

mentioned minaret may belong to such a set, the companion piers being hidden beneath modern buildings close by, west, east and south.

Further examination of the plan shows that the axial line of the sweet-meat bazaar, if prolonged northward would lead directly to the great but now walled-up triple gateway with the celebrated inscription in the southern wall of the present mosque. May we not therefore also infer that, at the point where this line crossed the outer enclosure wall, there must have been another gate which has now disappeared?

In conclusion, and at the risk of being prolix, I would remark that the impression I have gained from observations noted in the foregoing, is that material exists for a rough reconstruction of the plan of Roman Damascus.

The ancient city was traversed by two long streets running east and west, ending in great triple gates, and lined with grand colonnades. These streets were intersected by others at right angles, and also ended in city-gates, some of which can still be identified: Bab Kisan, Bab Shaghur, etc. The palace and military quarter was where the present citadel stands; the agora, forum, or market south of the latter and south and west of the Temple enclosure. The theatre still needs locating. Perhaps the name of the "Midan" (or theatre) suburb will furnish the clue.

Lastly, I must record my obligation to Mr. Prumann, of the Electric Company, who kindly furnished a blue print from which the plan was traced.

THE MEANING OF THE NAME "THE OPHEL."

By THE REV. C. F. BURNEY, D.Litt.

RECENT literature dealing with the topography of Jerusalem appears to show that, many as are the unsettled and debatable questions, the meaning of the term Ophel is generally believed by investigators to be finally settled. Thus, Dr. Smith remarks that "the meaning of the word is well known. It signifies *lump* or *swelling*, and was

applied in Hebrew to a mound, knoll or hill, in one case with a wall round it" (*Jerusalem II*, p. 152). Dr. Paton alludes, without discussion, to "the hill of Ophel," and speaks of it as one of the "three smaller peaks of the eastern ridge" (*Jerusalem in Bible Times*, pp. 66 f.). The late Col. Conder actually states that Jotham "is said to have built a wall *on Ophel*" (the italics are mine), referring to 2 Chron. xxvii, 3, which says of Jotham, that "on the wall of Ophel he built much" (*The City of Jerusalem*, p. 62). Dr. Merrill appears to stand alone in explaining the term as referring not to a hill but to a building (*Ancient Jerusalem*, Chap. XXXIII). In so doing he seems to be guided by the renderings of A.V., which give this sense—a sense which has been abandoned by R.V. in favour of that adopted by recent investigators.

The following are the renderings of Ophel by A.V. and R.V., in all passages where the term occurs in the Old Testament:—

A.V.	R.V.
Mic. iv, 8, <i>the stronghold.</i>	<i>the hill</i> : marg., Heb., <i>Ophel.</i>
Isaiah xxxii, 14, <i>the forts</i> : marg. or <i>clifts.</i>	<i>the hill</i> : marg. or <i>Ophel.</i>
2 Chron. xxvii, 3 ; xxxiii, 14 ; Neh. iii, 26, 27 ; xi, 21, all <i>Ophel</i> : marg., <i>the tower.</i>	<i>Ophel.</i>

Of the Ophel at Samaria:—

2 Kings v, 24, <i>the tower</i> : marg. or <i>secret place.</i>	<i>the hill</i> : marg., Heb., <i>Ophel.</i>
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Consideration of the evidence which can be brought to bear upon the meaning of Ophel appears to me to tell overwhelmingly in favour of the sense *fortress* or *citadel*, as against that of *hill*. This view I have already maintained in discussing 2 Kings v, 24, in my *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings*. But the discussion of an isolated point is apt to get buried and lost in a large commentary, and I think now that I may perhaps restate my arguments rather more cogently.

It is customary to identify the topographical term 'ophel, with the word 'ophel which is used in 1 Sam. v f. to denote a particular kind of *tumour*, a usage which can be paralleled from the Arabic. 'Ophel, denoting *tumour*, is supposed to be so called from its *swelling* appearance, the sense to *swell* suiting the one occurrence of the verb

which is known to us, Hab. ii, 4, Pu'al, וּפְּלָה, R.V., "is puffed up."¹ Both the identification of the two usages of 'ophel, and the meaning assigned to the root, are inferential merely and not certain,² though in each case the probability may be said to be high.

Supposing then that, in the usage with which we are now concerned, 'ophel denotes a hill, we have to notice first that such a hill is mentioned as existing in three different localities: (i) at Jerusalem, upon the south spur of the east hill, *i.e.*, the site of the ancient City of David; (ii) presumably at Samaria (2 Kings v, 24); (iii) in the territory of Mesha, king of Moab, upon the site of a city, probably Ye'arin (*Moabite Stone*, ll. 21 f.). Mesha says: "I built Karhah, the wall of Ye'arin, and the wall of the 'ophel, and I built its gates, and I built its towers."

