

REPORTS FROM JERUSALEM.

Rock-cut Cave at Silwân.—When, a few weeks ago, I went down to Silwân to choose one or two points for excavation, in order to settle the question of a *second aqueduct*, I was told by the people that there exists *another rock-cut chapel* with a large iron cross in it. So I requested them to show me the spot, which they did, bringing me into a large rock-hewn cave. It is no chapel at all, although there is on one of the walls a large cross. They stated this to be of *iron*, but I found it to be *plaster*, so blackened by smoke and age as to look like iron.

I enclose a plan and section of this cave. It is situated under the first house which the road coming from the water or the Pool of Silwân, and crossing the valley, leads to. The rock is cut perpendicular to a height of 20 feet, and has in it an opening 14 feet wide and 6 feet 4 inches high. A rock-cut step leads up to this opening, which is partly walled up, only a door about 4 feet wide being left, which has wooden doorposts and wooden door, which was locked, but on my wish opened. Ten steps lead downwards into the body of the cave; its flooring about 4 feet 6 inches deeper than the surface of the road and court outside. At the end of the steps is some masonry, on one side forming a large *recess* measuring about 10 feet by 10 feet, and used as a stable. The shape of the main cave is very irregular, and on the average (without the steps, &c.), 35 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 13 feet high—the highest point is 15 feet 3 inches, as the ceiling and flooring being not quite even. On the south wall, close to the stairs, is a *recess*, not an *apse*, as I had been told, for it is neither a half circle nor of any exact measure on its four sides. Of greater interest is a kind of *passage* cut into the rock on the same side, 2 feet 4 inches wide, 4 feet high, and 14 feet 8 inches long, and terminating abruptly. Its direction is not exactly in a straight line, and its floor has a slight slope upwards. This passage is 9 feet 6 inches above the flooring of the cave, which is here somewhat higher than the main flooring, forming a kind of step.

Opposite, on the northern wall, which is not so straight as the southern, is fixed the *cross* already mentioned. It is in relief, 3 feet long, with its lower end 6 feet above the floor. Although in several places on the side walls plaster is visible, yet it was no *cistern*, as no hole for a well is observable in the ceiling, and the bottom is not deep enough for that kind of cistern from which the water is fetched by the stairs. My humble opinion is, it was originally a *habitation* for men, and at the same time, or afterwards, used for a stable, magazine, and mill. The millstones are still there.

Excavations at Aceldama—or, as the natives call the hill higher up, *El Shamah*.¹—Somewhat above the Aceldama building, near the top of

¹ Possibly a corruption of Chaudemar, the name given to the place in the 12th century.—Ed.

the hill, some excavations were made by the proprietor of the ground when about to cultivate it, and to plant vines and trees. Caves, scarps of the rock, mosaics, hewn stones, &c., were found; so I visited the place, and have to report the following. Some of the excavations had no important result; some are not finished, and those which seem to me interesting, are the following:—

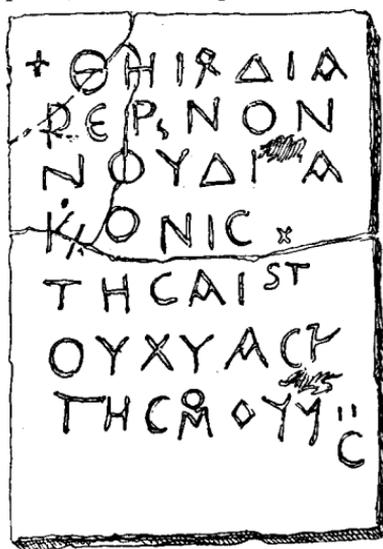
(a) A kind of court or yard worked horizontally into the surface of the rock. As the ground rises towards the west the flooring is worked down to the level. On the eastern side, on some parts where the rock lies deep, it is restored by mosaics of somewhat large stone cubes. This court is on an average 32 feet long and 19 feet 6 inches wide, and has at its eastern end two small pools. The smaller one is 4 feet wide each way and 3 feet 6 inches deep, and from its bottom a round hole leads to the larger one, which is 8 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 5 feet deep, and has on its bottom a kind of shaft 3 feet 6 inches deep. This is round, and at its middle has an *upset*, so that the lower part is narrower than the upper, which has a diameter of 2 feet. This shaft, as well as the sides and bottoms of both pools, are laid with such dies or cubes as are mentioned above, and over them there is no plaster. What was the use of these things? It is not easy to say. The proprietor thinks they formed a *bath*, as he has found in the pools some white stuff which he thinks to be the sediment of soap. But this is not likely to be the case, and I rather think the white stuff is the remains of *lead*, with which the pools were overlaid, instead of cement. A bath also does not want such a court, but rather adjoining buildings. So I think it was a store-house or fabric of wine or oil.

(b) Some caves and scarps with steps, &c. Close by are some rock-cut tombs, of no special interest, unless the large stone which was found before the door be reckoned as such.

