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W. T. Pilter

To cite this article: W. T. Pilter (1883) Where is Cana of Galilee, Palestine Exploration Quarterly, 15:3, 143-148, DOI: [10.1179/peq.1883.15.3.143](https://doi.org/10.1179/peq.1883.15.3.143)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1179/peq.1883.15.3.143>

Published online: 20 Nov 2013.

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WHERE IS CANA OF GALILEE?

By the Rev. W. T. PILTER, M.R.A.S.

(Formerly Missionary in Palestine.)

THE traditional site of the village where our Lord wrought His first miracle has, for the last five or six hundred years, oscillated between Kâna, a ruined village, eight miles, as the crow flies, due north of Nazareth, and *vid. Sefûriyeh*, and Kefr Kenna, a village four miles north-east of Nazareth, *en route* for Tiberias. People at home usually follow Dr. Robinson in taking Kâna to be the authentic site, while those who have visited Palestine are almost certain to have seen Kefr Kenna, though not Kâna, and favour the place they have seen,—a species of vice not confined to travellers.

For reasons which will presently appear, in this matter of Cana of Galilee I am disposed to join the tourists' chorus.

But we have first to settle with Dr. Robinson. He informs us¹ that Kâna was known both among Christians and Moslems only by this name Kâna el Jelîl; while the same name was sometimes applied, by Christians alone, to the village of Kefr Kenna, because, apparently, the monks have taught them to do so. He further reminds us that Kâna el Jelîl is precisely the rendering of Cana of Galilee in the Arabic New Testament. We might add that the same rendering is preserved in the revised Arabic translation of Drs. Eli Smith and Van Dyck, and that it is exactly the equivalent in the modern vernacular of Palestine of the *κανὴ τῆς Γαλιλαίας*.

of the Greek Testament, or קְנַה אֶשֶׁר בְּגִלְיֵל of the Hebrew Version of the New Testament. Naturally, therefore, if Kâna el Jelîl were the original native name of the now ruined northern village, it would need very cogent evidence indeed to prevent us identifying it with the Cana of Galilee of St. John's Gospel.

But, so far as I can gather, the only authority Dr. Robinson has for his full name of Kâna el Jelîl was his friend Abu Nâsir, an intelligent Arab-Greek Christian of Nazareth. Against Abu Nasir's statement, that the place "was known both among Christians and Moslems only by this name Kâna el Jelîl," we have the evidence of the Palestine Exploration Fund's map, which shows it only as Kâna, or Khûrbet Kâna. But we have fuller evidence on the subject, and almost contemporary with Dr. Robinson's—that of Dr. W. M. Thomson in the first edition of "The Land and the Book" (p. 425). He says that when on the road from Tiberias "I pestered everybody. I could find on the right and the left—farmers, shepherds, Bedawîn, and travellers—with inquiries about the place where the *water was made*

¹ Robinson, "Biblical Researches" (1st edition), vol. iii, p. 205. In his 3rd edition I see Dr. Robinson omits "el Jelîl" from the name and writes only Kâna."

wine. With one consent they pointed to Kefr Kenna. Some of them knew of a ruin called Kâna, on the north side of the great Plain of Buttauf, but only one had ever heard of the word Jelîl as a part of the name; and, from the hesitancy with which this one admitted it, I was left in doubt whether he did not merely acquiesce in it at my suggestion. It is *certain* that very few even of the Moslems know the full name Kâna el Jelîl." The evidence now shows that this is only another of the several Kânas which are found in Northern Palestine; the name may be applied to any place where *reeds* grow, as, *e.g.*, to the spring of the little village of Er-Reineh, between Nazareth and Kefr Kenna, which is called (see the Survey map) Ain Kâna.

Although Dr. Thomson's evidence is so important against the identity of the name, he is disposed to adopt Dr. Robinson's identification of Kâna as Cana of Galilee on other grounds, which we have now, therefore, to examine, viz., the evidences of tradition and natural topography.

