

the majority of cases, it appears this refers to some duplication of objects—in the case of Jerusalem, to the twin hills upon which it is situated. There are a certain number of compound names conveying information as to the localities, as those compounded with "en" (spring), *e.g.*, En-rogel, En-gedi; with "beer" (well), *e.g.*, Beer-sheba, Beeroth; with "hazar" (village), *e.g.*, Hazar-gaddah; with "ir" (town), *e.g.*, Ir-nahash; with "kir" or "kiryah" (city), *e.g.*, Kir-Moab; and with "gath" (winepress), *e.g.*, Gath-rimmon.

Natural features gave names to other places, as the predominant color in Lebanon (white), or Adummim (red). The size of a town gave rise to the names Rabbah (great), and Zoar (small), while its beauty is indicated in Tirzah and Jotbah. The need of defense is indicated by the frequency of such town-names as Bozrah, which means literally a "fortified place," Geder, a "walled place," and Mizpah, a "watch-tower."

Perhaps the most frequent component is "beth," implying, as a rule, a sacred shrine. This, however, is sometimes omitted, as is shown in the case of Beth-baal-meon, which occurs also as Baal-meon, though sometimes the second component is omitted and the word reduced to Beth-meon. It has been conjectured that the name of Bethlehem is connected with the Babylonian god Lahamu. Especial interest attaches to the place-names Jacob-el and Joseph-el, which occurred in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and are supposed to throw light upon the names of the Patriarchs.

Altogether, there are about fifteen hundred place-names occurring in the Old Testament and Apocrypha, the majority of which still need philological inquiry. Many names relating to places occur in the Old Testament with specialized meanings which are not adequately represented in the English versions, as Shefelah (the maritime plain of Phenicia); so with Negeb (southern Judea).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: G. B. Gray, in Cheyne and Black, *Encyc. Bibl.*; G. Grove, in Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 479-534.

J.

PLACZEK, ABRAHAM: Austrian rabbi; born at Prerau Jan., 1799; died at Boskowitz Dec. 10, 1884. In 1827 he became rabbi in his native city, and from 1832 to 1840 he officiated at Weisskirchen, in Moravia, whence he was called to Boskowitz. In Oct., 1851, he succeeded S. R. Hirsch as acting "Landesrabbiner" of Moravia, and in this office he successfully defended the rights of the Jews, especially during the period of reaction. Placzek was one of the most prominent Talmudists of his time, as well as a successful teacher, and carried on correspondence with eminent rabbis, in whose collections of responsa his name is frequently mentioned.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Die Neuzeit*, 1884, p. 488; G. Deutsch, in *Lwów*, ed. Epstein, Brünn, 1885.

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S. F.

PLACZEK, BARUCH JACOB: Austrian rabbi; born at Weisskirchen, Moravia, Oct. 1, 1835; son and successor of Abraham Placzek. In 1858 he founded a high school at Hamburg, and two years later was called to Brünn. Since 1884 he has been styled "Landesrabbiner" of Moravia, after having

had charge of that rabbinate as assistant to his father from 1861. It is mainly due to him that only men with an academic and theological training are appointed as rabbis in Moravia. Placzek is now (1905) chief rabbi of Brünn, a knight of the Order of Francis Joseph, and curator of the Israelitisch-Theologische Lehranstalt at Vienna; he was likewise founder of the Proseminar, with which a cantors' school is connected, as well as of a number of philanthropic societies. He is an honorary member also of several political societies.

Placzek has published, in part under the pseudonym **Benno Planek**: "Gedichte" ("Im Eruw, Stimmungsbilder," 1867), the novel "Der Takif," and other works, several of which have been translated into English, French, and Hebrew. He is known also as a naturalist (comp. "Kosmos," v., vols. iii. and x.), his scientific works including: "Die Affen," "Wiesel und Katze," "Der Vogelgesang nach Seiner Tendenz und Entwicklung," "Vogelschutz oder Insektenschutz," "Zur Klärung in der Vogelfrage," "Atavismus," and "Kopf und Herz" (an introduction to the study of animal logic).

