

For this ambush must do the work of destruction. The main army came forth only to show themselves, and then by a feigned retreat to challenge the people of Ai to a second pursuit.

As soon, then, as the latter perceived that the Israelites were gone by the way they came, into the midst of the valley (Heb. *בְּעֵמֶק*, v. 13), the wide lower land over which they had passed, they started in pursuit. There was a feint of battle "before the plain" (Heb. *לְפָנֵי הַעֲרָבָה*), in immediate sight of the open expanse of the low lands by the Jordan. The Israelites made as if they were again beaten, and fled by the way of the "wilderness." The sequel is well known, and further details have little to bear upon our present question. Ai was made "an heap" (Heb. *לְהָר*) for ever, even a desolation unto this day." And if Rummon be the spot, its very name is gone.

I fear this article is too long already, and designedly omit, on this account, the discussion of any further collateral and incidental questions.

T. H. GUEST.

ON THE SITE OF KIRJATH-JEARIM.

THE exact position of Kirjath-jearim is of great importance for the right understanding of several Biblical narratives. Fortunately we have several statements as to its position relatively to known places. Thus Jud. xviii. 12 tells that it lay *east* of Beth-shemesh; and from 1 Sam. vi. 21, vii. 1, we learn that in relation to that same place it lay "up," and was on, or by, a hill (Gibea). These indications lead us to look for it at the head of the great valley of Surar, in which Beth-shemesh lies.

Chesalon (Kesla) lies up eastward from Beth-shemesh, and we know from Josh. xv. 10 that Kirjath-jearim must be sought still farther east, or *south-east*.

Again, Psa. cxxxii. 6, though obscure, manifestly implies that the ark while at Kirjath-jearim, or when on its way thence to Sion (2 Sam. vi.), was near Bethlehem Ephratah.

Further, the description in Josh xv. 8-10 of the boundary of Judah tells us that it ran up from the ravine of Hinnom to the top of the mountain lying west of that ravine and at the north end of the valley of Rephaim; that thence it reached along from the top of the ridge to the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron, and reached to Kirjath-jearim, whence the border curved westward to Mount Seir, and passed over to the north shoulder of Har Jearim, which is Chesalon.

Of this boundary line the extremities, Hinnom and Kesla, are known.

A curious feature of it appears in Josh. xviii. 15, where the *southern* boundary of Benjamin (and *northern* of Judah), while traced from the west eastwards, is said to go from Kirjath-jearim *westward*. The cities

of Mount Ephron, or the last of the group, must therefore have lain to the south or south-east of Kirjath-jearim. The line could not have gone to the *north-west*, or it would have formed the *western*, not the *southern* boundary of Benjamin, and the borders of Judah and Benjamin would have touched to the west of Kirjath-jearim, contrary to Josh. xviii. 14.

Just such a line would be described if we trace the boundary of Judah from the valley of Hinnom, due westward, and not up by the north-west side of Jerusalem, sweeping around the valley of Rephaim so as to enclose it, coming thus near *Rachel's Sepulchre* (1 Sam. x. 2), and thence westward a little, then stretching back in a north-easterly direction towards Ain Karim, and so out westward by Kesla.

Or it might be drawn, I think, so as to exclude the valley of Rephaim, giving that to Benjamin. The boundary would then run by the Wady el Gerd, and Rachel's tomb would be literally on the border of Benjamin.

The identification of Lifta with Nephtoah is no doubt conclusive against such a proposal, if it could be relied on. But does not Lifta rather represent Eleph of Josh. xviii. 28? And though the proposal to identify Nephtoah and Netophah has been condemned, there is not a little to be said for it. Nephtoah is only named in Joshua xv. 9, xviii. 15, while Netophah does not occur earlier than 2 Sam. xxiii. 28, 29. We read only of "the shining of the water of Nephtoah," not of a town of that name. There was a Wady Beth Netophah, and presumably "a water" in the wady of the same name. Netophah was applied to a considerable district: there were "villages of the Netophathites" (1 Chron. ix. 16, Neh. xii. 28). It lay not far from Bethlehem (1 Chron. ii. 54, Neh. vii. 26, Esd. v. 17, 18); and the form of the name Anetophah has been recognised in Autubeh, to the north of Bethlehem, while Beth-Netophah has been identified with Beit Nettif some miles to the west. Notably the name of Netophah is found in the Greek both as *Νετοφθα* and *Νεφωθα*, illustrating the very transposition of consonants required; while the change of *Teth* for *Tau* in the Hebrew cannot be accounted of much moment, considering the age of the record in Joshua, and that the "t"—sometimes "th"—disappears altogether in "Nehopas," yet another form of Netophah.

As to the Valley of Rephaim, it is not certain where precisely it lay, whether to the north or south of the boundary line, though probably to the south. From 2 Sam. xxiii. 13 we gather that at least its southern extremity lay west of Bethlehem, and so interposed between it and Adullam. The statement of 1 Sam. x. 2 may perhaps thus be explained; it is certainly precise as to the sepulchre of Rachel being on the border of Benjamin, while the description in Gen. xxxv. seems to fix it pretty conclusively. It would scarce be counted strange if the boundary here made even some detour to enclose the birthplace of Benjamin in the inheritance of his children.