We will first hear Robinson and his own authorities. He says (p. 205) "that it is only since the sixteenth century that monastic convenience has definitely assigned Kefr Kenna as the site" of Cana of Galilee. Quaresmius (a Latin monk and Papal Commissary, who resided about twelve years in the Holy Land, and whose book was printed 1634-39) "relates, that in his day, two Canas were spoken of among the inhabitants of Nazareth and the vicinity; one called simply Cana of Galilee (Kâna el Jelîl), and the other Sepher Cana (Kefr Kenna). . . . He decides, however, very distinctly for the latter place, because of its being nearer to Nazareth, and having some ruins [of a church built to commemorate the miracle]; without, however, as he says, venturing to reject the other tradition. Yet it was probably the authority of this very writer which tended, more than any anything else, to fix attention upon Kefr Kenna, and throw the true Kâna into the shade; for from that time forward the latter is very rarely noticed by travellers. It may be remembered, too, that in the time of Quaresmius, the church and convent at Nazareth were first built up, after the desolations of many centuries; and this circumstance conspired to give currency, among travellers, to the view which the monks adopted respecting Cana."

It appears from this that when, according to Robinson, the monks began to adopt Kefr Kenna as the site of Cana of Galilee, they could point to some old ruins still there commemorating it as the true site; it also appears that for some centuries before this it was not so convenient for travellers to visit Kefr Kenna in consequence of the convent at Nazareth being then desolate.

It may have been that the "monastic convenience" Robinson speaks of had led the monks, when driven from Nazareth, but still maintaining a good footing in Sefûrieh, to fix upon the village of Kâna—so accessible from Sefûrieh, and bearing the name of Cana—as Cana of Galilee. The testimonies Robinson quotes, of travellers earlier than Quaresmius, support this conclusion as much as his own—to wit, Adrichomius, near the close of the sixteenth century; Anselm, about A.D. 1507; and Breydenbach, A.D. 1483;

the first and last of these apparently quoting "earlier writers." "But the most distinct notice of the Cana of those days," says Robinson, "is from Marinus Sanutus, about A.D. 1321" (whose account, however, may have been taken from Brocardus, *circa* A.D. 1280). "In coming from Ptolemais ('Akka), he says, the most usual course was to proceed first eastwards to Cana, and thence south, through Sepphoris to Nazareth. All this leaves no doubt that the site of Kâna el Jellî is here meant. At that time the place was professedly shown where the six waterpots had stood, and also the triclinium where the feast was held; but the whole was in a crypt, or cavern, underground." This piece of evidence indicates pretty clearly that this was but a "show place" for pilgrims devised by the monks. Marinus went the "usual course" of the different sites which were "professedly shown." And it is morally certain that this site was a monkish invention, for the monks are fond of locating the scenes of Bible stories in caves (witness the Chapel of the Anunciation in Nazareth, and that in which the Apostles' Creed was composed on the Mount of Olives); but no Jewish feast, such as that of the marriage at Cana, was ever held in a cave. In the time of Saewulf, about A.D. 1103, there was a monastery "still standing," called the Architrclinium. Now, although Robinson merely mentions this piece of evidence, I confess that it seems to me to be the most striking of all he adduces in his favour. The architrclinium at least testifies that there was already a tradition that in this place the first miracle of Christ was performed. The tradition may not have been very old, but it was there. And where was this place? "Nearly six miles north of Nazareth, on a hill." Both Kâna and Kefr Kenna are on hills, but the former *ten* and the latter a little over four English miles from Nazareth. But an English mile is longer than Saewulf's Roman ones, and this difference would make Kefr Kenna nearly *five* miles and Kana *eleven miles from Nazareth*, and, therefore, Saewulf speaks evidently of Kefr Kenna, and clearly not of Kâna; moreover, he apparently saw it just before the traditional site was changed, "to suit monastic convenience," to Kâna.

