

found in the Wâdy el-Kelt, possibly ancient Cherith, where also Elijah (the forerunner of John) lived for a time. Even when Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, tradition locates it in the same region. How long John stayed here we do not know, but it may have been several years. The reason that he left this place, it can only be suggested, was either that the brook became dry, or that the rulers in Jerusalem, whom he had pronounced to be a "generation of vipers," were about to take measures to stop his preaching. He went then to the other side of the Jordan, which was not under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin, but under King Herod Archelaus, who "liked him and heard him gladly" (Mark vi, 20). At Bethabara (John i, 28), or at the ford of the Jordan, very many people passed there, so he could proclaim his message to many.

8. *Résumé* and conclusion. From the above paragraphs it will, I think, be clear that neither Jerusalem, nor Bethlehem, nor Hebron can be the city of Judah in which John the Baptist was born; moreover it cannot be Juttah, since neither its name nor its history lend any support. On the other hand, in 'Ain Kârim we have the support of the name, the tradition, the history, and the locality, viz., in the mountain or hill country. Hence in these circumstances there can be little question that the required site can only be 'Ain Kârim.

NOTES ON BIBLE GEOGRAPHY.

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(Continued from "Quarterly Statement," 1904, p. 388.)

II.—ZARETAN.

THIS site, which seems to have given great difficulty to the later Hebrews and to the Greek translators, is important in connection with the question of the stoppage of the Jordan on the occasion of the first entry of the Hebrews, under Joshua, into Western Palestine. It is generally allowed that the passage must have occurred on the line between Shittim (*Ghôr es Seisabân*), and Gilgal (*Jiljâlieh*), opposite Jericho, and thus near the present ford called *Makhadet Hajlah*, from the town Beth Hoglah (near 'Ain Hajlah), or otherwise *El Mishr'ah* (or *El Mashr'ah*), which appears to mean

“the watering place.” But as to the point of obstruction of the river itself, it is described as “very far off, by Adam the city that is beside Zaretan,” and Adam is generally placed at *Ed Dâmieh*, about 20 miles further up the river, measuring from the ford. This, as has been before noticed in the *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund, was also the place where an actual obstruction of the river is stated by an Arab writer to have occurred in the thirteenth century A.D. Zaretan, therefore, is to be sought in this vicinity. Whether the city Adam was the same as Admah (Gen. xiv, 2) may be doubtful, but both were in the *Ciccar* or Jordan Valley.¹ The name Zaretan does not occur in the Vatican MS. of the Septuagint, where, however, the reading is very evidently corrupt and impossible.

Zartanah (1 Kings iv, 12) seems to be the same place as Zaretan (LXX reads $\Sigma\epsilon\sigma\alpha\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu$), and is noticed in connection with one of Solomon's provinces, roughly coinciding with the tribal lot of Issachar. Baana ruled in “Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth Shean, what is near Zartanah, below Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abel Meholah (*Ain Helweh*), as far as the ford of Jokneam” (*Tell Kaimân*)—the latter being at the foot of Carmel. Again, we find Zarthan (1 Kings vii, 46) noticed in connection with the “clay ground (LXX, $\pi\acute{\alpha}\chi\epsilon\iota\ \tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma\ \gamma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$) between Succoth and Zarthan”; or, as we might read, “the fat soil of the red land,” or even “the fat soil of Adamah.” The site of Succoth is usually placed at *Tell Derûla* (following the Talmudic identification), east of Jordan, and just north of the Jabbok River, and therefore not far from *Ed Dâmieh*. This again places Zarthan just where Zaretan is to be sought. The LXX reads $\Sigma\epsilon\iota\pi\acute{\alpha}$ in this passage.

¹ The cities of the plain (*Ciccar*) are usually sought near the Dead Sea. It is, however, remarkable that near the Dâmieh we find several names suggesting a connection, such as *Talat Amrah*, “Ascent of Gomorrah,” south of *Kurn Surtubeh*; *Wâdy Saddeh* (answering radically to the Valley of Siddim); and *Wâdy el-Humr*, “the valley of bitumen” (cf. “slime pits,” Gen. xiv, 10). Moreover, we have an ancient Salem in the hills immediately to the west, and Salem seems to have been near Sodom (Gen. xiv, 17, 18, 21). The only objection to putting the cities of the plain so far north seems to be found in Gen. xix, 28, as Abraham “locked towards Sodom and Gomorrah” from Hebron. The great battle (Gen. xiv, 10) might have occurred near Admah, as the kings “went out” (8), but Sodom itself should lie somewhat further south, and near Jordan, on account of distance from Zoar (*Tell Shâghûr*) (see Gen. xix, 15-23). It should be noticed in this connection that the sun must be high before it lights the Jordan Valley and Zoar.

