

eastern, or Zion, the northern "excrescence" of which was termed Ophel—a name which implies an "excrescence" on another hill, and not the whole hill itself—and Mount Moriah, on which the Jebusite city stood. Until it was levelled by Simon the Hasmonean, the highest point of Zion dominated Moriah, which will explain why the Jebusite redoubt, or protecting fortress, was built here, and also why David erected here his palace and barracks. From the time of Solomon onwards the south-eastern part of Moriah was occupied by the palace and temple where the court officials and guards as well as the priests lived; the rest of Moriah continued to be the seat of the Jebusites and foreign merchants who filled the bazaars on the north and west.

Now it is clear to me that Captain Conder, with his mind full of the Temple area of the Herodian epoch, has never realised that it was this amalgamation of the old Jebusite town and its Jewish suburb which I meant by pre-exilic Jerusalem. Otherwise he would never have imagined that I confined "the capital of Syria in David's time" to an area of only 15 acres. He himself tells us (in his "Handbook to the Bible") that the building space on Moriah amounted to 35 acres, and this has to be added to the 15 acres before we have an approximate measure of the size of Solomon's city. My impression is that the Jewish suburb itself, though we are told only 15 acres in extent, was no smaller than the Hebron which was for seven years the capital of David. The Jerusalem of David's later years would not be much inferior in size to the rival capital of Ammon.

Captain Conder thinks that his views as to the size of pre-exilic Jerusalem are supported by the Book of Nehemiah, where it is said (vii, 4) that "the city was large and great, but the people were few therein." Unfortunately, however, he has not read on to the next chapter. Had he done so he would have seen what Nehemiah's statement really means. Here (viii, 1) we learn that not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem itself, but also of the country round about, "gathered themselves together as one man into the square that was before the water-gate," and there listened to Ezra, while he read the Law. It was no wonder, therefore, that the city seemed "large and great" to them. Captain Conder has forgotten the infinite capacities of Orientals for packing themselves together in a small space: had he slept with the fellahin of Palestine as often as I have done, I think he would have understood how it is managed.

A. H. SAYCE.

"AS THOU COMEST UNTO ZOAR."

EVERY new discovery in Bible lands tends to throw new light on the Bible text; and every fresh illumination of the Bible text in the light of later Biblical research is almost sure to give added meaning, as well as added clearness, to both text and context. There is always a positive

gain in finding out just what was originally declared in the sacred Scriptures, however the recent disclosure may damage or destroy the venerable interpretation of centuries. A fresh illustration of this truth is furnished in the light thrown on various passages in the Pentateuch, by the now better understanding of the prominence attaching to the Great Wall of Egypt in the days of the Hebrew Exodus.

Take, for example, that passage in Genesis xiii, 10, which pictures the Jordan Valley, as it was in the days of Abraham and Lot: “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.” Why “Zoar,” of the Jordan Valley region, should here be named in conjunction with “the land of Egypt,” has long been a puzzle to the Commentators. A favourite mode of solving the difficulty has been by re-shaping the passage, so as to connect the approach to “Zoar” with “Sodom and Gomorrah” (see, *e.g.*, Vatablus, A. Lapipe, Bochart, Poole, Houbigaut, Bush, *et al.*); but that is only a suggestion of what *might have been* a diluted meaning of the passage.

The Syriac version reads “Zoan” [of Lower Egypt] for “Zoar.” That would make the sense clearer, if only the change could be justified. Modern discoveries in Egypt have, however, brought out an ancient name of a locality in that land, which comes nearer to “Zoar” than “Zoan;” namely: “Zar,” or “Zar” (or Tar, or Tor, as it would be literally, since there is no “z” in the Egyptian). Already, several scholars have proposed the reading of “Zor” for “Zoar,” in the passage referred to; but this leaves still unsettled the questions: Where was Zor in Egypt? and Why should Zor have such mention in the description of the Jordan Valley? It is to those questions that I now essay an answer.

Zor, or Zar, or Zal (in the plural Zaru or Zalu), was a designation, not of a city or town, but of the border-land of Eastern Lower Egypt, which of old was shielded by the Great Wall, stretching across that desert frontier from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Suez. The word itself signifies the “strong place,” the “fortified place,” or, as it might be rendered, the “walled land.” Brugsch, who has done so much in disclosing the history of ancient Egypt, says of the meaning of this word (although, by the way, he has been misled, by some of its applications, into the belief that its use was at times limited to a single city of the border region, instead of applying uniformly to the border region as a whole): “Zar . . . possesses the same signification as its Coptic derivation (ⲗⲟⲗ, ⲗⲟⲗⲉ, ⲗⲁⲗ, ⲗⲁⲗⲓ, ⲗⲁⲗⲉ, ⲗⲁⲗⲉ), ‘brave, strong, strength, a fortified place.’ . . . It therefore follows that a country called Zar must signify a ‘country fortified by forts for its defence.’” (See Brugsch’s “Dict. Geog.,” p. 997.)

