The Khurbets of Carmel

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PILLAR OR GARRISON ?

THANKING H. B. S. W. for his support on this question, and, without wishing to insist on an interpretation which may be doubtful, I would note that his argument as to the verse "the garrison of the Philistines went out" (יצא מצב) is apparently inconclusive, because this verb is used of inanimate objects, in a manner which seems to support my view. Thus we read in Joshua xv, 3, 9, &c., יצא הגבול "and the border went out," in the sense of extended. My idea is, that the Philistine border was marked by a cippus, or menhir, which Jonathan smote, and that, having obtained possession of Geba, he forced the Philistines to retire across the valley, and to establish themselves at Michmash. This border—no doubt protected by an outpost called "the men of the garrison" (xiv, 12)—then "went out," or "extended only as far as the "passage of Michmash" (xiii, 23), and the desecrated menhir may have been here erected anew. The passage has always, I believe, been considered difficult, and "garrison" is by no means the general reading. "Standing camp" (in the margin), "governor," "boundary" (Speaker's Commentary), and other renderings have been suggested; but as to the general reading of the words מצב and נצב (the Arabic *Nusl*) there is no doubt whatever; and H. B. S. W. has shown clearly how hasty is Mr. Birch's assertion, "It is an entire mistake to say it is rendered pillar in other passages of the Old Testament." My view was derived from a study of the Speaker's Commentary, which renders מצב by "boundary."

C. R. C.

THE KHURBETS OF CARMEL.

THE accurate delineation of Mount Carmel in the Society's map, will in all probability have corrected the idea hitherto widely but erroneously entertained in regard to this historic locality. We are now able to realise that Carmel is not an isolated mountain, but a highland region, about thirty-five miles in circumference, with various ranges cut up by narrow gorges, or broader valleys, and diversified by lofty spurs, rounded summits, and level or undulating plateaux. The explorer is thus furnished with a district through which he may wander with the pleasing consciousness that he will not speedily exhaust its picturesque or archaeological points of interest, but may at any moment unexpectedly stumble upon the sites of ruined towns, or feast his eyes upon new beauties

of scenery. Indeed, it is impossible once more to supply, in imagination, this region with the population it must have contained in former ages, without realising that it possessed all those attributes which rendered its loveliness proverbial. The massive ruins which are so abundantly strewn over its loftiest summits, the traces of terraces which cover every hill-side, the gigantic roots of old forest trees, long since departed, which crop through the soil, the remains of mills, reservoirs, and cisterns, which bear testimony to its wealth of water, all furnish evidence that the highlands of Carmel once supported a large civilised population, and that it has been subjected to a very high degree of cultivation. With the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs, about the middle of the seventh century, the beauty of Carmel doubtless began to fade; still it is probable that it retained some of its leading characteristics until the end of the thirteenth century, when, on the expulsion of the Crusaders, it lapsed once more under the influence of Islam. We have no clear historic record of the conditions of the mountain from the year 1291, when the Carmelite monks were driven from the monastery, till the middle of the seventeenth century, when they recovered their position; but it is probable that it was almost completely uninhabited for about 300 years. It was in the early part of the seventeenth century that the Druse Emir Fakr-ed-din, having conquered Beyrout, and the coast towns to the south of it, extended his sway as far as Carmel, and under his rule were established the eight Druse villages, of which two, Esfia and Dahlieh, alone exist. The other six, the remains of which I have visited, were all built on the sites, and with the stones of ancient towns. They are—

Khurbet Beistan,

- „ Umm esh Shukf,
- „ Shellâleh,
- „ Duweimîn,
- „ Duweibeh,
- „ 'Aleiya-eddîn.

Besides the population contained in these villages, there were a few Druse families scattered over the mountain in hamlets. As the sites of these villages were the most eligible, it is probable that when Fakr-ed-din appropriated the mountain there were no inhabitants in it, or they would have been occupied—the more especially as, except the two which remain, the mountain is again abandoned; for the Moslem villages of Belad esh Sheikh, Tireh, Umm es Zeinat, Tsjim and 'Ain Haud, which own lands in the mountain, are all situated at its foot, with the exception of Umm es Zeinat, which is on a lower range of hills to the south-east, below the Makkraka. There are no Moslems actually on Carmel proper. Its entire population consists of about 800 Druses, divided between the two villages of Dahlieh and Esfia and fifty Christians of the Melehite sect, who live at the latter place, and the monks in the monastery. The Druses of Dahlieh are of a somewhat superior type to those of Esfia, having come direct from the neighbourhood of Aleppo, the original cradle of the Druse nation.