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PLAGUE.—**Biblical Data:** Word which is used in the English versions of the Bible as a rendering of several Hebrew words, all closely related in meaning. These are: (1) "Maggefeh" (a striking, or smiting): Used in a general way of the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians (Ex. ix. 3-4); of the fatal disease which overtook the spies (Num. xiv. 37), and of that which slew many of the people after the rebellion of Korah (Num. xvi. 48-49), and at Shittim because of idolatrous practices at the shrine of Baal-peor (Num. xxv. 8, 9, 18; Ps. cvi. 29-30); of the tumors which attacked the Philistines on account of the presence of the Ark (I Sam. vi. 4), and of the three days' pestilence which ravaged Israel after David's numbering of the people (II Sam. xxiv. 21, 25); of a disease of the bowels (II Chron. xxi. 14-15), and, prophetically, of a plague which shall consume the flesh of the enemies of Jerusalem, both man and beast (Zech. xiv. 12, 15, 18).

(2) "Negef," from the same root and with the same general meaning as "maggefeh" (a blow, a striking): Used of the plague of Baal-peor (Josh. xxii. 17), of that which followed the rebellion of Korah (Num. xvi. 46-47), and with a general application (Ex. xii. 13, xxx. 12; Num. viii. 19). The corresponding verb is used with the sense of "to plague" in Ex. xxxii. 35, Josh. xxiv. 5, and Ps. lxxxix. 23.

(3) "Nega" (a touch, a stroke): Used of the last of the Egyptian plagues (Ex. xi. 1) and many times of leprosy (Lev. xiii., xiv., and xxiv., and generally in I Kings viii. 37-38 and Ps. xci. 10). The corresponding verb, in addition to a general use in Ps. lxxiii. 5, 14, is used of the plague which afflicted Pharaoh and his house because of the wrong done to Abram (Gen. xii. 17).

(4) "Makkah" (a blow, a wound): Used of the plague which was due to the eating of quails (Num. xi. 33), of the plagues of Egypt (I Sam. iv. 8), and more generally (Lev. xxvi. 21; Deut. xxviii. 59, 61; xxix. 22; Jer. xix. 8, xlix. 17, 1. 13).

(5) "Deber": Rendered "plagues" in Hos. xiii. 14; "murrain" (*i.e.*, cattle-plague) in Ex. ix. 3; and "pestilence" in Ex. v. 3, ix. 15; Num. xiv. 12, and Hab. iii. 5.

E. C.

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—**In Rabbinical Literature:** Commenting on the words of Jethro, "For in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them" (Ex. xviii. 11), the Talmud says: "The Egyptians were cooked in the pot in which they cooked others" (Soṭah 11a), that is, the punishment was made to correspond to their crime, on the "jus talionis" principle. This refers to Pharaoh's edict to the effect that all Jewish infants were to be cast into the Nile, the Egyptians being punished by the plague that turned the water of the Nile to blood. At the same time this plague proved that the Nile was not a deity as the Egyptians believed. Furthermore, the Egyptians suffered to the full extent the evils of the plagues, and did not derive any benefit, however indirect, therefrom. Hence, the frogs died in heaps "and the land stank"; while the "arob," which the Rabbis say was a mixture or drove of wild animals (not "a swarm of flies"), disappeared after the plague ceased, and "there remained not one":

"**Lex Talionis.**" from the hides of the animals, which they might have done had the latter died like the frogs. Two theories have been advanced for the plague of darkness, one of which is that the plague was intended to hide the annihilation of the wicked Israelites who, refusing to leave Egypt, died there.

The period of each plague was seven days (Ex. vii. 25); and twenty-four days intervened between one plague and the next. The ten plagues lasted nearly twelve months ('Eduy. ii. 10; comp. Ex. R. ix. 12). The order and nature of the plagues are described by R. Levi b. Zachariah in the name of R. Berechiah, who says: "God used military tactics against the Egyptians. First, He stopped their water-supply (the water turned to blood). Second, He brought a shouting army (frogs). Third, He shot arrows at them (lice). Fourth, He directed His legions against them (wild animals). Fifth, He caused an epidemic (murrain). Sixth, He poured naphtha on them (blains). Seventh, He hurled at them stones from a catapult (hail). Eighth, He ordered His storming troops (locusts) against them. Ninth, He put them under the torturing stock (darkness). Tenth, He killed all their leaders (first-born)" (Yalk., Ex. 182; Pesik. R. xvii. [ed. Friedmann, 89b]).

