

Publish It Not as Gath

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THERE are many towns in the southern Levant which have enjoyed considerable prominence in both pre- and post-biblical times without ever having been mentioned in the Bible. Present-day Jatt, situated on the eastern edge of the Sharon Plain at the foot of the hill country, once occupied by the House of Joseph (Josh. 17:14–18), is such a site. This city makes its first appearance in recorded history on the geographical roster of Thutmose III, where its position beside the traditional longitudinal traffic artery is indicated by its place in the series (Simons 1937: 112):

66.	<i>ʾa-pu-q-n</i>	* ^ʔ Apōqōn	Aphek	Râs el-ʿAin (Tel Afeq)
67.	<i>śú-kú</i>	*Śókô	Socho	Šuweiket er-Râs
68.	<i>ya-ḥ-ma</i>	*Yaḥma	Yaḥm	Kh. Yemmā (Tel Yaḥam)
69.	<i>ḥ-b-ḏ-n</i>	Unidentified		
70.	<i>k-n-tu</i>	*Gintu	Gath	Jatt (Tel Gat)
71.	<i>ma-k-ta-r</i>	*Magdal	Migdal	Tell edh-Dhurûr (Tel Zeror)

A similar sequence of towns appears in the record of the second (third) military campaign of Amehotep II, but ‘Gath’ is not mentioned, unless it occurred in a broken part of the text.

The question as to which of the several Gaths is to be associated with Jatt in the Sharon Plain seems to be decisively answered by the evidence from the geographical list of Pharaoh Shishak (c. 925 BCE; Simons 1937: 178). His passage from the Jezreel Valley through Wādī ʿÂrâ to the Sharon Plain may have been the reverse of the route taken by his 18th-Dynasty predecessors (Mazar 1957; 1986: 144–148). Be that as it may, at least the sequence in the Shishak list is reversed. The places in question are nos. 32–39, as follows:

32.	<i>ʿá-r-na</i>	* ^ʿ Arôna	Kh. ʿÂrâ (Tel ʿAra)
33.	<i>bí-rú-má</i>	*Birûm	Kh. Bûrîn (Ḥorvat Borim)
34.	<i>ḏa-d-p-t-rú</i>	*Gat-padallu	Jatt (Tel Gat)
35.	<i>ya-ḥ-ma</i>	*Yaḥma	Kh. Yemmā (Tel Yaḥam)
36.	<i>bí-tá-ʿá-lú-má</i>	*Bêt-ʿalûm	Unknown
37.	<i>kú-qa-rú-ya</i>	?	Unknown
38.	<i>śô-kú</i>	*Śókô	Šuweiket er-Râs

Entry no. 34 can hardly represent any place other than the town named ^{URU}*Gi-ti-pa-da-al-la* of the El-Amarna correspondence (EA 250:12). It has been objected repeatedly (most recently Goren *et al.* 2002: 223) that the orthography *ḏa-d* cannot

represent Hebrew/Canaanite Gath, because the standard Egyptian transcription of that vocable is always *k-n-tu*. But this objection does not take into consideration the fact that Shishak orthography is independent of the conventions followed by the scribes/artists of the 18th Dynasty, as discussed by Simons (1937: 101):

It is clear ... that the exterior form of the topographical names of the Shoshenq-list in some aspects notably differs from that of all other lists. In spite of the commonly accepted opinion to the contrary, it would seem that its contents are on the whole not less original.

In this regard, one may note that the name of Megiddo, written *ma-k-tá* in the 18th-Dynasty texts, is written *ma-k-dô* (no. 27) in the Shishak list (Simons 1937: 178).¹ The biblical Sochoh (1 Kings 4:11 [Eng 10]), in the fifteenth-century texts of the 18th Dynasty, is written *śú-kú*, with Egyptian *ś* for Semitic *Sin*, in accordance with the standard correspondences during the Late Bronze Age. On the other hand, the Shishak list has *śô-kú* with a *ś* sign. The strange spelling here of *da-d* (i.e. *djḏ-d*) in a list dating from the time of the Libyan dynasty, over three centuries later than the standard New Kingdom spelling conventions, must reflect linguistic developments, for which outside controls are still lacking (cf. discussion in Rainey 1968: 3–4, n. 14). But entry no. 34 with the second component, *-p-t-rú*, can hardly be anything but the *Padalla* element from the Amarna place name. Incidentally, that component may possibly be *Paṭalla*, with *ṭeṭ* instead of *dalet*.

