A proposed location for Sinai from a Quranic interpretation

Omar Abur-Robb

Library: omr-mhmd.yolasite.com omar.robb@yahoo.com Sep 2023

I did write about this subject in an Arabic article (53# in omr-mhmd.yolasite.com) in 2021 and this is an overview.

I am going here to derive a proposition for Sinai by following some Quranic legitimate interpretations. But this work can be conducted by either a believer or non-believer. Therefore, this is an academic work rather an apologetic one.

However, I need to clarify that the interpretations here are not the only legitimate interpretations for the related Quranic verses. But even if the proposed location for Sinai was inaccurate, still, the proposed location is really interesting and very unique.

Let us first clarify the name "Sinai":

The Sinai peninsula is highly-likely unrelated to the biblical Sinai. The link between the peninsula and Sinai was probably established by few Christian monks that thought that the mount of Sinai is in the south of this peninsula, and this thought was reinforced by Empress Helena (the mother of Constantine I). However, the ancient Egyptian name for this peninsula was Biau or Mafkat (from Wikipedia).

Now ... there are two Israelite documents regarding the biblical Sinai, but most Scholars do focus on the first while ignoring the other: the Jewish Bile and the Samaritan Bible. Surprisingly, the names in the Samaritan Bible are much clearer.

Now ... I don't know Jewish Hebrew or Samaritan Hebrew, and the English translations have different pronunciations for the names. So, I am going here to use the Arabic translation for both (as I think the names there are pronounced more accurately), then I will pronounce the names in English as-is.

In the Jewish Bible, the path after the exodus can be summarized as the following: The Sea of Soof, the desert of Shur, Murrah, Eleem, The desert of Sin, Refedeem, the desert of Sinaa', and the mount of Sinaa' (i.e. the mount of Sinai).

The names in the Samaritan bible are: The Sea of Qalzam, the desert of Shur, Murrah, Eelah, The desert of Sin, Refedim, the desert of Sineen, and the mount of Sineen (i.e. the mount of Sinai).

Now ... the Sea of Soof is not a known name, but the Sea of Qalzam is a well-known ancient name for the Red Sea.

Also, Eleem is not a known name, but the name Eelah is a well-known name for the city of Aqaba.

The surprising thing that I didn't expect was the name Sineen. There are two names in the Quran for the mount of Sinai: Sinaa' and Sineen (Quran 23:20 and 95:2). The ancient Muslim commentators couldn't present a solid explanation for this different

pronunciations for this mount, and they have suggested that the name in 95:2 was modified to fit the musical/rhythm flow, which is something that the ancient Arabs allowed for poems and rhetoric speeches. But it seems that the ancient Muslims commentators didn't come across the Samaritan Bible because the name there for the mount is "Sineen".

So, it seems that the name was very foreign to the Hebrew language that it was pronounced in two different ways, and the Quran have used these two names in two different verses.

Also, I am assuming here that the name of the mount is not Sinaa'/Sineen but this is name of the desert, and when we say: the mount of Sinaa'/Sineen then we mean the specified mount in that desert.

Now ... the Quran has some very different details than the Bible (both the Jewish and Samaritan) about the story of Sineen. One of the main differences is that the Israelites didn't all go with Moses to the Mount, but he only took 70 men from them and went there (Quran 7:155).

1# Now ... There are three Quranic verses related to the mount that are very interesting:

1.1# In Quran 19:52 (translated by quran.com): We called him from the right side of Mount

But how we can identify the right side form the left side of any mount.

1.2# In Quran 20:12 (translated by quran.com): <u>It is truly I. I am your Lord! So take off your sandals, for you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa</u>.

But the name is not Tuwa but T'uwa. T' is the 16th letter in the Arabic alphabet, and it doesn't have an English equivalent, and the nearest is hard T therefore {T'}.

So, the name of the valley is T'uwa, but this name is not known to the Arabs. Also, the Quran said that God told Moses that the name of this valley is T'uwa.

So, did the people at Moses' time called this place T'uwa? or did God named it T'uwa? And how could this name be useful today?

1.3# In Quran 23:20 (translated by quran.com): <u>as well as 'olive' trees which grow at Mount Sinai, providing oil and a condiment to eat.</u>

However, this translation is not totally accurate. In the Arabic verse, there is no mention of the word "olive". A better translation is the following: <u>A tree coming from the Mount of Sinai providing oil and a condiment to eat</u>. However, it is very clear that the tree here is the olive.

