

It is between himself and God if they do not give tickets in due form. Likewise if an answer should arrive to say, 'Let it be that the names should be called out for those in your custody, for you brought them there, then you are not to make a question of the correspondence of the name called out to the ticket written, and brought there. You are to say I am not capable of reckoning with you the signals of the Midianites, with their signal officers. Thou canst repeat them, for thou art among them of a verity. Lo thou art Moses of the Semites. Art thou not a noble? Thou wast brought from another place (viz., Midian, I suppose), to set thyself on an equality with the nobles. Thou hast learnt their words of command, the answering to their names. I give orders that — should be brought, — their language with the language of those who live in Egypt, for thou art of the race of the Midianites.

"In giving our instructions again, a few words. While you listen, do what you can. Yea, are not these things to be reckoned to you. Your kind Excellency will bear the burden."

DUNBAR J. HEATH.

ESHER, SURREY, *September, 5.*

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## THE PLACE OF STONING.

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### I.

JERUSALEM, *August 17, 1881.*

THE discovery of an interesting tomb of the Herodian period in the rocky knoll to the west of Jeremiah's Grotto was recently announced in the columns of the *Athenæum*. Lieut. Conder suggests that this tomb may possibly be the "Sepulchre in the Garden" of the Gospel narrative. Whether or not the distinguished explorer is right in his conjecture will probably always remain an open question. I desire simply to call attention to one or two facts which will, I think, throw some light on the name "Place of Stoning," mentioned by Lieut. Conder in connection with the lately discovered "sepulchre."

It is well known that when Jerusalem was in the possession of the Crusaders the northern gate of the city (a predecessor of the present Damascus Gate) was known as the Gate of St. Estiene—St. Etienne—St. Stephen, from its proximity to a church of that name, situated outside the walls on the spot where, according to the traditions of that age, the proto-martyr had been stoned. From the account given in "*La Citez de Jhérusalem*" (*vide* Appendix ii to vol. ii of Robinson's "*Biblical Researches*") it appears that the church of St. Stephen was built on the opposite side of the road to that on which stood the "donkey-house of the Knights Hospitallers," the ruins of which building were discovered by Col. Warren some years ago. Saewulf (p. 43, "*Early Travels in Palestine*," "*Bohn's Antiquarian*

Library") tells us that "the stoning of St. Stephen took place about two or three arbalist shots without the wall to the north, where a very handsome church was built, which has been entirely destroyed by the pagans." These notices evidently point to the "Place of Stoning," that is, the rocky knoll above mentioned, as the site of the mediæval church of St. Stephen, and it seems probable that one or other of the two or three rock-tombs on the spot may have been the last resting-place of Eudoxia, the empress of Theodosius II. A French guide-book for the use of Latin pilgrims to Palestine ("Guide Indicateur des Sanctuaires et Lieux Historiques de la Terre Sainte") states (p. 252), on the authority of William of Tyre and Albert Aquensis, that Eudoxia was buried in the church of St. Stephen, which she built.

It is remarkable how, during the lapse of centuries, the monkish traditions as to the place where Stephen was stoned varied. Arculf (A.D. 700) was shown the site of Stephen's martyrdom on Mount Zion ("Early Travels in Palestine," p. 5), Bernard the Wise (A.D. 867) mentions the place as on Mount Zion (p. 28), Saewulf (A.D. 1102), and the author of "La Citez de Jh'rusalem" (A.D. 1187) place it north of the city, and Sir John Mandeville (A.D. 1322) on the east, over against the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The spot now shown to pilgrims as that where Stephen suffered is on the way from the St. Stephen's Gate of our days (during the Middle Ages it was the Gate of Jehoshaphat) to Gethsemane.

## II.

JERUSALEM, *August 25th*, 1881.

Having in my letter of the 17th called attention to a few historical notices concerning the mediæval church of St. Stephen, which is alleged to have been built by, and to have contained the tomb of, Eudoxia, and having also made some remarks on the vacillating character of the monkish traditions, I would now say a few words about the Jewish opinions respecting the "Place of Stoning." From various passages in the Talmud, especially Sanhedrin, fol. 23, 1, Bab. Sanhedr., fol. 42, 2, in explanation of

Leviticus xxiv, 14, we learn that the **בֵּית הַסְּקִילָה**, Beth Hasekeelah, was without the camp, or more correctly, "without three camps," **חוּץ לְגַבֵּי מַחֲנֵה**, the first **מַחֲנֵה**, or camp, being the place of the Shechinah, *i.e.*, the Temple, the second the camp of the Levites, and the third, Jerusalem, the camp of Israel. In other words, the Place of Stoning was situated outside the city, always supposing the tribunal which condemned the malefactor to have been held within the city.

Maimonides, Sanhedr. xii, 3, p. 96, is of opinion that if the trial took place outside the city, then the place of execution was situated at a distance of **שְׁלֹשָׁה מִילִין**, that is, three times the distance a person resident in the city was allowed to walk on the Sabbath from the place where the

tribunal sat. We are not, however, told in what direction from the city the place of execution lay. One local Jewish tradition considers the Convent of the Cross (el Mûsallabeh) to be situated on the site of the **בית הסקילה**, and another points to the ground above Jeremiah's Grotto with the precipice as the Place of Stoning. This is, perhaps, the Place of Stoning alluded to in the notice in the "Athenæum" mentioned in my letter of last week. The general opinion amongst those Jews of whom I made enquiries on the subject of the location of the Beth Hasekeelah, who did not seem to know anything of, and to whom I took care not to mention, the traditional sites I have just referred to, is that the Place of Stoning was situated outside the city and not far from the Damascus Gate, or rather the place now occupied by that gate.

The chief arguments in favour of the supposition that the place above Jeremiah's Grotto really was the Jewish Place of Stoning seem to be (1) the tradition; (2) its position outside the city; and (3) the adjacent precipice, though the last does not appear to have been an absolutely necessary adjunct to the Beth Hasekeelah, which, it seems, was a sort of scaffold ("ein Gerüst," Rabbinowicz, 'Einleitung in die Gesetzgebung und die Medicin des Thalmuds, aus dem Französischen übersetzt,' Trier, 1881) from ten to twelve feet high (*see* Lightfoot on Acts vii, 58), or twice a man's height.

If, therefore, we are able to identify the place above Jeremiah's Grotto with the ancient Jewish Place of Stoning, where after death the bodies of executed criminals were hung up by the hands (a proceeding suggestive of crucifixion), the question very naturally suggests itself as to whether this spot may not have been the Golgotha of the New Testament, conspicuous "afar off" (Mark xv, 40, Luke xxiii, 49), near a great high road leading up "from the country" (Mark xv, 21, Luke xxxiii, 26), and "nigh to" but "without" the city gate. Compare John xix, 20, with Hebrews xiii, 12.

This theory seems to have great probabilities in its favour, though, as I remarked in my former letter, it will probably always remain an open question as to whether the recently discovered Herodian tomb be the actual "Sepulchre in the Garden" or not.

J. E. HANANER.

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## SITE OF MEGIDDO.

ABERDEEN, 30th March, 1881.

ROBINSON identifies Megiddo with Lejjun, and Conder with Mujedda in the Jordan valley.

There is one important notice of Megiddo that seems not to have been taken into account in determining the site, 2 Kings ix, 27, "But when Ahaziah, the king of Judah, saw this, he fled by the way of the garden