

# THE JERUSALEM RESEARCHES.

## LETTERS FROM M. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

### VII.

JERUSALEM, *March 5, 1874.*

In one of my recent visits to the Haram, I remarked that in one or two places they had taken away some of the slabs covering the ground within the Sakhra : (1) before the gate of the cave ; (2) before the Eastern gate called *Bab en neby Daoud*. Ascertaining that on Saturday last they were going to dig at the second point, I went on that day to the Mosque, but unfortunately too late ; the excavation, insignificant (0·30 metre) in dimensions, was already finished and the hole filled up. Vexed at losing an opportunity which might never occur again, I succeeded in my entreaties that the excavation should be begun over again before my eyes. I chose a point different from the first, trying to get as near as possible to the rock. We attacked the soil again, 0·50 metre, S.S.E. of the angle of the south pillar placed between the eastern gate and the first circle of columns and pillars which surrounds the Sakhra properly so called.

Excavation  
within the  
Sakhra.

The excavation was pushed to a total depth of 0·90 metre, not counting the thickness of the upper slab. After a layer (0·30 metre) composed of greyish earth, mixed with stones and fragments of marble, a bed of cement was reached extremely compact and about 0·07 metre in thickness ; the material was very hard, and the pick struck fire against the fragments of stone which were mixed up with it. I gathered a specimen of this cement, which is grey in colour, and seems, like the Arabic cements, to be mixed with cinders and charcoal.

Immediately beneath this layer appears the red earth, the same as is to be seen in Jerusalem and its environs, in those places where there have been few inhabitants. We excavated in this earth for 0·33 metre more, till it was impossible to go any lower without making a regular excavation and exciting susceptibilities. The conclusions to be drawn from this little sounding are these : (1) There is no rock 0·90 metre below the surface at the point of examination, which might have been guessed beforehand, as, judging from the Sakhra itself, the rock must have about here a general inclination of west to east. (2) The existence of a layer of earth almost untouched. (3) Immediately above this earth a bed of cement, forming the general substratum of the edifice, and apparently of Arabic origin. (4.) A layer of earth between this and the surface slabs.

Fragments  
of inscrip-  
tions.

A number of Arabic texts, *neskhi*, flourishes, are daily being discovered in the interior of the Sakhra during the course of the works; many of these inscriptions are on plaques of marble which have been used in covering up the interior walls of the edifice, the bases of columns, sides of pillars, &c. Many of these texts are interesting from an epigraphic point of view, or for the history of the Haram. They prove in any case how many successive alterations the Mosque has undergone. Not only are these ancient materials which have been used in the first construction, there are also anterior Arabic materials used for subsequent modifications and alterations. Among these texts I remarked very fair specimens of Kurmatic writing: one in *neskhi* contains a part of the Sourati of the Coran called El Koursi; and the mention of a work executed by the orders of an Emir Zeyned-din, son of Aly, son of Abdallah, about the year 500 of the Hejira.

Bases of  
columns, &c.

We have been several times to the Mosque to study the bases of its pillars and columns uncovered, and the famous semicircular arca-ding of the external wall. M. Lecomte has made detailed drawings of our observations, which will reach you with this report. An important fact has been revealed by the fall of certain mosaics. It is the existence of a string course in stone in the interior, and nearly in the middle of the drum which supports the cupola. The profile of this string course appeared to M. Lecomte to resemble a mediæval profile of the 12th century. Here is a new element which appears now only to complicate still more the already obscure problem of the origin of the actual monument.

As for the semicircular arcade of the external wall, it is still very difficult to pronounce upon it. Up to the present, however, two things are quite certain: (1) The absence of the mediæval dressing on the blocks entering into the construction of the wall and the arches; (2) the existence on one of the blocks of a mason's mark of undetermined period, having this form  $\Sigma^1$ . It is on the second pier left of the west door, and the third course above the leaden roofing.

Projected  
excavation  
within the  
Haram.

A work is about to be undertaken in the Haram, which I shall follow with the greatest attention. There has been found, it is said, in the wall of the Haram, an Arabic inscription, which states that by digging at the place where it was written a great quantity of stones will be found which will serve for repairs or reconstructions. Three years ago, following this indication, they sunk a shaft of some depth, since covered up, but which I have seen open. This excavation led to no result. The new director (*mémour*) sent from Constantinople to superintend all the Haram works is about to reopen this shaft. The work, in the Haram itself, may be of the greatest importance, and I shall follow it with the greatest care possible. The point chosen is a little south of bench mark 2387.7 of the Ordnance Survey map.

The Inscrip-  
tion on the  
Inner  
Stones.

The inscription spoken of above is on the exterior of the eastern wall at the height of the loopholes (second course, counting the battle-ments), about 133 metres north of the south-east angle. Observe that

at this place is a very sensible break in the continuity of the Arab wall, seeming to indicate a later repair; the line of junction is oblique, descending from south to north at an angle of about 45°. The inscription is as follows: "In this place are stones buried for the use of the Haram esh Sherif."

The writing is of the kind called *sulus*. The text presents in construction and orthography certain faults which seem to indicate a Turkish hand. It may be that this text was contemporary with the works executed in the reign of the Sultan Selim, who repaired the ramparts of the city. The first excavation undertaken under Kondret Bey on these indications had been placed immediately behind the inscription. The *mémoür* proposes to open it a little farther to the north, and, if necessary, to push a trench parallel to the wall. According to Captain Warren's map, we ought to light on the rock at a depth of about ten mètres. It remains to be seen whether the inscription is in its original place.

On going back to the Haram we examined a very fine base placed near the entrance of the magazine close to El Aksa, at the east. The lower face is entirely covered by a beautiful Arabic inscription in relief, the meaning of which I made out at once, to the great astonishment of my Mussulman companions. It relates the restoration or construction of a surrounding wall (*soûr*) of the city, or Haram, under the reign of the Sultan *El Melik el Mansour seif ed dén Gilaoun es sâlêhy*. This sultan, seventh king of the Mameluke dynasty of the Baharites, reigned from 678 to 698 of the Hejira (1279—1290 A.D.)

Inscription on the building of the south-west wall.

The Arabic historian of Jerusalem, Mejr ed Din, mentions among the works executed by order of this sultan, A.H. 678, the reconstruction of the "roof" of the Mesjid el Aksa, on the south-west side, near the Mosque of the Prophets. Such, in fact, states the Arabic text published at Cairo. It is evident that the editors have made the mistake of writing *sagaf* for *sour*, *roof* for *wall*. This is clear (1) from the possible confusion of these two words in Arabic writing; (2) from the impossibility of speaking of the *roof* of the Mesjid el Aksa, the phrase meaning the whole Haram; (3) from the inscription which I have just quoted.

Rectification of a passage in Mejr ed Din.

Between the El Aksa and the Sakhra I observed, at the foot of the south staircase which leads to the platform, on the left, a fragment of a moulding with the mediæval dressing strongly marked. This *morceau*, which M. Lecomte will sketch on the first opportunity, is extremely interesting, because it furnishes us with a moulding belonging without possible doubt to the period of the Crusades, further specimens of which we shall doubtless find in edifices of date hitherto undetermined. In the Barrack wall I have found another, of which also we shall take a drawing.

Mediæval mouldings.

We have at length been enabled to examine closely the base of the arches hitherto hidden by a casing of marble, over the columns of the intermediary peristyle of the Kubbet es Sakhra. One of the external faces was stripped, and we obtained leave to mount a ladder and examine

The blocks surmounting the columns of the Kubbet es Sakhra.

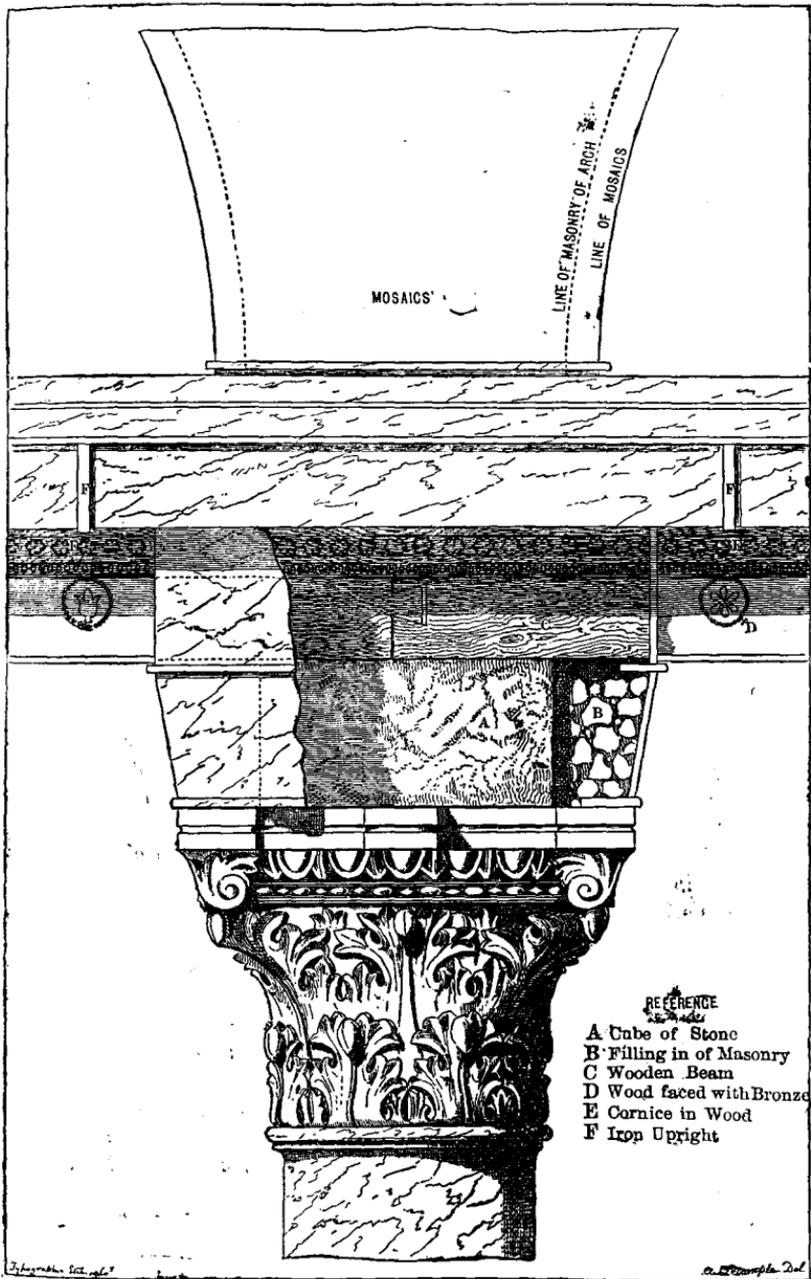
the capital closely. You will have a drawing of it; meantime here are a few words of description which will give an idea of the arrangement, to the knowledge of which archæologists attach great importance.

The capital of the column is surmounted by a cubical abacus, over which passes the beam which runs all round the edifice. This beam consisted of two pieces of wood, clamped by a dovetailed coupling. The point of junction is in the middle of the abacus. Upon the beam rest the abutments of the arches. It is evident that this part of the beam, now masked by the marble casing, was originally intended to be seen, because we found the ornamentation of the beam continuing under the marble. As for the abacus, it seems clear that it was always intended to be covered with some kind of ornamentation, for its bare surface and its rudeness would have made a disagreeable contrast with the richness of the general decoration.

As for the presence of the beam passing over the capitals, one can only remember the classical fact not long since mentioned by M. de Vogüé, in these terms:—"The presence of the wooden tiebeam is characteristic . . . it appears to be of Arab invention, for it is found in the greater number of early mosques, such as the Mosque of Amrou at Cairo, and the Mosque el Aksa, and has never been found, so far as I know, in any church of the fifth or sixth century." We have now to see what is hidden by the marble casing which surmounts the column of the interior perimeter. I hope to obtain equal facilities in this investigation.

Mosaics, &c.

It may be interesting to note here an observation that I have recently made, and which I have never seen anywhere else. The scaffolding now erected within the Kubbet es Sakhra has enabled me to examine closely the mosaics ornamenting the walls. I have ascertained that on many of the vertical walls in the interior of the Kubbet es Sakhra, the coloured and gilded little cubes of glass which produce together so marvellous an effect, are not sunk in the walls so that their faces are vertical, but are placed obliquely, so that the faces make an angle with the walls. This ingenious inclination is evidently intended to present their many-coloured facets at the most effective angle of incidence to the eye below. Such is the simple secret which produces the dazzling and magical effect of this decoration. Curiously, the same method has been followed in the construction of the splendid windows of the edifice. They consist of plaster cut into charming designs; in the holes so formed are fixed small pieces of coloured glass, arranged with exquisite taste. I have been able to examine a fragment of one of the window frames, and I observed that all these bits of glass are inserted obliquely, and not vertically, so as to overhang and meet the eye of the visitor at right angles, whence this charming brightness of colour. Perhaps this arrangement of the mosaics belongs to a certain known epoch, perhaps to the time of the construction of the windows, *i.e.*, the sixteenth century.



CAPITAL IN THE KUBBET ES SAKHRA.

Bas-relief in marble representing the triumphal entry of our Lord.

A bas-relief, very remarkable, comes from an Arab house situated near the Damascus Gate, and was found in the basement. One of the sides shows the mediæval dressing to which I have already called attention. This particularity furnishes us with our limit of date, the time of the Crusades, which is very likely, judging from the appearance of the work, to be its real date. Is it the work of a Byzantine artist, working perhaps for the Latin kings? The fragment belongs to a bas-relief representing the triumphal entry of Christ on the Day of Palms. Christ, clothed in a long tunic, with broad sleeves, in folds of classic form and execution, is sitting astride, not sideways, on the ass, which is walking straight on, and seen in profile. The head, which would seem to have been a three-quarters head, has unfortunately been destroyed, apparently by the Mussulmans; the foot is also broken. In the left hand Jesus holds the reins, and with the right hand, now disappeared, gives the benediction with the ordinary gesture, as is easily to be recognised by the movement of the right arm, half raised. It is a pity that this hand has been destroyed, as it would have been easy to see if the sculptor was under Latin or Greek influence, the position of the fingers in the Latin benediction being totally different to that in the Greek. The ass, which is covered with a cloth ornamented with rich embroidery, has also been decapitated by the same iconoclasts apparently. Nevertheless, it is impossible to hesitate on its identity, although the fine shape of the body might cause it to be taken for that of a horse. All doubt, however, is removed by the presence of the foal, which plays by the side of the mother, the head down in a pretty and truthful attitude, showing that the sculptor made a sincere study of nature.

