

It is a matter most deserving of remark that most of the characters on the seal, and many of those at Carchemish are to be found on a MS. from Western China, even to such minute details as | | | under the animal's chin. This MS. I believe to be a copy of ancient Kitai sculptured inscriptions, like those of Hamath and Carchemish.

H. CLARKE

THE SITE OF GATH.

I.

THE site of the Philistine City of Gath has hitherto eluded modern research. The Crusaders placed it at Yebna, which is now identified with the ancient Jabneh, Jabneel, and Jamnia. Dr. Robinson sought for it in vain, but he referred to Deir Dubban, as corresponding with the position assigned to Gath by Eusebius. ("Bib. Res." ii, 66.) Fifteen years later, Dean Stanley wrote "Gath has entirely disappeared." ("Sinai and Palestine," 255.) After a journey in Philistia in 1857 expressly in search of Gath, the Rev. J. L. Porter, editor of "Murray's Handbook of Palestine," and the writer of the article "Gath," in Smith's "Bib. Dic.," concluded that its site was Tell-es-Safieh, the Crusaders' "Blanche Garde." Dr. Thomson regarded Bethogabra, Eleutheropolis, Beit Jibrin, and Gath, as all one and the same city. ("The Land and the Book," ed. 1879, pp. 564, 565.) Lieutenant Conder falls back on Tell-es-Safieh, and carries his conclusion so far as to give a picture of that place as one of Gath ("Tent Work," p. 148), besides calling the present chiefs of the village, "Sheiks of Gath" (p. 155).

In the "Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund," just published, another site is advocated by the Rev. W. F. Birch, on the basis of a remarkable collocation of names, mostly brought to light by the new survey of the Fund. These are (1) Wady el Ghueit (Gath), between Beit Jibrin and Ashkelon, in connection with (2) Kulat el Fenish, or the Castle of the Philistine; also (3), Beit Affeh, representing "the house of Aphrah," (4) es Suafir, the biblical Saphir, and (5), Khurbet Jeleidiyeh, which is held to be an Arabic corruption of Goliath. The third and fourth are among the names connected with Gath by the Prophet Micah (ch. i, 10-16), who was a native of Maresbah in this part.

Before a conclusion is formed upon this very alluring proposition, attention is invited to another site, also brought into notice for the first time by the Pal. Ex. Survey. It is Khurbet Abu Gheith, which may be rendered the Remains of Gath. This place is situated at the head of the Wady el Hesy, here called el Muleihah, which falls into the Mediterranean Sea between Gaza and Ashkelon. The position is intermediate between Gaza and Hebron; and it commands the main route from the nomade region of the Negeb or South Country to the lowland hills of the Philistine Shephelah; just as Gaza protects the Philistine coast road, and

Hebron guards the highway through the mountains of Judah from the same aggressive quarter.

An examination of all the passages in the Bible relating to Gath, appears to afford a strong support to the claims of this site, in addition to those derived from its identical name and strategical position. In 1 Samuel vii, 14, it is written: "And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath." In this passage Ekron and Gath seem to be used to indicate the northern and southern extremities of Philistia, like Dan and Beersheba in reference to the Twelve Tribes. This use is thoroughly supported by the identification of Ekron with Akir, and of Gath with Geith; but if Gath be placed at Kulat-el-Fenish, or at Tell-es-Safieh, or at Beit Jibrin, then Gath is no longer a point on the southern frontier of Philistia, for all those places are in the central parts, and the sites of Eglon and Lachish, and the venerable Gaza are further south though not so much so as Geith.

Again in 1 Samuel xvii, 52, it is written, "And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron."

In Dr. Wm. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," art. Shaaruen, Dr. George Grove quotes Prof. Knobel ("Exeg. Handbook on Joshua, xv, 32"), as calling attention to Tell Sheriah on the Wady Sheriah for the site of Shaaraim. Thus Shaaraim is found just south of Gath (Geith); and the Wady Sheriah at this time constitutes the definite boundary line between the Felahin, who are the successors of the Philistines, and the nomade Azazimeh, who have succeeded the Idumeans and the Amalekites. Shaaraim seems to define in the text, the extreme southern limit of Philistia, as Gath did its southernmost city and fortress. This second reference to Ekron and Gath in juxta-position, serves to mark the extreme character of the Philistine flight up to the northern and southern limits of their country.

