

spot are strong. A good road following the Judæan watershed and leading south to Ziph exists on the side of the hill. A large ancient ruin with caves and cisterns stands on the brink of the steep slope, and looks down upon the white marl ridges of the Jeshimon, barren and rugged, patched with buff and brown, dotted with low black tents, but destitute of any single shrub or tree. On the north the twin peaks of Jebel el Shukuf above Ain Jidy, and beyond, all separated by the gleaming thread of sea, scarce seen in its great chasm; below are the long ridges of Moab, the iron precipices, the thousand watercourses, the great plateau of Kerak, the black volcanic gorge of Callirhoe, all lying in deep shadows under the morning sun, or brightened with a crimson flush at sunset. The scene is as wild and striking as could be desired for the drama there enacted.

Yet further the meaning of the "trench" may perhaps be explained. On the south side the road passes by a flat plot of ground, lying low and having steep cliffs on either side; it forms the head of a large wady, and has two wells of living water close to the roadside. It was no doubt here, sheltered from view and near to water, according to the modern Arab fashion of hiding an encampment, that Saul would pitch his tents. High up on either of the hill tops David stood to call to the host, and no doubt the special expression that he passed over to the other side intimates his crossing the valley and ascending the opposite hill.

Here we may close the record; the town of Ziklag is not yet known to which David retired, and where he was at the time of the battle of Gilboa. Its position, north of the Brook of Besor, in the territory of Gath, three days' hard journey from Jezreel, will, however, I hope, enable us to fix it next spring, when surveying the southern Maritime Plain.

The extremely definite character of the topographical notices was insisted upon by Mr. Grove in the "Bible Dictionary," and first drew my attention to the subject. "It is very much to be desired," he says (See Maon, "Bible Dictionary"), that some traveller should take the trouble to see how the actual locality of M'ain agrees with the minute indications of the narrative." I hope that the preceding pages, the result of careful comparison of the various passages, and a detailed inspection of the ground, may be considered satisfactory in settling the disputed points and in giving clearness and consistency to the history of the nomadic life of David and his men.

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## THE ROYAL CANAANITE AND LEVITICAL CITY OF DEBIR.

BY LIEUTENANT CONDER, R.E.

EL DHOHERIYEH, *November 7, 1874.*

THE systematic arrangement of the topographical lists of the Book of Joshua is a subject which has as yet been little studied, and very

often it is altogether denied. The present survey, by placing known sites in their proper relative positions, by confirming identifications already proposed, and yet more by the addition of a larger number of new identifications than have been made since the time of Robinson, will be most invaluable in the elucidation of these difficult questions.

“So little,” says Mr. Grove (article “Zior,” “Bib. Dict.”), “is known of the principle on which the groups of towns are collected in these lists, that it is impossible to speak positively” as to many probable identifications.

A careful inspection of the various groups in the lot of Judah has led me to a discovery which, as I have never met with it in any standard work, I am led to consider new. It is one of immense interest, as showing that the topographical system is far more perfect than would at first be imagined. It may be briefly stated thus:—

*The list given in the twelfth chapter of Joshua, and preceding all other topographical lists, forms the key to the whole.*

Nothing could be simpler than the system depending on this definition. The towns here referred to, thirty-one in number, were royal cities of the Canaanites. They reappear in the succeeding lists, and it will be found that, with one exception easily explained, every separate group of towns contains a royal city. The larger groups occurring in the plains and lowlands contain naturally more than one, but the country is at once divided by these royal cities into districts, which will, on inspection, be found to have natural boundaries, and to be to a certain extent preserved to the present day.

Without enlarging further on this subject, which I propose to follow out later on, it will become evident that of all sites in the country these royal cities are the most valuable as indicating the locality of other towns connected with them.

Of the thirty-one no fewer than twenty-six were known long ago. M. Ganneau added one to the list in the discovery of Gezer, and only four remain to be fixed, Debir in the south, and Lasharon in the north of Palestine, with Libnah and Makedah in the Philistine plain.

The site to which our attention has been specially directed since leaving Jerusalem is that of Debir, which has never as yet been placed in a satisfactory manner. The name Dewir Ban, which some have supposed to be the modern representative of the site, exists within a couple of miles of Hebron, south, and not as placed on Murray's new map, north of the valley containing Ain Unkúr, which, under the incorrect form of Nunkúr, Dr. Rosen mentions as a probable site for the Upper and Lower Springs.

There is, however, a fatal objection to this identification. Dewir Ban is the name, not of an ancient site, but merely of a hill-top among the vineyards close to Hebron.

