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BIBLE MAPS

THE Bibles issued by the Bible Societies or by private publishing houses generally contain maps designed to help the reader to locate places mentioned in the sacred text. To the average reader, of course, a map is a map. The idea of questioning the accuracy of the map-maker never occurs to him. That peculiar combination of topographical knowledge and Biblical learning required for the making of a trustworthy Bible map is assumed. An occasional question-mark, such as the more conscientious map-makers have introduced alongside an Emmaus, for example, or a Tirzah, proves rather a disturbing element to the reader who has the curiosity to "look up" where Emmaus or Tirzah lay.

As a matter of fact, most of our Bible maps have been simply borrowed (with or without permission), one set from another. An error, once introduced by either the author or the mechanical draughtsman of a map, goes on reproducing itself in spite of all criticism. The mistake passes on from edition to edition, a sad illustration of the old proverb about the difficulty of truth overtaking error.

Whatever excuse there may formerly have been for this sort of map-publishing, there is no excuse to-day for any society or business house issuing Scriptures with maps, to bind up with the sacred text any set of maps simply taken over "as is" from earlier editions. A map of the Holy Land intended, let us say, to assist the reader of Joshua, even if it were the best and most scientific that could be made twenty years ago, is now about as out-of-date as a pre-war map of Europe. The purpose of this article is to attempt to give some impression of the recent remarkable progress in the science of Biblical topography, which provides the data for the maker of Bible maps.

I

The most striking fact regarding this progress is its international character. And precisely therein lies the reason for the prevailing ignorance of its scope, even in circles where a primary interest in these results may be presumed. Few are able to avail themselves of all the original sources of information. Many, indeed, see one or two such sources, but not many the

whole wide range of discovery and criticism. Even those who are so fortunate as to have access to a thoroughly equipped library, which receives the mass of reports, bulletins, annuals, statements and reviews from all over the world, are not always able to read these issues because they are in various languages. And, quite apart from the language difficulty, there is the factor of time : it would be no small task even to keep abreast of the current publications, to say nothing of the overwhelming quantity of material packed away in the files of these past twenty years.

In fact, each of the "schools", "funds" or "expeditions" which issue these periodicals is chiefly interested in the more or less restricted localities or branches of investigation that it has made peculiarly its own. The heads of these groups naturally keep themselves posted on the proposals and criticisms of all the rest, for they must take them into account in framing their own theories. But they do not, as a rule, gather up general results in a comprehensive way. The public thus misses the broad basis of knowledge possessed by the specialists in the work. There are, of course, many popular presentations of the results of archæological progress in Bible lands. But archæology is not topography. Intimately related as these subjects are, they are so far from being identical that it is quite possible for a man to be an excellent archæologist and a very poor topographer. A German scholar, Professor Peter Thomsen, began even long before the war to gather up the topographical results of all the schools during a given year, or series of years, and others more recently have attempted such a compendium as a department of their own periodicals. But there is no trustworthy way for the maker of Bible maps to-day to gather his material save by the long and slow process of "digging" in this mass—this polyglot mass—of periodicals, much as his archæological colleague has to dig in the mounds for his walls and pottery.

What, then, are the chief of these literary "mounds" in which the student of topography must dig? No significance is to be attached to the order in which these will be named, as if the first-named were the best and the last the worst.

II

There is, first, the Annual (*Jahresbericht*) published by the German school at Jerusalem, over which Dr. Dalman so long

presided and Professor Albrecht Alt now presides. In each number it has a sketch-map of the routes followed by the Director and members of the school in their longer and shorter excursions from Jerusalem, to illustrate the narrative of these journeys written by the Director himself. In these narratives Professor Alt incorporates his views—always fresh views, either confirming or correcting former impressions of himself or others—as to the sites thus visited.

The American school, directed by Professor Albright of Johns Hopkins University, issues both a *Bulletin* and an *Annual*. The former is a little brochure, appearing at frequent intervals and rather profusely illustrated, in which narratives of the American school's excursions are entertainingly written, but unfortunately without a sketch-map to serve as a kind of geographical index to the reader. New impressions and new theories are freely put forth in this little paper, without anxiety as to their permanence. In fact, Professor Albright does not hesitate to recant in a later issue what he has tentatively advocated in an earlier one. But in the *Annual* of the American school are to be found the major articles on topography as well as archæology, with detailed argumentation.

