A Study of the Place-names Gergesa and Bethabara

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THE unifying aim of both these inquiries is the purpose of determining the weight to be given to the testimony of Origen in problems of New Testament geography, and, incidentally, the bearing of this upon the textual value of the Old Syriac version of the gospels. For the many categorical statements made against the authority of this testimony of Origen's, the proper cause — his allegorical interest — is usually given; but for the most part the statement is put forth without sufficient basis of investigation or in too absolute a fashion. The latter fault detracts somewhat from Lagrange's excellent article in the *Revue Biblique* for 1895.

I. Gergesa

Into the discussion of the historicity of the demoniac story this is not the place to go. If it be, as v. Soden asserts, but a legend, we must still account for the use of these particular geographical names, though the details of the story are naturally not so much to be relied upon in that case. I assume a historical basis, *i.e.* that the demoniac caused the stampede of the swine by rushing upon them in a frenzied effort to help the Great Healer to drive out the demons with which he believed himself to be possessed, the record of the word of permission from Jesus being a mistaken implication of the man and the onlookers. According to Tischendorf's text of Matt. 8 28 this happened in the land of the Gadarenes, Mk. 5 1 Gerasenes, Lk. 8 26, 37 Gergesenes. Our inquiry has mainly to do with the last name.

1. The historical evidence for Gergesa may be shown to be probably confined to Origen. Zahn [1] adduces also Eusebius

[1] *Komm. z. Mt.*, *Neue Kirchl. Zeitschr.* vol. xiii. pp. 928–930, 938.

(Jerome), Epiphanius, Procopius, and the translator of the Jerusalem Lectionary; and says we have no right to call it a conjecture of Origen. There is a plausible, perhaps sufficient, excuse for the use of most of these authorities; it is, however, too much to claim that any or all of them are convincing, even if they are men who were in Palestine between 230 and 500 A.D.

That Jerome[2] is simply translating Eusebius' *Onomastica Sacra* and has no independent value, is evident from a simple comparison. Zahn admits that Jerome is translating from Eusebius, but regards him as a partially independent witness because he translates the latter's Γέργεσα καὶ νῦν δείκνυται by *et hodieque demonstratur*. This simply shows that the old Origenian-Eusebian tradition still hung about a ruin on the east shore, which was probably pointed out to him from the other side. If he had seen it himself close at hand, he would scarcely have contented himself with the simple addition of *que*. Further, the retention of Geraseni in the Vulgate indicates that his remark about Gergesa is merely a citation from Eusebius, not deemed of enough value to change the text.

Epiphanius is the strangest witness to call upon. His remark that the place lay in the middle between the three territories (κλῆροι)[3] is rightly recognized by Zahn as simply a foolish harmonistic conjecture of a man in general unclear in his descriptions. And yet he continues that Epiphanius, being a native of Palestine, must have heard of a real place Gergesa on the east shore of the sea to speak as he does here. The latter's words rather prove that he knew absolutely nothing of the geography of the section, or that, knowing the region, he still knew nothing of a place called Gergesa and simply imagined in harmonistic interest that there must be such a place because he had found the reading. That this reading came from Origen is probable, since one of the vari-

[2] *De situ et nominibus*, v. Gergesa, "ubi eos qui a daemonibus vexabantur salvator restituit sanitati, et hodieque super montem viculus demonstratur juxta stagnum Tiberiadis, in quod porci praecipitati sunt. Diximus de hoc et supra."

[3] *Haer.* 66. 35, *v.* Tisch. viii. to Lk. 8 26.

ants of Epiphanius' text reads γεργεσαίων, the LXX form which Origen uses alongside of γεργεσήνων. Epiphanius is then either neutral or negative as a witness to a tradition independent of Origen.

That Procopius of Gaza (500 A.D.) speaks of Gergesa as now lying deserted or ruined on the shore of the sea of Tiberias[4] may simply mean that this place, mentioned by previous writers, was no longer existent as an inhabited spot. It may have as much independent worth as that it records a tradition that hung about some ruin on the shore. But there is nothing to prove that Origen is not the source of the tradition or of his record; and the fact that he writes this in connection with Gen. 15 21, the passage from which Origen probably took his clue, and adds that "the γεργεσαῖοι (instead of γεργεσῆνοι) dwelt in Gadara and Gergesa," makes it probable that his remark is based simply on Origen's note and his own ignorance of any corresponding place other than that there were some ruins on the east shore.

The Jerusalem Lectionary took its final form in the fifth or sixth century under strong influence from Greek lectionaries,[5] and its uniform Gergesenes (Mt., Lk.; Mk. lacking) indicates a systematic change according to later Mss. under the influence of some such critical opinion as that of Origen rather than the exact information of a native translator, especially in Matthew, where practically all the evidence for Gergesenes is of this schematic, harmonistic character, or is open to suspicion of Origenian influence.

The testimony of Eusebius[6] is less open to suspicion. The fact that he calls it a village instead of a city makes him appear less dependent on Origen; but, as Zahn remarks (p. 938), it may have had both designations from its intermediary character, as Bethlehem (Lk. 2 4, Jn. 7 42). That the village lay on a hill he might simply have inferred from

[4] Mai, *Auct. Class.* VI. 333 (*Neue Kirchl. Zeitschr.* p. 929).

[5] Zahn, *Forsch.* I. 329, 350; Burkitt, *Encyc. Bibl.* "Texts."

