

THE JERUSALEM RESEARCHES.

LETTERS FROM M. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

I.

RAMLEH, Nov. 6, 1873.

I write a few words in haste from Ramleh, where I have just arrived on my way to Jerusalem. The French mail packet will touch tomorrow at Jaffa, and I snatch the opportunity of letting you know that we arrived safely on Monday, the 3rd, after a tolerably good voyage and three days' quarantine at Alexandria.

I took advantage of our short stay at Jaffa to make some examination of the city and its environs. I believe I have succeeded in settling a point which has for a long time engaged my attention, and is of great importance for the history of Jaffa and ulterior researches, namely, *the situation of the ancient cemetery of Jaffa*. I observed a circle, which extends in the great gardens outside Jaffa, bounded by a little hamlet called Abou K'bir* (Abu Kebir), and by the well of Abou Nabboût (Abu Nabbut). This circle, called Ardh (or Jebel) Dhabitha, contains a quantity of tombs cut in the *tufa*, and exposed every day to the light by the fellahin. I had the good fortune to purchase on the very spot, of a peasant, a small slab of marble, with an inscription that I think to be extremely curious. It is the epitaph, in Greek, of a Jewish personage, with the representation of the seven-branched candlestick and the funeral palm. It is the exact pendant of the inscription of *Thanouni*, which comes also from Jaffa, a squeeze of which I sent you for the Exhibition. By the next mail I will give you a reproduction with a translation. I propose to return and explore the environs of Jaffa, which promise valuable "finds." We must at least find two or three more inscriptions of the same kind coming from the same neighbourhood.

JERUSALEM, Nov. 12, 1873.

The business of getting settled, procuring furniture, finding a house, hiring servants, receiving and paying visits, have not left us very much

* In the reports and letters of M. Ganneau, the French spelling of Arabic names will be preserved, but after each will be given the spelling according to Robinson's method. Mr. Drake spells the names in his reports according to his own method. The Committee have in consideration the adoption for their map of a uniform system.

time for work. Notwithstanding, we have neglected no opportunity, since setting foot on the sand of Jaffa, of making observations or getting information; and the following is a succinct account of what I have done up to the present moment.

Jaffa. I had already, during my first stay in Palestine, remarked at Jaffa, in an Arab house belonging to M. Damiani, the French Consular Agent of Ramleh, a fragment of *bas-relief* in marble fitted in the pavement. The first thing I did was to go and examine this. M. Lecomte made a very pretty drawing of it, which you will get by the next mail, with other illustrations of these letters. The *bas-relief* from Cæsarea represents a tragic mask a great deal mutilated and broken below the nose: the head is in fairly good style, and may belong to the best part of the Greco-Roman period. Judging by the arrangement of the hair, the disposition of the fillet, and the ensemble of the features, the mask must belong to a woman's head: the eyes are deeply sunk; and the mouth, in great part gone, must have been open for the classical *rictus*. A fragment of ringlet on the left, and a bit of wing on the right of the head, seem to indicate that it formed part of a decoration, and other particulars tend to show that the whole was to be looked at from beneath, and formed part, perhaps, of a frieze, rather than the decoration of a sarcophagus. May we recognise here a piece of the Roman Theatre of Cæsarea?

The City Walls. I made the tour of the city walls, trying to pick out the portions that are ancient, whether of construction or of material. I observed, especially towards the north, and on the seaward side, a considerable quantity of fine rusticated blocks. The people of the place told me that they were brought here from Cæsarea and St. Jean d'Acre. Along the wall may be very plainly distinguished from place to place, in front of the actual wall, old foundations at present partly under water. I ran along the south part of the wall which separates the city from the sea in a boat. Starting from the advanced bastion, above which rise the lighthouse and the traditional house of St. Peter, extends a basin of water of very small depth, the boat touching the bottom every moment. This sea basin is surrounded by a reef of rocks, and bears the name of *Birket el Gamar* (the Basin of the Moon). All this place, and that portion of the site which adjoins it, deserve to be minutely explored. The coast here is covered with ruins apparently ancient.