However, the verse is structured in the present tense (coming) and we know that olives were originated from the East Mediterranean about 50 million years ago. So, this tree is coming (in present tense) from a mount that seems to be far from the Mediterranean!

So, let us analyze these verses one by one:

2# The Meccans (the people of Mecca) have special words for directions: East, West, Left (Shimal) for north, and Right (Yameen) for south. And there were names of sites that originated from Left and Right that only were used by the Meccans. So, "Yemen" wasn't the standard name for this place, but it was the Meccans' name for it, and it was originated from the word "Yameen" (right), while others called it Saba'. Also, "Sham" is the Meccans' name for Syria, and "Sham" was derived from the word "Shimal"

Therefore, the right side of the mount is the south side of it. But this would not be very helpful in identifying this mount.

However, looking deeper into the matter then we can argue that "Yameen" (right) direction might not just be the south; because it is the direction name for only the Meccans. Therefore, the "Yameen" (right) direction has only one direction which is the south of Mecca. This means that the mount is located at the same longitude of Mecca.

Now ... this is not really a very solid deduction, but it is a deduction that can easily be searched, verified or disproved.

There are 7 figures in the appendix of this article:

In **figure-1** you see the map of Arabia, and in it you see two lines: The blue is the longitude of Mecca and the red is the latitude of Aqaba (as Moses and the 70 men started their Journey probably from Aqaba).

You will find a red pin, which is about 3 km from the blue line (**figure-2**), which still can be regarded to be directly north of Mecca. The proposed mount is in **figure-3** at: 29 14 00, 39 51 19 [Latitude, Longitude. When you enter this coordinate in Google Earth/Map then make sure that there is a space before and after the comma].

The first thing that came to my mind when I saw this mount is the <u>United-Star-Ship</u> (<u>USS</u>) <u>Enterprise</u> in Star Trek. Yes, it doesn't look exactly the same, but the resemblance is very clear.

Now ... there is a large valley in this mount, which is clearly located at the <u>south side</u> of it.

3# Before explaining the verses in 1.2 and 1.3, there is a persistent question that should be answered first: How on earth did Moses reach this place?

3.1# At the time of Moses, Arabia was an international trading hub. The Indians and Chinses ships forward their cargos to the east ports of Arabia, then the Arab transported these cargos by camels to the east ports of the Mediterranean. In order for Arabia to be an international hub, then there are essential things that need to be there: safety and order. So, although Arabia wasn't united at that time, but all tribes founded essential to ensure safety and order in their lands as all were benefited from Arabia being the international trading hub. So, it was safe to travel in Arabia at that time.

- <u>3.2</u># Looking at **figure-1** again, Hail (pronounced Ha-il) is pre-historic place as it is defendable with vast wells of water, and it is in the middle of Arabia between the east ports and the Mediterranean. So, it is reasonable to say that Hail was the main center in the routes to the Mediterranean.
- <u>3.3</u># We have proposed a location for Midian in a previous post, but it was just a proposition. But we can be sure that Midian is somewhere between Tabuk (north of Arabia) and Hasa (south of Levant, see **figure-1**). Let us take Hasa to be the far possible case for Midian.
- <u>3.4</u># I would assume that Moses in the business of livestock would find it better to sell his extra stock in Hail than to sell it to the local traders. The distance between Hasa to Hail is about 700km. This distance can be crossed in a slow/average walking in about a month. So, if Moses took his extra stock about the end of winter, then he would reach Hail and return back before the end of spring. So, this is not a hard business trip and probably it was more profitable.
- 3.5# To fit this story with the Quranic verses then we could say that he went to Hail, sold his extra stock, and while returning back, he might have taken a short cut and reaching the place in **figure-3**.
- **4**# To fit this proposition with the names in the bible then I would say that the desert of Sin is "Wadi Rum" and the east desert to it (see **figure-1**). This desert includes a maze of hills with sands that almost look red. The desert of Sineen/Sinai is probably the area that is called today: "Al Jowf Province".
- 5# In figure-4, I am showing that the shape of the mount can be seen as two letters from the ancient Tabuki Script that was used in that parts. The shape represents the letters "O.E" with a small circle in "O" and the middle line of "E" is shifted upward. In the Tabuki alphabets (Figure 5 & 6) E is T' and O is W. So, it will be {W.T'}. It should be noted that the Tabuki script didn't have vowels [this actually was the case for all ancient scripts until the Greek invented the vowels]. Also, the Tabuki script are read from right to left (or up to down).