To say nothing of its being far out of the district where Debir should be sought, it is not natural to suppose that this capital city should have existed so close to Hebron, especially as it does not occur in the list of the Hebron group.

A second identification is proposed by Vandevelde at Khirbet Dilbeh; it is, however, very evident from his remarks that he never visited the spot. The city of Debir stood, as will be seen, in a *dry land*, and it is therefore directly contradictory to the plain statement in Joshua to place it at the only spot in the country where fine springs occur. In addition to which Khirbet Dilbeh, which lies close to the spring of that name, is an unimportant site, and not apparently of any great antiquity.

"The subject, and indeed the whole topography of this district, requires further consideration," is Mr. Grove's comment on the attempts as yet made to fix the position of Debir; and indeed there are few parts of Palestine so little known and so incorrectly mapped. It is evident that most of the sites have been fixed by inquiries made in passing along the main lines of communication, and it is often quite plain that where two ruins have been seen almost in line, the traveller pointed to the one generally the farthest, whilst the native gave the name of the nearer.

Indeed, the proper district of Debir has never been correctly understood, in consequence of a very fatal mistake made in the first instance by Dr. Robinson.

Fixing correctly the position of Socoh, or Shueikeh, he has placed Anab (the modern 'Anáb) immediately east of it. I was considerably surprised at not being able to find this important name in our list from Yutta camp, but our guides explained with one accord that this ruin was much farther west out of their country, and west of El Dhoheriyeh, and such proved to be the case, according to the testimony of the inhabitants of the latter place.

The site so named by Dr. Robinson is really called Deir el Shems, a name which has been placed farther north on the maps.

This error has been followed by other travellers, who have no doubt merely copied from Robinson's map. It is even to be found in Professor Palmer's route sketch, although he spent a night at El Dhoheriyeh; but there is not a shadow of doubt that the name was either wrongly given to or wrongly understood by Robinson, and that the true site of Anáb is a ruin containing remains of a church and a modern tower existing on a ridge immediately west of El Dhoheriyeh. This fatal error has caused the site to be sought in the wrong direction, and its correction leads naturally to the identification. The group of cities of which Debir was the capital was eleven in number, as follows:

- |                          |     |     |     |               |     |                        |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|-----|------------------------|
| 1. Shazmir               |     |     |     |               |     |                        |
| 2. Jattir                | ... | ... | ... | 'Attir        | ... | .. Robinson.           |
| 3. Socoh                 | ... | ... | ... | Shueikoh      | ... | ... Robinson.          |
| 4. Dannah                | ... | ... | ... | Domeh         | ... | ... C. R. Conder.      |
| 5. Kirjath Sepher        |     |     |     |               |     |                        |
| Kirjath Sannah, or Debir | ... | ... | ... | El Dhoheriyeh | ... | C. R. Conder.          |
| 6. Anab                  | ... | ... | ... | 'Anáb         | ... | ... Robinson, C. R. C. |
| 7. Eshtemoa              | ... | ... | ... | Semú'a        | ... | ... Robinson.          |

- |                     |                |          |
|---------------------|----------------|----------|
| 8. Anun ... ..      | El Dilbeh...   | C. R. C. |
| 9. Goshen ... ..    | Lekiyeh ... .. | C. R. C. |
| 10. Holon, or Hilen |                |          |
| 11. Giloh           |                |          |

It will be seen that a sufficient number are known to allow of the district being pretty evident. It is an area of some hundred square mile of low hill country, including part of the great valley which, starting at Hebron, flows to Beersheba, and thence to the Mediterranean. 'Attir and Semû'a lie on the eastern limit, beyond the Wady Khalil. The northern boundary is given by Domeh, lying near the foot of a higher range which runs east and west, on which stands Dura. This higher district belongs to the Hebron capital. On the south the desert of Beersheba forms the natural boundary of the district, and on the west the hills sink suddenly into the Shephalah, in which stand the sites of Umm el Rumamin and Khuweilfeh, identified with towns belonging to Simeon and now inhabited only by Arab tribes. The district of Debir is indeed just the limit of the settled population and of cultivation; it is remarkable for its broad rolling downs, with a fruitful soil. The inhabitants of its two modern villages, El Dhoheriyeh and Semû'a, are very rich, especially in horses, flocks, herds, and cattle. It is pre-eminently a *dry land*, as not a single spring is to be found in it; but it is not less remarkable that in the very corner of the land the finest collection of springs in Southern Palestine is to be found, which, though not properly belonging to it, seem yet included in its territory. The explanation of this irregularity in the following of the natural boundaries is found very fully in the Book of Joshua.