Dahlieh is the most southern Druse village in Palestine. The inhabitants of Esfia, and the remaining Druse villages now deserted, were all from the Lebanon. The tyranny of Ibrahim Pacha during the Egyptian occupation of Palestine, and the lawless and predatory habits of the inhabitants of Tireh and Tsjim especially, rendered the mountain untenable, to a great extent, by the Druses of the six villages I have enumerated, and one by one they were abandoned, their inhabitants for the most part taking refuge in the Jebel Druse to the east of the Hauran. There remain, however, within sight of Esfia, fourteen Druse villages on the southern slopes of the northern hills of Galilee, and their Sheikhs pay annual visits to their brethren on Carmel. It is manifest that the Crusaders had military posts on the mountain, and built their forts with the materials which a bygone population had left behind them, leaving their own traces in the carvings which bear evidence of the Crusading period. The fragments of columns, carved capitals, and architectural remains still to be found, prove that Roman civilisation once had a foothold here, while the remarkable Jewish vestiges till lately existing at Khurbet Semmaka (see "Memoirs," Vol. I, p. 318), and the quantities of tombs with which the hill-sides near some of the Khurbets are honeycombed, give evidence of the large Jewish population by which it was inhabited from a remote antiquity.

I spent two months last summer at Esfia, which according to the Survey has an altitude of 1,742 feet above the sea, and found the difference between its temperature and that of Haifa quite sufficient to justify its selection as a summer resort, the thermometer between the middle of July and the middle of September rarely rising above 80° in the house in the middle of the day, and usually falling to 70° at night in the tents. It was during this period that I made the excursions in the neighbourhood, the notes of which are contained in the following pages. I have thought it best to make sketches of all the devices and carvings that I found, as they may possess a value of which I cannot judge so well as those more learned in matters of antiquarian and archæological research. The names of the Khurbets which are not marked in the map I have given in Arabic.

Khurbet Dubil.—These remains cover a larger area than any others which I have visited, and would seem to indicate a place of importance. They crown an eminence in the neighbourhood of Dahlieh, and are marked in the Map (Sheet 5, J 2). Many of the stones, of which the walls still standing, to a height of 8 or 10 feet, are composed, measure 4 feet by 2½ feet by 18 inches; while some, which had evidently been lintels or jambs for doors, measured from 7 to 10 feet in length, by 4 feet in breadth, and 2 feet in depth. On one of these, measuring 9 feet in length, was the following device :—

From a smaller one I copied another piece of ornamentation :—

I also found, almost concealed by thick brushwood, what at first sight appeared to have been a chamber hewn out of the living rock. It had been roofed with four stone slabs, two of which had fallen in, measuring 12 feet by 3 feet by 18 inches in depth. The chamber was thus 12 feet square. The sides hewn from the rock were about 12 feet high, measuring from the rubbish which had accumulated, and which was covered by a dense undergrowth ; but it was probably originally much deeper.

I am now inclined to think that this excavation was originally a cistern, of which one side had been formed by a wall, the stones of which have since been carried away. I also found two upright stones, about 4 feet apart, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, and on the face of each had been cut two slots, 6 inches wide at the top, 9 inches at the bottom, 2 inches deep, and 2 feet long ; in the centre of each was a hole 3 inches square, perforating the entire stone, of which an illustration is given below. These were probably the bases

upon which were fixed upright posts, which supported an olive-crushing apparatus. Also two large nether millstones, 6 feet in diameter, perforated in the centre by a hole 8 inches square. I found another of these on which half of the upper stone was still lying, which was $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter, and 18 inches thick. Scattered among these ruins were several rollers similar to those discovered by the Survey at Khurbet Semaka, and which are thus described : "They are of limestone, about 3 feet in diameter and 7 feet long. There are on the sides four vertical lines of sunk grooves, four or five grooves in each line. It was supposed that these columns, which

weigh about two tons (taking 2·7 as the specific gravity of the stone) were used for crushing olives." ("Memoirs," Vol. I, page 318.)

