

from Jerusalem on the 24th of Siwan, 1523, and a great number of Ishmaelites, riding on horses, accompanied me five miles."

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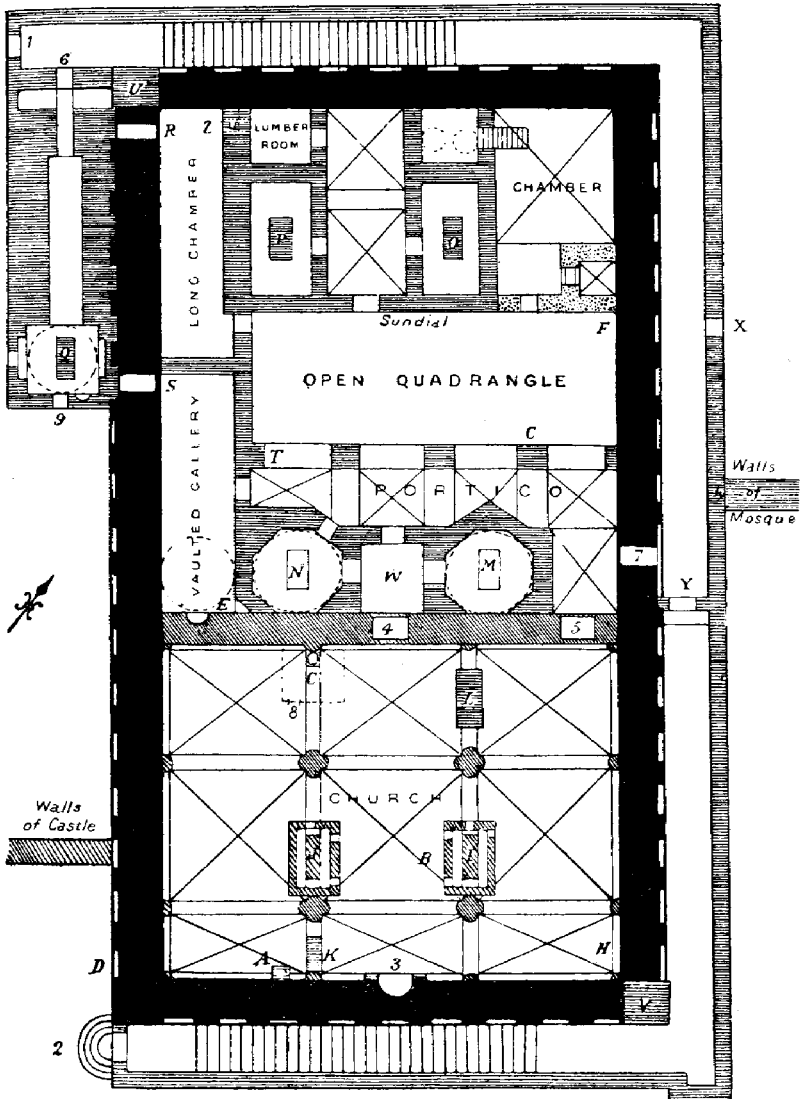
## NOTE ON THE HEBRON HARAM.

By the Rev. Canon DALTON, C.M.G.

