

If this coin really is Herod's, why does it contain a symbol which, on the one hand, is a corrupt version of the \times^P adopted by Constantine, circa A.D. 312, as a so-called *Christian* emblem, and, on the other hand, bears a suspicious resemblance to the Egyptian "Sign of Life," or Crux ansata, ⋈ ?

It is singular that on the obverse of this same coin there is a *Star*. Can this be in allusion to Numbers xxiv, 17: "There shall arise a Star out of Jacob"? If so, the adoption of the star, and also of a Pagan circle-surmounted Tau, or Crux ansata, would appear to indicate a desire on the part of Herod to pose as the protector of both Israelites and Pagans. That a coin of Herod's should contain a nominally *Christian* symbol is out of the question, of course. The early Christians in Egypt unfortunately adopted the Crux ansata because of its resemblance to the popular idea of "the accursed tree," or possibly to the initial letter \times of Christ;¹ and were doubtless actuated in their choice by the fear of persecution. But why a Jewish King, who died 25 years before Christ's crucifixion, should adopt either the Pagan Tau or the Egyptian "Sign of Life," is not apparent, unless, as suggested above, he was a semi-Pagan.

Can any one explain the meaning and presence of this curious "monogram"? What is it a "monogram" of?

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THE VALLEY GATE AND THE DUNG GATE.

By THEODORE F. WRIGHT.

IN the *Statement* of April, 1896, I offered the suggestion that the excavations already made by Dr. Bliss show such gates as verify the statements of Nehemiah in his account of his night ride. At the same time, it seemed well to refer to the conjectural assignments of position made by writers who had not had the help of these discoveries. One of these geographers, the Rev. George St. Clair, replied, in the *Statement* for July, that his error is not proven, and he said:—

"The statement made twice over by Dr. Wright, 'That the Dung Gate is said in Neh. iii, 13, to have been about 1,000 cubits east of the Valley Gate,' has no foundation in Scripture, either in the English version or the Hebrew text."

This raises questions as to the distance of 1,000 cubits and as to the eastward direction. Perhaps I should not have said "about," for the

¹ Tertullian, "De Corona Militis," c. iii, vol. II, p. 80; Wilkinson, vol. V, pp. 283-284.

statement in Neh. iii, 13, is definite ; but I did not suppose that anyone would hold the narrative to such exactness of measurement as Mr. St. Clair requires. Suppose, when all is finally plain, that the distance should vary a few cubits from 1,000, would this surprise anyone ? My measurement, made, of course, loosely by the aid of the plans so far published and of other maps, found the distance between what were assumed to be the two gates just about this distance ; but I did not understand that exact measurement must either be attributed to Nehemiah or be required of one who was finding great help from Dr. Bliss's reports.

In regard to the direction being east, I cannot see that it was wrong so to interpret Nehemiah's course on the night ride or his order of mention of the gates as they were repaired. The text does not say "east," but it goes from one point to another point. Now as to that direction being eastward, I do not see how a doubt can exist. Verse 1 of chapter iii says that the men began at the Sheep Gate. That was certainly in the eastern wall. Verse 3 mentions the Fish Gate, and verse 6 the Old Gate. Are we now on the northerly or on the southerly side of the city ? All authorities, I believe, agree that the narrative is leading us from the east along the north wall. Verse 11 speaks of the tower of the furnaces, commonly placed to the westward. We then hear of the Valley Gate in verse 13, and the Valley of Hinnom rather than the Valley of the Kedron is brought to mind. Especially is this confirmed by the immediate mention of the Dung Gate as 1,000 cubits away. Can we place the Dung Gate with good reason anywhere but southward, where the natural drainage of the city went, and where Tophet has been from the first mention of such a place ? Thus the distance would place the Valley Gate south-westward from the city and the Dung Gate southward. Verse 15 tells of "the Gate of the Fountain and the wall of the Pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and the stairs that go down from the city of David." Here and later one must not dogmatise, for the places thicken, but there is no room for doubt that we are now at the south-eastern portion of Nehemiah's course, for Siloam and the king's garden were just there. The hill Ophel is mentioned in verse 26, and, finally, in verse 32, we have the Sheep Gate again.

Thus the description unquestionably goes quite round the walls, and the only question is, Does it go round by the north or the south ? If we try it in the latter way, we shall put everything that is well known in a position opposite to that which is given to it in the Scriptures. If we put it in the usual way, going from east to west by the north, no difficulties whatever arise. I, therefore, understand that the text bids us look from the Valley Gate about 1,000 cubits eastward for the Dung Gate, and I can scarcely imagine that plain inferences from Dr. Bliss's findings will be reversed by his later work or by that of any other.

Mr. St. Clair will, I hope, pardon us if we begin our geographical figuring from the excavations rather than from his "matured opinion published in 1891," but, of course, only tentatively.