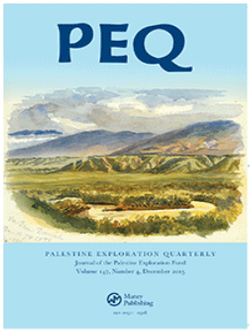

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Synagogues of Galilee

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of Doves' (W. el Hamâm), debouches into the green oasis of Ghûweir, or plain of Gennesaret. East of the sea the long flat plateau of Bashan stretches from the precipices which enclose the lake, and reaches away to the volcanic cones and dreary lava-fields which are backed by the peaks of Jebel ed Drûz.

"Tiberias was hidden below the cliffs, and only about half the blue and limpid lake was seen behind them; most conspicuous on this line are the Horns of Hattin, so fatal to the Christian kingdom in 1187, and here also, as on the east, a broad plateau runs almost to the top of the precipices.

"It is wonderful to reflect how numerous are the ancient towns which encircled this little lake; speaking of the west side alone, they number more than twenty. Hidden by the cliffs we have Tiberias, or Rakkath, and Hammath (El Hummâm), Tarichæa (Kerek), Sinnabris (Sennâbreh), and Magdala (Mejdel), with Kedîsh, the probable site of the Kadesh of Barak.

"On the western plateau stand Adamah (Admah), Adami (Ed Damieh), Bitzaanaim (Bessûm), Lasharon (Sarôna), Shihon (Sh'aîn), and other sites of Biblical interest. Arbela, with the synagogue of Rabbi Nitai (200 B.C.), Hattin (the ancient Zer), Yemma (the Talmudic Caphar Yama), Kefr Sabt (Caphar Sobthi), Seiyâdeh (the Talmudic Ziadethah), Tell M'aûn (Beth Moan), Sha'arah (Beth Sharaim), and several other towns of later times swell the long list of cities. The district is full of sacred places: Rabbi Akiba, Rabbi Meir, and the great Maimonides, were buried near Tiberias, and the supposed tombs of Jethro and Habakkuk are still shown on the hills above."

SYNAGOGUES OF GALILEE.

THE number of known examples of synagogues in Palestine is eleven; besides these there are three doubtful specimens which may have been synagogues, making the total number fourteen. By dealing first with the three doubtful specimens the way will be left clear for a consideration of the date of these interesting buildings. The only specimen that does not occur within the limits of Galilee is that on Mount Carmel, described by Lieutenant Conder, at the ruin of Kh. Semmâka. Two lintels were found, one still resting *in situ* on its stone doorposts. The mouldings resemble those common in other synagogues, being carried back on the lintel in the peculiar T-shaped beading clearly seen in the synagogue at Meiron. Lieutenant Conder describes this principal doorway as being the eastern door, which is peculiar. The only other known example of the entrance being on the east is at the synagogue at Irbid, and there this position was rendered necessary by the fall of the ground on which the synagogue was built.

Part of a colonnade was observed, the pillars being about the same

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dimensions as those usual in synagogues. The second smaller lintel has two lions carved upon it, with a cup between them; this is another peculiarity, as on all the other synagogues where carved figures occur they seem to have been on the principal lintel or upon all three. There is no other example known where the side-door lintels were thus ornamented and the principal door left bare.

The second doubtful synagogue is at Kh. Taiyebeh, not far from Shefa 'Amr. A single double column and some pieces of ordinary columns were observed in the ruins of a small building, too much destroyed to be at all intelligible in its present condition. Excavation here might lead to the discovery of a synagogue. The third is the ruins at Belât, where the peculiar double columns again occur at both ends of a long colonnade. It was described by me in *Quarterly Statement*, October, 1877, p. 166, and the only photograph of these interesting remains is now in the Palestine Exploration Fund series. Though this building has some points of resemblance to synagogues, it is not, in my opinion, one of that class of buildings. In the first place it is longer and narrower than any known synagogue, the want of mouldings on the architrave, the archaic form of the capitals, and the general appearance of the building, seem to point to a much earlier date than that at which the synagogues were erected. The aisle or passage between the columns is made wider than in synagogues, and there is only one specimen (the small synagogue at Kefr Bir'im) where only two rows of columns occur. There is no sign of a southern doorway, though there is some reason to suppose that the entrance was in the centre of the eastern side, which is, as before pointed out, unlike the generality of synagogues. On the eastern side of this building there are the remains of buildings enclosing a courtyard containing a large well that resembles such as one would expect to find of a monastery or castle. The situation, on the top of a very commanding, steep, and narrow ridge, difficult of access, is unlikely to have been the site of an important town, of which there are no traces. From these considerations I am led to the supposition that we have here one of the most perfect and earliest specimens of a temple dedicated to some deity worshipped on this "high place," and attended by a number of priests or votaries who were lodged in the surrounding buildings. To its isolation in this, the wildest part of the country, is probably due its preservation up to this time.

