

Dominus præmisit discipulos ad civitatem est in monte Oliveti, sed fere nusquam apparet."

Bernard (A.D. 865) says:—"In descensu etiam de monte Oliveti ad occidentalem plagam ostenditur marmor, de quo descendit dominus super pullum asinæ."

The "western" slope of Olivet will not fit in with our *stèle*, but the fact remains that in the ninth century such a stone was shown.

M. Ganneau goes on to show that the traditional site of Bethphage was maintained up to the 17th century. He concludes his paper (*Revue Archæologique*, Dec., 1877) as follows:—"We know, therefore, beyond any doubt, the point where the Crusaders localised the episode to which the name of Bethphage is attached. The ruins noticed by M. Guillemot not far from the painted stone belong to the Bethphage so called by the Crusaders. Is this mediæval Bethphage identical with that of the Gospel? This is a question quite distinct from the first. We know how different are opinions on the site of Bethphage. According to some who rely on the Greek text of Luke xix. 29, it is placed to the east or the south-east of Bethany; others consider it as identical with the modern village of Silwan; others, again, relying on the authority of the Talmud, make Bethphage a suburb of Jerusalem. For my own part, I confess that I ask myself whether Bethphage is not simply the village of the Mount of Olives called *Kefr et-Tûr*. I believe this village ancient on account of its name of *Kefr*, on account of its situation, and on account of the ancient remains that one sees there. *Kefr et-Tûr* means the *Village of the Mount of Olives*; it may formerly have had a designation more personal, which is lost. Now the Gospel tells us of an ancient locality whose name has disappeared; it is Bethphage, the *Village of the Mount of Olives*.

"This hypothesis will enable us to explain and understand certain Talmudic passages, which are all clear if one admits that Bethphage marked on the East the boundary of the Sabbath zone which on every side surrounded the city. The Mount of Olives (by which we may now understand a particular point of this mount) was exactly a Sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem. And what point could this be except the village of the mountain which occupied its principal summit and now bears its name?"

II.

LIEUTENANT KITCHENER'S REPORT.

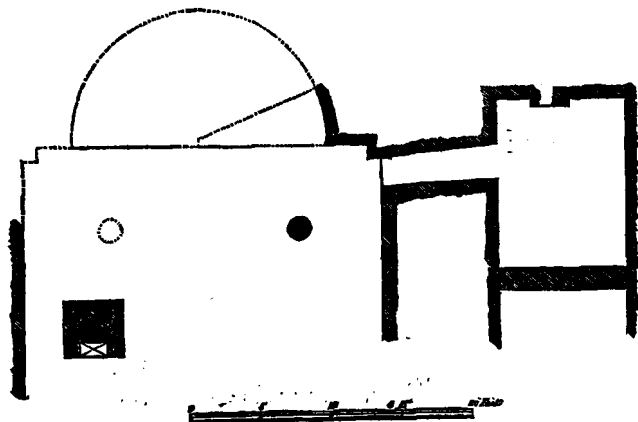
The road from the Mount of Olives to Bethany crosses a narrow ridge of land which joins the Mount of Olives to the hill above Bethany. On this narrow strip ancient tradition placed the site Bethphage, mentioned (Matt. xxi. 1; Mark xi. 1; and Luke xix. 29) as the place where our Lord mounted the ass for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The remains of an ancient chapel have been uncovered, dating probably from the twelfth or thirteenth century.

In the chapel there is an almost square block of masonry or rock covered with paintings; it measures 4ft. 3in. by 3ft. 6in. by 3ft. 10in.

high, and its position in the chapel is curious—being on the north side, probably between two columns of the nave, as seen on the accompanying plan.

This square block is supposed to be either an altar, a shrine, or a portion of the rock cut out and ornamented, being the exact place where our Lord mounted the ass.

Plan of recent discovery
near
Mount of Olives



R. M. H. Schermer
11/9/77 *S. M. H. E.*

The paintings, of which I send you pen-and-ink sketches, are well done, though now much disfigured. On the south side is the Raising of Lazarus; on the north are the Disciples fetching the Ass; on the east there are a number of persons standing in a row, but it is too much disfigured to be recognisable; on the west there is a niche covered by an arch, which was probably supported by two small columns; below the niche is a portion of an inscription still remaining; several lines have been destroyed.

On the top there was also some design and the traces of an inscription. The walls of the small chamber to the south were also painted with a design of squares containing circles, and the walls of the church were painted in a common pattern.

M. Le Capitaine Guillemot was the first to visit these remains, and he has made elaborate drawings and copies of the paintings and inscriptions when everything was almost perfect. These he is about to publish. He was able to read on different parts of the inscription, "Hic est," "Bethphagus," and "Hierusalem."

H. H. K.