

JEWISH PILGRIMS TO PALESTINE.

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IN response to the desire expressed by the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, I have much pleasure in furnishing a short account of the works of the early Jewish travellers in the East, and I propose also to give extracts from some of their writings which have reference to Palestine.

Even prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews were settled in most of the known countries of antiquity, and kept up communication with the land of their fathers. Passages from the Talmud prove that the sage Rabbi Akiba, who led the insurrection of the Jews against Hadrian, had visited many countries, notably Italy, Gaul, Africa, Asia Minor, Persia, and Arabia. The Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, the Midrashim and other Jewish writings up to the ninth century, contain innumerable references to the geography of Palestine. I would refer those who wish full information on this branch of the subject to Dr. A. Neubauer's valuable work "La Géographie du Talmud" (*see also* "Jewish Quarterly Review," vol. iv, p. 690).

In the year 797, Charlemagne sent an embassy to the powerful Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, and it was Isaac the Jew who brought back a gracious reply, coupled with rich presents, from the Caliph. As a result of this mission learned Rabbis were despatched from Babylon, and they established schools of learning in Western Europe.

At the end of the ninth century, one Eldad the Danite, probably a native of Palestine or Babylon, visited the various Jewish settlements in Arabia, North Africa, and Spain, and represented that he belonged to the Tribe of Dan; he gave circumstantial accounts of the lost ten tribes, and also details as to the extensive settlements in Æthiopia and South Arabia of his own tribe, and of the tribes of Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. He had likewise much to say about the descendants of Moses and the River Sambatyon. His writings have come down to the present day, but are considered by competent authorities to be devoid of historical truth. For a full account respecting Eldad I would refer the reader to a series of articles contributed by the erudite Dr. A. Neubauer to vol. i of the "Jewish Quarterly Review," entitled 'Where are the Ten Tribes?' (*vide* pp. 14, 95, 185, and 408).

In the middle of the tenth century, Chisdai, the Jewish Minister to the Moorish Court at Cordova, was able to communicate by means of Jewish travellers with the King of the Khozars, a people who dwelt between the Euxine and the Caspian Sea, and who held the southern part of Russia, including the Crimea, under subjection. The whole nation had embraced the Jewish religion, and the epistle from the

Minister to the Khozar King, and the reply of the latter, form interesting contributions to the scanty literature of that time.¹

The great Jewish poets of the eleventh century were penetrated by a yearning to see the land of their fathers, and their writings are replete with pathetic references to the cradle of their religion. Foremost among these Jewish poets is Jehuda Halevi, who in 1141 left his family and his all behind him and started in the sixtieth year of his life to satisfy his longing. His stormy voyage from Spain to the Levant is described in thrilling lyrical language. Eventually Jehuda landed at Alexandria, where his admirers would fain have detained him, for it was a hazardous undertaking at that time to visit Palestine. Jerusalem was in the hands of the Crusaders, who had massacred the Jewish community when the city was taken in 1099, and but a scant few had since returned. We cannot say with certainty that Jehuda Halevi visited the Holy City, nor do we know the year of his death. But we do know that his last days were spent in the north of Palestine. There is a legend that he was trodden to death by a Mohammedan horseman as he was uttering his well-known Ode to Zion. I shall have occasion to refer to his burial-place further on. *1298 n*

The first mediæval Jewish writer of whose travels we possess a detailed record is Benjamin ben Jonah, of Tudela. He proceeded in the year 1160 from Spain, through France, Italy, and Greece, to Constantinople. Thence he visited Syria, and Palestine, as well as Persia, and returned to Spain in 1173 by way of Egypt and Sicily.

A. Asher, the well-known publisher, issued the Hebrew text of Benjamin's account of his travels, with an English translation, in the year 1840, and supplied also voluminous notes to which Dr. Zunz and other Jewish savants contributed. Dr. Zunz maintains Benjamin's accuracy as regards all which he professed to have seen. Benjamin subjoins, however, hearsay information as to Khorassan, India, China, and other distant places, but in most of these cases he adds the words "I have heard" and not "I have seen," and such statements must be accepted with reserve.

The travels of Benjamin have been translated into various languages. All the editions hitherto published seem to be based upon the Editio Princeps which appeared in the year 1543 at Constantinople, but which is far from correct. In the year 1865 the British Museum acquired a manuscript which, although somewhat defective in parts, in consequence of damp, gives improved readings in many cases.