There were also many cisterns and tombs. I visited a number of the latter, of which the following were the most worthy of notice :—

One with two chambers 7 feet square, the inner chamber containing two loculi ;

One, 15 feet square, with four kokim on each side, and two loculi with arcosolia. At the entrance to this cave was a circular stone, like a millstone, which moved in a groove, and which, with a little clearing away of the rubbish, might have been rolled across the square entrance, which is still half closed ;

A large cave, 20 feet square and 7 feet high, containing four kokim, two loculi, partially destroyed, and a small pit, about 6 feet deep, and 3 feet square ;

A tomb, with nine kokim, three on a side ;

A tomb, with six kokim and a loculus ;

A tomb, with seven kokim and a loculus ;

A tomb, the handsomest of all, with five loculi, the sides high like those of sarcophagi ;

besides many others of less interest, and in a less perfect condition.

Khurbet Duweimin (Sheet V, J h).—These ruins are of great extent, and are so much overgrown that they are difficult of examination. I found, however, one sarcophagus and two sarcophagi lids ; a fragment of a column erect, 3 feet high and 2 feet in diameter ; a fragment of a prostrate column of the same size ; two lintels in position across doorways, 7 feet by 2½ feet by 18 inches ; a stone slab, 6 feet by 2½ feet by 18 inches, which had been elaborately carved, but which was so weatherbeaten that it was impossible to make out the device which had been engraved on what appeared to have been a tablet in the centre, but of which the following is a drawing :—

Two slabs, 7 feet long, each containing a carved circle 2 feet in diameter with a cross in the centre.

I found several cisterns, but only two tombs worthy of notice. One, entered by a flight of three steps, which contained four loculi, with arcosolia; and another, with a fragment of a slab, on which was a simple carving, which probably formed part of the door, containing three loculi, with arcosolia.

I have also visited several cave-tombs in the vicinity of Esfia, one containing eight kokim, and another with four. Near the former is also the slab which formed the doorway, carved thus :—

Khurbet 'Aleiya-eddin ^{علي الدين} —This ruin is situated on a rising

ground a few hundred yards to the left of the path from Esfia to the Mukkraka, at a distance of two miles and a half from the former place. It covers an area of about four hundred paces by three hundred, and consists of the usual remains of walls built of massive stones from 4 to 5 feet long by 2 or 3 feet wide, and 18 inches thick. Some of these walls are standing to a height of 12 or 14 feet, and in one of them is a window $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, with sockets hollowed into the stone on both sides. I also found what appeared to have been the fragment of a column $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter, and 3 feet in length, but it may have been a round mass of

stone used for some other purpose, as there were no other similar fragments near it. There were also two circular stones 5 feet in diameter. In the centre of each was a hole 18 inches deep, which, however, did not penetrate the stones. As these were partially buried, I could not ascertain their thickness. The holes were 18 inches square, and 6 inches from the surface had been hollowed to a depth of 2 inches round two sides, making a sort of recess round these two sides a foot high and 2 inches deep. These stones were 30 or 40 yards apart; it is possible they may have formed part of an olive-press. About a hundred yards from this I found a mill-stone, $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter, and 18 inches thick, with a hole perforating it 8 inches square.

The most remarkable feature of these ruins was its cisterns and reservoirs. From the number and extent of these the population must have been entirely dependent upon them for its water supply. Besides nine large rock-hewn tanks, I counted twelve of the usual bell shape, with the small circular orifice. Over one cistern, 8 feet square, which was hewn out of the living rock, and was 10 feet deep to the *débris* with which it was probably now half filled, was an arch of seven stones, which averaged in size 3 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 6 inches by 1 foot 6 inches. This was evidently all that remained of an arched roof, and was the more interesting because it accounted for the niches in the side of a tank which I shortly after discovered. This cistern, which, like all the others, had been hewn from the solid rock, was 24 feet long by 20 feet wide, and on each side, on a level with the surface, were 5 niches, 3 feet 6 inches long, 2 feet 6 inches across, and 15 inches deep. It is probable that it had been originally arched over, and that these were the sockets from which the

PLAN OF ROCK-HEWN CISTERNS AT ALEIYA-EDDIN.

arches sprung. This cistern, as well as the largest, had a flight of steps which led to the bottom, now filled with *débris* and overgrown with shrubbery, so that the actual depth can only be conjectured; of all the reservoirs in the system of which this formed one, and of which a sketch plan is given below, the largest was 40 feet square, roughly estimated, and its present depth is about 15 feet. The bottoms of all were thickly overgrown. The ledges by which they were separated were of solid rock. Three others of a similar character were scattered elsewhere over the rocky hill-side. I also found one tomb, 14 feet square, containing two kokim, and the entrances to several others which were too much choked to be accessible.