Behind the group, on the right, are to be seen the remains of figures, mostly destroyed by the hammer; on the left are two other figures, clothed in flowing drapery, which have suffered less. The hinder part of the ass rests upon the framing.

The sculpture is in high relief, with attempts at shade effects, and a general inclination of the figures, showing that it was intended to be seen from below. Probably it was some door lintel, or decorative frieze, such as that which surmounts the entrance to the Church of St. John.

It is interesting to compare this subject with the same scene represented in the mosaics of the church at Bethlehem. Essential difference of style and composition exists between these two works. For example, at Bethlehem Christ is seated on the ass, but the foal is absent. These variations are the more curious, because, as has been remarked already (De Vogüé, "Eglises de la Terre Sainte," p. 96), the composition at Bethlehem is absolutely in conformity with the prescription of an ancient Byzantine "Guide of Painting," which contained detailed rules on the manner of treating different subjects.

The author of the mosaics of Bethlehem appear to have followed the nearly parallel narrations of St. John, St. Mark, and St. Luke, who only speak, the one of a young ass (*ὄναριον*), the other two of a colt (*πῶλον*). Our artist, on the other hand, seems inspired by St. Matthew.

The mosaist of Bethlehem, and the Byzantine school to which he belonged, took the words used by the Evangelists literally, representing Jesus *sitting*, and not astride upon the ass. It is hardly necessary to remark that this literal interpretation is hardly reasonable, for the Gospel of St. Mark uses the same term in speaking of an ass "whereon never man sat," the word there being evidently used in the ordinary sense of riding.

Besides, we may show by the Hebrew text of Zachariah ix. 9—"Behold thy King cometh unto thee . . . riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," to which the Evangelists all four refer—that the normal method of riding is intended, for the word used is *rokeb*.

The interpretation adopted in our bas-relief, although it departs in appearance from the tradition usually followed, is thus in reality more exact and nearer the truth. The sculptor who thus set aside the Byzantine traditions belonged, perhaps, to another country, perhaps to another epoch.

The constant communications which I have with the Silwan people have brought to my knowledge a curious fact. Among the inhabitants of the village there are a hundred or so, domiciled for the most part in the lower quarter, and forming a group apart from the rest, called *Dhiâbiyé*, i.e., men of Dhiban. It appears that at some remote period a colony from the capital of King Mesha crossed the Jordan, and fixed itself at the gates of Jerusalem at Silwan. The memory of this migration is still preserved, and I am assured by the people themselves that many of their number are installed in other villages round Jerusalem.

Passing the other day by the gate of St. Stephen (Bab Sitti Miriam), I remarked outside the city, in the wall, some mètres south of the gate, a fragment of Greek inscription which had escaped my attention up to that moment. No one had ever remarked it, although it is one of the most frequented spots in the place. It is on the sixth row of stones. The letters appear well formed, but it is so badly placed, and in such an unfavourable light, that I have only been able to make an imperfect copy. I will make a squeeze of it. Meantime, this is what I have made out:—

C . . . O  
 T . . . .  
 O T . . . .  
 H . . O C

The stone is placed on its side, so that the lines descend vertically. There is on the left the trace of a framework, which shows that we have the commencement of the text, which apparently consisted of four lines.

Another inscription in Mediæval Latin is unfortunately also incomplete, but Latin texts of Frank origin are so very rare at Jerusalem that I have thought it worth while to put it together as well as possible. You shall have a drawing of it made after a squeeze.

The inscription appears to have been cut at its two extremities, in order to obtain a block of size convenient for the use for which it was

Arab colony  
 from the  
 Dhiban  
 settled at  
 Silwan.

Greek in-  
 scription  
 embedded  
 in the wall  
 of the city.

Mediæval  
 Latin in-  
 scription.

adapted. It is, in fact, a step in the staircase of an Arab's house, near the Damascus Gate; the same house as that in which the bas-relief I have described above was found.

It is composed of seven lines, of which only the middle part remains, the beginning and the end having been sacrificed by the mason who utilised it. The letters are 0.19 mètre high; they are of Gothic form, and although roughly executed they appear to be contemporary with those of the sepulchral slab of *Philippus de Aubingni*, placed near the entrance of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This view is supported by the identity of the formulæ employed, which enables us to reconstruct a great portion of the mutilated inscription.

ET IO  
DE LA  
FRATER  
A ROCH  
S ANIM  
SC I

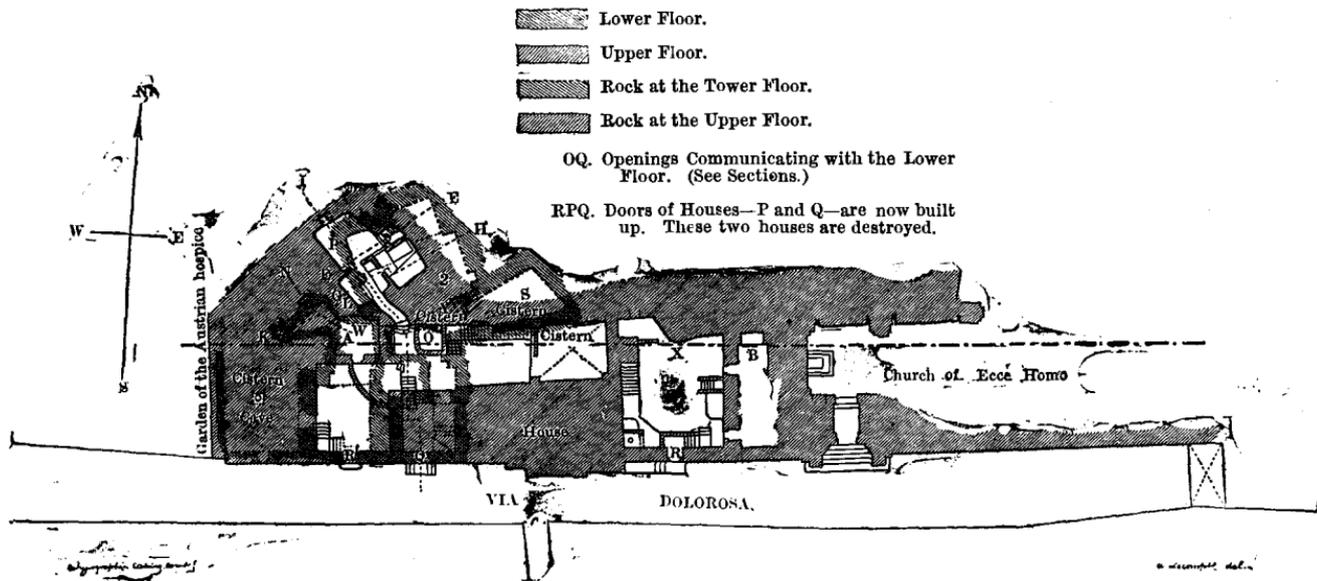
Comparing this with the inscription of *Philippus de Aubingni*, we find that the *et* of the first line is the end of the formula, "Hic jacet," probably preceded by the cross (+). Then comes the name of the person interred, beginning with I and O, or Q. We have a choice of names, such as *Iocelinus*, *Iordanus*, *Ioscerandus*, *Johannes*, &c. The second line began with part of the name, followed by *de la*, indicating the origin of the person, probably French, if the characters LA are the article, and not the commencement of the name of the place. We have numerous examples of the use of the proper name in the Latin, and the place in the vulgar tongue, as *Ricardus de Belmont*, *Iocelinus de Calmont*, &c.

The third line begins with the name of the place, and shows by the word *frater* that the person spoken of belonged to some religious order. The fourth line gives A ROCH . . ., but the R may be a P. Perhaps it is the name of the order. In the fifth we have the word *anim(a)*, certainly preceded by *(cu)ju(s)*. In the sixth line we have part of *(re)quiescat i(n)*. The seventh line ought to have *pace*, followed by *amen*, of which there are traces.

We can now forward you the plans and sections of the rock-cut chambers near the Ecce Homo Arch. The complicated arrangement of the chambers, and the accident which for some time kept us from getting access to them, has retarded the preparation of the plans.

I have already sent you\* a detailed description of the place. I have now to add some remarks on certain new facts with relation to a point almost ignored. I have considered, in connection with this subject, the rock which is visible at the Church of the Ecce Homo, already known, because it has an intimate relation to the position of the well observed by us. We have thus a full development of the rocks in a line nearly 42 mètres in

\* *Quarterly Statement*, April 1874, p. 105.



length. If we consider this line generally on my plan, we observe that it lies in a direction sensibly constant, only at about the middle of its course it makes a sharp turn at an obtuse angle, after which it resumes its original orientation. This is important, because the line has been cut nearly everywhere with the pickaxe, and is not a natural formation. This cutting is most visible in the Ecce Homo Church, and is found again in the rock of the house R, and in that of the adjacent houses Q and R'. In the house Q it seems now that the cutting has suppressed one of the walls of the chamber cut in the rock S. This result is a valuable indication for the date of this chamber, and the group of those of which it forms a part, a date anterior to the period of the cutting of the rock. (The vestibule Y has undergone a similar excision.)

If, now, we turn to the general section, and particularly to the small section, we may easily follow the slope of the rock from east to west in the direction of the slope of the street. The passage, which now debouches into space, might originally have opened



upon a layer of rock which has now disappeared, owing to the same cause which has destroyed a wall in one of the chambers.

Another general remark. The normal axes of the chambers and the direction of the passage form acute and obtuse angles with the present face of the rock, which could not originally exist, for it would be contrary to all known usage up to the present day in that kind of excavation.

In the passage on the left may be remarked a broad "notch," apparently indicating that the workman wanted to rectify the sinuosity of the passage. The square opening made at the end of the chamber P seems to communicate with another chamber filled with earth, which I should very much like to dig. It is a question whether this opening is not the original entrance to the cave, and whether a passage has not been cut afterwards from the inside, to attach the chamber V directly with the exterior. I must add that the conjecture is rendered difficult by the configuration of the ground, as one makes it out, the chamber appearing to plunge into the depth of the hill. On this hypothesis, we should have to admit that the chamber P communicates with another

chamber by the square hole, and that the chamber filled with earth had its entrance communicating with the exterior by the west face. In that case, the real primitive entrance of the group of chambers would have to be sought to the east of the Austrian hospice, near the second A in the word Mahometan in the O. S. map. We may, in fact, admit, without too much temerity, that the side of the hill turns and faces the west. All this, however, is purely conjectural.

If we pass to the examination of the lower chambers, we shall make the following notes. The people of the house told us that the chamber Q was provided with a bench cut in the rock; it is impossible to ascertain the fact now as the place is filled with ordure to the ceiling. The wall of rock, which we saw in the third house, appears to be in the alignment of the extremity of the rock of the neighbouring house, Q; there is, between the two, a solution of continuity of only a few metres.

In this third house the rock had been also excavated to make a chamber, partly destroyed. A piece of the ceiling of this chamber has fallen (section K L) through some movement of the ground overloaded with houses, or an earthquake. Most likely the latter was the cause, for the wall of the chamber is cloven vertically.

If now we search for the origin of this rock-work and the period at which it was effected, we are reminded of what Josephus says about the fortress Antonia, *which was separated from the Hill Bezetha, not only naturally, but by means of a deep ditch cut so that the foundations of Antonia were not at the foot of the hill and, therefore, easy of access.* The same historian informs us, besides, that the second wall, starting from the Gennath Gate, joined Antonia, only circumscribing the northern region.

The Second Wall and its ditch.

The second wall, then, evidently starting from Antonia, must have been directed to the west, and turned its face to the north. Now, during the first part, it was exposed to the same inconveniences as Antonia in being commanded by Bezetha. To the same evil the same remedy was applied—the rock was cut, or the moat of Antonia extended. Can we not see in the face of the rock cut by the pickaxe, which we found behind the houses, the counter-scarp of the prolonged moat, cut to protect, not Antonia, but the second wall? It was not necessary to prolong the moat beyond the point where is now the eastern wall of the garden of the Austrian hospice, for at this point the base of Bezetha seems, according to our observations, to turn to the north, forming one of the sides of the great valley from the Damascus Gate, which the second wall must necessarily have crossed. In the eastern flank of this valley were excavated chambers, belonging, perhaps, to a cemetery, of which those chambers found by us formed a portion. In that case these chambers, cut across by the moat and consequently older than it, were probably more ancient than the building of the second wall.

These facts are of extreme importance in helping us to find the second wall; it seems to me that it must have passed between the two streets called 'Tarik as Serai al Kadim' and 'Daraj as Serai' in the Ordnance Survey map. Now all the west part of this place is occupied by a large

space of ground belonging to the Catholic Armenians, where I believe I could easily obtain permission to dig. Captain Warren has already sunk a shaft on this side in the street Harit el Wad, without results, but possibly he missed the wall by some few metres.

Tomb at  
Beit Sahur.

I resume my interrupted enumeration of our researches explained in the drawings sent off by the last mail.

I have only a word to add to my description of the sepulchre with a semicircle found at Wady Beit Sahur (No. 18). The form of the sarcophagus pointed out by me in the Haram (photograph D.) may be compared with the form of the trough of the first chamber, the inside of the sarcophagus being rounded at one end and square at the other. The sarcophagi coming from Jerusalem are generally square at their two extremities with a receptacle formed in one of the angles to support the head of the corpse.