The itinerary of Benjamin deserves careful perusal, as it shows that the writer, considering the age in which he lived, was a man of exceptional enlightenment. Many a passage throws light upon the commercial relations subsisting between the principal nations of his time, and the information he gives about Palestine is specially interesting. I propose to give copious extracts from the manuscript in the British Museum, omitting minor details.

¹ See "Miscellany of Hebrew Literature," vol. i, p. 92.

The preface runs as follows :—"This is a book of travels which was compiled by Rabbi Benjamin, the son of Jonah, of the country of Navarre.

"The said Rabbi Benjamin set forth from Tudela, his native city, and passed through many countries, as is related in his book. In every place where he entered he made a record of all that he saw, or was told of by trustworthy persons—matters not previously heard of in Spain. He gave an account of some of the sages and illustrious men residing in each place. He brought this book with him on his return to the country of Castile, in the year 4933 (A.D. 1173). The said Rabbi Benjamin was a wise and understanding man, learned in the written and the oral law, and wherever we have tested his statements we have found them consistent and true to fact."

The book commences as follows :—"I journeyed from my native town to the city of Saragossa, and thence by the way of the River Ebro to Tortosa. From there I went a journey of two days to the ancient city of Tarragona, which was built by the giant sons of Greece. And there is not found the like thereof among any of the buildings of the country of Spain. It is situate by the sea, and is distant two days' journey from the city of Barcelona. . . . To this city there come for the purpose of traffic merchants from every part, from the land of Greece, from Pisa and Genoa, from Sicily, and from Alexandria of Egypt, also from the land of Israel, and from Africa and all its coasts. From Barcelona it is a journey of a day-and-a-half to Gerona, which contains a small congregation of Jews. Thence it is a journey of three days to Narbonne. This city is pre-eminent for learning, and from it the law goes forth to all lands. In it there dwell great sages and illustrious men, at whose head is Rabbi Kalonymos, the son of the great prince, Rabbi Todros, who is of the seed of the house of David, as is proved by his genealogy. He holds from the lords of the city large estates, of which nobody has the power to dispossess him. . . . Marseilles is a great city of traffickers on the sea-coast, and from there men proceed in ships to the city of Genoa, which is situate on the coast, being four days' journey by sea. . . . Genoa is surrounded by walls, and no king governs it, but it is ruled by judges whom the people set over themselves, according to their choice. Each house has its tower, and in times of dissension the people fight with each other from the tops of these towers. They are masters of the sea, and build ships that are styled 'galleys,' which go forth to make raids as far as Greece and Sicily, and they bring back to Genoa the spoil they have taken. They are at war with the men of Pisa, and between the two cities is a distance of two days' journey. Pisa is a very large city containing about 10,000 houses with towers, used for purposes of fighting in time of civil war. All its people are men of valour, and no king or prince rules over them, but they are governed by judges whom they appoint over themselves. . . . Rome is a great city, the capital of Christendom. The 200 Jews who live there are honoured and pay tribute to no one. Some of them are in the service of the Pope Alexander, who is at the head of

the Christian Church. Rabbi Jechiel is an officer of the Pope ; he is a handsome, discreet, and wise young man, and acts as steward of the Pope's household. The River Tiber divides Rome into two parts. On one side thereof is situate the great cathedral of St. Peter, and also the palace of Julius Cæsar the Great. The city contains numerous structures which are altogether different from any other buildings in the world. At San Giovanni Laterano, one can see two brass columns from the Holy Temple, of the work of King Solomon, and on each is to be found engraved the name of Solomon, the son of David. The Jews of Rome told me that every year on the ninth day of Ab, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, sweat oozes from the pillars as water spilt on the ground. Moreover, there is a cave there in which Titus, the son of Vespasian, deposited the vessels of the Temple, which he brought from Jerusalem. Sorrento was built by Zir, the son of Hadad, who fled thither through fear of King David. The sea has encroached on it, and divided it, as it were, into two parts, and to the present day one can see the submerged buildings and towers of the city. A fountain wells forth from underground, and an oil called petroleum is collected from the surface of the water, and is used for medicinal purposes. There are also baths of hot water which bubbles forth from the earth. Twenty of these baths are by the sea, and anyone who is afflicted with disease bathes therein, and finds healing and relief. At Trani, by the sea-shore, the Christians assemble to embark for Jerusalem, for the harbour there is a very safe one. Thebes is a flourishing town where about 2,000 Jews live. They are excellent workmen, and skilled in making garments of silk and purple. The people of Wallachia are fleet as the hart ; they descend the mountains to pillage and plunder the land of Greece. No man can stand against them, and no king can subdue them. Some say that they are of Jewish origin, and they call the Jews their brethren. Moreover, though they may despoil the Jews, yet they do not slay them as they slay the Greeks. They are subject to no law.

