

stone or metal. People who were accustomed to write upon the two latter materials would have made their letters angular, like the letters of the Moabite stone, or those which we see on Dr. Chaplin's weight.

THE SITE OF KIRJATH-SEPHER.

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YEARS ago I urged that Kirjath-Sepher or "Book-town" must have been the site of a Canaanitish library, consisting, like those of Assyria and Babylonia, of tablets of clay, and that if its ruins could be discovered, the clay books it contained would be found still lying under the ground. The discovery of the tablets of Tel el-Amarna brought with it a partial confirmation of my opinion; the discovery of a cuneiform tablet at Tell el-Hesi has now rendered that confirmation complete. If once the site of Kirjath-Sepher can be determined, we may excavate upon it in full confidence that a library of ancient Canaanitish records will be brought to light.

The recovery of the site thus becomes of great importance. Unfortunately the indications we possess of the exact geographical position of the city are exceedingly vague and indefinite. It was destroyed almost at the beginning of the Israelitish conquest of Canaan, and its precise situation seems to have been forgotten. Beyond the fact that it was near Hebron, later generations remembered but little about it.

Nevertheless the discovery of its remains is so important to the student of the Bible and of ancient history that even an approximate determination of its situation will not be useless. Materials have recently come to light which seem to bear upon the question, and it is consequently less difficult now to examine it than it was a few years ago. It is true that the several links in the chain of reasoning are weak, but taken together they form a mass of presumptive evidence which is at all events the best at present attainable.

From the Old Testament we learn that Kirjath-Sepher was a name given to a city also called Kirjath-Sannah and Debir (Josh. xv, 15, 49). What Kirjath-Sannah means it is impossible to say; the ordinary explanation of the name as "the City of the Law" hardly deserves mention. The analogy of Kirjath-Arba would lead us to infer that Sannah was the name of a person or a god. Debir, however, signifies the "Sanctuary," and in 1 Kings vi, 5, is the word applied to the Holy of Holies in the temple at Jerusalem. It shows that the city to which it was attached was consecrated by the existence in it of one of the chief shrines of southern Canaan. We know that the clay libraries of Assyria and Babylonia were established in the temples, a room or rooms in the sacred building being set apart for their reception. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Canaanitish Debir was also the site of a library from

which the town derived its popular name of Kirjath-Sepher or Book-town.

The city stood near Hebron. This is evident from Josh. x, 38, and xv, 15. But it also stood on higher ground, since Caleb "went up" to it from Hebron. Moreover it appears from Josh. x, 38, that it lay to the west of Hebron, since the Hebrew forces first marched eastward from Lachish and Eglon to Hebron and then "turned back" to Debir. It would further seem from Josh. xv, 19, that it was situated in "the Negeb" or "southland"; unfortunately we do not know how far to the north the latter term extended. One of the "springs," however, given by Caleb to Achsah may have been the famous springs of Hebron. Finally in Josh. xv, 49, Kirjath-Sannah or Debir is described as one of the eleven cities of Judah which were built in "the mountains." The only one of these which can be identified with any approach to probability is Socoh, called Suqa by Thothmes III, who places it westward of Gath and Lydda, and Shauqa by Shishak. It is probably the modern Shuwêkeh, a little to the south of 'Ain Shems and westward of Tell es-Saffiyeh.

This is the sum of the information given us by the Old Testament in regard to the site of Kirjath-Sepher. We must now turn to other sources of information and see if they can throw any further light on the matter.

In one of the Tel el-Amarna tablets mention is made of a city which may be the Kirjath-Sannah of the Book of Joshua. In a fragmentary letter of Ebed-tob, King of Jerusalem, now preserved in the museum of Ghizeh, we read: "Behold, the country of Gath-Carmel has fallen away to Tagi and the men of the city of Gath. He is in Bit-'Sani; and we have effected that they should give Labai and the country of the 'Sute to the district of the Khabiri."¹ Bit-'Sani would correspond to a Hebrew Beth-Sannah, and it seems probable that Beth-Sannah, "the temple of Sannah," and Kirjath-Sannah, "the city of Sannah," were one and the same. If so, Kirjath-Sannah would have been situated not far from Shuwêkeh, westward of Gath and eastward of Hebron. It may be added that in the list of Palestinian places enumerated by Thothmes III at Karnak, Kuthan Karman, the Gath-Carmel (Gimti-Kirmil) of the letter of Ebed-tob, precedes the names of Batia and Tapun.² A Tibneh is marked on the maps between Shuwêkeh and 'Ain Shems.

