

NOTES ON DISPUTED POINTS.

House of Aphrah (בֵּית לַעֲפְרָה).—Mr. W. F. Birch treats this name (Micah i, 10) as that of a town, which he proposes to identify with *Beit 'Affeh*.

I would submit that there are several objections to this view. First, that there is no radical connection between the Hebrew and the Arabic. Secondly, that the occurrence of the Hebrew particle in the sentence (*Beth li Aphrah*) seems scarcely to agree with the supposition that we have to deal with a topographical name, *Beth Aphrah*. The verse contains a pun on the noun *Aphrah* and the verb עָפַר "to roll"; as does verse 14, on the name *Achzib* and the verb "to lie." The topographical value of the passage seems to be small, as the names *Zaanan*, etc., occur in other places, where the indications are better as to their relative positions. It may be noted that if *Aphrah* were really a town, a possible site might be found at the important ruin of *Beit Fâr* ("House of the Mouse") *Fâr* representing the ancient *Aphrah* ("Gazelle") with the loss of the initial guttural—of which there are occasional instances; but this is at best only a conjecture, as the identification with *Beit 'Affeh* must apparently also be considered.

Gath.—Mr. Trelawney Saunders adduces in support of his view that *Gath* was in the south of *Philistia*, the passage where *Samuel* is said to have recovered the cities of *Israel* from *Ekron* even unto *Gath* (1 Sam vii, 14); but against this it may be argued that *Gath* and *Ekron* occur frequently next one another in topographical lists.*

The question which is thus raised is one of considerable interest, namely, whether the Jews ever possessed any land in *Philistia* proper.

In the Book of *Joshua*, three of the five great *Philistine* cities (*Ekron*,

* Mr. Trelawney Saunders appears to think that there is a philological disagreement between Professor Palmer and myself. If this were the case, I should no doubt be wrong, but we both stated that the Arabic for *Gath* was *Jetti*; and I believe Professor Palmer would be the last to urge that a place called *Jenneta* was *Gath*, unless strong reasons could be adduced to prove the corruption of the word.

Mr. Saunders is scarcely correct in stating that *Shaaraim* was a town of *Simeon*, and therefore objecting to *S'alreh*. *Shaaraim* is attributed to *Judah*, and occurs with *Adullam*, *Socoh*, &c., in the *Shephelah* (*Josh. xv, 36*), in a position exactly agreeing with that of *S'alreh*.

It is true that the name stands in one passage (1 Chron. iv, 31) for the *Sharuh* of *Simeon* (*Josh. xix, 6*), but the nomenclature of the list in *Chronicles* is well known to be very corrupt.

The route Mr. Saunders indicates for the defeated *Philistines* is even longer than that which I wrongly supposed him to mean.

A pursuit and a return of more than 60 miles must have intervened before the Children of *Israel* got back to spoil the tents (1 Sam. xvii, 53). This would have occupied two or three days. It would have been remarkable if anything remained to be spoiled after this interval.

Ashdod, Gaza) are allotted, "with their villages," to Judah, but there is no enumeration of these villages, and the detailed enumeration of the towns of Judah is confined to the mountains and the Shephelah.

In the time of Joshua's first campaign there is no mention of the conquest of Ekron, Ashdod, Gaza, Ascalon, or Gath, or of any town in the *Sadeh* or plain of Philistia, save Eglon and Lachish, close to the Shephelah hills.

In Judges (i, 19) we read that Judah "drove out the inhabitants of the mountain but could not drive out the inhabitants of the Valley (Emek) because they had chariots of iron." Ekron, Ascalon, and Gaza were, however, conquered at this time (verse 18), though apparently soon after lost.

In the time of Rameses II, all Philistia appears to have been under Egyptian rule; and the Philistines were of Egyptian extraction. In the days of Samuel, Saul, and David, the contests with the Philistines occurred in the Shephelah and on the border of the Judean Mountains.

Josephus also makes use of the remarkable expression—"that mountain where the tribe of Judah ended"; and even Adullam is once spoken of (1 Sam. xxii, 5) as beyond the border of Judah. The frontier of Rehoboam was drawn from Zorah and Azekah to Gath, including the fortified towns of Adullam, Lachish, Adoram, Mareshah, and Shochoh. Thus it is clear that Philistia was excluded from his kingdom, and by the time of Ahaz the Shephelah also had been entirely lost, while the expeditions of the Hasmoneans into Philistia were mere raids, with only temporary results.