“Constantinople is the metropolis of the Greek Empire. This is the residence of the Emperor Manuel. Twelve princes rule the empire under him, and each has a palace in Constantinople. The city of Constantinople is 18 miles in circumference. It is situated by two inlets of the sea, one issuing from the Russian Sea and the other from the Mediterranean, and it is a city of great bustle and traffic. Merchants come from Babylon and from the land of Shinar, the land of the Medes and Persians, the kingdom of Egypt, the land of Canaan, the kingdom of Russia, Hungary, Patzinakia, and Slavonia, Lombardy, and Spain. It is a city of great traffic, and is full of merchandise brought thither from all countries by sea and by land. There is not the like of it in any country, except the great city of the Arabs, Bagdad. The church of St. Sophia is under the authority of the patriarch of the Greeks, since the Greeks do not acknowledge the Pope of Rome. It contains as many altars as there are days in the year, and the wealth of the church exceeds that of any in the

world. Close to the palace is a structure called the Hippodrome, and great festivities are held there on the anniversary of the birth of Jesus the Nazarene. Various feats of jugglery are performed in the presence of Cæsar and his queen. Lions, bears, and other animals are brought into the place and engage in combat with one another. Such sport is not seen in any other country. . . . Great are the resources of the land; the annual revenue derived from letting the markets and bazaars alone amounts to 20,000 gold pieces. The men of the country are very rich, and go about dressed in garments of silk embroidered with gold, and the wise men are well versed in the books of the Greeks, and they sit each under his vine and under his fig-tree. The people are, however, effeminate, and lack the strength to ward off an enemy; accordingly they hire men from other lands (whom they call barbarians) to fight their battles with the Sultan, the ruler of the Turks. . . . The Greek Empire reaches as far as Malmistras, which is Tarshish, situated by the sea. Thence it is two days' journey to Antioch the Great, situated on the banks of the River Pur (Orontes), which flows from the Lebanon and the land of Chamath. The city lies by a lofty mountain, which is compassed by a wall. At the top of the mount there is a well, from which a man, appointed for that purpose, directs the water, by means of 20 subterranean passages, to the houses of the great men of the city. The other part of the city is surrounded by the river. It is a strongly fortified city under the sway of Prince Boemond Poitevin, surnamed le Baube, and ten Jews dwell there engaged in glass-making. Thence it is a two-days' journey to Lega, which is Latakia. . . . Two days' journey from this place brings one to Gæbal, which is Baal-gad, at the foot of the Lebanon. In this district there dwells a people known as the Assassins. They do not believe in the religion of the Mohammedans, but follow one of themselves, whom they regard as their prophet, and all that he tells them to do they carry out, whether for life or for death; they call him the Sheik-al-Hasissim, and he is known as their Elder. At his word these mountaineers go out and come in. Their principal seat is Kadmus, which is Kedemoth, in the land of Sihon. They are faithful to each other, but a source of terror to their neighbours, killing even kings if told to do so. The extent of their land is eight days' journey, and they are at war with the Christians, who are called the Franks, and with the ruler of Tripoli, which is Tarablous-el-Sham. At Tripoli in years gone by there was an earthquake which caused the death of over 20,000 people. From Tripoli it is one day's journey to the other Gebal (Byblus), which is on the border of the Children of Ammon and is now under the sway of the Genoese, the name of the governor being Guillelmus Embriacus. Here are found the remains of a temple containing an idol, formerly worshipped by the Ammonites, made of stone overlaid with gold, with a female figure at each side thereof and an altar in front. From Gebal it is two days' journey to Beyrout, the Beeroth of Scripture. A day's journey thence takes one to Saida, the Sidon of old. Ten miles therefrom is a people who are at war with the

men of Sidon. They are called Druses, and are pagans and of a lawless character. They inhabit the mountains and the clefts of the rocks and are steeped in vice—brothers marrying sisters and fathers their daughters. They also believe that at the time when the soul leaves the body it passes, in the case of a good man, into the body of a new-born child, and in the case of a bad man into the body of an ass or a dog. Jews dwell not in their midst, but Jew handicraftsmen and dyers come amongst them for the sake of trade, as they are fond of the Jews. The Druses are swift of foot and no one can prevail against them.