Therefore, W.T' could easily be pronounced (from right to left) as T'uwa. Therefore, my interpretation here is that this valley has been named for the shape of the mount itself. Therefore, we could call this mount as Sinai as the Israelites had called it, or T'uwa as it represents the letters W.T'. Also, it is valid to call the main valley in this mount with the name of the mount itself.

6# Looking at the verse in 1.3 (Quran 23:20):

<u>6.1</u># It is accepted in the ancient Arabic language to mention the part to mean the whole, or to mention the whole to mean the part,, and I assume that this is also accepted in all languages. For example, I can say that the Capital declared war ..., and here I don't mean the city, but I mean the country.

Therefore, it is valid to interpret the mount in the verse to mean the whole desert of Sinai (as of stating the part to mean the whole).

<u>6.2</u># It is accepted in the ancient Arabic language to use the past tense to mean the future (for example, Quran 26:90-94 speaks about the events in the Judgment day in the past tense). Also, it is accepted to use the present to mean the future (for example Quran 5:40 is in the present tense put means the future). This variations are not random, but there are meanings behind it. For example, speaking about the Judgment day in the past tense does give the impression that it is a very certain day and it is going to happen soon.

Therefore, <u>tree coming from mount Sinai</u> can legitimately means that this tree will come in the future from the desert of Sinai. I am assuming that the reason for using the present tense here is that the people will realize the meaning of this verse when it is already in the present. This interpretation did come true, and it is in the present.

<u>6.3</u># There is huge groundwater in the Al-Jowf Province. The businessmen in Arabia found that the best way to capitalize on this water is by planting olive trees. They started this business about 2010 in an area that is called today "Basita Farms" (see **figure-7**). To date, there are more than <u>20 million olive trees</u> in Al-Jowf.

There are farms in the north of the proposed location of about 70km, but the main farms are in Basita about 150 km from the proposed location.

7# All of the above interpretations are legitimate (although they aren't the only interpretations). However, I cannot confirm that this is the mount of Sinai until the main sign has been confirmed. This sign is in Quran 7:143. In this verse, a mountain near the mount has been levelled to dust. This cannot be verified by Google-Earth, and it does need a scientific study. But also, science will not even accept the proposition that there was a mountain there being levelled to dust. The maximum that science can present is: there is an unexplainable event that had happened here. And this would be sufficient.

8# Therefore, I am not confirming that this is the location of the mount of Sinai, but it is a proposition, which still needs extra work.

Therefore, I am calling this location: the "Proposed Sinai", but many people could just call it "USS Enterprise".

As I have said before: even if my interpretations proved to be inaccurate, still, the proposed location is really interesting and very unique.

The Appendix

The Figures for this article. All figures here are from Google-Earth except figure 5 & 6.

Figure-1: Map of Arabia. The blueline is the longitude of Mecca, and the redline is the altitude of Aqaba.

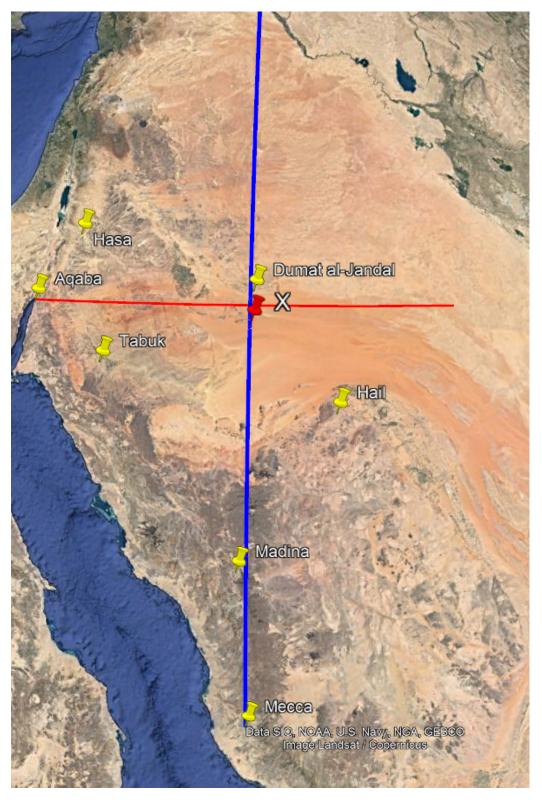


Figure-2: Zoomed view for the location of the red pin (see figure-1) which is the proposed location for the mount of Sinai.