Cemetery at  
Wady  
Yasoul.

I have already spoken of this valley, the name and direction of which are accurately given by Tobler (Jerusalem u. Seine Umgebungen II. 7). It lies at a few minutes' distance from the Holy City, and contains a vast cemetery, with many hundreds of sepulchres cut in the rock, which appears to have been a sort of *succursale* of the Jerusalem cemetery. We have visited a large number of the tombs, some of which are extremely important. As an illustration of the singular arrangement formed among them I may mention that sketched in plan No. 21, brought to light by our excavations.

Plate 19 represents a sepulchre. There is an *arcosolium* covering a bench in a lower chamber, which is connected with an upper chamber by the end of a loculus like an oven. On this bench is indicated by a light hollowing out the place where the head and shoulders of the corpse would lie. It is only the second example of this kind that I have found in the tombs round Jerusalem. Immediately below the bench and in the vertical wall were cut two little alcoves to receive bones. When we opened the tomb I found these alcoves and the four oven-like recesses still closed by slabs wedged in with small stones; they contained nothing but fragments of bones.

Plate No. 16 shows another tomb also excavated by our men, in which we remarked the following points: three little recesses, like those in the former, serving as depositories for bones, the third of them consisting of a small grave cut at the end of a loculus, and closed by two slabs of black stone with a layer of cement interposed; within were bones and the skull of an adult. In the wall at the end, above and a little to the left of the entrance of the central loculus, a *little cross carved*. In the corner of No. 5, on the bench, fragments of sarcophagi of well-known type; in the opposite corner (H) fragments of lamps in terra cotta: two of the recesses were furnished at the end and laterally with two boxes at right angles with them, one of which, still closed with a slab, contained fragments of bones. This tomb has certainly been used again, perhaps at the period when the cross was engraved.

Plate 17 reproduces the details of another tomb of greater importance, because it was partially inviolate.

The first chamber has nothing remarkable except the great irregularity of the loculi, and the strange deviation of one of them, which pierces the wall of a loculus of a neighbouring chamber at the same level. In the middle of this first chamber, furnished with a bench, is a rectangular grave, through the pierced wall of which is access to a little lower chamber. The entrance was closed by a slab. It is very small, and has an ornamentation quite different to that below which it extends. The ceiling forms a low arch; right and left stand two walls cut in the rock, and forming two troughs, each of which is divided into two parts, one by a diaphragm of rock, the other by a slab placed vertically. Between these two troughs is a kind of empty passage, almost entirely filled with earth; the lid of a little sarcophagus in soft stone placed transversely towards one of the two extremities, forms a small partition. Three of these "boxes," G, H, P, contained the bones of at least three skeletons.

To the right of the entrance had been cut in the vertical wall a very small recess, where we found an ossuary of soft stone (F) without a lid, filled with bones; sides bare: made to be closed with a groove; with feet; the lid forming the partition I fits it perfectly.

To the left of the entrance is hollowed out another recess, divided into two parts by the rock forming its diaphragm. In the left division stood an ordinary ossuary, placed parallel to the diaphragm; no feet or grooves; bare sides; the lid broken by the fall of a piece of rock; bones in it. At the side of this ossuary, and at right angles with it, another ossuary, B; bare sides; no feet; lid with grooves; bones, among others two skulls placed on the surface, at the two ends of the ossuary.

In the right division, ossuary C, parallel to the diaphragm, ornamented with roses and an elegant framework of traditional type; ornamented sides relieved with red; feet; flat lid; no leafwork; on the small face a Hebrew inscription in *graffito*; bones. Behind this ossuary and in the same direction, is the fifth ossuary, D; a rose simply designed; feet; leafwork for lid; no lid; bones. The lid has been used to raise at the side an upright partition forming a new recess, serving for an ossuary, and containing a number of bones. Without doubt this unviolated chamber has been used a second time, at a very ancient period; the adaptation of two of the lids into partitions serves alone to show it. We took great care in collecting together the bones of the earlier occupants of the sepulchre. These sarcophagi are undoubtedly more ancient than the second use of the tomb, which agrees perfectly with the existence on one of them of a Hebrew inscription. In my next report I will give you the inscription. The absence of any glass or pottery is very remarkable.

Ossuary,  
ornamented  
with  
Hebrew  
inscription.

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### VIII.

JERUSALEM, March 19, 1874.

I have paid a second visit to the Greek inscription which I had previously observed in the wall of the city, quite close to the gate of Saint Greek inscription in the wall of the city.

Stephen spoken of in my last report. I tried to take a squeeze, but there was so high a wind that I failed to get anything good; at the same time, thanks to a ladder, I was able to examine the text closely and to take an exact copy, after carefully cleaning it. The following is a reproduction of the inscriptions made by the aid of the copy and the squeeze:—

ΕΚΟΙΙ  
ΤΠΑΤ  
ΟΤΙΜ  
+ ΠΙΟC

The stone, cleaned of the mortar which plastered it up, showed a little cross engraved at the beginning of, and a little above, the fourth line. The inscription, then, is Christian. It appears, also, to be a funerary inscription, judging from the first word, which we may restore as *ἐκοιμήθη* "here lies," a word often recurring in sepulchral formulæ of Christian times, from which is, of course, derived the word *κοιμητήριον* cemetery.

The word which begins the second line, ΤΠΑΤ, may mention a consul or proconsul (*ὕπατος*), or it may be the name of the deceased person. ΟΤΙΜ in the third line may be separated into *ου*, the genitive termination, and *ιμ* the beginning of a name, or it may be the Greek way of writing a Latin word beginning with *vim*. In the fourth line the second letter is perhaps an R, and the fourth an S or an E. In the former case we have the preposition *προς*.

Greek inscription near Ain Yardé.

A fellah of Abu Gosh has just told me of an inscription between Kubeibch and Tell el Gezer, not far from Ain Yardé. He showed me some letters rudely copied by him, but it was easy to recognise the characters. I made out ΑΔΙΚΙΟΝ, perhaps *Αδικίου* (?) I propose to visit the place and see it.

The Legend of the Fenich.

I gathered from the same fellah further information about the *Fenich*, in whom I proposed, some years ago, in a note sent to the Institute, the Philistines. The Fenich king, or the King of the Fenich, had his summer residence at Souba, and his winter residence at Rathoun or Latroun. He had several brothers, one of whom lived at Sara in summer and at Beit Alub in winter; another at Beit Our in summer and El Bourdj in winter; another at Beit Jibrin, &c. I shall, perhaps, return to this common popular legend of the Fenich, to which I have been the first to call attention.

Kuryet.

This resident of Abu Gosh told me that his village, Kuryet el Enab, was the Kuryet *par excellence*, called so without any other qualifying name. He told me, besides, of a place not far from Yalo called *Hérché*, which means forests; one cannot help being struck by the singular resemblance of this word with the Hebrew Hareth, the name of the forest which served as a refuge for David (1 Sam. xxii. 5, "Then David departed and came into the forest of Hareth.") The *shin* and the *t* are constantly interchanged in Hebrew and in Arabic; the other letters are identical. If it is not the Biblical Hareth, there would be

The Forest of Hareth.

nothing impossible in its being that which passed for it in the time of Eusebius and St. Jerome, for the Onomasticon places an Arat, which it identifies with Arith, David's place of refuge, west of Jerusalem.

Perhaps we might connect with this place the name of Mount Heres of Judges i. 35—"The Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim"—shown as occupied by the Amorites, and whence it seems that Aijalon and Shaalbim were also, according to the literal tenor of the verse. I know that some think that "Mount Heres" is really *Irchemes, City of the sun*, but this supposition is quite gratuitous and may easily be refuted. The question is too complicated for me to solve it *en passant*. I hope to return to it.

The same peasant told me that there was at Amwas (*Emmaus*) a well now closed, whence formerly the plague issued to spread over all the world; this well is called *Bir et taoun*, the *well of the plague*. It is easy to find the origin of this tradition, which has a historical foundation. The terrible epidemic which desolated the Mussulman army after the conquest of Syria by the lieutenants of Omar, of which mention is so frequently made in the chronicles of Arab historians, is called by them the Plague of Emmaus, probably because the first cases broke out there. To localise the birth of the scourge, and to make it spring from a well, is but one step.

The Well of the Plague at Amwas.

I had already ascertained the existence of a fountain named Ain Nini, at Amwas. My fellah confirmed the fact. May we recognise in the name a truncated echo of the old word Nicopolis?

Ain Nini.

There has been, probably, some confusion in the publication of these travelling notes, written apparently at different periods and in different places. It is desirable that the names belonging to each region should be classified and grouped, in the interest of future explorers east of Jordan.

Permit me to insert in my report certain observations which have been suggested to me by reading over again a list of names published in the *Quarterly Statement* of July, 1872. It is a list collected by Captain Warren, and examined by MM. Sandreczki and Palmer. The places are given as east of Jordan. In fact, the first pages (123—164) appear to belong to this region. I will add as well *Jebel Atarus*, written *Atrud'*—the *Ataroth* of the *Moabite Stone*—and mentioned immediately before *Zuka Main* and *Moudjib*. But at page 144 we leave the trans-Jordanic country, and get an enumeration of places belonging to the environs of Jericho. Again, at page 167 we are transported to the west of Jerusalem, to judge by the juxtaposition of such names as *Deit Atab*, *Saide*, *Soba*, *Neby Danyal*, etc.\*

Observations on the list of places east of the Jordan, published in the *Quarterly Statement*, July, 1872.

Certain Arabs of the city, fired with archæological ardour by my recommendations, have just extracted from a tomb in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem four ossuaries of ordinary type in soft limestone, three being ornamented with roses. One of them, without roses, bears on the edge

Newly-found ossuaries with Greek and Hebrew inscriptions.

\* M. Ganneau's remark is correct. On republishing these lists they will be properly separated.

of one of its faces the name ATIFONA, which is, probably, the equivalent of Ἀτιφόνη. Is the omission of the N the fault of the engraver? I should be tempted to attribute it rather to a voluntary suppression, the result of a common custom in Jewish orthography. The assimilation of the letter *n* with that which follows it is a constant fact in Hebrew. In virtue of this phonetic law, for instance, we write *bat* for *bant*, *benet*, *daughter*. It would not be extraordinary if this, an organic law of the language, were applied to proper names borrowed from the Greek. I have already\* pointed out a very remarkable instance, for the letter *r*, in the Hebrew transcription of Bennigi for Berniki (Veronica). The word before us may have undergone exactly the same transformation, only it would have been in conformity with the Hebrew usage to write ATTIFONA; the *n*, which disappears, would be replaced by a double *t*. The name of Antigone was extensively used by the Hellenising Jews. The regular form is ANTIFONOC, but we find also ANTIFONA, for example, in the monument of Patron (Greek Inscriptions of the Louvre, No. 240), where in a group of eight names figures an ANTIFONA immediately after a ΜΑΧΙΨΗ (The last name has an unmistakably Semitic appearance, and these two persons were very probably of Turkish extraction). ANTIFONA is, perhaps, the feminine form of ANTIFONOC, and in the monument of Patron as well as on our own ossuary we have two women. The Hellenising Jews, however, affected the genitives in *alpha* for many masculine names, which they brought to the termination *as* in the nominative, as Ἀρτεμᾶς, Θευδᾶς, Κλεοπᾶς, for Ἀρτεμίδωρος, Θεόδωρος, Κλεόπατρος. It is true that this systematic alteration was in general preceded by a contraction which we do not find in Ἀτιγόνα.

The second ossuary bears on the upper part of its long side, which is ornamented in characters legible but more cursive than those of the preceding, the name ΕΥΤΡΑΠΕΔΩΤ in the genitive. I do not know if the adjective εὐτράπελος (*versatile*, *gay*, *clever*) has ever before been met with in a proper name. As it is of two genders it is difficult to say whether the name belongs to a man or a woman, most likely the former. It is probably the translation of some Hebrew name having the same signification, and it makes us think of the names *Adna*, *Adnah*, *Adin*, *Adino*, etc.

Elashah.

The third ossuary has on the back face, opposite to the ornamented side, a graffito in square Hebrew characters, broadly traced by means of a point which appears to have been notched. The letters, though cursive, are written by a sure and practised hand: they read *Elashah*. The name, which signifies literally "created by EL," is borne by several persons in the Bible, notably by a priest who in the time of Esdras had married a Gentile woman (Ezra x. 22). Another of the same name was sent by Zedekiah to Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon (Jer. xxix. 3). The characters, as in writing, are uniformly inclined to the right. The "lamed" is formed by a long *haste* without a hook. I have already

\* "Nouveaux ossuaires Juifs." A *mémoire* read before the Academy of Inscriptions, and published in the *Revue Archéologique*, 1873.

found several instances of this form used in epigraphic Hebrew. On one of the small faces of the same ossuary is engraved another Hebrew inscription much less easy to make out. The first letter is a long vertical stroke like the *lamed* of the preceding: then comes a complicated group which appears to be formed by the combination of two characters. There are the complete elements of an *aleph*; but this letter once pulled out, it is very difficult to do anything with the remaining strokes;—a tsade? a teth? If we admit, on the other hand, that there is a stroke common to the two characters, this complexity resolves itself into an *aleph* + *chin*. As to the last letter, it appears, from its prolongation below the line, to be a *nun* rather than a *lamed*. None of these probabilities give us very happy results, and I do not very well see, for the moment, how the word is to be read.

We have not been able to take squeezes of these texts, but have contented ourselves with the sketches (Pl. 33, B C D E) forwarded herewith. The proprietors of the ossuaries have the most extravagant ideas of their value.