“ From Sidon it is half a day’s journey to Sarepta. Thence—one day’s journey—to New Tyre, which is a fine city, its harbour being in the midst of the city; at night, those that levy dues throw iron chains from tower to tower, so that neither ships nor men can issue forth. . . . There dwell there about 500 Jews, who have ships of their own. They are the manufacturers of the Tyrian glass-ware, which is prized in all countries. In the vicinity is found the beautiful purple used for dyeing purposes, and people come from afar to obtain it. From the walls of New Tyre, at a distance of a stone’s throw, one can see Old Tyre, which the sea has covered up, and if one goes forth in a ship, the old towers, markets, streets, and palaces in the bed of the sea are discernible. New Tyre is a busy commercial centre to which merchants flock from all places. One day’s journey brings one to Acre, formerly Acco, which is on the borders of Asher. It is the commencement of the land of Israel proper. It is situated by the Great Sea and possesses a large harbour, which is the landing place for all the Christians who travel to Jerusalem by ship. Close to it runs the River Kedumim.¹ . . . Three parasangs thence take one to Khaifa, which is Hachepher, by the borders of the sea, and on the other side is Mount Carmel, at the foot of which there are many Jewish graves. On the mountain is the cave of Elijah, where the Christians have erected a structure called St. Elias. On the top of the mountain can be recognised the overthrown altar which Elijah repaired in the days of Ahab. The site of the altar is circular, about four cubits in extent, and at the foot of the mountain the River Kishon flows. Four parasangs thence bring one to Capernaum (which is the village of Nahum), identical with Maon, the home of Nabal the Carmelite.² Six parasangs from there is Cesarea, the Gath of the Philistines, where 200 Jews and 200 Cuthæans (Samaritans) dwell. It is a fair city situated by the sea, deriving its name from Cæsar. Thence it is half a day’s journey to Kakon, the K’eilah of Scripture. Thence half a day’s journey to St. George, which is Lud. Thence it is one day’s journey to Sebaste, the

¹ The name Nachal Kedumim occurs in Deborah’s song (Judges v, 21). The version renders it “that ancient river.”

² A. Asher has already remarked that Benjamin must have confounded the two Carmels and wrongly placed Maon in the north of Palestine. Both Maon and Carmel, where Nabal had his possessions, were in the territory of Judah (*cf.* Joshua xv, 55).

