

THE JERUSALEM RESEARCHES.

LETTERS FROM M. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

III.

JERUSALEM, *October 5—10, 1873.*

Excursion
to Jericho.

THE day before yesterday we returned from Jericho, having taken advantage of Lieutenant Conder's presence there to visit the place, in the hope of verifying certain points. We passed five days in the Survey Camp, meeting with the most friendly reception from the officers in charge, and came back here on the third.

The two points which were the motives of this journey were (1) the examination of the site of the Hajar el Asbah, which I had for a long time,* for various reasons, proposed to identify with the Stone of Bohan;† and (2) the project to excavate a cemetery near Goumran pointed out as curious by MM. Rey and De Sauley. In view of the latter I had brought with me two peasants of Silwan, formerly workmen under Captain Warren, and taken certain tools, such as picks, shovels, and crowbars from the Society's storehouse. The Jericho people are of no use for this kind of work, as they even employ the fellahin of the mountains to cultivate their own lands.

Our journey was accomplished without incident, except that arriving after nightfall, and badly guided by our two peasants, we wandered about for two hours in the darkness and the thorn thickets before discovering the camp, masked as it was by the Tell el A'in, at the foot of which it was placed.

Hajar el
Asbah and
the Stone of
Bohan.

We started the next day, accompanied by Messrs. Conder and Drake, for Hajar el Asbah‡ and the Khirbet Goumran. We arrived at the territory (Ardh) of the former after crossing in succession the Wady el Kelt, the Wady Daber, and the little Wady el A'sala. It is a small plain extending between the foot of the mountains and the sea, to a bold and well-marked promontory which one of our guides called, I believe, Edh-dh'neib e'yeir (?). In the northern portion of this region, almost at the foot of the peak, lie four or five great blocks of rock, probably fallen from the summit or flank of the mountain. The most northerly of these, very nearly cubical in form, and measuring two metres and a half in height, was pointed out to us as the Hajar el

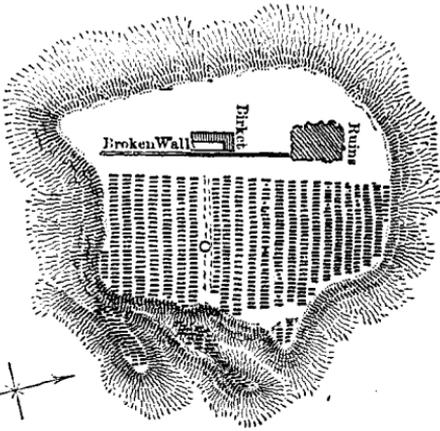
* *Quarterly Statement*, 1871, p. 105 ; and *Quarterly Statement*, 1872, p. 116.

† Joshua xv. 6, and xviii. 17.

‡ Hajar el Asbah is marked on the maps of Vandevælde and Murray as Hajar Lesbah, on the north-west of the Dead Sea.

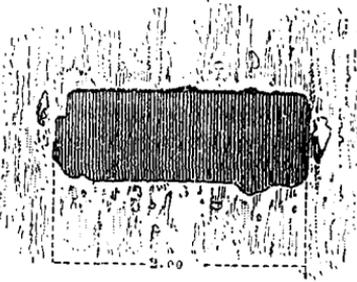
Gomara's

Plan of Palace

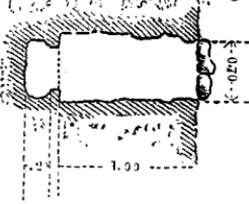


Position of Tomb N 20° E

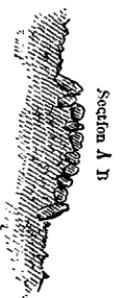
Plan of a Tomb



Section C D



Section A B



Plan of a Tomb



A Tomb, etc.

CEMETERY OF GOMARA.

Asbah : it is cloven in the middle. The scantiness of its proportions forms a striking contrast with the importance accorded to this simple piece of rock, which, without any thrilling character, has nevertheless given its name to a surrounding piece of country comparatively large. The form of the stone hardly appeared to me to justify the signification which in my memoir on the subject I had assigned to the Hebrew Bohan, and to the Arabic word Asbah (for Asb'a), *thumb* or *finger*. On the other hand, I discovered close by, and standing on the side of the hill, a remarkable isolated peak, which struck me at first sight as well as my companions. This point of rock presents a striking resemblance to a fist closed with the thumb raised, as will be easily seen by looking at M. Lecomte's sketch. Nothing more natural than to apply to this finger-shaped point of rock the characteristic denominations of *thumb* or *finger*, only unfortunately the guides assured us that the Hajar el Asbah was really the fallen block we had just visited, and that this other rock was called *Sahsoul H'méin* or *Gourdet Sahsoul H'méid*, which it seems difficult to attach etymologically to *Eben Bohan*.

What are we to understand from these facts? It may very well be that the Arabic translation of the Hebrew word at first applied to the peak has been transferred to one of the blocks fallen from the mountain close by. What would seem to justify this conjecture is that the name of Asbah is extended over the whole of the plain, as we have seen. There seems nothing impossible in supposing that after this extension of meaning it should be again concentrated on a single block within the space, and that towards the point by which the place was ordinarily reached, the north. The transference of name might possibly be dated back to the falling of the stone itself from the mountain; such an accident may have struck the next visitors so much as to have caused them to fix the denomination of the whole region to this single stone.

I collected from the Bedawi who accompanied us a variation of the name Hajar el Asbah, viz., *Hajar es Sobeh*.

Not only the peak itself in which I wished to find the Stone of Bohan has a highly characteristic form, but the shadow which it threw on the side of the hill, at the moment when we passed before it, gave a curious profile suggesting also the signification of the name.

Lastly, I will add to these observations one which appears to me of great value in this important question of Biblical topography. This peak marks the exact point where the mountains which fringe the western side of the Dead Sea change their direction, or at least to the eye appear to change it. It is at the extremity of the Cape which, looking from north to south, closes the landward horizon, appearing from this side to plunge into the sea. It is a point which forms a natural position, and there is therefore nothing astonishing in its being chosen as one of the points in the border line between Benjamin and Judah. This consideration appeared to me so important that on our return I begged M. Lecomte to make, from the top of the Tell Ain es Sultan, a panoramic

view of the plain of Jericho and its horizon of mountains from the *Tawahîn es Soukkar* to the sea.

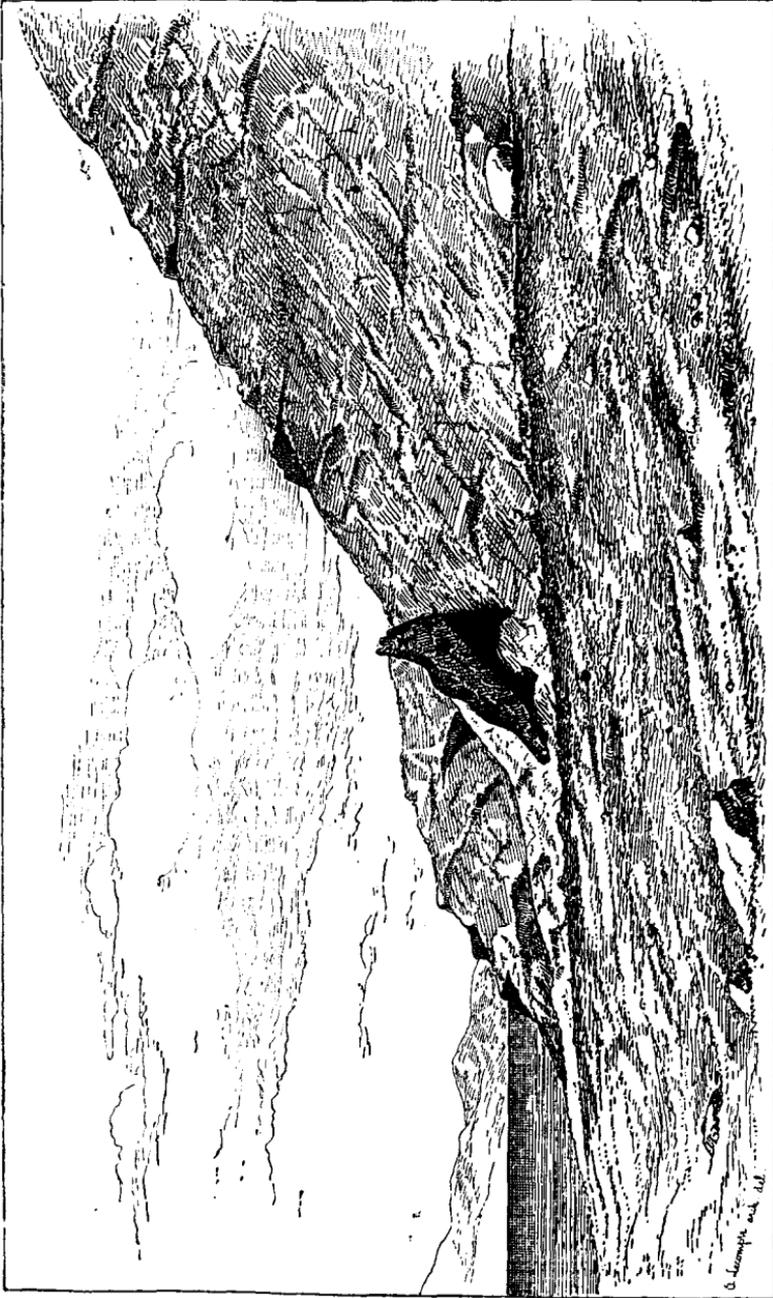
We must remark that the peak only presents its profile clearly indicated when one looks at it from the north; seen from the south, as we remarked on returning, it had lost its first aspect; on the other hand, it resembled now, in a very striking manner, a colossal statue, seated in the Egyptian manner.

