

## THE TOMB OF DAVID, ZION, AND JOSEPHUS.

By PROF. W. F. BIRCH.

AN ancient tomb near the Holy Sepulchre is mentioned by Lieutenant Conder, in his "Handbook to the Bible," as being possibly and perhaps really the Tomb of David. This site—the tenth proposed—I consider impossible, being beyond the limits of Zion.

In the tomb referred to there are nine *kokim* or sepulchral recesses, and Lieutenant Conder makes the number of persons buried in the tomb of David to be exactly nine. My calculation is different, as I fail to see why Asa and Ahaziah, if not also the good high-priest, Jehoiada, should undeservedly be thrust out of the royal catacomb. (Handbook, p. 341.)

So strong is the Biblical evidence in favour of the City of David having been on Ophel (so called) that it must elude all opposition.

Lieutenant Conder still thinks that this hill was made outside the Jerusalem of David's time, and yet (Handbook, p. 341) he has to admit that the sepulchres of David were apparently situated on Ophel above Siloah (Nehemiah iii, 16). He does not attempt to explain a second difficulty, viz.: how the company after leaving the fountain gate by the stairs of the City of David on their way to the water gate, could *naturally* pass above the house of David, if it were either in the Upper City, or near the Holy Sepulchre.

If David neither lived nor was buried on Ophel, *i.e.*, if it was not the City of David, it is certainly a curiosity of literature that in Nehemiah both the *house* and *tomb* of David (or the tomb *twice*, if house = tomb) should be placed there. Which are we to believe, the ancient Nehemiah, or the modern theory that rejects Nehemiah?

Further it seems to me that it is rather rash in 2 Chronicles xxxii, 30, to state that "**Marabah al**" means "**westwards to**," instead of "**to the west side of**" (A.V.) since the same expression cannot possibly have the former meaning in xxxiii, 14.

Some writers, led (or rather *mised*) by the inventive Josephus, identify the City of David with various portions of Jerusalem, viz., the part near the Holy Sepulchre (Lieutenant Conder), that north of the Temple, or with the Upper City. Let the powerful advocates of these positions bring forth their *strong* reasons; it will not be difficult to overthrow them, unless they are decidedly *stronger* than the unsupported statements and random guesses of the Jewish historian, who (as Prideaux says) "frequently varies from scripture, history, and common sense," and (it may be added) as distinct from the three, also from himself. When he is short of information, Josephus often draws a bow at a venture, as long as Jonathan's was sure. Hence the "**cock-and-bull**" (story) of the levelling of the Acra. How he must have chuckled over thus duping the Gentiles! The idea is rich of sleepy orientals *working*, not as Nehemiah just induced the Jews to do, from "**the rising of the morning till the stars appeared**" for **fifty-two days** but **day and night** (!) without any intermission (!!) for **three whole years** (!!!). Why not have turned this superhuman effort to making the Acra impreg-

nable? "The tale cuts its throat with its own absurdity." (Quarterly Statement, 1878, pp. 183, 186.)

Whiston thinks (Note Ant. XIII, vii, 1), that the copy of 1 Macc. used by Josephus ended at xiii, 50, *i.e.*, with the capture of the Acra. This would afford an opportunity for the incredible story.

When, however, Josephus speaks of his own times he deserves attention. It is fair to add that he is occasionally *mistranslated*. He does not say that Acra was *like a crescent*, since *ἀμφικύπτρον* (Wars V, iv, I) describes the shape of the moon, when it is more than a semicircle and less than a circle. Some inconvenient statements of his in regard to Acra are also ignored when it is placed north of the Upper City. This position has not a *deep valley on the outside*. Acra, quite as much as the Upper City, was defended where necessary by *three walls*. North of the Upper City it could only have *two*. Josephus often *directly* gives the title of Acra to the Ophel hill (so called), but never to the part north of the Upper City. Nor is it given by implication. Lewin's *four points* are all fallacies, *e.g.* (1) "The part north of the upper city did not belong to it, nor yet to Begetha, therefore it belonged to Acra." In truth it belonged to none of the three, being called *the suburb*. The rest are too complicated to be noticed here.

Josephus often lies open to rebuke, now *altering* (not omitting) what he does not understand, now (to spare his brains) blindly copying the errors of the LXX.

Here are some of his paraphrastic freaks :—

BIBLE.	JOSEPHUS.
(1) "David went <i>down</i> to the hold*" (near) the cave of Adullam. 2 Sam. v, 17.	"David went <i>up</i> to the citadel of Jerusalem." Ant. VII, xii, 4.
He afterwards compensates for this by turning "went <i>up</i> ," 1 Macc. vii, 33, into "going <i>down</i> ," Ant. XII, x, 5.	
(2) "David took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the city of David." 2 Sam. v, 7.	"David called it (Jerusalem) by his own name, the City of David." Ant. VII, iii, 2.
"David dwelt in the fort and called it the city of David." <i>Id.</i> , 9.	The <i>upper hill</i> (afterwards <i>city</i> ) was by David called the <i>citadel</i> or <i>φρούριον</i> (meaning fort or <i>metzad</i> ). "Wars," V, iv, 1. See "Handbook." 336.