Samaria of old, where the ruins of the palace of Ahab, the son of Omri, can be seen. It was formerly a well fortified city by the mountain side, containing springs of water; the land is a land of brooks of water, gardens, vineyards, and olive groves, but no Jew dwells there. Thence it is two parasangs to Nablous, which is Shechem in Mount Ephraim, where no Jews reside. It is situated in the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, and contains about 1,000 Cuthæans, who observe the *written* law of Moses alone, and are called Samaritans. They have priests whom they style Aaronites, and the latter intermarry not with the Cuthæans, but wed amongst each other. These priests offer sacrifices and burnt offerings in their place of assembly on Mount Gerizim, according to what is written in their law—‘And thou shalt set the blessing upon Mount Gerizim.’ They say that this is the proper site of the Sanctuary, and there on Passover and the other festivals they offer up burnt offerings on the altar, which is built of the stones which Joshua and the children of Israel set up when they crossed the Jordan. They claim to be descended from the tribe of Ephraim, and in their midst is the grave of Joseph the son of Jacob, as it is written, ‘And the bones of Joseph which the Children of Israel brought up from Egypt they buried in Shechem.’ Their alphabet does not contain the three letters ה (He), ח (Heth), and א (Ain). They lack the dignity, kindliness, and humility which distinguished Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob respectively, virtues denoted by these three letters. In place of these they make use of the Aleph, by which we can tell that they are not of the seed of Israel. They guard themselves carefully against defilement caused by contact with the dead or with graves. Before going to their place of worship they divest themselves of the garments which they wear by day, bathe, and put on fresh clothes. On Mount Gerizim are fountains and gardens, but Mount Ebal is barren, and between them in the valley lies the city of Shechem. From the latter place it is a distance of four parasangs to Mount Gilboa, which the Christians call Mont Gilboa; it lies in a dry district. Thence five parasangs to a village where there are no Jews. . . . Thence two parasangs to the valley of Ajalon, which the Christians call Val-de-luna. At a distance of one parasang is Maria-le-grand, which is Gibeon-the-great. From there it is three parasangs to Jerusalem, which is a small city fortified by three walls. It is full of people whom the Arabs style Jacobites, Armenians, Greeks, Georgians, Franks—people of all tongues. It contains a dyeing-house for which the Jews pay an annual rent to the king on condition that they alone shall be allowed to engage in dyeing there. Two hundred Jews dwell in one corner of the city under the Tower of David. The lower portion of the wall of the Tower of David to the extent of about 10 cubits is part of the ancient foundation set up by our ancestors, the remaining portion having been built by the Arabs. There is no structure in the whole city stronger than the Tower of David. The city also contains two buildings, from one of which, the hospital (*hospice*), there issue forth 400 knights and therein all the sick who come thither are

lodged and cared for. The other building is called *Templum Salamonis*, which is the palace built by Solomon, the King of Israel. Three hundred knights issue forth therefrom every day for military exercise, besides the knights who come from the land of the Franks and other parts of Christendom, having taken upon themselves to serve there a year or two until their vow is fulfilled. In the great church called the Sepulchre is the burial place of Jesus, unto which the Christians make pilgrimages.

“Jerusalem has four gates, namely, the Gate of Abraham, the Gate of David, the Gate of Zion, and the Gate Gushpat which is the Gate of Jehosaphat, in front of our ancient sanctuary called *Templum Domini*. Upon this site Omar-ben-Al-Khataab erected a very large and magnificent cupola, into which none of the Gentiles brings any image or effigy, merely coming there to pray. In front of this place is the western wall, which is one of the walls of the Holy of Holies. This is called the Gate of Mercy, and thither come all the Jews to pray before the wall of the court. There are also in Jerusalem, in the house which belonged to Solomon, the stables built by him, forming a very substantial structure composed of large stones, the like of which is not to be seen anywhere in the land. There is also visible there up to this day the pool where the priests used to slaughter the sacrifices, and people coming thither from Judæa write their names upon the wall. The Gate of Jehosaphat leads to the valley of Jehosaphat, which is the gathering-place of nations (*cf.* Ezekiel xx, 35), the site of the pillar called Absalom's Monument and of the grave of Uzziah, the king. In the neighbourhood is also the great spring known as the Pool of Siloam, which runs into the brook of Kidron. Above the fountain is a large structure, dating from the time of our ancestors; but little water is found at the spring, and most of the people of Jerusalem drink the rain-water, which they collect in cisterns in their houses. From the valley of Jehosaphat one ascends the Mount of Olives, whence one can see the sea of Sodom, and two parasangs from the sea of Sodom is the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was turned; the sheep lick it continually, but afterwards it regains its original shape. The whole land of the round plain and the valley of Shittim as far as Mount Nebo are visible.

“In front of Jerusalem is Mount Zion on which there is no building except a place of worship belonging to the Christians. Fronting Jerusalem there are three sepulchres belonging to the Israelites (for in the days of old they buried their dead in caves) and upon each of these sepulchres there is a façade, but the Christians destroy them, employing the stones thereof in building their houses. Towards Zelzach is the boundary of Benjamin. Surrounding Jerusalem are high mountains.