In considering the connection by the prophet Micah of Aphrah and Saphir with Gath, it must be remembered that those places are only two out of ten included in the passage (Micah i, 10, 16). Gath appears to have been then the chief city of Southern Philistia, as it probably was also when Hazael, King of Syria, made it a special object of his conquest, before attacking Jerusalem (2 Kings xii, 17). Thus it became the first object of the Morasthite prophet's theme, who then proceeds with his composition by allusions to Aphrah, Saphir, Zaanah, Beth-ezel, Maroth, Lachish, Moresheth-Gath, Achzib, Mareshah, and Adullam the glory of Israel. That Aphrah and Saphir are noticed next to Gath, may be owing to their position in the plain immediately under the eye of the writer at Mareshah. To notice the other places in the list is not requisite for the present purpose, unless the opportunity be taken to suggest the identification of Beth-ezel with Deir-el-Asl, eastward of Geith. In conclusion, it may be added that the word Gueith seems to be Arabic, and of a distinct meaning from the Hebrew Gath, a wine press; a point, however, which the present writer would prefer leaving to Prof. Palmer.

July 21st, 1880.

TRELAWNEY SAUNDERS.

II.

With regard to the suggested identification by Mr. Trelawney Saunders, I have to explain, that being asked by the Secretary what would be the probable modern form of Gath, I explained that it would probably appear as *Jatt*, but that it was quite possible that the doubled letter in it might suggest a false analogy with the more common word *Jennat*, so that the name might appear as *Jennat* or *Jenata*. Instances of these false derivations in local names are common enough: witness Rás en Nákúra. "The Cape or Promontory of the Trumpet," became Súr (*i.e.*, the "rock"—Tyre) is known to Arabs in the meaning of a "trumpet," but is little understood in its real and primitive sense.

E. H. PALMER.

III.

PROFESSOR PALMER is of opinion that Gheith is not admissible as a modern form of the archaic name, Gath, because their meanings are different, and their initial letters are never interchangeable. He argues that Gath would take the Arabic "form of *Jatt* or even *Jennat*, signifying a garden." With this idea, a search was made in the map, and about 9 miles north-east of Gheith, the ruined site of *Jennata* was found. Thus far, the Professor's view finds support.

But the following objections to it are suggested. (1), Gath is used five times in the Bible as a common noun, and in each instance, the sense of the passage demands the unvaried interpretation of a "wine-press." To accept "garden" as the meaning of Gath would destroy the forcible character of each of those passages, viz.: Judges vi, 11; Nehemiah xiii, 15; Isaiah lxiii, 2; Lamentations i, 15; Joel iii, 13. See "Englishman's Hebrew Concordance," and Davidson's "Analytical Hebrew Lexicon." The anglicised Arabic for a wine-press seem to be *Ma'aser* or *Mugsara*. Neither the form nor the meaning of *Jennata* seems therefore to connect it with Gath.

It may be observed that in the case of a name, however distinguished in history, the site of which has ceased to be identified for many centuries, there is nothing surprising, if in its traditional descent, it has undergone changes both of form and meaning. The wonder is that anything remains of the original word, after transmission through Philistines, Hebrews, Egyptians, Syrians, Idumæans, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. But the shadow of a name is of value when historical incidents contribute to identification, and it may be thought hypercritical to attach much weight to a linguistic difference.

(2), another objection to *Jennata* is derived from its position. The flight of the Philistines from the Valley of Elah was first directed to the Gai or Ravine (doubtless that of *Wady es Sunt*) which carries the drainage of Elah into the Philistine Plain at the northern base of Tell-es-Safi, whence it passes north-westward to the sea at Ashdod. From the mouth of the ravine, they were chased by the Israelites northward up to the gates of Ekron. They also appear to have fled southward, when they reached the plain, for their wounded fell by the way of Shaaraim even

unto Gath. Now the road from Tell-es-Safi to Shaaraim through Gath, (Gheith) follows a line which is nowhere higher than 500 feet; while, to reach Jennata, the highland whence they had come, must be reascended to a height exceeding 1,000 feet. Facility of flight is therefore certainly not in favour of Jennata. Besides Jennata would be properly described as on the high road from the Wady es Sunt to Beersheba, and it cannot be supposed that Shaaraim would be mentioned unless it related to a line quite distinct from that leading to the more noted place.