It would seem then that Philistia never was conquered by Judah, and if this be the case, the cities recovered to Judah by Samuel between Gath and Ekron would probably be those enumerated in Joshua xv, 41, on the border between Philistia and the Shephelah, and near the site of Samuel's victory in the Valley of Sorek. The recovery is noted as the result of that victory not as entailing a further campaign (c.f. Ant. VI, 2, 3); and if the above conclusion be accepted, the passage quoted by Mr. Trelawney Saunders does not place Gath in the south.

Mr. Saunders suggests that "accepting Lieutenant Conder's interpretation of Abu Gheith as Father of Rain, the designation suggests an attribute of mystic power, and so may be carried back to some incoherent traditional remembrance of Goliah."

According to Freytag's Dictionary my translation is correct. I am not aware of any tradition connecting Goliah with the rain, but there are many traditions of Moslem Derwishes who were, and are, supposed to be able to give or withhold rain, and the name is probably quite modern. Inquiries on the spot might be interesting.

Megiddo.—The suggestion that the name *Mukutta'* may be a corruption of Megiddo is open to the objection that only the M is common to the two names, and, which is more important, that the T in the Arabic word is the Hebrew ט or strong t, which is not interchangeable with the *Daleth*.

Mr. Trelawney Saunders also follows Robinson in an assumption which

seems to be contrary to two passages in Scripture, viz., in supposing that the stream which springs near Lejjûn is the ancient Kishon, and thus unconsciously begs the question of the identity of the "Waters of Megiddo" with the River Kishon.

Now Barak encamped on Tabor before defeating Sisera (Judges iv, 12), and the Canaanites advanced on that position. "I will *draw unto thee* to the River Kishon, Sisera" (verse 7). In the Psalms also (Psalm lxxxiii, 9) we read "as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kishon: which perished at Endor," which is close to Tabor on the south.

It thus seems clear that the name Kishon applied not to the affluent from Lejjûn, but to the stream from the springs of el Mujahiyeh ("the place of bursting forth") west of Tabor.

Mr. Saunders says, "it seems impossible to separate Megiddo from the Kishon." If this were the case, then the site of Lejjûn could not be that of Megiddo according to the biblical definition of the Kishon.

Robinson's identification of Megiddo with Lejjûn rests mainly on the proximity of Taanach, a town often mentioned with Megiddo in the Bible. It cannot be too clearly stated that the only connection between the names Legio (Lejjûn) and Megiddo is found in Jerome's paraphrase of the term Bikath Megiddon by the "Campus Legionis." Megiddo is mentioned with Bethshean Jezreel and other places in the Jordan Valley (separate towns of the tribe of Manasseh) as well as with Taanach, and there is no real foundation for the assumption that the Valley of Megiddon was the Plain of Esdraelon, for the term *Bikath* (rendered Valley in the A. V.) is also used in the Bible of the Jordan Valley (Deut. xxxiv, 3; Zech. xii, 11), and on the edge of the broad Bikath of Bethshan the important ruin of *Mujedda'* with its springs and streams now stands.

Mr. Heuderson has quoted in defence of my theory, the translation given by Brugsch of a passage in the "Travels of a Mohar" (for the quotation of the Poem of Pentaur as including the statement that Megiddo was near Bethshean appears to be an oversight. The Pentaur Epic refers to the wars of Rameses Miamun against the Hittites). This translation is more favourable than that of Chabas, and was not previously known to me.

In support of the *Mujedda'* site, another argument may be drawn from the account of the flight of Ahaziah from Jezreel (2 Kings ix, 27), "he fled in the direction of Beth-hag-gan" and was slain "at Maaleh Gur, which is by (or near) Ibleam, and he fled to Megiddo and died there."

Dr. Thomson many years since proposed to recognise Ibleam in the ruined site of *Yebla* which gives its name to a long valley south-east of Tabor. On the plain east of Tabor also, fifteen miles from Jezreel, is the ruined village of Beit Jenn ("house of the garden"), exactly representing the Hebrew Beth-hag-gan, rendered "garden house" in the A. V., and the road from Jezreel past Tabor and past the head of Wâdy Yebla, towards Beit Jenn, leads over a rolling plateau where a chariot might easily be driven. After crossing the bed of the Jezreel Valley it ascends gradually towards en N'aurah (Anaharath), and on this *Maaleh* or ascent stands the ruin *Kâra*, a word derived from the

root *Kâr*, which is cognate to *Jâr* or *Gâr*, all having the meaning of "hollow." This ruin, possibly representing Gur, is $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles north-east from Jezreel, and five miles west of the ruin *Yebla*. We thus appear to recover the names Gur Ibleam and Beth-hag-gan in connection with some other north-east of Jezreel, and this is much in favour of the Mujedda' site, because an easy chariot road leads from *Kâra* south-east, crossing the upper part of W. Jalûd, and thence skirting the foot of Gilboa to Mujedda'.

