

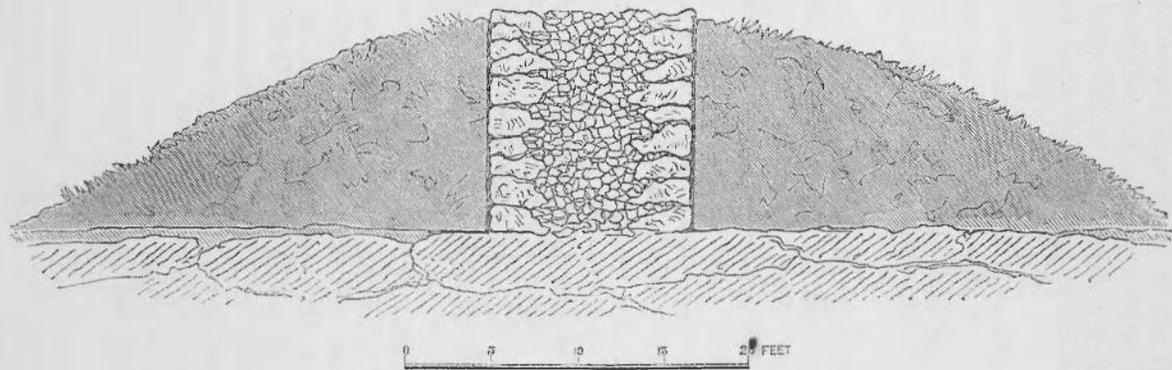
CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE ANCIENT GEOGRAPHY OF
THE TROAD. ON THE SITE OF GERGITHE.

BY FRANK CALVERT.

THE remains on Balli-Dagh near Bournabashi, the site of ancient Troy according to Le Chevalier's hypothesis, have often been described,—the Acropolis, the vestiges of the walls of the city and of the buildings within, and the four tumuli.

An examination of the portion of the town walls still remaining *in situ*, which can be traced for some distance, has persuaded me that they belong to an epoch posterior to that of the "well-built" Homeric Troy, the comparatively small hewn stones in regular layers, of which it is composed, being dissimilar to the more massive masonry that characterises the remains of Tiryns, Larissa, and Mycenæ, true Homeric cities. The walls of Cebrene and Neandreaia can also claim an earlier date than the remains on Balli-Dagh, as will be shown in a future memoir on those ancient cities. Within the precincts of this last-named site are found fragments of black glazed and light-red pottery, and occasionally coins of Sigeum, Novum Ilium, Gergis, and other towns of the Troad; facts which further tend to prove its comparatively modern date.

My special attention has been directed to the tumuli which Le Chevalier supposed to appertain to the Trojan heroes, and which assumption is one of the chief arguments adduced in support of his hypothesis. It must be remembered, however, that this rests on the conjecture only, that the Trojans, having no other defence from the incursions of the Greeks than the walls of their city, deviated from their ancient practice, and buried their dead within the town, outside the walls of the Acropolis. Thus does Le Chevalier account for their situation at the summit of the hill; and in proof of this supposition he quotes Dares the Phrygian—"The body of Paris was carried within the city,



Section of a tumulus on Balli-Dagh in the Troad.

“The Tomb of Priam” of several modern Geographers.

and Priam constructed a tomb for him.”¹ Morrith, following Le Chevalier, says these tombs were, of course, near Troy, for the same reason that those of the Greeks were near the shore.² Francklin, although adopting Le Chevalier’s views generally, here differs from him, for he asks, with reason, why demand leave of the Greeks to bury Hector if within the walls of Troy?³

Being determined, therefore, to ascertain the true character of these mounds, and how far they might correspond with the Homeric description so strikingly illustrated in the tumulus of Hanai-tepeh, I subjected them to a careful examination.

According to the description of Forchhammer, three of these tumuli are situated on the summit of the rocky eminence, a little distance outside the thick wall which separates them from the Acropolis, and by the side of each of which is a deep pit, apparently artificial. The fourth is on the same ridge, more to the west.⁴ He is not altogether correct, however, in stating that their materials are all derived from the natural rock on which they stand, for one of them alone is entirely so—namely, the one correctly so described by Le Chevalier, and which he names “the tomb of Hector.”⁵

The largest of the other mounds (which is yet very inferior in size to Hanai-tepeh), supposed to be the tomb of Priam,⁶ was the one I decided on excavating. It is about thirteen feet in height, and, cropping out on the summit, traces of a quadrangular building were visible. I caused an open shaft to be commenced at the base of the mound, and it was carried along the surface of the natural rock through a mixture of earth and stones, as far as the masonry in the centre which rested upon it. This structure I found to be, as at the top, square in form, and measuring about fourteen feet by twelve. It is formed of large irregular stones, roughly hewn on the outward faces alone, and put together without cement. The space in the interior is filled in with

¹ Voyage de a Troade, par J. B. Le Chevalier. 3rd edit. 1802, vol. ii. p. 290. Ditto, translated by Andrew Dalzel, Edinburgh, p. 122.