We may now turn to the accounts of the capital contained in the Old Testament.

Debir, or Debr, for it occurs with and without the *yeh*, is first mentioned in the account of Joshua's Philistine campaign. From Eglon and Lachish the conqueror advanced up the main pass of Wady Duweimeh to the mountains of Hebron, and having seized this important town he attacked Debir. "And Joshua returned (or turned back), and all Israel with him, to Debir; and fought against it: and he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword . . . he left none remaining" (Josh. x. 38—40).

The expression here used is peculiar, and not found in any other verse. It shows that Debir was not in the direct line of his march, but required a special *détour*. This would place it south of Hebron most probably, for being the last of his conquests the next march would by rights have been northwards, from Hebron to Gilgal.

It does not, however, appear that Debir was deserted by its original inhabitants, for we find soon after that in the time of Caleb it stood another siege, when Othniel, his nephew, took it and received it as a dowry with the hand of Achsah, his cousin.

This again points to its being near Hebron, the possession of Caleb.

There is a peculiar expression in the Book of Samuel where the Egyptian slave relates how the Amalekites had attacked the coast belonging to Judah and "the south of Caleb" (1 Sam. xxx. 14). It would appear therefore that the possession of Caleb extended to the South land, or Negeb. The most important passage, however, immediately follows this second conquest, and relates how Achsah begs of her father an additional "field," or territory.

The wording of the account is the same in the two records, Joshua xv. 19 and Judges i. 15. "Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs."

The following notes for the elucidation of the passage were kindly sent me by Dr. Chaplin, and are of great use in the correction of the rather obscure translation:—

(1) *A south land*, in the Hebrew Erets-han-negeb, *an arid land*. (This, I may remark, is the *avχuos* of the Septuagint, which I have mentioned in the paper on the wood of Ziph.) *Negeb* is from a Semitic root, signifying *to be dry*. The Vulgate and French, Italian, and Spanish versions have "a dry land." Jewish commentators have the following:—"A portion of territory dry and without springs of water. Negeb signifies dry." The Targum of Jonathan Ben Uziel has *Daruma*, a south (a name, I may add, used in the "Onomasticon" to specify the territory of which we are now speaking). The southern part of Palestine seems to have been called Negeb, because it was dry.

To this note I may add that the expression Negeb would properly refer to all that district of hills of soft, porous, chalky limestone extending from the desert on the east (the Jeshimon) to 'Anáb and the plain on the west, and from Dilbeh and Yutta on the north to Beersheba on the south.

The water supply in this district is derived from the rain alone, and not a single spring of any importance occurs.

(2) *Springs of water*.—In the Hebrew, *Gulloth maim* (*Pools of water*). The Targum of Jonathan Ben Uziel has *Beth Shakah d'Maiah*—*locus irrigationis aquarum*—a well-watered place, as in Gen. xiii. 10. Rashi says *Gulloth maim* is "*beth-hab-baal*," a piece of land that does not require irrigation. Other Jewish commentators say it was a land with fountains and springs of water.

(3) *Upper Springs and Lower Springs*—*Gulloth, 'ileth and Gulloth takhteth*.

(4) The Vulgate rendering of the passage is, "Quia terram arenam dedisti mihi da et irreguam aquis. Dedit ergo ei Caleb irreguam superiam et irreguam inferiam."

In this, as in many other cases, the Vulgate seizes the full force of the passage, which is obscured by the reading "south land," although, strictly speaking, the south land and dry land were synonymous terms. The passage may be better paraphrased thus, "Thou hast given me a

dry district; give me also a stream." Here, then, we may sum up all materials which come to hand for the identification of Debir.

1st. Debir is to be found in the south-west of Hebron, and between the towns of Socoh and 'Anáb, near Dannah, that being its position on the list.

2nd. It must itself be placed in a district destitute of springs, but at some little distance, on the borders of its territories, a well-watered district with springs at the head of and lower down in a valley must occur.

With regard to the name Debir, which is a form unlikely to endure in Arabic without change, it is said to signify *remote*, and occurs in one passage as Debir (1 Chron. vi. 5, 8), in another as Debr (Josh. x. 38), and in a third Deberah, or Debrah (Josh. xv. 49). Under this name it does not appear to have been known to Jerome. In the earlier passage (Josh. xv. 49) its original name is given as Kirjath Sannah, "the city of the Palm." In another it is said to have been first called Kirjath Sepher (Judges i. 11), "the city of books," a title which has given rise to many conjectures as to the civilisation of the Canaanites, some having looked upon Debir as a sort of collegiate town or Amalekite university.