In the corresponding passage in Chronicles (2 Chron. iv, 17) the casting of the Temple vessels is said in like manner to have occurred in the *Ciccar* or Jordan Valley, in the clay lands (or fat lands of Adamah), between Succoth and Zeredathah (LXX Σαρηθᾶθᾰ); so that either we have a copyist's error for Zarthan (which name is the better established, as occurring in three passages), or the *dath* of the later Hebrew stands for *danath*, and Zardanah for Zartanah.

In the first place we must distinguish this site from two others, with which it has sometimes been confused. One of them is Zereda, the home of Jeroboam, which was in Mount Ephraim (1 Kings xi, 26). It seems likely to have been the present *Şurdah*, south-west of Gophnah. The Septuagint (Vatican text) gives Σαριπᾶ, not only in this passage but also in the additional passage, after verse 24, which is not found in the Hebrew. If Sarira were the true reading we might think of the ruin of *Şarra*, just east of Shiloh, as being in Mount Ephraim; but this can hardly be the proper position for Zaretan. The village of *Şurra*, west of Shechem, is not in the lot of Ephraim, and appears inadmissible for either of the ancient sites. The second site to be distinguished is Zererath (Judges vii, 22), where we read of the flight of the Midianites down the valley of Jezreel, "as far as Beth-shittah (*Şhattah*), towards Zererath, as far as the lip (or terrace) of Abel Meholah." This place is therefore too far north, as Abel Meholah appears to have been at *'Ain Helweh*. The name Zererath appears to mean "pebbles" or "loose stones" (Arabic *Şarâr*). Close to *'Ain Helweh* is the ford called *esh-Sherâr* ("the rapids?"), and though it is not very likely that the Hebrew letter *Tsade* would be replaced by the Arabic *Shîn*, yet it is not impossible that Zererath and Sherâr may be connected, since the Jordan near here is full of stones at the rapids. Abel Meholah is noticed yet again as the home of Elisha (1 Kings xix, 16) who, on his journeys to Carmel, used thus naturally to pass Shunem (1 Kings iv, 8), near which was his house at Ophel ("the tower," 1 Kings v, 24), probably the present *'Afûleh*.

To return to Zaretan: the name, it may be noted, does not appear to be translatable in Hebrew, and this may be the reason why it seems to have puzzled scribes and translators. The Assyrian language may perhaps throw light on the word (צרתן), and so help the identification. In Assyrian *tanu* has the meaning of "great" or "strong," being directly borrowed from the Akkadian *tan*, or *dan*,

which has that meaning, and which compares with the Turkish root *ton*, meaning "thick." This word occurs even in the Bible, Tartan (2 King xviii, 17; Isaiah xx, 1) being the Assyrian *tar-tanu*, derived from the Akkadian *tar-dan*, or "great chief," and being, as is well known, a military title. If we supposed, therefore, the first element (צר) to come from the root צור (as in the case of the word צר, Exod. iv, 25; Ezek. iii, 9), the meaning would be a "sharp point" or "peak," and Zarthan or Zaretan would mean "the great peak." It may be noted, in passing, that even the name of the Jordan may have a similar derivation, as meaning the "great river" (not, as usually explained, "the descender").¹

There is one "great peak" which forms the most conspicuous feature of Jordan Valley scenery, namely, the *Kurn Şurtubeh*, which rises immediately west of *Ed Dâmieh*, on a spur projecting into the valley from the Samaritan mountains. We know that the name *Şurtubeh* is ancient, since the place is mentioned in the Mishnah (see Neubauer's *Geography of the Talmud*) as a beacon station near the border of Samaria. It is even possible that the beds of ashes which I found, in 1874, at the monument on this peak are the remains of the beacon fires which the Jews used here to light at the new moon. The word might be rendered "goodly peak," and thus answer to the older name Zarthan, "the great peak." The position is so appropriate that it has long been supposed that Zaretan is to be identified with this "horn of *Şurtubeh*." The place of stoppage of the River Jordan is thus apparently to be found about 20 miles north of the place of passage where Israel crossed the river, and is described as "very far off, by Adam the city that is beside Zaretan."

III.—THE BATTLE OF GIBEON.