[6] Lagarde, *OS.*[2] 248. 15: Γεργεσά. ἔνθα τοὺν δαιμονιῶντας ὁ κύριος ἰάσατο. καὶ νῦν δείκνυται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους κώμη παρὰ τὴν λίμνην Τιβεριάδος, εἰς ἣν καὶ οἱ χοῖροι κατεκρημνίσθησαν. κεῖται καὶ ἀνωτέρω (i.e. 242. 68).

the Gospel story; or it may be that the town was pointed out to him from the other side of the sea, coupled with this local tradition, which had sprung up from the apparently happy conjecture of Origen as to its name. It may appear that this is simply an attempt to evade Eusebius' testimony. There is no absolute proof that he did not know a place by this name in a suitable location. But, on the other hand, there is no very convincing proof that he did. He gives no particulars other than those that he might have gained without a personal acquaintance with the place or personal effort to probe the authenticity of a stray tradition. And that he is not very consistent or clear about the location of the spot is evident from the fact that at the close of this citation he refers to another description (just preceding this passage in his *Onomastica*) with reference to a Gergasei[7] (Dt. 7 1), which is connected with Mt. Gilead and which he says is sometimes identified with Gerasa, the famous city of Arabia, and again with Gadara, and that the gospels speak of the people of Gerasa.[8] Here we have simply varying answers to the question, Where is the Gergesa of Origen?

The authority then is primarily that of the testimony of Origen himself.[9] He knew of but two readings: Gerasenes in most copies, and Gadarenes in a few others; and rejected both because of the geographical impossibility of either the southern Gerasa of the Decapolis, or the northern Gadara of the same Greek territory, respectively thirty and six miles southeast of the sea. The identification of its people with the Girgashites of Gen. 15 21 — known to us only in western Palestine — and consequent designation of it as an "old city," point to this connection with the Old Testament as a chief reason for his preference of Gergesa. Josephus[10] says that

[7] Lagarde, *OS.*[2] 242. 68. [8] Jerome changes this to Gergesa.

[9] *Comm. on Jn.* VI. 24 (41): . . . ἀλλὰ Γέργεσα, ἀφ' ἧς οἱ Γεργεσαῖοι, πόλις ἀρχαία περὶ τὴν νῦν καλουμένην Τιβεριάδα λίμνην, περὶ ἣν κρημνὸς παρακείμενος τῇ λίμνῃ, ἀφ' οὗ δείκνυται τοὺς χοίρους ὑπὸ τῶν δαιμόνων καταβεβλῆσθαι . . .

[10] *Ant.* 1. 6. 2: "For the seven others . . . Gergeseus . . . we have nothing in the sacred books but their names, for the Hebrews overthrew their cities, their calamities coming upon them for the following reason," *i.e.* (sec. 8) the curse on Ham. Zahn disputes the application of this as proof for the

the name Girgashites had disappeared without leaving traces. Not that Origen tried wilfully to falsify; but he regarded the other names as corrupted, and this occurred to him as the probable original reading, the more so because he found in Gergesa the allegorical meaning of "habitation of those that have driven away." [11] Then, as is the case with so many travelers, the natives gave him the answer that he wanted [12] upon his putting a leading question to them; and, under the influence of this suggestion and the reports of it that spread abroad, adopted it as a local tradition. There is then a strong probability that the only real evidence for a town Gergesa springs from Origen, and that he derived the name from a conjectural connection with the Old Testament and allegory.

2. This conclusion is confirmed by a survey of the textual evidence. The bulk of the attestation for γεργεσήνων occurs in Alexandrian texts or in the Constantinopolitan form of the late Antiochian revision, connections suggestive of Origen's influence. For a score and more of years his fame as scholar and teacher had drawn the choicest youth of the Christian East to Alexandria; and, although he himself made no revision of the New Testament, yet his unwearying devotion to the elucidation of Scripture bore fruit in many suggestions as to the text, which we have good reason to believe were more or less fully incorporated in certain manuscripts by Pamphilus, Eusebius, and others of his disciples.[13] It is worthy of notice that the first corrector of ℵ, who avowedly goes back to Origen through Pamphilus and calls special attention to the differences in proper names between the two

non-existence of a little place on the shore of the sea of Galilee. We may not perhaps use it as absolutely conclusive, but it turns the balance against Origen at least; for Josephus certainly knew the territory on both sides the sea.

[11] How this meaning came from Γεργεσά is hard to tell. גרש = drive out, and would seem to support Gerasa. This, however, is impossible, as the whole point of Origen's criticism is to substitute Gergesa for Gerasa.

[12] To Neumann (*Qurn Djeradi: Studien zu Mt.* 8 ₂₈, p. 46) and Frei (*ZDPV.* IX. 123) the natives gave at first another name than Kersa, the latter having been very likely learned from Europeans.

[13] Bousset, *T. und U.* XI. 4, p. 45 f.

Mss., changes the Matthean Gadarenes of ℵ to Gergesenes, and in Luke restores the latter, for which an Antiochian corrector had inserted Gadarenes. The influence of Origen extended from his later Caesarean location as far as Antioch, but made itself still more felt in that branch of the late Antiochian (or Syrian) family of Mss. which had Constantinople as its center. The explanation may lie in the fifty parchment Bibles transcribed under the care of Eusebius, and sent by him to the capital in 322. Those texts which read γεργεσηνων in each of the four passages are frequently found to have Alexandrian readings — LX(Mk. lacking) fam[1] 33 boh aeth arm S^{lct}. The Antiochian revision seems to have harmonized to γαδαρηνων ($S^{pe\ ph\ txt}$ M) 69(?); but in the Constantinopolitan form to have introduced one reading — Mt. γεργεσηνων — from the Alexandrian family (AKΠESVϛgo).[14] ℵ and Ξ, which also have many Alexandrian readings, have introduced γεργεσηνων in Luke. And the only Ms. that joins with $S^{s(c)}$ in reading γεργεσηνων in Mark with the other readings as in the Antioch revision (S^{c} lacking Mt., Mk.) is Δ, which is characteristically under Alexandrian influence in Mark.[15]

With so general and varied efforts at harmonization it is difficult to arrive at the original readings. For Matthew γαδαρηνων is assured. γερασηνων occurs only in Mark and Luke, except for the marginal correction of S^{ph} and the harmonistic text of the latins and the sahidic. It could hardly have been introduced by a scribe who knew of Gerasa and did not know of Gadara. Else why do we not find some traces in Matthew? Indeed, Gadara seems to have been about as well known as Gerasa in the ancient world: the former for its hot baths, the latter as a capital city, and both for the noted men born within their borders.[16] And while γαδαρηνων was applicable, since the territory of that city extended to the Sea of Galilee,[17] Gerasa was too far away.