References to this region Zor are frequent in the papyri, and on the sculptured monuments of ancient Egypt, all going to show its location

within the Great Wall, and its population as including the foreign residents of Egypt; such as the Hebrews in their land of "Goshen," and the Shasoo, or Bed'ween, in their border camping-ground, the "Succoth." The Great Wall itself is often called the "Khetamoo of Zar," the "Fortifications of the Strong Land." The region just westward of the Great Wall is designated on the list of Nomes at Philæ, as *Ta-m-Zaru*, the "Land of Zaru," or the "Land of the Fortifications." The Egyptian official in charge of that region is called *Mer-Khet-Zal*, "Superintendent of the Fortress of Zal;" and again, *Her-petoo*, "Head of the Foreigners." From this root Zor it is probable there comes Mazor as a designation of Lower Egypt, and again Mitzraim, the Two Egypts, Upper and Lower.

Zor was the garden land of Egypt. "The best of the land" was there in the days of Joseph (Gen. xlvii, 6), and so before and after. A graphic picture of it in the nineteenth dynasty, not far from the period of the Exodus, is given in an ancient Egyptian letter-writer's description of the treasures and attractive surroundings of one of its chief cities. The "Letter of Panbesa," as translated by Goodwin, is to be found in the "Records of the Past" (Vol. VI, pp. 11-16); but I quote from the freer and more pictorial rendering of Brugsch ("Hist. of Egypt," II, 100-102): "Nothing can compare with it in the Theban land and soil [in Upper Egypt]. . . . It is pleasant to live in. Its fields are full of good things, and life passes in constant plenty and abundance. Its canals are rich in fish, its lakes swarm with birds, its meadows are green with vegetables, there is no end of the lentils; melons with a taste like honey grow in the irrigated fields. Its barns are full of wheat and durra, and reach as high as heaven. Onions and sesame are in the enclosures, and the apple-tree blooms. The vine, the almond-tree, and the fig-tree grow in the gardens. . . . Plenty and abundance are perpetual in it. He rejoices who has settled there."

Here was a "garden of the Lord," an earthly paradise, in the eyes of those who were familiar with it. Abraham and Lot had been within its borders. The self-exiled Hebrews could never forget it as their old home. When they were out in the dreary wastes of the Sinaitic peninsula, their hearts went back after its luxurious abundance, and their lustful cry was: "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt [in the land of Zor] freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away [we are famishing]: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes [no other food to be seen]." The pictures of Zor are alike, whether sketched by Egyptian or by Hebrew pens.

Now if, as we may well suppose, the Book of Genesis was written by Moses (with the aid of whatsoever documents, from the days of Abraham or long earlier, were available to him) during the period of the wanderings, is it not every way natural to find him comparing the rich and tropical fertility of the lower Jordan Valley, which the Israelites did not yet know from personal observation, with the paradise of Zor in Lower Egypt, which was so familiar to them? What more effective comparison could he have chosen?

There are frequent glimpses in the Book of Genesis of the primary application of its ethnical teachings to those for whom it was originally prepared. This reference to Lot's choice would seem to be one of these. Moses is picturing Abraham and Lot on the bleak and rugged hillsides of Judah, looking down into the fertile valley of the Jordan, with its tempting display of unfading bloom and beauty. In making vivid his portraiture to the Israelites, his description is as though he had said, "That scene before the eyes of Lot was a rare one. The Jordan Valley is even now a lovely region. You may be tempted to think of it as only a slight improvement on these Negeb wadies southward from it, with their scanty vegetation and their partial water supply; but it is quite another land from this, and in the days of Lot, before any portion of it was laid waste by the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, that valley was like the place of places in all the world of your knowledge. It was as well watered everywhere, and as fertile in consequence, as that earthly paradise which was your old home in Lower Egypt. It stretched out before the eyes of Lot, as the Egyptian Delta stretches out before those who enter Zor, through the desert gateways of the Great Wall, from the eastward."

That was a comparison which every Hebrew who had come out of Egypt could recognise and appreciate. And when it was added that, under those circumstances, "Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan," while Abraham moved Negebward, and was afterwards a dweller "between Kadesh and Shur," between the border limits of Canaan and Egypt, many of those longing Hebrews must have felt, that Lot showed more worldly wisdom than Abraham in his choosing. With this understanding of their ancestral history, the Israelites were prepared to consider more intelligently the recorded consequences of the choice of ease-loving Lot; as over against the choice of patient and trustful Abraham, with its assured results to his countless children in the faith.

The difference, in the Hebrew, between the words Zor (צור) and Zo'ar (צוער) is that of a single letter (ע). The Rev. Henry George Tomkins (whose recently expressed desire for light on the location of Zor has immediately prompted me to this article) even goes so far as to say, that "the Hebrew word *exactly* suits" the Egyptian name; but, possibly, he had in mind the fact that an *Egyptian* writer, not having an exact equivalent of the Hebrew 'ayn, would have written Zo'ar the same as Zor. A *Hebrew* writer, however, might have observed the distinction, had he chosen to do so. If is certainly fairer to suppose that a later copyist, more familiar with Zo'ar in the Jordan Valley than with Zor in Lower Egypt, erred in a change of the letter accordingly, than it would be to suppose that the whole passage was originally written so clumsily as to require its reconstruction, in order to make its sense plain, as so many commentators have argued.

