

There is a popular tradition in the Holy City, current we are told amongst Christians and Mahomedans alike, that when Christian troops enter Jerusalem through the Golden Gateway the Turkish domination will be at an end. This tradition was not mentioned in Fergusson's account of that remarkable building, printed in pp. 94-102 of *Antient Topography of Jerusalem*, published in 1847; but if his speculation be correct, that the gateway was once the propylaeum or festal entrance of Constantine's Basilica, known as the Marturion, the interest of the tradition is unquestionably very great. The fact that no vestige of this famous Basilica now remains is attributed by Albericus to the order of El Hakim to level it with the ground, "solo aequare mandavit." William of Tyre describes this building as "usque ad solum diruta" (Lib. I, cap. IV); but if Fergusson's theory be correct the foundations almost certainly remain, and could probably be found by excavation. That the Turkish Government would ever voluntarily allow such excavations to be made in the Haram area is, under present circumstances, doubtless inconceivable; but until this is done, the truth of Fergusson's theory can never be effectually tested, and the problem of Constantine's Churches will remain, as it is at present, one of the principal unsolved problems of the Holy City.

---

## THE SITE OF CAPERNAUM.

By DR. E. W. G. MASTERMAN.

THE very important observations made by Mr. Macalister in the neighbourhood of *Telhâm*<sup>1</sup> may, I fear, on account of their brevity and incidental mention, be overlooked by students of New Testament topography. The site of Capernaum has, in Anglo-American Protestant circles at any rate (not, I believe, with Roman Catholics and Jews), been a subject of such divided opinion that any new

<sup>1</sup> "Diary of a Visit to Safed," *Quarterly Statement*, 1907, pp. 116-120. (On p. 105, line 4, read *east* for *west*, *ib.* l. 22, *wooden* should be *wooded*, p. 108, l. 7 from foot, for *there* read *these*; p. 109, l. 13, for *Alma* read *Akma*; l. 22, *Mawwâsy* should be *Qudarîn*; l. 29, 'Ain Salah, which is the name in the P.E.F. Map and *Memoirs*, is not now used, this spring is called 'Ain el-Kahâleh.)

facts bearing on the question must be valuable. Mr. Macalister's deductions from the pottery, which, I may say, would have been convincing to any unbiased and intelligent student, who like myself had had the privilege of going over the ground with him, are, from the point of this controversy, epoch-making. They show conclusively that the long credited *Khan Minyeh* sites are untenable. In Mr. Macalister's brief report he has, however, only dealt with the negative side of the question. I wish to deal here, in a very brief way, with the positive evidence in favour of *Telhâm*, which to me, after several months of studying the question in the immediate neighbourhood, appears overwhelming. While abbreviating my arguments as much as possible, I am not intentionally avoiding any difficulty.

The sources of our information regarding the site of Capernaum are: 1. The New Testament; 2. Josephus; 3. The early and mediæval pilgrim writings; 4. Certain Jewish writings; and 5. The modern ruins.

1. From Matthew xiv, 34, Mark vi, 53, and John vi, 17-21, we may infer that Capernaum was close to Gennesaret. The disciples, going to Capernaum, from apparently the east side, landed at Gennesaret. Now although no one will, I think, maintain that Gennesaret ever extended as far as *Telhâm*, yet I see very strong reasons for believing that the district so called (never, be it noted, called "a plain") extended as far as and included the great springs of *et-Tabaghah*.<sup>1</sup> I cannot see how anyone reading the description of Josephus (*B.J.*, iii, 10, 8) can doubt this; the dimensions he mentions imply a much larger area than the narrow limits of *el-Ghuweir* (usually called the "Plain of Gennesaret"), while the varied products of the district were certainly not those of simply an irrigated plain. The new fact that the hill *el 'Oreimeh* was in those days unbuilt upon<sup>2</sup> greatly strengthens this theory—there would have been no break in the fresh fertility all the way from Magdala to *et-Tabaghah*. Viewed from the lake to-day, the whole of this area is a distinct unit; the green hill *'Oreimeh* does not, as it does on land, seem to interrupt or divide the district. Now if this is

<sup>1</sup> This view I first saw enunciated in an article on "Gennesaret," by Prof. W. R. Stevens in the *Baptist Quarterly Review* (U.S.A.), Oct., 1886, and I have gone into it fully in an article, now in the press, in the *Biblical World* (Chicago).