The Bedouin legend of Joshua, given in a previous report (p. 87), says that the pagans of Jericho were finished off by wasps sent from heaven. This is entirely Biblical, and reminds us strikingly of a passage in the Wisdom of Solomon, xii. 8, in which the writer is speaking of the Canaanites and their sanguinary rites. “Nevertheless, even those thou sparedst as men, and didst send wasps, forerunners of thine hosts, to destroy them little by little.” And we may compare the passage (Deut. i. 44), “The Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah.” Not only the image, but the words also, are identical in the Hebrew and the Bedouin story. To the same order of ideas belongs the passage in Isaiah (vii. 18)—“It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria”—and that in Ps. cxviii. 12, “They compassed me about like bees.” The Hebrew word *deber*, derived from the same root, signifies extermination, and was used particularly for the plague, which attaches itself by preference to armies. The Arabic word *dabra* applies especially to the flight of a defeated army. It is very possible that these different significations, sprung from the same root, are connected with each other by the metaphorical bond which I have thought it best to explain.

At last we are able to send you the results of our examination of the balustrade of the Kubbet es Sakhra, and of a certain number of the bases belonging to the columns of the edifice. This work has cost a great deal of time, and has been necessarily delayed. We have at least the satisfaction of forwarding precise and definite information on these important parts of the mosque, only recently discovered and already beginning to disappear. With the photograph you have already received, and the five plates sent with this (Nos. 28 to 32), containing M. Lecomte's drawings, you will be able to attack with profit the interesting questions

The tradition of the wasps.

Kubbet es Sakhra

raised by these unlooked-for facts, facts which may throw precious light upon the much disputed origin of this monument.

See Plate 31. During the course of the repairs several columns of the intermedia peristyle of the Kubbet es Sakhra have been laid bare by the removal of the marble casing which covered up the base. One of these columns has even had its abacus partially exposed, as I stated in my previous report. M. Lecomte will probably be able to send a drawing of it by the next mail.

By reference to Plate 2 of the Ordnance Survey the positions of the columns examined can be easily ascertained: A, column S. of the S.E. face; B, column N. of the same face; C, column S. of the E. face; E, column N. of the same face; F, column N. of the N.E. face; I, column of the S. face, represents a column and a base, having already undergone a restoration which will very soon cover up all the preceding.

The other bases of the intermediary peristyle have not yet been stripped of their old covering; as to that of the interior perimeter none has yet been touched. We wait impatiently for the moment when they will undergo this operation.

A glance at the drawings will show the form of their bases better than any description. It suffices to show one positive fact: that they are heterogeneous. We cannot certainly deny that there is a great resemblance in the profiles A, B, C, if we only consider form; but the proportions, sensibly different for each of these three bases, do not permit us to refer them to a single type. Besides, they vary in every case absolutely from the base E, as much in the dimensions as in the disposition of the mouldings. Finally, the marble in which they are cut is not of the same kind for each.

The aspect of the bases fully confirms (what the variety of modules in the columns above them might teach us) the opinion of those who see in the primitive building ancient materials from various sources used over again. This use, which seems very improbable in an ancient work, even of late period, is on the contrary quite in accordance with Arab customs. It is clear that if the bases and columns, whatever their absolute age,\* had been specially made for the Kubbet es Sakhra, they would all be alike. The builders would have no interest in seeking for the absence of symmetry, which shows itself not only in the variation of profile in the bases, but also in differences of thickness and height in the shafts. No caprice, no supposed intention, can account for the last and grave irregularity which the sketches show. It was so striking that it fully justifies the adaptation of these false bases, which are at least regular, formed of marble slabs; it is very probable that from the very beginning the deformities of the halting columns had been disguised by

\* This absolute age is difficult to determine, for it is dangerous to apply to Palestine, still so little known, rules exact, perhaps, for other places. M. Lecomte thinks that the form of these bases might go back to the sixth century in the East, and come down as far as the tenth in certain parts of the West (Lombardy, for example).

this dress of marble, and that this remedy is as old as the evil. The value of this fact is proved when one reflects that these bases and these heteroclite columns support a wall ornamented with mosaics, dated from the year 72 of the Hegira (A.D. 691), that is, the very year of the first construction of the Arab edifice.

Plate 29. Bases of exterior columns. To complete this group of bases, M. Lecomte has made notes of three others, which are found outside the building, to the right of the east and north porches (the gate Neby Daoud, and that of Paradise). We know that these porches have been added to the building, and are not an integral part of it. Consequently, we cannot draw any conclusions, in the sense of the preceding, from the aspect of these bases. Nevertheless, they deserve, by their singularity, to be brought to the attention of architects.

Bases of  
exterior  
columns.

G is on the north side, and H on the south of the eastern gate (Ordinance Survey, Plate II).

D is on the west side of the north door.

They are in one block, and show a bastard profile, formed by mouldings, which are complicated and do not belong to any determined category. They present one curious detail, on which M. Lecomte rightly insists, because it may put us on the path of their origin. The higher part of the base surmounting the pedestal has one of its faces lightly curved, as the sketch of the base G shows, in which the *tore débordée* on the vertical face of the plinth. These bases, although different in detail, appear to belong to one building, and the same part of the building, perhaps circular.

Plates 28, 29, and 30, give the *ensemble* and the details of the exterior wall of the Kubbet stripped of its tiles.

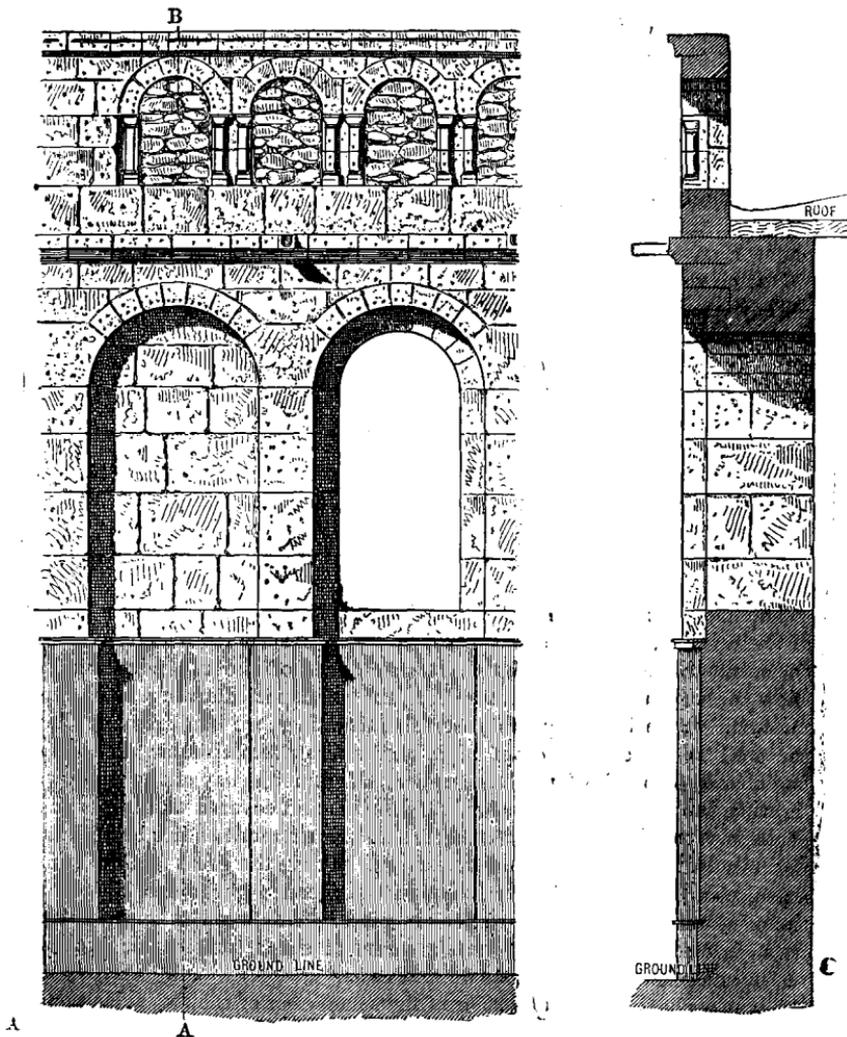
Arcades of  
the external  
wall of the  
Kubbet es  
Sakhra

The elevation on the scale of 1-100th shows two of the sides of the octagon, the west and the south-west. At the right extremity of the south-west side has been shown a portion of the tile covering, to show the way in which this interesting and unsuspected arrangement was masked. If we begin by studying this latter face, we shall remark that the wall is pierced by seven high and narrow semicircular arches (a fact already known), of which the upper half forms the bay of the windows lighting the interior. The lower half is solid, and covered with a plating of marble; the bays of the two arches at the extremities are blind, and not blinded, as the arrangement shows. Above the great arches runs a projecting band, which gives passage to six leaden gargoyles, by which the rain-water runs out above the six piers. This band is surmounted by a high course, which supports a series of small semicircular arches, resting on *colonnettes* grouped two and two.

These arches, of which there are thirteen on each of the two sides seen, have been closed *subsequently* to their construction. In fact, (1) the side of the wall which fills them up is in the same plane as the general face of the wall and the cutting of the capitals of the columns; (2) the columns are in fact part covered up by the filling in; (3) the filling in is effected by stones quite different from the rest of the building; (4) one of the arches

in the west front has been opened, and has given evidence that it was originally destined to be always so.

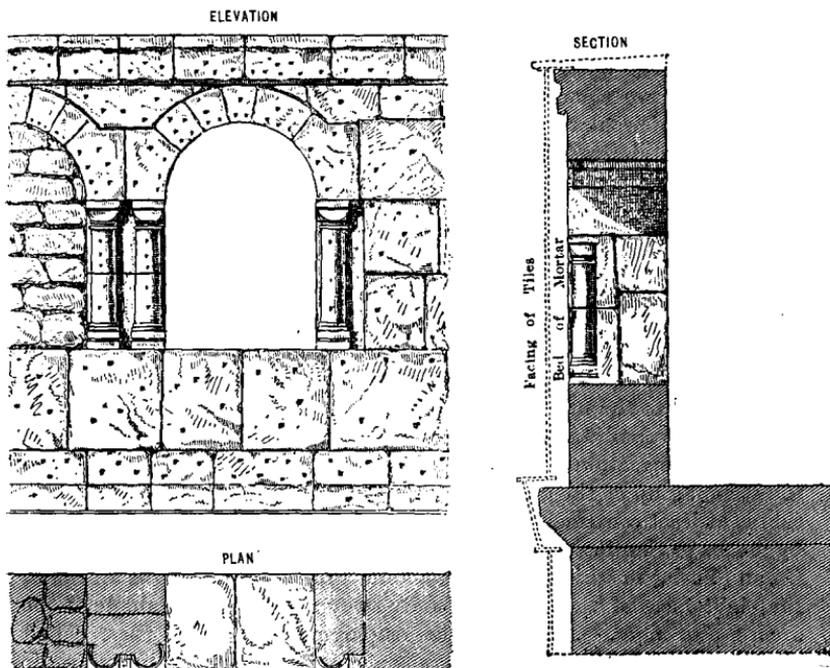
Lastly, immediately above the little arcades, at a tangent to their extrados, runs a terminal cornice, the profile of which is extremely difficult to arrive at, so much has it suffered.



The western face shows the same arrangement. We remark only that the last of the higher arches on the right extremity has been opened during the works, and that the great central arch which serves as the door

is broader than the six other arches. This breadth has been secured by the narrowing of the bays, the breadth of the piers remaining sensibly the same. The proportions of the higher arches remaining unaltered, there results a general difference between the west and the south-west faces; in the latter the higher arches are calculated in such a manner that their axis, two by two, corresponds with the axis of the arches below, if we count 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13; with the axis of the piers if we count 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12. In the west face, on the other hand, this correspondence does not exist.

The drawing represents in stippling the projection of the porch, which



is supposed to have been taken away to show the original entrance. The surface of the blocks of the whole construction has a good deal suffered. It is, besides covered with holes, serving to fix the casing which covered it. As a result, the dressing (tool marks) has almost wholly disappeared; we have, however, been able to ascertain that the dressing is not that which I have shown in a previous report (see p. 136) to be mediæval. The only lapidary sign which we have noticed is one spoken of in my last report (p. 136); it is engraved on the third course of stones, below the left abutment of the third great arch of the western face, starting from the left. It is, as may be seen from the copy of it in Plate 28, too

indeterminate in form to permit us to attach it to one epoch rather than another.

Plate No. 29 represents the detail of the opened arch, and plate No. 30 gives the details of the columns, base, and capital, in full scale.

It is more than probable that the six other faces of the octagonal wall, still concealed by the tiles, would show exactly the same respective disposition as these two, if they were also stripped.

Starting from the band, the wall in which the higher arches are built is much less thick than the great wall on which it rests; this appears to indicate that it has originally been treated as a lighter construction, not having so much to support.

The existence of these arches running all round the monument reveals to us a previous state very different to the present aspect, and raises curious historical questions.

Above all, we should take account of two essential facts: (1) the arches are semicircular; (2) they were originally destined to remain open.

This fact established, if we try to determine the date of this building exclusively by the aid of technical considerations, we shall be much embarrassed. We may nevertheless hold for certain that the whole wall, from the higher arches to the *half of the lower arches*—that is to say, in the whole of its height which has been exposed—is, in spite of the differences of thickness, of homogeneous construction, and can have only one date. As for the part below it is difficult to pronounce. The casing of marble hides the true wall, except at the right feet of the gate of the western face, where it seems to show that the wall is entirely the same from the top to the bottom.

Besides the absolute age of the construction, it remains to fix the period of the transformation which it subsequently underwent, and which led to the stopping up of the upper arches. It is evident that the transformation is at least contemporaneous with the decoration of the monument by means of the tiles placed upon the wall: the beautiful *sourate* of the Coran (Yasin) in white letters on a blue ground, which runs all round the eight faces of the octagon, passes away nearly in the middle of the arches *d'en haut*. Although the employment of these tiles, called *Kechany*, is of different dates, there is a general agreement in fixing the first application of them in the sixteenth century. It is easy to understand that the decorators, in trying to get as large a surface as possible to cover with their enamelled tiles, thought of gaining this surface at the expense of these closed arches, which had perhaps a long time before lost their *natural use*, and which were treated as a higher prolongation of the wall.

