

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Palestine Exploration Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_peq_01.php

SOME FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE "CRAFTSMEN'S GUILD" OF JUDAH.

By R. A. STEWART MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

IN the *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* for October, 1906 (Vol. XVII, pp. 753-763), appears an article entitled, "Die in Palästina ausgegrabenen alt-israelitischen Krugstempel," by Dr. Sellin, in which he courteously but adversely criticizes the theories I have put forward regarding the potter's stamps found in recent excavations.¹ I may ask permission to reply briefly to these comments, meanwhile thanking their author for his kind references to the Paper in which my views were set forth. I shall take the various points in the order in which they occur in Dr. Sellin's Article.

(1) In my Paper I stated that, in order to test my conclusion that the *Shocoh* jar-handles were the latest of the four with royal stamps, I asked the foreman of the excavations which of the four groups had, in his opinion, been most often picked up *on the surface of the ground*. He gave me the answer I had expected, "Shocoh"; but if he had given another answer it would not have affected my position. For the other three royal stamps have also been found on the surface. I merely brought forward this point, not so much as an argument, but as an interesting corroboration. The chance occurrence mentioned by Dr. Sellin, that a casual visitor to Tell ed-Duweir (who, to my personal knowledge, did not spend more than about an hour on the mound, happened to pick up a Ziph and a Hebron handle, but no Shocoh handle, does not disturb the impression which I share with my foreman, that of *all* the jar-handles with royal stamps found on the surface of the ground, wherever picked up, *the majority are those bearing the name of Shocoh*.

(2) "It is notorious," says my critic, "that the chronicler has often mistaken town names, and sometimes tribal names, for personal names. The fact remains that, of the four names of the [royal] stamps, three are already well-known town names, and that Hebron alone appears as a Levitical personal name (Ex. vi, 18; 1 Chron. v, 28)²; but Ziph and Shocoh, never in the Old Testament."

Now I, for one, cannot help feeling that those who assume too freely this "notorious" fact, create gratuitous difficulties for themselves. If certain of the personal names in the pedigrees of Chronicles, which

¹ See *Quarterly Statement* for July and October, 1905.

² vi, 18, English version.

happen to be also well-known names of towns, are to be taken as denoting those towns, how are we to interpret the statements made about the owners of those names? When the Chronicler speaks, for example, of "Mareshah, the father of Hebron," what does he mean? Naturally, that Hebron was founded by a colony from Mareshah. But Hebron is known to be one of the most ancient cities in Palestine: Mareshah, which is identified with Tell Sandahannah by the inscription of Apollophanes, has been shown, by excavation, to be not older than the Hebrew monarchy. Once we begin interpreting these names as town- or tribe-names, there is no special reason why we should stop at any point, and we will inevitably find ourselves landed in a maze of anachronisms and confusions from which the only escape is a return to the simple theory that the genealogies record the physical relationships of human individuals, and that some of these individuals happened to have names identical with names of towns—a possibility already admitted in the case of Hebron.¹ In some cases the formula, "father of Beth-lehem," father of Gedor," and the like, seems to denote that the person so distinguished held a certain definite office in the town mentioned; but that *Völkerwanderungen* are anywhere so much as hinted at, or that it is necessary to assume that the Chronicler has misunderstood his authorities, seem to me assumptions wholly gratuitous. Possibly the *place* names may have had a different vocalization.

Indeed, I would go farther, and say that this whole theory of the personification of communities by the names of individuals seems to me to be overdone to an absurd extent; nowhere so much as in the patriarchal narratives. There is, of course, no merit in endeavouring to minimize the great difficulties in the way of accepting the literal historicity of these stories; but I find it much easier to believe, for example, that a wily Oriental, after meanly defrauding his father and brother, ran away and took refuge with his uncle, on whom he continued to practice his talent for underhandedness, than that two Bedawin tribes, under any circumstances, fused together into one! The one was a matter of daily occurrence in the East at the time of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, and is a matter of daily occurrence in the East in this current year. The other simply *does not happen*, unless, possibly, as a matter of the rarest and most extraordinary exception; even now, although all the diverse gods and totems, and separating influences generally, have given place to the unifying creed of Islam, and though it would obviously be to the interest of the tribes to make common cause against an alien domination.