August 19th, 1880.

TRELAWNEY SAUNDERS.

IV.

FROM the publication of the Survey Sheets may be expected to result a large number of proposed identifications. Until, however, the memoirs are also in the hands of students it may perhaps be doubted whether more harm than good may not be done to the cause of Biblical topography by the hasty suggestions of those whose acquaintance with the facts must often of necessity still be incomplete. In order for an identification to become generally accepted it must of course be shown to be satisfactory—1st, as fulfilling all the requirements of the Biblical narrative and of those of ancient authorities; 2nd, as presenting philologically a sound radical identity of the ancient and modern names; 3rd, as referring to an indisputably ancient site. Partial acquaintance with the literature of the question, unsound or fanciful derivations, and identifications with modern ruins are each and all weak points which are certain to be discovered so soon as the complete memoir is in the hands of the public; and although we may hope that students will derive valuable discoveries from the Survey Sheets, it must not be forgotten that the ancient sites have all been conscientiously sought by the Survey Officers on the ground under circumstances more advantageous than those of the student who only has the map before him.

The question of the site of Gath is a case in point. The search for this venerable fortress occupied the attention of the Survey party for many weeks during the spring of 1875. It was certainly a disappointment to be unable to report anything very novel in connection with the subject.

Had a leading question been ever permitted, no doubt a dozen sites might have been found; but as this was not done, I will venture to say that no modern title representing the Hebrew name Gath will be found on any of the Survey Sheets within the bounds of Philistia. Had such a word existed in the name Indexes it could not have escaped the searching scrutiny to which the original Arabic lists have been subjected already by Professor Palmer, and, perhaps I may be allowed to add, by myself.

I.—Philological Considerations.

The word Gath (גַּת) occurring in the names Gath-hepher, Gath Rimmon, Gethsemane, Gittha, Gittaim, and Gitta, is translated "wine

press" and its correct representative in Arabic is the name *Jett* spelt with the first or soft T.

The Samaritan town of that name, the birthplace of Simon Magus, is probably the same *Gethu* or *Gethuna* mentioned in the Lists of the Conquests of Thothmes III, and also noticed in the account of his expedition against Megiddo as if within two days' march of the latter town—*Geuta* (as it is there called) being on the road leading northwards by the land of the Anakim, while the road from Sharon actually pursued by Thothmes led eastwards by Aaruna. A suitable position for this town is found at the village of *Jett*, which stands at the foot of the Samaritan hills west of the plain of Dotham. In this case the name Gath or Gitta is thus found still to exist in the correct equivalent in Arabic.

The Galilean Gath (Gath Hepher), the home of Jonah, has lost its original name, and is now known as *el Mesh-hed* "the monument," because it contains the supposed tomb of Jonah, which has been venerated by Jew and Christian alike at least since the 4th century A.D.

As regards the name Gath-Rimmon, further indications will be found below, but while speaking of the name itself a word may be said as to various proposed identifications of the sound.

Colonel Warren R.E. proposed some time ago to recognise the name Gath in the final syllable of the name *Huleikât* applying to a village south-east of Ascalon. This name appears however to be the diminutive form of *Helkât*, the Hebrew *Helkath* or "fields" which was also the name of a town of Asher. (Josh. xix, 25.)

Mr. Trelawney Saunders recognises the name in *Khurbet Abu Gheith* or "ruin of the father of rain," but however alike the words Gath and Gheith may appear in English letters they could scarcely be more distinct in Arabic and Hebrew, for the simple reason that they *do not contain a single letter in common*.

The word *Gheith* is written with the strong guttural letter *Ghein*, one of the two modern forms of the Hebrew guttural *Ain*. The *Ei* represents the Arabic—Y the Hebrew *Yod*, and the letter *The* (th) is properly speaking one of the two modern equivalents of the Hebrew *Sin*.

Thus written in Hebrew the word *Gheith* would become (אֵיִת) '*Ais* or possibly '*Aith*, and the name if proposed as equivalent with Ai or Aiath would be less open to objections on philological grounds than would be the case if supposed to represent Gath.

Abu Gheith will be found elsewhere on the map as the name of a Sheikh, and it may be noted that we have not as yet a single well-authenticated instance in which the word Abu (father) has become a prefix to an ancient Hebrew name. It serves in fact as a rule to distinguish a modern appellation from a really ancient local name.