The topography of this episode has been discussed of late by two writers, namely, by Mr. J. Harvey (in the *Churchman*, November and December, 1903), and by Mr. E. W. Maunder, the astronomer (in the *Sunday at Home*, February, 1904); and both these papers have been kindly sent to me by the authors. It is not proposed here to discuss in detail what is meant (Josh. x, 12-13) by the expression that the sun was "dumb." The word (דום) is applied to inanimate objects (Hab. ii, 19), and the Rabbis even

¹ In Gen. i, 10, 11, the name *Yor-dan* appears to apply to a branch of the Nile ("the great river"), as the Jordan cannot be intended.

divided nature into three classes—animal, vegetable, and dumb (including stones and metals). (See Kimchi, quoted by Buxtorf, on Jer. x, 8.) The term applies to places in the desert, such as Dumah, and I believe in Arabic it also means “dark,” like the Assyrian *damu*, so that we might read the couplet from the *Book of Yashar* :—

“Sun be dark by Gibeon,
And moon by Vale of Ajalon.”

On the other hand the second word used in the passage (עמד), and rendered “stayed” (verse 13), and again “stood still,” appears to have no other meaning than “to remain” or “be stationed.”

It is usually assumed that Joshua was standing, when he spoke, between Gibeon and Ajalon, near Bethhoron, and that he was able to see both the two places named in the couplet. It is not very certain where the name “Vale of Ajalon” should be supposed to apply. There is a broad valley east of the village (of *Yaló*) which drains north to the main valley (*Wády Selmán*), which Mr. Maunder supposes to be the Vale of Ajalon. But the important point to note is that nowhere between Ajalon and Gibeon were both places visible. The country rises west of the latter town (along the “going up to Beth-horon,” verse 10), and Ajalon is 2,000 feet below Gibeon. We are not told where Joshua was standing, but the episode comes after the account of pursuit to Makkedah (Josh. x, 10). Mr. Maunder points out that, for the sun to be rising at about 17° S. of east, and the moon (near the full) setting at 17° N. of west, as indicated by the position of Gibeon and *Wády Selmán*, it is necessary to suppose that the time was the autumn. This he regards as too late in the year of Conquest; but the time spent at Gilgal, Ai, Shechem, &c., by Israel is not defined; and it is notable that a hailstorm (verse 11) would more naturally occur in autumn than in summer. It is clear from the narrative that the battle occurred later than the spring, since Israel only crossed Jordan at the time of the Passover.

Both these writers come to the conclusion (independently) that the event recorded was the obscuring of the great lights by the hailstorm. As regards the difficulty that arises from notice of a return to Gilgal (Josh. x, 15) it is remarkable that this verse does not occur in the Septuagint at all.

It may be remarked also that Gibeon, Ajalon, and Makkedah are almost exactly in the same latitude.

As regards Makkedah, which Sir C. Warren places at *El Mughār* ("the caves"), I believe that this city is the *Makida* of the Amarna letters, which is usually supposed to be Megiddo. The name of Megiddo occurs once in these tablets, and is otherwise spelt. The topography of the letters (as I have attempted to show) becomes clear if *Makida* be placed at Makkedah; and, as regards the form of the name, it is worthy of notice that the Greek gives Μακηδῶ.

IV.

Sinim (Isaiah xlix, 12). This land is popularly regarded as being China, which seems highly improbable as being outside the usual limits of Bible geography. The ancient Akkadian name of Elam was *SI-NIM*, "the high land," and the meaning of the term was equivalent to the Semitic Elam, or "high land." Apparently the Greek translators knew this identification, for they render the words ἐκ γῆς Περσῶν—"from the land of the Persians."

V.

Sephar (Gen. x, 30), a "mountain of the east," and the boundary of the south branch of the Semitic race, appears to be unknown. The recent discoveries at Susa (Shushan, east of the Tigris) are held to prove the presence of the Semitic race in Western Elam at a very early period; and on one of the bricks found at Susa a place in Elam is noticed called *SI-PAR*, which may indicate that the mountain (or mountain chain) of Sephar was that which bounds the Valley of the Tigris on the east near the mouth of the river.

NOTE ON THE GEZER TABLET.

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I AM' obliged to the Rev. C. H. W. Johns (to whom we owe an excellent rendering of 'Ammurapi's laws) for his comments. I have only two remarks to make:—(1) That because the eponym was known in Assyria it does not follow that he would be known in Gezer; (2) That, though there is authority for reading *AL* for *TU*, this has no importance. The sign still remains the causation of Accadian verbs, whichever sound be adopted, as is clear from Lenormant's *Etudes*; as to *Nadu* and *Nathan*, the roots may be distinct, but the meaning is the same.