So it does not appear to me at all proved that the names in Chronicles are other than personal; and I would simply answer the statement that

¹ The alternative theory that some scholars have adopted—that the genealogies are mere arbitrary inventions—is refuted by their form. They would surely have been much more coherent had they been an artificial production.

"Ziph never appears in the Old Testament as a personal name" by pointing to 1 Chron. iv, 16. Taking the text as it stands, without the emendations I have already proposed for it (which do not affect the point at issue), we read, "And the sons of Jehallelel, Ziph and Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel." Observe, the formula is not that already mentioned, "Jehallelel, the father of Ziph," in which case there would have been an ambiguity. Ziph here is one of four names; three of them are (as I suppose I may presume) admitted to be personal; but how then could a man be "father" of three children and one city? Is it that Jehallelel founded the city of Ziph? But could we conceive of anyone writing (say) "The sons of Hiel the Bethelite were Jericho, Abiram, and Segub"?

(3) Dr. Sellin remarks that it is a striking fact that the father's name is never added to those on the *royal* stamps, whereas it always appears on those without the symbol. And again, that the presence of the father's name on the *private* stamps is an indication that the potters were not in servitude; as slaves, actual or emancipated, substituted their master's name for their own family name.

The omission of the father's name can easily be explained by the desire for symmetry in the stamp itself, and by the fact that the words denoting the royal patronage were quite sufficient to distinguish the potters from all namesakes. Nor have I claimed that the family in question was literally in slavery. Shebaniah calls himself "slave of Uzziah," but Shebaniah's seal shows him to have been a person of considerable importance, and we can hardly explain his use of the word עֶבֶר as other than a respectful self-humiliation which did not necessarily imply the actual abasement of his family.

(4) "Three out of the four names on the royal stamps are recognized town names; but of the thirteen names on the private stamps, all are known to be personal names only."—This I admit, but see nothing more in it than a curious accident.

(5) "*Memshath* must also be a town name, because the feminine ending in ת is common in town names, but hardly ever, if at all, found in masculine personal names."—It is, naturally, rare in masculine personal names, but that it does appear sometimes is indicated by such names as תַּנְחֻמֶת (Tanhumeth, 2 Kings xxv, 23; Jer. xl, 8), גִּינַת (Ginath, 1 Kings xvi, 22), עֲלֵמֶת (Alemeth, 1 Chron. vii, 8; viii, 36; ix, 42), גִּנְבַת (Genubath, 1 Kings xi, 20), שִׁמְרַת (Shimrath, 1 Chron. viii, 21). The name of the Phœnician king *Tabnith* is also in point.

And I think I have found one more mention of *Memshath* in the fragments of the book I have called the *Records of the Craftsmen*, which are scattered through the pedigree of Judah.

In chap. iv, 3, 4, is a much-confused passage, which reads in the English version thus: "And these were the sons of the father of Etam; Jezreel and Ishma, and Idbash: and the name of their sister was Hazzelel-poni:

and Penuel the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushab. These are the sons of Hur." It will be remembered that one point which I endeavoured to make, was that Bezalel the artificer was a member of this family, a close relative and contemporary of Memshath; and that in his pedigree, "Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur," the second step was to be omitted as simply a doublet of the third. I do not profess to see my way through all the difficulties of the passage just quoted, but it has occurred to me that it may be, perhaps, not impossible to see the name of Bezalel in the enigmatical "Hazzelel-poni." The "*poni*" termination is easily explained as a dittography of the following *Penuel*; and, premising that the Old Hebrew ו and ח differ only by the slope of the two upper cross-bars, it is not difficult to imagine Bezalel (בצלאל) slipping into Hazzelel (הזלל).