Traditions. There is living at Jaffa a certain Mussulman named 'Ali Sida, master mason. This man, now of advanced age, has directed all the constructions ordered at the commencement of the century by the legendary Abou Nabbout (Abu Nabbüt), Governor of Jaffa. It would be interesting to collect from him and on the spot every kind of information on the considerable changes that Jaffa underwent at that time.

Amphora. An extremely intelligent Arab, living at Jaffa, spoke to me of an amphora handle found in the gardens of Jaffa, and bearing characters of which he showed me a copy made by himself. As far as I could judge by this reproduction, simple enough, but seriously meant, the

inscription is Greek, and gives the name of the potter. I will try to see the original on my first journey to Jaffa.

On leaving Jaffa to go to Jerusalem, I wished to verify an important point, which has engaged me a long time, and I think that I have positively arrived at it—it is the site of the ancient cemetery of the city. With this object, on leaving the gate of the city, in place of following the ordinary road, I directed our little caravan to the left—*i. e.*, to the north, across the gardens which surround Jaffa on all sides. We soon arrived at a small hamlet named *Sakneh Abou K'bir* (*Sukneh Abu Kebir*), where I spoke to some of the fellahin. One of them led us a few steps farther in the interior of certain gardens very little cultivated, when I ascertained the presence of numerous recent excavations designed to get building stones. These excavations have brought to light at several points sepulchral chambers cut in the limestone. Such tombs are found, it appears, from the hamlet of Abou K'bir (Abu Kebir) as far as the Jewish Agricultural Institute, on the other side of the road, and to the present Catholic Cemetery. The peasants assured me that they had found in these tombs lamps and vases in terra-cotta, and stones with inscriptions. At my request one of them went to get such a stone; it is the same of which I spoke in my first note from Ramleh. I bought it for the Society. I examined it at leisure at Jerusalem, and find it to be positively an epitaph in Greek of a Jewish personage, designated as Φ PONTICTHC AAEZANAPIAC. The mention of this function occupied by him at Alexandria gives this inscription a great historic value. I propose to send you by the first opportunity a facsimile and an interpretation.

After this short but profitable diversion we made our way to the picturesque fountains of Abou Nabboût, to get back to the ordinary road. We followed it without finding anything worthy of note, as far as the little village of Yazour (Yasûr). Here I left the road to cross the village and examine a little nearer an old building, church or small castle, flanked with centre forts. The only information I obtained relates to the name of the place. A fellah, less savage than his companions, was good enough to inform me that *Yazour* used to be called formerly *Adalia*, and that after the place was taken by an ancient king, by main force (*béz-zôr*), it received the name of *Yazour*. Without attaching importance to an etymology based upon a mere play upon words, I thought it well to note it. It may, besides, be remarked that in this region, as far as the mountains, local tradition often assigns two names to places, the one reported ancient and the other modern. This particularity, which I have often observed in my previous researches, must have its weight with any one who gives himself up specially to onomastic topography.

At Ramleh, where we passed the night, I had no time to do any-Gezer. thing. We started early in the morning in order to pass by the site of the ancient Gezer, which I discovered on the spot three years ago, after determining it *à priori* by theoretical and historical considerations.

We rode straight to the place, crossing over fields split open by the drought, across which it was difficult to urge the horses. Arrived at the summit, we found a house in process of construction, and met there Messrs. Bergheim *frs*, who are building it, and who told us they had bought the whole hill. Let us hope that this acquisition will make research on the site of the old Canaanite city easier for the future. The works of MM. Bergheim have caused the discovery of certain cuttings in the rock, of which they showed me some which appeared to me very curious. In passing I gave one look at the great *birket*, the plan of which I drew on my first visit. It is now cleared out almost to the bottom.