Esfia itself was evidently a Crusading post, for there are many stones built with the native houses on which are Crusading devices, and on one of them the machicolated stones of an old tower have been re-arranged with narrow arched windows divided by a small stone column. The village is situated on a summit about 200 feet above the copious spring, and the hills round it form an amphitheatre. This is the head of the Wâdy Shomariyeh. On the summit of one of these hills, about half-a-mile from the village, are the ruined walls of the Khurbet esh Shelkiyeh, marked on the map, where I found a couple of cisterns, but no remains of any interest, and on another summit, half-a-mile distant, on the range forming the northern side of the amphitheatre, are the more extensive and apparently more ancient ruins of Khurbet Shemaliyeh, *الشمالية*, where there were also some cisterns, a very ancient olive-press, some drafted stones, with sockets &c., and a tomb, the entrance to which was choked. There were, therefore, in old times, three small towns on the hills surrounding the spring, and all equi-distant from it. The hill-sides all round bear marks of terraces, and the whole of the amphitheatre must have been richly cultivated and a scene of great beauty, as, indeed, it is at present, for though the terraces are for the most part dilapidated, the valley round the spring is irrigated, and green with gardens and orchards of fruit trees. Among the spots of interest near Esfia is a singular cleft in the rocks, about a mile distant from it in a westerly direction, called the Crow's Nest, *عقب ع*. The sides of the limestone precipice are about 150 feet high, split by cavernous fissures, and the gloomy area below is covered by a dense undergrowth of jungle, into which the sun never penetrates. Another curious spot is "The Forty Trees" (Shejeret Arbam), a grove of magnificent old oak-trees near the Khurbet el Khureibeh (K h). There is a rude sort of altar cut in the rocks here, and the place has a certain character of sanctity connected with it, as tradition has it that forty Skeikhs were once murdered here, and that death would be the penalty of any attempt to tamper with these trees, as it is already said to have been in the cases of a man and his father, who began to cut one down. At Khurbet Khureibeh I found nothing of any interest beyond a small arched chamber, which may have been comparatively modern, though constructed with the old stones.

Khurbet Lubieh اللوبية.—This ruin is situated about a mile and a quarter to the east of El Mughrushah (marked on the map K i), on a lofty spur projecting into the Wādy el 'Ain. It is a small ruin, and so overgrown as to be difficult of examination; but the stones are large, and the place bears all the marks of great antiquity, and seems not to have been occupied in recent times. It would seem to have been a fortress, both on account of its position and from the fact that the outside walls, still standing in places to a height of 3 or 4 feet, are about 6 feet thick. It is approached on one side by terraces, somewhat similar to those at Rushmia. I observed here that some of the stones were drafted; many had holes and sockets cut into them; there was a fragment of a sarcophagus and a circular stone a foot high and 18 inches in diameter, with a hole in the centre 3 inches square by 4 inches deep, and another stone 3 feet 6 inches high, which had apparently been pointed standing alone in the centre of what seemed to have been a chamber; and there were some choked-up tombs and cisterns, but I only found two stones on which was any carving. Upon one was the following device 6 inches square.

On another stone, 3 feet long, was a carved moulding which may have formed part of a cornice, such as those existing at Kades and elsewhere.

The high rocky summit near Lubeh is called the Jebel Sheikh, from the fact that the natives consider it the highest part of Carmel. On the right hand of the path leading from it to Shellaleh I observed the fragment of a column about 6 feet long.

Khurbet Shellaleh has been exhaustively described in the "Memoirs," also Sheet 5, J h. Its position on the abrupt cliff of a wild gorge is in the highest degree romantic.

Khurbet er Kakhtyek (Sheet 5, J h).—This ruin bears all the marks of having been undisturbed from the most ancient times. There is a large circular cistern here, 82 paces in circumference, the upper coping of stones still remaining in parts. It was apparently an open cistern, and is the only one of the kind I have seen on the mountain. It was about 20 feet deep to the undergrowth on the *débris* at the bottom. I also observed three fragments of columns, one of a roller, with grooves, and a large olive mill, hewn out of the living rock, with vat for receiving the oil attached, besides the circular bases of two other mills, each 7 feet in diameter. In the rock cliff near this olive mill was a most interesting tomb, with an inscription much defaced, but of which the traces of the Greek characters

still remained on the rock over the doorway and under the arch ; below it was a hexagonal device in a tablet 2 feet long by 1 foot broad, and on each side of the entrance were two circular devices. The traces of the red pigment which had been used in the inscription were still visible. I had, unfortunately, no materials with me for taking a squeeze, and could only make a rough and very imperfect copy—