After a brief halt at Hajar el Asbal, we continued our journey to the south, to examine the site of the Khirbet Gomran, and especially the cemetery pointed out here by MM. Rey and De Saulcy. The ruins are quite insignificant in themselves: a few fallen walls of mean construction; a little *birket*, into which you descend by steps; and numerous fragments of irregular pottery scattered over the soil. Our attention was principally attracted by the numerous tombs (perhaps a thousand) which cover the mound and adjacent plateaux. To judge only by their exterior aspect they might be taken for ordinary Arab tombs, composed of a small elliptical tumulus, surrounded by a range of rough stones, with two large stones placed upright at the two extremities. All that distinguishes these sepulchres distinctly from modern tombs is the orientation: they all have their major axis north and south instead of east and west. This particularity had been already noted by the Mussulman guides of M. Rey, and it called from them the remark that they were the tombs of *Kouffar* (not Mussulmans).

Excavation
of the
Tombs of
Gomran.

I resolved to open one of the tombs. Our two men of Silwan set to work under our eyes, while we followed—Mr. Drake, M. Lecomte, and myself—the progress of the excavation. After digging about one metre in depth, our workmen came upon a bed of rough clay brick measuring 0·40 × ·20 × ·12 metres, and resting on a kind of flange cut in the earth itself. On removing these bricks, we found in the grave the bones, partly destroyed, of the corpse which had been buried there; and managed to pick out a bit of a jawbone, with teeth adhering, which will perhaps enable anthropological conclusions to be drawn. There was no article of any kind in the tomb. The head was turned to the south, and the feet to the north. You will gather from M. Lecomte's sketches some idea of the dimensions and disposition of the tomb which we opened, as well as of the general aspect of this enigmatical cemetery. The principal plateau, which contains the greater number of these tombs, is crossed from east to west by a kind of alley dividing the tombs into two zones. It is difficult to form any opinion on these sepulchres, principally on account of their abnormal orientation. Can they belong to some ancient Arabic tribe of the *Jahiliyeh* period? If they were Christian tombs they would offer some characteristic sign or religious emblem, for the employment of bricks to cover the body, and the comparative depth of the graves, show that the tombs have been constructed with a certain amount of care.

I took advantage of Sunday to make a little excursion to Rîha and its environs, accompanied by M. Lecomte. We paid a visit to the *Mutesellim*



ROCK NEAR THE HAJAR EL ASBAH (STONE OF BOHAN).

S. H. W. 1871

of the place, who resides in the Arab *borj*, in the hope of getting some information from him. We found a man of Riha who pretended to have discovered some days before three stones with inscriptions; perhaps they were only fragments of sculpture such as we had already found at the *Tawahîn es Soukkar*, mere pieces of capitals and friezes on which the Arabs wanted us to see inscriptions. However that may be, it was impossible for us to get a sight of these three inscribed stones, and the owner ended by saying that he had given them to a man of Silwan.

We then entered an enclosure belonging, they told us, to the Russians, in which had been accumulated a great quantity of ancient cut stones taken from excavations made in the surrounding Tells, and intended to serve for a new building projected by the Russians. We examined with the greatest care this kind of workyard, principally furnished from the excavations at Tell el Matlab, and observed great quantities of architectural fragments of mouldings, bases, capitals, shafts, fragments of sculptured friezes, bits of sarcophagi with garlands, &c., and stones bearing the cross. Farther on, in the garden, almost entirely buried in the soil, was a great block of red granite. It would be important to know exactly the origin of these remains, which are certainly the *débris* of considerable buildings, as some conclusion might be drawn from it as to the site of ancient Jericho.

Fragments
of sculpture
from the
Tells of
Jericho.

Unfortunately, only a limited faith can be put in the assertions of the Arabs, although the greater part were unanimous in indicating Tell el Matlab as the place which had furnished most of the stones. And, indeed, we found, on the way back to camp, fresh traces of excavations in that Tell, and some blocks recently dug out. This indication agrees well enough with the tradition mentioned below, which places the ancient Jericho at the Tell el Matlab. M. Lecomte went the next day to copy the most interesting of these fragments.

In the afternoon I went alone on a little excursion north of Jericho, taking for guide a fellah of El 'Azariyé (Bethany), who often comes down to Jericho for agricultural work, and knows its environs better than the inhabitants of the place itself, from whom one can get no information whatever.

I went first to visit *Khîrbet el Mouffjir*, north of the *Wady Nouè'mè*, not far from the aqueduct which crosses the valley and was pointed out to me under the name of *Jesr Abou Ghabbouch*. Its ruins are composed of little mounds extending over a considerable space, some of which have been excavated by Captain Warren. These excavations brought to light, among other things, a fragment of an apsis whose convexity pointed south, perhaps the extremity of the transept of a church of regular orientation. The same name (*Khîrbet*, or *Tawâhîn el Mouffjir*) is applied to very considerable ruins about a quarter of an hour to the west, at the end of an aqueduct supported by an arcade with nearly semicircular arches. A little wady, a lateral affluent of the *Wady Nouè'mè*, which I remarked not far off, was pointed out to me as the

Khîrbet et
Mouffjir.

Wady Moufjir; later on the Bedouin of the locality assured me that it was not the *Wady Moufjir*, but the *Wady Seürhän*; others again maintained that it was not a wady at all, but a simple place called "the *zaggoums* of *Seürhän* (*Z'goumät Seürhän*) since a certain *Seürhän* had been killed there by the *Adouän*.

sanctuary of
the Imam
Aly.

We then proceeded to *Ain ed Douk*, crossing the *territory of the sanctuary of the Imam Aly* (*Ardh Maqam el Imam Aly*), a sanctuary which is the object, in this locality, of the greatest veneration, and is often simply called the *Maqam*. We shall see immediately the curious legend which belongs to this Moslem sanctuary. We passed on our way to the *maqam* by the *Tell el Abraïke*. The *maqam* has nothing remarkable in itself. I found a Mussulman tomb protected by a low wall of uncemented stones and surrounded by a number of implements and tools deposited by their proprietors under the safeguard of the sanctity of the spot. Farther on are two large shafts, which seem to mark the exact site of the *maqam*. A small plateau in front is fitted with pits dug in the ground, and also confided to the protection of the saint. The *maqam* is at the foot of a considerable eminence called (we shall see directly why) *Mouèdhhèn Eb'äl*, that is to say, *the place where Ebläl uttered the call to prayer*. This hill commands all the environs and the *Wady Nouè'mè*; and its eminently strategic position may perhaps justify us in regarding it as the site of the fortress of *Doch* or *Dagon* (?).

Tomb with
sarcophagus
and sculptured
bed.

We continued to ascend the *Wady Nouè'mè*, which widens at this place, following the foot of the mountains which bound it on the north. Arrived at the *Well of Ain ed Dùk*, and of *Ain Nouè'mè*, I went to a tomb cut out in the side of a hill, the entrance to which is visible from the bottom of the valley. It consists of a chamber with twenty-one perpendicular loculi disposed in two stages. The number 21 (7×3) is essentially a funereal number. I remarked two sarcophagi, of which one is longer and broader than the other; on the ground, in the midst of a pile of cut-up straw (*tibèn*), lay a fragment of a sarcophagus lid sculptured and ornamented with triangular pediments, and other fragments of lid and sarcophagus mixed up. The chamber had been recently opened, I was told, by a *Bedawi*, who had managed to make a granary of it. I saw, indeed, at the door of the tomb, the earth which had been taken out of it; it was all mixed up with bones, fragments of pottery and glass, &c., and appeared to have been deposited very recently. By the side of this was another tomb like it, almost entirely filled with earth. I came back the next day and made an excavation, which led to no result of importance. The second tomb, which appeared to me unfinished, had in any case been violated a long time before. We found in the earth at one of the corners bones which seemed to belong to a body inhumed here after the building of the tomb, perhaps of some Arab. Mr. Drake and M. Lecomte went the next day and took drawings of the plan of the tomb and the sarcophagus lid.

Legend.

It is probably the presence of these tombs which has given rise to

the legend which my guide told me when he pointed them out from the valley. "Deep down in the flat ground of *Abou Lahem* (*fi qā' 'Khaur Abou Lahem*) is a stone with an inscription; beside it is a leaden casket, which contains another of gold, and this contains the body of a man."

The same guide told me that the *old men* of Riha said that the site of ancient Jericho was Tell el Matlab.

The whole of Monday was taken up with the useless excavation of the neighbouring tomb. In the evening, talking over it in the camp with one of the *'Abūl* employed by Lieut. Conder, I took down from his mouth certain traditions, which seem to me sufficiently important to be related in detail, because they attach themselves, in a confused but undoubtful sort of way, to the name and story of Joshua. I attach the more importance to these legends—an echo of the Biblical narrative—because they were told me by a man extremely simple and almost a savage, before an Arab audience, who could have pulled him up short, and because the stories themselves have undergone changes too strange and too local not to be original.

The Bedawi began by relating how, not far from the *Tell-el-ithlā*, there exist ruins with *Dawāris* (i.e., ruins of old things), and that there was the ancient Jericho, the City of Brass, *medīnēt en nahas*, surrounded by seven walls of brass. The city was in the power of the *Kouffar* (infidels), on whom the Imam Aly, son of Abou Taleb (he of the *maqam*), made war. Aly mounted his horse Meimoun, rode round the city, and overthrew its walls by blowing on them (*bén-néfès*), the ramparts falling of their own accord, stone by stone. This legend recalls the Biblical account of the taking of Jericho, and there is another circumstance which shows how, under the name of Aly, lies hid the personality of Joshua. After his combat with the *Kouffar* of the City of Brass the day drew to an end, and the infidels were about to profit by the darkness to escape, when the Imam Aly cried out, addressing the sun, "Return, O blessed! return, O blessed!" (*Erdja'y ya mūbarèkè! Inthiny ya moubarèkè!*) Immediately, by the permission of God, the sun, which was in the west, and on the point of disappearing behind the mountain, placed itself once more in the east, in the place whence it had started, and since that time the mountain above which the sun was hanging at the moment of the miracle has been called *Dakrat eth-thiniyé* (the croup of the turning, from *inthana*, to turn, return). It is the low chain running at the foot of Mount Quarantania above the *Tawahhūn es Soukkar*, which one passes, in going from Ain es Sultān to the *maqam*, on a point covered with little heaps of stones (*chawāhid*) raised by Mussulmans, who can see from this place Neby Mūsa.