N.B.—In the historical passages of the Bible the stronghold of Zion, and Zion (2 Chron. v, 2), are *identically the same* place, while Josephus

\* *Metsoodah* (Hebr.) in both cases. This word seems to be used exactly six times in the historical books, and in every case, I believe, refers to (or to a place near) the cave of Adullam; twice certainly (2 Sam. xxiii, 14; 1 Chron. xi, 16); twice probably (1 Sam. xxiv, 22; 2 Sam. v, 17); twice quite possibly (1 Sam. xxii, 4, 5); since *the land of Judah* may be used in contrast to the *wilderness of Judah*. See also xxiii, 3 "in *Judah*" opposed to "*Keilah*."

makes the former to be *part* of the latter, really knowing nothing about either.

Both in the Bible are here said to be *the City of David*, and in 1 Macc. i, 21, 33, 35, the City of David is clearly distinguished from Jerusalem. Who is Josephus that we are to sacrifice the precision of these two authorities to his careless statements? As a matter of fact, according to the Bible, David did not call any part of the Jebusite possessions "the citadel," the name he gave was "*the City of David*." The Bible most carefully avoids describing the *upper hill* as *the City of David*, as when Nehemiah (ii, 13) going from the valley gate to the dung views the walls of *Jerusalem*, and no mention is made of *the City of David* until the Tyropœin is reached (iii, 15).

It has been stated that "the City of David" is used in the Bible both in a narrower and wider sense; it remains for the statement to be proved. It seems to me to be *precisely the same place throughout*.

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| (3) "David and his men gat them up unto the <i>hold</i> *" (Metzoodah (near) the cave of Adullam). | "David went up to the <i>Straits of Mastheroth</i> " (εις την Μασθηρῶν ἀνέβη στενήν). |
| 1 Sam. xxiv, 22.   | Ant. VI, xiii, 4.   |

Here he thoughtlessly copies from the LXX, εις την [Μεσαρὰ] στενήν where στενήν is a marginal explanation which in time has got into the text. This copying is the clue to his *too easily* credited account of Jerusalem (Ant. VII, iii, 2), a stupid paraphrase from the LXX.

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| "David built round about from Millo and inward."                 | "David made buildings about the <i>lower city</i> ; he also joined the <i>citadel</i> (την ἄκραν) to it, and made it one body. |
| 2 Sam. v, 9.   | Jos. Ant. VII, iii, 1, 2.  |
| ἠκοδόμησεν αὐτὴν πόλιν κύκλῳ ἀπὸ τῆς ἄκρας, καὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. |  |
| Id., LXX.  |  |

Josephus also says Joab took the citadel (την ἄκραν). Observe that Millo (Hebr.) becomes in LXX Acra, which word Josephus here adopts, naming it elsewhere as φρούριον = Upper City. Therefore Millo, if we are to believe Josephus, was the Upper City. Who will allow this? "Credat Judæus."

Thus the question of Jerusalem topography is really narrowed to *this important issue*. Which are we to believe, the Bible or Josephus? Let the earth speak.

Zion *excavated* will prove to be "the faithful city" by declaring the truth. The discovery of the Tomb of David will set this matter at rest.

The *tomb* near the Virgin's fountain is (I believe) after all *modern*, and so does not affect the position of the Tomb of David, the entrance of which

\* See Note, p. 168.

from other indications I place at *less than 40 yards* distant from the corner of the city wall, south of the Haram Area.

I hope in the next number to show full reason for this on a plan. Omitted accidentally in *Quarterly Statement*, 1879, p. 175.

## GATH.

Of the five Philistine cities, four are well known,—Ekron (Akir), Ashdod (Esdūd), Askelon (Askalān) and Gaza (Ghūzzeh). Gath alone is missing, having apparently slipped out of notice before the time of Josiah, not being mentioned in Jeremiah xxv, 20; Zephaniah ii, 4-7.

Where then stood this famous city, often contested for (1 Chronicles xviii, 1; 2 Kings xii, 17; 2 Chronicles xxvi, 6), and rich in reminiscences of David's eventful life? For here in the home of the loyal Ittai he twice took refuge with Achish; here the braggart Goliath grew up to being "six cubits and a span;" here the abusive Shimei stumbled over the fugitive slaves.

Dr. Porter identifies Gath with Tell es Sâf, a white chalk cliff guarding the mouth of the Valley of Elah. This theory is at first sight very attractive, yet here the old error which formerly placed Zoar on the mountains, appears to recur, as there is no reason for supposing that Gath was not in the plain, like the other cities of the Philistines. Their strength lay in chariots of iron (Judges i, 19). The "Shining Hill," however is apparently open to attack from the interior over ground ill-adapted for their use, and the list of cities in 2 Chronicles xi, 5-10, admits of the missing city having been situated as far from the hills as was Lachish. If some indications point to Gath having been towards the north of Philistia, they are at once neutralised by the fact that Ziklag, one of its towns, was in the south (1 Samuel xxvii, 6; xxx, 14). We must, therefore, scour the whole open country for the object of our search.

On sheet XX of the large map, a "Wâdy el Ghûeit" is marked, about 10 miles west-north-west of Beit Jibrîn.

This probably implies that there *has been a place of that name*. Mr. Finn recovered the name *Ghutt*, as that of a deserted place near Beit Jibrîn, but states that *Gath* in Arabic would most probably be *Jett* or *Jatt*. If *Ghûeit*, however, could represent Gath, we seem to have a clue worth following.

Near the Wâdy is a Crusading tower now known as Kûl'at el Fenîsh, Castle of the Philistines ("Tent Work" ii, 163), adjoining the village Keratiya.

Uncertain as is the precise value of these two points, there is another reason for this being the neighbourhood of Gath. Micah (i, 10, 11) says, "Declare ye it not at Gath, weep ye not all; in the house of Aphrah roll