

## NOTES ON BIBLE GEOGRAPHY.

By Colonel C. R. CONDER, R.E., D.C.L., LL.D.

## I.—THE NORTH BORDER OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL.

VERY few points on this border being generally recognised there has been much dispute as to the exact line. It appears, from Joshua xiii, 4, 5, that the land of Israel was to include the south part of Syria. On the west are noticed Mearah (*El Mogheiriyeh*, north-east of Sidon) and Aphek (*Afka*) near the border of the Amorites, whom we know, from the Amarna letters, to have lived in the Lebanon as well as further south. On the north again the territory of Gebal is included, so that the "Entering in to Hamath" should be sought north of Gebal. To the east is mentioned Baal Gad under Hermon, which was in the valley of Lebanon (Josh. xi, 17), and seems therefore best fixed at the spring of *Judeideh* on the north-west of Hermon.

From another passage (2 Sam. xxiv, 6), following the Greek, we find that the "Land of the Hittites of Kadesh" was outside the border of David's kingdom. Kadesh, at *Kades*, lies north of Riblah, near the broad opening at the head of the great valley of the River Eleutherus, which divides the Lebanon, and flows into the Mediterranean north of Tripoli. This great pass has always been the highway by which armies have advanced to the sea coast, from Hamath and from the valley of the Orontes. By it the Amorites of Tunep (*Tennib*) came down, in the fifteenth century B.C. to attack Semyra, which lay at the mouth of the pass (at *es Sumrah*), in the coast plain. By it also Rameses II subsequently appears to have marched up to Kadesh from the coast road, along which he has left his monuments at Sidon, and at the Dog River near Beirût. By the same pass the main body of the Crusaders, marching from east of Antioch, came down to besiege Arkah and Tripoli in the first crusade. This natural highway might well be called "the entry to Hamath" from the coast road, which becomes more difficult further north; and, if it formed in early times the north border of Israel—as it did later in the days of Jonathan the Hasmonean (see 1 Macc. xi, 7, xii, 30)—the site of Kadesh on Orontes would lie just north of the north border of Israel.

This position for the "Entering in to Hamath" agrees with the more detailed account of the border (Num. xxxiv, 7-11), which was to be marked from the sea to "Mount Hor" (LXX τὸ ὄρος τὸ ὄρος), or, as we may perhaps render it, "the mountain of the mountain region." By the "entrance of Hamath" it went east "towards Zedad," which is well known to have been at *Saddad*, on the high road from Riblah to Palmyra, and east of the Anti-Lebanon. But the border, which thus would leave Kadesh immediately to its north, since the direction was south-east from the head of the Eleutherus Valley, did not reach quite to Zedad. It passed by an unknown place called Ziphron (Δεφρωνά), and the "going out" was at Hazar Enan, which may very well be placed at *Râs el 'Ain* on the same high road to Zedad, some 12 miles nearer Riblah, and close to the Anti-Lebanon. The description of the east border which follows agrees with this identification: for Hazar Enan ("enclosure of springs") at *Râs el 'Ain* ("spring head") was the north-east corner, whence the east border went to Shepham and "went down from Shepham of Riblah on the east side of 'Ain." The last-mentioned place seems therefore to be the present village *el 'Ain*, near the west foot of the Anti-Lebanon, 20 miles south of Riblah. The border therefore was following the line of the Anti-Lebanon along its crest, or on its west slope. This again agrees with the definition (Josh. xiii, 5) "all Lebanon towards the sun rising," and with the position of Baal Gad.

We may, perhaps, render Shepham "the lip," and, as a topographical term, it is used of a hill-terrace or slope (perhaps also connected with שֵׁפֶלַח "height" or "slope"), so that Shepham of Riblah was the anti-Lebanon slope, bounding the territory of Riblah on the east. It is clear that the border could not have passed through the town of Riblah itself, which lies on the Orontes in the middle of the valley of Lebanon. From 'Ain it was unnecessary to give further detail, as the natural boundary was followed to Baal Gad, and west of the crest of Hermon to the Jordan at Dan.

The account in Ezekiel (xlvi, 15-17) of this same border may be founded on that in Numbers, and agrees with it, though noticing some other places not yet identified. The Greek of this passage (in the Vatican MS.) is unfortunately so corrupt and inconsistent as to give no help. The "way of Hethlon" led to Zedad, being the high road already noticed, and also apparently to Hamath,

and to unknown sites (Berothah, Sibraim, and Hazar Hatticon), the last of which was the "middle town," as the name signifies, on the borders of Damascus. Finally, this north border of Israel is generally defined as being "from the sea to Hazar Enan (*Râs el 'Ain*) the north border, north of Damascus, and the border of Hamath." It appears, therefore, that a line from the head of the Eleutherus River to Hazar Enan marked the division of the lands of Israel and Hamath, and that the country east of the Anti-Lebanon, as far north as Zedad, belonged to Damascus. This leaves Kadesh in the Hamathite region, as well as Argana (*Arjûn*), between Kadesh and Riblah, a place where Shalmaneser II (in 854 B.C.) fought his great battle against the Syrian allies of Hamath. The line of the north border of Israel thus presents no real difficulty, and all the notices agree.

In this connection it may be noted in passing that the site of Tamar (*Ezek. xlvii, 19*), on the south border, seems never to have been fixed. The line runs "from Tamar to the waters of strife in Kadesh." Kadesh being (as in *Joshua xv, 3*) the south-eastern corner town—near Petra according to Jewish statements—Tamar would be the south-west town, and may therefore very well be identified with *Tumrah* about seven miles north of Gaza.

(*To be continued.*)

## AUSTRIAN EXCAVATIONS AT TAANACH.

By Sir CHARLES WILSON, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., &c.

Dr. SELLIN, having decided, whilst travelling in Palestine, to explore the buried remains of one of the towns of Northern Palestine, selected Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo. The selection was a happy one, for the excavations have shown that the isolated hill, *Tell Ta'anek*, upon which the town stood, was unoccupied for some 1,500 years (B.C. 600 to A.D. 900). The buildings of the Amorite and Israelite periods are, consequently, in a better state of preservation than they are at Gezer, a place that was occupied continuously, and changed hands more than once during the stormy times of the Maccabean wars. Supported by Government grants, which were supplemented by private contributions, Dr. Sellin was able to do much in a short time. The report on his