What was this natural use? To answer this question we must go back six centuries, to the time of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. We have several descriptions of the *Templum Domini*, made by contemporary authors. Among these descriptions there are none more exact and more detailed than that of John of Wirzburg. Unfortunately, I have not with me the original text, and I quote from the partial translations of

Porches and galleries of the *Templum Domini* in the time of the Crusaders.

Tohler and De Vogüé the following important passage: "Between the external wall (pierced by four doors and by windows) . . . and the interior columns (12 + 4) supporting the interior wall, less broad, higher, and pierced by twelve windows, there is a row of sixteen columns and eight pillars. This circle of columns supports a roof which joins the interior to the exterior wall, and a ceiling ornamented with beautiful *caissons*. The roof is surrounded by a continuous gallery, with pipes of lead to carry off the rain water." This description applies admirably to the monument in its present state, and proves how few were the essential modifications which the *Kubbet es Sakhra* has undergone since it ceased to be the *Templum Domini*.

As to the valuable detail which terminates the description of John of Wirzburg, it appears to me to exactly correspond with the description brought to light by the repairs. Here is Tohler's translation, in his own words: "Am unterm Dache war ein Rundgang zum Lustwandcl und bleierne Röhren schenkten das Regenwasser aus." The lower roof is that properly so called in opposition to the cupola; the *Rundgang zum Lustwandcl* is a gallery running round.

There is no possible doubt our arches are nothing else than a little portico surrounding this gallery; the inclined roof would, at its lower end, approach the horizontal, or, at least, stop suddenly to permit a passage, which would not need to be very broad. The breadth of the lower wall (1 metre, plate 28, section A.D.) is of itself sufficient. A spout and leaden pipes, corresponding with the present gargoyles, would suffice for the rain-water to pass away.

A man standing upright in the internal wall is just able to look without by the bays of these arches, whose height, measured from the summit of the arch to the base represented by the great wall, is at least two metres.

It is not necessary to remark how this explanation accounts for the existence, and justifies the utility of this little portico, which, later on, closed and transformed into a wall, seemed to have no reason at all for existence, and gave to the right faces of the octagon the unpleasing appearance of eight panels cut out in cardboard. Unfortunately, the repairs follow the same error, and this light colonnade, exposed for one moment, will again be transformed into a massive wall, this time not even having the excuse of bearing the elegant fayence of Soliman.

Henceforth we may hold for certain that such was the disposition of the *Templum Domini*. I will add that we may see a vague but real confirmation in the reproduction of this edifice which figures on the seal of the Templars; there are clearly to be distinguished two rows of bays superposed.

This gallery, adorned with porticos still in use at the time of the Crusaders, the traces of which are now wholly lost—did it exist before their time? I think that we may, without hesitation, reply that it did, for plenty of reasons: the absence of mediæval dressing, the use of the semi-circle, the historical certainty that the Crusaders have never interfered

Disposition before the time of the Crusaders.

with the work, as a whole, of the Khubbet es Sakhra, the homogeneous nature of the arcade and the wall which supports it.

To these general reasons one more precise may be added. A Persian author, Nasir ibn Khosrou, who visited the Khubbet es Sakhra in the year 438 of the Hegira, that is to say, some years before the first Crusade, describing the exterior wall of the Khubbet, says that it was 20 "yards" high and 33 long, on each side of the octagon. I have not the original here, and forget what was the exact measure called by the English translator, Major A. R. Fuller, a yard, consequently I do not know the real dimensions expressed by the author. At any rate, the proportion of height to breadth was as 20 : 33. Now these dimensions are actually 12 and 27 metres. In order that the ratio of Nasir's dimensions should be as 1 : 2, there wants 7-66ths; in order that the ratio of the actual dimensions should be as 1 : 2 there wants 1-18. Now, the difference between 1-18 and 7-66 is only 5-99, a difference so small that we may neglect it, and conclude in consequence that the wall before the Crusades was the same height as it is now. And we have seen above that it may be considered as produced at a single effort.

As to the period which extends between this epoch and that of the *first construction*, the field is still open to conjectures as to what concerns this part of the monument.

If we wanted to find examples of analogous dispositions we might, as M. Lecomte suggests, find the *point de départ* in certain edifices of central Syria, towards the fifth or sixth century. As to relations with other places, we might multiply them, but without great advantage to the chronological elucidation of the special question which occupies us.

I have other and important observations which the repairs in the Haram have enabled me to make. These bear upon the works executed by the Crusaders in the sacred enclosure; but time presses, and I must defer them to the next mail.

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## IX.

JERUSALEM, April 19, 1874.

IF, leaving the place called *El Mesharif* to the north of Jerusalem on the Nablus road, the name of which is the equivalent of Scopus (see my preceding reports), you turn to the east, you find at about two hundred metres' distance certain mounds or hills called by the fellahin *Rujm el B'hîmé*, literally, "the heap of the animal." The thing that gives particular interest to these hills is, that they are entirely composed of a prodigious quantity of flint chippings.

We have only as yet devoted one visit—that very rapid and necessarily superficial; but it results from this first examination that these mounds of elongated form, and representing thousands of [actual metres, ought to be thoroughly explored. How to explain this enormous mass of flint

broken up small? A few steps farther on crops up the very rock from which these fragments come. With what object did they cut up the rock into these tiny pieces? The collection in heaps may be explained: it was perhaps done to clear the ground and to facilitate cultivation. But how to explain the formation of the fragments? I thought at once, and I am still tempted to think, that we have here a workshop of flint implements. The existence of tools and arms in flint at different parts of Palestine is a fact beyond all doubt. It is enough to recall the authentic finds at Beit Sahur, near Bethlehem, and at Gezer. We may note as well that the flints from both these localities, far apart from each other, are, as regards form, identically the same; a fact which would lead us to suppose that the flint instruments came from certain centres of fabrication, and were thence sent into the rest of Palestine. This mode of production seems very probable when we observe that layers of flint suitable for the purpose, and in abundance, are distributed over certain regions, and that it is therefore probable that the work would take place near the material.

Are we then to see in the *Rujm el B'hîmé* the waste chippings of one of these primitive manufactories which supplied the land of Canaan? One would hardly dare to affirm this, but I am not far from believing it. We passed some time in searching on the surface of the mounds for specimens of cut flints. We found quantities which seem to have been roughly prepared; others which seemed to have been commenced and abandoned; not a single specimen perfect, or so perfect as to be pronounced with certainty a weapon or a tool. I intend to excavate these mounds, and perhaps a few crucial incisions will throw some light upon this interesting question.

Local tradition of the Lifta people calls the place the site of an ancient city, or rather of an ancient inhabited place; but it is silent as to the flint, and contents itself with calling the chippings *sowanât* (flint). I forgot to say that we found on the surface some fragments in terra cotta.

A fellow of Abu Gosh, the same spoken of in a previous report, has brought me a rough copy, made by himself, of an inscription at El Kubeibeh:

CIIOIXI  
ARV II

Difficult to get anything out of this; but it seems like a Latin inscription on account of the R. The X would then be a numerical sign. Have we some inscription of the Tenth Legion, or is it a piece of a Roman milestone? It is interesting on either hypothesis. As soon as time permits I will examine this inscription, as well as that of Ain Yardé. The same peasant spoke to me of a sarcophagus with three rosettes which is at El Boueiré. It is something else to visit.

I have seen and made a squeeze of a fragment coming from Beit Sahur et Ati'ga. It contains nothing but three Greek letters of Byzantine appearance— $\text{HPO}$ , with a large character underneath, like an A laid horizontally.

Inscriptions  
at Ku-  
beibeh.

Fragment  
of inscrip-  
tion at Beit  
Sahur.

Greek inscription from the land of Ammon.

I received a visit from a trans-Jordanic Bedouin, Jasem, son of Sheikh Goblan, who, besides giving me certain curious information, brought me the squeeze of a Greek inscription in the Wady el Katar, west of Khan es Shib (lat. 31 degs. 25 secs., long. 36 degs. 9 secs.).

ΦΙΛΟ  
 ΗΟΤΑΓΡΙΠ  
 ΚΟΚΚΗΙΟΤΑΚ

*κοκκηίου* would be the genitive of the Latin Cocceius. The Cocceian *gens* was an important one; the Emperor Nerva, and the historian, Dion Cassius, both belonged to it. The squeeze is as good as a Bedouin can make it; that is to say, detestable, and the characters are hard to decipher. Perhaps the word *φιλο* is part of an official title, such as *φιλοκάσιαρ*, *φιλοδήμιος*, or *φιλορωμαίος*. In this case it is a great pity that this word is lost, because the inscription would then have a great historical value. At times the second line looks like as if it contains the name Agrippas.

Lastly, a peasant sold me, with a lot of terra cotta coming from Wady Beit Sahur, a fragment of soft stone, with certain characters, which seem to have been written with the point of a knife.

The Well of the Pest at Amwas.

*Apropos* of the *Bir et-Ta'oun* at Amwas, of which I have spoken already, here is a remark which occurred after I wrote my account of it. I have already explained the origin of this legend of the Well of the Pest, but very likely another tradition has been engrafted on the former, relating to the closing of the well. The passage in Sozomen has often been quoted which mentions at Emmaus Nicopolis, identified with the Emmaus of the Gospels, a source situated at the intersection of three roads, and endowed with miraculous healing powers, which it owed to the touch of Christ.

This miraculous fountain was closed by order of the Emperor Julian, in order to suppress the Christian belief which was attached to it. If Amwas be really the Emmaus of Saint Luke, would it be rash to consider the legend of Bir et-Ta'oun, closed as it is, a confused amalgam of reminiscences relating to very different events—the suppression of the beneficent source, and the appearance of the epidemic called the pest of Emmaus? Perhaps an inquiry made on the spot will furnish me with more precise information on this point.

Malha.

I have just made an excursion to the village of Malha, south-west of Jerusalem, where I picked up a little information not without its value. There is nothing very curious in the houses, except a ruined burj near the mosque. I remarked in the angle of a house not far from it a broken inscription, very faint, perhaps only a flourish. Inside another house I was shown the entrance, now closed, of a cavern, the door of which would have borne an inscription. The approaches to the village, and the little hill which rises before it (same orientation) are filled with tombs cut in the rock, one of them containing fragments of ancient pottery. They showed me a kind of long box in dried earth, with rounded angles, found probably in one of these tombs, full of bones.

It measures very nearly thirty-six inches in length, and looks like a small bath. I propose to go and open one or two of these tombs.

According to a tradition of the Mawaleh, or inhabitants of Malha, they may be divided into two categories of different origin: the one coming from trans-Jordanic regions, the other from Egypt.

Their pronunciation is something quite peculiar. It is chiefly characterised by the sound of the long *a*, which is very full, and closely resembles the sound of *o*.

The water of the fountain, Ain Yalo, a little distance west-south-west of Malha, enjoys a great reputation. The Mawaleh, when they wish to praise it, say that they weighed its water in the Mijan, and found it lighter than gold; which does not prevent it from being heavy for drinking.

The immediate environs of Malha contain many localities which appear to be of importance: for example, Khirbet el Fowagesi, on a hill, whose terraces in stages can be seen from Ain Yalo. A little more to the east is a place called *Q 'la es souwan*, the *rocks of flint*, to which is attached a singular legend. It was formerly an inhabited place; but the people having drawn on themselves the wrath of God, the whole region was transformed into flint. The sin committed was that the women did not use the bread for the nourishment of their children. I do not see what lurks beneath this story, unless it be some relation with the use of flint by the Canaanites in primitive ages. I shall see when I visit the place if it shows any traces of the working of stone.

The Mawaleh have pointed out to me, not far from Malha, three Tumuli. great mounds, on the *Jebel et-tawagi*, west of the village, Rujm Afanil, Rujm Ataya, and Rujm et-Tazoûd. They are probably the three tumuli indicated by Prokesh and Tobler (Topog. 761), on the left hand of the road from Malha to Ain Karem. The *Darûd* of Tobler must be my Tarud. I see, too, that Mr. Drake (*Quarterly Statement*, Jan., 1874) speaks of these tumuli, which he names El Atyya, El Tarud, and El Barish.

The position of Malha, and the numerous tombs which surround it, Malkhaya. are enough to indicate that we must look for an ancient locality near it. Up to the present no identification proposed appears either happy or important. The best known is that of Schwarz, which has been generally repeated. Malha would be mentioned in the Talmud under the form Malkhaya, as the country of a certain Rabbi José. From a phonetic point of view this identification is very well; but it has no historical value at all, this being the only place where Malkhaya is mentioned at all. Some authors have even doubted the exactness of this otherwise insignificant connection. Thus Neubauer, in the "Geography of the Talmud," remarks that the Talmudic Malkhaya must be looked for in Upper Galilee, because this Rabbi José is named in the passage with another rabbi coming from Sikhnin, a place undoubtedly Galilean, and he recalls the fact of the existence of a town called Malha in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea.

Caphar  
Gamala.

Tobler, not without hesitation, in which he is right, compares Malha with Caphar Gamala, the place where the body of St. Stephen was found by a certain Lucian. (Top. 101.)

Caphar  
Melich.

Its connection with the Caphar Melich of the Cartulary of the Holy Sepulchre (pp. 90, 93), would be more acceptable phonetically; but we must not forget that Caphar Melich is mentioned with Anquina (?)

I shall propose, in my turn, with some confidence, a new identification of Malha, which, if it is admitted, will have the advantage of solving one of the lesser problems of Biblical topography.