“On Mount Zion are the graves of the House of David and of the kings that came after him. The site cannot, however, be identified, inasmuch as 15 years ago a wall of the church on Mount Zion fell in and the patriarch commanded the superintendent to restore the church, saying to him: ‘Use the stones of the old wall of Zion for the building of the church’; and he did so. He hired about 20 workmen at fixed

wages, who brought the stones from the base of the wall of Zion. Among these men were two friends who were confederates, and on a certain day the one entertained the other ; after their meal they returned to their work, when the superintendent said to them : ' Why have you tarried ? ' They answered : ' Why need you complain ! When our mates go to their meal we will do our work.' When the dinner-time arrived and their fellow-workmen had gone to their meal, they removed the stones and discovered the entrance to the cave. Thereupon one said to the other : ' Let us go in and see if any money is to be found there ! ' They entered the cave and found a chamber resting upon pillars of marble overlaid with silver and gold. In front was a chamber of gold and a sceptre and crown. This was the sepulchre of King David. On the left thereof was the sepulchre of King Solomon in like fashion. And then followed the sepulchres of all the kings that were buried there belonging to the kings of Judah. Closed coffers were also there, the contents of which no man knows. The two men essayed to enter the chamber when a fierce wind came forth from the entrance and smote them. They fell to the ground like dead men, and there they lay until evening. And there came another wind crying like a human voice : ' Arise and come forth from this place.' So the men hastily went forth in terror and they came unto the patriarch and related these facts to him. Thereupon the patriarch sent for Rabbi Abraham, the pious recluse of Constantine, who was one of the mourners of Jerusalem, and to him he related all these things according to the report of the two men who had come from the cave. Then Rabbi Abraham replied : ' These are the sepulchres of the House of David belonging to the Kings of Judah, and to-morrow let us enter the cave, I and you and these men, and find out what is to be seen there.' And on the morrow they sent for the two men and found each of them lying upon his bed terror-stricken. The men said : ' We will not enter there, for the Lord does not desire that any man should see the place.' Then the patriarch gave orders that the place should be closed up and hidden from the sight of man unto this day. All this was told me by the said Rabbi Abraham.

"From Jerusalem two parasangs bring one to Bethlehem, and close thereto is the pillar of Rachel's grave at the parting of the way. The pillar is made up of eleven stones corresponding with the number of the sons of Jacob. Upon it is a cupola resting on four pillars, and all the Jews that pass by carve their names upon the pillar. At Bethlehem there are two Jew dyers. It is a land of brooks of water, and contains wells and fountains. At a distance of six parasangs from Bethlehem is Hebron. The Hebron of old is in ruins, and in the valley is the cave of Machpelah, where there is a great church called St. Abraham. Whilst the Arabs held the place the Jews had on this spot a house of worship, and the Gentiles made there six graves, respectively called those of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah, and they tell the Christians that these are the graves of the patriarchs, whereupon they receive offerings of money. But when a Jew comes there who gives

argesse, the keeper of the cave opens unto him a gate of iron which was made in the days of our ancestors, and then he is able to descend below by means of steps, holding a lighted candle in his hand. He then reaches a cave in which nothing is to be found, and a cave beyond which is also empty; but in a third cave the visitor comes upon the veritable six graves of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah, one facing the other. They bear an inscription as follows: 'This is the grave of Abraham,' 'This is the grave of Isaac,' &c. A lamp burns in the cave over the graves day and night, and one finds there casks full of the bones of Israelites, as the members of the house of Israel were wont to bring the bones of their fathers thither and they deposited them there to this day.

"Outside the field of Machpelah is the house of Abraham, and there is a well in front of the house, but out of reverence for the patriarch Abraham no one is allowed to build in the neighbourhood.

"From Hebron, at a distance of five parasangs, is Beit Jibrin, which is Mareshah, where there are but three Jews; proceeding three parasangs beyond, you reach St. Samuel of Shiloh. This is the Shiloh which is two parasangs from Jerusalem.

"When the Christians captured Ramleh, the Ramah of old, from the Arabs, they found there the grave of Samuel the Ramathite close to a Jewish synagogue. The Christians took the remains, conveyed them unto Shiloh, and erected over them a large church, which they call St. Samuel of Shiloh unto this day. At a distance of three parasangs you reach Maronmrih-la-petita, which is the Hill of Saul, and is identical with the Gibeah of Benjamin. Three parasangs beyond you come to Beth-nubi, which is Nob, the city of the priests, and halfway are the two crags, the name of the one being Bozez and the name of the other Seneh. Two Jew dyers dwell at Nob.