Traditions relating to Joshua and the taking of Jericho.

The city of Brass, taken by Imam Aly.

As soon as the Imam Aly saw the sun return to the east, he cried to his servant Eblal (or Belal), who at this moment was on the mountain now called *Mouèddhèn Eblal*, to make the call for the morning prayer (Edhān), whence the name given latterly to the mountain (Place of the Call to Prayer by Eblal). Perhaps this name belongs to a group of the

tribe of the 'Abid called Belalat. The miracle having assured victory to Imam Aly, he exterminated all the infidels, and demolished the city from the foundations, the fugitives being entirely destroyed by wasps.

We easily observe in this simple legend the leading features of the story of the fall of Jericho and the victory of Joshua over the Amorites, only in consequence of the absolute want of historical perspective which belongs to popular stories, facts and personages the most widely separate are mixed up together. We remark as well a very pronounced tendency to localise details by attaching them in the most rudimentary etymological manner to the names of places. It is not, however, without interest to have collected on the very spot where the events took place these popular accounts which have preserved their memory.

Tell el
Ithlé.

On Tuesday morning, while M. Lecomte was occupied in making a drawing of the plain of Jericho, taken from the Tell el Ain, we went with Lieutenant Conder to Tell el Ithlé, to which the story related above had drawn our attention. We remarked nothing striking. Lieut. Conder left us here to go and explore the *Tell el Moufjir*. I wanted to examine the environs of *Tell el Ithlé*, but, unfortunately, my guide was a Riha man, extremely stupid, who could give no information whatever, and I was obliged to renounce the design. I regretted this exceedingly, for on my return to Jerusalem I saw on reading the guide of Liévin, and the dissertation of Zschokke, that not far from there was the probable site of Gilgal, now called *Tell el Jeldjoul*. I could have wished to verify this on the spot, but I immediately pointed out the fact to Lieut. Conder, who has just informed me by letter of the correctness of the information with which I furnished him. I am convinced that there would be interesting researches to be made in this place, the identification of which would determine *par contre-coup* the precise site of the different Jerichos.

Inscriptions
at Riha.

From Tell el Ithlé I went to Riha, where my guide professed to have in his house an inscribed stone found at Tell el Qos; it was nothing more than a simple piece of marble with certain scratches made by a pick. I passed nearly an hour in examining stone by stone all the tumble-down houses in Jericho. This minute inspection resulted in nothing. I only saw the place where, three years ago, a fine monumental Latin inscription had been taken away. I took a squeeze of it then. It contained, in all probability, the name of the famous usurper Pescennius Niger.

Ancient
Convent in
the Wady
Kelt.

The afternoon was devoted to visiting, with Mr. Drake and M. Lecomte, the convent of Deir el Kelt, situated in the wildest part of the wady of the same name, the plan of which had been taken a few days before by Lieut. Conder. I went there principally to take the squeeze of a Greek and Arabic inscription which Lieut. Conder had found and copied. In order to reach the place we followed on foot the aqueduct which descends the wady on the north side. The road was as bad as possible, and the heat considerable.

There is nothing very remarkable about the convent; the frescoes which decorate the interior of the church and the ruined chapel appear to belong to several periods. They are covered with *graffiti*, painted or engraved. The only detail which struck me was that the church having no orientation, on account of the direction of the rock to which it clings, the builders had to compensate for this infraction of the rules of religious architecture by placing sideways the window of the apse, of which the two sides (themselves oblique) form between them and with the apse itself, such angles that the mean axis of the window is directed exactly towards the east. Symmetry is thus unhesitatingly sacrificed to the exigencies of custom.

The inscription spoken of is over the entrance. It is bilingual, and probably of a late period. The Greek is exceedingly incorrect in orthography and in syntax. It is, besides, negligently carved, and very difficult to decipher.

Bilingual
Inscription.

This is what I have read of it up to the present :—

+	ANΘEKEN	.	.	.	+	was dedicated
.	.	.	.	.	.	by the hand
.	ΔΙΑΧΙΡΟΣ	.	.	.	.	of Ibrahim and his
.	BPAXIMTOUCA	.	.	.	.	brothers.
.	ΔΕΛΦΟΥΤΑΤΤΟΥΣ	.	.	.	.
.		

XII

While the Arabic inscription reads as follows:—"This . . . has been built by Ibrahim and his brothers . . . Moussa from Jifné (?) . . . May God hold them in his mercy. And he said: Amen."

Perhaps the Arabic word which I cannot translate refers to the building of the gate itself. I have, however, in my hands a squeeze which will probably enable me to read more of it.

I forgot to add that I profited by the presence of our two workmen to disengage a part of the little ruined building which surrounds the fountain of Elisha. I distinguished very clearly an apse with a niche, which probably belonged to a little pagan temple consecrated to the goddess of the fountain. Unhappily the people of Riha made me discontinue the work for fear of spoiling the water.

IV.

I had read the first word of the Greek part of the inscription at Deir el Kelt (see above), ANΘEKEN, admitting an incorrectness in spelling, of which the rest of the inscription offers several examples. An attentive examination of the squeeze shows me that it should have been read ANEKENICΘH (for ἀνεκαίνισθη), "has been repaired or rebuilt." This new reading, of which there is no doubt, changes the whole construction of the phrase, which otherwise appeared singularly confused. Evidently ΔΙΑ ΧΙΡΟΣ, "by the hand" (of Ibrahim), belongs to the verb, completing the predicate, while the group of letters between

The Græco-Arabic inscription at Deir el Kelt.

the two contain the noun which is the subject of the passive verb. This noun up to the present has resisted all my efforts to read, which is the more to be regretted, because it certainly names the building, or the part of the building, repaired. I think it was preceded by the feminine article η : it begins with ΠΑ, followed apparently by a sign of abbreviation. It might have been *παλαια* (the ancient). In this case the true name would begin with the second line, Μ^ο, which I am tempted to consider as an abbreviation for ΜΟΝΗ (monastery), a form much used, if I mistake not, in ecclesiastical inscriptions. "The old convent has been repaired by the hand of Ibrahim," &c.

The carver had first written ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ ΑΤΟΥ correctly enough, save for the omission of the τ in *αυτου*; but he afterwards added two sigmas, so as to make it run *τους αδελφους αυτου*, choosing, apparently, to sacrifice grammar to truth, in order to perpetuate the plurality of Ibrahim's co-operators. The Arabic text speaks of several brothers.

As to the last line, which contains a religious invocation of some kind, I cannot yet make anything of it.

I found at Khan el Hathrour what seemed to me the fragment of a Roman milestone, brought, however, from some other place. Lieutenant Conder has pointed out to me that the old Roman road from Jericho diverged from the present road before Khan el Hathrour, and passed more to the south, and, besides, that the distances between Khan el Hathrour and the Dabbûs el 'Abid is more than a mile.

I send you a copy of an inscribed stone presented to me by a man at Jerusalem on my arrival. It is a curious specimen of the manufacture of pretended inscriptions which has been carried on here for three years, and to which I have called attention on several occasions in Europe. The stone is a kind of Cornelian cut in the form of a cone: the inscription consists of four lines in Phœnician characters like those of the Moabite Stone, the engraving of which is alone sufficient to prove the forgery. The lapidary, for instance, makes his characters approach the Greek and Latin types:—the *He* is written like E, the *van* like a k, the *cap* like a C. This inscription has a certain advantage over its brethren, being invented by a man with some pretensions to knowledge, for it can really be translated without difficulty into sense. This fact proves that it comes from a different origin to the Shapira things. It reads, in Hebrew, thus—

אבר
יהוה
דוד
בן

"The servant of Jehovah, David, King."

David's own seal, and for ten francs! Certainly far from dear, and the forger must be credited with great moderation.

Fragment of a Roman milestone.

Forged inscription in Hebrew Phœnician.

On the 16th of December I went for the first time to the Haram, in company with M. Lecomte and Lieutenant Conder. The visit was a brief one, but was not without results. I found in one of the little oratories which surround the esplanade of the Sakhra a Cufic inscription of the third century of the Hejira, which I intend to copy. A little farther on I remarked a beautiful old sarcophagus, ornamented with roses, and then we examined closely the curious semicircular arches in the upper part of the exterior wall of the Sakhra. They were brought to light on one of the sides which had been stripped during repairs of the covering-in tiles which concealed them. The existence of these arcades is a fact of great importance, and one which may lead to new conclusions as to the original form of the mosque; we must not, however, be in too great a hurry to deduce proofs as to this or that date. The arcades must be studied with the most minute care before we can determine their period with any precision. We propose to give our attention to it immediately, and to take a photograph, as soon as the weather will allow, of the side now exposed.

Visit to the Haram.

I do not think it out of place to communicate an observation which I made some time ago, and which I have not seen any notice of elsewhere.

Distinctive character of the stones cut by the Crusaders.

It has, I think, a certain value, because it leads to no less than an almost absolutely certain diagnosis of the stones cut by the Crusaders.

Criterion by which to recognise them on first inspection.

This distinction concerns not only the mediæval archæology of Palestine, but also, and almost to the same degree, the archæology of earlier times.

One knows already how little people agree respecting the age of several of the Palestine monuments; it is not rare to see contradictory theories on the subject of the same edifice, or the same part of an edifice, oscillate between the most diverse epochs, Hebrew, Jewish, Roman, Byzantine, Mediæval, Western, and even Arab.

Gothic, Saracenic, and Western.

The reason of this is, that people confine themselves usually to the examination of *forms* and *styles*, and that nothing is more deceptive than this kind of evidence when other means of identification are not at one's disposal. I will cite but one example. One looks upon it as an established truth that every pointed arch with *normal* joints is *Arab*, and that every pointed arch with vertical joints is *western*.

This rule, elsewhere fixed, is frequently violated in Palestine, and will assuredly mislead those who would take it for an infallible guide.