It seems probable that from this and other specimens of the same class then existing, the architects copied those peculiar double columns that are always found terminating the colonnades in synagogues.

Another fact pointing to this view of the case may be derived from the enormous monolithic double columns of red granite now lying in the ruins of the cathedral at Tyre. These were certainly not made for the cathedral, as all the interior decoration of that building was of white marble. They must have been taken from some building, or, more probably, were found lying, half covered with sand, on the site, when the cathedral was

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about to be built, and, from their great size and beauty, were used in that building by the Christians who did not know their Pagan origin.

We then come to the question, Were they not used in a synagogue formerly on this spot? If so, the Jews of that time were able to import from a distant country, probably Egypt, larger monoliths of more beautiful marble than any other race had been capable of bringing to the country. In no synagogue has any marble been found, the hard limestone of the country is always used, and the columns and door-posts, though of monoliths, are nothing like the stupendous size of these enormous blocks of granite. It appears to me that these columns are the remains of a very early and most magnificent temple, dedicated to some unknown deity. The remains at Belât (within sight) appear to have been an offshoot and, probably, a copy of this temple. What mysterious religion was inculcated at these places there is no evidence to show.

If it is allowed that synagogues were copied from an earlier form of temple, much additional interest is added to the study of the details of these buildings.

The known examples are eleven, and stated in order of their preservation would occur thus:—

Large Synagogue at .	Kefr Bir'im.
Synagogue at . . .	Meiron.
,, . . .	Irbid.
Small Synagogue at .	Kefr Bir'im.
Synagogue at . . .	Tell Hum.
,, . . .	Kerâzeh.
,, . . .	Nebratein.
Small Synagogue at .	el-Jish.
Synagogue at . . .	Umm el 'Amed.
Large Synagogue at .	el-Jish.
Synagogue at . . .	Sŭfsâf.

I have very little doubt that there were also synagogues at Tiberias and Sâsa. At both there are traces, but not sufficient evidence without excavation to say for certain that they are those of synagogues. The whole area covered by these synagogues is very small; only a little larger than Rutlandshire.

This shows how local the Jewish influence was in the country when these synagogues were built. A striking characteristic of these buildings is their similarity in plan and detail of ornamentation; at all of them the same class of mouldings are observable; and in many cases they are identical, even when cut out of the hard basalt as at Kerâzeh. No modifications were allowed, and the niches of this specimen are even more elaborately carved than in other cases. The capitals show some variation, being Corinthian, Ionic, and with simple mouldings; but all these forms occur in the synagogue at Irbid, and cannot therefore be taken to show different dates. These points seem to show that they

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were all built at nearly the same time, and that no later specimens were attempted. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that the Jewish influence which gave rise to these buildings was both extremely local and short-lived.

In the New Testament, synagogues are frequently mentioned as occurring commonly at all towns and villages: at Jerusalem, John xviii. 20, Luke xiii. 11; at Nazareth, Luke iv. 16; at Capernaum, Matt. xii. 9, John vi. 5, Mark i. 23, Luke vii. 5; Synagogues in all villages, Matt. iv. 23, xiii. 54. The question then is, are these ruins the remains of the synagogues there mentioned?

In the "Bible Dictionary," on Synagogues, under the sub-head "Structure," it is stated: "Its position was, however, determined. It stood, if possible, on the highest ground in or near the city to which it belonged." This is not what is found as characteristic of these ruins. Major Wilson, R.E. (*Quarterly Statement*, No. 2, p. 37), states: "In choosing sites for the synagogues in the different towns, the builders have by no means selected the most prominent positions."