The distinguished group of scholars of the French monastery of St. Etienne at Jerusalem give to the world their scholarly results and opinions, in the archæological and topographical as well as other fields, in the quarterly called the *Revue Biblique*. Père Vincent, Père Abel and their confrères are recognized authorities on the topography of both the city of Jerusalem and the whole land of Palestine, including the South country and the regions in and across the Jordan Valley.

The British world of scholarship, as represented chiefly by the Palestine Exploration Fund, has done much in the past to unlock the mysteries of ancient Palestine. Its *Quarterly Statements* are still the repository of valuable papers on Biblical sites. The British school at Jerusalem, under an able succession of trained archæologists, maintains on the field men quite able to hold their own with the scholars of other lands. Probably the most remarkable discovery of recent years in the field of Biblical topography is Garstang's identification of the site of Hazor, the old Canaanite capital. In this connection it deserves mention that the present British administration of Palestine under the Mandate of the League of Nations has placed the whole

world of Biblical scholarship in its debt for its impartial and intelligent co-operation in every phase of archæological and topographical progress.

The above schools and funds may, however, be all regarded as foreign to Palestine, for they are supported by the friends of Biblical scholarship in Germany, Britain, etc., and are distinctly national in budget and staff. The scholars of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem may be looked at in a different light. While their budget and personnel are Jewish, still their home and centre is not some distant foreign capital or university city : it is Jerusalem itself, where they are now at home. It is a ground for satisfaction that Jew, Catholic and Protestant have been able, to so large an extent, to co-operate in these scholarly pursuits in a land torn by racial and religious strife above other lands. And a symbol of such co-operation is the local organization for archæological study, the Palestine Oriental Society, composed of members of all nationalities and issuing a *Journal* to which each may contribute in his own tongue.

Besides the above-mentioned periodicals there are magazines published abroad, either specially devoted to the study of Palestine, such as the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, or affording to specialists in this field a wider forum of Biblical scholars, such as the *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*. In fact, the Index-volumes of the former *Zeitschrift*, appearing about once a decade, come nearer to forming an index of Palestinian topography than any other single publication.

The map-maker of to-day, in order to assimilate all the material afforded by such current publications, must embroider them upon a background of the earlier scientific work, which made such astonishing progress in the nineteenth century, especially in the period of Edward Robinson, that indefatigable American scholar whose achievements have not been dimmed by the later reputations of Clermont-Ganneau, Conder, Schumacher or Dalman. To aid him he has the results of the Palestine Survey, in both book form and map form, supplemented by reports of travels and surveys, especially for regions not included in that British survey, such as those of Schumacher, Musil or the Princeton Expedition. And gradually, with the passing years, he will have more and more help from the great "cadastral survey" now being conducted and published by the Palestine Government under experienced British oversight. When all

the sheets of this vast map are published, the scholar at home will have the whole land lying before him in utmost detail—only, alas, in but two dimensions. Palestine is decidedly three-dimensional.

III

Now, with all this apparatus available for the student of Palestinian topography, he must expect to be asked, What of the results? Have any of those old question-marks disappeared? Can we be sure of any more identifications now than in the time of Conder and Kitchener? What measure of agreement prevails among the various schools mentioned above? Have any former identifications, once regarded as sure, had to be given up, or at least relegated to the uncertain? Above all, have any principles been agreed upon, or any new methods developed, that give promise of progress and assurance in the work of identification?

Perhaps the last question may best be answered first. It may be answered with an emphatic Yes. While there is not yet entire unanimity among the specialists as to the absolute dates to which particular types of pottery may be assigned, it may safely be asserted that the relative dating of the potsherds is practically a point of agreement: a basis, therefore, for argument from the known to the unknown. It is only a few years since scholars made the first attempts to gather facts from these humble, unsightly relics of Palestinian antiquity. Even after the results of such study had begun to be gathered up into a science, there were those who mocked and pronounced the whole elaborate scheme a figment of the imagination. But to-day, after a relatively short time for its growth, there is already a structure that deserves the title scientific, by means of which the topographer may measure his data assembled from Biblical and extra-Biblical records of antiquity.

