

Kub'a, apparently the Hebrew *Koba*, "a helmet," from the form of the hill.

Fârah is the Hebrew *Parah*, a town of Benjamin.

'Arâk el War = "cliff of rough rock."

Shehab (vulgar for *Sh'ab*) *el Hâtîy*, "the walled hill spur."

The Survey party ascended this gully in 1873 after descending from the plain east of *Teb'a*.

Suweinît diminutive of *Sunt* = the little acacia.

Esh Shinâr = the partridge.

El Hisir, probably *el Hosr*, "the pebbles."

El Hosn = "the fortress."

C. R. C.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE ABOVE.

By Rev. W. F. BIRCH.

The precision of the Hebrew language in the use of different words again helps us in this inquiry. "Rock" in the A.V. represents (at least) two words in the original, *Tzur* and *Sela*.

The latter always means a *precipitous* rock—*i.e.*, a *cliff*. Therefore the Rock (*Sela*) of Rimmon (as also *Etam*) was a *cliff*. Where, then, was it situated?

On the tribe of Benjamin being at last defeated in the third battle at Gibeah, the light brigade, according to Josephus, cut their way through the enemy, and so anticipated Balaclava—

" Archers to right of them,
Slings to left of them,
Spearmen in front of them,
Charged the six hundred,"

"and fled into the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months" (Judges xx. 47).

A village, three miles east of Bethel, called Remmoon (apparently considered as Rimmon by Eusebius), has, by virtue of its name, had greatness thrust upon itself, in its site being taken to be the veritable rock Rimmon; but though it may be described as "a white chalky height" (S. and P.), or "a rocky Tell" (Bibl. Res.), on no side does it present a *cliff* (*sela*). This want is a *fatal* defect in the above identification, so that minor difficulties need not be considered—*e.g.*, the probability of Remmoon being not in Benjamin, but in *Ephraim*, the scarcity of caves to shelter the refugees, the water supply, &c. Rimmon means the "pomegranate tree." In 1 Sam. xiv. 2 it is stated that "Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a (lit. *the*) pomegranate tree (Rimmon) which is in Migron" (*i.e.*, the precipices). This position on the southern side of Wady Suweinit (the passage of Michmash), about a mile east of Jeba, suits very well the local indications in Judges xx.—*e.g.*, (43)

“they trode them down* with ease over against Gibeah towards the sun-rising.”

Gesenius takes Rimmon in Judges xx. and 1 Sam. xiv. to mark the same place; while so striking are the points of agreement between “the cliff of the pomegranate tree” and “the pomegranate tree that was among the precipices” that there hardly seems room for any other opinion.

That the six hundred survivors at first, and afterwards Saul and “about six hundred men” found refuge among the same southern cliffs of the passage of Michmash, and that, therefore, here was the great natural fastness of the tribe of Benjamin, would be finally established beyond question, if there could also be found here first proper accommodation, and next sufficient water for 600 men for four months, since Saul and his followers might have managed with a poor supply of both for a few days at the most.

A small but valuable book, “Byeways in Palestine,” seems to provide the desired link. In 1852 Mr. Consul Finn was at Remmoon, inquiring for a large cavern that might have contained the 600 Benjamites, but he only found a few of inconsiderable size. Afterwards he passed through Mukhmas and crossed Wady Suweinit, and observes (p. 207), “at a short distance down the valley there are remarkable precipices on each side, which must be the Bozez and Seneh, renowned for the bold adventure of Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and near these projections are some large old Karoob-trees.” Next he comes to Geba (Jeba), and adds: “The guide told us of a vast cavern in the Wady Suweinit capable of holding many hundred men, near to the above-mentioned haroob trees, and therefore just the suitable refuge for the Israelites (1 Sam. xiv. 11), besides the Bozez and Seneh; and he told us that halfway down the precipice there is a course of water running towards the Ghor.”