[14] KΠ of this group are thought to show Origenian traits generally. *T. und U.* XI. 4, p. 134.

[15] Burkitt, *Encyc. Bibl.* 4985. [16] Schürer[3], II. 123–126, 141–144.

[17] Schürer[3], II. 126 (coins with ship); Joseph. *Vit.* 9. 10.

Either there was another Gerasa on the Sea, or we have in Mark and Luke the substitution by evangelist or scribe of this better known name for some obscure one that has now wholly disappeared, but not for Gadara. For the reading of Mark and Luke is almost certainly *γερασηνων*. B is the only pure witness for this; but it is supported in Mark by ℵ and in Luke by C.[18] Zahn rightly insists that it is a mistake to expect the same name in all three gospels — a mistake that has caused already the many harmonistic alterations that necessitate the elimination from consideration of so much of the evidence. But he begs the question and reasons in a circle when he says that it cannot be that one of the evangelists would have known so little of the region as to put in Gerasa, thirty miles away, and then proceeds upon that assumption together with the greater likeness and consequent liability to transcriptional error between *Γεργεσα* and *Γερασα*, to reckon all Ms. evidence for Gerasa as *ipso facto* evidence for Gergesa; and, at the same time, he rejects the Origenian authorship of Gergesa on the ground that Gerasa, which he regards as its corruption, was already read in some Mss. by the Church Father.

[18] The classification of the evidence will be clearer from the following table, in which d = Gadarenes, s = Gerasenes, g = Gergesenes:

B	C	C^3	C^3	ℵ	$ℵ^{ca}$	$ℵ^{cb}$	Ж	A	K	Π	E	V	go	ς	S	F	G	H	R	Γ	Λ	
d	d		g	d		g	°	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	°	°	°	°	°	°	Mt.
s	d			s			°	d	d	d	d	d	d	d		d	d	d	°	°	°	Mk.
s	°			g			g	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d				d	d	d	Lk. 26
s	s	g		g	d	g	°	d	d	d	d	d	d	d			d	d	d	d	d	Lk. 37

U	S^a	S^c	Δ	Epiph	$S^{ph\ mg}$	28 81	565 700 1071	N	157 251	13 22	X	33	
g	d	°	d	d	s, g	28°		g			g	°	Mt.
g	g	°	g	g	g	g	g	g				g	Mk.
d	d	d	d	s	s			°	g		g	g	Lk. 26
d	d	d	d	s	°			°		g	g	g	Lk. 37

L	fam^1	boh	S^{tet}	arm	aeth	69	M	S^{pe}	$S^{ph\ txt}$	sah	D	it	vg	
g	g	g	g	g	g	°	d	d	d	s	(°s)	s	s	Mt.
g	g	g	g	g	g	d	d	d	d	°	s	s	s	Mk.
g	g	g	g	g	g	d		d	d	s	s	s	s	Lk. 26
g	g	g	g	g	g	d	d	d	d	s	s	s	s	Lk. 37

S^s represents simply a transcription from a Greek Ms. that had adopted the Origenian correction in Mark, and in Luke had suffered a harmonizing alteration to conform it to Matthew, the tendency which, farther carried out, came to characterize the late Antioch revision. It cannot be directly derived from Palestinian tradition, and probably also not directly from Origen, since it reads ܓܪܓܣܝ, not ܓܪܓܣܝ, as S^{ict} stands, and Origen must have read to make the connection with Gen. 15 21. Because the reading of S^s is not found in the Diatessaron and yet is supported by Greek Mss., Burkitt classes it under the following category: "Like almost all the S^{vt} readings, which are neither due to the exigencies of translation nor rendered directly from Tatian's Diatessaron, these variants must have been found in the Greek text of the gospels as read at Antioch about 200 A.D." [19] The reading here would not seem to be due to an accident of translation, nor is it probable that it is an adaptation of the Diatessaron text, though we have no accurate knowledge here of what the Diatessaron reading was, since the Arabic reads the same as the Peshitta and Ephraem's Commentary does not contain the passage; but Burkitt does not make enough allowance for the corruption of later corrections, of which we have a clear case in this instance. If his remark, "It is to be noted that neither S^s nor S^c reads Gergesenes in Lk. 8 26, 37" (p. 248) has any value other than merely to satisfy curiosity, it must mean that he is not quite certain of Gergesenes in Mark and thinks S^s may have read originally Gadarenes. That would reduce it still farther to the level of the late and altered Mss. Merx admits, with the utmost unconcern, that Gergesenes is a copy of Origen's emendation, apparently without perceiving that the authority of S^{vt}, or of our representatives, is in any way lowered. It must be granted that proper names are more easily changed than subject-matter, and that further investigation must be made to discover whether this new find, S^s, has been overvalued; but that its

[19] *Evangelion Da-Mepharresche*, II. 246, 247.

undoubtedly very great value has been to some extent over-emphasized we have here, at least, one slight indication.

