

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER, Esq.

(Continued from Q.S., 1906, p. 197.)

The fields as already mentioned have different names, derived from any peculiarity, *e.g.* from a pit, a tree, a ruin, and so forth, a field is known as the land of the pit, etc. The border lines in a plain are separated by a deep furrow called *takhm*, and marked by a big stone or by piles of stones. These divisions are called *mawâres*.

In the hill countries, there are terraces called *habâ'il*, which are more or less narrow strips of lands along the slopes of the hills, divided by loose-stone walls, one above the other. Bridle paths lead generally to these divisions, but when, as is sometimes the case, there are none, the proprietor must climb over several other walls before he can reach his own.

Near the villages are small enclosed plots of land called *hakûra(t)*, walls are planted with thorns to protect them against goats and sheep, and vegetables for the proprietor's use are generally grown there.

The *khale(t)* is an open land, like a terrace, but without walls. It is in a half wild condition and it derives its name from *khala*, "wilds" or "desert." The *barie(t)*, on the other hand, is the wilderness, and *barr* is the open land from *bara* outside. *Bîr* is the uncultivated land. The *marâ'* is a plateau on the top of a hill or mountain, the *marj* is the prairie.

The *jisr* (lit. bridge) is a broad space between two mountains, reaching from one side to the other, and separated by walls along the valley. The *zâwie(t)* is a "corner" of land in a winding of the valley, the *kâ'a(t)* is a small space at the end of a valley before the plain commences.

The *jurf* denotes a piece of enclosed land into which the water falls from every side, the *hakl* is the broad arable land in the hilly country, and the *karn* is applied to a projecting eminence on a

mountain or hill (cp. the fruitful *hill* [lit. "horn"] of Isaiah v, 1 (see R. V. margin).

The natives plough the lands wherever it is possible to go, with a yoke of oxen; a mule or horse is very often employed in the mountainous regions. The arable lands are ploughed at the end of October or beginning of November, according to the moisture which is in the earth, after the first rains have fallen. Where they cannot afford to lose so much time and plough twice, the seed is thrown on the hard soil and often among thorns, a proceeding which is a great drawback to the crops. The first ploughing is called *k'sara(t)*, breaking the land, the second is the *theneye(t)* (ثَنَيْتَ). The prophets Jeremiah and Hosea, it will be remembered, instruct the people not to sow among thorns, but to break up the fallow ground (Jer. iv, 3, Hos. x, 12). It is not always through want of time that they sow the seed in the fallow ground, it is also to prevent the myriads of birds from descending and picking up the grain, which it is more difficult for them to eat in the dry clods than in the moist soil. Millions of starlings come in October and November, and are often a serious nuisance, sometimes obliging the fellâh to sow again. But the advent of the starlings promises good crops; the proverb says, *sant iz-zarâr uhrâth fil-bâr*, "In the year of the starlings, plough in waste lands." Besides the starlings, there is the calandra lark (*melanocorypha calandra*; *sturnus vulgaris*), which is almost as bad, though not so numerous as the starling. Least among them is the crested lark (*alauda cristata*), قَنْبَرَةٌ *kunbara(t)*, a native of Palestine, which never leaves the country, whilst the other two migrate.

Ploughing for winter crops continues till about February for barley and lentils, and, of course, these lands cannot be utilized for other crops in the same year. About eighteen months elapse from the ploughing of the lands for winter crops to the next ploughing for summer crops; this ploughing is in April and May.

The ploughmen, *harâthîn*, are called *shadâdîn* in the plains where they hold lands and oxen, as a part of the village lands—for they always plough with oxen in the plains—but in the mountains they plough with whatever they happen to possess, whether cows, or donkeys, or even a cow and a donkey, or a mule or horse. Sometimes even the camel is used, but is not very much appreciated, as it stamps the land with its broad soft feet and is often troublesome.

Ploughing for wheat is not expected to extend further than the end of January; but all depends on the quantity of land a man intends to sow, and the number of yoke of oxen or mules he happens to possess. In the plains they plough with many yoke of oxen in order to ensure more regular growth and harvest; but in the mountains, on account of the different position of the several plots, it is easier to plough the land first in the warmer and sheltered parts, and then to continue towards the more exposed summits, where the harvest is often expected a month later. The prophet Elisha, who was a landed proprietor, was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, he himself also with a yoke, when Elijah came to call him away (1 Kings xix, 19). The owner alone is called the *fallâh*, and the rest *katrûs*.