The name, however, is not in this case so safe a guide as the two indications before noticed, to which must be added that so important a site must have left traces which are unmistakable. Rock excavation is the surest indication of antiquity in Palestine. The Troglodytes, who, as Josephus informs us, descended from Abraham and Keturah, must at one time have existed throughout the country, or imparted their habits to other tribes. The ancient Canaanites seem to have lived principally in caves, and no nation subsequently has done as much in the country in the excavation of caves, cisterns, and tombs out of the living rock as was done by the early Jews or their Canaanite predecessors.

But beyond these excavations evidence must also be derived from the roads. A capital such as Debir must have communicated with its dependent towns on every side, and these ancient roads, marked with rude boundary blocks of rock, are easily traceable in the south of Palestine.

There is, I think we may now say with certainty, only one site which fulfils all these requisites. The modern village of El Dhoheriyeh. This site has hitherto been much neglected. Professor Palmer slept there one night in 1870, and was the first to recognise its antiquity. Murray asserts that "there is nothing of interest to detain the pilgrim," but he finds it "a most interesting place. The dwellings consist principally of caves in the natural rock, some of them with rude arches carved over doorways, and all of them of the greatest antiquity. . . . The village is evidently an ancient site, and in the centre is a building of massive masonry containing three arched apartments."

Professor Palmer, misled by Robinson's mistake as to 'Anáb, does

not, however, propose any identification. With regard to the caves with arched entrances their antiquity is doubtful, for from their constant connection with Christian ruins, as well as from the fact that no arches occur in the really ancient ruins of the country, I have been led to consider them Christian. The central building, called El Hosn by the villagers, is also probably of the same date. That El Dhoheriyeh is a really ancient site is, however, indubitable.

Hewn cisterns with well-worn mouths and ancient rock-cut tombs are seen on every side, and it forms the central point whence many ancient roads diverge. To Attir and Zanúta on the south-east, to Shuweikeh and Semú'a on the east, to 'Anáb and Ghuzzeh on the west, to Beersheba on the south, to Domeh, Dura, and Hebron on the north; to all of these good roads principally of antiquity lead. A careful examination of the country shows further that El Dhoheriyeh is the only ancient site in the neighbourhood which, as I have already shown, is very restricted by the terms of the various indications.

It is also very probable, though much stress cannot be laid on this point, that Dhoheriyeh is a corruption of the ancient name of Deberah, and the more so as the name has a distinct meaning in Arabic, being derived from Dhohr or Zohr, a back, and thus in the adjective form signifying the *village on the ridge*, for it stands, not as shown in previous maps half way up a slope, but on the very top of the long flat ridge which runs south from the higher hills of Dúra.

Debir was one of the Levitical cities, we therefore carefully searched for inscriptions or other marks.

I had occasion, in one of my last reports, to explain how we found the boundary of 3,000 cubits at Semú'a marked by a large stone with a name still forming the boundary of the lands belonging to the village. This discovery is all the more interesting if, as has been suggested, the 3,000 cubits marks the distance of a Sabbath day's journey.

In the case of El Dhoheriyeh Corporal Brophy discovered on the main road leading south, and exactly at the distance in question, taking the sixteen-inch cubit, a stone similar to the Hajr el Sakhain but larger: it had not, however, a name; there was also another stone of the same character (a large rough block similar to some of the English primeval monuments) to the west on the line, and at the south-east corner and close to the south-west corner were large wells.

On the north side Sergeant Black observed wells and wine-presses placed on the boundary line, if drawn with the sides not the diagonals of the square facing the cardinal points, which still seems to me the more natural explanation of the Biblical account.

The second part of the question remains, however, still to be discussed. To place Debir at a spring is, as has been seen, evidently a mistake, but we are still bound to find in its neighbourhood the *Upper and Lower Springs* of the Book of Judges.

As has been shown, no ordinary spring will satisfy this account; a copious supply of water is to be inferred, and two springs or groups of

springs. The account is, however, fully satisfied by the Seil El Dilbeh, a secluded valley to the west of Yutta, and only six and a half miles north of El Dhoheriyeh.

On visiting this beautiful spot in the very end of October I found a considerable brook running in the midst and extending through the small gardens a distance of four or five miles. Such a supply of water is indeed a phenomenon in Palestine, and yet more extraordinary in the Negeb where no others occur. There are also, as required, both upper and lower springs, and these so copious that the various translations, pools of water, fountains for irrigation, or well watered places, are all fully accounted for.

There are in all fourteen springs divided into three groups.

The first includes 'Ain El Fureidis, 'Ain abu Kheit, and 'Ain Shkhakh abu Thor, and one other, situate near one another high up on the slopes of the hills south of Dúra.