The determining factor here, however, is the conformity of the *sequence* of names with the same sequence of known Arabic toponyms on the ground. This is how historical geography works. But if, as has been claimed, the town of Jatt was the Gath-Carmel (^{URU}*Gin₈-ki-ir-mi-il^{KI}* EA 288:26; EA 289:18, 19; Goren *et al.* 2002: 232–234), then why isn't it mentioned here in the Shishak list next to *Yaḥma*? As Goren's research has shown, the Taqiye shales, from which the tablets sent to Egypt by Tagi are formed, is in fact known not only in 'the area of Tul-Karem-Metzer', but also 'in the contact zone between the southern Mount Carmel and the Menasheh Hills'. And we are told that it is found in 'several outcrops along the Western Galilee hills'. Consequently, the location of Tagi himself could easily be at Tel el-ʿAmr (Tel Meʿamer), Tell Qeimûn (Tel Yoqneʿam), Khirbet el-Harbaj (Tel Regev), or one of the tells in the Acco Plain. The reference to Gath-Carmel by ʿAbdi-Kheba certainly gives the impression that Gath-Carmel is a town belonging to Tagi, but *not* his home base. So in any case, the clay from Tagi's tablets *has nothing to do with the location of Gath-Carmel*, which undoubtedly has to be the Getta mentioned by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* V, xvii = 75):



There was formerly a town called Crocodilon, and there is still a river of that name; and the cities of Dora and Sycamini, of which only the memory exists.

1 The orthography of the final vowel will be discussed elsewhere.

Then comes Cape Carmel, and on a mountain the town of the same name, formerly called Acbatana. Next are Getta, Geba, and the river Pacida or Belus, which covers its narrow bank with sand of a kind used for making glass.

The name of Geba mentioned here may have survived in Jaba^c, the village on the seaward side of the Carmel, although that place seems too far south. Perhaps Pliny is referring to the Geba^c that guarded the pass between the Jezreel Valley and the Acco Plain, one of the Geba^cs in the Thutmose list (no. 41, or, more likely, no. 114). In any case, the *Getta* in question has to be near the Carmel headland. The Pliny reference cannot be cavalierly dismissed. A location at Jatt is impossible, and in any case, the idea that the name ‘Carmel’ was stretched to include a town on the eastern flank of the Sharon Plain (*pace* Alt 1926: 48, n. 3; Goren *et al.* 2002: 234) is too far-fetched.

As for the clay composition of EA 249 from ^{id}IŠK[UR.UR.SAG(?)] (collated 16 September 1999),² which is presumably the same as EA 250 (collated 8 February 1981, but not examined by Goren), Goren determined that the clay came from the ‘central Jordan Valley’ (Goren *et al.* 2002: 223). However, in a personal conversation, Goren confirmed that one of the Jerusalem letters was also written on the same kind of clay. The other Jerusalem texts are written on clay from the Jerusalem area. But the Jerusalem corpus is a collection of six tablets, all from the same scribe with the same ductus, same linguistic peculiarities and the same idioms. As for the letter on different clay, it could be that the scribe had written a draft on wax in a diphtich which he carried to the Egyptian military base at Beth Shean, where it was copied onto local clay and sent via a caravan, which may have gone to Acco or to the Sharon Plain. This might have been in order to avoid the possibility of ‘Abdi-Kheba’s enemies at Gezer intercepting the letter. In short, the venue of the clay for that Jerusalem letter, as well as for EA 249 (and probably 250) *means absolutely nothing* with regard to the location of the town in question.

