

## THE SEA OF TIBERIAS AND ITS ENVIRONS.

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*(Continued from p. 22.)**Bethsaida.*

WHILE there is no doubt that one of the Bethsaidas of the Gospel Narrative is the Bethsaida Julias of Josephus (*Ant.* xviii, 2, 1, etc., and Jerome Comm. Mt. xvi, 13), it seems to me certain that there was another Bethsaida, the birthplace of Andrew and Peter (John i, 45; xii, 21), situated somewhere in the "land of Gennesaret" (Mark vi, 45, 53), on the Western shore of the Lake of Galilee.<sup>1</sup> With Mark compare John (vi, 17), who says the disciples crossed the sea "towards Capernaum." If, therefore, there was a Bethsaida somewhere near the plain of Gennesaret, its site is one of the problems in this region which await solution.

Some, following Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, Vol. II, p. 406), suggest that et-Tabighah marks the site and, to suit the narrative of St. John (vi, 17) Robinson also locates Capernaum at Khan al-Minieh (*Researches*, Vol. III, p. 359). Just south of Khan al-Minieh, however, on the northern end of the small plain of Gennesaret, there are remains of a settlement which I suggest may very likely prove to be the site of this Bethsaida "in the land of Gennesaret."

Et-Tabighah, as already stated, is the modern form of the Greek name (ἐπι)τὰ πηγαί, which, in its turn, is a translation of the Hebrew בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע, "seven wells" Beer-Sheba (*cf.* 2 Kings xxiii, 8). It is assumed that Tabighah marks the site of a fishing town, but I found no trace of ancient ruins on that exact point north of Khan al-Minieh. Khan al-Minieh is separated from the Valley of the Seven Springs by a knoll named *Tell Oremeh*. Tabighah is situated on the seaside edge of this knoll. There is very little space for a fishing village between the knoll and the sea, and the ground is very rocky. The village cannot have stood on Tell Oremeh, for it has been examined, and only Pre-Israelite remains were found on it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [The theory of a second Bethsaida has been put forth by Reland and others; for the arguments against it readers may consult Sir George Adam Smith's article on the site in the *Ency. Biblica*.—*Ed.*]

<sup>2</sup> See *Q.S.*, April, 1907, p. 117.

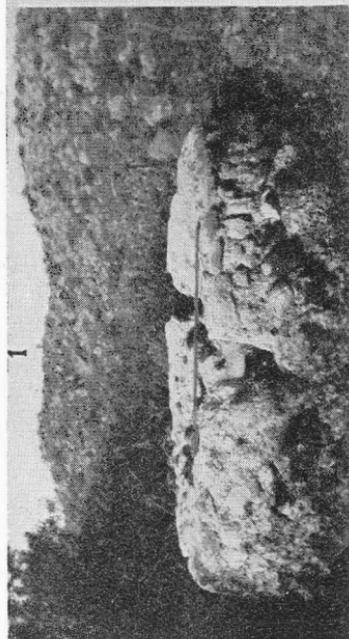
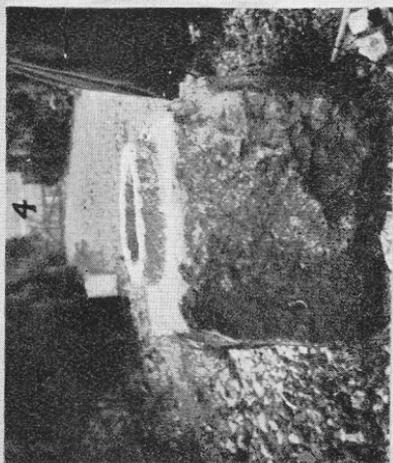
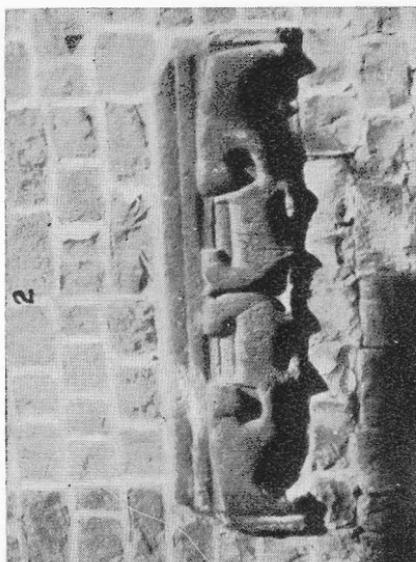
There is nothing unlikely in Bethsaida and Dalmanutha having been situated as close to each other as Tabighah and Khan al-Minieh are. Compare the Tiberias of Roman date and *Hamath* further down, separated practically only by two walls. The Tabighah site, however, suggests no remains nor other evidence of a fishing village having been there, though the modern hostel is built there on the ground that it was the Bethsaida of Christ's time. It must be admitted also that its proximity to the Bay of the Call of Peter and Andrew, where the fishes come close in in shoals for the warm water of the springs, marks Tabighah point as a likely place for the fishing village to which Peter belonged; but nothing can be based on this fact. Two of the favourite haunts of the fishermen of Tiberias to-day are just this bay itself and the bay opposite the shore of the plain el-Bateiha beside Bethsaida Julias (Ewing, Hastings, *B.D.*).

