

statements. Thus we learn that no less than twenty-four synagogues, mostly in Galilee, were built by R. Simeon bar Jochai about 120 A.D., among which were those at Kefr Birim, at el Jish, and at Meirun, probably the ones visited by Major Wilson, as this date agrees with the opinion formed by architects as to the character of the work. Two others are noticed at Sasa and Tiria which have still to be discovered, and it is not impossible that others of the known synagogues are to be attributed to the same founder.

As regards the tombs the Jewish information appears also to be reliable. Thus at Gath-Hepher, which he identifies correctly, Isaac Chelo mentions the tomb of Jonas now visible in the centre of the village. It is remarkable, however, that Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, a little earlier, places Gath-Hepher at Caipha.

The tombs of Joseph at Balata, near Shechem, and of Hillel and Shammai at Meirun, are still shown as described by these mediæval Jewish pilgrims; the sepulchre of Samson at Zoreah, is no doubt the present *Mukâm of Sheikh Samit*, and it will in all probability prove equally easy to recover the numerous sepulchres in Upper and Lower Galilee mentioned in these itineraries, many of which are of considerable interest.

The deductions which it appears to me may safely be drawn from the facts detailed in the foregoing pages, are simple:—

1st. As regards early Christian topography, and especially that of the Onomasticon, the authority of the writers is not sufficient when unsupported by other evidences to establish the identity of a Scriptural site.

2nd. Crusading topography subsequent to 1100 A.D., is so hopelessly obscured by the ignorance of priests and pilgrims alike, and by the continual transference of sites from their true place known by the early Christians into new positions, quite irreconcilable with the requirements of the original narrative, that it must be considered entirely valueless in fixing the real sites.

3rd. The mediæval Jewish pilgrims appear, as a rule, to have had a much more accurate knowledge both of the country and of the Bible, their assertions are borne out by existing remains, and are in accordance with the Scriptural narrative, and the indications contained in their writings frequently appear to be of the greatest value.

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieut. R.E.

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## SAUL'S JOURNEY TO ZUPH.

1 Sam. ix. and x.

THE wanderings of the hero "who, seeking asses, found a kingdom," form one of the most curious puzzles in Scriptural topography, for the starting-point is unknown, the point to which he returned doubtful, and

the intermediate places, though noted with much apparent exactitude, have not been recognised as identical with any well-known or important sites. The following notes derived from the Survey may, however, prove interesting to those who have given attention to the subject:—

1. The starting-point was Saul's home. Kiah, his father, was a Benjamite, and it seems almost certain that he must have inhabited Zelah, a Benjamite city (Josh. xviii. 28), for here we find later the "sepulchrs of Kiah," in which the bones of his descendants were interred (2 Sam. xxi. 14).

We find, however, immediately afterwards, a town or a district known as Gibeah of Saul as being the home of the king. It may be, therefore, that this place, called Gabaoth Saule by Josephus, is the starting-point. The question is too long to enter upon at present, but as it appears that Saul first passed through Mount Ephraim, the starting-point may be generally stated as towards the northern limits of the territory of Benjamin. The consecutive order of the list in the book of Joshua would seem perhaps to place Zelah (more properly translated *Tzel'a*) in the northern part of the land of Benjamin, and it may perhaps be identified with a large ruin called *Khürbet Sh'ab Saláh*, "ruin of the ridge of Zelah," the last word being a natural equivalent of the Hebrew *Tzel'a*. This place is only four miles north-west of Jeb'a (Geba of Benjamin), and there are strong arguments in favour of identifying Jeb'a with Gabaoth Saule, which need not, however, be discussed here.

2. On leaving his home at Zelah, or Gibeah, Saul first passed through Mount Ephraim (ix. 4). According to Josephus (*Antiq.* vi. 4, 1), having first sought over the territory of his own tribe, he went over that of other tribes. This would seem to make his first direction northwards.

3. Leaving Mount Ephraim, Saul passes through the land of Shalisha (ix. 4). It is only natural to connect this name with that of Baal Shalisha or Beth Shalisha (2 Kings iv. 42), and this place may be fixed as at the present *Sirísia*, thirteen miles north of Lydda, from entirely independent considerations. (See *Quarterly Statement*, April, 1876, p. 69.)

4. Leaving this district, Saul comes to the land of Shalim (or "foxes"). This might be identical with the "land of Shual" (of the fox), near Ophrah (1 Sam. xiii. 17); but this seems irreconcilable with the last indication, and the land of Shalim was not in the land of Benjamin (comp. verse 4, lower down), which the land of Shual evidently was. Gesenius, in giving the meaning of the word (S.V. Shalim), suggests a more probable identification, namely, that the territory of Shalabim ("foxes"), a city of Dan (Josh. xix. 42), is here intended. This place has been fixed at *Selbít*, south of Lydda, which gives a direct journey southwards of about a day's duration.

5. Saul next enters the land of *Yemeni* ("Benjamites," A.V.), and passes through it. *Selbít*, it may be remarked, is not far from the western border of Benjamin, which would be crossed in journeying to Zuph if identified as below.

6. Saul arrives at the land of Zuph, the farthest point of his journey,

and here encounters Samuel at a certain city, the name of which is not given (ix. 5, 6).