Now it is surely remarkable, in the first place, that in each of these three locations the 'ophel specified *is connected with a city*. The kind of hill which may be described as "tumour like," a low swelling or conical hill, is by no means uncommon in Palestine; and, if 'ophel denotes such a hill, it is strange that the term is never used of hills standing out in the open country. And, secondly, it must not escape our notice that in each case the definite article is used: it is *the 'ophel* to which we find allusion. Now the use of the article, as I take it, is only to be explained in one of two ways. It may describe the 'ophel as an accidental natural feature of each of these city sites so prominent that it would instinctively be recalled to mind as *the 'ophel*; bearing such a relation to the configuration of the city as, *e.g.*, "the Mound" bears to the general aspect of the city of Edinburgh. Such a use of the article appears, however, to be excluded by the term 'ophel itself. If 'ophel means a hill, it means, *ex hypothesi*, not an outstanding beetling crag, but a low topped conical hill of the kind which would be the less likely to rivet attention as *the 'ophel* when covered, wholly or partly, with walls and large buildings, as, in the instances with which we are concerned,

¹ The verbal form of Num. xiv, 44, is generally thought to be proved by the Arabic to be from a different root.

² It is certainly going too far to say that "the meaning of the word is well known" (Smith, *loc. cit.*). The text in Hab. ii, 4, is by no means certain (*cf.* Driver, in *Century Bible*, p. 76); for all we can say, *with confidence*, the tumour may be named 'ophel from some characteristic other than that of "swelling"; and there may be no philological connection between this word and the topographical term.

it appears to have been. Failing this explanation of the use of the definite article, we can only explain the 'ophel as some feature which was to be expected in any fortified city, i.e., therefore an artificial and not a natural feature.

If 'ophel means a "swelling" it might very well be applied to an artificial "swelling" in a fortification, e.g., a *bulging* or *rounded keep* or *enceinte*. The passages in which the term is used, where they throw light on its character, seem to me to prove that such a sense is intended. In 2 Chron. xxvii, 3, we read of Jotham that "on the wall of the 'ophel he built much"—a statement which does not help us greatly, since it might describe either the additional fortification of a natural mound, or the repairing and heightening of an artificial keep or citadel. 2 Chron. xxxiii, 14, is more to the point. The passage tells us that Manasseh "built an outer wall to the City of David, to the west of Gihon in the ravine, even to the entering in at the Fish gate, and he compassed about the 'ophel, and raised it up very greatly." Here the verbal suffix in וַיִּבְנֶה, "and raised it up," can only refer to the 'ophel. It is more natural to speak of raising the height of a fortress than the height of a hill, unless indeed we are to think of artificial earth-works rather than walls. Neh. iii, 27, states that, for the repair of the walls of Jerusalem, one party of builders had charge of the section extending "from the great tower that standeth out unto the wall of the 'ophel." The 'ophel, then, may be inferred to have had a wall of its own distinct from the city wall which ran along the east slope of the south-east hill, though forming on its outer side the continuation of that wall. This suits a bulging fortress or citadel rather than a natural mound.

The same inference is to be drawn from the *parallelism* in each of the two prophetic passages which seem to refer to the 'ophel of Jerusalem. In Mic. iv, 8, the expression "tower of the flock" can hardly be anything else than a synonym of "'ophel of the daughter of Zion," the figure of a shepherd's refuge being applied to the old Davidic fortress from which the king is to shepherd his people. Here, at any rate, even if the term 'ophel originally denoted the natural mound, it has come to be applied to the fortress standing upon it. But is it not more natural to suppose that 'ophel, like *migdal*, "tower," refers solely to the fortress and not to the hill?

In Isaiah xxxii, 14, we have a picture of coming desolation. The passage is somewhat difficult, but as it stands it may be rendered—

For the palace is abandoned,
The humming city is forsaken,
'Ophel and watch-tower have become
As caves for ever ;
A joy of wild asses,
A pasture of flocks.

Here we have palace, city, and watch-tower, all the handiwork of the builder. Does not 'ophel, then, fall into the same category ?

With regard to the 'ophel at Samaria (?) we are simply told that, when Gehazi came to the 'ophel, he took the bags containing Naaman's present from the servants, and put them in the house (2 Kings v, 24). The most natural explanation is that the 'ophel was the citadel; and nothing is more likely than that Elisha, on good terms as he was with the king of Israel (at any rate at one period, or in one cycle of narratives, cf. chap. v, 8 ; vi, 8 ff. ; viii, 4), should have had a residence within the citadel granted to him as a mark of royal favour. Arrived at the outer gate of the citadel, Gehazi would naturally relieve the servants of their burden. But, if we explain the 'ophel as a hill simply, what is the point of its mention ?

Lastly, we have the 'ophel of Mesha's city, which, as we have noticed, had walls, gates, and towers. It is, I maintain, most unnatural to speak of the walls, gates, and towers of a hill. The reference is to a citadel or fortress (whether on a mound or not is immaterial), the building or rebuilding of which ranked as an important achievement.