מאפס'נוויל'מלמ

Underneath which was the tablet—

The construction of the tomb inside differed from any which I have hitherto seen. The chamber was 8 feet by 6 feet 6 inches. On the right-hand side were three kokim ; on the side opposite the entrance was one koka in the right corner ; the rest of the side was made up of a loculus under an arcosolium, but behind it, so that you had to step over the loculus to get into it, was an oblong recess with a flat roof 7 feet 6 inches long, by 2 feet 6 inches broad, the entrance to which was 3 feet high by 2 feet 6 inches broad, but the rock had been grooved so as to admit of a door, and on the upper right-hand corner was a socket into which the pivot for a stone slab had evidently been fitted. On the left side was a single loculus the whole length of the chamber under an arcosolium. The whole was in good preservation, and the tombs had evidently been the possession of a family of position. I annex a plan.

The Arab who accompanied me to Khurbet Rakhtyeh, who was a peasant I picked up at Shellaleh, told me that according to native tradition both this ruin and Shellaleh had in former times been inhabited by Greek priests. I observe that in the "Memoirs" it is stated that an early Byzantine monastery possibly stood at the latter place. The inscription over the tomb would in all likelihood date from the same period.

The olive mill I found here is the best specimen I have seen, though riding over the hills one day I came upon another almost as perfect in a secluded valley far away from any Khurbet. Indeed I have counted more than a dozen of these at the different Khurbets I have visited, and they evidence the extent to which olive culture was formerly carried on in Carmel. The method of grinding olives at the present appears to be identical with that of the earliest period, indeed in many cases the old stones are still used, though it is possible, as has been suggested in the "Memoirs," that the huge stone rollers were used for expressing the oil afterwards in default of the modern upright wooden screw apparatus.

Khurbet el Kerek (Sheet 5, K i).—These ruins, which are beautifully situated on a southern spur of the range, are apparently very old. All I found here were two rollers, an olive-press 8 feet in diameter, with a raised rim 9 inches high—the first I have seen—and some large circular stones with the square hole in the centre, and the recess round two sides such as those already described. There were also some drafted stones with sockets, but I found no carving. A great many stones had not long since been removed for building purposes elsewhere. There was also a rock-hewn cistern, 12 feet square, with niches similar to the one at Ali-ed-dîn. On the road to Dahlieh, not far from here, my Arab pointed out to me an almost circular natural fissure in the rock, evidently not a well or cistern, though there was some masonry round the mouth, which by throwing lighted paper down I judged to be about 60 feet in depth, from which, according to native tradition, fire had at one time issued accompanied by loud reports like thunder-claps.

Khurbet Duweibeh (K i).—The ruins of the walls here were those of the last Druse inhabitants who had used the ancient stones. I observed a millstone built into the wall. Some of the old door jambs, with sockets, were still *in situ*. A large oblong vat like a sarcophagus, hewn out of the living rock, which I take to have been a wine-press, from the arrangements made for the juice to escape, and three rollers lying together, complete the objects of interest. Near the road from here to Esfia is another wine-press, 9 feet square and 8 feet deep, hewn out of the living rock.

Tempted by the account of a stone-mason of extensive caverns existing at a place called Nagnnaghiyeh, النغنجية, I found, on my arrival, that it was none other than the hill marked Tell el Aghbariyeh (Sheet 8, J 7). It consists of two limestone hills, which are honeycombed with natural caverns. They were only interesting as having at some former period served as dwelling-places. One, 18 feet square and 7 feet high, was plastered with cement, as was also a solid column in the middle, 3 feet 6 inches square. There was a sort of cornice running round the floor, and

an aperture at the back leading through to the hill above, apparently for the escape of smoke. There were several other caves bearing traces of cement and occupancy.