3. The geographical evidence also fails to support Gergesa. No place of that name is found to-day, and the places whose names are the nearest approach to it lack some of the essential features of the account. Gerasa is supposed by the majority of commentators to be identical with Kersa (or Kursi) at the mouth of the Wadi es-Samak, on the northern

KERSA (FROM THE EAST)

part of the east shore. The higher hills do, at this point, approach nearest to the shore, and it is directly opposite the scene of Jesus' labors on the west of the Lake. Furrer[20] contends by the example of Gabara = Kabra, that the identification of Gerasa and Kersa is phonetically possible; some even go so far as to see in Kersa, Gergesa. The possibility of both of these changes is denied by Neumann,[21] to whom the vowels of Chorazin seem a more likely source for

[20] *ZDPV.* XXI. 184. [21] pp. 47–56.

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Kursi.[22] It must remain an open question, and is perhaps an idle one, inasmuch as the name Kursi means Chair or Stool, and may be simply a descriptive name applied to the tower back to the east of the shore ruins. This tower dates from a later period than the ruins below, and is probably of Roman construction at the turn of the first or beginning of the second century. The part that lies on the beach is properly called es-Sur, though the other name is usually applied to the whole.[23] Other names seem to belong to it, too (*cf.* note [12]), especially Kasr = Castle.

The site seems, on the whole, improbable. The ruins are insignificant and lie on the beach, allowing no road of the length presupposed in the gospels, if Jesus landed at the nearest point to the town. The tombs asserted in general terms to be in the mountain that rises above it[24] are denied by Captain Wilson[25] and Lagrange and in Frei's detailed description,[26] though in the latter are mentioned some natural niches in the rock above the town. These tombs would also be behind the houses and not near the landing place, as is directly implied by Matthew and also by Mk. 5 2, if, as probable, the phrase "from the tombs" in the latter be genuine, and indirectly by all the accounts in any case. Frei's description would not lead one to expect good pasturage for the swine on this elevation either, though it is not full enough to give certainty. Lagrange states[27] that the swine would have had to run down by the city — sparing the herdsmen their trip to bring the news, which is contrary to the biblical account. Professor B. W. Bacon, to whose courtesy I am indebted for the use of the two illustrations, says that we are not forced to this alternative, but that Jesus may have landed anywhere along the beach. If he came ashore three-quarters of a mile to the south of the settle-

[22] Swete, *Mk.* p. 87, and Guthe, *RE.* 6, 380, also question the phonetic possibility.

[23] Schumacher, *ZDPV.* IX. 340.

[24] Thompson, *Land and Book*, p. 355.

[25] *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 369.

[26] *ZDPV.* IX. 123; *cf.* Schumacher, *ZDPV.* IX. 340 = *Jaulan*, p. 179.

[27] *Revue Biblique*, 1895, p. 519.

ment, the swine might easily have dashed down the long dark slope seen in the second view. This seems to be the only possible situation for the event in this locality. Professor Bacon made no detailed investigation and knows of no tombs south of the town, nor have we record of any

LOOKING SOUTH FROM KERSA

from any travelers except MacGregor,[28] who says, "between W. Semak and W. Fik (Enghib) there are at least four distinct localities, where every feature in the Scripture account of this incident may be found in combination; above them are rocks with caves in them very suitable for tombs." The general terms used here and the neglect of this stretch of shore in reports of more thorough explorers make us question what MacGregor thought was necessary; that which is seen in this photograph does not give much suggestion of caves and tombs. That does not prove that there are none, or even that there were none at that time, though it is not as likely a place for tombs as the nearer hill back of the

[28] *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 423.

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town to the east. Again, the indications of Mt. 8 28, "so that no one could pass by that way," and 34, "came out to meet Jesus," are that this happened on a road or way by which people were accustomed to pass from the shore to the village, not on any part of the beach where the boat happened to land. It seems strange, too, that they should land so far south, when Jesus was going to the city — "came out to meet Jesus." And finally, there is the objection that Kersa is not and never was in Gadarene territory, — Hippos intervenes, — and that requires us to hypothecate a scribe who did not know the country as a whole, and consequently wrote Gadara, of which he did have knowledge; whereas another site is possible, lying within Gadarene territory, and so corresponding to the reading that is best attested.

The effort of Neumann, supported by Lagrange and Guthe, to find Gerasa and Gadara in Qurn Djeradi west of Kal'at-el-hösn, the old Hippos, furnishes a plausible phonetic explanation and a better site. This hill, just north of Wadi Enghib in the central part of the east shore, suggests that there may have been at its foot a little settlement with the same name or its ancient equivalent גרדא. The people, he argues, would have been called גרדיא even if they were an outlying dependency of Hippos. In the Aramaic גרדא (*γεραδα*) might be pronounced also גרסא (*γερασα*), and through the Hebrew or Aramaic of Matthew this might become confused into גדרא = *Γαδαρα*. Such changes are possible.[29] One is, however, moved to ask just why it is that in Matthew alone there is such explicit testimony to *γαδαρηνων*. Neumann accounts for it through his theory that our Matthew was written in Hebrew. Although we cannot accept this, the same change may have occurred in the Aramaic sources of the gospels, except that it is harder to see why Matthew should stand alone.

On the way up to Hippos one finds plenty of tombs,

[29] He might have cited Δ *Γαραδηνων* for *Γαδαρηνων*, Mt. 8 28,
1 Macc. 4 15 A *γασηρων*,
ℵV *γαζηρων*,
Joseph. *Ant.* 12. 7. 4 *γαδαρα* for Gezer.

though, according to Frei's account,[30] they seem to be rather far away from the shore — on the highest of the terraces forming the fore part of the hill Kal'at-el-hösn just below the plateau. The stretch of beach between the descent of the hills and the lake appears rather long for the pigs to run — even if they did have devils in them! It is a good half mile.[31] Furthermore, the trip to the city and back would have taken, at the greatest speed, an hour to an hour and a half. Such a long wait on the part of Jesus is also possible, but hardly probable. This identification is rather hypothetical and the situation hardly satisfactory.