That this is the sense in which 'ophel is to be understood is corroborated by an interesting extract from Hegeſippus, preserved by Eusebius, *H.E.*, II, chap. 23. Here it is stated that, such was the estimation in which St. James of Jerusalem was held on account of his extraordinary righteousness that he was called "righteous one," and *Oblías*, which means in Greek, "fortress of the people and righteousness" (*Διὰ γένοι τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ, ἐκαλεῖτο δίκαιος καὶ ὠβλίῦς ὁ ἐστὶν Ἑλληνιστὶ περιοχὴ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ δικαιοσύνη*). *ὠβλίῦς*, probably a corruption of *ὠβλιάρμ*, must stand for *עַם לְפָנָי*, "'ophel of the people."

In Josephus' account of the siege the *'ophel* is mentioned several times as "the place called Ophla." The use of "place" does not, however, imply that the reference is to a hill or mound, since we are told in VI, vi, 3, that Titus' soldiers "set fire . . . to the place called Ophla." Thus, though Josephus does not add further support towards my explanation of *'ophel*, he at any rate cannot be cited in opposition to it.

I conclude then that the *'ophel* at Jerusalem was originally the fortress or citadel of the City of David, which took the place of the **מְצוּרַת צִיּוֹן**, *i.e.*, the old Jebusite "stronghold of Zion." This, as was natural, was added to and strengthened from time to time by succeeding kings.

That this fortress may have been situated upon a knoll or rounded summit upon the south-east hill, afterwards cut down and levelled by the Hasmoneans, I do not, of course, dispute. My contention is that evidence shows that *'ophel* does not denote such a knoll in itself, but rather the main stronghold or keep of a fortified city.

GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE DECAPOLIS.

By THE REV. D. LEE PITCAIRN, M.A.

MISS A. M. ELVERSON, of the Church Missionary Society, residing at El-Husn, in the land of Gilead, has sent me two Greek inscriptions which she discovered in that neighbourhood early in the year 1910. Each was built into a native house as the lintel of the door. This gives an idea of the dimensions of the stones. The people think it is lucky to have an inscribed stone for the lintel.

The first inscription is from Irbid (Arbela). It is placed upside down over the door, but is complete, and of some historic interest:—

ΕΤΟΥΣΤΕΚΑΤΑΚΤΙ
 ΣΙΝΤΗΣΠΟΛΕΟ(Σ)
 ΛΟΥΚΙΟΣ ΔΟΜΙ
 ΤΙΟΣ + ΜΑΝΩΡ +
 ΤΗΝΣΤΗΛΗΝΑΥΤΟ
 ΣΥΝΤΩΕΝΑΥΤΗΜΝ
 Ι ΜΩ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕΝ

“In the year 305 according to
the founding of the city
Lucius Domitius Major
made the monumental stone
to himself with the
memorial on it.”

“The founding of the city” is plainly the era from which the 305th year is reckoned. As a date A.U.C. is out of the question, the era is certainly B.C. 64, the date of the granting of independence to the Greek cities in Syria by Pompey (*Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, by George Adam Smith, p. 594). The coins of Gadara are dated according to this era. But this date-formula has not been found on any previously known inscription, so Mr. F. H. Marshall, of the British Museum, informs me.

In line 4 the spelling of Major is curious. As the inscription is quite clear-cut, I should think the **H** is not a mistake for **I** but a case of phonetic spelling. The modern Italian *maggiore* suggests that in Italy the **I** had a consonantal sound. But this inscription suggests that in Syria it was sounded as a vowel.

In line 5 **AYTO** is probably **AYTΩ**, *i.e.*, *αὐτῶ*. The last letter may be in part obliterated on the stone.

In the last line **MNHMΩ** ought probably to be **MNHMIΩ**, a common itacism for *μνημείῳ*. Does it refer to the mere inscription? or does it suggest that the *στήλη* and the *μνημείον* were separate but conjoined, like a pedestal and a bust?

The second inscription is copied from a lintel-stone at Sareeh, 'Ajlūn:—

7 Ψ ⊕
 ΝΟΛΔΕΚΕΙ
 ΓΕΙΛΩΡΟC
 ΠΟΠΡΟΤΗ
 ΙΟΥΡΟCΕΤΟΕ
 ΑΡCΙΟΥΔΕΙC
 ΘΑΝΑΤΟC

This inscription as it stands cannot be read. It is in fact imperfect. The clue is furnished by the two concluding words, which are distinct, *οὐδεις θάνατος*. Prof. G. A. Smith (see above) states that a common formula in funereal inscriptions in this part of the country is “No one is deathless,” *i.e.*, *οὐδεις ἀθάνατος*. This clue suggests that one letter is deficient at the beginning of the last line of the inscription, and in fact of every line. Most of these missing letters can be supplied with certainty:—