Both Bethsaidas are New Testament sites, but when they come to be examined, in all probability remains of much earlier settlements may be found. The name Tabighah may itself be an indication of an old Hebrew settlement known as Beer-Sheba as above indicated.

#### *Chinnereth-Gennesaret.*

Next in order on the west side comes the site of the town Chinnereth, a name which in New Testament times took the form of Gennesaret. There is no doubt whatever that the small plain between Magdala and Khan al-Minieh is the "land of Gennesaret" (Mark vi, 53; Matt. xiv, 34, Γεννησαρέτ), if we follow the reading adopted in the A.V. The R.V. and more recent translators, however, have adopted the reading of Tischendorf's text in these passages, making the passages read: "They came to the land unto Gennesaret." This is significant, and implies that there was a village of Gennesaret, after which the sea and plain were probably named. Gennesaret is the later equivalent of the Hebrew Chinnereth (Numbers xxxiv, 11; Joshua xii, 3, xiii, 27), the Old Testament name of the Sea.

Deut. iii, 17, and Joshua xix, 35 (*cf.* xi, 2), however, describe Chinnereth as a "fenced city" of that period; and yet another passage (1 Kings xv, 20) speaks of Chinneroth or Cinneroth as a district. It is quite clear, therefore, from the summation of this evidence, that there has been a town named Chinnereth from the



1. Circular shafts.

2. Carved lintel.

3. Panelled door.

4. Stone cut section of drain.

[To face p. 66.]

earliest Hebrew occupation of the country, if not earlier ; that there was a village in Christ's time named Gennesaret, the Greek form of the old Hebrew name ; and that the sea, as well as the plain around this town, bore the name of the town itself all through.

In Josephus, the name Gennesar, or Gennesaret, describes the sea and the land bordering on it on the west side, known to-day as el-Ghuweir. Josephus describes it as very fertile, full of many kinds of trees and growing many kinds of fruit—walnuts, dates, figs, olives. To-day the plain is covered with tall grass, thorns, reeds and oleanders. It is difficult, therefore, to examine it for ruins ; but unquestionably, somewhere in this small plain, probably quite near to the shore of the Lake, ruins of the town Gennesaret of Christ's time and of the older Chinnereth of Joshua's time, if not also ruins of a Canaanite settlement, await discovery.

#### *Magdala.*

The modern village of Mejdal (or Mejdal Nunyah, Mejdal of the Fishes), situated on the shore, just at the point where the Via Maris enters the Wady Hammam and strikes to the south-west through the hills, seems not only to retain the name, but also to occupy the site of the Magdala of Christ's time. There are undoubtedly remains of an early settlement there, but the houses of the present village cover them. Their extent, however, is interesting as showing how limited were the confines of these many villages, described as towns and cities, around the shores of the Lake. Magdala certainly cannot have been a large village. Its position is valuable as showing that, where there was large enough space close in to the shore, the inhabitants of Christ's time preferred to build their houses as near to the water as possible ; though, just as we find in our own fishing villages, it is quite likely that the town also spread inland and covered part of the higher ground as well. This was probably the case at Tell-Hum (Capernaum), where the ruins occupy the higher ground some distance from the shore. Presumably the houses of the fishing people were built close to the water's edge.

#### *Via Maris.*

At the entrance to the Wady Hammam, high up the cliff on the south side, there are enormous caves.

In one of these caves<sup>1</sup> were found, some 12 years ago, two large heavy slabs of limestone, each slab having a lion carved on it. These are probably intended to represent a lion and a lioness. They stand facing each other and (if I remember correctly), there are two cubs between them. In the photo, reproduced from a picture-postcard, the lion has his left paw on the head of one cub.

These lions have the tail curled up over the back of each, and may be rough imitations of Assyrian sculpture. The presence of these lions showing Assyrian influence in these caves on the side of the Via Maris may be regarded as confirmatory evidence of the identification of this passage through the hills to the South and West country as the genuine Via Maris, through which the Assyrian and Babylonian hosts passed on their way to Judaea and Jerusalem and Egypt. These carved slabs were secured by the owner of the Hotel Tiberias, and they are now built into the front wall of the verandah of the hotel, in the modern town of Tiberias.