The best location of all seems to be that suggested by Zahn — Tellul-es-S'alib by es-Samra on the southeast shore. He is right in denying the necessity of a steep, high descent into the sea[32] or of the ruins of an imposing burial place. The latter would be a help to identification; but are not necessary, as it may be taken for granted that there were tombs somewhere by the city. Here are ruins of an old settlement on the top of a chain of hills stretching down to the shore at their northern end; from the last one a perpendicular, ten-foot bank descends to a narrow strip of beach.[33] It lies in Gadarene territory, thus justifying Matthew's reading; and yet is not Gadara itself,[34] thus giving rise, perhaps

[30] *ZDPV.* pp. 127, 128. [31] Lagrange, *Revue Biblique*, p. 520.

[32] τὸ ὄρος bezeichnet in dem N. T. nicht den hohen Berg im Unterschied vom Hügel. Ein Wort für letzteren hat die evangelische Erzählung nicht. Ev. Hrs. כרמל = auch Ackerfeld; *cf. Didache* 9: 4, "das hügelige Gelände" (Zahn, *Neue Kirchl. Zeitschr.* 939, 940).

[33] Schumacher, *Jaulan*, p. 258 = *ZDPV.* IX. 357; Frei, *ZDPV.* IX. 133.

[34] Gadara is six miles away and separated by a river valley into which the swine would have to run on the way from the region of the tombs. A. Legendre (Vigoroux' *Dict. de la Bib.*) objects to making χώρα in Mt. more general than in Mk. and Lk.; but the objection hardly stands; cf. Mt. 2 12 15 21 Ac. 12 20 10 39 Lk. 2 8. That the swineherds ran to several cities and villages (S^{s} Mc. 5 14 Lu. 8 34) is only a mistake of S^{vt} (hardly original in Diat.; for Ephr. (Moes. 76) uses the singular of city), due probably to the fact that ܩܪܝܐ, which can mean either fields or villages, was given the latter meaning on account of the great number of swine, and then the scribe supplied the supposedly missing plural dots over ܩܪܝܬܐ. The reading is found in some Mss. of the Peshitta in both places, but is adopted into the text by Gwilliam only in Lk.

through its real name, to the name Gerasa, whether the name was Gerasa or was only similar to it, or whether it was simply a small place otherwise unknown, for which tradition or the evangelist or a later scribe substituted the better known Gerasa.

This seems to leave the possibility open of Origen's depending on a real local tradition, and that the town may indeed have had the name of Gergesa. We do not know what its name was. But Gergesa is simply a possibility, hardly a probability, as there is another good explanation for Origen's use of the name.

II. Bethabara

That "Bethany beyond Jordan" is the original reading in Jn. 1 28 is put beyond doubt by the overwhelming documentary evidence,[35] and is tacitly [36] or expressly [37] admitted, even by advocates of the great age of the Receptus "Bethabara." S^{sc}, which give us the only ancient Ms. evidence for the latter reading,[38] are, therefore, here at fault. The weightier question is, whether this fault rests upon a false conjecture of Origen, or is based upon an earlier independent tradition.

A categorical answer to this question, such as is given by Bousset,[39] is impossible of absolute proof; but there is ground for a strong suspicion that we have here a fault of the Origenian School repeated. Origen says [40] that almost all the Mss. of his day read *βηθανια*, but that he had convinced himself from local investigation that it should be *βηθαβαρα*. From his silence as to the reading of the minority, Zahn concludes [41] that this must have been *βηθαβαρα*. The con-

[35] $\aleph^{*}$ABC*EFGHLMSVXΓΔ($^{*}\beta\epsilon\theta$) *al plus^{180} aldin it vg boh S^{pe} ph txt ($^{mg\,(wh)}$ *βηανια*, *βηαραβα*) $S^{let(AC)}$ arr perss sl Herakl cod pl ap Or cod ap Epiph Chr Cyr Nonn.

[36] Zahn, *Neue Kirchl. Zeitschr.* 13. 925, 6.

[37] Burkitt, *Ev. Da-Meph.* II. 309.

[38] $_{c}C^{2}\Pi^{c*}T^{b}KU$(*βιθαβηρα*) (*βηθεβαρα* A 69*346, 262) 1 22 33 69 al + 30 (multi tant in mg) arm (ⲩⲏⲑⲁⲃⲁⲣⲁ = *βηθαβαρα*) sl $S^{ph\ mg}$ cod acc ap Chr Thphyl Euthy Or Epiph Eus (Hier) *OS* Suid $\aleph^{cb}$ (*βηθαραβα*), $S^{let(B)}$ ($^{sm\Pi\ ap\ Adi.}$ *βιθαραβα*) Bousset, *T und U.* XI. 4, p. 117: 33+ Min incl 13 w (48) t (q).

[39] *T. und U.* XI. 4, pp. 85, 117.

[40] *Joh. Komm.* 6. 40 (24); Brooke, 40, pp. 157, 158, l. 1.

[41] *Neue Kirchl. Zeitschr.* 13. 926.

clusion is natural that this may have been at least one, if not the only reading of the minority.[42] This is the main defense of those who deny the dependence of S^{sc} upon Origen.[43] It might seem all the defense necessary, and it is an argument which cannot be completely overthrown; so this dependence still remains possible. But it is also too much to say that the minority must have read *βηθαβαρα*. It seems strange that Origen did not cite this minority reading expressly as an authority.