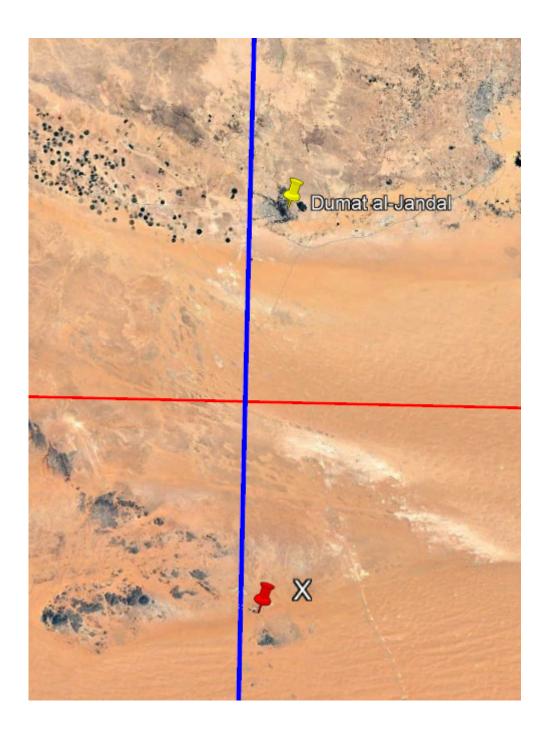


Figure-3: The proposed location for the mount of Sinai: (Latitude, Longitude) 29 14 00, 39 51 19

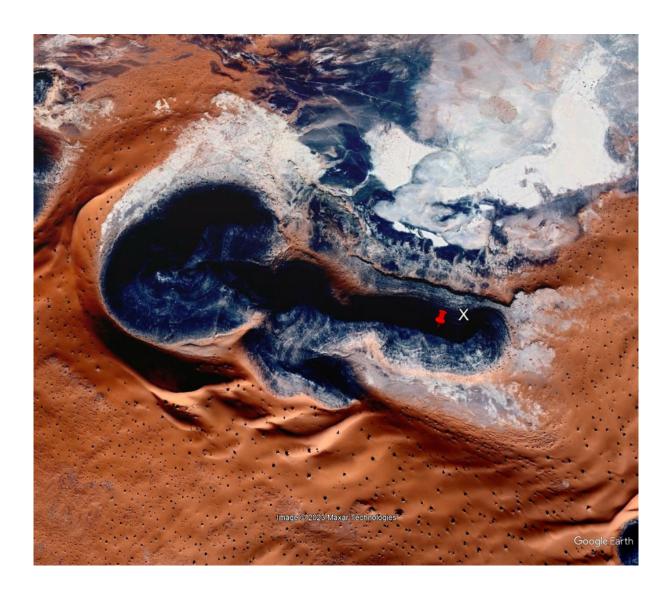


Figure-4: The shape of this mount does look like two characters from the Thamudic-Tabuki Script as can be seen in figure 5 & 6.



The above shape could be simplified as the following:



Which also can be represented by the following:



This is "OE" with a small circle in "O" and middle line in E is shifted up.

This represents two characters from the Tabuki script as can be seen in figure 5 and 6.

It should be noted that the Thamudic script is not related to the tribe of Thamud in the Quran as this name (Thamudic script) was issued by the English Archaeologists in the 19th when they noticed these script first time in a village that is called Thamud in Yemen. It should also be noted that Thamud is an Arabic name from "Thamad" which means "little water", therefore, Thamud means "the land of little water". It does seem that there were many tribes in different ages that were named Thamud.

Figure-5: Thamudic Characters board. Ref: https://twitter.com/arch1993/status/637862317217091584?lang=en https://twitter.com/1 almahri/status/1245681130759696384

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Figure-6: The same as figure-5 with translations and marks.

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Figure-7: Basita farms in Al-Jowf Province.