It is a structure literally built of clay, to be sure,—broken bits of clay, for the most part,—yet after all composed of the only commonly used substance (save stone) that has been able to withstand the stress of time, weather, fire, war. The archæologist digs and finds the sherds. On the basis of their material, shape, finish and decoration he assigns them to this or that ceramic period or sub-period. He arranges the various periods

thus certified for this or that particular site. And then comes the topographer to try for an answer to the question: What place was this? What was its ancient name, or, were its ancient names?—for two, three or even four names for the same site in Palestine are not at all uncommon. And for the purposes of identification the topographer must make all his data, from history, from literature, from living tradition, whencesoever drawn, conform to that scale of ages constructed from the unerring testimony of the sherds. At least his theory must not fly in the face of that testimony, though he will claim, and doubtless must be granted, some leeway when it is a question of silence from history on the one side or of hitherto undiscovered sherds on the other.

Yes, there must be digging if a fairly comprehensive picture is to be gained of the vicissitudes of the average historical site. City below city, they must be laid bare, or, down through their strata shafts must be pierced or cuttings dug, in order that the clay vessels used in each inhabited age may be brought forth, to stand in array as witness to the dates of successive levels.

But digging is a slow and expensive business. Must the topographer *always* wait on such results of the archæologist, with his elaborate set-up of government permit, institutional backing, financial support and co-ordinated staff? The identification of ancient sites would progress slowly indeed if this were the only means of obtaining topographical evidence.

It was the "surface topographer", like Robinson or Guérin, before the days of excavation, who really achieved the bulk of those identifications which still remain unchallenged to-day. Of course, those early travellers had fresh fields to conquer. An open Bible, in the original, in the hand; an adequate acquaintance with Arabic, the present language of the land; a free permit to travel, observe, ask questions, compare and combine: such were the simple means they used to such good effect. It might well be thought that the day for that sort of topographical research was long since gone—that every nook and cranny of the Holy Land had been combed over and over till there was no possible combination of place on the map with name in the Bible that had not been already tested by some traveller.

But it is not so. And again it is this new science of the potsherd which promises to re-open "surface topography".

Scattered over the Holy Land are mounds that represent the ancient inhabited sites, some of them still inhabited, many of them bare or with only a structure or two on top or a poor hamlet at the base. Everywhere, lying on the soil, or just beneath the surface, or sticking out among the roots of grasses, or in a jumble with the stones turned up by the peasant's feeble plough, there are fragments of sherds ready to tell their story, just as faithfully, so far as they go, as those laboriously brought to the surface by the excavator's spade. They tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, even if they do not tell the whole truth, about the site where they are found.

IV

In this way it has been found possible to revive the old habits of the itinerant topographer. A young Finnish scholar, Saarisalo, trained by Dr. Albright in the American school, has obtained some remarkable results in the last few years by simply taking a limited section of country and making a surface study of it with careful collation of the sherds found on or near its tells. His study of the boundary between Issachar and Zebulon threw much light on the bronze age sites south-west of the Sea of Galilee. And in a little corner of Judah where the hills break down towards the Philistine plain, he was able to suggest the solution of a place-name in Micah which has long puzzled the commentators. May it not be that a new period of advance lies just before us in the use of such simple and inexpensive methods by persons trained to gather data hitherto disregarded ?

One side of progress is always negative. Mistakes have to be recognized, acknowledged and given up. Hence it need not be surprising if more, and not fewer, question marks appear on a map of Palestine to-day than on one of 1910. Yet it is safe to say that there has been considerable positive progress too. It might be hard to mention even an approximate figure representing the number of fresh identifications achieved since the war ; but none can challenge the assertion that there is in fact a respectable total of such generally accepted results. A certain measure of national jealousy naturally shows itself in the criticism exercised by these national schools upon one another's theories. But it is probably an advantage that there exists this natural check upon individual eccentricities or confessional prepossessions. It is,

therefore, quite a safe principle for the map-maker to adopt, that whenever any three—usually when even any two—leaders of the great schools in Jerusalem have united in accepting an identification it may pass as established. If, on the other hand, after the lapse of sufficient time—say, two or three years—for a new proposal to be tested and criticized, no authority outside the bounds of that school which fathered the proposal has commented favourably upon it, the map-maker dare not consider it established and incorporate it in his map—certainly not without a full-size question mark.

Unanimity? Yes, there is such a thing, even in this hotly contested field of scholarship. But it often takes a long time to reach it. Who to-day dare say, in view of all the arguments pro and con: here was Mizpah, here Beeroth, here Gibeon?

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