Could the minority have omitted all mention of a name? This is hardly a proposition to be put forward with certainty. And yet it might be possible that by a scribal error the phrase *ἐν βηθανίᾳ* was omitted in some Ms. and the error carried along in its descendants. It is a strange coincidence that while the Bethany readings are remarkably free from minor corruptions, the Bethabara readings show a very large number,[44] as if they might well be marginal corrections to supply an omission or to correct the other reading Bethany, especially when it is remembered that the state of Origen's text is very corrupt, at least in the only family of Mss. that we possess. Such marginal corrections would not be as distinctly written, and, being perhaps derived from oral repetition of Origen's correction before the latter gained sufficient vogue to be inserted in the text, would naturally be subject to more slight alterations.

[42] P. Lagrange (*Revue Biblique*, 1895, p. 504) evades the point when he says that Origen does not say this. It is certainly possible that he implies as much.

[43] Burkitt's argument that the derivation from Origen is extremely unlikely in view of the general character of the text, does not prevent this being an Origenian corruption, even if the character of the text in general does show many differences from that of Origen. In that case S^{sc} would be more valuable than if we found Origenian influence in the first composition of S^{vt}. Still the authority of S^{sc} to rank beside ℵB and D-lat^{vt} as third factor in determining the text, would be considerably lessened, if even the handiwork of later correctors with a predilection for Origenian suggestions can be proved.

[44] *βηθεβαρα*, *βηθαραβα*, *βιθαραβα*, *βιθαβηρα*, *βηθααβαρα*, Bethbaara, *βηαβαρα*, *βιθαρα*, *βαθαρα*. *βηθαβρα* is hardly another variant, as the vowel would be very likely to drop out in the Armenian.

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No pilgrim up to and through the time of the Crusades mentions the name of the place of baptism,[45] although the tradition as to its site, east of Jericho and usually below, was very strong from the time of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (333 A.D., a contemporary of Eusebius). It is very possible that the name had disappeared in local tradition.[46] It would hardly be as likely that it was directly cut out for this reason, as that it fell out by scribal error; for the conscious changes of scribes were usually rather additions or alterations. Still there is the possibility that instead of the local cult of Bethabara growing up and influencing some texts,[47] there was rather a period of neglect of this special point of the local tradition, in which all remembrance of the name disappeared, and which led either to the careless omission or wilful excision of the name Bethany in some texts. If this be not the real course of events, there is at least more evidence for an Origenian than for a local cult of Bethabara. That there was originally no name there, and that Bethany is also a later invention [48] is hardly possible in view of the extremely wide and ancient attestation for this reading.

And, moreover, the fact that Origen had no direct knowledge of the locality,[49] together with the considerable grounds for supposing that his allegorical interest led him to the

[45] Lagrange, *Revue Biblique*, 1895, p. 506.

[46] Lagrange, p. 506; Meyer-Weiss, *Komm.* p. 67.

[47] Burkitt, *Ev. Da-Meph.* II. 309.

[48] The absence of any name in 10 40 and the perfectly indifferent way in which the Bethany near Jerusalem of 11 1 follows, as if no other Bethany had preceded, might lend color to this view, or, if other circumstances allow, support another name for 1 28. Baur makes Bethany of the latter verse an invention of the author to contrast with Bethany at the end of Christ's ministry, and Edwin Abbott (*Joh. Gram.* 2648) finds two parallels to 1 28: of place with 10 40, preparation for ministry and preparation for his greatest miracle; of name with 11 1 f., anointing for life work with water, anointing for death with ointment. Such suggestions may have played some part in the author's method of composition; but they are rather too subjective and insecure to be regarded as proof; further, the temptation would fit better in the first parallel.

[49] δείκνυσθαι δὲ λέγουσι παρὰ τῇ ὄχθῃ τοῦ Ἰορδάνου τὰ βηθαρᾶ (ed. βηθαβαρᾶ), ἔνθα ἱστοροῦσιν τὸν Ἰωάννην βεβαπτικέναι. *Comm. on Jn.* 6. 40 (24); Brooke, 158, 8-10.

exploiting of an Old Testament passage (Ju. 7 24) which seemed to give a good explanation, point strongly to him as the originator of the reading.

The Bethbara of Judges 7 24 must have been on the West side of the river Jordan,[50] as the Ephraimites there cut off the passage of the Midianites. Origen was led astray by using the literal LXX translation[51] (*ἀπὸ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου*) of עֵבֶר (v. 25), so that he understood that the Ephraimites brought the chiefs' heads from Bethbara, on the other (east) side of Jordan to Gideon in western Palestine; whereas he should have understood it "on the other side,"[52] *i.e.* that they brought the heads from western Palestine across the Jordan to Gideon, who was on the other side.[53] This false location of Bethbara in eastern Palestine helped Origen probably to the connection with it of the place where John baptized.

The ford of 'Abarah,[54] just north of Beisan and Wadi Jalud, is too far north for Judges,[55] and too fertile for John 1 28 and parallels. Not that "desert" is to be interpreted as necessarily a sandy and barren place; but it does refer to an uncultivated locality, and the valley is wholly under cultivation from below W. Jalud to the north.[56]

[50] G. F. Moore, *Comm. Ju.* p. 215; Lagrange, p. 504.

[51] *Cf.* Aquila, 2 Ki. 10 16, 3 Ki. 4 12 14 15.

[52] *Cf.* Lat. and Syr. text, Moore, 215, Lagrange, 504; as in Is. 18 1, Nu. 21 18, Zech. 3 10.

[53] That "beyond the Jordan," 7 25, is a redactional gloss to harmonize 7 24. 25, where both fighting and presentation of trophies occur west of the Jordan, as Gideon drives the enemy into the hands of Ephraim, with 8 4 f., in which Gideon pursues Midian by a more northerly route across into eastern Palestine and there makes the capture himself, is no contradiction of the argument that Bethbara was west of the Jordan. The redactor understood the location of Bethbara, even though he did not have that of Gideon clear in his mind.