THAT portion of the diary of David the Reubenite which describes his visit to the interior of the Haram at Hebron in A.D. 1523 is full of circumstantial detail, and carries on its face an aspect of truth altogether different from anything which "a fabricated" account might be expected to exhibit. What he says he did and saw on a particular date is wholly distinct from the account he gives of his ancestors and of those he had left behind in Khebor, or the ambitious projects he may have cherished as likely to result from his travels. The stories about his ancestors he may have himself come to have believed. They may very well have been founded on fact, however largely they were subsequently embroidered with imaginary additions, just as, in a similar way, the accounts given by many otherwise truthful and trustworthy persons in England regarding their own ancestors are wont to be, even in these enlightened and matter-of-fact days. But be this as it may, I shall confine myself in the following note to what Reubeni says that he actually saw in the Haram at Hebron in the spring of A.D. 1523. In any careful chronological catena of authorities who describe their visits to the Patriarchs' Tombs, such as that given by Colonel Conder at the end of the paper concerning his own visit to Hebron in 1882, and published in the *Quarterly Statement* for that year, p. 212, Reubeni's account will henceforth have to be inserted immediately before that of the tract, "Jichus ha Aboth," A.D. 1537. "All the extant notices of visits to the sepulchres of the Patriarchs at Hebron are brought together and discussed by Comte Riant, in a paper in vol. ii, p. 411, of the 'Archives de l'Orient Latin, 1884'" (Guy Le Strange, "Palestine under the Moslems," 1890, p. 318).

In the late Dean Stanley's "Sermons in the East," 1863, pp. 141 to 169, is the inimitably fresh and picturesque narrative of the visit paid by him with the Prince of Wales to the same Haram in January, 1862. In the late Professor Fergusson's "The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem," 1865, Appendix J, on "the Mosque at Hebron," pp. 136 to 151, is the description of the visit paid by him to the interior at the end of 1864. The account appeared originally in the "Builder," 24th December, 1864, and is valuable as containing the opinion of a trained architect as to dates of stonework, etc. In the *Quarterly Statement* for 1882, pp. 197 to 214, appeared Colonel Conder's careful and detailed report, with Sir Charles Wilson's additional note, concerning the visit paid by both of them, with the late Duke of Clarence and with the Duke of York, to the interior of the Hebron Haram in April of that year.

This has since been reprinted in a shortened form in the third volume of the "Survey of Western Palestine," pp. 333 to 346; and in a still fuller form, and with a more detailed plan of the Haram, in the "Cruise of H.M.S. Bacchante, 1879 to 1882," vol. ii, pp. 595 to 619. The three several accounts written by Dean Stanley, Professor Fergusson, and Colonel Conder should be really re-read, for the sake of refreshing the memory, by those who wish properly to appreciate in detail David Reubeni's account, now translated by Dr. Chaplin. Similarly the quotations from various Moslem visitors, given by Mr. Guy Le Strange, in his "Palestine under the Moslems," 1890, pp. 309 to 327, can be readily re-perused by those who think that Reubeni may have copied or borrowed the accounts of others and incorporated them into his own diary. As, however, without reference to the plan of the interior of the Hebron Haram (*Quarterly Statement*, 1882, p. 196), his narrative can only be very inadequately understood, that plan is here reproduced with these few elucidatory remarks. The Hebron Haram, as originally constructed, appears to have been a miniature copy of the Temple Haram at Jerusalem. The Cave of Machpelah is enclosed at its south-eastern end, under the three-aisled church that now stands above it. The floor of the church and of the quadrangle in front of it is now 18 feet above the level of the ground on the western exterior of the Haram. This higher level is therefore now approached by means of two stairways (1 and 2), erected in the tenth century, "one for going up and one for coming down," against the north-western and south-eastern exterior ends of the Haram, and by means of the passage along the whole north-eastern side. These Moslem additions make it thus practically a dependence of the Jawaliyeh Mosque, entered at X, on its north-eastern side. The only entrance now into the Haram is at 7. This door was broken through the Haram wall in the tenth century by order of the Fatimite Khalif Mahdi, who came to the throne of Egypt in A.D. 918. Professor Fergusson, Sir Charles Wilson, and other authorities consider it probable that the original entrance in Herodian and Byzantine times was in the north-western corner, and may have been similar in design to that of "Barclay's Gateway" in the Jerusalem Haram, and that the portal in the massive masonry is concealed by the buildings known as Joseph's Tomb, Q, erected by the Moslems in the tenth century. No traces of an entrance are visible in the exterior walls of the Haram anywhere else, and as this is the only place where the Moslem additions cover up any extent of these walls it seems natural to conclude that the original entrance must now be covered by this erection. In the accompanying plan the lower portion only of that building is shown, with its entrances at G and at 9; this last, from the kalah, or castle, opens immediately upon the Tomb of Joseph itself. The upper story, 18 feet above it, consists of two chambers; the one approached from the level of the quadrangle by S, a door opened through the Haram wall by Shihâb ad Din Ahmad al Yaghmurî, one of the guardians, and afterwards Governor of Jerusalem and Hebron in 1394 A.D., when he also