² Walpole’s Travels, 2nd edit. 1818, vol. i. p. 578.

³ Remarks and Observations on the Plain of Troy, by Wm. Francklin, 1st

edit, 1800, p. 19.

⁴ Journal of the Geographical Society for 1842, vol. xii. p. 37.

⁵ Voyage de la Troade, par J. B. le Chevalier, vol. ii. p. 289.

⁶ Remarks and Observations on the Plain of Troy, by Wm. Francklin, p. 19; Walpole’s Travels, vol. i. p. 108.

small loose stones (see section, *ante*). A few accidental fragments of the pottery already described were thrown out during the excavations, but nothing was found to indicate that this mound had been used as a place of sepulture. It appears rather to have served as a base to some statue or public monument, or, as Dr. Hunt remarks, as a foundation to some altar or shrine.⁷ It had apparently been hitherto untouched.

I feel very sceptical, likewise, as to the sepulchral nature of the heap of small stones which Le Chevalier denominated the tomb of Hector. This irregular mound is situated near some of the quarries called by Forchhammer "deep pits, apparently artificial," which furnished stone for the use of the ancient town; and the frequency of similar mounds of various dimensions which are to be found all over this hill, and on the one facing it on the opposite side of the river Mendéré, wherever stone has been quarried, leads, I think, to the reasonable inference that they are nothing more than heaps of refuse stone thrown out during the works.

The two remaining tumuli, which are smaller and composed of earth and stones, have not yet been excavated. The isolated one to the south (or, more correctly, westward), Francklin thinks not impossibly to be the tomb of Paris, for Aristotle mentions his being buried *near* Troy⁸—a statement which, it will be noticed, is at variance with that of Dares the Phrygian.

I found the necropolis of this town outside what Le Chevalier terms the "Acropolis walls." The tombs consist of the large kind of "pithoi," or earthen jars, containing unburnt skeletons, which, as I have already shown in the memoir on Hanai-tepeh, must be assigned to a later period than the heroic age to which that tumulus belongs.⁹ Those which I have as yet examined contain fragments of black glazed pottery.

We are informed by Demetrius that after the fall of Troy the stones were removed for the reparation of other cities, and Archœanax of Mitylene is said to have fortified Sigeum therewith.¹ If this statement is to be relied on, some trace

⁷ Remarks and Observations on the Plain of Troy, by Wm. Franklin, p. 19; Walpole's Travels, vol. i. p. 103.

⁸ Remarks and Observations on the

Plain of Troy, by Wm. Franklin, p. 19.

⁹ Journal of the Archæological Institute, vol. xvi. p. 4.

¹ Strabo, xiii. c. i. § 38.

of these materials ought surely to be found on the Sigean promontory, among the several disputed sites of the town.

The whole of the upper part of Balli-Dagh is formed of primitive limestone, which furnishes good building material, as is seen by the existing remains on its summit, and it would undoubtedly have served the same purpose in a pre-existing city. Not so the base of the hill, which is black trachyte of a disintegrating nature. The geological formation of the promontory differs from that of Balli-Dagh, being tertiary oolite; yet we find amongst the various supposed vestiges of Sigeum none but the material produced on the spot.

The consideration of all these facts² has converted me from the belief that the actual remains on Balli-Dagh can be those of ancient Troy, as held by Le Chevalier; still less can I suppose them to be those of its predecessor Dardania, as suggested by Francklin. If the hypothesis be advanced that a city may have existed on this site prior to that of which the vestiges now remain, it is one which for the present, at least, must rest on conjecture alone, being entirely unsupported by evidence.

The question then naturally arises, if this site be not that of ancient Troy, to what other town can it be assigned? I am inclined to place here the ancient Gergis, a city whose geographical position has not been identified. Its name, which is variously given by different writers as Gergithos, Gergithes, Gergithus, and Gergitha,³ is not mentioned by Homer, we may, therefore, infer that it did not exist contemporarily with Troy. It occurs first in Herodotus, who states that the inhabitants were considered to be the remaining descendants of the ancient Teucrians, and that they were subdued, with the Æolians who inhabited the territory of Ilium, by Hymeas, son-in-law to Darius (B.C. 511—485).⁴ As Webb remarks, the opinion of Herodotus is borne out by Athenæus, who relates that the Trojans, conducted by Teucer to Cyprus, returned in great numbers to Æolia, and one of their chiefs persuaded a body of them

² It is hardly necessary again to mention Le Chevalier's imaginative and oft refuted account of Bournabashi and the "hot and cold springs of the Scamander," which lent so plausible a color to his hypothesis. The forty sources have all

one temperature: viz., 63° to 64°, and any assertion to the contrary is absurd.