When ploughing begins, a *Fatiha* is said, either by the *khatîb* or priest of the village, or by the owner without any further ceremony; on the following day the work is always begun "in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful."

About the region of Gaza a regular service of thanksgiving, *mowlad* (مولد), is celebrated at the beginning of each agricultural event, as ploughing and sowing, harvesting and threshing: the owner gathers all members of the family and a *khatîb* or two to chant, and after the religious ceremony, a dinner terminates the festival. Before commencing to plough, one or more long squares are traced by furrows, to mark the quantity of land to be ploughed that day, and for sowing the seed in it. Ploughing ceases at Vesper, the *asser*, an hour or so before sun-set. The ploughs are carried home in the plains or, if there is no Wely wherein to leave them by night, they are hidden in any brush-wood in the vicinity.

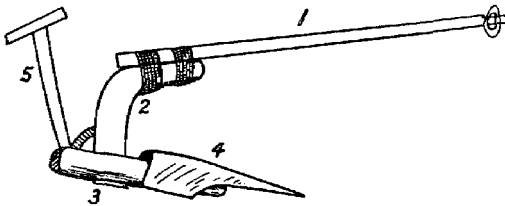
Manuring is followed by systematically carrying the manure to the fields in the arable lands, it is only left fallow for watered gardens, and trees, or vineyards in some places. Manure in general is called *zibl*, but a number of terms are in use to specify each particular kind, e.g., *harâ*, *jille(t)*, etc.

The manuring of the fields is somewhat of a hap-hazard business; the herds and flocks have to follow the reapers for many weeks, and thus the fields are manured. In the mountains the wealthy land-owners invite wealthy shepherds to camp for several weeks on the reaped lands, these shepherds then put up their tents, and the flocks pass the nights on the grounds. This service is paid for by several rotls, or ratls, of coffee and sugar. Carcasses which are only

left to decay and to be devoured by wild beasts and birds also serve their purpose. The Christian villagers of Bethlehem, Beth Jála, and Ramallah, also the Hebronites, carry the sweepings into their olive-yards and vineyards. In the poor naked hilly country as well as in the plains, cow's dung is gathered and made into a kind of cake with a mixture of straw (*kaswal*), and stuck against the walls to dry, for use in the ovens. This *jille(t)*, as it is called, is mostly used in the Mount of Olives and Philistia. It is put outside the oven to heat it, and does not come in contact with the bread. Ezekiel was ordered to take *gél* to bake his bread, *i.e.*, not to put the bread on it, but in the oven (Ezek. iv, 12), and as the Fellâhîn never use human dung for anything, neither for heating nor for manuring, for fear of becoming defiled, so Ezekiel asks not to be defiled (iv, 13-14). All refuse which will not do for fuel is thrown on a heap, and accumulates in some villages, as Beth-dajjan, to form real hills. In the same village they have set up round manure huts, which look like the dark cupolas of small mosques, and as every family possesses one such hut, there are quite a number to be seen near each other. This led to an error when one day several Egyptians arrived in sight of Beth-dejjan and saw the cupolas, and, mistaking them for mosques, worshipped at (as they thought) the first collection of Saints in the Holy Land.

The Hebrews followed, or rather preceded, in much the same way as the Fellâhîn (cp. Jer. xvi, 4; viii, 2; ix, 2). The dung-hills in the villages (the *medhbale(t)*) of the Fellâhîn are the *ashpattoth* where the poor preferred to sit (Ps. cxiii, 7), probably because it was warmer in winter than the cold ground (1 Sam. ii, 8).

