

then comes into a kind of passage or empty place less than 6 feet high, to the right and left of which are *loculi*, in which are bones and mould. Each *loculus* was covered with three slabs, nicely smoothed, on one of which is an inscription, which I copied (*see* Drawing), but the Monks removed all the slabs, liking to see the mould and bones.

"A little west of this tomb was found a similar one, but without any inscription, and instead of a door it had a *round stone to be rolled before the opening* (*see* Drawing, Tomb No. 3). It was like that at the Tombs of the Kings, only this stone was somewhat thinner and smaller. The stone was not in its place, but in the rock a narrow and long recess is excavated, into which the stone might be rolled, and so the tomb opened. The adjoining drawings will explain all this; and the exact situation of these newly discovered tombs may be seen on the plan marked 1, 2, 3.

"I give a drawing of three masons' marks, of forms new to me, found at the place.

"The stone forming the well-mouth of the cistern in the yard east of the little church, and south of the recently discovered rock-cut tombs, is octagonal externally, and a curious feature of it is that on four of the eight sides, half-way up, there is a step, on which one might put his foot when drawing water. I think it was originally not intended for a well-mouth, but for a baptismal font. Short people, as boys, might, at this solemn act, have stood on this kind of step. I have never seen anything of the kind before."

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## TWO CISTERNS NEAR JEREMIAH'S GROTTA.

I HAD the opportunity of examining two cisterns near Jeremiah's Grotto, and found both interesting. The situation of these cisterns is shown on the tracing from the Ordnance Survey Plan of Jerusalem  $\frac{1}{2500}$  (p. 9), where they are marked 1 and 2.

No. 1 (*see* Plan) is rather a large cistern, the greater part cut in the rock, with its four sides inclining, not perpendicular, so that the space which had to be arched over is much smaller than the bottom of the cistern. The roof is not rock, but a curious tunnel arching, very much pointed, and with sides nearly straight, made of hewn stones. The present surface of the ground is, according to the Ordnance Survey, about 2,515 feet above the sea. The former surface is shown in the shaft of the mouth of this cistern to be 10 feet lower, or 2,505 feet. As the cistern is about 45 feet deep, its bottom is therefore 2,460 feet above the sea. It is damaged and requires some new cementing. The last repairs were done by Christians, as there are on the eastern side, some feet above the bottom, and near both ends, crosses 4 feet 6 inches high and 3 feet wide, made in plaster, of the form shown in the section. In the bottom there is, just under the mouth, a round bowl-shaped pit, 4 feet deep and 10 feet 6 inches in diameter. The cistern is covered with a pavement of

large flagstones. Fourteen feet north of the mouth is a second one, covered with a large stone, having two iron rings on its upper surface; but this mouth had no shaft up to the present surface of the ground. That represented in the drawing has been made recently. The cistern is 65 feet 9 inches long in the middle at the bottom, and 29 feet 6 inches wide; it has rounded corners. It may take water up to 25 feet, a quantity equal to about 20,000 skins.

Its northern end comes to within a few feet of the rock scarp, in which are rock-cut tombs, thought by General Gordon to be the Sepulchre of Christ. This remarkable cistern is certainly not of Mohammedan or Christian origin, but apparently Canaanitic, its form being like so many made by Canaanites in the rock; but I have never before seen one so large. The arching and the slab with two iron rings is very likely Crusading.

Cistern No. 2 is 250 feet south of the former, towards the Damascus Gate. It is very much smaller than the former, but may contain 3,000 skins of water. It is entirely hewn in the rock, and before it was made into a cistern was rock-cut Jewish tombs. In the rock ceiling is a square, 13 feet by 13 feet, very nicely worked, with a kind of cornice round it, exactly as in the Tombs of the Kings. The floor below this is smooth, but the rest of the flooring is rough, just as it was left when the tombs were broken away to get more room. As it is plastered all round, the door to the former square chamber cannot be ascertained, but it is supposed to have been in the north-western wall. For the same reason it cannot be ascertained whether the pillar or support is of living rock or masonry. Near it the rock at the bottom is left rough, and now forms two long steps. The mouth is over a kind of recess, and goes up through the rock, over which a square shaft is built. The cistern is nearly square, about 24 feet in each direction, and has an average height of 15 feet. The ceiling is very uneven, except that of the former tomb-chamber.

There was an idea that between the present town wall and the scarp of Jeremiah's Grotto on the north, there was nothing else than a quarry; but this cistern proves that there were rock-cut tombs, as in the Jeremiah's Grotto hill itself. In regard to the rock levels I will add that recently in digging outside the Damascus Gate, 26 feet north of the north-east corner of the eastern tower of that gate, the rock was found at a level of 2,474½ feet; 6 feet 2 inches higher than the sill of Damascus Gate.

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## EXCAVATIONS ON THE EASTERN BROW OF "ZION."

A few years ago a French gentleman, Count Piello, bought a piece of ground on the eastern slope of the western hill of Jerusalem, generally called Zion, about half way down between the buildings of Neby Dâûd and the Pool of Siloam. A little watch-house was then built, and a