#### *Tiberias.*

The modern Tiberias occupies a site a little to the north of the city of Christ's time. The ancient Tiberias was built over a cemetery, and was therefore unclean. As Herod could get no Jews to come and live there on that account, the town was populated chiefly by Greeks and Gentiles of other nations. This explains why we find no record of Christ's ever having entered the town—a further proof of His scrupulous regard for the Law.

Excavation work has been carried on to some extent on the ancient ruins, and the results have been published. The line of the walls and the foundation walls of many houses are now visible. The most interesting building connected with it was the palace of Herod Antipas, built on the high ridge to the south of the

<sup>1</sup> In the *Q.S.*, 1877, p. 119, Kitchener there describes this stone:—

“Inserted into the lower wall (at Kulât ibn Ma'an) is a large block of limestone bearing two lions facing each other, one front paw of each being placed on some indistinguishable object. It appears to me extremely probable that this stone, quite distinct from those around it in material and workmanship, was brought from the ruined synagogue at Irbid. It also greatly resembles the stone bearing two lions at the synagogue at Umm el-Amud. Should it have been brought from Irbid it would appear that both synagogues had similar lintels ornamented with lions.”

(See also *Memoir of the Survey*, Vol. I, pp. 408 and 410.)

present city. This palace was enclosed with walls which ran down the slope and joined on to the city walls, so that the palace formed part of the ancient city. The walls of the building can still be traced, and with very little excavation the general plan of the palace could be discovered. The line of the enclosing walls is clearly visible. The walls of several rooms are still exposed to view to a depth of several feet. These are covered with a heavy coat of plaster, which is painted. These rooms have undoubtedly been exposed in recent times by people searching for treasure or for building material. In the interior, and towards the back court of the palace, I found what appeared to be two circular shafts built of stone and plaster (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Two deep slots, slightly over a foot in width and about the same depth, were cut in the circular wall at opposite ends of a diameter, apparently for the reception of a heavy beam, to which doubtless tackle had been attached for raising and lowering water or stores. One of these circular shafts is only about 6 feet in diameter. The other measures 10 to 12 feet across. It is difficult to say what purpose these shafts served. They are filled up now almost to the surface. It seems impossible that they can have been the mouths of draw-wells. They may have been connected with a series of cisterns, or with the water-supply which Herod brought to his palace from a distance. On the other hand, they may have been connected with store-chambers for supplies of food and weapons of defence.

There are enormous caves running into the hill underneath the palace, and at least one tunnel is locally reputed to be about 14 miles long, having its exit that distance south in Galilee. These caves are a labyrinth which, I believe, it is risky to explore without a guide. The entrances are half-way down the hill and were apparently included within the walls, so as to make the caves accessible from the interior of the city, but not from outside. It is possible that these shafts are surface connections within the palace with these caves and galleries underneath, providing a means of bringing in men or a means of escape if necessary. I found a similar circular-built shaft at Jubeihah (Jogbehah, Judges viii, 11) in Transjordan, where also all the surface ruins are of the Herodian period.

There are some who think that it was in this palace and not at Machaerus (Josephus, *Ant.* xviii, 5, 2) that John the Baptist was

<sup>1</sup> In the photograph a 5-ft. rod lies on the shafts.

beheaded. If so, it is possible that one of these underground dungeons may have been his prison.

In front of the south-west wall of the palace I found the remains of another large plastered room or cistern. If this was a cistern, it implies that the system of cisterns, rain-fed from the roof, was already in use in the time of Herod Antipas.

Fig. 2 shows a carved stone which is now built into the wall of a house in a small side street of Tiberias. The carving represents two lions, probably a lion and lioness, with two cubs between them. This work is certainly original, and not an imitation of earlier sculpture. It seems to me to be Hittite work, and on this point there appears to be considerable unanimity. Presumably this is a lintel which has been taken from Herod's palace on the hill. The people themselves say it came from there, and it is possible that it was one of the reasons for the destruction of the palace, as some suggest. The carving is very crude and primitive. Herod Antipas may have found it in the neighbourhood and have taken it to adorn his palace.