The peculiarity which I now point out enables one to decide, stone by stone, what materials were worked into any edifice by the Crusaders.

As is already known, a great number of the blocks found in the constructions erected in Palestine by the Crusaders show masons' marks consisting of letters of the Latin alphabet, including various symbols, some of which are very characteristic (the fleur-de-lis, for example). I have collected some hundreds of examples in my notes. No possible doubt would exist if each stone showed these

incontestable signs, but unfortunately this is far from the case. But my course of observations enables me to supply their absence and to arrive at the following conclusion:—That I believe myself able, without too much boldness, to generalise as follows—"The stones bearing mediæval (Latin) letters have their exterior faces dressed, or rather scored, in a special manner, which of itself alone suffices to characterise them."

This surface dressing consists (on stones with plane surfaces) of oblique lines closely ranged, all in the same direction, done with a toothed instrument. The obliquity of the lines appears generally to be at an angle of 40° to 45° . This uniform line is particularly visible when the stones are illuminated by a side light. I have found it on a quantity of stones without masons' marks, but employed concurrently with signs on stones in perfectly homogeneous buildings.

Its presence is so specific that it has often led me to note masons' marks which would otherwise have escaped me, because it determines, *à priori*, the age of the stone, and warns me that, perhaps, a mason's mark is to be found.

I have noted the existence of this surface dressing on stones of all shapes and positions: blocks, in courses, in walls or pillars, voussours of arches, and even in rebated blocks. It exists also on stones with carved surfaces placed vertically, shafts of columns, concave or convex blocks of apses, or circular walls.

But in this case the cuts are very slightly oblique, and approach perceptibly to the vertical which is the normal of the cylinder; when, on the contrary, the cylinder is disposed horizontally (horizontal mouldings) the lines of the cut are very nearly horizontal.

These facts are easily explained by the necessity of making the tool follow a rectilinear direction; if, for example, the same method had been followed as for plane surfaces, the tool would only have touched the curved surfaces perpendicularly to their normal, and would have produced marks only instead of lines. I have remarked another group of stones also dressed obliquely, but on which the cuts are replaced by a series of dotted lines. I have not yet studied this peculiarity sufficiently to say if these stones belong to the same epoch as the others.

So far I have not met with a single fact in contradiction to the broad rule which I think I am able to lay down as follows (restricting it, be it well understood to those parts of Palestine with which I am familiar):

All stones showing what I propose to call "the mediæval dressing" (*taille mediævale*) were worked in by the Crusaders.

There is no need, I think, to insist further on the advantages which may arise in a multitude of cases from an application of this rule, reposing as it does on the result of minute observation, so to speak, on what one may consider the "epidermis" of the blocks.

One knows also how much importance technical men attach to

this detail. "The nature of the dressing is one of the most certain means of recognising the date of the construction," says one of the most learned architects of our time, M. Viollet le Duc, in his *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture Française*.

One of my first cares has been to commend these facts to the attention of M. Lecomte, whose professional competence in the matter is indispensable to me in order to determine with precision the instrument and the method, by the aid of which was obtained this characteristic dressing which appeared with the Crusaders, and which seems to have disappeared with them.

I hope very shortly to send the Committee some photographs, drawings, and squeezes, with which to supply to archæologists comparative graphic specimens of the different sorts of "dressing" employed at different epochs in Palestine, and to place in their hands a convenient and certain means of distinguishing at least one of these periods.

With the sanction of the Committee I would collect original specimens of the stones themselves, to be submitted to men of the profession, and be judged definitely by them. This study may be peculiarly fruitful in what relates to the blocks employed in the heterogeneous enclosure of the Haram, and by analogous observation it may perhaps establish a clear distinction, hitherto unknown, between the so-called Herodian and Solomonic materials.

Besides the practical and local application which I have indicated, this fact which I have pointed out concerning the "mediæval dressing" is capable of furnishing a new element in the history of the development of Western architecture itself. It is known that the dressings vary in the West according to the district and period. The period being known, it would perhaps be easy to determine the original European region of the method in question, and, in consequence, to find out to what school the builders belonged who were employed by the Crusaders.

It will not be forgotten that it was precisely in the twelfth century that (in France, at least) the different styles of dressing reached a great degree of perfection. Some authors are even tempted to attribute this result to the influence of Græco-Roman art in Syria. I leave it to the specialist to find out whether the point I raise is contrary to this explanation or in its favour.

My researches with regard to the real site of Scopus have incidentally led to a little "find" of some interest. In the course of my work I have had occasion to explore a sepulchral cave cut in the mountain situated to the north of the Mount of Olives, near the place where the word *Scopus* is written on the Ordnance Survey map (scale 1-10,000). I should remark, by the way, that this mountain is called by the fellahin of the locality, *Ez zè 'weyqa*. The south-eastern brow to the north of the road leading to 'Anāta bears the name of *El Maïtala*, which means, literally, *an elevated place whence one can see*—an observatory; a word which is the exact equivalent of the Greek *Scopos*.

Excavation in a sepulchral cave near the Mount of Olives.

Should we place Scopus there, or at the other point, the northern extremity, of this long chain on the Roman road going to Nablous, at the point marked on the Ordnance Survey map Δ 2686, 3. ? That point has the very characteristic name, which I was the first to point out—(see Burton and Drake's "Unexplored Syria," vol. ii.)—of *Chéréfé* or *Mechārif*—*observatory, place whence one can see*, which is the exact translation of *Scopus*. Perhaps the true Scopus is neither the one nor the other, but another part of this chain, extending from the Mount of Olives to the Nablous road, whose summits bear different names, not yet marked. As soon as the present bad weather is over I propose to explore this chain very carefully from the onomastic point of view. *A priori*, the site which would appear best to answer to the data of the question, is the mamelon on which, in the Ordnance Survey map, is marked the word *Mount* (preceding the word *Scopus*). The fellahin call it, if I remember rightly, *Khāl't el 'adjouz*. This is the highest point of the range; it is, besides, at the precise distance mentioned by Josephus. We shall see if any local tradition confirms this hypothesis rather than any other.*

But to return to my sepulchre. It is composed of three rooms, communicating with each other by passages, pierced in the direction of the axis of the doorway. I penetrated into the first by a kind of cistern-mouth, opened in the roof to about three or four metres of earth. The normal entrance is entirely masked from without by accumulations of earth; from within is seen the door, closed by a great slab, still in its place. The first chamber contains nine loculi, perpendicular to the walls, and distributed three by three on three sides; the second contains other loculi similar, less carefully cut; as to the third, I have only been able to penetrate into it with great difficulty, for it had been almost entirely filled up with water by the rains. I remarked in the first chamber, half filled with earth, the end of a bench cut in the rock, which would run all round.

Many pieces of sarcophagi in soft limestone, exactly like those of which I have often spoken before, both in material and form, were scattered over the ground, with a quantity of bones and pieces of pottery. Evidently the sepulchre has been violated, but the violaters did not take the trouble to carry away what they broke. I had all this *débris* carefully collected, and minutely examined the loculi in the first chamber. My search produced results, and I had to send to the village

* Mr. Conder has just shown me a note on the position of Scopus, in which he considers the question from a practical and military point of view. These considerations would tend to justify my first hypothesis, which consisted (see above) in identifying Scopus, properly called, with *el Mechārif*. Two points may be remarked—(1) the existence of a great well at *el Mechārif*; (2) that of a large number of *méchāhid*, little heaps of stones placed there by the Mussulmans because, they say, *it is the point from which Jerusalem and the mosque of the Sakhra are first observed in coming from Nablous*. Perhaps the word *Scopus* embraced the whole of the chain stretching from the *Mechārif* to the Mount of Olives (see p. 111).

of Djebel et Tour for an ass to carry away my archæological booty. The most important pieces are : three fragments of Hebrew inscriptions on pieces of sarcophagi; a lachrymatory in glass, very well preserved, and of an elegant form; a little lamp in terra-cotta, unbroken (without Christian symbols); a little instrument in bronze, forming a twig, finely ornamented, having at one end a bud and at the other the commencement of a narrow spatula; two large nails; a hundred nail-heads, oxydised, seeming to indicate the presence of wooden coffins; a great many fragments of vases and lamps in terra-cotta; and pieces of sarcophagi ornamented with roses. I have already found among the latter fragments the materials for three complete sarcophagi. I collected, besides bones, which may be of use to an anthropologist, fragments of skulls, jawbones with teeth, &c. Lastly, which might be the most important of all, I found in a *loculus* an antique coin in bronze; unfortunately it is so much defaced that it is probably impossible to identify it, and so to deduce a minimum limit for the date of the inhumations and the inscriptions. Other considerations, already published, make me place this about the first century of the Christian era.

These unlooked-for results inspired a very strong desire to push my researches farther. I could have wished to examine the third chamber, which might have given me new texts or other objects—even to have cleared away the entrance so as to study the mode of closing the tomb. The proprietor of the ground, however, would not consent, and I was obliged to put off my work till another day. I believe, however, that I shall eventually overcome his scruples without very great expense.

