



The Quality of the Water in Jacob's Well

Henry Bailey

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and-fast rules of masonry alone. Unlike the case of Cyclopean polygonal masonry, the examples I have quoted show no line of demarcation, not even a period of transition. Each succeeding style has mingled with its predecessor from the time of its introduction; boss and margin work may have been used in early Jewish times, but was undoubtedly used in later Jewish, Roman times, and afterwards; comb-pick margin with pick-centred dressing was certainly used contemporarily with the boss and margin, and may have been used before. Quarry-pick dressing is universal. The delicate pick-centre and comb-pick margined dressing of the Haram Area is certainly characteristic of one great building period, such as that of Herod might signify. The plain-faced, comb-pick, and chisel-pick styles may have been introduced into Jerusalem in Roman times and have been used since. The furrowed Crusading dressing seems alone to definitely date its origin, and its after-use is beyond doubt. Ornament, characteristic mouldings, or plans, are all sufficient data on which to base the date of buildings. Dressing is an indication, combined with peculiarities of setting or jointing its evidence becomes most valuable, but unless backed by some such auxiliary as position, pottery, or the like, simple masonry is a frail basis on which to found archæological deductions in Jerusalem.

THE CAMP, JERUSALEM,
August 17th, 1896.

THE QUALITY OF THE WATER IN JACOB'S WELL.

By Dr. HENRY BAILEY.

PROFESSOR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, of the Free Church College, Glasgow, has forwarded the following letter from Dr. Henry Bailey, on the qualities of the water in Jacob's Well, and why the Samaritan woman went there to draw. Dr. Bailey was for three years medical missionary of the Church Missionary Society at Nâblus :—

"BISHOPSTOKE, NEAR SOUTHAMPTON,
"October 15th, 1896.

"The question as to why the Woman of Samaria should have gone to such a distance as Jacob's Well, when a copious fountain gushed forth from the mountain side close by, does not present any difficulties to anyone familiar with the locality and people.

"Apart from the sacred character of the well, which some might suppose an attraction, its waters have a great local reputation for purity and flavour amongst the natives of El 'Askar and Nâblus. The excellence of various supplies of water and their respective qualities are a favourite topic of conversation with Easterns, and in a hot climate, and where other beverages are almost unknown, it is not surprising to find that the

natives are great connoisseurs as to the quality of water. Pure water is the universal beverage, in Mohammedan districts at any rate, coffee, lemonade, &c., being reserved solely for guests and special occasions. The people, therefore, as we should expect, have a keen appreciation of the various qualities of different waters, to a degree which we can scarcely realise in more favoured climes.

"The numerous springs of water at Nâblus are, from the nature of the soil, mostly of very *hard* water, very '*heavy*,' as the natives express it. They not unjustly attribute many of their complaints to this cause, and speak with longing of the '*light*' waters of Gaza, and various other places.

"Now Jacob's Well has a reputation amongst them of containing cool, palatable, and refreshing water, free from the deleterious qualities of their other supplies of water. Frequently I have been told, that after eating a hearty meal (and a hearty meal with them is something appalling!) a good draught of water from this particular well will disperse the feeling of abnormal fulness in a remarkably short space of time, and, moreover, make one ready for another good meal in an incredibly short space of time.

"The copious fountain at El 'Askar gushes forth from the very bowels of rocky (limestone) Mount Ebal, and is therefore of particularly hard ('heavy') water. The woman would, therefore, gladly take her jar to this celebrated well for a supply of drinking water.

"Although 30 feet and more of rubbish has found its way into Jacob's Well, the supply of water even now lasts till the month of May, most years, or even later. The source of supply to this well has not yet been accurately ascertained, but it is doubtless greatly due to percolation and rainfall. The latter may account partly for some of its special qualities as to '*lightness*' (softness).

"It is not uncommon in the East to send to a great distance for a supply of drinking water, as you may know, especially by those who can afford to do so. The woman of Samaria may, if poor, have been hired to convey the water for some richer person. When at Nâblus I used to send to a certain spring some mile or so from my house for drinking water, and soon quite a regular little cavalcade repaired to this spring every morning and evening to supply the richer families with water which the English Doctor recommended! Bishop Blyth, of Jerusalem, sends three miles from Jerusalem, to Ain Karim, for his water supply."