Walls of Castle

Walls of Mosque

Arab Work  Herodian Work 

Christian Work  Recent Work 

Scale of Feet.



erected the cenotaph of Joseph in this chamber, immediately over his tomb below, for the convenience of pilgrims visiting the cenotaphs of the other patriarchs within the Haram. The other chamber, over 50 feet long, in this upper story of Joseph's tomb is approached by the doorway R, pierced by the same authority at the same date. All the buildings in the northern two-thirds of the Haram, that is, in the portion outside the church, are Moslem, and, with the exception of the two octagonal chapels containing the cenotaphs of Abraham and Sarah and the two oblong chapels containing the cenotaphs of Jacob and Leah, were erected in 1331 A.D., and are the successors of those that were built, as Mukadessi tells us (*Pilgrims' Text Society*, 1886, pp. 50, 51), as a public guest-house, with kitchener, baker, and servants appointed thereto for the accommodation of Moslem pilgrims. What is contained in the 18 feet depth of soil or rock immediately beneath these buildings and the quadrangle outside the church is not known, or whether its present level is the same as it was in Herodian or Byzantine times. It would appear possible that this two-thirds of the Haram interior may have originally been supposed to cover the extent of the field purchased by Abraham outside the actual cave (*Gen. xxiii, 17*), and its level when first enclosed may have been nearer that of the exterior of the Haram on the west than that of the present interior. Judging from the enclosure at Beit-el-Khulfil, where the stones are apparently of the same date as those in the exterior walls of the Hebron Haram, the motive that prompted the construction of that as well as of this was merely the desire to mark off a site hallowed by the presence of the Father of the Faithful. Beit-el-Khulfil was the spot where he traditionally had pitched his tent, Machpelah his place of burial. These sites were preserved, but without any adventitious additions. Hence, in Herodian times, when the Haram was entered at the north-west corner, the visitor would, as he stood "in the field that was before Mamre," see in the cliff face fronting him at 8 the square door that led to the double cave behind. The bodies of the patriarchs would long ere that date have returned to their native dust; even Jacob's "mummy" could not have endured till Herod's days in that moist and damp climate. It was the cave alone that was preserved for the sake of the hallowed reminiscences that clung to it. In the Byzantine period a church was erected over the cave; and judging by what happened at the Holy Sepulchre, at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, and elsewhere, the interior of the cave would be encased with marble, and otherwise ornamented. All this would be overthrown by the Moslems. But Ibn Batūtah, who visited Hebron in 1355 A.D., states that even then the caves were "paved with marble." The level of the court outside the church was meanwhile artificially, and probably gradually (with the *debris* of Byzantine church, etc.), raised 15 feet, so that the present approaches round the exterior of the Haram and at a higher level would be more convenient, and they are entirely Moslem, as has been mentioned.

After entering the Haram at 7 the visitor finds himself in a wide narthex or portico, at the north-west end of the church. This portico