³ Steph. Byzant., s. v.; Livy, xxxviii. § 39; Strabo, xiii. c. 1. § 70.

⁴ Herodotus, v. § 12.

to colonize their ancient fatherland at the foot of the Trojan Ida, where they built the town first called by them Gergina and afterwards Gergitha.⁵

That Gergis cannot have been situated far from Ilium Novum we may infer from the foregoing passage in Herodotus, and from the statement of Livy that Rhœteum and Gergithus were added to the territory of the Trojans.⁶

In his account of the march of Xerxes from Ilium Novum, Herodotus says that the Persian army had on its left the cities of Rhœteum, Ophrynum, and Dardanus; and on its right the Gergithe Teucrians.⁷ It is on the authority of this passage, that in Smith's Geographical Dictionary these people are placed to the north of the Scamander, their town being only mentioned after the passage of that river. On referring to a map of the Troad, however, it will be perceived that Rhœteum (Palaio Castro) is scarcely at a greater distance from Ilium Novum than Balli-Dagh or Gergis; and that, looking from Ilium Novum on a line parallel to Rhœteum and Ophrynum (near Renkioi), the site on Balli-Dagh is still nearly as much in front on the right hand as is Rhœteum on the left. It is evident that the mention of these towns by Herodotus was not intended to define their exact relative positions, but merely had reference to the movements of the army and the general direction of its march, which appears to have lain up the valley of the Dumbrek-Sou. Xenophon mentions Gergis with Scepsis, as strongly fortified towns where the treasures of the Dardanian princess Mania (appointed to the governorship of Æolis by Pharnabazus) were deposited, when they were seized by Meidias, her son-in-law and murderer. Xenophon further informs us that when Dercyllidas, general of the Lacedæmonian army in Asia Minor, proceeded against Scepsis and Gergis, the men at the latter place who were on the towers, which were very lofty, seeing Meidias, to whom he had granted conditions of alliance, advance with him, they laid aside their weapons and opened the gates, when they entered the city together and went up to the citadel, where they jointly sacrificed to Minerva.⁸

The description of Gergis, as a place of great strength,

⁵ Osservazioni intorno allo stato antico e presente dell' Agro Trojano, dal Signor Filippo Barker Webb, p. 75.

⁶ Livy, xxxviii. § 39. Vide also Strabo,

xiii. c. i. § 70.

⁷ Herodotus, vii. § 3.

⁸ Hellen. III. i. § 15.

with lofty towers and an Acropolis, answers to Balli-Dagh surrounded as it is on three sides by precipices four hundred feet deep; whilst the quantity of fallen hewn stones which are found on the northern side, corresponding with those *in situ*, shows the town walls to have been of considerable dimensions. Gergis was the reputed birthplace of a sybil.⁹ This might appear to have been suggested by the wild and romantic situation of the town, and the existence of some caverns on the face of the precipice which overhangs the river Mendéré. The modern name of Balli-Dagh, which signifies in Turkish, "honey-abounding mountain," is derived from the produce of this cliff. The coins of Gergis bear the type of the prophetess and of a sphynx (with the letters ΓΕΡ), as noticed by Stephanus Byzantinus. It is a circumstance worthy of remark, that these coins are offered for sale for the most part by the peasantry from this neighbourhood, and some have been picked up on Balli-Dagh, as already mentioned. According to Athenæus, the inhabitants were in repute as court flatterers, so that the name Gergitha became synonymous with sycophant.¹

Alexander gave Phocion the choice of one of the four Asiatic cities—Cios, Gergithus, Mylassa, or Elæa; the offer was declined.² Gergis was destroyed by Attalus of Pergamus (B.C. 217—197), who transplanted its inhabitants to a place near the sources of the Caicus, and incorporated its territory with that of Ilium Novum several centuries previous to the time of Strabo, which accounts for the scanty information given by that writer, and also by Pliny, who merely mentions its disappearance.³

It is difficult to determine how far inland the territory of Gergis extended, and what part of the Dardania of Demetrius it included; but Neandrea probably formed its boundary to the south. We may assume the upper part of the plain of Troy, on the further side of the Menderé-Sou, the Scamander of Demetrius, to have appertained to the people of Gergis, as far as the boundaries of Ilium Novum to the north and north-west, affording by its proximity, in like manner with Rhœteum on the other side, a motive for their annexation by the Ileans.

⁹ Stephanus Byzantinus, s. v. Lact. de fals. neb. I. c. 6.

¹ Osservazioni intorno allo stato antico

e presente dell' Agro Trojano, p. 75.

² Plutarch's Lives, xxxv. Phocion.

³ Strabo, xiii. c. i. § 70. Pliny, v. 32.