

old one, and originated perhaps through fear of the gecko. The law minutely describes the plague, "with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish," and this is exactly the colour that comes out in a damp room, when saltpetre grows on it, and gives it a leprous appearance, yet no case is ever given of a leprous house visited and healed. The Canaanites had perhaps spread the news, which they believed as firmly as a modern town Arab, and it was dreaded by the Bedawy-Israelites as much as by the modern Bedawy. The geckoes stick their eggs to the wall, or in the shelter of the window-arches, and were not their call "geck" heard from time to time, they would pass unobserved.

The gecko is an accursed animal, for when Mohammed fled from Mecca and hid in the cleft, the gecko told the pursuers جك والذبي في الشك "jik! the prophet is in the cleft" (*jik! wan-Naby fish-shik!*).

(To be continued.)

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## TELL EL-FÛL AND KHURBET 'ADĀSEH.

By Dr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN.

AT the suggestion of the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Crace, and stimulated by the interest aroused by my reading the papers of the Rev. W. F. Birch on the subject, I arranged to take a half-day off and go with Yusuf, the P.E.F. overseer, to examine the rival sites of Gibeah of Saul.

We left Jerusalem about 11.30 and first thoroughly explored the sides and summit of *Tell el-Fûl*. This lofty hill is so near the great northern high road, and is visible from so many points around Jerusalem, that it has been very familiar to me for many years, and once long ago I rode to the summit. This time we rode around its base and over a considerable part of its surface. The site is a magnificent one, especially when viewed from the east, and the outlook from the summit is over a very wide area

indeed. To the south the summit of the Frank Mountain is visible; to the north the view stretches over *er-Rām* beyond *Bireh* to *et-Taiyibeh*; to the east, beyond the Dead Sea and a wide sweep of the Jordan Valley, lie a long line of the Mountains of Moab; to the west, *Kastel* and *Nebi Samuël* crown the highest points. The strong watch-tower on the summit was, I should suppose, a place of outlook in the days of the Latin Kingdom (see *Memoirs*, III, pp. 158-160), although Dr. Mackenzie considers it far more ancient (*Q.S.*, 1911, p. 98); from here signals of approaching danger could have been made over a very wide area. With regard to the main part of the site I fear that, for once, I cannot agree with my friend, Prof. R. A. S. Macalister (see *Q.S.*, 1904, p. 254), who writes of this site: "Around (the watch-tower) are meagre traces of a small occupation." It seems to me there is ample evidence of this having been an extremely strong and important ancient site. It is in the first place a site in shape extremely well suited to primitive fortification: this is especially noticeable on the east. It is similar in size and shape to other well-known ancient city-sites. Whether the walls appearing at the surface are really ancient is very doubtful, but during the long ages in which the greater part of this hill has been cultivated the soil has slipped down covering all that may still survive of city walls. To me, at any rate, although there were many hewn and half-hewn stones, I could not be satisfied that any were necessarily in ancient position. It is probable that the statement of the *Memoirs*, III, p. 160, that "there are no traces of a former town" is due to the absence of walls at the surface. But the pottery fragments tell a surer tale. The whole area is covered thickly with fragments of "Roman" and "Israelite" pottery. On the east side especially they extend the whole way from the summit to far down in the valley. It seems to me impossible that any site could have such an enormous quantity of pottery sherds unless it had been occupied over a long period. To the east of the *Tell el-Ful* itself is a lower spur, the side of which facing the Tell is full of caves, some doubtless ancient tombs, and at least two quarries. On the north-east side of *Tell el-Ful* we found one well-cut tomb with six *kōkim* and evidences of other tombs near. On the opposite side of the valley to the south we found another opened tomb around the door of which were scattered the fragments of a broken ossuary. A more extended search, and particularly a search accompanied by a little digging, would certainly reveal

more tombs. Mr. H. Clark, of Jerusalem, has purchased some fine Israelite pottery brought from this site by the *fellahin*. Taking therefore all the evidence into consideration, I am decidedly at one with Prof. Dalman and Dr. Mackenzie in considering that *Tell el-Fūl* is the site of an important ancient city, which *may* have been Gibeah. It is a great pity that a few pits are not made, under the supervision of a competent archaeologist, to see what the remains under the surface consist of.