The two names which Mr. Birch proposes to connect with Gath are those of *Wâdy Ghâit* and the ruin of *Jelediyeh*. With regard to the former he states that "this probably implies that there has been a place of that name." The assumption is, however, scarcely a safe one, for *Ghweit* signifies soft or well-irrigated soil, being the same word found in the title

Ard el Ghāta or "fertile land" applying to the district surrounding Damascus. The title being thus purely descriptive of the rich character of the soil in this fertile plain does not of necessity imply the former existence of a town. Mr. Birch has moreover fallen into the same error with Mr. Trelawney Saunders in supposing the *Gh* or *Ghein* to represent the Hebrew Gimel—a substitution of which there is no known instance.

The suggestion that the name Jelediyeh is derived from Goliath and that Gath after losing its real name was called after that of its famous champion is, to say the least of it, not founded on any Scriptural or other literary evidence. The place in question is the site of the Crusading fort called Galatia.

The authority of Professor Palmer has been quoted in favour of the statement that the name of Gath might survive under the form *Jenneta*.

Professor Palmer will no doubt have a good reason for his assertion, but I am at present unable to understand it. *Jenneta* would appear to be a derivative from the root גננ like the Hebrew Gannim and the Aramaic Gennath, "gardens," whence the Arabic *Jenn.*, pl. *Jennān*. So far as our present experience goes, such changes have not been proved to have taken place in the nomenclature of Palestine. The ancient names when existing are preserved with but slight alteration and the *sound* appears to survive more often than the meaning (*e.g.* Rimmon, Ramah, Endor, &c. the meaning, of which names is now not understood by the peasantry.) It is indisputable that the most probable modern form of the name Gath is the Arabic *Jett*, and an identification founded on the assumption that a radical change had occurred, substituting a double N for the double T, would appear to be extremely unsafe unless supported by very strong testimony of another order.

II.—Archæological Considerations.

The various sites above mentioned appear unsatisfactory moreover, on account of the character of the ruins there found.

The ruin of Abu Gheith is extremely insignificant, consisting only of heaps of fallen masonry and remains of a modern wall. The description given in the *Athenæum* (Aug. 7, 1880) of this spot as "commanding the main route from the Nomad region of the Negeb or South Country to the lowland hills of the Philistine Shephelah" is scarcely justified by anything in the map or memoir. The ruin lies low and is not on any main road, but more than a mile from the track leading from Beersheba to Gaza. The ruin of Jelediyeh in the same manner does not appear sufficiently important to have been that of one of the five great Philistine strongholds. On visiting the site in 1875, I found the ruins to occupy a piece of level ground and to include the remains of a small tower apparently of Crusading origin.

Judging from scattered references the site of Gath was of great strength. The city was walled, and according to the Rabbinical writers (Midrash Vayikra Rabba, ch. 5) it was a fortress. No remains of anything resembling the site of a large fortified town are to be found at either of

the two ruins above noticed, and we have in this case an illustration of the fact that the Survey map by itself without the memoir is likely rather to mislead than to assist those who are unacquainted with the country.

III.—*Topographical Considerations.*

In the absence of any trace of the name of Gath we are obliged to base our arguments on the very indefinite indications of position to be found in ancient writers.

In the first place, Gath was a fortress of the Philistines and a royal city in the time of David. The five lords of the Philistines ruled in Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, and whenever those cities are enumerated the name of Gath occurs next in order to that of Ekron. (Josh. xiii, 3; 1 Sam. vi, 17, &c.) Of these cities the other four are well known as occurring in the plain south of Jaffa. The earliest mention of the Philistine country connects it with the sea-coast north of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, at which time there is good reason to suppose the plain of Philistia to have been subject to the King of Egypt. (Cf. Exod. xiii, 17; and xxiii, 31; and Ezek. xxv, 16.)

There is no good reason for supposing that the Philistines possessed any portion of the Shephelah or low hill country extending between the maritime plain and the high watershed ridge. The name Shephelah has it is true been improperly applied by some writers to the plain itself, but the Philistine plain is called in the Bible *Sadeh* (שדה) rendered "Country" in the A. V. (1 Sam. xxviii, 5 and 7), and is thus distinguished from the Negeb or "dry" country and from the Shephelah or "lowlands." The strict distinction always noticeable in the Old Testament, between the various natural districts, each distinguished by a peculiar Hebrew name, is one of the most interesting incidental indications of the familiarity of the sacred writers with the scenery of their native land.