"Three parasangs beyond you reach Rams, which is Ramah, containing remains of walls from the days of our fathers, as is found written on the stones. Three hundred Jews dwell here. It was formerly a large city, and has a large Jewish cemetery, situate at a distance of two miles from the town. At a distance of five parasangs is Joppa, the Jaffa of old, situated by the sea, where one Jew dyer lives. Five parasangs' journey takes one to Ibelin, which is Jabneh, formerly the seat of the Jewish Academy, but no Jews dwell there now. Thus far extends the territory of Ephraim.

"Five parasangs beyond is the site of Palmid, which is Ashdod of the Philistines, and which lies in ruins. No Jews dwell here. Two parasangs further bring one to Ascalon. This is the New Ascalon, which Ezra, the priest, built. It is on the sea shore, and was first called B'neberak; it is situated at a distance of four parasangs from ancient Ascalon, which is now in ruins. New Ascalon is a large and fine city, whither people come for traffic from all places, as it is not far from the frontier of Egypt. Two hundred Rabbanite Jews dwell there, also 40 Karaites together with Cuthæans (Samaritans) to the number of three

hundred. In the midst of the city there is a well which they call Bir-Ibrahim, and which was dug in the days of the Philistines.

“A day’s journey brings you to St. George, which is Lud. From there it is a journey of a day and a half to Zerim, which is Jezreel, where there is a large well. One Jew, a dyer, dwells there. Three parasangs further take you to Sefuriyeh, which is Sepphoris, the burial-place of Rabbenu Hakodesh (R. Jehuda Ha-nasi), of Rabban Gamaliel, of Rabbi Chija (who came up from Babylon), and of Jonah, the son of Amittai. These are buried on the mount. Numerous graves of other Israelites are also found there. Five parasangs further bring you to Tiberias, situated on that part of the Jordan which is called the Sea Kinnēreth. Here the Jordan flows into a valley enclosed by two mountains, which it fills, forming Lake Kinnēreth—which is really the river, great and wide like the sea. The Jordan, after flowing between the two mountains, pours down into the land of the Round Plain unto a place called the Slopes of Pisgah, whence it falls into the Sea of Sodom, called the Salt Sea. And at Tiberias there are about 50 Jews. . . . and here are the hot waters bubbling up from beneath the earth, which they call the Hot Springs of Tiberias. Close by is the Synagogue of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, with the graves of Israelites, including that of Rabbi Jochanan-ben-Zacchai and Rabbi Jehuda Halevi.¹ All these are in Lower Galilee.

“Two days’ journey brings one to Teimin, which is Tiunatha, where Simon the Just and many other Israelites are buried. Three parasangs further to Merun, which is Meiron. In a cave in the neighbourhood are the graves of Hillel and Shammai, also 20 graves of their disciples, and the graves of Rabbi Benjamin-bar-Jepheth, and of Rabbi Jehuda-ben-Bethera. Two parasangs further you come to Alma, with 50 Jewish inhabitants, and a large Jewish cemetery. Here are buried R. Eleazer-ben-Arach, R. Eleazer-ben-Azariah, R. Chouni Hamaagal, R. Simeon-ben-Gamaliel, and R. Jose, the Galilean. It is half a day’s journey to Kadesh, of Naphtali, on the banks of the Jordan, where the tomb of Barak, the son of Abinoam, is to be found. No Jews dwell there.

“Thence it is a day’s journey to Baniyas, which is Dan, where there is a cavern, whence the Jordan issues, flowing for a distance of 3 miles. The Arnon, coming from the borders of Moab, falls into it. In front of the cavern may be discerned the site of the altar associated with the graven image of Micah, which the Children of Dan worshipped in ancient days. This is also the site of the altar of Jeroboam, where the golden calf was set up. Thus far reaches the boundary of the land of Israel, at the side of the Western Sea.

¹ The published text reads “Rabbi Jonathan-ben-levi.” The British Museum manuscript has the words “Rabbi Jehuda Halevi.” Under this name the great Jewish poet is referred to. This passage fully settles the question as to Jehuda Halevi being buried in the Holy Land. The burial must have taken place within 20 years of the date of Benjamin’s visit.