[54] Conder's location for Jn. 1 28.

[55] Moore, 215, against Bertheau, 151, and Lagrange, 510. Moore's location near W. Farah gives a better watercourse by which to cut Midian off, allows Ephraim more time and a better road to get there ahead of them, and is, moreover, the natural avenue of escape, continued over the ford of Adam (Damieh) and the road into the desert.

[56] Lagarde, p. 507.

Such a name (place of ford)[57] might occur at more than one place on the river, just as Bethany is a name that might occur more than once in Palestine.[58]

בתברה, indeed, is not the same as בתעברה.[59] At first this might seem to make impossible the derivation of Origen's *βηθαβαρα*, from his connection of the baptism with the Judges passage. But Origen's chief interest seems to have been in the allegorical explanation of the name (*οἶκος κατασκευῆς* = house of preparation)[60] — a possible translation of בתברה for one who was trying to find an allegorical meaning and was willing to stretch a point to get one; for, if we suppose a substitution of א for ה we have as original, "house of creation, fashioning" = "house of preparation" (*cf.* Ps. 5 12, Isa. 41 20),[61] and the fact that he so translates the name is perhaps an indication that he wrote *βηθβαρα*, not *βηθαβαρα*.[62] Just as in Ju. 7 24 *βαιθβηρα* (Gr.[Lucian] Lat. Syr.) became *βαιθηρα* (B) by transcriptional error (Moore, p. 215), so, perhaps under the influence of this Judges reading,[63] *βηθβαρα* is found as *βηθαρα* in Origen

[57] G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.* p. 496; Brown, Briggs, Driver = *βηθαβαρα*(?).

[58] G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.* p. 542.

[59] Moore, 215: ע not dropped in common speech (against Reland).

[60] *Comm. on Jn.* 6. 40 (24), Br. 158, 112.

[61] Against this derivation of his definition it might be urged that the second of the two component parts is not a noun; but, probably for this eager hunter of allegory, this would seem too trivial to obstruct his explanation. How else can he have gotten this definition unless one of the other variants, *βηθαραβα*, could be made to equal "house of preparation" from the late Hebrew עֶרֶב שַׁבָּת (= day of preparation, Friday, originally only evening). This is hardly as likely, since the root ערב occurs in this meaning only in the form עֶרֶב and in special connection with feast- and Sabbath-days, requiring as much violence of formation to give *βηθαραβα* as before, in regarding ברא as a noun. Further, this reading is not as well attested as *βηθαβαρα*, and can be accounted for from another source, Josh. 15 6. The derivation of *βηθανια* from בֵּית עָנִי = "house of poverty or affliction," to equal "house of obedience" (*ὑπακοή*) is equally forced; עָנִי (adj.) adds the idea of humbleness, which answers better, but does not present the right construction.

[62] Nestle (*Einführung*, p. 235) thinks he may have written *βηθαβαρα*, changing *βηθβαρα* of Judges by adding *α* as the equivalent of the article and thus representing by the whole בית הַבְּרָא — in his allegorical interest of course.

[63] Lagrange (p. 504) fails to explain whether this variation of readings was introduced by Origen himself (hardly possible!), or by some scribe or dis-

(Brooke, mg. 157. 28, 158. 9, 327. 33 = WH, Ti. 4. 280 *βαθαρα*). In some texts of Jn. 1 28 was incorporated the *βηθαβαρα* reading, another variant [64] of the text of Origen, made by a slight lengthening instead of shortening of the original, perhaps with some knowledge of the ford 'Abarah as a basis. A place north of the latter is reported as the scene of Jesus' baptism by Ali el Herewi (d. 1215 A.D.).[65] This would not be sufficient to assure any very authentic tradition; but 'Abarah was only three or four hours from Aenon (Oum el Amdan, Lagrange, 509, 510), where John baptized (Jn. 3 23). Lagrange says that this tradition as to Aenon with the proximity of 'Abarah led Origen himself to this confusion. But there were plenty of fords along the river and we have seen that this location is too far north for Ju. 7 24. It is more likely that Origen's derivation was Bethbara, from an allegorical connection with the Old Testament, combined perhaps with some report as to a Bethabara on the Jordan, but not necessarily the one near Aenon. Some of the followers of Origen may easily have conjectured this Bethabara as the correct reading in place of the corruptions in the text of their master's commentary. In other texts the name was changed to *βηθαραβα* [66] with Josh. 15 6, 61; 18 22 (18) in mind. A slight indication that the reading *βηθαβαρα* may have been produced by marginal correction from *βηθ-βαρα* is to be noted in Eusebius. *Onomastica Sacra*, 240. 12, reads *βηθααβαρα* with *α* twice, as if in the text used by him *α* [67] had stood originally in the margin and had then been

ciple of Origen who knew whence his conjecture arose. It may be simply a chance coincidence.

[64] Brooke, p. 158, l. 1; *Joh. Komm.* (Preusch.), S. 149, Z. 15. That *βηθ-(β)αρα* has been changed to *βηθαβαρα* in this one place only, in the one family of Mss. of Origen's *Comm. on Jn.* that is preserved to us, seems strange; but this is the most likely place to find a correction, if some one made it in a hasty way from outside evidence, without due comparison with the context; for this is the place where the categorical denial of Bethany and contrasted assertion of Bethabara is made.

[65] Lagrange, 508.

[66] Orig. 4. 140, 142 (Ti) $\aleph^{cb}$ S^{ph} mg.

