NOTES ON DISPUTED POINTS.

House of Aphrah (בֵּית אֲפָרָה).—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 יָרָה “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 Fār (“House of the Mouse”) Fār 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 Jētāt; 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 Sā'ārēh. Shaaraim is attributed to Judah, and occurs with A'īdulam, Socoh, &c., in the Shephelah (Josh. xv, 36), in a position exactly agreeing with that of Sā'ārēh.

It is true that the name stands in one passage (1 Chron. iv, 31) for the Sharuhen 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 Hasmonaens 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 ד or strong צ, which is not interchangeable with the Daleth.

Mr. Trelawney Saunders also follows Robinson in an assumption which
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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 Mujahlyeh (“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 Jezerel 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. Henderson 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
Wady 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 Nâfurâh (Anaharath), and
on this Maaleh or ascent stands the ruin Kâra, a word derived from the
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root \textit{Kdr}, which is cognate to \textit{Jdr} or \textit{Gdr}, all having the meaning of “hollow.” This ruin, possibly representing Gur, is 2½ miles north-east from Jezreel, and five miles west of the ruin \textit{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 \textit{Kara} south-east, crossing the upper part of W. Jalud, 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 Jenin, and then back north to Lejjun 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 Lejjun (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 Lejjun 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 \textit{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 \textit{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 Lejjun 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.
NEW IDENTIFICATIONS.

_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 Fül (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 Fül _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 (גבעה) 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 (גבעת גבעה) literally "from the cave of Geber," Judges xx, 33); this shows that linguistically no distinction was made between Gibeah and Geber, just as the word is now spelt indifferently _Je'ba' _and _Je'ba'h._

Josephus places Gabaoth Saule at the Valley of Thorns; and if he refers to Wady Suweinit ("valley of the little thorn tree"), this favours the identification with _Je'ba'. _

That Gibeah of Saul was a district having its capital at Geber 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. Suweinit and west of Je'ba'.

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NEW IDENTIFICATIONS.

Beit Aula 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 Sāfīḥ. _See _foot note to the note on Kadesh Barnea.

C. R. C.