A second reference to this locality, with the same error in transcription, would seem to be found in Deuteronomy xxxiv, 3, where the Land of Promise is described as it stretched out before the eyes of Moses

from the heights of Pisgah. "And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar," is the present reading. The apparent prominence here given to the small city of Zoar as a noteworthy boundary limit, is clearly not in keeping with the other statements of the inspired description; but when "Zor," or the eastern border of Lower Egypt, is recognised in this "Zoar," the consistency is manifest. "Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan." That took in Israel's territory east of the Jordan, at the right hand of Moses, as he stood, and marked the northerly limits of the Land on the western side. "And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manassah." That swept downward through Galilee and Samaria. "And all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea." That included the territory of Judah and of the Philistines, in front of Moses, from the Dead Sea westerly to the Mediterranean. "And the south." That was the Negeb, from Beersheba to Kadesh-barnea, at his left hand. "And the plain of the valley of Jericho the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar;" or, more accurately, "And the circle of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto "Zor." That marked a sweep from the beautiful Jordan Valley, at his feet, far away south-westerly to the borders of Lower Egypt, the limits of the Land of Promise in that direction. Is not the reasonableness of this rendering obvious?

It may be mentioned just here, that a chief difficulty in the way of identifying Zoar in its suggested site near the southern end of the Dead Sea, has been the fact that that point was not visible to Abraham and Lot on the one side of the Jordan, nor to Moses on the other side, from their summits of observation severally. But if Zoar is found to be not mentioned in either instance, its site can be decided apart from any such supposed difficulty.

And is it not fair to suggest, also, that "Zor" was meant instead of "Zoan" in the references, in Psalm lxviii, 12, 43, to the marvels wrought in Lower Egypt? The Ten Plagues were not confined to the city of Zoan, nor to the immediate suburbs of any one city. Their sweep was peculiarly "the field of Zor," the region westward from the Great Wall of Zor—as the Hebrew Psalmist would view it. It would certainly seem a very natural way of recalling, from Palestine, that series of miracles in the Egyptian Delta, to say of God's wonder-working in behalf of His ancient people:—

"Marvellous things did He
In the sight of their fathers,
In the Land of Egypt,
In the Field of Zor."

Brugsch is clearly not justified in claiming that he finds in an ancient papyrus the very phrase "sochet Zoan," the 'field of Zoan,' as an equivalent of the phrase of the Psalmist, "sadeh Zoan," as will be seen

by an examination of the hieroglyphs which he cites in support of that claim (see his "Geog. Dict.," p. 992). To make his point, he arbitrarily translates the quite general determinative of the three upright reeds into the special word *sochet* (*sekhet*) "a field," and then adds the proposition. In fact, while he does not find the phrase "field of Zoan" in the inscriptions, Brugsch does find there the phrase "field of Zaru," or "field of Zor" (see "Geog. Dict.," p. 993), as clearly applicable to the region of the Eastern Delta.

This whole inquiry gives another illustration of the value of Biblical geography as an aid to Biblical exegesis.

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THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION.

FROM the labours of German scholars, and especially Dr. Guthe and Professor A. H. Sayce, we infer that the text of the inscription is now as fairly translated and settled as it ever will be. My present note has reference only to the statement in the fifth line, and its use in aiding us in the settlement of the value of the Jewish cubit in British inches. Professor Sayce, quoting from Dr. Guthe's article in the "Zeitschrift der Deutschen," &c., xxxvi, 3, 4, gives the following translation of the fifth line of the text, as now settled:—

"And there flowed the waters *from the spring to the pool* for a thousand two hundred cubits."

All former translations of the text have given us 1,000 cubits, but the latest are unanimous in making the number 1,200 cubits. I propose in this short note to again call attention to the value of the Jewish cubit as tested by this revised text of the inscription. It will afford us a good opportunity of arriving at some general result.

THEORETICAL VALUE OF THE CUBIT.

In former communications I have advocated a cubit of $\sqrt{\pi} \times 10 = 17.724$ inches. But I have been making extensive researches in relation to this question, and have arrived at definite results. The cubit-rod of the ancient world, as seen embodied in the nilometer at Elephantine, in the measurements of the Great Pyramid, in the many cubit-rods, and in measurements given in papyri and elsewhere, was the well-known radius of the circle expressed in seconds of arc taken as inches, and reduced

$\frac{1}{10,000}$ part = 20.62648 inches, or the same factor as we use in our estimate of the radius of the earth's orbit to obtain the sun's distance

$$= \frac{206264.8}{10,000} = 20.62648 \text{ inches.}$$

This radius was the ancient measuring