The only remaining definite witness Robinson calls to support his view is St. Willibald, who visited Palestine in the eighth century. But St. Willibald's evidence is as follows:—"And having there (*i.e.*, at Nazareth) recommended themselves to the Lord, they proceeded to the town of Cana, where our Lord turned water into wine. A large church stands there, and near the altar is still preserved one of the six vessels which our Lord commanded to be filled with water to be turned into wine; and the travellers drank wine out of it. They remained there one day, and then continued their journey to Mount Tabor,"¹ thence to Tiberias, Magdala, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Dan. The route given is vague from its brevity, but the "Cana" manifestly suits Kefr Kenna rather better than Kâna. Indeed, if Kâna were meant Willibald must have also seen Sefurieh *en route*, an important place to pilgrims, with a cathedral which, according to the tradition of at least two centuries (*i.e.*, from the time of Antoninus

¹ T. Wright's translation of Willibald, in "Early Travels in Palestine," p. 16.

Martyr), was built on the spot where the Virgin Mary received the salutation of the Angel; yet Sefurieh is not referred to by Willibald in the remotest way; we thence infer that he did not see it, and therefore did not go to Kâna.

Before we come to the evidence of the Scripture period it may be well to have a description of Kâna before us. According to Dr. Thomson, "a careful examination of the site (of Kâna) led to the conclusion that there were never more than fifty houses in the place. . . . There are some ancient cisterns about Kâna, . . . but no fountains or well,"—and hence it must always have been even more insignificant than Nazareth, which possesses its own spring. It would thus have been remarkable indeed if an inhabitant of Kâna had said, as Nathaniel of Cana of Galilee said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

There are two other arguments of some, though not of great weight in deciding against Kâna. The first is, whence came the water to fill "six waterpots of stone, . . . containing two or three firkins apiece?" It may have been there "a practice" to keep "water in large stone pots, each holding from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons,"² but those at the feast in question were empty, and filled at the command of Jesus. Now 130 gallons or so might have been easily enough obtained at that period of the year, apparently spring-time, from a spring such as that of Kefr Kenna; but one might have expected the villagers of a little place of not more than fifty houses to have raised some objection to such a quantity of water being carried off at once from a common cistern. The second difficulty is one of travel. Cana of Galilee was reached on the "third day" (John ii, 1), after leaving the Baptist at Bethabara (John i, 28). Assuming Bethabara to be the same as Beth Nimrah, this would be eighty miles distant from Kefr Kenna—a sufficiently long journey to be accomplished "on the third day" without adding five or six miles.

One argument, which I confess has always weighed much with me in favour of Kefr Kenna, is the naturalness of its position in the Galilean circuit,—whence, so far as we have any evidence, all the disciples seem to have come (excepting only the one from Judea, the traitor), and also the natural way in which all the New Testament references to Cana of Galilee fall in with this site. Kefr Kenna is on one of the two ordinary routes from Nazareth, "where He was brought up" to Capernaum, where He afterwards took up His abode;—it is thus on the road to the Mount of Beatitudes and the Galilean Lake. It seems natural, therefore, that Philip of Bethsaida should have a friend dwelling at Kefr Kenna; and Capernaum might be a common meeting-place for the disciples, as it would be "the city" at that time to Kefr Kenna and Bethsaida, but not to Kâna. This idea receives some confirmation from all the New Testament references to Cana, as, *e.g.*, from the fact that when our Lord, leaving Judea, was welcomed

¹ "The Land and the Book," vol. ii, p. 303, new edition (1883).

² Dr. E. D. Clarke's "Travels," quoted by Canon Westcott in the "Speaker's Commentary" on St. John.

into Galilee, He stayed again at Cana, and the centurion of Capernaum, hearing that He had come "into Galilee," went to Jesus, perhaps expecting to find Him in His own city of Nazareth; but while on his way thither found Him at Kefr Kenna, through which He would naturally pass *en route* for Nazareth.

We must bear in mind another fact, which we shall have to make more use of immediately, namely, that, so far as appears, there never was any thoroughfare passing Kâna,—nothing but a bye-road which ended with the little village, while Kefr Kenna has always been on a much used thoroughfare, as well as in proximity to the Roman road, and so, humanly speaking, well adapted as a missionary centre of the Great Teacher.