Here are the three fragments of inscriptions :—

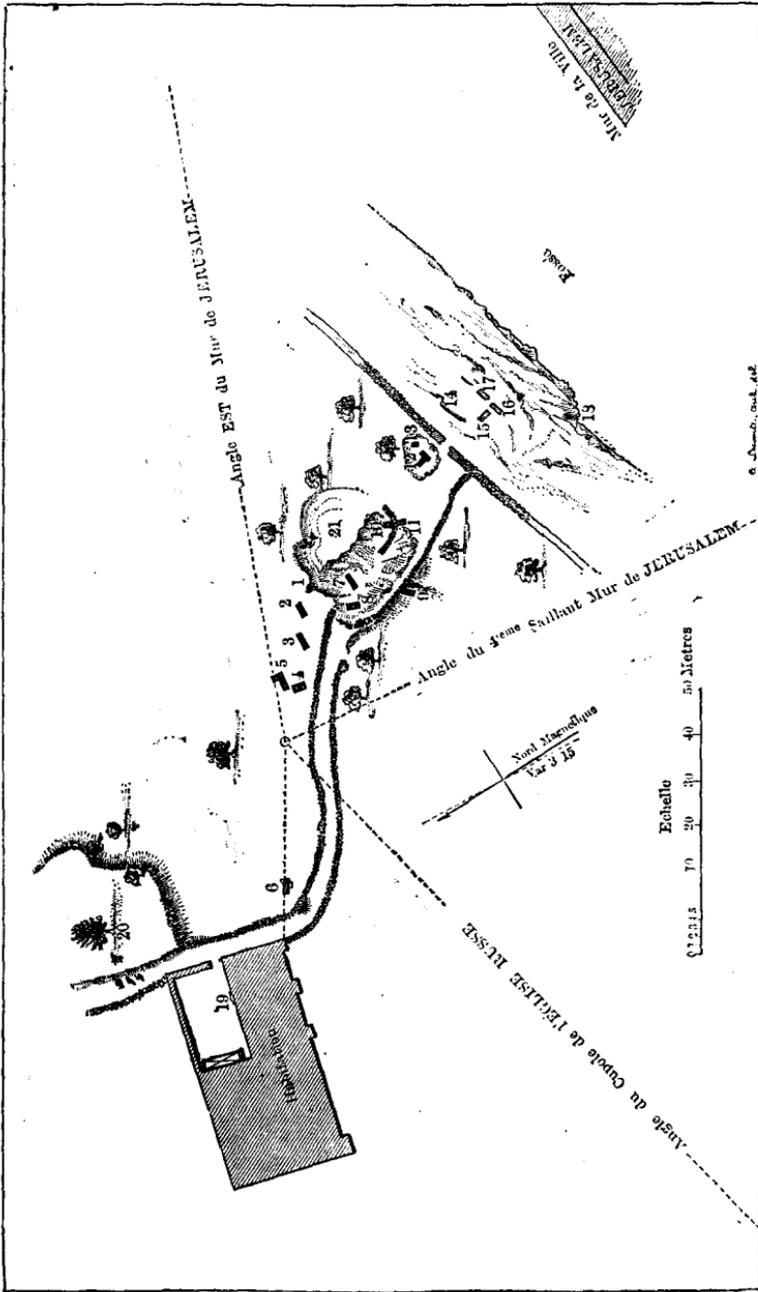
(1) A name beginning with . . . יהו, followed by בר, *son of*, and traces of letters belonging to the patronymic; the letters which follow . . . יהו are not very distinct; the last is certainly a ך, the two others appear to be a *nun* and a *tau*,—*Jehonathan*.

(2) There are four characters very clear, of which the two last, without doubt, are *lamed* and *shin*; as to the first or two first I do not know if it is a *koph* or a *samech*, followed by another letter.

(3) Two characters, the first being certainly a *pe*, followed by a letter mutilated by the fracture, but in which I see quite clearly the elements of a *lamed*; but the Hebrew names beginning with these two letters are too numerous for me to risk a restoration.

I have just observed a group of sepulchres cut in the rock, which, so far as I know, have never been noticed. They are all in a large field lying between the moat north-east of Jerusalem and the magnificent pine standing close to a winepress worked by Mohammedans; this place is generally known under the name of *Kerm ech-cheikh*. These sepulchres are interesting from a double point of view: (1) in regard to their form, they belong to the horizontal system of rock sepulture; the entrance consists of a rectangular trench about 1m·60. by 0m·45,

Tombs cut
in the rock
in the
north-east,
and quite
close to
Jerusalem.



PLAN OF THE TOMBS AT NORTH-EAST ANGLE OF THE CITY WALL.

C. Decker, aut. del.

Echelle
0 10 20 30 40 50 Mètres

Nord Magnétique
Var. 3 1/2

Musée de la Ville
de Jérusalem

and more than a metre in depth; at the end a rebate cut in the rock appears to have been destined to receive and support a slab closing the tomb properly so called, placed in a sepulchral chamber situated below. So far as I have been able to judge of the exterior, these chambers are excavated in a vaulted form: they appear to have a considerable extent, and the proprietor of the ground has assured me that many of them communicate. I have not yet been able to examine further, because they are partly inundated by the late rains. There have been found in them, I am told by the proprietor, quantities of bones, broken pottery, "boxes" in soft stone, and an ear-ring in gold, which he promised to show me.

(2) The position of the sepulchres may be of importance for the question, *adhuc sub judice*, of the third wall of Jerusalem. They extend along a line of about 125 degrees, starting from the south-east angle of the building, marked close to the great pine on the Ordnance Survey map, and running to the road which passes along the moat of the city at the north-east. We counted a dozen openings of tombs, and the last are hardly 40 metres from the moat of the city. If the examination of these tombs, that we are about to make without delay, leads us to assign them an ancient date, it is clear that the existence of a cemetery of a certain date may furnish us proofs for or against the existence of a third wall to the north of this point.

The proprietor of the ground told me that they had found another great tomb cut in the rock under the wall north-east of the present building (at the south side of the little court margined on the house on the Ordnance Survey map). It appears, besides, that a tradition assigns to the *Kerm ech-cheikh* a *maqam* of *El Khadher* (the prophet Elijah). I think that there must exist about here many tombs of the same kind. We know that it is very near this point that the partisans of the identity of the tomb of Agrippa with the modern northern wall place the Fuller's monument spoken of by Josephus.

NOTE.—Accompanying this report were drawings and photographs, including:—

- (1) The stripped side of the Kubbet es Sakhra, showing the newly discovered balustrade, with round arches. (Photo.)
- (2) The idol lately found at Gezer. (Photo.) A drawing of this also arrived from Mr. Drake.
- (3) An ancient sarcophagus, now placed in the Haram. (Photo.)
- (4) Bilingual inscription from the Deir el Kelt. See p. 89. (Photo.)
- (5) Lamp, lachrymatory, &c. (Photo.)

V.

JERUSALEM, Jan. 22, 1874.

A slight illness, which kept me in bed for eight days, and the bad weather, which has rendered outdoor work impossible, have together made the last fortnight one of small profit. I have, however, been able to utilise this forced inaction in studying by text certain questions which should be the object of future research.

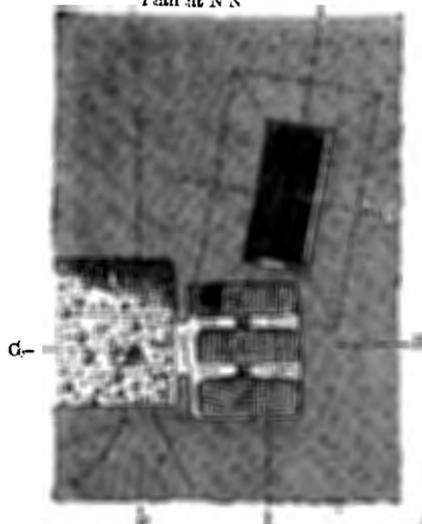
Great cavern in the side of Mount Zion.

While exploring, some days before I fell ill, that part of Mount Zion where, according to my calculations, the tombs of the kings of Judah should be, I remarked, about 280 English feet east of the great mulberry-tree of Silwan, situated at the south-east angle of the "Old Pool" of the O. S. map, a curious great cavern. The entrance is very narrow, but the cave, which appears to be in part cut by the hand of man, enlarges considerably, and plunges almost horizontally into the side of the hill. At the end a pillar, rudely cut, supports the roof of the cavern, and I think I saw openings to other galleries. Unfortunately, the interior is in great part filled with earth, so that at certain points one is obliged to creep in order to pass between the ground and the roof. I undertook a small excavation in order to ascertain the extent and the direction of this cavern; above all, its extent. I cut a narrow trench of no great depth, with the intention of pushing it as far as the cave extends, intending later on to cut deeper in order to reach the original bottom. We were already fifteen metres from the entrance when my illness put a stop to the works. The excavation has, up to the present, produced (1) considerable quantities of bones, which appear to have been thrown in pell-mell, as into a charnel-house; (2) bits of broken pottery by the thousand, some of which appear very ancient; (3) a large number of fragments of great stone vessels, worked all round in flutings and mouldings; (4) and lastly, one stone weight. I have brought away all the things indiscriminately, and we have taken out and put aside for photographing some as being worthy of attention. It is evident that all this rubbish has been designedly accumulated in the cavern. I believe that it would be desirable to pursue this research, which may be managed within the modest means at my disposal, as I only employ two or three workmen at a time. I hope that, as we dig deeper down, the fragments will become more ancient, and that we may find among them some with characters—stamped jar-handles and the like. Besides, it seems to me very curious to know where this subterranean passage leads. Without assuming that it may have a connection with the Tombs of the Kings, we may suppose that it will teach us something on the topography of Zion.

Tombs cut in the rock north-east of Jerusalem.

As soon as I could walk, after my illness, I paid another visit to the very curious tombs of which I spoke in my last report. We have, with M. Lecomte, drawn up an exact plan of the ground where they lie, so as to give their position relatively to the city. We have carefully noted the orientation, which differs with each. Within the plot of

Plan at N N



G-

Section through E F



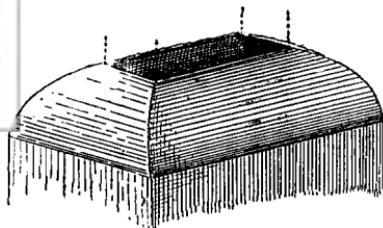
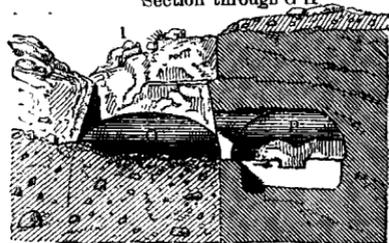
Section through A B.



Section through C D

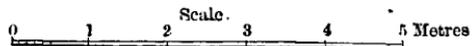


Section through G H



Ver. 3. 15

Magn North



DETAILS OF THE TOMBS AT THE NORTH-EAST ANGLE OF THE CITY WALL,

ground which is bounded by a dry stone wall bordering the road we counted 13 openings, some completely open, some partially filled with earth, others which seem to have been commenced and left unfinished. Opposite the gate of the ground, on the road itself, we also remarked traces in the scarp of the rock of three rectangular graves (belonging probably to the same system) and of a great wall. On the counterscarp of the city moat there exists one other grave, which might belong to the same group.