The ruler of this Gath-padalla is known by a name written ^dIŠKUR.UR.SAG (EA 250:2, also EA 249:2). Like many rulers of small city states in that period, he — or rather, his scribe — wrote his name by means of Sumerian logograms, which clearly mean ‘The storm god is a warrior’. The only known personal name from the Late Bronze Age with this same connotation is *Ba^clu-mahar, a compound of the West Semitic deity Baal and the West Semitic term for ‘(chariot) warrior’, used as a synonym for the Indo-European *maryannu* (Papyrus Anastas I, 23:1, 2; Rainey 1967: 1; Fischer-Elfert 1986: 197), which means ‘Baal is a warrior’. This name is documented as a Canaanite personal name in Egyptian, *viz.*  *Ba^c-a-al-ma-ha-ar* (Ranke 1935: 93, no. 23), as is the complementary form  *Ma-ha-ar-ba^c-a-al* ‘A warrior is Baal’ (Ranke 1935: I, 163, no. 12). The latter is

2 All collations are by the author.

widely documented for Punic (מַהַרְבַּעַל, Benz 1972: 137–138); it also appears in transcription, Greek Μααρβαλ (Appian, *Annabaike* 42, 43), Μερβαλος (Herodotus 7, 98) and Μεερβαλον (in the Maresha burial cave; Peters and Thiersch 1905: 41, 50) and Latin *Maharbal* (Livy, 21, 12). The tendency for some of these late transcriptions to have an *e* instead of an *a* vowel suggests that the *he* may have exercised some influence, or we may consider the variations between *qatl* and *qitl* nouns in Northwest Semitic. The noun **Mahar* is a well-known loan word in Late Egyptian texts (Hoch 1994: 147; Zorn 1991: 133). It is also well known that Ugaritic *mhr* is a type of soldier (Rainey 1965: 24). At Ugarit there is also a long known PN written ÌR.UR.SAG ‘Servant of the Warrior (god)’ (RS 16.257:II, 41; Nougayrol 1955: 200), which has usually been interpreted as ‘*Abdu-qarrādu* with the Akkadian reflex of UR.SAG. However, no such name as **bdqrd* has ever been found among the alphabetic texts from Ugarit. Now there is a documented PN ‘*bdmhr* in a text from Ras Ibn Hani (Hani 77/22A:14; Bordreuil and Caquot 1979: 308). Thus, it is highly likely that this latter is the real Ugaritic reflex of ÌR.UR.SAG. No-one can deny that the two PNs mean the same thing, ‘Servant of the Warrior (god)’. As for ^ldIŠKUR.UR.SAG, it has been proposed to read it **Ba‘lu-meher* because of the reference to ^ldIŠKUR-me-her in EA 245:44, where that person is said to have been released along with Lab‘ayu, and because there are so many attestations to this Canaanite PN in Egyptian and Greek sources (cf. above).

With regard to the Amarna texts which bear the name of ^ldIŠKUR-mi-ḫi-ir (EA 257:3, collated 13 September 1999, and presumably EA 259:2, collated 13 September 1999) and ^ldIŠKUR-me-ḫir (EA 258:2, collated 13 September 1999), Goren’s geological definition of the clays is far from straightforward (Goren *et al.* 2002: 228–229). He states that the clays of these three texts must come from the Carmel area in the vicinity of biblical Yoqne‘am (Goren *et al.* 2002: 229–230), but also seems to be saying that the clay composition of the three texts is not exactly equivalent. However, he also mentions — without being specific — that similar clay would be available from the Umm el-Faḫm area. Now the town of Jatt is not that far from the block of hills on which Umm el-Faḫm is situated. Therefore, the possibility exists that tablets EA 257–259 were written on clay from the vicinity of Jatt. That they are presumably not on clay from Jatt itself is by no means decisive.

The collation of EA 257 (13 September 1999) revealed that the penultimate line (line 21) does not conform to Knudtzon’s reading (accepted by Moran and Na’aman). The final sign is not TE. Schroeder’s copy truly reflects the wedges as written; they match the DI/DE sign in line 17 but they are entirely different from the real TE sign at the end of line 13. Knudtzon had a tendency to transcribe TE instead of DI as he did in EA 250:28 (collated 8 February 1981; *contra* Na’aman 1999). The subject of the verb in line 20 was probably [URU-*šu*], i.e. ‘his city’, but the ensuing word(s) are most likely not the name of the town.

In summary, the recent examination of the clays from several of the tablets in question has not led to convincing new identifications for Gath-Carmel or Gath-

padalla. There is no doubt, however, that Goren's petrographic investigations will be helpful in understanding the Amarna correspondence and its geographical and cultural setting. We must look forward to the full publication of his results so that the data can be made available to competent Amarna scholars.

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