reason to believe, was on the eastern hill—in the Lower City—and assuming that Isaiah was making his way to the Upper City he would have to pass through the Middle City to reach it.

In 2 Kings xxii. 14, “Huldah dwelt in Jerusalem—in the second (Jerusalem).” The Hebrew word (*Mishneh*) means second in order second in dignity, and might well be applied to that division of the city

which was second in order, whether you began reckoning from the east or the west. The Second City therefore would appear to be the same as the Middle City.

In Neh. xi. 9, Judah the son of Senuah is ruler over this Second City. Probably the two "thighs" were separately fortified at an early date, and the valley between them would be suburban to both. It would thus probably be the same as Josephus's "suburbs" (*Antiquities* xv. xi. 5), and perhaps the same as Parbar or the Suburb mentioned in 1 Chron. xxvi. 18 and 2 Kings xxiii. 11. The Second City itself would thus be virtually separate, so as to justify separate rule, and would only need short east-and-west walls at its northern and southern ends to shut it in entirely.

In Zeph. i. 10 the prophet is describing an invasion. Jerusalem, as was usual, is attacked on the north. There is first a noise from the Fish Gate, which for several independent reasons I should identify with the present Damascus Gate, at the head of the Tyropœan Valley. Of consequence there is next a howling from the Second Jerusalem, for the forcing of the Fish Gate has brought the invaders into the Middle City. Next, the alarm having spread, there is a crashing of spectators from the hills which constitute the "thighs." Lastly, the inhabitants of Macktesh are to howl. Macktesh means a mortar or socket, and may be a name descriptive of the hollow at the junction of the three valleys—Hinnom, Tyropœan, and Kidron—where, perhaps, the wealthy people would live. Some place the King's Gardens near here. The inhabitants are to howl because "all the merchant people are cut down." Now, the sweep of the invaders has been down the Tyropœan Valley, and "Tyropœan" is thought by some to mean "Valley of the Tyrian merchants." Another possibility is that Macktesh may have been one of the transverse valleys, since filled up, but rediscovered by Captain Warren.

For different views, see Lewin's "Sketch of Jerusalem," pp. 53, 54, where "the second" is taken to mean Second Gate (from Fish Gate); and Thrupp's "Ancient Jerusalem," pp. 116, 117, where the words of Zephaniah are supposed to indicate not the order of events, but the order in which they would be discovered by a person in the Upper City.

GEORGE ST. CLAIR.

To the Editor of the "Quarterly Statement" of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

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SIR,—Allow me to attempt a reply to the two queries of "H. B." published in your last *Quarterly*. No doubt in the original of 2 Kings xx. 4, the Hebrew is יְרוּשָׁלַיִם , which means the city, and not court. But "H. B." seems to have overlooked that this is the *Keri* (the reading in the