Returning to the "Bible Dictionary," we find: "And its direction, too, was fixed—Jerusalem was the Kibleh of the Jewish devotion. The synagogue was so constructed that the worshippers as they entered and as they prayed looked towards it (Vitringa, pp. 178 and 457)." The existing remains have, with one exception, at Irbid, where the ground would not allow of this arrangement, their doors on the southern side, so that every Jew entering would have to turn his back on Jerusalem. The ark, if there was one in these synagogues, must therefore have been kept at the northern end, and the Jews would therefore pray with their backs to Jerusalem.

We know besides how abhorrent to the Jews were the figures of animals; yet in these synagogues we find them prominently carved in stone in six out of the eleven, and they probably existed in the others and in greater quantities than those already noted, but have been destroyed by the Mahommedans as contrary to their religion.

It may therefore be said that they differ vitally from the known form of the earlier synagogues, as well as from the tenets of the earlier Jewish religion, and yet there can be no doubt that they are synagogues; the Hebrew inscriptions and the sacred Jewish symbols carved on the lintels prove it.

Milman's "History of the Jews," Book XIX., gives an account of the establishment of the Patriarchate of Tiberias after the fall of Barcochab, less than sixty years after the war under Hadrian.

Before the close of the second century after Christ, the Jews present the extraordinary spectacle of two regular and organised communities: one, under a sort of spiritual head, the Patriarch of Tiberias, comprehending all of Israelitish descent who inhabited the Roman empire; the other under the Prince of the Captivity, to whom all the Eastern Jews paid their allegiance.

The Sanhedrin was re-established under Simon, son of Gamaliel, and

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five others, who were named by Judah, son of Bavah, secretly, before he was slain by the Romans; these were Judah, son of Ilai, Simon, son of Jochai, R. Jose, R. Elasar, R. Nehemiah, and R. Meir.

The foreign communities of Jews at Rome and in the whole of Asia Minor acknowledged at once the authority of the patriarch, and either came to live in the district or sent alms to their spiritual head.

The Romans recognised the Patriarch of Tiberias, and by their moderation granted him many indulgences; he was empowered to appoint his subordinate ministers and apostles, who visited all the colonies of the Jews in distant parts, and also to receive from his despised brethren an annual contribution. By this kind treatment and by the influence of the foreign Jews, who had been completely naturalised to the language and customs and partially to the religion of the people with whom they dwelt, the Jews of Palestine became tractable to Roman rule and Roman customs, and developed their great characteristic love for commercial pursuits which has ever since been typical of them.

Thus the colony round Tiberias became very powerful, and under Antoninus Pius, 138-161 A.D., some additional privileges were accorded to them, such as the permission to perform the rite of circumcision.

Synagogues were at this time erected in the villages belonging to the colony, and it seems probable that they were erected in imitation of the great works of that emperor in Syria.

At the beginning of the third century they were in high favour with the Emperor Alexander Severus; this emperor was even called the Father of the Synagogue, and this name may have been given him from his influence over the erection and architecture of these buildings.

At this time the most celebrated of the rabbinical sovereigns, Jehuda the Holy, had ascended the Patriarchal throne, which was then at the height of its power, and after his death its glory sank. Milman describes its fall:—"The small spiritual court fell like more splendid and worldly thrones, through the struggles of the sovereign for unlimited sway and the unwillingness of the people to submit even to constitutional authority. The exactions of the Pontiff, and of the spiritual aristocracy, the Rabbins, became more and more burdensome to the people. The people were impatient, even of the customary taxation. Gamaliel succeeded Jehuda, Jehuda the second Gamaliel."

Falling rapidly as Christianity arose, we find the two powers in frequent collision in later times. A last flicker of life was given to the community under the Emperor Julian, the apostate. His proposal, in 360 A.D., to rebuild the temple on Mount Moriah, gave the Jews an immense impulse; they flocked to Jerusalem, but the signal failure of the enterprise gave the last blow to the power of the community, and the Patriarchate became extinct in 414 A.D.

We thus find that there was a powerful body of Jews established at Tiberias, receiving contributions in money from the Jews of the whole Roman Empire; even the Babylonian Jews, under the Prince of the Captivity, acknowledged the supremacy of the Patriarch of Tiberias,

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about the year 180 A.D.; and also that this power was under the protection of the great builders and restorers of temples in Syria, Antoninus Pius and Alexander Severus. The existence of the power of this community was also very short-lived; one century, or almost the life of one man, Rabbi Jehuda the Holy, appears to have been its limits.

