ON THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SCAPE-GOAT.

There is no ceremony of the law of Moses which possesses greater interest to scholars than that on the day of Atonement when the "scape-goat" (as the Authorised Version has rendered it) was sent out into the wilderness.

It is not my object to enter into the question of the true meaning of the term "the goat for Azazel," which represents the Hebrew text (Levit. xvi. 8), or to enquire whether this word is properly to be connected with the demon of that name who was supposed to inhabit deserted and ruined places, and to have been a fallen angel teaching many arts to mankind. (Book of Enoch, chap. viii.) The name is still applied (according to Gesenius) by some Arab tribes to an evil genius,
but it is sufficient here to take the words of Josephus that the goat was "sent out of their coasts to the desert for an expiation and a supplication for the sins of the whole multitude" (Antiq. iii. 10. 3).

According to the original law the scape-goat was set free and went away into the wilderness, but we learn from the Talmud that on one occasion a scape-goat found its way back to Jerusalem, and this was considered so ominous that an innovation was made, and the goat was effectually prevented from taking so unusual a course by being precipitated from the top of a lofty mountain.

The tract Yoma of the Mishna, devoted to the ceremonies of the great Day of Atonement, gives a full account of the ceremony as performed at the later period. The high priest stood in the temple court with the two goats "for Jehovah" and "for Azazel" before him. To the horns of the latter he bound a tongue-shaped scarlet cloth to distinguish it, and the lots were then cast, it being considered of good omen if the lot for Jehovah fell in the right hand.

The reason of the red cloth was, according to Maimonides, to distinguish the goat, but the doctors of the Gemara, ever anxious to put an unnatural meaning to every act, quoted the passage, "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow" (Isaiah 1. 18), and asserted that the atonement was not acceptable to God unless the scarlet cloth turned white, which it ceased to do forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

The goat, when chosen, was sent out with a special messenger to a place called Tzook, and passed on the road another place called Beth Hidoodoo. The passage in the Mishna runs as follows:—

Yoma, chap. vi.:

(4) "And the nobles of Jerusalem went with him to the first tabernacle, for there were ten tabernacles between Jerusalem and Tzook, and ninety stadia (Ris), and seven and an half stadia were one mile" (Mil).

(5) "At every tabernacle they said to him, Behold food, behold waters (Mim), and they went with him from one tabernacle to the next, except at the last, for they did not go with him to Tzook, but stood afar off and watched what he did.

(6) "What did he do? He divided the scarlet tongue and placed half upon the rock and tied half between the horns of it (the goat), and he pushed it (the goat) backwards, and it rolled and fell down, and or ever it was half down the mountain every bone of it was broken. And he went and sat under the last tabernacle till the evening. . . .

(8) "And they said to the high priest, 'The goat has reached the desert.' And how did they know that he had reached the desert? They made watch-towers on the road, and waved cloths, and knew that the goat had reached the desert. Rabbi Jehuda said, 'Was not this the great sign; from Jerusalem to the entrance of the desert (Beth Hidoodoo) was three miles? They went one mile and returned, and counted for one mile, and they knew that the goat had reached the desert.' The foreign legend. Rabbi Ismail said, Was not this the sign, they tied the red
tongue to the gates of the temple, and when the goat had reached the
desert it became white, since it is said, 'Though your sins be as scarlet
they shall be white as snow'?

We may here examine the three topographical terms here used.

Tzook comes from a root meaning "narrow," and equivalent, according
to Gesenius, to the Arabic دك دك دك دك. According to Bartenora
the term applies to any prominent and lofty mountain, but it is generally
taken to be a proper name, and in this view Maimonides, commenting
on the passage, agrees.* A precipitous mountain, probably a narrow
ridge but lofty, and easily seen from a distance, with a road leading to
it from Jerusalem, is required evidently at a distance of twelve Jewish
miles from the capital, somewhere in the direction of the eastern desert.