Manocho.  
X

One knows the important group of eleven cities of Judah added in the Septuagint version to Joshua xix. 9. All the critics are agreed in considering this passage, which does not exist in the Hebrew text, not as an interpolation, but as the translation of an original verse omitted by a copyist. Several of these cities are easily identified: *e.g.*, Tekoa, Bethlehem, Faghour, Karem, Bettir. Others are less easy to identify on account of the variations of the different manuscripts. With these I have nothing to do for the moment. I shall only remark that all the MSS. name, after Bettir, with very slight differences, a city called Manocho—*Μανοχω*, *Μαβαχ*. Critics have connected this place with Manahat, whither were transported the men of Benjamin, originally from Geba (1 Chron. viii. 6); but it seems to result from Judges xx. 43 that this Manahat is identical with Menonha, situated in the territory of Benjamin. However that may be, 1 Chron. ii. 2 and 4 appear to indicate very clearly that this was a Manahat or Menouhat in Judah. It is to this Manahat or Menouhat that the Manocho of the Septuagint corresponds. Both are, in my opinion, the actual village of Malha. The change from *n* to *l* is a *constant fact* in Arabic, especially in vulgar Arabic, in proper names; so that when the fellahin say *Malha*, it is exactly as if they pronounced *Manha*. This little phonetic alteration would have been facilitated by the natural attraction tending to bring the Hebrew word to the Arab word *Malha*, *salted*.

Topographically, Malha perfectly agrees, for it is on the road to, and a little distance from, Bettir, which stands immediately beside Manocho in the Septuagint list. In any case it is in the country of Judah, to which this Greek passage applies generally.\*

Amwas.  
Legends and  
etymology

Another interview with the fellah Ibrahim Almud gave me new traditions on the ancient Nicopolis which are not without their value. It is always the famous pestilence of which I have already spoken in my

\* Schwarz (*Holy Land*, 79) supposes that the Manocho of the Septuagint corresponds with a Hebrew form, Manuka. The Greek *ch* might possibly, according to the custom of the Septuagint, be the representation of a *caph*, but it holds quite as often the place of a *khet*. Besides this supposed form Manuka once obtained, Schwarz is obliged to have recourse to another conjecture. He admits an interversion in the word, and connects it with the Mekonah of Nehemiah xi. 28, one of the cities re peopled after the captivity by the men of Judah, and finally with Mechamim, or Machamin, mentioned in the Onomasticon between Jerusalem and

previous reports which fills the principal part in these vague souvenirs of the past.

On the first appearance of the pestilence at Emmaus, the inhabitants, who were all Jews, mostly fled. Nearly all who remained died. The scourge passed, the fugitives came back to the town. But the following year the epidemic appeared again, and the people all perished without having the time to escape by flight. At this moment arrived Neby Ozeir (Esdras), who found all dead—men, women, and children. The prophet having asked of God why he had so rudely chastised the country, supplicated the Almighty to resuscitate the victims. It was done, and since that time the Jews have been named *oulad el mité* (*the children of the putting to death*).

It is to this epidemic that the city of Amwas owes its name, according to our fellahin. They say, in fact, of the pestilence, *amm-ou-asa* (*it was extended generally, and was an affliction*). (I have not been able to determine precisely the meaning of the second verb, which I omitted in my notes.) Of course I put no faith in the truth of this etymology, which is evidently artificial, like many of the same kind met with in the Bible as well as in the mouths of the people, and on which I have many times in these reports found occasion to insist.

It will be curious to give, side by side with this rustic etymology, a philologic explanation of the same kind given us by St. Jerome precisely *apropos* of Emmaus. The learned Fulton translates the word Emmaus as *populus abjectus, alias abjicientes*, which proves that he decomposed Emmaus into *Am, people*, and *Maus, refuse*. St. Jerome appears to allude to various Biblical passages where this word is applied by Christian exegesis to the Jewish people, and to have had notably present in his mind the verse of Lamentations iii., "Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people."

It is clear from this etymology, more ingenious than probable, but to which we ought to have paid a little attention, that in the time of St. Jerome the Semitic name of Nicopolis was pronounced 'Emmaus, 'Ammaus, with the *ain*, and that consequently the Arabic form is much nearer the original than the Talmudic *Amaous* with the *aleph*.

This interpretation of Saint Jerome is, besides, an additional proof that, for him, the Emmaus of the Gospels was Nicopolis, and consequently the Amwas of our time; it also shows that the word Emmaus was nothing at all to do with Hamath, which is written with a *hchet*,

Beit Jibrin, eight miles from the latter city. This series of suppositions is very improbable, especially if we reflect with Mr. Grove (*Bible Dict.* s. v.) that the Mekonah of Nehemiah, joined with Ziklag, was probably much farther to the south of Palestine. Schwarz adds at the end of his paragraph, *oder Malcha*, only, in his article on Malcha and Machaya, p. 89, he does not breathe a word of this identification, which presented itself to his mind for a moment, but without any plausible reasons.

and which some authors want to identify with it. Here are names of different places situated at Amwas. *Khall't el Adhra*, the well of *Khall't el Lammam*; *Ersoum*; *Khall't et taga*, where they show the place where knelt the camel of Saleh, the prophet sent to the Themon-dites. The fountain of Ain Nini dries up in summer. Formerly there was an aqueduct carrying water to Amwas from Bir et Tiné, on the road near Bir Eyub.

Inscriptions  
with em-  
blems.

I have just seen at a mason's in Jerusalem a fragment of a strange inscription, brought to light, it appears, in repairs made at the Meh-keme. The block on which it is engraved has the mediæval dressing, which gives us as our limit the period of the Crusades. There is only one line of characters rudely traced and difficult to make out :

U U S N - - 1 1

but what is interesting is that the line is surrounded by representations of tools and instruments: the first resembles a great cullender, the second a stove, the third is certainly a cleaver; then comes a kind of pestle; next a cutlass in scabbard. The whole resembles the apparatus of a cook. Perhaps we have the epitaph of some great *chef*. We know that the representation on the tombstones of certain artisans of the instruments of their trade was a common thing in the middle ages as well as in antiquity. Perhaps we may see in the first letters of the fragment *uus*, the end of the word *coquus*. You shall have a drawing of this enigmatic stone.

Haram  
arcades and  
gallery of  
the Kubbet  
es Sakhra.

I have at length succeeded, after many researches in the various libraries in Jerusalem to which I have access, in getting at the original text of John of Wirzburg, and in studying the principal passage of this author quoted in my last report on the little arcade round the Sukhra. Here is the passage:—

“*Supra se etiam, juxta tectum, locum deambulatorium circum quaque exhibitibus et habentibus canales plumbeos qui aquam pluviatilem evomunt.*”

The construction of the phrase is sufficiently obscure, and the manner in which Tobler and M. de Vogüé render it seems to me a paraphrase rather than a translation. If we keep to the text, taking the architecture itself as our commentary, it seems that *supra se* should mean, in the incorrect language of the author, “above the exterior wall” of which we have just been speaking, as well as of the interior wall, and not “above the roof,” since immediately afterwards we have *juxta tectum*, “near the roof.” It is the only explanation possible, if we admit the punctuation adopted by the editor of the text and followed by these two learned archæologists. But I think that this punctuation, which makes of the words *supra se* a phrase by themselves, is an error; and, in fact, by cutting up the text in this fashion, the words *exhibitibus et habentibus* belong to nothing at all. Replace the colon by a comma, and restore the passage as follows:—“*cum pulcherrimis laqueariis supra se etiam, juxta tectum,*” &c., and translate: “Between the two walls there is an intermediary roof, with a beautiful panelled

ceiling, over which (which has above it), running all round, is a gallery, and which has leaden pipes for getting rid of rain water." From this rigorous translation, it is clear that the gallery was above the ceiling, and therefore had a large relative width, not being limited to the breadth of the wall. Possibly the inclination of the roof stopped suddenly before reaching the external wall, surmounted by arcades, and let the water fall upon the floor of the gallery: here they would be caught by the leaden gutters and thrown out by gargoyles placed most likely at the same points as we now see them. Tobler translates *canales* by *rohren*, De Vogüé by *tuyaux*. It is better, I think, to use the French word *cheneaux* derived from it, and signifying, not a tubular conduit, but an open canal.

The excavation undertaken by the Memour against the interior of the east wall of the Haram, of which I have already spoken, has been sunk to more than 30 feet. The point chosen is nearly 160 metres (173 yards) south of the Golden Gate. We have now reached, and even passed below, the level of the soil outside. The excavation has led to no archæological or practical result; nor any traces of the dressed stones searched for. It has passed through made-up earth mixed with pottery, cubes of mosaic, fragments of marble, &c. We descended the shaft, which is not very cleverly made, and narrowly framed in. We were able to examine the wall as far as the shaft goes, and can state that the stones have no mediæval dressing. . . . I am afraid that the shaft will be shortly closed.

Excavation within the Haram.

At the bottom of the shaft the wall presents two successive sets back, the first 3 in. of projection and 15 in. of height; the lower 7½ in. of projection, with a height as yet undetermined, the shaft having stopped at . . . . At a point 6 ft. 6 in. above the first projection the wall shows a very sensible change in construction, seeming to indicate two successive visible epochs, visible also from the outside: the more ancient below, the more modern above, naturally.

Now a few remarks on my visits to the Haram. The blocks of the inner side of the exterior wall of the Kubbet es Sukhra, visible in the frame of the wooden stair leading to the roof, are pierced by numerous openings, in which have been inlaid small pieces of flint, having their visible faces cut and polished. I cannot explain the purpose of this singular arrangement, which has perhaps a superstitious origin. The dressing of the blocks is not mediæval.

Flints inlaid in the blocks.

The application of the rule of mediæval dressing has led us to establish several important facts in the *enceinte* of the Mesjid. (1) Great bases of engaged columns on the platform and near the Mosque of the Mogrebbin, certainly mediæval. (2) Various fragments of architecture of the same origin built up here and there. (3) Mediæval stones and gate in the wall north of the gallery, which joins the Aksa to the Mosque of the Mogrebbin. (4) *The whole south-west angle of the esplanade of the Sakhra is entirely mediæval.* (5) Several buttresses on the west side of the platform are made up of materials of the middle ages.

Crusading constructions in the Haram.

I observed on the pillars of the porch north of the Haram a large number of Latin masons' marks (pricked with the point of the tool); they are engraved on great blocks, *which have been stripped of their mediæval dressing*. I suppose them to be older blocks simply used again by the Crusaders, who put signs on them to facilitate placing them in proper positions.

Niche of ancient Statue.

On examining the large hollow stone which the Mussulmans consider the cradle of Jesus, I believe I have discovered that it is the niche for a statue of small dimensions.

South face and S.E. angle of Antonia.

The south face of the scarped rock north of the Haram requires to be studied attentively; at a certain point it makes an abrupt return at right angles and due north. I have not seen this angle marked in the map of the Ordnance Survey. Perhaps it is the east limit of Antonia. A little more to the west an ancient cistern is cut in the side of the rock; here and there, and at a uniform height, are to be seen in the rock quadrangular holes seemingly intended to receive beams.

Wall west and north.

The thin wall of rustic-work to the west and the north, indicated in the *Statement* of April, 1872, is again accessible and visible. We hope to make an exact sketch of it, the published plan giving a very insufficient idea of it, and not indicating the kinds of pilasters, recalling those of the *enceinte* of the Mosque of Hebron and the *débris* of the Russian ground behind the Holy Sepulchre.

We have just undertaken two excavations.

The rock-cut chambers between the Ecce Homo and the Austrian hospice.

The first, in the chambers cut in the rock between the Austrian hospice and the church of the Ecce Homo. I at first tried to push myself into the opening I, at the end of the chamber P, hoping to arrive at another chamber, or at a primitive entrance. I had to force my way in the midst of a mass of rolling stones, which shook at every movement. After two days of stubborn as well as dangerous work, we were obliged to give it up. We have, however, meanwhile, succeeded in seeing and touching to right and left two *vertical walls of rock*, at right angles, the angle being about one metre from the opening. These two walls may belong to a chamber like that lettered P; but they may also be the walls of a vestibule, whose sides were cut in the rock, and which was open to the sky. In favour of this hypothesis, the ground of the passage *i*, Plate II., above the surface of the chamber P, is on a level with that of the region X, still to explore, an arrangement which applies better to the entrance of a tomb than to a simple communication between two chambers. Besides, the enormous mass of stones, against which we have vainly endeavoured to struggle, implies the existence of a hollow much higher than a single chamber. Either this chamber has lately given way, or else it was always open to the sky.

Shaft and gallery in the Armenian ground south of the Austrian hospice.

The second excavation is in the Armenian ground (27 O. S.). Captain Warren has already made an excavation on this side in the Street of the Valley (March, 1869). The point that I have chosen is sixty metres more to the east, at the lowest point of the ground. One

shaft is already five metres deep. I propose to open a shaft to the S.S.E., in order to cut the probable line of the second wall.

## X.

JERUSALEM, *May 3, 1874.*

SEVEN days ago, as I was preparing to make an excursion to Jericho, an Arab of Jerusalem, who owns and cultivates a large piece of ground at Latrun, came to tell me of the discovery, or rather the apparition, of a large inscription close to that village. After the information which he gave me, I thought it best to adjourn the projected excursion and to repair without delay to the spot, in order to examine the text, which might be important, consisting, as he professed, of twelve lines, written all round, and inside a well, called the Bir el Helou. We arrived at the well, which is situated a few minutes south-east of Latrun, at the bottom of a broad valley, whose waters it drains; it is a veritable "well of living water," and not a cistern, circular, and of careful construction, covered with a vault, in which are seen two openings showing the ancient place of a *beyyara* or *noria*. The water drawn by this machine was poured out into a small *birket*, and from thence directed by an aqueduct, half destroyed, upon the ground for irrigation. The diameter of the well is 3.70 metres. I immediately proceeded with an *empressement*, easy to understand, to search for the famous inscription: and in fact I saw running all round the interior wall of the well a considerable number of very small characters, of which I counted in certain places as many as twelve or thirteen lines. The first line, the lowest, was a very little above the level of the water, which was low in the well. The characters, traced at some distance from the margin of the well, were so small and so close together, that I could only distinguish them by means of a glass. I say *distinguish*, because it was perfectly impossible for me to read a single one, or to determine the language and the character of this mysterious inscription, to the great disappointment of the Arab who accompanied me. I estimated the number of letters at ten thousand!