The complete plough is called *'ud* when it is meant for oxen. The different parts of the plough are:—

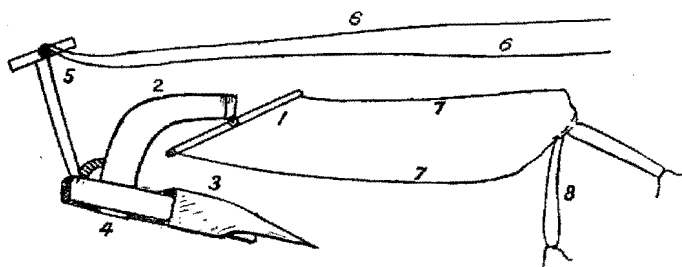


Plough for Two Oxen.

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>Kudâmâniye(t)</i> . | 3. <i>Rijel</i> . |
| 2. <i>Fukbe(t)</i> . | 4. <i>Sikke(t)</i> . |
| 5. <i>Yad</i> . | |

All the parts except the plough-share are of oak, the plough-share itself is of iron. The yoke is also of oak, or sometimes lighter wood, and is called *nîr*, corresponding to the Hebrew *šól* (Isaiah ix, 4; Jer. ii, 20).

When the plough is drawn by only one animal, whether a horse, mule, or camel, the team, or *ḫudâmânîye(t)*, is not necessary, and the various parts are :—



Plough for One Animal.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Neyára(t)</i> . | 5. <i>Yad</i> . |
| 2. <i>Rukbe(t)</i> . | 6. <i>Zemám</i> (reins). |
| 3. <i>Sikke(t)</i> . | 7. <i>Šar'</i> (second reins). |
| 4. <i>Rijel</i> . | 8. <i>'Abwe(t)</i> (cp. <i>'abóth</i> , Hos. xi, 4). |

The reins are attached to the halter, and the animal is thus guided. The prophet Hosea compares Ephraim, under God's guidance, to the animal attached to the plough (chap. xi, 4): "I drew him with the cords (reins) of a man (not of a mule), with bands (collars) of love, and I was to him, as one taking away from their jaws the burden of the yoke." As the oxen have no reins, a long goad, *massas*, is used with a nail at the end to prick the oxen. This is the ox-goad; compare Shamgar's slaughter of the Philistines (Judges iv, 31).

When one animal is employed, and with reins, a short goad, *mankház*, is used. It has a broad metal end, to remove any adhering clods from the plough; compare the *dorbán* of 1 Sam. xiii, 21, among the instruments of the Israelites, which they could sharpen by a file.

After the squares of land have been traced out, the sower fills his lap (*hajar*) with seed, and steps along the furrow (*thalm*), up

and down, and with every second step throws a handful in a half circle. Whilst throwing it they say :

يلا يا رب	<i>Yalla ya Rab.</i>	Attend O Lord!
ميتان اردب	<i>mitain erdab.</i>	Two hundred erdab.
وان حس الكيل	<i>wa-in hass il-Kale.</i>	And should it be less,
وقي يا رب	<i>Waffi Ya Rab.</i>	Fill the wanting (number).

The erdab is a Persian measure, no more in use, although the name still lingers on only in the verses. The measure mostly used is the *ṣa'*, weighing about 3 roṭls of good wheat or 4 roṭls of good barley (the roṭl is about 6½ lbs). The quantity of seed thrown depends on circumstances, fat land wants less seed than poor land. Again, where thorns may be expected to grow up plentifully, more seed is thrown in order to choke them. Where the lands are sufficiently separated either by walls or by steep descents from the road-side, the field is all sowed with the same seed; but in the plain country, where nothing intervenes, and animals may feed the growing crops, they sow lupin (*turmus*) next the road, because the animals do not eat them. Tares (*zawân*) grow also, but this depends upon the quality of the wheat. The seed of summer crops as durra and sesame is sown by means of a leather funnel fixed to the plough, with a long reed going down to the ploughshare. The seed thus falls in the furrow as the animal advances, and the sowing is therefore done very regularly.

The crops grown in winter are wheat (*kameh*, *ḥunṭa*[t], cp. Heb. *ḥittah*), barley (*sh'ir*, Heb. *sē'orah*), lentils (*'adas*, cp. Heb. *'adāshîm*), vetches (*karsanne*[t]), and broad beans (*fâl*, Heb. *pôl*). The summer crops are *dhura*[t] (ذ, د), generally pronounced *dourra*, sesame, giving oil when pressed, chick-pea (*ḥumus*, حمص). *Ḥumus* may be the *ḥāsîr* ("leeks"), which the Israelites longed for in the wilderness (Numb. xi, 5). The *ḥumus* is sour when eaten raw, and this may have been the cause of their asking for such a plant. Cotton is planted in some regions north of Jerusalem.