<sup>2</sup> Macalister, *loc. cit.*

admitted, several difficulties are got rid of. The beautiful bay of *et-Tabaghah*, teeming with fish, becomes at once a port of Gennesaret; while, if Capernaum was at *Telhâm*, this bay must have been the harbour and the fishing station<sup>1</sup> of the town.<sup>2</sup>

The other New Testament references to Capernaum all refer exclusively to the great synagogue there. It is manifest that this was then recently erected under, apparently, government patronage (Luke vii, 5); Jarius was one of the rulers of the synagogue of Capernaum (Luke viii, 41, Mark v, 22), in this synagogue our Lord rebuked the Unclean Spirit (Mark i, 21-27, Luke iv, 33-35), here He healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day (Matthew xii, 10-13, Mark iii, 1-5, Luke vi, 6-11), and in the same synagogue He discoursed on the bread of life (John vi, 26-59). It is not far-fetched to suppose that it was because of the presence of this great synagogue that Jesus Christ selected Capernaum as the centre of His Galilean ministry. Now at the end of this paper I shall have occasion to point out that there is one thing for which *Telhâm* must always be celebrated, and this is the ruined white marble synagogue, which, even in its utter destruction, yet bears eloquent witness to its once unique grandeur.

2. When we turn to Josephus we find two statements bearing on the subject. In his "Life" we read<sup>3</sup> that he was injured while fighting near Bethsaida Julias (in *el-Bataihah*), and that he "was carried into a village Cepharnome," where he received medical advice, and whence he was the next night carried by boat to Tarichaea. It must always be a difficulty with anyone who maintains the *Minych* site that, whether carried by sea or land, Josephus must have passed *Telhâm*, which, if not Capernaum, must, without doubt, from the extent of the ruins, have been the largest Jewish town on the north shore: it is difficult to suggest any reason why Josephus should not have found the assistance he needed there.

The second reference in Josephus occurs in connection with the well-known description of Gennesaret. At the conclusion Josephus states: "It (*i.e.* Gennesaret) is also watered by a most fertile fountain. The people of the country call it Capharnaum. Some have thought

<sup>1</sup> Hence it is possible there was here a Bethsaida or fishing place, not a town but a suburb of Capernaum.

<sup>2</sup> Rob Roy brought against *Telhâm* the argument that there was nowhere a harbour.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Flavius Josephus*, § 72.

it to be a vein of the Nile because it produces the Coracin fish as well as does that lake which is near to Alexandria.”<sup>1</sup> Now, anyone describing this district might refer to many springs, but none have any claim to *special* mention compared with that great fountain now rising in the ruined octagonal basin, called after *Sheikh ‘Ali edh-Dhather*. Of it the late Sir Charles Wilson wrote: “it is by far the largest spring in Galilee, and was estimated to be more than half the size of the celebrated source of the Jordan at Banias. It rises to the surface with great force, at a temperature of 86·5°. It is without doubt the fountain of Capharnaum, mentioned by Josephus as watering the plain of Gennesaret.”<sup>2</sup> The only objection anyone can raise is that it does not water any large part of the plain of Gennesaret; it, with its associated smaller springs, only watered, probably in New Testament days, that particularly fruitful and attractive corner of the district known to-day as *et-Tabaghah*, unless, as is highly improbable, the aqueduct round the seaward aspect of the hill *el ‘Oreimeh* is pre-Arabic work. But the fact is *el Ghuweir* is abundantly supplied with water from *Ain et-Medawwreh*, *Wady er-Rübädtyeh*, and *Wady el ‘Amüd*, with some small assistance from the shore-spring *‘Ain et-Tineh*. Capernaum itself may have drawn all its needed water from the lake—as the lake-side dwellers do to-day at Tiberias and elsewhere—though there are indications that there was once an aqueduct to the town from the Jordan, but that a spring so near, within two miles, should have been called after the town which owned it and utilized its waters is only natural. Even to-day the *Telhäm* property extends close to this spring, the actual boundary being the adjoining spring known as *Hammäm Eyyüb*. By his reference to the Coracinus fish, Josephus has introduced what has seemed to many a difficulty. The Coracinus or cat-fish (*Charias maerocanthus*) is almost ubiquitous along the north shore of the lake, it finds its way up every stream in the early months of the year, during the breeding season, in myriads.<sup>3</sup> I have watched numbers of these interesting creatures gliding about in the waters of *‘Ain et-Tineh*, but so far as I can find out, both from personal observation and local enquiries, it does not occur to-day in the waters of the *Birket Sheikh ‘Ali edh-Dhather*. The statements that it has been seen there are founded