We have not yet the time to study completely the interior of these tombs. Up to the present we have only penetrated into those marked I. and II. on the general plan. The plan and the detailed sections will be found in a special drawing. We entered by the opening No. I., half destroyed by stonecutters, who here quarry the rock, and will very soon destroy these remarkable monuments.

It is difficult to give, in a simple description, any idea of the arrangement of these tombs, which (so far as we have seen) are composed of a chamber oblong in plan, vaulted in the manner known technically as "*arc de cloître*," or "*coved vault*," formed by the direct penetration of two cylinders; whilst the vault known as "*voute d'arêtes*," (the plain *groined* vault), is obtained by the *intersection* of two cylinders. Architects are well aware that the first-named system is older than the second.

M. Lecomte has added to his plan a little sketch giving the geometrical perspective of this vault. Below the springing of the vaults are vertical walls; at its summit is the opening of the grave, communicating with the exterior, and of this the bottom seems to have been closed by a big block resting on a rebate cut in the rock.

The first chamber (O) which we entered, almost entirely filled with earth, communicated by a small round opening (R) with a second chamber (P). This is very small, and contains three loculi cut trough fashion and parallel. A hole pierced by the Arabs in one of the angles permits the visitor to penetrate to an adjoining chamber (Q), which is only separated from its neighbour by a very thin wall of rock.

This third chamber is filled with earth nearly to the springing of the vault, so that we could not discover the funereal arrangement. At the top is the rectangular opening marked in the general plan (under No. 2), by which this chamber opens directly to the exterior.

We visit a very curious tomb, in which, to the left on entering, one sees an "*arcosolinum*" (?) covering in a trough, rounded at one end, square at the other: the rounded end was evidently that in which the head was, so that the feet were turned towards the entrance. A second chamber, situated in the axis of the other, is ended by a "*hemicycle*" (or *semicircular apse*). I have never until now met with this singular arrangement; we shall see presently the plan and section of this sepulchre, which is unique in its way.

We shall return soon to the exploration of the other tombs, which are at present filled with mud and water. I can at present give no

opinion whatever on the exact age of these tombs, and my hesitation is increased by the importance of the question connected with it, and which I indicated in my last report, viz., the extension of ancient Jerusalem to the north of this point. I will only observe for the moment that in building the Latin Patriarchate there were found inside the present city, about 250 metres west of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, tombs with sarcophagi identical with those of which I have many times spoken, and a number of lachrymatory glass vases, like those picked up by M. de Sauley at the entrance of the Gobour el Molouk, and to that found by myself in a sepulchral cave, with fragments of Hebrew inscriptions.

I think it would be of some interest to attempt an excavation on this spot to try to clear out one of the tombs not yet violated; perhaps one might come across something of an epigraphic character, or at least some objects which might help us to determine the period to which they belong.

One may compare the interior arrangement of the second chamber with that of a tomb described by Lieut. Conder (*Quarterly Statement*, 1873, p. 22), which is close to the excavation marked No. 81 on the Ordnance Survey map of Jerusalem.* A little distance north of the house of the Kerm ech Sheykh is an old Arab cemetery, which appears to have been long abandoned.

Near the point where the curve of the level (2479 of the Ordnance Survey map) meets the counterscarp† of the city moat (at the eastern end of the curve) debouches an aqueduct, which appears to have come from the north and to have been cut by the moat. It would perhaps be worth while to ascertain its origin. I do not know whether it has yet been pointed out.

Some metres east of this point the counterscarp cut in the rock turns abruptly at a right angle, then resumes its original direction for 25 metres, and makes another rectangular bend. This redan does not appear to me necessitated by any strategic reasons, for it corresponds with no salient of the wall. May this not be, perhaps, an ancient little "birket," of rectangular shape, which may have been cut across, and almost entirely destroyed by the moat. In that case the aqueduct and pool, if aqueduct and pool they were, would make a part of the water-system of the north-east region, at present so obscure. I confine myself for the present to the simple suggestion.

Descending the Wady en Nar, below the Bir Eyub, on arriving at Ain el Loz, ten minutes' walk, a small wady is seen on the right, which comes from the west and drains into the Ain el Loz. This wady, which is tolerably broad but very short, is marked, but without a name, on some of the maps. The men of Siloam call it Wādy āsoūl, which we must resolve into Wād + yāsoūl, not into Wādy + āsoūl; for other

* It is on the right-hand of the great north road, a short distance from the city.

† Close to the Damascus Gate.

peasants have pointed it out to me as Ehèb yāsoul and Ardḥ yāsoul. In any case, the word is certainly written with the *sad* and not the *sin*, so that it corresponds exactly, satisfying all the rules of etymology, with the Hebrew אַחַל, which occurs in the difficult and famous passage of Zechariah xiv. 5: "And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains (Ge-harai); for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Schwarz in an ingenious note has proposed to see in Geharai the *Erôgé* of Josephus, mentioned by him *à propos* of the earthquake in the reign of Uzziah.* As for Azal, the greater number of commentators agree in considering it a place near Jerusalem; † some have even identified it with the Beth-ezel of Micah (i. 11): "The inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel." May it be Yasûl? Whatever it be, this little valley presents points of great interest. In the south side have been excavated several sepulchral caves. The bottom of the valley is full of broken pottery, cubes of mosaic work, certain indications that the place has been at some time inhabited. On the north side, half-way up, I remarked in a plot of ground belonging to a Silwan man and called *Kerm Gamar* (the enclosure of the moon) cisterns, ruins, the base and the capital of a column, a fragment of lintel with a cross, and an extremely elegant lid of a sarcophagus in hard stone. You will find enclosed a sketch of Lecomte's giving these interesting remains. I have, besides, acquired of the proprietor of the ground two out of twenty lamps found by him in a sepulchral cave cut in this *Kerm*: the one is of elegant form with ornaments finely executed; the other bears a Greek inscription that I have not yet been able to decipher.

Objects found in a sepulchre at Beit Djala.

I have just seen at the Latin Patriarchate a very interesting collection of objects taken from a tomb opened in a plot of ground of Beit Dejala belonging to this religious establishment. Two very fine *alabastra*, a great deal of terra-cotta with a star drawn in the centre, a quantity of phials in glass of various forms and sizes (double, with blue enamel, &c.), many lamps in terra-cotta ornamented with crosses of different shape—one with this inscription—ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ (of the virgin). I will photograph the entire group.

Fragments of a Greek inscription found at the Damascus gate.

I have seen in the hands of a Mussulman, and I hope to get it myself for a trifle, a fragment of a Greek inscription found not far from the

* "In the meantime a great earthquake shook the ground, and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately: and before the city at a place called Eroge, half the mountain broke away from the rest on the west, and rolled itself four furlongs, and stood still at the east mountain till the roads, as well as the king's gardens, were spoiled by the obstruction."—Josephus, *Antiq.*, ix. 10. 4.

† Schwarz places it El Azariyeh, the traditional Bethany.

gate of Damascus (north of it), perhaps near the tombs pointed out by Lieutenant Conder, of which I speak above. The characters are clear, distinct, and deeply marked; they appear to be of the Byzantine period. I give a transcript, though not an exact drawing:—

EIMΩ

NATT

EPOI

Could this fragment be connected in any way with the Church of St. Stephen, which was near here?

I have gathered from the mouth of a Mussulman of Jerusalem a rather curious legend on the Wady Kelt and its aqueducts. Although his narrative is deficient in local accuracy, and I shall have to verify it on the spot, it will not be inopportune to note it here.

Legend of Moses and the Wady Kelt.

A Christian woman caused an aqueduct to be constructed in the Wady Kelt, in order to irrigate the plain of Jericho. Then came Moses (Sidna Mousa), who wanted to do the same. The Christian woman having refused to help the labour of Moses in allowing him to run his aqueduct over a certain place, a challenge followed on either side as to who should first finish the work. Then Moses took his rod and traced on the ground with the end of it a road which the water followed immediately, running into the *Birket Mûsa*, which is at the foot of Beit Djaber. The remarkable point of the legend is that it gives us, in all probability, the real origin of the name Wady Kelt; it was, in fact, to irrigate the plain (*minchan yigallit*) that the rival constructors wished to make their aqueducts. Now *yigallit* is the second form of a verb *galad*, which has not the sense of irrigating, filling a reservoir, at all: it is the verb *galat* which has this meaning. The change of the final *d* for a *t* would be the result of rapid pronunciation. And just as this is *yigallit* for *yigallid*, so then might be the Wady *Gelt* (*kelt*) for the Wady *Geld*. On this theory the Wady Geld, Gelt, or Kelt, signifies the valley of irrigation, a name which is explained by the presence of the three aqueducts which we find there.

The same man told me that there was in the same valley a spring whose name he did not know, *bewitched with the black man and the white* (*marsoûd 'ala 'l-'abed ou'l-horr*)*. The water of the spring at one moment wells up abundantly and at the next disappears, so that often you have not the time to drink. The reason of this intermittence is that the white man and the negro are waging a perpetual battle; when the negro has the better the water comes up, when the white is conqueror the water disappears.

Legend of an enchanted fountain in the Wady Kelt.

During the heavy winter rains there are formed, close to the gardens of Jaffa and to the west, real lakes of considerable extent. The largest of these marshy ponds lies south of the road, and is called by the name of Bassa, a word applied in other parts of Syria to similar pools. As for the signification of the word in Arabic, nothing more

The Bassa of Jaffa.