There are several different kinds of wheat:—

nārsî, 4 rows of grain, long ears, white flour, very thin stalk, does not give good *tibn* (straw for food) for the animals.

ṣafra mukrāta(t), 4 rows of grain, thick ears, fine flour, good *tibn*.

katráwiye(t), 4 rows of grain, thin corn (not used in the mountains).

abu herêbe(t), 2 rows of grain, grey corn (is not liked, as it seems mouldy).

kaf-er-rahmán, or *dibbiye(t)*, lit. "the palm of the merciful," or "bear-like" (being clumsy), the husks are black and the grain is long, 4 rows, usually grown in the Jordan Valley, and when brought to the maritime plains degenerates very quickly, seed has to be brought every second year.

tábásy, very white transparent grains.

baladiyet, brown grains.

kamh imfobar, black spots on top.

kamh ghúrány, thick, white.

kamh haurány, from the Hauran, brown grains.

kamh ghazáwy, from Gaza, dark-rose coloured.

kamh nábilásy, from Nablús.

kamh 'ajlány, from Eglon.

kamh dibwány, from Moab, bright, long grains.

Barley of different sorts is also found :—

farkadi, 4 rows, the ear very long.

ghazáwy, 2 rows, very long husks.

sab'ini is sometimes sown in February, and can be reaped 70 days after, whence its name.

Wheat gives ten, twenty, or thirty-fold, according to the soil, extent of the previous ploughing, and situation of the field.

Barley may give a hundred-fold, especially if all conditions agree: sowing in November at the feast of Lydd, rain at the right season, absence from depredations of birds, ants, and so forth. It was under favourable conditions that Isaac sowed barley in Southern Philistia, and received an hundred-fold that year (Gen. xxvi, 12).

In the beautiful parable of the sower and the seed Jesus remembers all the above conditions: the birds (starlings and larks) devoured some, the earth with but little soil (this is seen especially in the hilly countries), the fallow ground, where the thorns choke the wheat, and the good ground bringing a hundred-fold (Matt. xiii, 3-8).

Lentils and vetches rarely give more than ten-fold, sometimes not even so much, varying according to the goodness of the ground.

When the barley is in the vicinity of towns, where the rubbish

gives it a vigorous growth, and has grown one or two feet high, it is cut when quite green to be sold as fodder for the horses. In this state it is called *kašile(t)*, and if it is cut before it is very high, not over two feet, it may grow again.

The standing field of corn is called *zure'*, it is not often weeded in the poorer mountainous regions, because there manuring is almost nothing and the moisture less than in the plains, and therefore weeds are fewer. But in the maritime plains, and more especially in the Jordan valley, the weeds grow faster than the wheat and it is indispensable to go there in February and March, and as the Bedawin, the owners of the lands, do not work, the Fellâhin from the mountains of Judea and Ephraim who hold shares, go there and do all that is needful. The fields also are often irrigated near Jericho, and on the banks of the Nimrin and adjacent streams, the plain of Shittim.

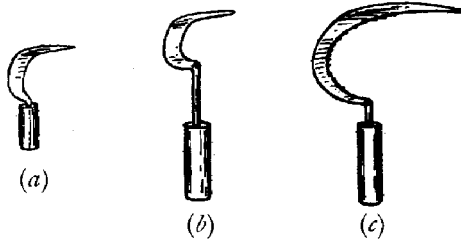
The Gaza wheat is not much liked, because it gives grey bread, and contains too many tares (*zawân*). Certainly the tares could be picked out, but the wheat is not strong enough to resist the tares, and it is probably such wheat that is meant in the parable of the tares (Matt. xiii, 27). So, the Gaza wheat being weak, the tares are left, lest they root up the wheat with them in the act of plucking.

