

THE ASNERIE.

IN the mediæval account of the Holy City, dating about 1187 A.D., known as "La Citez de Jherusalem," a building called the Asnerie, or "donkey," is described as outside the gate of St. Stephen, which is stated to be the northern gate (*Bâb 'Amûd el Ghûrâb*). The Church and Monastery of St. Stephen stood towards the right on entering, and the Asnerie, in front of it, to the left, or east of the northern road. The monastery was destroyed by the Christians before Saladin's siege, because it was near the walls and might be used in the attack, but the Asnerie was not destroyed and was afterwards in use.

The remains of this building were excavated by the owner of the ground in 1875, as mentioned in my report (*Quarterly Statement*, October, 1875, p. 190), but no full description has as yet been published of the discoveries. The following notes are taken from those made on the spot during our stay in Jerusalem in May, 1875.

Outside the Damascus Gate (*Bâb 'Amûd el Ghûrâb*) is the hill called *el Heidhemâyeh*, "the cutting," in which is the so-called Grotto of Jeremiah. A plot of ground at a lower level extends between this hill and the road, with a house in its south-east corner, as shown on the Ordnance Survey. On the north and west it is surrounded with a modern wall, and the garden is entered from the road in the north-west corner. The plot thus enclosed is about 150 feet square, with a scarp of rock on the north and east. It seems probable that the great inn called the Asnerie, originally belonging to the Hospitallers, occupied the whole of this site.

The scarp on the north was excavated in 1873 (see *Quarterly Statement*, October, 1873, p. 153) and traces of arches observed along it. A chamber is cut in the scarp, which was apparently a Christian double tomb, and this was found to be full of bones. The eastern half of the chamber measures 11 feet 7 inches by 7 feet 10 inches, and has three *loculi* 2 feet wide, one on either side, one at the east end. On the east wall are two crosses, rudely painted in red, with the Greek letters Λ and Ω either side of the cross. The other half of the chamber on the west measures 6 feet 2 inches east and west, 10 feet 8 inches north and south, and was full of bones. This tomb is entered by a double door on the south—the eastern 2 feet wide, the western about 4 feet.

Near the cistern marked on the Ordnance Survey, which appears to be very extensive and cut in rock, remains of piers of masonry were found, the stones about 2 to 3 feet long. On one of the stones a masons' mark, representing the letter R, occurs, showing the masonry to belong to the Crusading period. The stone has the diagonal dressing found on the best specimens of such date. A capital in marble, the base of a small attached column, and a pillar shaft 1 foot 6 inches thick, were also discovered.

About forty paces south of the garden gate the excavations laid bare the remains of a building—a wall of masonry similar to that above described running in two directions from its south-west corner, which

was laid bare. Northwards the wall extended 33 feet 6 inches, where it ends apparently at a gateway. A cross wall runs east 6 feet 6 inches south of the north end. Eastward the excavations were pushed for about 36 feet—both walls are 6 feet 6 inches thick.

Inside the southern wall are a row of what would appear to be stone mangers for the beasts here stabled. Each manger is 1 foot 9 inches broad, and they are separated by partitions 4 inches broad—about fifteen were uncovered. The back of the mangers slopes, so that at the top they are 2 feet 6 inches, measuring north and south, and at the bottom 1 foot 10 inches, the depth being 8 inches. Their discovery is of great interest as confirming the opinion which I ventured to express previously as to the identification of the building.

It is probable that the Church of Saint Stephen, built in the fifth century by the Empress Eudoxia, may still remain to be discovered beneath the rubbish on the west side of the road, where tombs were discovered in 1876, as reported by Dr. Chaplin (*Quarterly Statement*, January, 1876, p. 9).

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THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE SURVEY.

THE translation of 6,000 Arabic names on the Survey sheets has just been completed, and I propose to sum up some of the principal points of interest noticeable in this mass of nomenclature.

That the task of translation requires special acquaintance with the peculiarities of the peasant dialect may be easily shown. In the *Quarterly Statement*, July, 1872 (pp. 123, 150), Dr. Sandrezcki's provisional translation of the names collected by Captain Warren, and written down by the dragoman, is given. The true local meaning of the word is in a great many cases apparently unknown. A few instances will be sufficient to show how materially the translation may be improved.

Ku, rendered "retreat," or "window," is used by the Bedawin in its original Hebrew signification of a "hollow place." *Tabakah*, rendered "stage," or "story," or "floor," occurs constantly in the Jordan valley, meaning a "terrace" with precipitous edges. *Miseh* untranslated means the "mace tree" (*Cordia myxa*). *Matal es Sireh* is best rendered "the ridge of the sheepfold," not "extension of the march." *Matkh* means a "height," not a "shepherd's staff," and *Rikbeh* is constantly used for a "hill-top" (properly *Râkib*), not a "knee." *Jûrat el Beid* means "the white hollow," but is transformed by the dragoman into "ditch of eggs." *Hawârah* is the term used for a kind of soft white chalk, which fits better than the translation "a new-born camel." *'Ain el 'Abharah* means "spring of the mock orange" (*Styrax officinalis*), a plant which gives its name to a large wooded district near Carmel. This cannot but be considered an improvement