* "Horr" literally means *freeman*; "abed" *slave*.

satisfactory can be found than that of *firebrand*, *lighted wood*. The same word, on the other hand, is found in the Bible (Bissa, בִּסָּה) used to signify a *lake* or *marsh*. "Can," asks Bildad (Job viii. 11), "the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow up without water?" (בְּלֹא־מִיֶּרֶחַ). And further on (Job xl. 21) "(Behemoth) lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed and *fens*." And the word is also found in Ezekiel xlvi. 11, "The miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt." Commentators and lexicographers (cf. Gesenius and Fürst) derive this Aramaic word from a hypothetical root בִּצָּה, to which, relying on the Arabic *budhdha*, they give the meaning of "*paulatim fluxit et emanavit aqua*." The supposition appears to me entirely gratuitous; in fact, the existence of the *Bassa* at Jaffa and other places proves that *Bassa*, in the sense of pond, is allied with the Arabic *bassa*, to *shine*. The origin of the word shows that the meaning "pond" is connected with shining or glittering in the sun. It is exactly the same idea which has given the similar word its meaning of *firebrand*. A similar reasoning could be extended to the word *ain*, which in Hebrew and Arabic has the double meaning of *an eye* and a *fountain*, surely far enough removed from each other. The meaning in both cases has been borrowed from one and the same primitive sense.

Head of
statue and
figure of
Venus.

I have just acquired of an Arab mason two curious objects found by him some years since in repairing a sewer and some foundation work under the Mehkeme. The first is a head, rudely carved in limestone, and of a very curious appearance. You might be tempted at times to ascribe an Egyptian origin to it, but the execution is too rude for me to assign any period to it.

The other object is a little figure in lead of about five centimètres in height, representing a woman nude to the girdle, the lower part of the body draped, the arms folded and raised above the head, an attitude which reminds one of certain statues of Venus. The statuette has been a good deal injured, but the outlines are still elegant, and the whole figure is in conformity with the rules of ancient art. According to ecclesiastical tradition there was, as we know, a temple in which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands, consecrated to Venus, and the mysteries of Adonis were celebrated in the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem. Are we to see in this statuette a specimen of the Venus of *Celia Capitolina*? You shall have drawings of these two things next week.

VI.

JERUSALEM, *February 8th*, 1874.

The bad weather which prevails at present, with rain, snow, and hurricane, has prevented the carrying out of my plans, and has confined our operations to a few intermittent labours, interrupted at every moment,

and resumed whenever the weather permits. The effect of the interruptions will be clearly noticeable in the results which I forward you.

The Committee will probably remember that among my proposed researches I pointed out certain rock-cut chambers immediately beside the rock in the Ecce Homo Church. The presence, previously unsuspected, of these excavations in the interior of Jerusalem, and in a place which is particularly interesting as regards the topography of the Holy City, is a fact of great importance, and one of my first cares was to visit the chambers with M. Lecomte, in order to get an exact plan of them. The work, which it was desirable should be accurate, was rendered difficult by the complication of modern houses placed at different levels, and leaning on the flank of Bezetha, so as to mask the general direction and particular aspect. We were therefore obliged to give several days to the work. We met with an excellent reception from the residents of the houses—Arabs of Greek religion—and every facility for accomplishing our task. The work was nearly finished, and there only remained a last visit to be made to take certain measurements, when an unforeseen accident put an end to our examinations. The very day when we were to return, an hour before our arrival, the house, an old tumbledown ruin, saturated with the heavy rains, suddenly fell down. We found nothing but a mountain of *débris*, completely barring the Via Dolorosa. We had had a narrow escape. An hour later and we should have been in the cellars of the house, and in all probability there would have been an end of all our archæological labours. Fortunately the house was uninhabited. The worthy people next door escaped with no worse injury than a horrible fright. They had, however, to decamp immediately, their own house appearing desirous of following its neighbour's example, so that it was judged expedient to anticipate its wish and pull it down at once. This unfortunate contretemps leaves us with an unfinished plan on our hands, and I fear they will pile up the fallen stones in such a way as to hinder access to the chambers. Anyhow, the essential part of the work is done, and the plan, such as it is, very minute, so far as it goes, gives a good idea of the place.

Rock an
rock-cut
chambers
west of the
Ecce Homo
Church.

The following notes will serve to some extent to describe what we found:—

You know the escarpment of rock (O. S., No. 72) in the Ecce Homo Church, forming, with a length of several metres, part of the northern wall of the church. The escarpment suddenly stops, interrupted by the houses which rise west of the church, and which line the Via Dolorosa as far as the garden of the Austrian Hospice. It is behind these houses (there are three) that I found and marked the rock forming a continuation to this escarpment, about 25 metres in length. Proceeding from east to west, in the first house is observed a piece of rock in nearly the same line as the escarpment of the church. The wall makes almost directly an obtuse-angled bend to the north-west, and gets buried among buildings where it cannot be followed. The presence of the rock up to this point is noted by Tobler ("Dritte Wanderung," p. 249). Passing

into the next house, we find the rock with its general direction to the west (slightly southing), with a length of about 12 metres. Arrived at this point, the rock offers a peculiarity of double interest to the archæologist and topographer. In the vertical wall is cut a corridor, winding at first, which plunges into the masonry and takes a north-west direction. It divides in two my first chamber, irregularly cut in the living rock, with flat ceiling, flanked right and left by two broad stone benches, measuring nearly 2·20 by 2·40 metres. After this it immediately abuts on a second chamber also cut in the rock about 3 by 3 metres, with irregular angles. A space opening out in the wall north of this chamber loses itself in the earth and masonry. In the last wall is indicated a doorway whose framework has given way; the upper part alone is pierced, and gives access to a little alcove, which seems an unfinished chamber. In the south wall two doors have been opened similarly with fallen in framework, one of which communicates with the first chamber already described, and the other debouches into a third chamber cut in the rock, with a complicated arrangement of benches. This is not all. On the lower floor—the cellar, so to speak, of the house—the same wall of rock is perceived descending below the actual level of the street. A broad bay forming a vestibule is cut in it, and gives access to a group of chambers also cut in the rock, extending in a north-west direction under the chambers above, with which they communicate by means of a hole.

Lastly, in the third house near this, the rock is found again, at the end of the lower caves or chambers; it has been cut in the same way, and appears to have been cloven by an earthquake. Immediately beyond is the partition wall separating this last house from the garden of the Austrian Hospice.

The exploration of these lower regions was not by any means easy or pleasant, on account of the mass of filth and rubbish piled up nearly to the roof in the rock-cut chambers, over which we had to clamber and creep; one room in which we were obliged to remain several hours was a mere receptacle of sewage, though fortunately disused for some time. However, temporary uneasiness is forgotten in thinking how nearly this wretched place was becoming our tomb.

Cisterns made at different points along this line of the rock have been sounded by us, and have given depths which show that the rock extends several metres below the level at which it ceases to be visible. This line is at a mean distance of about nine metres at the back and north of the Via Dolorosa. It is more than probable that it is directly connected with the rock which was observed in the construction of the Austrian Hospice, at the north-east angle of the actual building. There also is found a rock-cut chamber which Tobler ("Dritte Wanderung," pp. 244, 245) is tempted to consider as a stable of great antiquity. It is difficult for one to pronounce on the destination of this chamber, now transformed into a cistern and consequently inaccessible; but I am sure, and M. Lecomte entirely agrees with me, that the

chambers visited and noted by us have not been cut for any such purpose as a stable; the only doubt is whether to call them chambers for the living or for the dead. The latter destination appears much more probable, and in this case it is unnecessary to point out that sepulchres cut in a place situated more than 250 metres south of the north wall of the present city, and at a few metres only from the town of Antonia, must necessarily go back to a remote antiquity, and bring us to the time of the Jebusites, or at least to a period which precedes the reign of Herod Agrippa.

The people of the house reported to us that, according to an ancient tradition, there was formerly in one of the higher chambers into which there is an entrance by the passage described above, a chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist (*Mar Hanna el m'a mouädäny*). I do not know what foundation this legend may have. It is not impossible that at some time or other one of these chambers was converted into a little chapel; if so, the little alcove spoken of above would certainly serve as a small apse. It appears that some years ago ancient coins were found in the square opening cut at the end of the second chamber.

I have ascertained the existence, at about 110 metres north-west of the ancient tank, No. 81 of the O. Survey, and west of the great northern road, of two tomb openings cut in the rock, apparently belonging to the same system as the sepulchres which we found near the Kerm-ech-cheikh (see Report No. V.).

The excavation on Mount Zion (see preceding Report) is going on. We have reached the end of the gallery, and the men are now cutting down to the rock as they work back to the entrance. We keep on finding an incredible quantity of fragments of stone vessels in all shapes and sizes, together with certain other objects, among them spur rowels in hard stone, and a truncated cone in stone worked all round, which ought to be of very ancient date, judging by the calcareous deposit which adheres to one side. There is another stone object also representing a truncated cone. Up to the present, no trace of inscriptions, if we except a plain cross † on a jar handle.

We profited by a little clearing up in the weather during the last few days to make an excursion to Chofat. We examined the village attentively, and remarked hardly anything old in the buildings. The only observations worth being noted are the following.

We penetrate into a Mussulman's house to examine what the people call El Kénisè (the Church), and find in the midst of suffocating smoke, which nearly blinds us, a piece of wall with two windows in *ogive* of fairly good workmanship, looking east; no trace of an apse; the dressing of the stone does not appear of Crusading date. Above, on a terrace, a chimney in stone reminding one of that which I pointed out at Neby Chamouil. There is no spring in the village, nor in the neighbourhood. The wely of the place is called Sultan Ibrahim. The old name of Chofat was Alaïkon. I was also told of *Deir el Mahroug*, the burned convent.

Ancient chapel of St. John the Baptist.

Ancient tomb near the ash heaps.

Excavation on Mount Zion.

Chofat (Shafat).

El Kénisè.

The name of Alaikon is strange, and I do not see what its origin could have been. It was given me by a woman, the accuracy of whose information I have since proved. I have often remarked in Palestine that the women are much more archaic, so to speak, than the men, in manners, language, conversation, recollection, and costume. I have often been able to get information from them that I should have vainly asked the men.

