

The cliffs of Arbel, overlooking the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, mark the south side of a steep valley known in Arabic as the Wadi Hammam, or the "valley of the pigeons," after the many pigeons that nest there. In the Plain of Arbel, at the foot of the cliffs, a battle was fought in 160 B.C.E. between the Hasmoneans and Bacchides (1 Maccabees 9:2). In the caves in these cliffs, Herod the Great destroyed the remnants of the revolt against his rule, rebels who hid in the caves of the Arbel. According to Josephus, Herod had huge boxes built, which were lowered down the face of the cliffs by ropes. Soldiers in the boxes dragged the last rebels out to their deaths by means of long iron hooks, which they thrust back into the caves (*Antiquities* 14.445).