Summer crops being sown in regular rows, with space between, the weeds grow much quicker, and they must be attended to as long as the principal plants are still quite young. Wheat and barley is about knee-deep in poor lands of the mountains. In such plains as the Bek'a (Plain of Rephaim) it grows to the height of one's girdle, and in the plains of Sharon often as high as the shoulder, whilst in the plain of Jordan, it will hide a horse and, in exceptional cases, even the horseman. Durra, too, is generally a foot or so higher than a man, whilst lentils and chick-peas are only about half a foot high.

The barley harvest begins in April in the Jordan Valley, in May in the maritime plains. Lentils and vetches, however, are reaped before; these last are plucked root and all and laid in heaps, whence they are removed on camels and donkeys in large packages. The harvest, *kašide(t)*, of barley is performed with the aid of sickles, *manâjil* (plural of *mînjal*); we may compare the Hebrew *maggâl* (Jer. 1, 16). The sheaves, *ghemâr*, are thrown behind by the *kašsâd* (harvestman) and gathered and put into neat bundles. They are

then carried to the threshing-floor, *jurn*, the Hebrew *gôren* (Gen. 1, 10). When the cereals are very weak, the plants are plucked without the aid of a sickle and taken in the arms, as no sheaves can be made, the straw being too short to bind them. These meagre harvests are called *maḥel*, as opposed to *khaṣṣâh*, the very fruitful ones. Such a *maḥel* harvest is foretold to the fallen house of Israel, "when the harvestman gathereth the standing corn, and his arm reapeth the ears (that is, without sickle on account of the shortness of the stalks);" Isaiah xvii, 5. The reaper wears a leather apron which covers his breast and knees, as the husks of the barley and wheat would soon penetrate the thin and only *thobe* he has on. The wheat is also reaped with the sickle when convenient, and the stubble is left for the animals which follow the reapers.

There are three kinds of sickles, according to the height of the wheat, (a) a very short sickle for cutting grass and short cereals, *ḥashâshe(t)*; (b) the *menjal*; (c) the *kâlâsh*. With (b) the Hebrew



maggâl has already been compared. As for (c) it is possibly the קלש which the Israelites were wont to have repaired by the Philistines (1 Sam. xiii, 20); the translators took it to be part of the fork.

The reapers eat twice a day; about 10 in the morning they have the *ṣâbâh*, and at about 2 in the afternoon the *ghadhâ* (غدا). When a man has too much to gather and he wishes to get rid of the work in the shortest possible time, he sends an invitation to all his friends and relatives. This is called *‘âne(t)* (أنة). The people come and reap everything in a very short time, and a grand dinner follows as the reward for their trouble. When a village possesses lands in common at some distance from the village, the whole of the inhabitants go there and build huts (*‘arâish*), and live there for several months round the threshing-floor; the main village is then almost abandoned, and only a few guardians remain to take care of

the things (generally of no great value) which are left behind. But whether it be far or near, all the women, rich or poor, go to glean behind the reapers. Though the name *lukáta(t)*¹ is sometimes used for the gleaners, they are better known as *seyáfát*, i.e., "summer-enjoyers or gatherers." The ears, when gathered, are tied into small round bundles like a bouquet of flowers, and the bundles are carried home by the woman on her head, where she threshes out the wheat with a stone.

A diligent gleaner can gather more wheat than would be her usual pay for a day, especially in a fertile field where many stalks are left. In the plains of Philistia the gleaners are more numerous than the reapers, and it is difficult to keep them away from the sheaves; a North-African is therefore employed to watch and to remonstrate with them when they become too impertinent, "but" (as a *náfúr*, "watchman," said to me) "what can one young man do before so many young women? Besides, there is so much scolding and cursing, and where goes the blessing?" For among the wheat-sheaves and on the threshing-floor, a curse invites the genie to carry away food as they neither sow nor reap, yet want to eat. In Ruth ii, 5, we read of the "servant that was set over the reapers" to watch, and Boaz enjoined him to allow Ruth to pass between the sheaves and not to speak harsh words to her (Ruth ii, 15). The same words are used in Arabic of the scolding which the above-mentioned *náfúr* has continually to do. Much as the reapers try to prevent the gleaners wandering among the sheaves or into the fields, it is natural with them not to gather stray ears or to cut all the standing ones, which would be looked upon as avarice; every bad act is avoided as much as possible "before the blessing," as the corn is very often called; the law of Moses, bidding them to "leave the stray ears" (Lev. xix, 9), is innate with them. The produce of the gleanings, which is sometimes considerable, may enable a widow to have bread enough for the winter, and in case of married women, who have not to harvest for themselves, or for girls, the wheat or barley is sold or changed for chickens, pigeons, or oil; which, as we have previously remarked, are the woman's property and care.