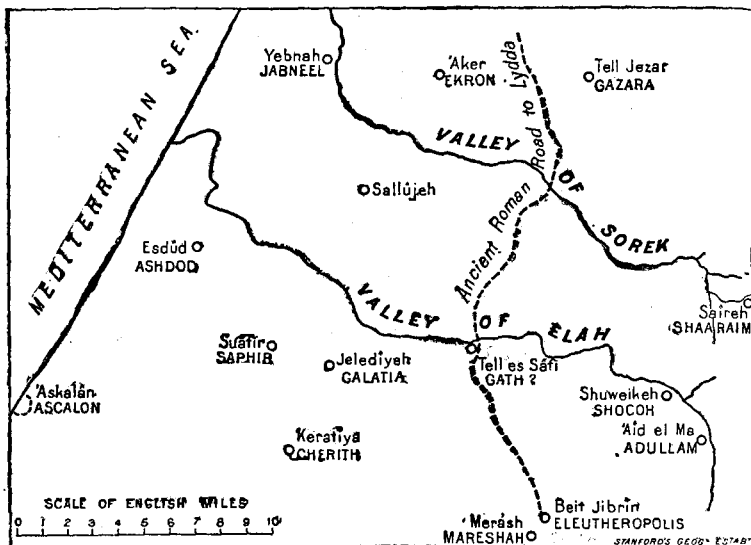
It is in the Plain of Philistia, or on its confines, therefore, not in the Shephelah nor in the Negeb, that Gath must be sought.

The second indication of position is found in the various notices which seem to imply that Gath was a frontier town between the Philistines and the Israelites. Thus after the death of Goliath the pursuit extended to Gath (1 Sam. xvii, 52), and again Gath is enumerated among the frontier fortresses of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi, 8) with Shocoh, Adullam and Maresah, cities of the adjoining Shephelah towards the north-east of the Philistine plain.

A third important indication is found in the account of David's battle with Goliath, which took place in the Valley of Elah near Shocoh and Azekah (1 Sam. xvii, 2). This great valley (Emek) the name of which in Hebrew signifies "Terebinths," is commonly identified with the present *Wady es Sunt*, still remarkable for its magnificent terebinths, and on the south bank of which the important ruin of *Shuweikeh* (Shochoh) is still found.

After the death of Goliath the Philistines are said to have fled "until

thou come to the valley (Gai) and to the gates of Ekron, and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim (or according to some translators 'to the gates') even unto Gath and unto Ekron," (1 Sam. xvii, 52).



Now in tracing the flight from Shuweikeh towards the Philistine plain (Sheets xvii, xx and xxi, of the map), it will be observed that the broad valley (Emek) near that ruin contracts to a gorge (Gai) or ravine east of Tell es Sâfi, and that another direct route leads north-west, passing beneath the hill on which is the ruin of *Sairah*, which M. Ganneau has identified with Shaaraim.

Supposing the name Shaaraim to be in this passage that of a town, its occurrence is of value as serving to localise the scene of combat. The ruin *Sairah* correctly represents the probable position of this town, which was one of the cities of the Shephelah belonging to the same group with Adullam, Azekah and Socoh (Josh. xv, 35). Mr. Trelawney Saunders appears to be in error in supposing the site in question to be *Tell Sheriah*, much further south, belonging to a group of towns in the Negeb.

It is true that the name Shaaraim does occur in one passage (1 Chron. iv, 31) among the towns of Simeon, but it seems probably to be a corrupt form in this case of the name Sharuhén, which takes its place in the corresponding list of Josh. xix (verse 6). The name *Sheriah* is much closer to Sharuhén than to Shaaraim because the guttural occurs at the end of the word and not before the R.

To suppose the pursuit of the Philistines to have extended southwards from the valley of Elah, a distance of 20 miles over the intricate country

between Shuweikeh and the little ruin of *Abu Gheith*, or again 8 miles further south to *Tell esh Sheria'h* appears very unsatisfactory; the impression conveyed by the sacred narrative being that after a short pursuit the Israelites returned to the field of battle to spoil the Philistine camp. (1 Sam. xvii, 53.)

