

Gerar

The Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. James Strong and John McClintock; Haper and Brothers; NY; 1880.

Ge'rar (Hebo *Gerar'*, גֶּרָא, according to Simonis a *lodging-place*, according to others from the Arabic *water-pots*, but more prob. with Fürst, a *region*, as being the center of a distinct Philistine kingdom; Sept. and Josephus [τὰ] Γέραρα), a very ancient town and district on the southernmost borders of Palestine, in the country of the Philistines, and not far from Gaza. It was visited by Abraham after the destruction of Sodom ([Ge 20:1](#)), and by Isaac when there was a dearth in the rest of Canaan ([Ge 26:1](#)). The intercourse, differences, and alliances of the Hebrew fathers with the king and people of Gerar form a very curious and interesting portion of patriarchal history (Thomson, *Land and Book*, 2:350). SEE [ISAAC](#). In Genesis the people are spoken of as Philistines; but their habits appear, in that early stage, more pastoral than they subsequently were. Yet they are even then warlike, since Abimelech had "a captain of the host," who appears from his fixed title, "Phichol," like that of the king, "Abimelech," to be a permanent officer (comp. [Ge 21:32](#); [Ge 26:26](#); and Psalm 34, title). SEE [ABIMELECH](#). The local description, 21:1, "between Kadesh and Shun," is probably meant to indicate the limits within which these pastoral Philistines, whose chief seat was then Gerar, ranged, although it would by no means follow that their territory embraced all the interval between those cities. It must have trench'd on the "south" or "south country" of

later Palestine. From a comparison of 21:32 with 26:23, 26, Beersheba would seem to be just on the verge of this territory; and perhaps to be its limit towards the N.E. For its southern boundary, though very uncertain, none is more probable than the wadys El-Arish ("River of Egypt") and El-'Ain; south of which the neighboring "wilderness of Paran" (20:15; 21:22, 34) may probably be reckoned to begin. Isaac was most probably born in Gerar. The great crops which he subsequently raised attest the fertility of the soil, which, lying in the maritime plain, still contains some of the best ground in Palestine (21:2; 26:12). It was still an important place in later times, as we may gather from 1Ch 14:13-14. According to the ancient accounts, Gerar lay in or near a valley ("the valley of Gerar," Ge 26:17; comp. 1Sa 15:5), which appears to be no other than the great wady *Sheriah* (or one of the branches of it) that comes down from Beersheba; besides, we know that it was in the land of thee Philistines, and that it was not far from Beersheba when Isaac resided there (Ge 26:1,20,23; Ge 26-33; comp. 20:1). The name continued to exist (perhaps as a matter of tradition) for several centuries after the Christian neia. Eusebius and Jerome (Onomast. s.v. Gerar) place it twenty-five Roman miles southward from Eleuteropolis; and Sozomen (*Hist. Eccles.* 6:32; 9:17) reports that a large and celebrated monastery stood there, near a winter torrent. The abbot Silsanus resided there towards the end of the 4th century, and the name of Marcion, bishop of Gerar, appears among the signatures of the Council of Chalceadon in A.D. 451. In the Talmudical writings the district is termed Gerarki (Schwartz, *Palestine*, page 109). The name seems to have been afterwards lost, and Dr. Robinson (*Researches*, 1:279; 2:383) was unable to discover any traces of it is the locality; but he unnecessarily disparages the claims of wady El- Jerur, which runs into the wady El-Arish at Jebel el-Helal, to be regarded

as a southern-most trace of the ancient kingdom (*Jour. Sac. Lit.* July 1860, pages 309-319). It is possible that the wells mentioned by him as lying in the shallow wady El-Kusaimeh, in the same neighborhood (1:280), may represent those digged by Abraham and reopened by Isaac ([Ge 26:18-22](#)). J. Rowlands, in traveling froes Gaza to Khulassah, came after 3 hours' march to a broad, deep wady, *Jurf el-Gerar*, a little below its junction with a branch-valley from wadey Sheriah. Near this junction are ruins called *Khurbet el-Gearar* (Williams, *Holy City*, 1845, App. pages 488- 492), which he identifies with Gerar. This account Van de Velde heard confirmed by the people of Gaza, with a slightb modification (*Narrative*, 2:183). There are no ruins yet standing, but scattered stones which appear to have been once used in buildings; and in the absence of old wells, it would seem as if the ancient city bad been supplied frorc some spring. Stewart's suggestion of the ruins of *El-Abdeh* (*Tent and Khan*, page 207) is out of the question (Van de Velde, *Memoir*, page 314). In [1Ch 4:39](#), the Sept. substitutes Gerar (Γέραρα) for Gedor (q.v.).