

that the inner harbour was used in the time of Solomon, in the time of Simon the Maccabee, and in the time of Saladin, and that seismic disturbances have changed the level at various times. I believe that Joinville's island was temporarily produced by such a change."

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## DAJÛN AND BETH-DAGON AND THE TRANSFERENCE OF BIBLICAL PLACE-NAMES.

By R. A. STEWART MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

THE report of the discovery of a find of gold coins in the neighbourhood of the modern village of Beit Dejân led Surraya Effendi and myself to pay a visit to the place. With great difficulty we persuaded an inhabitant of the village to guide us to the site of the discovery—the commendable promptness of the Government in dealing with those who attempted to sell the coins had made the inhabitants of the village cautious in their dealing with strangers.

The site is the ruin known as Dajûn, about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles south-west of the village. This ruin has for some time been treated by the fellaḥîn of Beit Dejân as a quarry, and they have been actively engaged in taking stones from it either for their own purposes or for sale in Jaffa. It was whilst these operations were being carried on that the find of coins was made.

Holes have been pitted all over the surface of the site, from which it is possible to get a fair idea of its period. There is not more than 6 feet of débris, and the pottery shows that this is to be assigned to the Roman and early Arab periods. No earlier occupation has left any traces on the site. It follows that Dajûn cannot be the Beth-Dagon of Joshua xv, 41, as has been suggested. On the other hand there is little cause for doubt that it is the connecting link between the biblical Beth-Dagon and the modern village of Beit Dajûn.

It is becoming more and more clear, as our knowledge increases, that the transference of names and sites is an element that must be taken into account in attempting to identify biblical places with their modern representatives. It would, perhaps, be too paradoxical to say that (contrary to the general opinion) the persistence of a biblical name is presumptive evidence *against* the fixity of the site; but it is certain that no identification based on a similarity of name can be accepted unless corroborated by other indications.

No doubt many reasons could be assigned for the transference of a village, with its name, to a new site. For example, if an earthquake ruined the village, stopped its well, and transferred its subterranean source of water supply to an inconvenient distance—not an impossible accident—the villagers would naturally rebuild near the new spring.

Equally naturally the old name would persist, the previous site being distinguished by some adjective meaning "ruined," "ancient," or the like. If (as by theory was the case of Beth-Dagon) at some subsequent time a second transference should take place, there would be every chance that all recollection of the first of the series of sites would be lost. The fellahin are not historians, and they would have little reason to refer to the old site of their village, and none at all to bear in mind the oldest site: ruins have no interest for them except as potential repositories of buried treasure.

Thus we have three epochs in the history of Beth-Dagon—the first on an as yet unknown site, from the Amorite to the Roman periods; the second at Dajûn, extending over the Roman and early Arab periods; the third at the modern Beit Dejân, lasting to the present day. It is probable that the present population could, had they the necessary documents, show a continuous chain of ancestry extending from the first city to the last.

Nearly similar is the case of Mareshah: but in this instance the name survives at one site only. Joshua xv, 44 attests its existence at the end of the Amorite period. The tomb inscriptions recently discovered connect it with Tell Sandaḥannah; but the result of excavations there forbids us to carry the history of that site back further than the Jewish monarchy or later than the Seleucid epoch. The name survives at Khurbet Mer'ash, which is a purely Roman site, and probably the modern descendants of the inhabitants live at Beit Jibrin. Here, therefore, we have four transferees. The unfortunate influence of the Crusaders, by fitting a new name on the tell, has spoiled the links of names: I have little doubt that were it not for the Crusaders' occupation the tell would be called by some such name as Tell Mer'ash.

Ekron is another notable example. Its identity with 'Akir is assumed by all without question: but it is a common-places with writers on Palestine that at 'Akir there is no tell or other sign of ancient occupation. It follows that it is simply impossible that 'Akir can stand on the site of so important a town, though it probably perpetuates its name.

To return to Dajûn, I may remark that the only object calling for notice on the spot is the drum of a column, 2 feet 9 inches in diameter, with mortices cut on each side. Without excavation it is impossible to tell with what this may be connected. A fragment of stone with a bit of acanthus ornament, and a large bead with inlaid coloured dots, were picked up by us.

The usual routine was gone through by the discoverers of the coins. The man who first noticed them endeavoured to distract his companions' attention so that he might be able to return alone and appropriate the whole booty to himself. Apparently he was at first successful in this, but in his anxiety he mistook a chance motion of one of the others for a sign of discovery, and gave himself away by a wild grab at the coins, which he bestowed in the folds of his cloak, and by running at the top of his speed off the ground. The others, finding some pieces which in his

haste he had dropped, divined at once the cause of his flight, and gave chase and captured the fugitive, whom they compelled to distribute his plunder; the division, however, was not sufficiently equal to please one of the party, who gratified his spite by turning "king's evidence," with the result that the government authorities promptly compelled as many of those concerned as could be found to disgorge their shares. It is probable that the majority of the pieces have been recovered, and it is gratifying that Dajûn is now probably safe from further illicit excavation, as the villagers are afraid to be seen near it.

The coins are now stored in the Government Museum at Jerusalem. I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing them, so can only state the fact of which I have been assured—that they are gold Kufic coins. I have been told that they are ascribed to Harûn er-Rashîd. Sixty have been recovered from the hoard.

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### NOTES AND QUERIES.

*Some Interesting Limestone Effigies from Jerusalem.*—In Mr. Hanauer's letter of June 27th he mentions that there have been found lately, near "Gordon's Garden Tomb," some small, roughly-carved figures of men on horses, of very elementary form. A photograph which he forwarded, showing these, at once reminded me of some of the old ridge-tile figures of which a few still exist in Cornwall, and possibly elsewhere. In one little town there existed till 20 years ago, at least four: but in the same place I could only find one lately. Some have, I believe, gone to Museums.

A rudely-worked effigy of a man on a horse bestrides one ridge-tile which occupied a prominent position on the roof of an inn, or place where man and horse could be accommodated. Mr. Hanauer thinks that it is quite possible that the figures he describes had a similar use, as they were found on the site of the Crusaders' "Asnerie," in which similar accommodation was provided.

J. D. C.

[Mr. Hanauer's letter describes three limestone effigies: one, the body of a powerful charger, minus head and legs, but with a Norman saddle, and the legs and distinctive foot-gear of a Norman equestrian, identical with illustrations of the Bayeux tapestry, &c. Another is a more mutilated body of a horse; and the third represents a horseman clothed with a cloak or mantle. In the case of the latter, the Maltese cross on the back, between the shoulders, seems to indicate that the effigy was that of a knight hospitaller.]