The inhabitants of Chofat are very savage and mistrustful. I had at first all the trouble in the world to get them to answer any questions. The woman who gave me the name of Alaikon had hardly pronounced it when her husband ordered her to be silent, and abused her in round terms for revealing the name to a stranger. Some carried their ill-temper so far as insolence. One, whose name I asked, informed me with a grin that he was called Khobez (bread). I replied that I was named Toumm (mouth), and was quite ready to make a mouthful of him. Bringing them thus to their senses, we so far succeeded in parting friends that the fellah whose house we had visited actually refused to take any *bakhchich!*

According to a legend of the country, evidently of Christian origin, there was formerly at Chofat a king named *Yächäfü't*, of whom mention is made in the *Tora* (Bible). It was he who gave his name to the place. It is not necessary to explain that this second-hand tradition has not even the advantage of being based on any etymological analogy, for the Hebrew name of Jehoshaphat does not contain the *ain* which exists in the word Cho'fät. Perhaps the proximity of the Valley of Jehoshaphat has had something to do with this made-up tradition.

A boy of the village told me of a cavern into which he had entered while running after a porcupine, and where he had found several *sana-dig* (sarcophagi) of stone with bones in them. We immediately went to the place, which is about twenty metres from the village, in the direction of the Russian buildings. After examining it I decided upon setting four or five men at work to dig and clear out the entrance of the tomb. The next day I returned, and found that the men had cleared out for several metres in length the tunnel made by the porcupine in order to get at the tomb which he had chosen for domicile. I crept into this narrow passage, along which one had to crawl at full length. About the middle I had to turn, keeping the same position, and at one time I thought that I could neither advance nor recede. At last I succeeded in dragging myself to the door of the chamber, and got in. Here I found nine *loculi*, in the form of ovens, disposed three by three in each of the three walls. At the left of the entrance, half buried in the ground which filled up the chamber and in places nearly touched the roof, I found a sarcophagus in stone, of very small dimensions, ornamented with roses, and at the small end with a palm branch. It contained fragments of the bones of an adult. At the end of another *loculus*, and in the direction of the axis, was placed a sarcophagus of larger dimensions and finer work, covered with a lid. At the foot and in front is placed upright a little phial in terra-cotta. Another *loculus* on the side opposite

Legend of
Jehosha-
phat, King
of Chofat.

Tomb with
sarcophagus.

to this was covered with a great slab rudely cut, wedged up by little stones placed between its higher edge and the margin of the entrance of the *loculus*. I had it taken away at once, but there was nothing there except a few fragments of bones falling to powder, and the skull of an adult. All the earth in the chamber was turned over and dug up by the animal which had installed itself there and left plenty of traces of his dwelling, such as quills 0.29 metre long. He had made himself a very comfortable place, the *loculi* serving for all sorts of purposes.

I gave the men orders to clear out the real entrance to the tomb, and to look in the earth for any other objects or bones.

Next day I went with them, and saw that the primitive opening of the tomb, by which it was now easy to enter, was 10 metres at least apart from that by which I had entered. At the end of the trench I distinguished clearly the great block of stone which originally closed the door. Its displacement shows, what was clear already from the internal aspect of the tomb, that the sepulchre is not in its original condition, and that it has evidently been used for a second time. I think that the sarcophagi belong to the earlier period, for we afterwards found many fragments in the earth. Other sarcophagi unbroken have since been brought to light, notably one larger than any of the rest, covered with a triangular lid.

I ought to have received yesterday everything that was found in the tomb, but the snow, which has been falling for the last two days, has prevented the fellahin from bringing the things. I hope to find inscriptions on the sarcophagi, which appear to be of the same material as those previously described by me.

One of my men told me that *Khirbet el 'Adésé*, north of *Bir Nebala*, Khirbet el 'Adésé. is called also *Beit Lidje*.

Some days ago we went with a *Silwan* man and a *Bedouin* of Tombs at Beit Sahour el 'Atiga. the *Sawaheret el Wad*, to visit some tombs near *Beit Sahour*, in the *Kedron Valley*, a little below the *Bir Eyüb*. The tombs that we saw offer nothing new or remarkable. We visited the great tomb first explored by *Captain Warren*, and found there a quantity of bones and skulls, apparently of recent date.

Our guides gave to the little wady south of the great wady which Wady es Sal'a. separates these tombs from the ruins of *Beit Sahour* the name of *Wady es Sala*, or *Djôf't es Sala*. On the road I gathered certain bits of information from the guides, some of which seem to be of value.

The high hill rising to the west of *Beit Sahour*, separated from the Djebel el Mukabber. *Djebel Deir Abou Thor* by the *Wady Yasoul*, is called *Djebel el Muta-chabber* (*el-mukabber*). From the summit one can get a very fine panoramic view of *Jerusalem* from the *Tower of David* to the south-east angle of the *Haram*. High up grows an olive-tree called *Zeitonnnet en neby* (the prophet's olive-tree). The prophet (*Mahomet*, the legend The Prophet's olive-tree. says) being come to besiege *Jerusalem*, occupied by *Pagans*, *djahiliyé* (neither *Christians*, *Jews*, nor *Mussulmans*), placed himself at this

tree, and began shooting arrows at Jerusalem. One of them struck the king of the Pagans, who was at a window of the Haram, and killed him. But the Pagans came out in force against the prophet, and made him beat a precipitate retreat. It was not till later that the Pagans were vanquished and Jerusalem taken by Hassam, son of Paul (Boulos), father of Martha, brother of Simon (Sim'an), surnamed 'Es Salibi, meaning Salib, a cross.

One of the guides, speaking of the cave at Khureitun, the traditional cave of Adullam, said that it was called *Meghâret el Mi'sâ*.

He also gave us a long story about the ruins of Merd, south of the Neby Mousa. These, he said, were the city of King Nimrod (Medinet Nimroud), who impiously caused himself to be adored by his subjects, and who was killed by a wasp or a mosquito (*heshês*) sent by God to chastise him, and which got in at his nose (a well-known legend). They still show at this place the tomb of Nimroud. Here we have evidently to do with the onomastic legends, to which I have already called attention; in fact, the name of Nimrod comes, like that of *Merd*, from a root (*marad*) used in Hebrew and Arabic.

All attempts to find an ancient locality hidden under the name of Merd have hitherto failed. Some have proposed the Maroth of Micah i. 12 ("For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good; but evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem"), confounded by Schwarz with Me'arat.

In the genealogy of Judah, as it is given in 1 Chron. iv., are a crowd of names of cities belonging to the territory of the tribe of Judah presented as personages descending from the patriarch. Among these synonyms are the group of the sons of Ezra. 1 Chron. iv. 17: "And the sons of Ezra were Jether, and Mered, and Ephher, and Jalon." Without entering into the various questions arising out of this obscure passage, which exegesis has not yet solved, I confine myself to remarking that the ethnical synonym Mered is the *exact* equivalent of the Arabic *merd*, and that it is possible that the text refers to the locality designated under the latter name.

Bêr Eyoub. I heard my guide say Bêr, not Bir, Eyoub. The pronunciation is curious, because, under this form, the word bêr (well) gives exactly the vocalisation of the corresponding Hebrew form.

Legend of Job. His miraculous cure at Bir Eyoub. A *propos* of Bir Eyoub, a current tradition among the Silwan people tells how Job (Neby Eyoub), lying ill, and eaten by worms, retired into a cavern situated to the west of Bir Eyoub (in the side of *Djebel es Soneik*), whither his wife came every morning bringing him food. (Here follows the legend that may be read in Khoudemir, and which is found at length in Herbelot's Oriental Library). Every day Job went to bathe in a hole filled with water where the well now stands, until, by the will of God, he recovered his health, and came out of the bath young again, like a boy of fourteen years—*ibn arba'atacher sènè*—literally, "like a son of fourteen years." The latter expression is very striking, for it is the literal representation of the Hebrew form,

Cave of Adullam, called el Misa. Merd, the city of Nimrod.

Mered, son of Judah.

that is seen, for example, in 2 Chron. xxvii. 1: "Jotham was twenty and five years old . . ." Literally, "Jotham was a son of twenty and five years."

This hole, filled with water, became then a fountain, which is now the well. The fellahin distinguish very clearly between the water of Bir Eyoub, which is sweet (*helwé*), and that of the Silwan fountain, which is brackish (*mâl'ha*). This fact is the more curious because Josephus expressly speaks of the *sweet* water of Siloam. I do not see how to fit this characteristic detail, which would apply much more to Bir Eyoub, with the theory which makes the fountain of Silwan the old Siloam.

C. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF SCOPUS.*

IN a previous report (see *Quarterly Statement*, Jan., 1873, p. 20) I mentioned a site which appeared to me undoubtedly that of Scopus. As my views have lately met with unexpected confirmation, I propose to enlarge a little more on the subject.

The point which it appears to me has been most neglected is that Scopus was not a mere high point of ground, but in the immediate vicinity was a plain ($\chi\theta\alpha\mu\alpha\lambda\delta\varsigma$, depression) of some considerable extent. Not only have we the positive assurance of this by Josephus (*Wars*, v. 2. 3), but the events which are recorded in connection with this locality also require such a supposition. Alexander, advancing on Jerusalem from the north, was here met by the high priest and priests (Joseph. *Antiq.* xi. 8. 5) accompanied by a great multitude. That some spot should have been chosen where the spectators, spreading out on a convenient extent of plain ground, might have witnessed the meeting upon whose termination the fate of Jerusalem depended, it is only natural to suppose. Such a site it is not easy to find in many places on the north side of Jerusalem. When we read that in two distinct advances upon the city by Cestius and by Titus a camp was formed, it at once suggests that the site must have possessed military advantages of a striking character, and a position favourable for the construction of a camp.

Looking at the matter simply from a military point of view, it is also evident that generals, experienced as were the Romans, would never have committed the mistake of a flank march in the face of the enemy, which would have left their main line of communication open to attack. Now, knowing as we do that the 12th and 15th legions were advancing from Galilee, through Samaria and Gophna, and there is no reason to suppose by any other than the main Roman route through the country

* See Josephus, *Ant.* x. 8. 5; *Wars*, ii. 19. 4; v. 3. 11.