<sup>1</sup> *B.J.*, III, 10, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> See the graphic description of Canon Tristram in the *Memoirs of the P.E.F.* “*Flora and Fauna*,” pp. 196-70.

upon a mistake.<sup>1</sup> One, however, asks : how could this fish get there now ? The cat-fish ascends all the streams for breeding purposes, it can creep along streams so shallow that but half its body is submerged, it can even cross patches of dry land, but that it should be able to insinuate its bulky head through the yards of broken masonry amid which the water of the *Birket* pours at head-long speed, or enter it over the 28 feet high surrounding wall, is inconceivable. But the *Birket* itself is but Arabian work, while its present state of ruin a matter of less than a century. That the cat-fish must have found its way to the spring under other conditions is not merely probable, but certain.

3. When we turn to the record of Christian pilgrims, we find that their accounts are all, without break, in favour of the *Telhâm* site until we come to the seventeenth century. There appears to have been no controversy regarding the site all the previous centuries. It is true that the writings of some of these pilgrims have been quoted by Robinson<sup>2</sup> as supporting another view, but the reason for this is that he failed to recognise the geographical situation of a certain place referred to by a long succession of pilgrims ; a "fixed point," as it were, from which distances to other places were calculated. This place was *et-Tabaghah*. What was *et-Tabaghah* in the days of the pilgrims ? In an article on *Tabaghah* by M. Heidet, a translation of which appears in *Das Heilige Land*,<sup>3</sup> it is clearly shown that this name is a survival of the *Heptapagon* or *Septem fontes* of the Greek and Latin writers respectively. Although the derivation is not very evident in writing, the pronunciation of the two words, as pronounced by the Bedawin, with something of an aspirate on the first syllable, becomes :—

*het'-tab-(a)gha* = *et tabaghah*.

*hep-tap-(a)gon* = *Heptapagon*.

<sup>1</sup> As regards Mr. Macalister's remarks in *Q.S.*, 1907, p. 119, I am sorry to say he is mistaken about Rob Roy's observations (see *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, pp. 368, 370), and I regret to find Father Beiver, who told us he had seen the *Coracinus* in the *Birket*, was mistaken, as he had had quite another fish than the well-known cat-fish pointed out to him as the *Coracinus*. When I told him the *Coracinus* was the *barbât* or cat-fish, he at once said he had never seen it or heard of its occurrence in this *Birket*.

<sup>2</sup> *Biblical Researches*, Vol. III, pp. 347-58.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Heilige Land*, Heft 5, pp. 210-228. My quotations of the statements of the Pilgrims are partly from Robinson (*loc. cit.*), and partly from this article.

Indeed, Father Beiver, of the *Tabaghah* hospice, who pointed out this similarity in pronunciation to me, further said that the Greek  $\gamma$  had something in it of an  $\xi$  (âin) sound. Whether this is true or not, the derivation is, I take it, certain.

Now, by early Church tradition—worthless perhaps to us from the point of view of the New Testament, but important for the present purpose—those biblical incidents are localised in the neighbourhood of the Heptapagon, and therefore of *et-Tabaghah*. They are:—

- (1) The feeding of the five thousand (Matt. xiv, 15–21, etc.).
- (2) The place of Benediction, *i.e.*, the scene of the long discourse of Matthew v–viii, followed by the healing of the leper, the site of which miracle was also pointed out.
- (3) The appearance of Christ by the Lake side after His Resurrection; indeed, all the events of John xxi.

Of these the first two are the earlier traditions, and can be traced back to the fourth century. These events were commemorated by a succession of churches and convents which arose here during the centuries. The first event (1) was specially localized on the hill to the east of the *Tabaghah* plain, and there may still be seen the apse of a chapel erected near a cave, now called *Mugharet Eyyub* (Job's Cave), where, by tradition, our Lord retired to pray (Matt. xiv, 23) after the miracle. The second event is associated by many with a spot further north, near the head of the *Wady et-Tabaghah*, where there is a tree known as *Shujaret el-Mubarakeh*; while the third event was connected with a spot some twenty yards from the shore, near where the mills now are. A long stone—possibly once a dolmen—called *Mensa Christi* was once shown here, but during the centuries, while the tradition of the *Mensa* or Table remained, the name was given, now to the table-like stone where the Resurrection meal was, now to the before-mentioned eastern hill, and at last to the open plain between the hill, where a late pilgrim supposed that the five thousand dined, as it were, “at the Table of Christ.” Some amount of detail has been gone into with regard to these ecclesiastical traditions, because pilgrim after pilgrim, who, one may add, all looked upon this as the site more worth visiting, state that Capernaum was two miles from this spot.