Site of
Primitive
Dwellings:

After taking leave of the new Seigneurs of Gezer, we traversed the whole length of the tell and made the descent in the direction of A'in Yardi and Goubab (El Kubab). On the road I made a fresh examination of the wine-presses, tombs, and foundations cut in the rocks, which had so much struck me on my first visit. I believe I have been enabled to determine in certain cuttings of the rock the position of the ancient houses. Thus, in certain places may be seen four or five steps abutting on a horizontal platform cut in the sloping rock. These cuttings are a trace, a kind of impress, of great houses now disappeared. In other places may be perfectly distinguished the place where the back part of the house rested. It would be well to draw exactly the most characteristic of these incisions and excisions of the rock: they may possibly throw great light on the restoration of the primitive buildings of Palestine. Such drawings and plans can alone make us understand what a Canaanitish city was like. Perhaps we shall be able, with the help of M. Lecomte, to visit the place again and make them.

Disposition
of houses
by isolated
groups.

Another remark that I made during this second visit relates to the manner in which the quarters of Gezer were distributed. In the centre and on the summit of the tell, the strategic importance of which must have been considerable, certainly stood the stronghold of the city—the city proper. Around it and along the sides were distributed a series of small isolated centres of agglomeration, a kind of satellites of the city itself, whose positions are determined by the cuttings in the rock, of which I have spoken above. This disposition to scatter itself, of which Gezer surely does not offer us the only specimen, explains in a striking manner, it seems to me, the Biblical phrase, “the city and her daughters.” Apparently it was this series of isolated groups, forming an integral part of the city, which was ingeniously called the “daughters.”

Abū Ghsh.

We halted a moment passing before *Giliat el 'Eneb* (Kuriat el Enab), a village of Abou Ghôch, to visit the church, named after Saint Jerome, which has been recently conceded to the French Government. Certain excavations undertaken since the concession have partly disengaged the crypt, which forms a complete subterranean church, and contains a cave or cistern filled with water. We remarked signs cut on

the blocks of the church above, which I had noted a long time. They leave no doubt as to the mediæval Latin origin of the monument. In the outside walls may be seen many blocks of rusticated stone, which remind me singularly of those utilised in the buildings of the church (also of the Crusading period) of Neby Shamouel and the ruined edifice of Colonia.*

Small Bas-relief from Ascalon.—A man brought me from Ascalon a little slab of marble with a sculpture representing two doves, birds symbolical of the town. (Sketched by M. Lecomte.) Archæological Notes.

Fragment from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.—We have also a drawing of a fragment of sculpture in marble, found during the demolition of the old cupola, the end of a bracket representing a lion devouring a grotesque human head. Greek characters in relief, A. Γ.

Marble Head found at Jerusalem.—A Mussulman of Jerusalem, Rabâh Effendi, has found in taking down a stone wall on his property, not far from the *g'bour el molouk*, a very fine head in marble of a man bearded, with curled hair, and a fillet adorned with a medallion representing an eagle. The type of this head, in good Roman execution, and the characteristic and individual aspect of the features, seem to indicate that we have here a portrait and not a common head. Probably it is one of some historic personage who played his part at Jerusalem. And if we are to take the details of his fillet as marks of royalty, perhaps we have the portrait of one of the Herods. Up to the present I have only had time to glance at this remarkable head. I will see it again and make a careful examination of it. Perhaps it is a broken piece of the statue of an emperor.

Fragments of Inscriptions coming from the Haram es Shereef.—The Russian Archimandrite, a man of considerable learning and very obliging, has shown me three fragments of interesting inscriptions brought to light during the repair of the Mosque. Two are in Byzantine Greek, one is in Latin.

II.

JERUSALEM, November 13—27, 1873. 7

I have already told you of the discovery, in a sepulchral cave at the Mount of Offence, of a group of Jewish sarcophagi. I have now the satisfaction of telling you that I was not wrong in attributing a very great value, archæological as well as epigraphic, to these monuments. A fuller and more frequent examination has only con-

Judeo-Christian Sarcophagi, with inscriptions, found on the Mount of Offence.