Nor is the above-mentioned passage the only one in which Gath is noticed in connection with cities towards the north and north-east of the Philistine plain. The towns noticed in connection with the fortress in question are as below :—

Ekron	(‘Aker)	1 Sam. vi, 17.
Shocoh	(Shuweikeh)	1 Sam. xvii, 2.
Adullam	(‘Aid el Ma)	2 Chron. xi, 8.
Mareshah	(Mer‘ash)	2 Chron. xi, 8.
Jabneel	(Yebnah)	2 Chron. xvi, 6.
Shaaraim	(S‘afreh)	2 Sam. xvii, 52.

If Gath were to be sought in the south of Philistia we should expect to find its name in connection with those of Eglon, Lachish, En-Rimmon, Beersheba, and other cities of the Negeb with which it is never connected.

The situation of Gath was presumably known to Josephus, who mentions it as being in the territory of Dan (Ant. V, 1, 22) and again with Ekron as on the border between Judah and the Philistines (Ant. VI, 2, 3), and in a third passage as being at the opposite extremity of Philistia to that marked by Gaza (Ant. IX, 13, 3). These incidental notices, but especially the first, are only explicable on the supposition that Gath was near Ekron on the north of Philistia. In one passage it is true that Josephus places Gittha (probably Gath) in Idumæa, mentioning the place as a walled city (1 Wars XVII, 2) but the title Idumæa is used by Josephus, like the Daroma of the 4th century, to indicate a very large district of Palestine south of Jerusalem (as is fully shown by Reland).

Gath-Rimmon (or “lofty Gath”) is mentioned among the towns of Dan (Josh. xix, 45), and there seems no good reason for supposing that this town was distinct from the Philistine Gath; but the border line between Judah and Dan is not defined with sufficient accuracy in the Bible, for many of the border towns (such as Zorah and Eshtaol for instance) appear to have been claimed by both tribes. It appears however tolerably clear that a town called Gath lay near Ekron on the borders of the Philistine plain and of the Shephelah of Judah.

Such indications as we possess in the ancient accounts of the Old Testament, Josephus, and the Talmud appear then to support the following deductions :—

- 1st. Gath was a city of the Philistine plain (גַּת) and is not to be sought in the Negeb district.
- 2nd. Its name always occurs in connection with towns towards the north of Philistia, or in the Shephelah north-east of the Philistine plain.
- 3rd. It was a walled city and an important fortress, possibly standing on high ground (as implied by the name Gath-Rimmon).

4th. It was on the border between the Philistines and the children of Judah, and according to Josephus on the south border of Dan.

These deductions are all fatal to the proposed site at Abu Gheith, which is not (as has, it is hoped, been made clear) satisfactory from either a philological, a topographical, or an archæological point of view.

In the works of Jerome we have very definite indications as to the site which he supposed to represent Gath. Jerome and Eusebius cannot be quoted as authorities unless their testimony agrees with that of the Bible, yet their indications have preserved for us the sites of Gezer, Bezek, Adullam, and a great many other important Biblical towns.

Jerome (*Præfat ad Jonam*) notices Gath as lying between Eleutheropolis (Beit Jibrin) and Diospolis (Lydda). Eusebius (*Onomasticon*) places Getha 5 Roman miles from Eleutheropolis in the direction of Diospolis, and again under the head of Geth Rimmon as being 12 Roman miles from Diospolis near Eleutheropolis. In another passage Githa is placed between Antipatris (Râs el 'Ain) and Jamnia (Yebnah), and in another commentary Jerome places Gath on the border of Judah between Eleutheropolis and Gaza (evidently an error for Gazara or Gezer, the site of which on the line from Eleutheropolis to Diospolis was well known to Jerome). These indications agree in placing Gath in the north of Philistia.

The distances are unfortunately inexact, as the distance from Eleutheropolis to Diospolis is about 24 English miles and not 17 Roman miles; but the only really strong site on the ancient Roman road from Beit Jibrin to Lydda is the fortress of Tell es Sâfi (Blanchegarde), situated about 7 miles from the first mentioned town. It is with this important fortress, guarding the entrance to the valley of Elah, that Dr. Porter proposes to identify Gath; and in this case the Philistine flight through the Gorge (or Gai) to their nearest frontier fortress extended over only seven miles from the field of battle along a natural line of retreat.