I have hazarded the suggestion that the Kings of Judah used the Jordan Valley as their highway to the north; that, instead of toiling over the hostile mountains of Ephraim they marched up to assist the Israelite monarchs by the chariot road from Jericho, and advanced to oppose Necho by the same route. Megiddo would thus seem to have been their outpost on this route, and Ahaziah's retreat to it is intelligible, whereas the reason of his flying first south to Jenfn, and then back north to Lejjûn has never appeared intelligible.

In order to render this interesting subject more clear, the following points are recapitulated as those which seem most to require consideration.

1. There is no known connection between the ruin Lejjûn (Legio) and the site of Megiddo, either by name, by measured distance, or by tradition.

2. It is purely an assumption that the plain of Esdraelon is the Valley of Megiddon.

3. It is an assumption which contradicts Scripture that the stream from Lejjûn is the ancient Kishon.

4. It is a pure assumption (and a very misleading one) that the "Waters of Megiddo" were the Kishon river.

5. The mention of Taanach in connection with Megiddo should not outweigh the notice of Bethshean, Ibleam, Endor, Zartanah and other places east of Jezreel, also mentioned with Megiddo (see *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement, January, 1877, p. 16*).

6. The Egyptian records, so far as they elucidate the subject, are favourable to the Mujedda' site.

7. The ruin Mujedda' is ancient, well watered, situated in a plain on an important high-road; and here only has a name closely approaching to the Hebrew Megiddo been found.

8. The topography of Ahaziah's flight may be explained in easy accordance with the situation of Mujedda'.

I am far from supposing this question to be settled, but it seems that the *Mujedda'* site has claims to attention which recommend it to such careful critics as Mr. Henderson has proved himself to be; and that it should not be condemned merely because the assumptions of Dr. Robinson are taken as of equal value with his sounder arguments. The Lejjûn site rests on a more flimsy argument than perhaps that which fixes any other important biblical site, for we have positively not a single statement of the identity of Legio with Megiddo by any ancient authority. It is a vague conjecture, and not an identification at all.

Gibeah of Saul. In this case also we have to contend with an assumption of Dr. Robinson's. There is no connection either by name or distance between Tell el Fâl (probably a corruption of the Hebrew Ophel or "tumulus") and Gibeah; and after many visits to the site I entirely failed to find any traces of a town or village. *Tell el Fâl* is an isolated monument (probably a beacon) and not a city at all.

In writing on this question Mr. Birch concludes that the Gibeah where the Levite's concubine was killed was not Geba of Benjamin, but a distinct city. It is, however, worthy of notice that a confusion is here introduced by the authorised version which in two cases reads Gibeah where the Hebrew has Geba. This has already been pointed out by Mr. Grove:—

"That they may do when they come to Gibeah (לִבְעָה) of Benjamin, according to all the folly they have wrought in Israel (Judges xx, 10), and again:—

"The liers in wait came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah (מִמְעֵרָה גִבְעָה literally "from the cave of Geba," Judges xx, 33); this shows that linguistically no distinction was made between Gibeah and Geba, just as the word is now spelt indifferently *Jeba'* and *Jeba'h*.

Josephus places Gabaoth Saule at the Valley of Thorns; and if he refers to Wâdy Suweint ("valley of the little thorn tree"), this favours the identification with *Jeba'*.

That Gibeah of Saul was a district having its capital at Geba would seem to follow from the following passages:—

"The uttermost part of Gibeah, under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron" (1 Sam. xiv, 2), Migron being near Ai, probably a district name or that of a natural feature (c.f. Isaiah x, 28).

"Saul abode in Gibeah, under a tree in Ramah" (1 Sam. xxii, 6) Ramah being south of W. Suweint and west of *Jeba'*.

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NEW IDENTIFICATIONS.

Beit ^AAula has generally been identified with Bethul, but is too far in the hills. The suggestion of Beit Leyi for Bethul leaves Beit Aula for Holon (Joshua xv, 51), which fits far better topographically.

Zephathah (2 Chron. xiv, 10) is probably the present *Sâfieh*. See foot note to the note on Kadesh Barnea.

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