communicates through four pointed arches with the open quadrangle; and by two doors at 4 and 5 with the church. There was formerly a fifth arch in the portico at its west end, and a third doorway to the church at E. The latter of these was blocked, and the former removed when the vaulted gallery was erected. Thus each aisle of the Crusaders' church had a doorway at its north-western end, and probably each had an altar at its south-eastern end, in honour severally of each of the three patriarchs, St. Abraham, St. Isaac, and St. Jacob. This arrangement of separate altars would thus resemble that which existed in the church on Tabor, where Moses and Elijah each had a separate altar and side chapel. At G is an Arabic inscription on the pier, stating that repairs were made to this part of the building in 1755 A.D. At T is the *sebil* or water cistern for ablutions. At E is shown Adam's footprint. N is Abraham's cenotaph, M is that of Sarah. W is the vestibule. At F is the fragment of a Greek inscription of the Byzantine period on the wall. P is Jacob's cenotaph, O is Leah's. Z are steps by means of which an ascent is obtained on to the roof of the lumber room, and thence out on to the north-west wall of the Haram, and so along the top of the broad walls to the two minarets that now crown the corners at U and V. In the church over the cave, L is the merhala or reading desk, K the minbar or pulpit, 3 is the mihrab, J is the cenotaph of Isaac, I is that of Rebecca. At C is a round hole in the floor of the church, looking down through which a square chamber is seen below, with a square-headed doorway at 8 leading into the outer or western cave. This cave apparently extends from 8 to A, where there was another entrance to it from the church—now blocked. Pilgrims in the time of the Crusaders would pass down steps at C, and after looking into the inner or eastern cave in which the patriarchs had been buried, would pass along and come up at A. At D, in the exterior wall of the Haram, is a hole opening into this outer cave, where the Jews and others are now allowed to stand and pray, in a similar manner as they do at the "Wailing place" outside the Jerusalem Haram. At B, in the floor of the church, was the descent into the inner or eastern cave under the central aisle. This aisle, as well as the whole floor of the church, except C, is now covered with carpets and rugs. At H is a Greek invocation to Abraham, dating from the time of Justinian. For fuller detailed information the reader can only again be referred to *Quarterly Statement*, 1882 (pp. 197 to 214).

Taking up now Reubeni's narrative of his visit in 1523 A.D., we may note :—

1. For "the 23rd Adar," we should apparently read 20th Adar. The distance from Gaza to Hebron is between 33 and 34 miles. He left Gaza on the 19th, and, travelling all day as well as after sundown and before sunrise, reached Hebron midday of Thursday the 20th. He left Hebron, after praying three days in the church, on Monday morning, the 24th Adar. The time spent at Hebron would alone necessitate this correction, and he evidently means to say that he travelled with haste from Gaza to Hebron, whereas if he had taken four days and nights to cover the

distance, this would manifestly not have been the case. With this one correction made, all his other statements cohere definitely and accurately.

2. "The seventy old men" who sent a message to Reubeni were the hereditary Moslem guardians of the mosque. They are now said to be "forty" (Stanley, p. 154). In each case the number is, of course, a round one, and in neither is it to be literally pressed. Two of them, as Sheikhs, are told off to attend him, and see that all arrangements regarding backshish and other matters are fairly carried out. Reubeni states explicitly that these guardians are they who "put out from and bring into the church," *i.e.*, have the right of excluding persons or admitting them to the Haram. They address Reubeni complimentarily five times as "son of our lord," that is, as they themselves once expressly say "of Abraham, the Prophet": their common ancestor and his, and the presiding *genius loci*. So in like manner Reubeni afterwards to the guardians of the Jerusalem Haram claims to be "the son of their lord," the prophet Abraham.

3. His description (p. 47) of the relative position of the cenotaphs of the three patriarchs and their wives is most accurate. The prayer-place of the Ishmaelites or Moslems (p. 47), W, between the two chapels containing respectively Abraham's cenotaph, N, and Sarah's, M, and the north-east of it, is just outside the door of the church, and here Moslem visitors would stand and pray immediately after ablution at the *sebil*, T, in the portico; thus standing, they would face the entrance of the mosque, the cave itself, and Mecca.