From *Tell el-Fūl* we rode north and, after following the modern carriage road for a few minutes, we at the commencement of the next descent turned off into the old Roman road with *Tell 'Adāseh* full in view to the north-north-west. At the *Bāb el-Muallakah*, where the old road branches, we turned north-west, following the wide but extremely rough old Roman road along which St. Paul must have been taken under strong military escort to Caesarea (Acts xxiii, 23-33), the historic road which passes by the two Bethhorons to the maritime plain. Where the road crosses *Wādy ed-Dumm*, we asked an aged fellah, a native of the neighbouring village of *Bir Nebāla*, what the valley was called. He promptly replied *Wādy 'Adāseh*, and on being cross-questioned denied that he knew of such a name as *Wādy ed-Dumm*. This is a remarkable instance of how local some names are among the *fellahin*, for the fellah from *Beit Hanīneh*, whom we met a little later at the top of the hill, told us at once that the valley we had crossed was the *Wādy ed-Dumm*. It seems that different villages have their own names for the valley. I may mention here that it seems to me highly problematical that the name *Wādy ed-Dumm*, "Valley of Blood," has anything at all to do with the tradition of a battle fought there—long ages ago. It is simply a name given on account of the colour of its flood-waters due to the deep red-brown soil below *er-Rām*. Cf. similar phenomenon at *Nahr Ibrahim* (*The Syrian Goddess*, translated by Strong, pp. 47, 48).

The hill of *'Adāseh* now lay before us. The road to *el-Jīb* was almost impassable with boulders, so we gladly turned aside, followed a flower-besprinkled lane running between orchards of figs, almonds, and pomegranates. We turned gradually upwards up the east side of the hill. The whole of this aspect of the hill slope is well cultivated, orchards and vineyards succeeding one another all the way. We looked eagerly everywhere for pottery fragments, but, in contrast to *Tell el-Fūl*, scarcely a fragment was

here visible. Near the summit we encountered a fellah from *Beit Ḥanīneh* living in a rough cottage. He showed us the way to the *khurbet*, and proved most obliging and informing.

The "ruins" at the summit have been described in the *Memoirs*, but would probably repay a more thorough archaeological survey. (See *Memoirs*, III, pp. 105-6.) These are the somewhat massive remains of a small tower, a considerable *birkeh* (pool), now filled with earth, several cisterns, a partially excavated mass of white tessellated pavement, a cave dwelling (perhaps once a tomb) with a bolt hole for the door, a rock tomb, wine presses, etc. All the remains seem to point to the Byzantine period, and the pottery fragments, which are nowhere very plentiful, correspond with the same date. The remains appear to be those of some private villa with outbuildings for vineyards and farm, or, perhaps, more probably, to some kind of monastic establishment. Then a column base found here and the tessellated pavement may have belonged to a small church. Not a single fragment of more ancient pottery could we find anywhere, though we wandered all over and around the summit. The depth of débris too is nowhere in this part more than a few feet; the rock crops up everywhere. We went about in all directions and found the same evidence. At two spots, on the line indicated by the Rev. W. F. Birch, Yusuf, assisted by the fellah, sank a pit to the rock, but all the pottery fragments were Arab or Byzantine. I have the collection before me now. There is no evidence whatever that this site was ever extensively occupied and not a sherd to testify to any pre-Roman occupation at all. It was probably in those days a well wooded hill or a great vineyard. The whole shape of the hill is, so far as my experience goes, against the probability that any ancient city could have lain there. The actual summit is far too small for a city and the plateau of lower ground around is, on the other hand, in its entirety too extensive for any very ancient fortified site. The *Beit Ḥanīneh* man pointed out a rocky lower spur to our west which he said was also called *Khurbet 'Adāseh*, but on visiting this we found that it was an absolutely bare rocky hill with no evidence at all of previous occupation—certainly no "khurbet" (ruin).