Such, so far as I am able to collect the evidence, are the main facts in connection with this question. Gath cannot be identified until the name *Jett* is recovered, and as the name of the city drops out of the enumerations of Philistine places in the later books of the Old Testament, so also it seems to have dropped out of the nomenclature of Philistia. In face, however, of the Biblical evidence existing and of the concordant indications of the early Christian fathers, it seems idle to search for the site of this famous fortress in any district other than the north-east part of Philistia.

No notice has been taken above of the connection between the positions of Gath and Ziklag, for the simple reason that the position of Ziklag is an extremely obscure question. The site of *Sallâjeh*, west of Tell es Sâfi, has claims to represent the city which Achish gave to David. The position of *Zuheilikah* which I proposed in 1875, is more satisfactory, but there are strong objections from a philological point of view. *Asluj*, proposed by Robinson, is inadmissible, as not being in the Philistine "country" (שׁדד) and as too far from Aphek. Finally even if Ziklag were fixed the effect on the question of Gath would be insignificant. Further

exploration may lead to the recovery of the site, but no amount of examination of the Survey Sheets seems to me likely to settle the question of the position of Gath.

C. R. C.

V.

The philological disagreement between Lieutenant Conder and Professor Palmer, shows that philology is not the safest of ground for an argument on the present case. Attention was called in answer to Professor Palmer's *Jennata*, to the sweeping sources of disturbance to which names have been exposed in this region. There is another example of just such a change as the name of Gath appears to have undergone, if Abu Geith is the true site. It is found in the connected name of Shaaraim, which the Rev. E. Wilton exhibited as identical with Shilhim and Sharuhén in a clear tabulated comparison of the three lists in Joshua xv and xix, and 1 Chron. iv. Wilton's "Negeb," page 157. Also Article *Sharuhén*, in Smith's "Bib. Dict.," vol. iii, 1229.

The variations of Shilhim, Sharuhén, and Shaaraim, are so instructive, and bear so much upon the difficulties surrounding Gath, that a temporary divergence to the explanation of them from the more direct consideration of Gath, seems desirable. The first form conveys the idea of "sending away" in the plural number; that is, in two directions; or across a frontier from either side. When the idea is applied to a source of water, the singular number is used, as in Shiloah. It is a most apt name, and the first applied to this frontier station of Judah, in Joshua xv, 32. Davidson gives to Shilhim the meaning of "armed men," which may fairly be derived from the root, and is not inappropriate to a frontier station between nomad Avites or Hivites, and settled agricultural Philistines.

Then follows quickly in Joshua xix, 6, the same place with the name of Sharuhén, the identity being indicated at least, if not fully proved, by the substitution of it for Shilhim in the second of the parallel lists already mentioned. This change is made in the transfer of the town from Judah to Simeon, and as if to take it from the idea of being "sent away," as inappropriate to the place of passage between two brotherly tribes. Shilhim is therefore called Sharuhén, which Davidson treats as an abbreviation of Sharuthhén, and interprets as a "pleasant lodging." Davidson's "Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon." In other words, when the town was transferred from Judah to Simeon, the place was regarded as no longer associated with the idea of exilation, but rather with that of relaxation and rest.

Finally in Chronicles (1, iv, 31), in the list of Simeonite cities brought up to the time of David, Shaaraim has taken the place of Sharuhén. Shaaraim means "gates," and the root signifies to cleave or part. An explanation of the change of name is found in verse 27, where it is recorded that the Simeonites had not multiplied like the children of Judah, and further on, in verses 39-43, it is intimated that the nomadic character of the south country or Negeb, had survived the failure of the

Simeonite occupation. The new name retains the plural number as an indication of the double aspect of a frontier town, and the survey appears to confirm abundantly Dr. Knobel's identification of the site with Tell esh Sheriah. This modern name is the last variation of its form, and it is quite in accordance with that connection of sound and idea that appears to regulate these changes. It is now "the mound of the watering place." An accumulation of broken pottery on its summit is one of the obvious marks of the antiquity of the site, which is further indicated by the veneration attached to it, and by its continuing to be the burial place of the Hanajereh tribe. Guerin, "Judée," ii, 288.