The value of this information lies in its being (apparently) the spontaneous statement of a person who thought that one who cared to look for a large cave at Remmoon, would like to see one wherever he could, and so far the existence of shelter and water in the required spot, besides being desirable, becomes also probable.

A most interesting report in this *Quarterly Statement* from the Rev. H. B. Rawnsley (on a curious spring and cavern marked Mugharet el Jai in the new map, and mentioned by Dr. Robinson as being large), both proves that Mr. Finn’s informant spoke the sober truth, and, in my opinion, fixes the required position the famous “rock of Rimmon,” the *dernier ressort* of the tribe of Benjamin.

An old error, however, is not easily uprooted; accordingly, at risk of being tedious, the claims of Remmoon shall be fully considered, and if false (I hope) annihilated. What, then, are its claims to be the “Rock of Rimmon?”

* In passing it may be observed that the marginal reading for “with ease” is “from *Menuchah*,” probably = Manahath (?) near Jeba (1 Chron. viii. 6; compare 1 Chron. ii. 52, marg.).

(1) Its name and (P) mention in the Onomasticon. (a) "Remmon in tribu Symeonis vel Judæ: hodieque est vicus nomine Remmon, juxta Eliam contra aquilonem in quinto decimo ejus milliario." (b) "Remmon, petra Remmon in tribu Symeonis, sive Zabulon."

(2) Lieut. Conder says, "At Rümmon there are many caves sufficient for any number of Benjamites."

(3) Its elevated position. "Rummon lies high, on a rocky Tell." (Later Bibl. Res. 290).

(4) There is a spring of water in its neighbourhood.

(5) It is within the limits of Benjamin, as *commonly* drawn.

(6) It is in or on the borders of the wilderness.

Against the above site, and in favour of the position east of Jeba, it may be observed (1) that there was a Rimmon in the rival, or true position, according to 1 Sam. xiv. 2. "The pomegranate-tree (Rimmon) in the precipice." The Onomasticon in (a) has not in view the *Rock of Rimmon*, but the *city* Rimmon (Josh. xv. 32, xix. 7); and in (b) makes a ludicrous conjecture because "Rimmon" occurs in Josh. xix. 7 and 1 Chron vi. 77. The name Rimmon in the right position has also just been recovered in "Wady er Rumman."

(2) Is well met by the counter-cave reputed to hold *six hundred men*.

(4, 5, 6) Even if proved for Remmoon, hold good equally well for the position directly east of Geba.

(3) This is the *rock* on which the claims of Remmoon must go to pieces. Give the word *rock (sela)* its proper weight—*i.e.*, call it *cliff*—and it must crush this pretender. Remmoon does not stand on a *cliff*, and so could not give the Benjamites the security they sought and found in the mountain fastness in Wady Sûaineet.

That *Sela* means a cliff—*i.e.*, a rock more or less *perpendicular*—is clear from Biblical usage: 2 Chron. xxv. 12; Jer. li. 25; Amos vi. 12; 1 Sam. xxiii. 13 (*Sela-ha-macheloth*. See "Tent Work"). Accordingly the *Rock (sela)* Etam, though near Bethlehem, cannot be the Frank Mountain, which is the "Rock" (*Tzur*), 1 Chron. xi. 15, near the traditional and true cave of Adullam.

Happily, Benjamin had brains besides pluck, and so refused Remmoon and chose *Sela* Rimmon; otherwise it had never given a Saul to be the best and tallest king in Israel, and the "last and least of the apostles" in the Church.

So minutely accurate is the Bible, that it is hardly surprising that Mr. Rawnsley's report recovers 'the pillar-rock' in Wady Suweinit, which, though ignored in the A.V., is mentioned in the Hebrew; see 1 Sam. xiv. 5. "The one rock (Hebr. tooth) was a *pillar* on the north, over against Michmash" (Sp. Comment.).

This *pillar* is referred to as "a tooth of rock that, like a tower on a bracket, hangs in mid-air at the angle of the rock cliff."

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