From thence the Seil or brook runs east to the second group, including 'Ain el Májúr, 'Ain el Dilbeh, 'Ain el Hejery, and three smaller springs situate in the bottom of the valley some 100 yards apart. The Seil then gradually turns south and passes the third group a little lower down, consisting of 'Ain el Fowár and three smaller. The total amounts, therefore, to fourteen. The site thus discovered exists, as would be expected, not exactly in the natural territory of Debir, but on its extreme north-east limit; so that it could, at the request of Achshah, be added to the Negeb country which she already possessed.

I would propose also to place near to it the town of Anim, which is written with the *Ain*, and is no doubt derived from '*Ainain*, the two springs. The *Yeh* does not appear in the present Hebrew text, but may very probably have been lost, being a small letter, for it is represented in the Septuagint version of *Aidau*. This town was supposed, by Wilson, the traveller, to be found at Ghuwein, but this site has been with more probability identified with the 'Ain of Simeon.

Khirket el Dilbeh is, as I have before said, not an important ruin, but on the hill bounded north and east by the Seil are two fine tombs, and south of this, at Khirket el Jif, there is an ancient site which may possibly be the exact spot where Anim is to be placed.

We have seen, therefore, that El Dhoheriyeh is the only ancient site between Socoh (Shuweikeh) and Anab ('Anáb, as now correctly placed). The position of Dannah, or Deneh, has not been hitherto proposed. I have supposed it to be the modern Domeh, which is immediately north of El Dhoheriyeh, at a distance of about two miles. Domeh has hitherto been identified with Dumah, under the impression that it was north of Khirket Dilbeh. In its true position it cannot, however, be so identified, for Dumah belongs to the group immediately round Hebron, amongst which Beth-Tappuah (Terffüh), Arab (Khirket el 'Arabiyyeh), and Zior (S'afr), are enumerated, a district in the high hills north of the Negeb. In order, however to make the identification more certain, I may remark that on the western boundary of this higher district stands the



village of *Duweimeh*, which may be identified with far greater propriety with *Dumah*, thus leaving *Domeh* for the town of *Deneh*, in the exact position which it holds in the list.

I may point to this as a fair example of the results of the Survey. Nothing but minute examination would have led to the discovery of the Upper and Lower Springs, to the correction of Robinson's error as to *Anab*, or to the proper placing of *Domeh*, which destroys the very plausible identification as yet attached to its supposed position.

It will be remarked also that from this instance of the exactness of the lists, they seem, as in the case of *Zanoah* and of *Maarath*, to give, by the order in which the towns occur, correct indications of relative position.

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieut. R.E.

### GREEK INSCRIPTION FOUND IN THE SAKHRA OF JERUSALEM.

THE following notes on the inscription mentioned by Lieut. Conder (p. 6), appeared in the *Academy* for November 7, 1874. They were, together with the passage on the word *Αλκιος* and that on forgeries in Jerusalem, taken from a letter by M. Ganneau to the Secretary of the Fund. The notes are here reproduced by permission of the Editor of the *Academy* :—

A Greek inscription has recently been discovered on the buried side of one of the flags used in the flooring of the Sakhra at Jerusalem. Copies of it have been sent to the office of the Palestine Exploration Fund, both by M. Clermont-Ganneau and by Lieut. Conder. The following is the text, with the short commentary furnished by M. Ganneau :—

ΚΩΜΕΡΚΙΑΡΙΟΣ ΑΝΕΨΙΟΣΑΡΕΟΒΙ . .  
 ΩΝΤΣ . . . ΩΝ ΕΝΘΑ ΚΑΤΑ ΚΙΤΕ . . ΟΑ . .  
 . . ΣΚΩΝΕΤΕΤΕ ΤΗΕΩΑΤΤΟΤ Α  
 Η  
 ΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΟΣΙΑΣ ΜΝΗΜΗΣ ΜΔΕΚΕΜΒ . .  
 + ΙΝΔ Α ΕΤΟΤΣ ΠΑ+  
 +

Commerciarius, cousin of Arcob (*indos*?) . . of the . . lies here, the . . Pray for him . . . of holy memory . . in the month of December . . + Indiction I. year 104. + .

About half of the inscription, that on the left, appears to be wanting. *Commerciarius* is put for *καμμερκιάριος*, an official title under the Byzantine Empire; the proper name *Areobindos* is nearly certain, and is that of a historic family which played an important part under *Anastasius* and *Justinian*: several persons of this name were invested with important functions, and that of our inscription would be one of them,