Another equally interesting relic (Fig. 3) which has perhaps been stolen from the palace is a massive panelled door, thickly studded with large-headed iron nails. This door is now serving as the door of a modern house in the very heart of Tiberias, towards the south side. The little girl at the right-hand side of the photo serves as a scale and shows that the door is about 8 to 9 feet in height. It was shown me at sunset, and I had to leave early next day, so that I was unable to take any measurements. Whether or not this may be regarded as one of the doors of the palace of Herod Antipas, there is no doubt that an examination of the ruins of the Palace on the Hill would yield very interesting results, and more relics may yet be discovered in the modern town which have been taken from it. It may be assumed that all building material of any value, and especially any carved stones or lintels accessible, have long since found their way down to the modern town.

The people of Tiberias bathe and wash in the Lake, and insist on drinking the water as well. This has resulted in occasional outbreaks of cholera and typhoid, to prevent which bathing, etc., in the Lake has been forbidden by the Health Department. Another precaution I myself witnessed. As the women came up from the Lake with their water-tins full, the officer standing beside them squirted a strong solution of chloride of lime into each tin from a

bottle in his hand, but he winked to me as he did it, as though he seemed to doubt its efficacy. Another of the many proofs I have noted of the Arab's profound faith in the British!

Tiberias was at one period known as "Moeziyeh," the town of Moez, after an Egyptian Arab Sultan of that name.

#### *Hammath.*

Separated from the ancient Tiberias by the breadth of two city walls, or little more, stood the Town of the Baths, the Hammath of Joshua, xix, 35, the Emmaus (Ἐμμαοῦς) of Josephus (*Ant.* xviii, 2, 3, etc.), and now known as Khirbet al-Hammam. In the list of towns in North Palestine given by Thothmes III its name is Hemtu, and in another ancient authority (the Travels of Mohar) it is Hemat.

The mere fact that there are hot springs here is sufficient testimony that this site has all along been occupied. There has been a town or fortress here from a very early period. The ruins of the latest occupation are quite visible, and they lie so near to those of Tiberias that one cannot but wonder why they did not include both towns in the same walls of fortification. Both, however, were separately fortified, as can be clearly seen. No excavation has been done on the site, but the accumulated debris must yield traces of occupation back to early Canaanite times.

These four hot springs are still used. They are enclosed in a building which is open on certain days of the week for women only, and on the other days for men. Josephus' name, "Ἐμμαοῦς," is simply the Greek form of the Hebrew name Hammath (חַמַּת). With this we may compare the identification of the modern village Amwas, about seven miles from Jerusalem, with the Emmaus of the New Testament (Luke xxiv, 13). Wherever the name Amwas, or Emmaus, is found there is generally a spring, regarded as possessing healing power, in the vicinity. A site with a healing spring near it must therefore have the preference in searching for any village named Emmaus.

#### *Kadesh, Taricheae and Sennabris.*

Between Hammath and the south end of the Sea, three identifications yet await confirmation. (1) Kadesh, probably the Kadesh of Balak (Naphtali), comes first, and lies just a little south of Hammath, according to some authorities.

(2) The position of Taricheae (Ταριχῆαι, Ταριχάται of Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* 3, 10, 1) is disputed. The Talmudic name was *Beth Yerakh*. Close to the bridge across Jordan and on the western side of the river there are a few mounds of considerable height and extent. These mounds are by many regarded as marking the site of the Taricheae of Josephus, but what was the name of the early Hebrew town on this site there is no means of knowing. I examined the large mound nearest to the bridge and found pottery dating from Roman times back to the early Hebrew period, at least 850 B.C.

Strabo (Book xvi, ii, 45) mentions Taricheae as the fishing station where the Lake supplies the best fish for curing. The name means the "salting station." Boettger (*Lex. Fl.*, Josephus) seems to regard these mounds as marking the site. Wilson located it at Mejdal (Magdala). Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* iii, 10, 1) says Taricheae was situated like Tiberias at the bottom of a mountain, and when he besieged the place his soldiers were able to shoot arrows from the hill into the town.

These mounds cannot exactly be described as being at the foot of a hill, yet it seemed to me quite possible for arrows to be shot into the city from the hill-top on the west side. This is an important point in the identification of the site. The mounds are now known as Al-Kerak, perhaps a reminiscence of Beth Yerakh, the Talmudic name for Taricheae.

We searched carefully for traces of the stone drain by which water was brought to Tiberias from a wady several miles to the west; but we found no trace of it in close proximity to these mounds. This is not surprising. On visiting the Head of the Jewish Colony named Kinneret close by, however, I found one section of this stone drain lying near the door of his house (Fig. 4). Each block seems to have been about 2 feet square, pierced with a hole about 10 inches in diameter, and each block had a flange which fitted into the next. It must surely have been a laborious task to make a drain miles long of such blocks, and so smoothly and accurately bored.