We come, lastly, to the evidence of Josephus,¹ who appears to describe Cana as Cana of Galilee to distinguish it from Cana in Cœlosyria. The requirements of Cana of Galilee, as referred to in his "Life" (§ 16), would be most satisfactorily met by Kefr Kenna, as its situation would enable him to keep an eye on both Sepphoris (Sefurieh) and Tiberias at the same time; while one cannot see how an out-of-the-way village, containing not more than fifty houses, and a limited water supply, could have accommodated Josephus and his soldiers. So, again ("Life," § 71), Kâna was too insignificant and obscure to be specially watched by a Roman army. Finally, it would really appear too absurd of Josephus to ask to believe ("Wars," I, xvii, 5) that the "headquarters" of Herod the Great were at a village called Cana" (of Galilee, § 3), if that village could count scarcely fifty houses, little water, and no proper road!

To sum up. First, Dr. Robinson's chief argument of the identity of name of his Kâna and Cana of Galilee, upon which he might trust if it were real, is shown on examination to be untrustworthy. Secondly, the evidence of tradition is not in favour of Kâna, but of Kefr Kenna, except just enough to show that at a particular period "monastic convenience" temporarily shifted the site from Kefr Kenna to Kâna; that it was a monastic device being further testified by the fact of a cave being resorted to. Thirdly, that Kâna, from its obscure situation, its smallness, and deficient water supply, fails to meet the requirements of the Cana of Galilee of the New Testament and of Josephus, while Kefr Kenna fulfils all the conditions.

One difficulty remains to prevent us absolutely identifying Kefr Kenna with Cana of Galilee; it is that of *name*. The difficulty is, not that it has lost or changed its old name, for this is quite a common thing in Galilee; witness, *e.g.*, Bethsaida, Gath Hepher, Mount Tabor, and the Plain of Edraelon or Jezreel, and in Judea of Emmaus—to mention just one place which Mrs. Finn has lately discussed with so much lucidity and force in these pages. The difficulty is that *all* the Syriac versions insert *t* before the *n*, and read *Kotna* or *Kotneh*, which, as Canon Westcott says, may point to local knowledge; for the Syriac was the vernacular version of Palestine probably from the second century of our era. The meaning of the Syriac word, however, gives us no clue to the place. Could any village

¹ "Antiq.," XV, v, 1; "Life," §§ 16 and 71; "Wars," I, xvii, 5.

or ruins be found in the proper quarter called *Koḥna*, the question might be set at perfect rest ; but neither the Survey map shows us such a place, nor does any ancient traveller speak of one. What, then, shall we conclude as to *Cana of Galilee*? Why surely the same as the Arabs before us, that it is *Kefr Kenna*¹—The Village which has Changed its Name indeed !

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

I HAVE read with great interest Captain Conder's paper in the April number on the discoveries at what is called "*Jeremiah's Grotto*." I know the ground well, having both in 1872 and 1875 camped close to the place ; in 1872 I studied carefully the so-called "*Holy Sepulchre*," and was convinced it had no true grounds for the title. With my friend Tyrwhitt Drake and Bishop Gobat I often discussed the position of "*Calvary*." They believed that its position must have been on the northern side of the city, at or about a knoll which overlooks the Valley of *Jehoshaphat*, and close to the northern road (not far from *Jeremiah's Grotto*). I painted a picture of the spot in 1872, which was exhibited in London, and engraved in the *Graphic*, with a short notice propounding the idea that *that* was the true site of "*Calvary*." I give up my idea of that site for Captain Conder's, which is close by, and am only glad to find I was on the right track.

There is a passage in the Gospel of Luke of great importance, xxiii, 26 : "*Simon, a Cyrenean, coming out of the country,*" marks, I think, the position of *Golgotha*.

There are four great roads coming into Jerusalem :—

That from the *south*—the *Hebron road*.

That from the *west*—the *Jaffa road*.

That from the *east*—the *Jericho road*.

The last, the *north road*, "*coming out of the country,*" coming from Galilee, Samaria—from the very heart of the country. Luke is always so exact in his descriptions, that I think his expression proves that *Golgotha* was on the *northern side*, and being "*nigh to the city,*" and "*without the gates,*" is an additional proof of the soundness of Captain Conder's view.

HENRY A. HARPER.

¹ From *كفر* a village, and *كنا* to signify by an improper or changed name (as, e.g., by a surname).