More assistance is to be obtained from a discovery I made at Medinet Habu in the winter of 1891-2. Here I found that Ramses III of the Twentieth dynasty has given a list of places conquered by himself in what was afterwards the territory of Judah. Among these we find the name of Khibour or Hebron, corresponding to the Khabiri, "Confederates," of the Tel el-Amarna tablets. Then comes Inu or "Spring," with the determinative

¹ A re-examination of the tablet this winter has enabled me to correct Winckler's copy of this passage and, consequently, the translation I have given of it in the new series of the "Records of the Past," Vol. V.

² See "Records of the Past," new series, V, pp. 50, 51.

of "water," the famous springs of Hebron, now represented by the 'Ain el-Qâna and other springs further to the north.

After Inu follow the names of "the land of Lebana" and Apaqa or Apeh, next the unknown Abakhi, Magthil or Migdol, and Qarzak. Then we have Karimana or Karmel, "the upper district of Thabara," Shimshana, Hadashath, Arez, and "the district of Salem" or Jerusalem. Arez is, of course, the Hebrew *arez*, "land," with which Hadashath "new" agrees, *arez hadashath* being literally "the newlands." Hadashath is the Hadashah of Josh. xv, 37, where it is associated with Migdal-Gad, which may be the Migdol of the list of Ramises III. The two places are grouped with Eglon and Lachish, which we now know to be represented by the modern Tell el-Hesy.

Shimshana, Shimshôn in Hebrew, would be a city of the Sun-god, and we may therefore identify it with Beth-Shemesh, which seems to be called Ir-Shemesh in Josh. xix, 41. Beth-Shemesh or Ir-Shemesh has been located at or near the modern 'Ain Shems, north of Shuwêkeh; at all events it must have been in that neighbourhood. Karimana cannot have been the Carmel south of Hebron, as this would have lain in a different direction from that of the places which can be identified, and it must accordingly be the Gath-Carmel of the Tel el-Amarna tablets and the list of Thothmes III, between Gath and 'Ain Shems.

What, now, was "the upper district of Thabara"? The fact that it had a "district" or territory attached to it shows that it was a place of some importance, and the epithet "upper" further shows that it stood on high ground. The Hebrew name corresponding to Thabara would be Dabara, or, with a change of the vowels, Debir, and it is with Debir or Kirjath-Sepher that I accordingly identify the town. In this case, Kirjath-Sepher would have stood on high ground between Gath-Carmel and Beth-Shemesh.

We are thus again referred to the country west of Gath and east of 'Ain Shems and Shuwêkeh for the site of the ancient Canaanitish "City of Books." If Mr. Tomkins is right in regarding Tell es-Safiyeh as the site of Gath, the locality within which we are to look for the ruins of Gath-Carmel and Kirjath-Sepher is reduced to very narrow limits indeed. The only map to which I have access at the present moment—that in Baedeker's "Guidebook to Palestine and Syria"—marks only two *tells* in this locality, one of which is called Tell Keshfm. But the map of the Survey doubtless indicates others. Moreover the identification of Gath with Tell es-Safiyeh is not certain; there are scholars who think Bêt-Jibrîn a more probable site.

However this may be, I believe it is in this direction that we must look for the remains of Kirjath-Sepher. Professor Petrie states that he found a fragment of Amorite or early Jewish pottery at Khurbet Dhikrîn, a little to the south of Tell es-Safiyeh, and Khurbet Dhikrîn has been supposed by some to represent Gath.