May not *Ain Karim* preserve the sound if not the site of Kirjath-jearim. It is written in Ezra ii. 25, *'Arim* (possibly that is the correct reading in Josh. xviii. 28, where, as in 1 Sam. vii. 1, we find it linked

with a *Gibea*). When the "city of the woods" became a ruin, the "well" would remain; and as the neighbouring Beth-shemesh became *Ain Shems*, Kirjath 'Arim would become *Ain Kārim*. That the *Ain* should take this *Caph* sound is nothing unusual. The proposed identification of *Ain Karim* with *Rekem* is a possible one, no doubt; but, if accepted, it would surely throw the boundary of Benjamin too far south to admit of locating Kirjath-jearim at Kuriet el Enab. And as the proper name of that place is simply *Kariet* (*Quarterly Statement*, 1876, p. 80), it is more probably Kirjath of Josh. xviii. 28. *Ain Karim* has been identified also with *Kerem* of LXX., Josh. xv. 59, and with *Bethcar*, so that it seems yet undetermined.

Since the probability of *Ain Karim* being the site of Kirjath-jearim had occurred to me, I have met with the interesting announcement in the January number of the *Statement*, p. 19, of the discovery of *Khūrbet 'Erma*, "a ruin on the brink of the great valley two miles south of Kesla or Chesalon." Here may be the true site of Kirjath-jearim; and the boundary may not have "reached along" so far north as *Ain Karim*. This is a matter to be judged of only on the spot, or by one intimately acquainted with the contour of the ground; but I venture to suggest that the boundary line should go thus, much farther south than is usually drawn, by the Wady Bitir down into the Wady Surar.

Such a line would fit the Biblical narratives. The men of Beth-shemesh would send the ark up the valley eastward, as its easiest road back to Shiloh. There is no trace of any road ever having led over to Kuriet el Enab. When, after its resting there, it was removed to Sion, it would pass not far from Ephratah (Psa. cxxxii. 6), and of it, as there, David must have known as a boy at Bethlehem, and so would naturally describe one going out to seek the lost ark coming on its track, so to say, "hearing of it" there. Again, it is more than probable that the gathering of Israel to *Mizpeh* (1 Sam. vii.) was to the neighbourhood of the ark: that this was the place where Samuel judged Israel, and where Saul found him in the land of Zuph, whence he returned by Rachel's sepulchre (1 Sam. ix. 11, 25; x. 2).* *Might not this be recognised in Sôbu?* Placing *Mizpeh* here, we could better understand the story of Israel's victory when they drove the Israelites to below Beth-car. Beth-car (or Bethchor) seems to be identified in the narrative with "Shen" (1 Sam. vii. 11, 12); for which we should rather read *Ha-shen*, probably for *Ashan*. The LXX. read *Yasan*, and the Peshito, Syriac, and Arabic versions render both words (Smith's Dictionary) by Beth-jasan. That they were two names for one place, or the names of places so close as to be practically one, is also rendered more than probable by their conjunction in *Chorashan*, 1 Sam. xxx. 30, as a district not far from Ziglāg, somewhere south of Beit-jibrin and east of Gaza. If *Ha-shen* is the *Ashan* of Josh. xv. 38, this must have been its locality. If the defeated Philistines were

* Compare 1 Sam. i. 1, where we have *Zophim* and *Zuph* connected with Ephrath in Samuel's ancestry. The frequent connection of *Mizpeh* and *Zophim* or *Zuph* is well known.

chased down the valley past Gath, Ebenezer, which was set up between Mizpeh and Beth-car, might be sought for in that neighbourhood; and the locality of the earlier battle, when "the ark of God was taken," would be fixed thereabouts, for the Israelites pitched in Ebenezer (1 Sam. iv.) and the Philistines in Aphek.

This suggested removal southward of all those scenes in Samuel's life which follows the abandonment of Neby Samwil for Sôba as the Mizpeh of 1 Samuel (not the Maspha of later times) seems to accord better, not only with these narratives, but also with vii. 16, as the places of judging are more equally distributed; with xv. 12, which implies that Samuel's house was not very far from Carmel; with viii. 2, as his sons at Beersheba were not so removed from him as otherwise might seem; and we would thus understand why David clung so tenaciously to a neighbourhood, hostile and treacherous to him (as Keilah), because of Samuel's frequent presence there.

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NOTE ON GAZA.

WHILE the Survey was being carried on from Gaza three sunken pillars were found, marking the angles of a racecourse or exercising-ground for horses, called Merdân ez Zeid. It was situated to the east of the town, in the level country beyond el Muntar, and is supposed to have been laid down by the Saracens about 700 years ago.

The pillar at the south-west corner was found to bear an inscription; it was of grey granite 18 inches in diameter. The inscription was considerably worn by time, and partially covered by the ground.

Mr. W. D. Pritchett has lately informed me of the discovery of a fourth pillar, exactly completing the rectangle, but only showing a few inches above the ground after the winter rains, and also inscribed.

The letters were filled with a red pigment, of which traces remain throughout. The rugged line shows where the stone was broken off with the portion probably bearing the date.

The inscription is 14½ inches long by 12 high.

M. Clermont Ganneau, to whom this inscription has been submitted, reads it as follows:—

+ τοῦ κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ
πλήρωμα αὐτῆς
ἐπὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου
διακόνου ἐπλα=
κῶφη τὰ ὄδε(α)-(ε=)
τους χμ περιτίου

He remarks: The first two lines appear to belong to a religious formula, a Biblical text; it is found in the commencement of Psalm xxiv., "The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is." The inscription gives the exact text of the Septuagint version.