THEODOSIUS (530) describes his journey as two miles from Tiberias to Magdala; thence to the “Seven Fountains,” where was

the "multiplying of the bread," seven miles; from this to Capernaum two miles, and thence to Bethsaida (east of the Jordan) six miles.

ARCULFUS, at the end of the seventh century, after describing the place of the feeding of the five thousand, says: "from whence along the margin of the same lake, by not a long circuit they arrive at Capernaum along the shore." He did not himself visit it, but seeing it from the distance described it as without a wall, "and being confined to a narrow space, between the mountain and the lake, it extended a long way upon the shore from west to east, having the mountain on the north and the lake on the south." This is, one may add, a very fair description of the position of *Telhâm* as viewed from a little distance, *e.g.*, the hills about *et-Tabaghah*; the ruins form a mere fringe along the shore, and immediately to the north of them the hills begin to rise; the town of the living never apparently extended beyond the narrow plain, though in the *Wady Kerazeh* is the extensive Necropolis.

WILLIBERT (eighth century), in his itinerary, visited the holy sites in the following order:—Magdala (*Megdel*), Capernaum (*Telhâm*), Bethsaida (*et-Tell*), Corazin (*Kerazeh*), and thence to the sources of the Jordan.

EPIPHANIOS (tenth century) describes Capernaum as two miles from the Castle Heptapagon, where there was a large church. The "Castle" was apparently a fortified convent.

During the period of the Crusades a number of pilgrims<sup>1</sup> visited the district; the name Heptapagon appears to have been lost, but the "Mensa" remains, and all describe the place where Jesus fed the five thousand—the "Mensa" at this period—and that where Jesus appeared after His Resurrection as two miles from Capernaum.

In 1283 the Dominican monk BURKHARD (Brocardus) gives a full description of these parts. He describes the Mountain of the Beatitudes to the east of the plain; he states that at the foot of the mountain about thirty paces from the sea arises a fountain of living water, which is encompassed by a wall, and which is supposed to be a vein of the Nile because the Coracinus fish is found there. Josephus, he says, calls this fountain Caphernaum because the whole land from the fountain to the Jordan—a distance of two hours—belonged to Capernaum. He says, that from the "Mensa" is a distance of one hour east to Capernaum and two hours to the Jordan.

<sup>1</sup> M. Heidet (*loc. cit.*) mentions Fratellus (1119), an anonymous pilgrim of 1130, Hegisippus (1170), and Theodorich (1172).

The Italian Dominican RICCOLDO (1300) also describes "the table" where Our Lord appeared after His Resurrection as two miles distant from Capernaum.

ORDORICUS of Pordenone, a Franciscan monk (1330), visited Bethsaida and Capernaum, "which were separated from each other by the Jordan," and "two miles from Capernaum, near the sea, is the place where the Lord preached to the people . . . If one descends from there one finds the place where the Lord fed the people with the five loaves and the two fishes, it is therefore called the 'Mensa' . . . a little below is the place where the Lord appeared to His disciples after His Resurrection, and ate part of the fish with them."

FATHER NOE, a Franciscan, in 1508 writes: "Now, if you leave Capernaum and go about two miles you will find a mountain where Our Lord preached and healed the leper; at the foot of this mountain is a plain where our Lord fed the five thousand . . . it is called the table of honour (*mensa d'onore*)."