Khurbet Medineh.—This ruin is on the slope of the smaller of the above hills. Here were a pair of stones 3 feet high and 2 feet thick, each with a hole 5 inches square perforating the whole thickness, with a groove on each 4 inches broad and 3 inches deep, running the whole length of the stone. Also one in which was a hole 6 inches square and 6 inches deep, and on the other side of the stone was a groove 1 foot 6 inches long, 4 inches wide, and 8 inches deep, the uses of which I am unable to conjecture. There were also cisterns and tombs with choked entrances. Near the hill crowned by the Khurbet Beit Ras, is another hill, on the top of which is also a ruin, called the Khurbet Abu Lehiéh, at the head of the wâdy of that name, but I had not time to visit either of them. There were also some singular caves above the 'Ain Abu Zereik, marked on the map (Sheet 8, Lj), which I propose at some future time to examine. About half an acre of ground is here covered with holes like the bell-shaped mouths of cisterns, but they are only a few yards apart, and are between thirty and forty in number. They appear designed to let light into an immense cavern beneath, but I had no time to explore it.

Khurbet Semmaka and *Umm esh Shukf* (Sheet 5, J i) have both been so fully described in the "Memoirs" that only a few words are necessary. In regard to the former, it is most fortunate that it has been the subject of a minute examination by the Survey ten years ago, for the door of the synagogue, which made it the most interesting ruin on Carmel, has now been removed, together with most of its stones, by the inhabitants of Umm es Zeinat. There is only a fragment of the door jamb, about 3 feet high, remaining. The walls, columns, and most of the foundations are all gone. On the steep slope of the Wâdy Nahel to the west, I found two specimens of tombs in a very perfect state of preservation. On each side of the entrance to one was this simple device, representing a seven-branched

candelstick. A recess, covered by a single arch, contained three loculi, two parallel ones, and one across the end. On the right side, under an arcosolium, were two more loculi. The other was larger and handsomer, and the angles of the roof and the edges of the loculi were almost as sharp as if it had just been finished. It contained two recesses, each with three loculi with high sides, under arcosolia, and on the third side a seventh

loculus with arcosolium. The Wādy Nahel is the finest and most romantic gorge in Carmel, and the scenery here equals anything I have seen in Western Palestine.

Umm esh Shukf was formerly a Druse village, but the great quantities of pieces of tessellated pavement and glass fragments strewn about give evidence of occupation under conditions of Roman civilisation. Besides the tombs described in the "Memoirs" was one higher up the valley, containing three loculi with arcosolia, and on the doorway under the arch this device—

Khurbet Beistan.—Formerly a Druse village, a little lower down the wādy. There are no remains here of any interest.

Khurbet Mansurah.—(Sheet 8, K j).—This is a small ruin on the plateau about 500 feet below the Mukkraka. Nearly all the stones have been taken to build the Carmelite church on that site. The workmen engaged on the building told me that they found several with carving and devices, but that they had chipped them off in their stone-cutting operations, and they are now built into the walls.

Khurbet Umm Ahmed أم أحمد.—This is somewhat an inaccessible ruin situated on an abrupt shoulder of a spur of the mountain between the Wādy el Jennadiyeh and the Tell el War (Sheet 5, K i), about 800 feet above the Kishon. It has evidently never been disturbed by dwellers since ancient times. There are a few large stones with socket-holes; two tombs with handsome entrances, but too much choked for examination; some cisterns, and natural caves. One of these I entered by an artificial archway 5 feet wide; from the circular cave to which it gave access, another archway opened over a deep slope of *débris*, which probably concealed steps into another natural cavern about 60 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 15 feet high. A circular hole similar to those used for cisterns was cut in the rock above, probably to let in light. I think these caves may possibly have been used for places of refuge. I observed on the soft bottom the recent tracks of a leopard. There is a difficult path skirting the side of the range, about midway between the top and the plain below, and which, running in a northerly direction, leads one in a mile and a half from this ruin under abutting cliffs to *Khurbet el Kalaat* القلعة, the ruin of the fortress. This is one of the most interesting spots in Carmel. The mountain here rises almost precipitously from the Kishon to a height of about 800 feet, when it forms a ledge on a projection from which is an abrupt castellated-looking mass of rock. On the side facing the plain the rock rises precipitously from the slope to a height of about 50 feet; a little below it is a large natural cave; on the opposite side

of that facing the mountain an artificial defence has been raised by placing huge natural boulders one above another in three tiers. No attempt has been made to shape these; they have evidently been placed in the position they occupy by a very ancient race. Each stone must weigh from two to three tons, and they have been so arranged as to enclose half the circumference of what was a stronghold of the most remote antiquity. The area thus enclosed behind this barricade of rocks was 150 yards in circumference, and was a position of commanding strength. At the edge of the slope, and attached to the fort, was a rock-hewn cistern about 20 feet by 30 feet, but it would scarcely seem likely to have been the handiwork of those who had piled these huge natural stones on each other. I regret that in the fading light I had not time to make a sketch. In close contiguity were the massive stones that had formed the quarters probably of the garrison, for they were few in number; but about 300 yards distant were the more extensive ruins of an ancient village. I observed no drafted stones among those strewn around, though in one place the walls still remained two or three stones high, and I saw one stone which had been carefully shaped and hollowed out, making a bowl 18 inches in diameter and 9 inches deep.