* Abû Gosh is situated at the east end of the Wady Aly, on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. It is called in Murray's map Kuriet el Enab, but it generally bears the name of Abû Gosh, from the brigand of that name, who, after nearly fifty years of crime, was at last seized in 1846. It was identified by Robinson with Kirjath Jearim. (See Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*, *sub voce*.)

firmed my first judgment. I wish I could have taken photographs, but we cannot yet get at the apparatus. In their absence I tried to take squeezes of the ornamented surfaces as well as of the inscriptions themselves, the decorations being engraved lightly, so as to present few difficulties to this method of reproduction.

The ornamentations are exactly like those of similar monuments already known and published in the *Bulletin du Musée Parent*, the *Recovery of Jerusalem*, and in a memoir of my own which appeared in the *Revue Archéologique* of this year. Their principal *motif* consists of two roses geometrically constructed with greater or less complication.

The lids are of different forms (triangular, semicircular, rectangular, in section) and fitted to the sarcophagi in different ways, either placed on two or four internal rebates, or sliding into the sarcophagus just like the lid of a box of dominoes. The latter are provided at the upper part with a notch for the hand. The inscriptions, in Hebrew and Greek, are sometimes on the lids, but more often on one of the sides or ends of the sarcophagus itself. Some are painted or traced with *kalam*, or even with carbon; the larger number are engraved with a pointed instrument, but not deeply. Several, not only Greek, but also Hebrew, are accompanied by crosses, which leave no doubt of the religion of the persons whose remains were preserved in them; others present a sign of cuneiform appearance: others, again, have no symbol whatever, not even the palm or the seven-branched candlestick, which I have so often found on funeral inscriptions incontestably Jewish.

Here is a translation of the principal of these inscriptions. I send you my notes without attempting a classification:—

I. Hebrew inscriptions:—

(1.) שלום אשת יהודה. *Salome, wife of Judah*, engraved in very small characters. Below, in large characters, שלום, *Salome* (or perhaps a formula, as “*pax*”), with the symbol,  which appears like a leaf, or a bow with its arrow, but which is, nevertheless, in my opinion a cruciform sign.

שלום אשת יהודה. *Salome, wife of Judah*, on a flat lid which very likely belongs to the preceding sarcophagus. On the other face of the lid a Hebrew inscription indistinct, but with the same cruciform sign as that given above.

(2.) יהודה. *Judah*, with the cross +. Perhaps the husband of Salome, for the others of the same name whom we meet with afterwards do not appear to have been Christians.

(3.) יהודה הספר. *Judah the Scribe*. The quadrangular *samech* is a very interesting form. On another face of the sarcophagus, and rather carelessly engraved, יהודה בר אלעזר הסופר, *Judah, son of Eleazar the Scribe*. The word *sofer* is this time written in full, with the *vau*, and the *samech* is triangular as usual.

(4.) שמשון בר ישוע. *Simeon, the son of Jesus (Bar Jeshu'o)*. In characters nearly microscopic, but neatly engraved (comp. Elymas Bar-jesus the magician).

(5.) מרתאכתפצח. *Martha, daughter of Pasach.* with the *tsade* in place of the *samech* is quite admissible in vulgar orthography. The *tsade* is due to the attraction of the strong letter *heth*. Perhaps the name is Jewish as well as Christian.

(6.) אלעזר בר נתי. *Eleazar, son of Nathan.* The form *Nathaï* for *Nathan* is not uncommon (cf. *Tannaï*, &c.). May we recognise in this *Eleazar* the father of *Judah the Scribe* in No. 5?

(7.) יהודה ברחנניה. *Judah, the son of Hananiah.* It has been traced in *kalam*, appearing to be followed by the word מן, *Man of* (cf. *Luke iii. 26*, for the name only).

(8.) שלמציין בת שמעון הכהן. *Salamtsion, daughter of Simeon the Priest.* The name of the woman, *Salam Sion*, is of the greatest interest. We find it under other forms in the *Talmud* (as the name of the wife of *Alexander Jannæus*). It is the name *Salampsion* of *Josephus* (daughter of *Herod*). It appears to me formed exactly like ירושלים, *Jerusalem*, *Jeru-* being replaced by *Sion*, and the order of the parts reversed.