We closely cross-questioned the man to try and obtain any other name for the hill *Khurbet 'Adāseh* but he denied knowledge of any such. At last we asked him where *Beit Lejjeh* was. He replied at once: "Of course I can show you *Beit Lejjeh*, as it belongs to us. It is

away over there" (pointing to *Tell el-Fūl*). He finally described the site as lying to the north-east of *Tell el-Fūl*. On referring to the P.E.F. large map I found *Khurbet 'Adāseh* marked there and told him so. "Yes," he said, "it is also called *Kh. 'Adāseh*. There is a ruined church there which we call *Kenēset el-'Adāseh*, and some years ago some of us *Beit Hanāneh* men excavated the church and found some columns, one of which (with the capital and base) we sold to the English Bishop for 7 napoleons (this I have since confirmed) and it now stands in front of the Bishop's Church." On our way back, after paying a flying visit to the lofty village of *er-Rām* (Rameh) we turned aside eastward from the carriage road shortly before reaching *Tell el-Fūl* and after riding for about a quarter of an hour along an ancient road bordered with large stones set on end, running to *Hezmeh*, we reached the ruin *Beit Lejjeh*—or more correctly *Beit Ellejeh* (بيت العجة). There is a good-sized *birkeh*, besides a number of cisterns and a considerable area of ruined house walls. To the south-west are the half-excavated foundations of a church, but the *fellahin* have removed the best stones. On further inquiry we found the correct name of this site to be *Khurbet bīr el-'Adāseh* (خربت بدير العدسي) although the name *Khurbet 'Adāseh* (عداسي) is also known. It is quite clear from M. Clermont-Ganneau's *Researches* (Vol. I, pp. 471, 473) that this is the place to which he found the name *Beit Lejjeh* attached. Thus he says, writing in 1870:—

"North-east of Shufat, and about three-quarter of an hour's walk from it after crossing *Wād Kerum Abū Rīseh*, I came on *Khurbet bīr el-'Adāseh*; ruins of old stones without mortar, a not very large pool, some columns, underground buildings and cisterns. An ancient road, with a double line of great blocks of stone on the edges, runs all through this district." Apart from the direction, north-east (the other *Khurbet 'Adāseh* is north-west), the description of the remains makes it quite clear that this is the site. It is to this, then, that M. Clermont-Ganneau refers in 1874 (*loc. cit.*) when he says: "One of the fellahs told me that *Khurbet el-'Adāseh*, which I had visited three years before, was once called *Beit Lejjeh*. This fact, whose full importance I did not grasp at the moment, is, as I shall show, very interesting in connection with the mediaeval topography of the Holy Land." He then states that the identification of this site with the *Betligge* or *Beitligge* (there are other

variants), one of "the 22 casals of the Domain of Jerusalem which Godfrey de Bouillon gave to the Holy Sepulchre after his conquest," "may therefore be regarded as certainly proved."

This has taken me rather far from the actual object of this paper, which concerns localities of far older date, but if the western *Khurbet 'Adāseh*—Birch's Gibeah—were, as he thinks, this Beit Lejjeḥ—a mediaeval town or village, then all my conclusions regarding the site, as given above, would necessarily be wrong. As it is, I regretfully come to the conclusion that the proposal to locate Gibeah of Saul upon the west *Khurbet 'Adāseh* is impossible on archaeological grounds, and that *Tell el-Fûl* is on these grounds, if not a certainty, at least a very suitable site. By a curious coincidence the eastern 'Adāseh (*Khurbet bîr el-'Adāseh*) is very probably the successor of whatever city stood upon the summit of *Tell el-Fûl*—it is almost within stone's throw—and became the site of a settlement when more peaceful days caused towns to be built in sites more convenient, socially, than the tops of steep hills. Such a change of site took place in the early centuries of Christianity before the Arab invasion. If so *this Khurbet 'Adāseh* may actually, in a sense, represent the ancient Gibeah—now placed, however, at the foot instead of the summit of the hill.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (*Extract from Dr. Masterman's Letter of March 9th, 1913.*)—"In connection with my visit to *Tell el-Fûl*, I sent to Prof. R. A. S. Macalister a packet of pottery sherds, about which he says: 'They certainly seem to me pre-Exilic, though not, I should say, very ancient. If there are many pieces like this (and I may say there are very many—E.W.G.M.) on this site it would be quite safe to infer that it was occupied in the last hundred years of the Hebrew monarchy: and if so, as the Israelites were notoriously not given to building new cities, it would probably be older still, perhaps considerably so.'"