Ten other plagues were inflicted on the Egyptians in the Red Sea (Ab. v. 6; Ab. R. N. xxxiii.; comp.

ed. Schechter, 2d version, xxxvi.), in the various ways in which Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned. R. Jose the Galilean says: "The Egyptians in the Red Sea suffered fifty plagues.

In Egypt the 'finger' of God was recognized by the ten plagues; but at the Red Sea God's powerful 'hand' was visible [Ex. xiv. 31, Hebr.], which being multiplied by five fingers makes fifty plagues." R. Eliezer multiplied these by 4, making 200 plagues; and R. Akiha multiplied them by 5, making 250 plagues. Each adduced his multiplier from the

verse: "He cast upon them (1) the fierceness of his anger, (2) wrath, (3) and indignation, (4) and trouble, (5) by sending evil angels among them" (Ps. lxxviii. 49). R. Eliezer does not count "fierceness of his anger" (Mek., Ex. vi.; comp. Ex. R. xxiii. 10; see also the Passover Haggadah).

The order of the plagues in the Psalms differs from that in Exodus. R. Judah indicated the latter order by the mnemonic combination **דָּבַר עֲרֵשׁ בְּאֵרֶךְ**, consisting of the initial letters of the ten plagues as follows: **דָּבַר עֲרֵשׁ בְּאֵרֶךְ** = (1) water turning to blood, (2) frogs, (3) lice, (4) swarms of beasts, (5) murrain, (6) blains, (7) hail, (8) locusts, (9) darkness, (10) slaying of the first-born. The ten plagues are furthermore divided thus: three performed through Moses, three through Aaron, three directly by God, and one, the sixth, through Moses and Aaron together (Ex. vii. 17-x. 21; "Shibbole ha-Leḳet," ed. Buber, p. 97b).

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—**Critical View:** In the majority of cases the plague is regarded and spoken of as a divine visitation, a penalty inflicted upon the individual, family, or nation because of sin. Even the common disease of leprosy is said to be "put in a house" by God (Lev. xiv. 34). The exact nature of the fatal sickness which attacked the people on more than one occasion in the wilderness is a matter of conjecture, but there can be little doubt that it was the bubonic plague which destroyed the Philistines (I Sam. v. 6-12).

The calamities inflicted upon the Egyptians because of Pharaoh's refusal to let the people of Israel go into the wilderness to observe a feast **Plagues of** to YHWH are designated "plagues" **Egypt.** (Ex. ix. 14, xi. 1). The narrative in Exodus tells of ten such visitations. According to the critical analysis of the sources of this narrative it appears that one, probably the earliest, story (J) tells of seven of the ten plagues (*viz.*, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10); another (E), of four, or possibly six (*viz.*, 1, 3 [?], 7, 8, 9, 10 [?]); and the third (P), of six (*viz.*, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10). Psalm lxxviii. recalls seven, and Psalm cv. eight, of these. It is possible that one or more of the plagues may be duplicated in the narrative as it now stands.

The first plague was the defilement of the river. "All the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died" (Ex. vii. 21). The Egyptians regarded the Nile as a god (see Maspero, "Dawn of Civilization," pp. 36-42), and no doubt, to the Hebrew writer, this visitation seemed peculiarly appropriate. The water of the Nile regularly becomes discolored from minute organisms or from decaying vegetable matter and mud carried down by the floods which reach Egypt in June. The color is said to vary from gray-blue to dark red. A cause of this plague might therefore be found in the presence of an unusually large quantity of such impurities, making the water putrid. The second plague was a

Details of multitude of frogs. The third and **Plagues.** fourth consisted of swarms of insect pests, probably stinging flies or gnats. The fifth was a murrain, or cattle-plague, probably anthrax or rinderpest. Pruner ("Krankheiten des



THE TEN PLAGUES, ACCORDING TO A PASSOVER HAGGADAH OF 1695.
(From the Sulzberger collection in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York.)