The meaning of the word Zuph has not been determined with certainty, the Targum on the passage, however, connects the name with the root *Zephah*, meaning "to shine," and hence "to be conspicuous," whence come the words *Zephathah*, *Zophim*, *Zephu*, and *Mizpeh*. In other targums the words *Zophim* and *Mizpeh* are used indiscriminately in speaking of one place, both words being applicable to a "watch-tower," or city in an elevated situation. Zuph was, however, the name of a man, and it is not impossible that the land of Zuph may have been named after him (1 Sam. i. 1). In the first case the city in the land of Zuph would possibly be *Mizpeh*, in the second it would be *Bethlehem* the home of Zuph. The former identification appears to me the more probable for the following reasons.

1st. That the Targum derives the word from the root *Zephah*.

2nd. That on the departure of Saul, Samuel immediately gathers Israel together in *Mizpeh* (x. 17).

3rd. That the city is evidently one of those visited by Samuel (see ix. 12), and cannot be *Bethel* or *Gilgal* (see 1 Sam. vii. 16).

4th. That placing *Mizpeh* near to *Kirjath Jearim*, the land of Zuph would be reached immediately on leaving the land of Benjamin.

*Mizpeh* may be fixed as in this station on entirely different grounds. (See *Quarterly Statement*, July, 1876, p. 149.)

Zuph has already been fixed as in this neighbourhood (see Murray's new map); but the identification with *Sôba* is open to the objection that there is no good authority for supposing the letters F and B ever to be confused.

The root *Zephah* is represented by two Arabic roots, *Safa* (whence *Mesuffa*, "a place of view"), meaning "bright, shining, conspicuous," and *Shâf* (whence the exclamation *Shûf*, "look"), having also the meaning, "shining, looking out, viewing." Thus the modern *Khûrbet Shûfa* represents the Hebrew *Zophim* or *Mizpeh*, with which I have proposed to identify it on account of its position near *Ebenezer* and *Kirjath Jearim*. The name *Shûfa* probably still denotes a district, for there is a hill called *Râs Shûfa* about two miles north of *Khûrbet Shûfa*. This district, I would suggest, may be the land of Zuph. There is, however, another site which might also claim to be identified as Zuph, viz., the village of *Sâfa*, ten miles west of *Bethlehem*; and this position, indeed, fits in yet better with the subsequent part of the journey.

There is only one valid objection to these views. Josephus gives the name of the city as *Ramah*. Hence it has been supposed to be *Ramathaim Zophim*, which is here intended. *Ramathaim Zophim* was, however, in Mount Ephraim, and so not far from *Zelah*, in which case it seems impossible that Saul on his return journey should ever arrive at *Rachel's sepulchre*.

There is no space here to discuss the value of this statement by Josephus. The whole of his account (*Antiq.* vi. 4) is shorter and less

detailed than that in the Old Testament, and the order of the events differs. It will be generally allowed that the history of contemporary events given in the Wars and later books of the Antiquities, gives indications to be placed in quite a different category to those of the earlier books. The Survey gives many opportunities of forming a judgment as to the value of Josephus's descriptions in such cases as the sites of Herodium, Masada, and Jotopata. In some cases it seems impossible to reconcile Josephus with the Mishnic doctors, and in these cases the Talmud is often the better guide.

7. Leaving Samuel, Saul first arrives at "Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah" (x. 2). Supposing this to be the modern *Kubbet Rahîl*, near Bethlehem, which Saul might have reached in journeying to the main road along the watershed, two questions arise.

1st. How can this monument be called "in the border of Benjamin," being four miles south of that boundary in the territory of Judah?

2nd. Where was *Zelzah*? supposing it to be the name of a town, for no such name has been found anywhere near Bethlehem.

It is possible that the reading of the Vulgate, which renders *Zelzah* by the words "in meridie" (towards the south), gives the best explanation, and that we should read Rachel's sepulchre towards the south, either of Zuph, or of Saul's route, or of the border of Benjamin.

8. Supposing Saul to be returning to his own home, it is natural to suppose the plain of Tabor (x. 3) which follows to be the plain south of Jerusalem and north of Rachel's sepulchre, now called the *Meidân*.

9. The end of Saul's wanderings appears to be reached at a place called "the hill of God," where is the garrison of the Philistines (x. 5). This place, *Gibeah-ha-Elohim* in the Hebrew, appears to have been so called because it contained a "high place" (see verse 13).

In another verse it is called simply *Gabatha* ("the hill," A.V., verse 10), and Josephus also calls it *Gabatha*. It would seem that Saul's uncle lived here (verse 14), which would lead us to identify it with *Gibeah* of Saul. It was not improbably on the road to *Gilgal* where Saul next went, which would seem to place it at *Geba* of Benjamin, and it was a Philistine garrison, which points in the same direction, for immediately after we find Jonathan smiting "the garrison of the Philistines," which was in *Geba* (1 Sam. xiii. 3). After the great meeting at *Mizpeh*, we find that Saul "went home to *Gibeah*" (x. 26).

The outcome of these various expressions seems to point to Saul's return to *Gibeah* of Saul, and to the identity of this town with *Geba* of Benjamin. There are many independent arguments which lead to the identification of these two places as the modern *Jeb'a*, which may, however, be reserved for the present.