“Two days’ journey brings one to Damascus, the great city, which is the extremity of the dominion of Nor-al-din, the King of the Togarmim, called Turks. It is a fair city of large extent surrounded by walls, with many gardens and parks, extending over 15 miles, and no more fruitful district can be seen in all the land. From Mount Hermon descend the rivers Amana and Pharpar, for the city is situated at the foot of Mount Hermon. The River Amana flows through the city, and by means of aqueducts the water is conveyed to the houses of the wealthier inhabitants, and into the streets and market places. The Pharpar flows through their gardens and parks. . . .

“Baal-bec, which is on an incline of the Lebanon range, is the Baalath, which Solomon built for Pharaoh’s daughter. The palaces are formed of huge stones each 20 spans in length and 12 in breadth, and there are no interstices between the stones, and it is said that no one but Asmodeus could have put such a building together. At Tadmor, in the wilderness, which Solomon built, are likewise found buildings composed of enormous stones.”

Benjamin then gives a circumstantial account of various places in Babylon, and he dwells more especially upon the beauties of the city of Bagdad, bestowing high praise upon the Caliph Emir-al-Mumenin al ‘Abassi, and giving a full description of the public appearance of the Caliph during Ramadan. He then proceeds to describe the status of the Jewish community at Bagdad, and enlarges upon the great respect shown to Daniel, the chief of the captivity, who traced his descent back to David. When paying a visit to the Caliph, this Jewish prince is the only one allowed to sit by the side of the Caliph, in obedience to the injunction of Mohammed, who wished full effect to be given to the Scriptural passage, “And the sceptre shall not depart from Judah.”

In the neighbourhood of Babylon, Benjamin states, are to be seen the remains of a palace of Nebuchadnezzar, but people are afraid to go there on account of the multitude of serpents and scorpions. A synagogue, stated to have been built by Daniel, was still used in Benjamin’s time as a place for prayer; as was also the synagogue of Ezekiel, the prophet, near the River Euphrates. The tomb of the latter and the tombs of other Jewish notabilities, to which the Jews made periodical visits, were duly pointed out to the traveller.

Benjamin next gives an account of what happened to the coffin of Daniel, near Shushan. The inhabitants of the two sides of the river could not agree as to who should have charge of the remains of the prophet. In the end it was agreed that they should each have charge of the coffin alternately for a year. The ruler of Persia—Sanjar—thought this derogatory, and it was therefore arranged that the coffin should be suspended over the centre of the river. Rabbi Petachia, who visited the spot a few years after Rabbi Benjamin, gives a similar account, and remarks that the coffin, which was made of burnished copper, looked in the distance lustrous like glass.

Rabbi Benjamin then gives an account of David El-rui who represented himself to be the Messiah. Disraeli's novel "Alroy" is founded upon the details given by Benjamin.

The passages in Benjamin's Diary which refer to the Ten Tribes are fully given by Dr. Neubauer in the articles already referred to (*see* "Jewish Quarterly Review," vol. 'i, p. 189). Dr. Neubauer's remarks with reference to Prester John will be found of interest.

Benjamin next makes mention of various places in Arabia, Khorassan, Thibet, China, and India, including Ceylon. He then gives a short notice of Aden, Lybia, Æthiopia, Abyssinia, and furnishes fuller details respecting Egypt.

The return home to Spain from Alexandria was made by way of Sicily and Italy. He closes his work with a brief account of Germany, Bohemia, and France.

I may mention that Dr. Steinschneider has drawn up a very complete list of Jewish travellers to Palestine. This list will be found in Lunetz's "Jahrbuch Jerusalem," vols. iii and iv, and also in Röhricht's well-known bibliographical work on Palestine.

NOTE ON THE SWASTICA.

By Rev. Prof. T. F. WRIGHT, Ph.D.

In the very interesting papers by Herr von Schick and Major Conder in the *Quarterly Statement* for July the *swastica* is figured on pp. 187 and 206, with brief comments. The form is—



It may not be unimportant, as indicating the wide extension of this primitive type, to say that numbers of them were found in excavating for the Columbian Exposition the Hopewell Mound, in Ohio, U.S.A. In this mound more copper was found than had been obtained from all previously-explored mounds, also silver, mica, sharks' teeth, quartz, crystals, and obsidian. The copper had apparently been hammered cold and cut by stone chisels to various forms, prominent among which is the *swastica* in many sizes, very neatly done. The same has been found in Mexico and Peru. Americans can as yet offer no explanation of this connection between Troy and our aborigines.

CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.