It seems, therefore, almost a certainty that these emperors inspired and aided the erection of these synagogues, and that they were built by Roman labour; perhaps the same as restored the temple at Baalbek and built the Temple of the Sun at Kades. The Jews themselves, having taken to commercial pursuits, were unable to perform work of this sort, and by using Roman workmen obtained much finer results than we are led to think they would themselves have been capable of. The architecture of these buildings bears out this view of their erection. The dressing, size, and nature of the masonry is certainly Roman, so much so that the Temple of the Sun at Kades has been mistaken for a synagogue. No synagogues of the same kind have been found in other countries, though there were many in Babylon and in the colonies of the Jews, and this type has never been perpetuated in later works; no tradition of the Jews appears to have lingered that this was the proper form of a synagogue, and we have seen how many points of their religion were disregarded in their design and ornamentation. We may therefore suppose that they were forced upon the people by their Roman rulers at a time when they were completely submissive to that power, and that directly they were able, they deserted such Pagan buildings as a disloyalty to their religion. It has been stated that Rabbi Simon, son of Jochai, was the founder of these buildings; it is related that he built with his own money twenty-four synagogues in this part of the country, but putting aside the immense riches one man must have possessed to be able to build so many beautiful temples, from what we know of this rabbi he was a most fanatical teacher of the law, and during a public debate bearded Rabbi Jehuda, who was praising the Romans, and abused them roundly. For this he was adjudged by the Romans to have forfeited his life. This great scholar could therefore hardly have erected so many buildings in violent contradiction to so many points of the religion he guarded so jealously.

From these considerations I consider the date of these synagogues to be between the year 150 A.D. and 300 A.D.

Plans and detail drawings of the remains of all these buildings will be published in the memoirs to accompany the sheets of the large map. Photographs of most of them may be procured at the Fund Office.

Some points of interest, such as the formation of the court in front of the Great Synagogue at Kefr Bir'im might be mentioned. In this case the court was formed two bays wide, and the total length of the front of the synagogue. The pillars are on pedestals, and are as high as the building; they support an architrave with simple mouldings, and from a peculiar portion of this architrave that I found, I am led to suppose that over the centre bay, opposite the great door of the synagogue, the

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architrave was carried up to a point. This must have been a striking feature in the building, and is a very peculiar formation; it may have been copied from the gate Tadi of Herod's temple, which is described as having been of this nature in the Talmud. The corner pillars of this porch or court were of the peculiar double form seen at the corners of the colonnades in the interior of all synagogues.

H. H. KITCHENER, Lieut. R.E.

ZION, THE CITY OF DAVID.

WHERE WAS IT? HOW DID JOAB MAKE HIS WAY INTO IT? AND WHO HELPED HIM?

ARAUNAH could easily have answered these questions. Unhappily, we have not the spiritualistic power of cross-examining him. So we must be content if we can get conclusive answers by the laborious process of close investigation. The Bible, with various works on Jerusalem, and Captain Warren's remarkable discoveries, will be found to furnish sufficient materials for this end.

While the thrilling incident of the story will attract the general reader, the *savans* will require full proof of the statements advanced, so that both are given, but separately, to suit different tastes.

THE STORY.

Ancient Jerusalem stood on a rocky plateau enclosed on three sides by two ravines; that on the west and south was called the King's Dale, that on the east the Brook Kedron. The space thus enclosed was further cleft by another ravine called the Valley of Hinnom. On the narrow ridge running between the "Brook" and "Valley," and towards its southern extremity, stood, at the beginning of Davids' reign, the hitherto impregnable fortress of Jebus. On the west side of this ridge, in the "valley," lay the rest of the city, once at least already captured by the Israelites, but occupied (perhaps at times in conjunction with them) by the Jebusites. On its east side, near the "Brook," was an intermittent fountain, or rather one of irregular flow, called then Enrogel, once Gihon in the "Brook," for a time Siloah, but now the Fountain of the Virgin.

To a stranger, this position of the fortress of Jebus or Zion would not have seemed to be well-chosen, for it was built on an inconsiderable hill, while loftier and more precipitous eminences were close at hand.

The founder, however, of this stronghold of Zion was a very subtle man. While the art of erecting and taking fortified places was then in its infancy, water was, of course, as much as ever a necessary of life. An ordinary wall of no great height was enough to baffle the most skilful general and the bravest army—always supposing the besieged kept a sharp look-out. Bethel on its low hill was a match for all the

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