(3) The site of Sennabris, the place where Vespasian pitched his camp (Josephus, *loc. cit.*), is probably marked by the mounds on the river bank a little to the north-west of those identified with Taricheae. These are named to-day Sinn-en-Nabra. Josephus says Sennabris was about thirty furlongs from Tiberias, and that

Vespasian's camp was easily seen by the insurgents in Tiberias. Whether these mounds known as Sinn-en-Nabra to-day fulfil these conditions I cannot definitely state.<sup>1</sup> The mounds identified as Taricheae are visible from Tiberias' site now, but those suggested as the remains of Sennabris are hidden by brushwood. It is certainly very difficult to crowd Kadesh, Taricheae and Sennabris into the short distance between Hammath and the south end of the Lake, and the sites mentioned here are the only ruins of ancient settlements visible on the surface.

*The East Side of the Lake.*

The modern village Semakh, just over the bridge at the south end of the Lake, is the *Semakh* of the Jerusalem Talmud; but, though it must mark the site of a much earlier settlement, nothing is yet known of its earlier history.

Kal'at al-Hoṣn is the modern name of the ancient Gamala, which probably received its name from the Hebrew word "Gamal," a camel, because the hill on which it stands resembles the back of a camel.

A little to the south-east is the ancient Hippos, now known as Susiyeh. A little further north are the ruins now known as Kurseh, which is generally identified with Gergesa. Gergesa had a market for pigs in Greek and Roman times, and this may have some bearing on the confusion with Gadara (Matt. viii, 28; Mark xi, 1)

On the east bank of the Jordan, at its entrance to the Lake, lie the ruins identified as Bethsaida Julias. It was on the plain el-Bateiha here that the miracle of feeding the five thousand took place. Bethsaida Julias seems a correct identification. It is significant that the name Bethsaida was applied pre-eminently to the fishing village situated close to one of the best fishing grounds in the Lake. This confirms the identification of the other Bethsaida, with a site at or very near to Tabigha, where is another fine fishing ground—the fishes in both cases being attracted by the inflow of water from the Springs.

The list of sites awaiting exploration on the shores of the Lake, beginning at the north end and going down the west side, thus includes—Chorazin, Capernaum, Dalmanutha, Bethsaida, Gennesaret, Magdala, Tiberias, Hammath, Kadesh, Sennabris, Taricheae; and on the east side going north—Semakh, Gamala, Hippos, Gergesa and Bethsaida Julias.

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on the sites of Taricheae and Sennabris see *Q.S.*, 1910, pp. 274-284.

A few supplementary notes may be added regarding Capernaum (Tell Hum). An ingenious explanation of the modern name Tell Hum is suggested by the Rev. W. M. Christie, D.D., of Tiberias. He regards it as an Arab transliteration of the Greek word *Τελώνιον*, Latin "Telonium," *i.e.*, "the Tax-collectors' place." The basilica, supposed to have been built on the site of Peter's house in Capernaum, is referred to as still extant in A.D. 600 by Antoninus Martyr.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Christie throughout both of these articles on "The Sea of Tiberias and its Environs." He has put both his rich knowledge and his observations freely at my disposal.

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## NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY FROM ROME TO JERUSALEM.<sup>1</sup>

*(Continued from p. 28.)*

The distance between Bethlehem and Hebron is more than 20 miles, the road being difficult, rocky and mountainous. Towards the end of the journey we entered a valley full of vineyards, which continued as far as Hebron<sup>2</sup> and is called the Vale of Mamre. Near Hebron is the field where was created Adam,<sup>3</sup> the first man; the field is now a vineyard, whose soil is not red, as is usual here, but ordinary earth, that is to say, [of a colour] half-way between white and black, as is loam. The length of this vineyard is considerable, and in it may be seen the place where Noah planted the first vine. And there still survives one of these very vines, taller than a man can reach. It is supported by an olive tree up which it climbs; and the pilgrims, for devotional purposes, take away little portions of it. The wood inside is of a deep red. Nowadays the whole of this vineyard and site form the Valley of Hebron or the Vale of Mamre. To the right of the Valley, near the hill, is to be seen the spot, situated beneath an ilex tree,<sup>4</sup> where Abraham saw the three angels and worshipped one of them and entertained them. The ilex

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the 16th-century Latin Manuscript in his possession by H. C. Luke, C.M.G., B.Litt., M.A., sometime Governor of Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> The grapes of Hebron are still among the best in Palestine.

<sup>3</sup> Another old tradition places in Hebron the scene of Adam's death.

<sup>4</sup> This is probably the "Oak of Rest," a very ancient specimen of the *quercus ilex pseudo-coccifera* in what is now the Garden of the Russian Hospice.