The traditions are thus carried on to the sixteenth century. It would then appear that, on account of the growing hostility of the Moslems and the state of disorder in the land, the visiting of these sacred shrines gradually ceased. It was impossible to reach with safety the north end of the lake, and pilgrims were therefore apparently led to a spot near the Horns of Hattin, *from which these sites could be pointed out from the distance*; and from this reason the spot near Hattin gradually came to be accepted as the actual Mount of the Beatitudes, etc., while the site of the Appearance after the Resurrection came to be transferred to the neighbourhood of Tiberias. Hence, in the seventeenth century it is not surprising to find that the site of the ruined Moslem *Khan Minyeh*, and doubtless the remains of the Moslem town of the same name near the *Khan*, are referred to as the ruins of Capernaum. It may be explained by the long break of over a century in the pilgrimages, the insecurity of the country, especially such a spot as *Telhâm*, off the then high road; and doubtless, too, the fact that the recently ruined Arab town must have presented superficially an appearance much more imposing than the half-buried and long ruined remains at *Telhâm*. It is indeed quite probable that when Quaresmius (1640) made his much quoted statement that the site of Capernaum was occupied by a miserable Arabic Khan called *Menich*, he himself had seen the spot only from afar. But the important fact is that his



is the *first and only reference in the pilgrim writings to Capernaum as in the neighbourhood of Khan Mīnyeh.*

4. Considerable stress has been laid on the fact that, in some Talmudic references<sup>1</sup> to Capernaum, mention is made of certain *minim*, i.e., heretics (clearly, from the context, Christians), who lived there. It has been supposed that this word *minim* accounts for the name *Mīnyeh*, and connects, necessarily, Capernaum with the latter site. But, in the first place, the connection is extremely doubtful, as *Mīnyeh* seems rather to be derived from *munja*, the name of the Arab town which stood here in the Middle Ages<sup>2</sup>; and, secondly, even if there is a connection between *minim* and *Mīnyeh*, it proves nothing, as, in the event of Capernaum having been at *Telhām*, it is more than probable that the town property extended to the high road here, and that the custom dues were here taken on behalf of the town.

More important than these references is the mention of Capernaum by Jewish pilgrims. They clearly associate Kefr Nahum—the supposed birthplace of the Prophet Nahum—with Tanhum. Thus<sup>3</sup> “Kaphir Tanhum, or Nahhum is to the east of Gennesaret about half an hour” (Rabbi Isaac Farhi 1322). Rabbi Schwarz (1852), in describing Capernaum, says: “This place is now a ruin known to all the Jews, they call it Kephher Tanhum.” He says: “there are three tombs there—that of the Prophet Nahhum and of Rabbi Tanhhuma and Tanhhum.”

The derivation of *Telhām* from *Tanhûm* is practically certain, for, as Mr. Macalister<sup>4</sup> has pointed out, the place never has been a “tell.”

5. When finally we turn to the ruins, what do we find?—

- (a) A stretch of ruined dwellings, of black basalt, extending along the lake side over a larger area than anywhere on the north shore.
- (b) Clear indications that, though the surface ruins belong to Arab buildings, the site was long occupied by buildings of the Roman period, whose ruins are now found in the earth a few feet down.

<sup>1</sup> Midrash Rabbah on Ecclesiastes i, 8 and vii, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Or a *muayal Hashûm* which, according to Kazwini's “Lexicon,” stood here in the eleventh century (see G. A. Smith in *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Art. “Capernaum”).

<sup>3</sup> See also other references in *Ency. Bib., loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Quarterly Statement, loc. cit.*

- (c) An extensive necropolis of the Roman period at the adjoining mouth of the *Wady Kerazeh*.
- (d) The ruins of a large synagogue of beautiful white limestone, a local marble, every fragment of which had to be transported from a distance. The remains, though fragmentary, clearly show that the building here was, allowing for locality and period, of more than ordinary magnificence, finer than any of the other ruined Galilean synagogues, which were indeed apparently modelled after it.<sup>1</sup>

The existing remains are clearly not all of one period, and the extensive pavement to the east of the Roman synagogue would appear to have been not, as it became later, a mere courtyard, but to have been the foundations and pavement of an earlier synagogue to which, too, many of the more primitive of the surviving carved stones belong.

On the whole of the north shore there is nowhere else any indication of any such building, such as might be reasonably expected in the ruins of Capernaum; nor, indeed, as has been shown, is there any other site which was, apparently, from the evidence of the pottery, occupied during New Testament times. There is, lastly, one question which the supporters of the other view never appear to have satisfactorily answered: if not Capernaum, what Jewish city in the days of Christ could have stood at the site of *Telhâm*?

---

## THE "GARDEN TOMB."

By R. A. STEWART MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

It is with considerable hesitation that I take in hand the task of writing an article to state my views on the so-called "Garden Tomb," for I shall be compelled to express opinions contrary to those of friends for whom I have a high regard. But, having undertaken the duty, I must speak plainly.

<sup>1</sup> For preliminary account, with a plan and photographs, see *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, No. 29.