The threshing-floors generally belong to the whole village, and are some distance away on an elevation or on a rocky space if possible, not on the top of the hill, but so situated that the wind

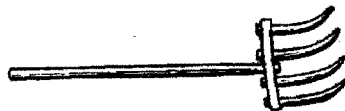
¹ Cp. the Hebrew verb *likkef* in Ruth ii, 2.

can help the winnowing. In the plains the threshing-floors are prepared by the stone-cutters, *derdās* or *hārās*, who roll and smooth the ground. Sometimes water is sprinkled to make the soil more solid and to prevent the grains from going into the earth. In the rocky hills the floors are merely swept, and the sheaves are put there to await the threshing. When all the harvest is gathered (and if the Government permits), they begin threshing. Until the threshing-commission has given permission no start can be made. This commission is composed of an official or the one who rents the tithe and two or three "mayors" of different villages. An estimate is made of how much every man has gathered, and this estimation (*takhīm*) is entered up by the *khutīb*, and the "mayor" has to seal it.

When permission is given, all the animals a man may possess, cows, oxen, asses, horses, mules, are taken and bound in a row by five or six, to trample on the sheaves. Those sheaves which are made ready are called *farḥa*, and are put in position by a wooden fork, *she'be(t)*. In many places the oxen are shod with iron; they are not muzzled as a rule. When the straw is so far trodden down that the ears are all crushed and the stalks reduced to *tibn*, the *farḥa* is gathered together in a heap and a favourable wind awaited. As threshing can only be done by day, when the sun is warm so that the straw crushes easily, the winnowing is done by night. The winnowing-fork, *mīdhra* (𐤎𐤃𐤕), is of oak and has four branches, whilst the *she'be(t)*-fork, for putting the straw in order before threshing, has but two. Both have a handle of a length of about 5 feet.



she'bet, threshing-fork.



mīdhra, winnowing-fork.

In the plains of Philistia, where the ground is looser than in the plains nearer the mountains, they thresh with the threshing-sledge (*mārāj*, cp. Hebrew *nōrāj*, Isaiah xli, 15). The sledge has

flint stones with the sharp edges pointing downwards to cut the straw (cp. the "teeth," *Is. l.c.*). When it is desired to prepare some wheat for their daily necessities, before the permission for threshing is given, they knock out some sheaves with a stick; this is not called *derâs* (the threshing with animals), but knocking or beating, *daḥ* or *khabeḥ*, which is done in a secret place and not on the threshing-floor, because there is also a keeper there to guard the wheat. Gideon, as we are told, was *beating* (the verb is *khâbaḥ*, Judges vi, 11) not *threshing* the wheat in the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites, the lords of the land in his day. The sesame is not threshed but the stalks are placed in the threshing-floor and are simply beaten out. Was it the *keṣaḥ* of Isaiah xxviii, 27? "For the fitches are not threshed with a sharp threshing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel (or calf?) turned upon the cummin, but the fitches are beaten with a staff (as the sesame is) and the cummin with a rod."

The fine straw, *tîbn*, is carried home in big bags on camels or donkeys and put into the store-room, by the opening in the roof; such sacks are called *shûwâl*. In the plains they have a hut for the straw (*shûnc[t]*); here the *tîbn* is kept in readiness as the villages are often miles away from the ploughing-grounds; but such store-houses in the village are called *matban*.¹ The stores are swept by the women and the refuse carried to the roof or other flat surface, where it is mixed with cow-dung and the women walk about trampling it with their feet, and then leave it to dry for fuel.

¹ So perhaps in *Is. xxv, 10*, "Moab shall be trodden down as the straw of the store (יִבְנֵי) for the dunghill."

(To be continued.)