The words preceding "Hazzelel-poni" (וּשֵׁם אַחֲתָם) would then require to be explained; and I venture to suggest that they have been evolved by an over-zealous scribe out of an exemplar, possibly not very legible, which he had before him, and which simply read וּרְבִישׁ וּמִשְׁתָּ וּבְצִלְאֵל.² The passage in question would then read: . . . "Idbash and Memshath and Bezalel and Penuel . . . these are the sons of Hur."

A further guess may, perhaps, be made about this passage, namely that for *Idbash* the original document contained another name nearly similar in outward appearance, namely, *Jabez*. This links the curious detail regarding the prayer of Jabez (iv, 9, 10, at present an entirely disconnected episode), with its setting in the genealogy where it finds a place. If the reader will write out these names (יעבץ, ירביש) in characters resembling those used in the Siloam Tunnel inscription, their similarity will be obvious.

Dr. Sellin has complained of the emendations suggested in my previous Paper, that "the wish is now and then the father to the thought." But surely such a criticism may apply to most emendations of ancient texts! For instance, I admit freely that in dealing with chap. iv, 16-18, I set myself a definite problem, which I wished to solve—to connect the names of Ziph and Hebron. The ease with which the problem solved itself, so to speak, was a great surprise to me; none but the most commonplace forms of corruption being assumed (confusion of similar letters, skipping due to homoceteleuton, and scribal attempts at correction). And I may anticipate a similar criticism which might be passed on the emendation of *Hazzelel-poni* proposed in the last paragraph, by mentioning that it happened to come into my head some little time ago, when I was engaged in something entirely different, and when I had not been giving any special thought to the questions raised by the jar-handles.

¹ In which alphabet the authorities on which the chronicler drew were necessarily written.

² Perhaps through an intermediate corruption, in which the ו of ירביש had been accidentally repeated, thus: ירבישישמשתוב.

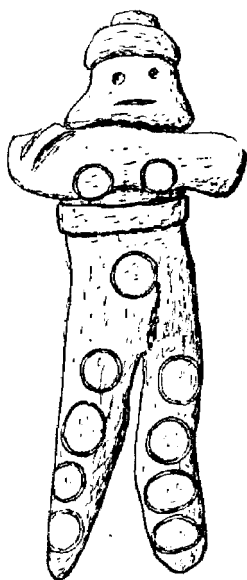
(6) I objected to the "royal pottery" theory on the ground that the clay and technique of the jar-handles from the four supposed towns ought to be different, not identical. Dr. Sellin answers this by supposing that in all royal manufactories the vessels would necessarily be made after one and the same pattern [why?]; and that my assumption, that the Memshath pottery is at least 100 years older than the Shocoh pottery is no less inconsistent with uniformity of type. I venture to think, however, that persistence of one type is not impossible over a yet longer period than 100 years. The large bowls of Mycenaean form, with a frieze pattern, containing birds, spirals, etc., persisted in Palestine with little or no change from about 1450 B.C. to nearly 1000 B.C. And it seems to me more probable that one manufactory in the hands of one family with hereditary traditions, and using one claybed, would be more likely to produce vessels of a uniform type than would manufactories in four different places, even though the latter should be contemporaneous.

Let me, in conclusion, once more thank Dr. Sellin for his kind criticisms, and express the hope that he will see in this answer a spirit of courtesy equal to that which he has shown to me.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

(1.) *Sacrificial Cakes*.—The feast with which the fast of Ramadan is closed is celebrated by the fellahin in various ways, among others the making and eating of cakes such as is illustrated in the sketch sent herewith, made from a specimen with which I have been presented. The interest of this object, in the first place, lies in its being a direct contravention of the well-known Muslim prohibition of representations of the human form; and, in the second, in its being possibly a survival of well-known types of *dea nutrix* figures. Though the turban on the head shows that the artist wished to represent a male figure, this does not prevent its being reminiscent of such an ancestry.

The cake is made of a heavy and extremely indigestible dough, stuffed with raisins. It is 10 inches long.



R. A. S. MACALISTER.