(c) Farther west are other and more interesting rock-cut tombs. The workmanship is excellent, walls straight, and angles exact. The entrance, as in all rock-cut tombs, is square, 2 feet 4 inches wide and 2 feet 6 inches high; inside of it, four steps lead down into a square chamber 11 feet long and 10 feet wide, and 6 feet 4 inches high. On the walls opposite the entrance, and on the two other sides, are deep recesses cut in the rock each 7 feet long, 2 feet 4 inches high, and 3 feet deep, so forming three tombs or places where a coffin or sarcophagus might be put; yet it is clear that it was not intended for such, for on the bottom, which is about one inch deeper than the bench in front, is hewn out from the rock a kind of couch, with a shallow place for the reception of the head of the corpse. The bench before the eastern recess is only 1 foot 3 inches wide, whereas the southern is nearly 3 feet, and the western a little more than 3 feet wide. The top and sides are smooth. On the western side, where it joins the southern, and below the upper edge, there is a Greek *inscription*, from which I took a squeeze and made a good copy, which I enclose.

The Greek Inscriptions on Tombs north of Damascus Gate.

IN answer to enquiries respecting the Greek inscription said to have been found in the Dominican ground north of Damascus Gate (*Quarterly Statement*, 1890, p. 3), on the 30th July last I sent a description and some drawings of two newly-discovered tombs at St. Stephen's, near Jeremiah's Grotto, one still with a stone door, the other one having once had a rolling stone. On each of these were Greek inscriptions, of which I sent copies (*Quarterly Statement*, 1890, p. 10). I mentioned also that on one, the covering stone of the entrance, there was also an inscription, but it had been broken in pieces and taken away by the monks. They made a wooden frame, and put the pieces together into the frame, and sent squeezes of the inscription to Paris, where it has been published in a paper called "Cosmos," No. 235, July 27th, 1889, together with notes and interpretations. I also inclose herewith a copy (reduced to about $\frac{1}{2}$). The slab is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and 2 feet 9 inches wide, and 6 or 7 inches thick; the letters are engraved, and the stone is broken into four or five pieces, and in some places the letters have suffered by weathering.



+ ΘΗΙΡΔΙΑ
 ΦΕΡ(ΟΥΣΑ,) Νόν-
 νου δια (κόνον)
 καὶ Ονισ(ίμοα διακόνδ)
 τῆς ἀγ(ιας) τ-
 οὐ χ(ριστο) ἰ 'Α(νίδου) (άσεω,)
 τες μο(νήσ) αὐτῆ-

]

This is the reading of Dr. Papoduculos.

Dr. Papoduculos, a learned man in the Greek Convent, tells me the inscription is abbreviated, and may be read so that it becomes fatal to the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre, but that before one can speak positively more proofs must be looked for, and as the matter now stands it is better not to make too much of it. He thinks it is clear from the inscription that the newly-discovered tombs were those of two deacons, Nonus and Onisimus, of the Church of the Resurrection, but that this does not prove that the church itself stood near their tombs. It seems to me

that they may have belonged to the clergy of the church on the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre, and have been buried here in the general burial ground. However, the learned in England will read the inscription properly and settle the question; I simply report upon it.

C. SCHICK.

This inscription has been submitted to Dr. A. S. Murray, of the British Museum, who is well known for his intimate knowledge of Greek epigraphy, and he gives the following criticism upon it:—

There is a family likeness between the inscription you have sent me and one which Boeckh (C. I. Gr. 9139) gives as *on the door of a cave at Jerusalem*. The copies he had access to differed much among themselves and he was uncertain of restoring the original. The reading of Papodoculos has probably been made with Boeckh's before him, and may, I think, pass. Here is Boeckh's inscription:—

† ΘΗΚΗ ΔΙΑΦΕΡΟΥΣΑ ΗΓΕΜ	Θήκη διαφέρονσα Ἡ(ρ)εμίᾳ
ΤΩΦΕΡ ΓΩΝΟΘΕΤΗ.	ἱερ (ομ. τοῦ) μ(ο)ναστηρ. (τῆς ἀγίας)
ΔΕΣΙΜ ΙΒ ΒΕΝΑΣ	Θέκλα[ς καὶ
ΚΕΥΑ Τ8 ΓΕΡ	(κατλσ)κενα(σμέν)ου Γερ(μανι)
ΚΟΥΤ8 ΓΙ8Η	κοῦ τοῦ ου
† ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΚΚΙΩΝ	τῆς ἀγίας Σιών.

As regards the smaller inscription which Papodoculos renders as follows: "Pachomios was buried on the 20th (of some month and of some year)," a possible alternative would be to suppose the name of the deceased person to be lost at the beginning of the inscription. The sense would then be ". . . was buried on the 20th of (the month) Pachon, in the 11th year of the Jndiction" (ἐτάφη τῇ εἰκοστῇ Γαχ(ῶ)νος λ. ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος)). But I have had hardly any experience of these Christian Greek inscriptions, and therefore cannot speak with confidence. The name Pachomios, which Papodoculos restores, may be right, but his reading of the word that follows seems to be wrong.

ΕΤΑΦΗΤΝΕΚΟΣΤ(Ι)
ΠΑΧΟΜΙΟΣΛΙΧΝ

Ἐτάφη τῇ εἰκοστῇ(ῇ)
Παχ(ῶ)μ(ι)ος Λιχν(δενί)

= on the twentieth (of a certain month of a certain year) Pachomios from Lychis dos (?) was buried.

A. S. MURRAY.