After the fruitless attempt I went back to the village of Latrun, where I had to pass the night, and took advantage of the opportunity to revisit Amwas. In both these villages I found the fellahin in a state of great excitement on the subject of the inscription round the well. They all gathered round me, eagerly inquiring if I had been able to make out the characters. I had humbly to acknowledge my inability. In turn I interrogated them as to how the inscription was first remarked, and got the following information. Twelve days before the women of Latrun went to the Bir el Helou to draw water, and came back in a great fright, crying out that the well was miraculously filled with writing. Nothing had been noticed the day before, though the well is much frequented and supplies the whole village. The fellahin imme-

The In-  
scription at  
Bir el  
Helou.

diately imagined that the inscription was a manifestation of the will of Sidna el Khalil (Abraham). The rumour ran about the neighbouring villages, and every day hundreds of them came on pilgrimage from the places round to contemplate the characters traced by the very hand of the patriarch.

This explanation of the enigmatic inscription which appeared in a single night was the more natural because there exists in the country an analogous legend. Forty years ago a great discussion arose on the boundaries of Deyr Eyüb and Latrun (the latter is *wakf* of Hebron and included in the lands of the Miri). No one knew which side to take, when the patriarch himself intervened, and placed in the night a mound on the point where he meant the boundary to pass. Next morning the newly-arrived hillock was seen, and everybody submitted, without further question, to the decision given by this supreme judge. They show the Rujm el Khalil on the left hand of the road leading from Deyr Eyüb to Latrun. This new intervention of Abraham in the affair of the inscription was the more marked because the Bir el Helou is also called the Bir el Khalil, the Well of Abraham, and because Abraham rested here, according to the local tradition, between his departure from Orfa and his arrival at Hebron. The fellahin are so convinced of the miracle that they are coming every instant to see if the writing does not increase, and if, by chance, the patriarch has added a postscript to his long missive.

As for the explanation of the fact, they offer a very singular one. Abraham manifested his will by writing to show that he would no longer tolerate Christians in the country. All were agreed in deriving this conclusion from the miracle. At Abu Gosh, which I passed both going and returning, the people were of the same opinion, and there was only one voice in the environs. Nevertheless, they did not fail to question me very carefully whether I had been able to translate the inscription, and when I was obliged to say no, they gravely shook their heads, and appeared to draw from my inability a new argument in favour of its supernatural origin.

I passed a bad night at Latrun, partly on account of a hard bed, and partly by reason of this strange affair, which perplexed me greatly. The next day I rose before daybreak to go back to Jerusalem, but I wanted first of all to see once more this phenomenon of inscriptions, and to get it off my mind. I put in requisition the furniture of my host, and went to the well with a little ladder, a table, and a rope. A great number of the people of Latrun accompanied me, some of them assisting me with a good grace. I placed the ladder horizontally in the water, holding it in its place by the rope, and placed the table on it like a plank; then I lowered myself down to this position of unstable equilibrium, half raft half scaffold. I was now able to touch the characters with my finger, and consequently to study them at leisure. They appeared to me traced with the *galam*, with ink of a reddish black on an old coating (of plaster), which covered the wall of

the well. Where the coating had fallen off, the lines continued. The two last lines appeared to have been smeared by a rise in the water at the moment when the ink was not yet dry. The letters remained some time undecipherable by me; they appeared to consist of signs entirely arbitrary, vaguely recalling the writing of certain talismans; the execution made me think of Arabic inscriptions written at the present day on the wall with ink and the *galam*.

Looking more attentively, I discovered a fact which shows peremptorily that the text has been written only a few days. The water, which two or three weeks ago was at a higher level, having dropped, several bits of straw floating on the surface had stuck to the wall. Now I observed that the strokes of the *galam* passed *over* several of these bits; striking one away, I observed the interruption of the stroke.

I had seen enough. I climbed out and told the fellahîn in plain terms, thinking it best to make a breach in their fanaticism, that the inscription had been made a few days before by some ill-advised joker. But they would not give up. If the inscription appeared to be recently executed it was one proof more that it came from the hand of Abraham; the characters must be *Yahoudi*, *'Ebrany*, or *Syriani*; that was the reason why I did not understand them. At this moment there appeared at the bottom of the valley a caravan of camels charged with grain coming from Gaza, escorted by two Jews, whom I called in to convince these obstinate peasants. The Jews declared that the inscription was not Jewish. Trouble lost!

Decidedly the *métier* of archæologist becomes more arduous in Palestine. After the pseudo-Moabite pottery, we have a quasi-patriarchal phantom; after the fraud comes the miracle. If fanaticism joins in, one will have to give up. The inscription of Bir el Helou is, then, of recent date. But how to explain the object with which it was drawn? It must have taken very considerable time and pains to write these thousands of signs, even though they are arbitrary, close to the edge of the water, in lines perfectly horizontal. Evidently the work was done during the night, since the evening before nothing was seen, and the next morning the women ran to announce the miracle.

Two explanations suggest themselves; I propose them under reserve. Some Mussulman searcher after treasure may have inscribed these magic signs, hoping to make the object of his search spring from the well. Or perhaps the intention of the writer is revealed by the effect it has produced—the *awakening of fanaticism tending to the expulsion of the Christians*. The thing that makes this last hypothesis probable is that in fact for two or three years past many Ottoman and European Christians have made great acquisitions of territory about this place with the view to agricultural operations. This intrusion is jealously regarded by the fellahîn, with whom the new proprietors have generally a bone to pick. Some mischievous villager may possibly have had recourse to this ruse to provoke against these Christians a religious reaction, shaking the sole cord which remains among the people of

fanaticism. Without meaning that one may see here the elements of a Mussulman *Jacquerie*, I must own that the emotion produced in the country by this miraculous incident has been very lively.

A few remarks made on the road :—

(1.) At Colonia, south of the road, in front of the ruined building, in a field, two great *voussôirs* with the mediæval dressing.

(2.) The hill close to Abu Gosh and south of it is called *Baten El Kheymé*. At a few minutes north-west of the village is a well whose water is endowed with healing properties. It is called *Bîr Au Kouch*.

(3.) Latrun was surrounded by a triple wall, according to the fellahin. I have examined the ruins, which appear to me important and worthy of being noted.

(4.) At Emmaus I visited several houses and saw pieces of sculpture coming probably from the church. The exact site of the *Bir et Ta'oun*, or well of Pest, is unknown. The Wely, placed on a height east of the village, is called Sheikh Moal iben Jebel.

(5.) The Fenich were three brothers, all kings; their tombs are north of, and not far from, Suba; you get to them by a well. There is, the peasants tell me, a subterranean communication between Suba and Latrun.

Excursion  
to Jericho.

The day after my return from Latrun we left for Jericho, where I went to ascertain certain points before heats set in. M. Pierre Decosse, overseer of the works at the Church of Saint Anne, was good enough to look after the excavation in the caverns of the Via Dolorosa and in the Armenian ground. We went to Jericho by the shortest and best known road; our journey there offered nothing worthy of note. We installed ourselves on a little hill at the entrance to Riha, near the cemetery, and not far from Burj.

Gilgal.

Next day we went to the presumed site of Gilgal, which we had not been able to visit on our first journey to Jericho, the existence and the name of which I had spoken of to Lieut. Conder. This place, situated not far from Tell el-Ithlé (or Hithlé), has been pointed out to several travellers (Schokke and Frère Liewin) under the name of Jiljulieh. The people of Riha told us that this was a name peculiar to the Franks.\* However that may be, we tried a few little excavations in the mounds of El Ithlé and Jiljulieh; these were not deep, and led to no great results. In the first, a large quantity of pottery fragments, cubes of mosaic, and lots of glass; in the second, sand. It is certain that there was once an edifice here of considerable importance, to judge by the mosaics. But that proves nothing for or against the identification of Gilgal, which appears to me still a doubtful point.

Fragment  
of sculpture  
at the  
Tawahin es  
Soukker.

Next day we examined the Tawahin es Soukker again, and especially an aqueduct where I had remarked at our first visit materials of

\* An example which proves with what care one must put questions to the fellahin and draw conclusions from their answers. Some time ago the Archimandrite of the Russian Mission having asked, on my indication, to see Jiljulieh, was taken to Tell el Mufjir, which they showed him by that name.

ancient origin. We turned over all the blocks scattered about the environs, and pulled down certain bits of the broken aqueduct, which brought to light a few sculptured fragments, evidently belonging to monuments of importance. They were drawn by Lecomte.

In the afternoon we went to Tell el M'gheyfer, also called sometimes Tell el Koursi (Tell of the Throne or the Chair), and considered by some authors as the real Gilgal. The Russians are at present digging there for building materials, they have already a considerable quantity of stones laid down with blocks brought from elsewhere in a place near Burj. Many of these blocks are covered with fragments of fresco painting in Greek style. I greatly desired to have a sketch of Kurn Surtabeh from this point, and while Lecomte was taking it our two workmen dug into the site, but without success.

The next day broke up camp in order to return to Jerusalem by way of Neby Mûsa. This sanctuary, so deeply venerated by Mussulmans, is in a state of complete dilapidation. We could not get into the central chambers, which were locked. We could only examine the exterior dependencies, and look through the window at the cenotaph of Moses, covered over by a silken sheet with embroidered inscriptions. Everything appears to be of Arab construction.\* The only things that deserve mention are: in the balustrade of the minaret a stone with oblique mediæval dressing; in the interior of one of the windows of the central building a fragment of a granite column; in the southern face of the peristyle a base sculpture in red limestone polished, consisting of a series of flutings, in which stands out in very high relief a kind of rosette of foliage elegantly entwined.

All was nearly deserted; a few Bedawin were halting there like ourselves to breakfast; there is fresh water, of a slightly bituminous taste, in a well of no great depth.

Some minutes farther on stands a little wely, called the Kubbet er ra'i, where reposes, according to local tradition, the Shepherd of Moses, called Sheikh Hassan.

The memory of Moses is certainly alive among the inhabitants of this region. At every moment I heard the Arabs swearing, "By the life of the son of Amran." I questioned some of them to find out if possible the *point de départ* of the legend which places the tomb of Moses on this side of the Jordan, and consequently in such flagrant contradiction with the Biblical tradition. They told us, in reply, that when the angels announced to Moses that his last moment was come, he was

\* See Mejr ed Dîn for several details on the history of this Mussulman sanctuary. He commences by mentioning the doubts on the authenticity of the tomb, adding that general opinion places it here. He assigns the construction of the Kubbet to Melek ez Zaher Bibars, who built it after his return from pilgrimage to Mecca and his visit to Jerusalem in 668 (A.H.). These additions were afterwards made. The minaret was built in 880. He mentions the annual pilgrimage hither, and speaks of apparitions and prodigies at the tomb, proving that it was that of him "who spoke with God."—*Kelim Allah*.

on the east of the Jordan, and that he fled, to escape the fatal moment, to the place now called the Neby Mûsa. There it was that he found the angels occupied in hollowing a tomb into which he descended, deceived by the subterfuge that we know. Arrived at this desert place, he said to God, "There is nothing here to drink, nor any wood to make a fire." And God said to him: "Thy water shall come from the well, and thy fire from the stones." And that is the origin of the wells dug near the sanctuary, and of the combustible stones of schist which abound at this place.

The rod of  
Moses.

There is met with here and near Jerusalem an insect like a centipede, called the rod of Moses. This inoffensive creature resembles a long blackish worm, and is provided with a large number of feet, by means of which it advances, preserving its straightness of form; in fact, you would think it a little stick endowed with the power of motion. If you touch it, it rolls together into a ball. This mode of locomotion and this aspect have made the little animal popular among the Arabs, who have connected it by its name with the miracle performed at the burning bush.

I got at Jericho new details on the life of Imam Aly, who is only, as I have said before, a travesty of Joshua. The boundary of the Ghor Seisaban and the Ghor of Beisan was traced by the sword of the Imam Aly, who cut through with a single stroke of his sword an enemy, the bridge or aqueduct on which he stood, and the ground beneath him. It was impossible for me to find out exactly where is the place indicated in this legend; it is called Jisr. Aly, again, had a great war to wage against the Emir Abu 'Obeide, before the time of Mohammed. Abu Obeide is a historic personage, who came with Omar. His tomb exists still east of the Jordan.

Bedouin  
pronuncia-  
tion.

The Arab who gave me this information so curiously jumbled up, pronounced the name 'Obweide; the intercalation of the *w* with the *b* and the *i* is familiar to the Bedouins; thus they say *bweino* instead of *beino*. Our two workmen, two worthy peasants from Beit Ikse, a little village situated west of Jerusalem, who worked some time at the repairing of the *locanda* at Jericho, gave me the history of Aly and the sun with a singular variation, which I will transcribe faithfully, but I cannot state whether it is their own invention, or if obtained by them from the inhabitants of Jericho.

Aly and the  
Sun.

Imam Aly received guests at a time when there was a great famine over all the country. Having nothing for them to eat, he went to a Jew and begged of him a single imaum of wheat, offering him in exchange a measure of gold. The Jew refused, saying that he would only give him the wheat on condition of getting it back again before sunset of the same day; failing which, Aly was to give him his son. The sun was about to set, and Aly searched vainly for wheat to restore the borrowed measure, when God said to the sun, "Return, O thou blessed!" He thus gave him the time necessary to get the wheat for the Jew, and he was not obliged to give him his child.

The men of Beit Ikṣa told me that their village bears also the name of Umm-el-ela: another of those double names that I have so often pointed out. The present inhabitants belong to the Beni Zeid, and come from the north; they obtained permission of Umm-el-ela, and gave it the new name of Beit Ikṣa. The ethnical name to which Ikṣa belongs is Keswani, in the plural Kesawne—*Beit Ikṣan* or *Ikṣwan*. We must, therefore, in Palestine topography, keep account of the migration of names transported with the population from one place to another.

Ancient name of Beit Ikṣa.

The route between Neby Mūsa and Jerusalem offers nothing remarkable in archæology. The only thing we have to notice is a fine fragment of sculpture fitted into the wall of a house in Bethany; at the angle of the fragment is the head of an ox; one of the facings shows the mediæval dressing. This will be drawn.