After this it seems easier to understand how Gath may have become Gheith, even with Abu prefixed to it. Again, is the change greater than that of Goliath to Jalut in the Koran? see art. "Goliath," Smith's "Bib. Dict.," and why is the Arabic Jett preferred? Does Jett ever mean a wine press? Accepting Lieutenant Conder's interpretation of Abu Gheith as the Father of Rain, the designation suggests an attribute of mystic power, and so may be carried back to some incoherent traditional remembrance of Goliath. Here too Lieutenant Conder, unassailable, appears to be in conflict with Professor Palmer on a philological point.

Turning now to Lieutenant Conder's archaeological argument, it may be asked, if anything more could be expected to appear at the remains of Gath, at first sight, and on the surface, than the "heaps of fallen masonry," which the surveyors found at Abu Gheith. To understand the position of Abu Gheith the sheets 19, 20, 23, 24, should be put together, and then it will be seen by experienced eyes, that the valley in which Abu Gheith is found, lies close under the mountainous region indicated by heights above 1,000 feet. As the flight of the Philistines was not to Gaza, they must have kept close under the mountains by Summeil and Arak el Menshiyih, and on by the valleys coming down to that place from the south; and still skirting the mountains on the east, they strike the valleys coming from the south by Abu Gheith, "on the way to Shaaraim," or Tell esh Sheriah. Now, it will be admitted that the fugitive Philistines fled from the valley of Elah, through the Wady es Sunt, to the plain at Tell es Safi. Here undoubtedly a part of them turned northward to Ekron, and it is contended that another part turned southward to Gath. But must Gath be looked for in the south? The affirmative answer is found in 1 Sam. vii, 14, where it is recorded that the cities taken by the Philistines from Israel were restored to Israel, "from Ekron even unto Gath." Here there is exactly that kind of juxta-position, by which the northern and southern limits of the Land of Israel are defined in the familiar reference to Dan and Beersheba. The full extent of Philistia is thus expressed, "from Ekron even unto Gath," and to mark still more emphatically the completeness of the subjugation of Philistia under the divine inspiration of Samuel, it is added "and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines." 1 Sam. vii, 5 to 14.

This testimony to the southerly position of Gath seems undeniable. That being granted, it may be affirmed that no passage from south to north

between the mountainous heights exceeding 1,000 feet, and the Gaza route can be found to facilitate a flight southward so much as the line between Arak el Menshiyeh and Abu Gheith, this line being also on the way to Shaaraim or Tell esh Sheriah.

As it is in this part of his discourse that Lieutenant Conder adopts Monsieur Ganneau's identification of Shaaraim with Saireh, the objections to that site are made here instead of being connected with the foregoing notes on Shaaraim. Kh. es Saireh is only about four miles distant on the north from the field of battle, which took place in the Valley of Elah, below Shuweikeh or Shocho. The Philistines came up from the west, the Israelites from the east; and Saireh was probably in the rear of the Israelite camp, and on one of the roads by which they had gathered together, while the gorge of es Sunt would have been in the rear of the Philistine position. Is it likely then, that the Philistines would have fled northward by way of the Wady en Najil, and across the Israelite lines, when the Wady es Sunt was entirely in their own hands and open to them?

Again Saireh is close to the northern border of the tribe of Judah; whereas Shaaraim was in the allotment of Simeon, certainly on the south of Judah.

It is wrong for Lieutenant Conder to lead his readers to conclude, that I have supposed the flight of the Philistines to have passed over the mountains between Shuweikeh and Abu Gheith, for I carefully took them through the Wady es Sunt into the plain, before dividing them right and left to Ekron on the north, and Gath on the south. It also appears to be a strange mistake to speak of that pursuit as "short," which was "until thou come to the valley (Wady es Sunt) and to the gates of Ekron" ('Akir); a distance of 15 miles as the crow flies, and 20 miles by way of Wady es Sunt.

I believe that I have now said enough to justify my adherence to Kh. Abu Gheith as the recovered site of long lost Gath.

TRELAWNEY SAUNDERS.

THE SITE OF MEGIDDO.

I.

In the modern name of the River Kishon, Nahr el Mukutta, may there not be a trace of the ancient Megiddo, which no doubt stood on its banks. It is true that the meaning of the modern name is the River of Slaughter, and the fitness of that meaning to the history connected with the ancient name, may account for the substitution. There are numerous instances of alterations of the same kind, as Cape Sanjak, for Cape St. Jacques.

Dr. Robinson identified Megiddo with Lejjun, the ancient Legio. In all