Beth Hidoodoo.—The word stands Beth Horon in the Jerusalem Talmud,
which appears to be a corruption. In the Targum of Jonathan on Lev.
xxvi. the same no doubt is intended by Beth Hidoori, spelt with the He.
Buxtorf translates the word, as does Surenhusius, "the entrance to the
desert." The root has, however, the meaning "to be sharp," and the
word Hidoodoom means "wrinkles." This term would apply well to the
knife-like ridges of the desert east of Jerusalem.

The circumstances of the case may not perhaps allow of very certain
identification, as it is doubtful whether either word is to be taken as a
proper name; but there are indications which may perhaps point to the
exact spot.

The ancient road from Jerusalem to the desert, and to the curious ruin
of Mird (Mons Mardes), is now traced throughout. At the distance of
some six English miles from Jerusalem it reaches a long, narrow ridge,
running north and south, having extremely steep sides and deep gorges
running northwards, separated on the west by the Wady of ed Dekakin,
and on the east overlooking the Bukei'a, or table-land above the Dead
Sea. This ridge culminates in the high point called el Muntar, about
half a mile farther east, and is bounded on the north by the precipitous

* In another passage (Mishna Baba Metzia vii. 10) the word also occurs in the
plural, لي rosii tszooktin, and in this case also Maimonides takes the word to apply
as a proper name to Tzook, the Scape-goat Mountain. It is worthy of notice that
the Arabic name سك, under the feminine form سكية, applies to a narrow ridge,
Dhahret Suktyeh; a valley, Wady Suktyeh; and a well, Btr Suktyeh, in the
same desert four miles east of Neby Yaktin. The distance from Jerusalem
prevents identification with Tzook, but the origin of the name is probably the
same.
valley of Mukelik, above which, a little farther north, is the peak called et Haddeidän.

The name Hidoodoo, which, as we have seen above, means sharp or knife-edged, is applied to two points in the same district, under the Arabic equivalent form Haddadiyeh, having an identical meaning, and the term Haddeidän is not improbably a corruption of the Hebrew Hadadim. Thus the Beth Hidoodoo would be the entrance to the district of sharp ridges which is peculiar to this part of Palestine.

It is remarkable also that there are a series of wells, at the average distance of three quarters of a mile apart, all along the ancient road to this ridge; and, finally, it is still more interesting to find one of these, the first upon the ridge itself, bearing the name Şâk.

This name has been collected by Mr. Drake as written with Sin, in which case it may be rendered “well of the market,” though why a well in the middle of the desert should be so called is not apparent. The Sin and Sâd are, however, so closely allied that they are not unfrequently confused, and some words (such as Sunt, the acacia) may be written with either. Curiously enough, this is the case with all words from the root Sâd, including Şâk. (See Freytag Lex.) Spelt with the Sad the Arabic is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew Tzook, for the last letter is a Kof, representing the Hebrew Koph.

The antiquity of these wells is certainly considerable. Many of them are reservoirs hewn in the rock with great care and labour. They exist in a part of the country quite uncultivated, and are evidently intended for travellers along the road, which also shows marks of antiquity, being hewn in the face of the cliff in parts. The exact length of the Hebrew mile it is not easy to determine, but the Ris as determined from Maimonides appears to have been 125 yards, which would give six and a half English miles as the total distance from Jerusalem to Tzook. This brings us to the summit of El Muntàr, and the Bir es Şâk may be supposed to mark the site of the last tabernacle.

These indications seem to point to the ridge of el Muntàr as representing the Tzook of the Talmud, and the exact point whence the scape-goat was rolled down into the valley beneath.

Claude R. Conder, Lieut. R.E.

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**NOTES FROM THE MEMOIR.**

The following points of interest have come out in preparing the nomenclature of Sheets 16 and 18 since the publication of the July Quarterly Statement.

1. Joshua’s Altar on Ebal.—The site is very possibly represented by the modern sacred site called ’Amâd ed Düna, “monument of the faith,” on the top of Ebal. This discovery is specially interesting, because the tradition cannot well be either Christian or Samaritan, but is preserved