[67] This would not have occurred in his own text; for he has already in *OS.* 237. 67 (Ju. 7 24) *βηθβηρα*, which is interpreted by Jerome, *de situ* 106. 12, "domus aquae sive putei," *i.e.* בית בארה = place of the spring (Moore,

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copied into the text, and also carelessly retained on the margin, which gave a later hand occasion to insert it the second time in the text. From such confusion it is difficult to evolve any certainty; yet we may regard it as probable that Bethabara comes from Origen, either directly, or more probably indirectly, as the substitution of a disciple for the Bethbara that the master wrote.

Eusebius and Jerome can only have thought of the nameless place near Jericho when they recorded that Christians still went there for baptism.[68] There would not have been two places on the Jordan where pilgrims resorted for the special blessing of performing the rite where Jesus also underwent it; or, if there had been, we should find mention of it in this connection. Our two informants, however, gave to the place the name they found in Origen, though Jerome seems here to be simply copying Eusebius with a few verbal variations, as he retains Bethany in the Vulgate. Bethabara was probably adopted from Origen by Epiphanius, who, although his enemy, still had great respect for his critical ability, and by Chrysostom; and from the latter it passed to Euthymius, Theophilus, and Suidas, so that they represent no independent tradition.

Bethany also cannot be located,[69] but there are, at least, not the definite objections to it that there are to Bethabara, and the Ms. evidence is immensely superior.

It is then probable that S^{sc} have here adopted a reading coined by Origen. Note that of the authorities most often giving an Alexandrian reading — ℵCLXT 33 boh sah arm Orig Cyr[70] — this reading is attested by those texts which

215). The latter represents a rival tradition as to the reading and meaning of the name of Ju. 7 $_{24}$, different from the Massoretic text and Origen, but recorded by Eusebius and Jerome without perceiving the contradiction with Origen's definition, which they also transmit. Bethbaara of cod. B. (Nestle, *Einf.* p. 235) adds weight to the theory of marginal correction.

[68] *OS.* 240. 12, 108. 6.

[69] Botnah (Fr. Delitzsch, *Zeits. Luth. Theol. u. K.* 1876, p. 602; Neubauer, *Geog. Talm.* p. 262) is too far away; a small place directly on the Jordan suits better than this large inland center.

[70] Westc. Hort, Notes, pp. 131, 166; Bousset, *T. und U.* 11. 4, p. 83; Burkitt, *Encyc. Bibl.* 4985.

may be supposed to be more influenced by Origen — ℵ^{c_b}C^{2}T^{b} 33 boh arm — and the attestation shows itself mainly in the later and corrected texts and forms. Moreover, of the other testimony, the two families 1& and 13& (13, 69, 346 here) often go with the above texts, and KII^{c}w represent a group often betraying Origenian influence.[71] There remain S^{sc}AU 22, 262, and other cursives, largely having only marginal attestation, the two uncials agreeing generally with the Antioch revision and showing here variant forms in both cases. Textual evidence then confirms the probability that S^{sc} here have an Origenian reading.

Origen may have sought a verification for his conjecture in what he could learn from tradition of this part of the country, which he had not been able to visit. But his personal search for "the footsteps of Jesus"[72] was evidently confined to the discovery that it could not be Bethany by Jerusalem.[73] With this objection to the name Bethany, combined with a dislike for its allegorical signification in this connection, which seemed to him to declare Jesus obedient to John, a name more fitted for the relation of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus to Jesus, he sought for another identification, and, probably putting a leading question as to there being a Bethbara on the Jordan, received an affirmative answer. Those who gave him the answer may have had in mind the ford 'Abarah and thought that near enough, or there may have been other fords on the river with this name, or with the name *βηθβηρα* (בתבארא) = spring.

Origen is his own impeacher. He clearly announces the allegoric motive which governed his decisions, when, in writing about Capernaum, he says, "We know that the names of places are significant for the events referring to Jesus," adding as an example, Gergesa.[74] His statement[75] that "he

[71] Bousset, *T. und U.* XI. 4, pp. 111, 112, 117.

[72] *Comm. on Jn.* 6. 40 (24), Brooke, 158. 2. 3 (cf. note [40]). *γενόμενοι δὲ τοῖς τόποις ἐπὶ ἱστορίαν τῶν ἰχνῶν Ἰησοῦ καὶ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν.*

[73] Br. 158. 4, 5, 15–22; cf. Br. 158. 8–10, as given in note [50]. Notice the use of the third person in the reports, except for Bethany by Jerusalem.

[74] *Comm. on Jn.* 10. 12 (10) (Preusch. p. 182. l. 22). [75] *Ibid.* 6. 40 (24).

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who wishes carefully to establish the scriptures should not despise accuracy in regard to names," is explained by the fact that this declaration follows immediately after these strained allegorical definitions of *βηθαβαρα* and *βηθανια*. And again he says,[76] "Names must not be despised, since things useful for the interpretation of places are shown by them." And, if he limits himself by saying,[77] "It is not proper to set forth the (my) proposition as to the (my) theory of names, setting aside those that have gone before," his disciples and followers did not confine their efforts in that way; and his suggestions they are, in all probability, that have crept into some texts in place of Bethany—among others into S^{vt}. The limitation thus imposed upon the authority of S^{vt} (*i.e.* corrected after 230 A.D.—not the pure text of 180–200 A.D.) is apparently not recognized by Merx, and not fully taken into account by Burkitt, in their valuable discussions of S^{vt}.

From these two examples it is evident that the testimony of Origen in geographical questions is not always to be depended upon, and especially that any name at all susceptible of allegoric interpretation must be carefully scrutinized and investigated before credence is lent it.

[76] *Comm. on Jn.* 6. 41 (24); Br. 160. 1–3.
[77] *Comm. on Jn.* 6. 41 (24); Br. 160. 3, 4.