Khurbet Zahluk lies about half-way between this place and *Leijet Zahluk* (marked on the map). There are some tombs and cisterns here, but nothing of interest.

This completes the list of Khurbets which I have visited, but there are still a few others on the mountain which I shall endeavour at some future time to examine. In conclusion, I would wish to say a few words in regard to a subject which has been a good deal discussed—I mean the supposed site of the Altar of Elijah. There can be no question that it was *not* on the position popularly assigned to it, known as the Mukkraka, or “place of burning,” where the Carmelites are now erecting their church, for this spot is in full view of the Mediterranean from Tantura to Cesarea; and it would have been quite unnecessary for Elijah to tell his servant to “go up and look towards the sea,” for there was no higher point to go up to, and he could see the sea himself. The late Dean Stanley has therefore put it down on the plateau on which the Khurbet Mansurah stands, and near which is the well of the same name; but I think there is a more likely position than this to which my attention was called by a pile of stones which, curiously enough, has all the appearance of an altar to this day. A mile before reaching the “place of burning,” concealed almost in a thicket of underwood, about 50 yards from the path from Esfia on the left-hand side, stands a singular pile of flat stones, each averaging 18 inches square, and 8 or 9 inches thick, which, placed on one another without cement, make a rude table about 12 feet long and 4 feet high. The breadth varies, as they have been broken away; but there is a large artificial slab about 6 feet square lying at the base. Though I do not for a moment mean to imply that this was the original altar, the unusual shape and position of this pile suggests that it may have been the result of some sacred tradition with the Biblical event, for the locality would exactly

fulfil all the conditions of the incident. From it the ground swells back and upwards in every direction, so that a vast host of people might have been assembled around, and witnessed whatever was transpiring here; a ten minutes' walk would have taken Elijah's servant to the top of the hill on which stands the Khurbet Duweibeh, from which the sea is plainly visible. Water in any quantity, even at that time of drought, could have been supplied from the tanks at Khurbet Ali-eddin, also only ten minutes' distant, a plan of which I have already given; and we are told that twelve barrels of water were used. Within a hundred yards of this pile the present path passes down the Wâdy el Jennadyeh, and at the bottom of it is Tell el Kussis ("The Hill of the Priests"), the traditional site of the massacre. Again, this must have been in the centre of the most populous part of the mountain. Indeed, it is difficult to realise now the extent of the population which must in those days have inhabited the south-eastern angle of Carmel. The best idea of it can be formed from the fact that within a radius of two miles and a half from this pile of stones there are, including Esfia, which is doubtless an ancient site, no fewer than twelve Khurbets or ruins of ancient towns and villages on the various hill-tops and mountain spurs which surround it. Here, then, are all the conditions required to satisfy the Biblical narrative, and to support the hypothesis that the events recorded—which certainly could not have taken place at the site generally assigned to them without involving contradiction—occurred rather on the plateau a mile distant, which is surrounded by so many of the villages of the mountain to which "all Israel" was summoned, rather than to the more limited space half-way down the mountain on the other side, where water was scarce, and the opportunity of witnessing the scene that was transpiring was less favourable.

LAWRENCE OLIPHANT.

RECENT BIBLICAL RESEARCH IN PALESTINE, SYRIA, AND ASIA MINOR.

(A paper read at the Reading Church Congress, October 3rd, 1883.)

By Colonel Sir C. W. WILSON.

THE most important features of recent Biblical research in Palestine are the discovery of the Siloam Inscription, and the survey of a portion of the country east of Jordan, by Captain Conder and Lieutenant Mantell, R.E., for the Palestine Exploration Fund. The Siloam Inscription, found accidentally in the rock-hewn channel which conducts the water of the Fountain of the Virgin to the Pool of Siloam, records the meeting of the workmen, and the completion of the channel. Its value for philology