(9.) שלמציין. *Salampsion.*

(10.) קרקס. Perhaps a transcript from *κοραξ-κορακος*.

There are several others that I have not been able to make out except in part.

II. Greek inscriptions:—

Jesus. ΙΕΟΥΣ, twice repeated, with the cross +. *Nathaniel,* ΝΑΤΑΝΗΑΟΥ; ΗΛΗΑ; ΚΥΡΘΑΚ; ΜΟΧΧΑΚ; ΜΑΡΙΑΔΟΚ; ΗΑ, accompanied by a cross apparently of a later date ✝.

These inscriptions raise a large number of questions of which I defer the consideration for the memoir which will accompany the drawings. Their value rests principally upon three points.

(1) *Epigraphy.* New documents throwing strong light on the history of the square Hebrew character, and enabling us to establish a synchronism with other inscriptions known but not dated. It is now evident, for example, that the inscription engraved on the sarcophagus taken by *M. de Saulcy* from the "Tombs of the Kings" (*K'bour el Molouk*) is contemporary with these, and can scarcely, therefore, be far removed from the Christian era.

(2) *History of the origin of Christianity.* Monuments belonging to the beginnings of Christianity, before it had any official position, coming from the very soil where it had its birth. No monument of this kind had hitherto been brought to light. The cave on the Mount of Offence belonged apparently to one of the earliest families which joined the new religion. In this group of sarcophagi, some of which have the Christian symbol and some have not, we are, so to speak, assisting at an actual unfolding of Christianity. The association of the sign of the cross with names written in Hebrew constitutes alone a valuable fact.

Perhaps, also, we ought to consider those which have no such symbol at all as Christians of the most ancient period. Perhaps "Judah the Scribe," and even "Simeon the Priest (Cohen)" belonged to the new

religion. In that case this Simeon might very well be the second Bishop of Jerusalem. But then would arise (only to be solved) the grave question of the marriage of Christian priests, since Simeon has a daughter named Salamsion.

I must add that in one of the sarcophagi (unfortunately it is impossible now to know which) were three or four small instruments in copper or bronze, much oxidized, consisting of an actual small bell, surmounted by a ring. The Arabs thought they were a kind of castanets. Can we trace here the equivalent of the bells hung on the robe of the high priest? * And do these ornaments come from the sarcophagus of our Simeon? We took drawings of them just as we did of the vases and vials of terra-cotta found in the other sarcophagi.

The explanation of the symbol also deserves serious attention.

3. The names. What gives additional value to these short inscriptions is, that they furnish a whole series of names found in the Gospels, in their popular and local Syro-Chaldaic forms—the use of *bar* for *ben* (son), for instance. The presence of the names of Jesus, written with its vulgar contraction, and Martha, of which we only knew historically that it was the feminine form of the Aramaic מרת, would alone be sufficient to make this collection important from an exegetic point of view.

By a singular coincidence, which from the first struck me forcibly, these inscriptions, found close to the Bethany road, and very near the site of the village, contain nearly all the names of the personages in the Gospel scenes which belonged to the place: Eleazar (Lazarus), Simon, Martha . . . a host of other coincidences occur at the sight of all these most evangelical names, if it were not imprudent to indulge in conjecture thus early in our researches.

It is deplorable that this interesting family tomb should have been opened by unintelligent and rude hands, which have carried away the sarcophagi without taking any kind of precautions, mixing up the lids, breaking the bones and the vases of terra-cotta. It is impossible now to know in what order they were arranged. I am told that they were placed over each other, giving some sort of chronological key, which it is a great pity to have lost. I think I ought to note that I have not seen among all these remains a single fragment of glass, and I have not been informed of a single object of this material among all the collection.

C. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

* See Exod. xxxiv. 24—26; Joseph. *Antiq.* III., vii., § 4; and Ecclus. xlv. 9.