Sculptured fragment at Bethany.

Some minutes before arriving at El 'Azariyeh (Bethany), on the east of the village is a rocky plateau, covered with sepulchral and other excavations, walls, wine-presses, &c.; one would say that there has once been an inhabited place. It was impossible for me to find out if the place had a name, and whether it was simply called a Khirbet: only at the southern extremity of the plateau local tradition shows a piece of rock half buried in the earth, and called the ass of Lazarus, saying that the animal was petrified after having been ridden by Jesus. Are we to place on this side the problematic Bethpage?

The ass of Lazarus.

My principal and only aim in going to Jericho, was to study on the spot a point whose full importance I realised on my first visit, I mean Kurn Sartabeh, and a Biblical tradition which seems to me narrowly connected with that well-known mountain.

Kurn Sartabeh.

If, in the vast plain of Jericho, you raise your eyes northwards you will see the horizon partly closed in the distance by a long chain of blue hills, above which rises a conical peak known as Kurn Sartabeh. This peak, which is seen from a long way off, and which appears to command all the low ground at its feet, attracts the eye by its bold front, and retains it by its strongly marked form. Robinson is right when he says that this commanding summit appears from Jericho like a bastion of the western chain.

The first part of the name (written by Robinson *Kurn*, and by me *Q'rein*, diminutive of *Kurn*, a *horn*) is frequently applied by the Arabs to remarkable peaks. It is this sense which has made Lynch commit the singular error of assigning to the name the meaning, "horn of the rhinoceros." The meaning of Sartabeh is completely unknown, and we must probably look for some ancient name to correspond with it.

It is, first of all, essential to establish its orthography. I have carefully noted the pronunciation of the Arabs of Jericho and its neighbourhood, and have ascertained that the first letter is a soft S (*sin*), and not the hard S (*sad*), as the transliteration of Robinson shows.

The Sartabeh of the Talmud.

Under this form it is easy to recognise the name of the mountains mentioned in the Talmud, and written קרשבה and קרשבא. Here is the passage, quoted often since the time of Reland, which I think I ought to give in full for the better understanding of what follows:—

“Signals of fire, serving to announce the New Moon, were made from the Mount of Olives to Sartabeh, from Sartabeh to Gerufna, from Gerufna to Khoran, from Khoran to Beth Baltin.”

M. Neubauer (*Géographie du Talmud*, p. 42) says: “They announced the New Moon to the country districts by means of fires lighted on the mountains. Later on, the Samaritans, in a spirit of hatred, lighted other fires, which caused errors. Therefore the fires were suppressed and couriers substituted.”

I have no occasion here to occupy myself with the historic side of the question, and to examine if it was really possible to make a direct signal from the Mount of Olives visible at Kurn Sartabeh. I confine myself to the simple identification of one hill with the Talmudic Sartabeh. Observe, further, that the Hebraic orthography of the word is different to that of Robinson; that is, the word no more contains a *tsade* than it does a *sad*.

This fact will permit us to pass immediately to a Biblical relation advanced for Sartabeh. It is quite natural to suppose that the Bible did not pass over in silence the name of a mountain so important.

Zarthan.

Starting with this idea, some writers think themselves authorised to recognise in Sartabeh the new Zarthan (Zaretan of Joshua iii. 16), and placed by the Bible in the Jordanic region. Nothing is less admissible than this identification, which rests wholly on an etymology entirely recent. The external resemblances which seem to exist between the two words completely vanish when we compare them letter by letter. The *num* final might correspond with the *b*, but both the *s* and the *t* are radically different in the two words.

Must we then abandon altogether the hope of finding this peak mentioned in the Bible? I think not, and I believe, on the contrary, I can adduce a passage of the highest interest, though under a form mythological rather than geographical.

Apparition to Joshua.

In Joshua v. 13—15, is related a strange episode which seems to attach itself to the consecration of Gilgal as a sacred place. Here is the literal translation—“And Joshua was at Jericho, and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man before him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went towards him and said unto him, ‘Art thou for us or for our adversaries?’ and he said, ‘Nay, but as captain of the host (SARSABA) of the Lord, and now I am coming towards thee.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship, and saith unto him, ‘What saith my Lord unto his servant?’ And the captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, ‘Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”

The Hebrew word Sarsaba signifies *chief of the army*, and is rendered

in the Septuagint by ἀρχιστράτηγος. The different versions of the Bible render it *captain of the army of Jehovah*. We know that Jehovah himself is sometimes called *Jehovah Sabaoth*, when mentioned as the head of the army of angels or stars, and that this expression appears in the Gnostic formulary, *Sabaoth*.

I only wish for the moment to call attention to the striking resemblance which exists between Sar Saba and Sar Taba, when the Hebrew *tsade* is replaced in the Talmudic and Arabic form by a *tet* and a *ta*. This substitution of the *t* for an *s* is one of the most frequent remarked in the passage of the Hebrew to the Aramaic; thus Tyre is now Sor (צר).

This etymological coincidence being so complete cannot be fortuitous. It leads us to ask whether it does not conceal a close relation between the mountain and the apparition.

Let us remember how often mountains are found in relation with visions analogous to that of Joshua. Mountains, it is well known, occupy a considerable place in Semitic religions, and even the Hebrews attached sanctity to them. We understand how they served as a natural theatre for the manifestations of the Deity. I could cite many examples. Let us take only one or two.

First, the appearance of Jehovah to Moses in the burning bush on Mount Horeb. Moses, perceiving the supernatural flame, advanced towards it, as Joshua towards the man. Just as Sarsaba told Joshua, who came towards him, to take off his shoes because the place was holy, in exactly the same terms Moses is ordered to do the same thing.

For the suddenness of the vision we may compare Zech. i. 8; ii. 5. It is the same prophet who says (viii. 3), "The mountain of Jehovah Sabaoth is a sacred mountain," and also shows us (xiv. 3, 4) the Lord going forth to fight with "his feet upon the Mount of Olives."

One of the apparitions which has the most literal resemblance with that of the Sarsaba to Joshua is the appearance of the destroying angel to David. This episode is told more simply in the Book of Samuel (2 Sam. xxiv. 15), but with greater detail in 1 Chron. xxi. 14—17. The latter strongly recalls the passage in the Book of Joshua, and especially if we compare the Hebrew text.

Jehovah having sent his angel to smite Jerusalem, had pity on the unhappy town, and said to the *Destroying Angel* (*Melek ha-Machhât*), "It is enough; stay now thy hand." David *lifted up his eyes and saw the angel stand between the heaven and the earth, having a drawn sword in his hand. He threw himself upon the ground.* The angel, who was at this moment above the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, caused Gad to tell David to *go up and set up an altar on the threshing floor.*

It results from this passage that the angel was above Mount Moriah. It may not be useless to remark that the angel called *Machhâh* seems onomastically connected with the Mount of Olives, often designated by

the much-disputed name of *Har ha-Machhit*.\* We know that the two mountains of Moriah and Olivet were intimately connected from a religious point of view, and in ceremonies, and that on the latter (2 Sam. xv. 34) was a place where David adored Elohim.

These analogies alone would be enough to make us seek in this episode of Joshua's life the existence of a mountain. And is this mountain anything except that which now is called by the significant name of Sartabeh, or Sar-Saba?

The story of Joshua analysed, means two things: (1) the height of the point where the apparition stood, for he lifted up his eyes; (2) a considerable distance between the vision and Joshua, for Joshua went towards him; and the angel said, *I come towards thee*. Further, the use of the word *אמר*, *sars*, means that the supernatural being was upright on a base.

The dominant position and the characteristic aspect of Sartabeh, the master of the plain, makes it an admirable place for the appearance of the Captain of the Lord's host.

Strategic  
importance.  
Sartabeh.

It is not superfluous to remark that, besides its probable character of sanctity, the peak had great strategic importance. Schulz has already proposed to place on it the Alexandrion of Alexander Jannæus, and the considerable ruins which Zschokke found on the summit have induced him also to share this opinion. The fact of its military strength would help to explain Joshua's question, "Art thou for us, or for the enemy?"

The appearance of the warrior-angel of Jehovah hovering over this strong natural fortress with which he identified himself, perhaps, is quite topical. Who knows even that the naked sword in his hand, as that of the destroying angel (of the Mount of Olives and Moriah), is not in some way connected with the flame which, according to the Talmud, was lit on the determined moment on the summits of the sacred mountain?

What are we to understand exactly by Sar Saba? The question is extremely difficult, and belongs to the more obscure side of the Hebrew religion. I cannot touch on it here. Let us only remark that God himself is called (Dan. viii. 11) *Sar Ha Saba*, which agrees perfectly with Jehovah Sabaoth. There is no doubt as to the general meaning: it is *commander-in-chief*. Thus Omri was Sar Saba over all Israel. It is the exact representative of the present Mussulman Serasker, † common to Turks, Persians, and Arabs.

\* Most commentators derive *Machhit*, the name of the Mount of Olives, from *Machah*, and translate it *oil*, while they make *Maclhit* distinctive from *Chahat*. I do not know the true etymology for each of these words, but what is without any doubt is they singularly resemble each other, and that this resemblance, added to the coincidence of the events, cannot be accidental.

† As for the etymology of *Serasker* it is, I believe, wrong to make a hybrid composition of the Persian *ser*, *head* and the Arabic *'asker*, *soldier*. *Serasker* is historically an Arabic term; it is thus, linguistically, a Semitic word; *ser* corre-

We see in Daniel that many nations have their *sar* or guardian angel; for example, Greece and Persia. The *sar* of Israel is Michael, who in other places in Daniel is qualified as the chief of the power, Sar hammalkot, and the chief of the grand chief, Sar hag-gadol; "Sar Michael is your chief."

Michael generally personifies the divine power, particularly in his manifestation of violence, or when he combats with Satan to help man. One remembers (Jude) Michael and the devil disputing over the body of Moses.

The later traditions do not hesitate to recognise Michael in the angel which appeared to Joshua.

Phocas speaks of a *Bounos* (tell) which was situated in front of the Mount of Temptation, on which stood a temple indicating the place where Joshua saw the Archangel Michael. Church of St. Michael on the site the Vision.

An anonymous description (Allat. 13) says, that below the monastery of St. Euthymus there was a monastery of the Virgin, whence Joshua saw the angel. Daniel also speaks of a church at Gilgal, where they had added a convent dedicated to St. Michael, because it was on the spot where Joshua had his vision.

It results from the testimony that tradition admitted the vision of Joshua to have taken place during his sojourn at Gilgal. I have already remarked that this conclusion appeared to be indicated by the tenor of the episode and by the position that it occupies in the chapter, although it begins with the words "at Jericho." We need not take the expression too strictly, and may very well understand by it the environs of Jericho.

The disposition of the mountains which border the plain of Jericho is such that the Sartabeh is invisible west of Riha, since it is completely masqued by the chain of the first plain, and especially by the height of Ichché Ghorab, which terminates it at the east. But starting from Riha to the east it appears at all points of the plane. The drawing that M. Lecomte has made is better from Tell M'gheyfer, one of the sites proposed for Gilgal. We have also a sketch of Tell el-Ithlé, taken from Jiljulieh.

I must note an observation of some interest. Coming from the east, as one approaches Jericho, Sartabeh retreats little by little to the eye, between Ichché Ghorab, which ends by covering it up completely. The profiles of these two mountains and the chain on which they stand offer the strongest analogies, taking account of perspective and proportion.

It has been entirely impossible for me to collect the smallest legend on this peak; nor any indication except that of the iron ring and the great cavern of which Zschokke was told. I thought at first that it sponds with *sar*, Hebrew, *chief*, and 'asker is connected with the Hebrew root *achkar*, to hire troops; the ain, additional, in the last word is purely prosthetic; we have already in Hebrew *achkar* with a prosthetic aleph, and the transformation of the aleph into the ain is frequent; thus Achkelon becomes 'Askalon.

could find some connection between the venerated *magam* of the Imam Aly-Joshua and the sacred *magam*, where Joshua stood while he spoke to the angel; but the Mussulman sanctuary is too far to the west to permit Sartabeh to be seen.

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## THE SURVEY OF PALESTINE.

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LIEUT. CLAUDE R. CONDER'S REPORTS.

### XXI.

28th April, 1874.

SINCE last I wrote from W. Far'ah the Survey, though still impeded slightly by wet weather, has been steadily advanced, and we are able by two days' work in subsidiary camps to fill in the whole piece required to complete the Jenin sheet, bringing the total to about 2,800 square miles, and giving the whole of the Jordan valley from the Dead Sea to within a mile or so of the Sea of Galilee. Our intermediate camp between Wady Far'ah and Beisan was placed at W. Maleh, and was by far the most desolate site which we have as yet been forced to select. A few fellahin and Arabs were settled not far off, and supplied us with guides and meat. The water in the neighbourhood is all more or less salt, whence the name given to the principal stream. We were therefore glad to remove to the plentiful springs and open rolling country of the neighbourhood of Beisan.

The following are the chief points of interest which we have noticed during the last fortnight:—

Ye:zeh.

Yezeh is a ruined site of very considerable extent, lying at the foot of the fine isolated hill called Ras Kader. The ruins seem of a late Græco-Jewish type, and the whole of the site is covered with a confused *débris* of moderately-sized rough-hewn stones, beneath which foundations are visible in parts. One or two stones have a broad flat draft, and seem rather to have been intended for tablets. Towards the north of the town are pillars and a fine lintel, probably remains of a temple. The ornamentation of the lintel with rosettes and the conventional vine is of the ordinary debased classic style. There are a considerable number of rock-cut tombs, internally very rough, and with loculi of both kinds; externally the circular arch above the door is very well cut, and in one case structural. A Greek inscription, illegible all but a few letters, with a rough ornamentation, is to be found on the front of one of these sepulchres. There are one or two moderate cisterns cut in rock. An ancient road leads by the spot at the foot of the hill.