

Migron

Migron (MT *Migrôn* “precipitous place” or “threshing floor”; LXX Μαγδων) is a toponym in the tribal territory of Benjamin, located near Gibeah/Geba and Michmash. The biblical data regarding Migron cannot be reconciled easily. According to 1 Sam 14:2, Saul stayed in the outskirts of Gibeah – i.e., in the utmost border area of the territory of Gibeah – at a place called Migron. (Some have suggested ren-

dering this place name “at the threshing floor” instead of using the toponym.) It was here that Saul stayed under a pomegranate tree, preparing for battle with the Philistines; this indicates a location south of Michmash. However, Isa 10:28 describes the approaching army spanning from Aiath to Geba, suggesting that Migron must be north of Michmash.

The biblical place Migron is identified with several sites that contain archaeological evidence dating to the Iron Ages. Tell Miryam (1755.1418) and Khirbet el-Qubbe (1772.1414) are both well situated for 1 Sam 14:2, but not for Isa 10:28. Tell el-’Askar (1768.1431) has also been identified as a possibility, but this site is too far north for 1 Sam 14:2. Perhaps Migron is not a settlement but the canyon of Wādī eṣ-Ṣwēnīt (175.130), the possible border between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the 8th century CE. There is some etymological evidence for this, since Migron could be derived from a root *n-g-r* “gush forth,” indicating an occasional torrent. The identification with Wādī eṣ-Ṣwēnīt conforms to 1 Sam 14:2 where Saul stayed under the pomegranate tree. Additionally, Muḡāret al-Ġa’ye (1771.1403), located in the Wādī eṣ-Ṣwēnīt, is compatible with Isa 10:28, in which the Assyrian army most likely passed over the valley of Migron having left its baggage in nearby Michmash. Euseb has two different name variants (Μαγδων or Μαγθων) and claims that Saul dwelt there (Eusebius, *Onom.* 132.6). Jerome translates the place Magro as “neck or down a pass” (*Nom. hebr.* 50.13).

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