The cenotaphs themselves are always said to have been erected "by the Gentiles," *i.e.*, Christians, *e.g.*, Benjamin of Tudela, A.D. 1172 (*Quarterly Statement*, 1894, p. 296). Photographs have been published of Abraham's and Sarah's. But the two actually within the church, now called those of Isaac and Rebecca, J and I, are different from the other four. They appear the oldest, and they only are enclosed in two masonry shrines of Santa Croce marble, through the windows in which the two cenotaphs can be seen. These two cenotaphs are remarkably like the tombs of the Norman Kings of Sicily in the cathedral at Palermo, and, if erected when the church was built (*i.e.*, between 1167 and 1187 A.D.) by the Crusaders, would be of the same date as, and possibly by the same artists as those that reared, the red porphyry sarcophagi and hearse-like canopies at Palermo from 1154 A.D. and onwards. These two cenotaphs also are the only ones of the six that stand over the cave, and would be on either side of the site of the high altar.

4. Having been shown the cenotaphs, Reubeni asks about the cave beneath, and gives the guardians money, apparently to purchase oil for lighting the lamp to be let down to illuminate the aperture at C, to which they then conduct him. The chief entrance from the church to the innermost cave was in front of the high altar and alongside the cenotaph, now called that of Rebekah, at B. There was another entrance at A from the side aisle of the church into the middle (or western) cave; and at C was, and is still, the entrance to the third

and outermost cave, or rather the cavernous pit outside the "double cave" proper of Machpelah (*Quarterly Statement*, 1882, p. 200, and p. 214). Reubeni's "opening of the door of the cave in the mouth of the pit" (p. 47) is undoubtedly this entrance at C. The words he uses to describe what he there saw are almost identical with those employed by Colonel Conder and Sir Charles Wilson at the same spot. Reubeni thus anticipated us in noticing the actual *door* into the cave. So, too, when he proceeds to describe the examination of the now-closed entrance at B, and the iron clamps in the pavement in "the middle of the great church" over the inner cave, and the removal by the guardians of the carpets that covered the floor of the church, the description (p. 48) is precisely the same as that given by Colonel Conder on p. 200. No visitor had made mention of this entrance before or since Reubeni till Raouf Pasha, the Governor of Jerusalem, in 1882, had discovered it on the evening before our visit, and insisted on the guardians removing the carpets and showing it to the Princes the next day when we were there. Two, therefore, out of the "four fresh discoveries" recorded by Colonel Conder at p. 207 were anticipated by Reubeni.

5. Benjamin of Tudela, in 1172 A.D., went down with a lighted candle in his hand through the three caves. If he there found ossuaries, by the six graves of the patriarchs, the bones in them were more likely at that date to have been Christian rather than, as he supposed, those of Israelites (*Quarterly Statement*, 1894, p. 297). But the run of the sentence, and the abrupt way in which in the very next sentence Benjamin passes to the description of Beit-el-Khulil, three miles away from the Haram, lead me to imagine that we should place a full stop at "night," and that the adverb "there" refers to Hebron in general. He can scarcely mean to say that during the time of the Crusaders' occupation of the Haram, and when the Church of St. Abraham was in all its glory, the Jews were allowed to deposit the bones of their friends in the crypt of the Christian church.

6. The story read by the guardians to Reubeni from some written account as to the closing of the B entrance in the pavement before the high altar of the church is most interesting. The cave was the crypt of the Crusaders' Church, as at Nazareth and as at Bethlehem. It is quite possible that we may find hereafter, when it is again opened, that the face of its natural rock has been cut away by them, and stone groined work inserted. More especially as 'Ali of Herat, writing in 1173 A.D., fifteen years before Hebron was retaken by Saladin and giving an account of what he himself saw there, states (*Le Strange*, "Palestine under the Moslems," p. 317) that he was informed that in the year 1119 A.D., in the reign of Baldwin II, a certain part over the cave of Abraham had given way and was repaired by the Franks from below. There seems every probability, I think, that on the floor are six low oblong stone slabs ("couches," says the account of the mason read to Reubeni), incised with the figures of the three patriarchs and their wives sculptured in relief, similar to those of the Norman period and

of the same date to be seen in English Cathedrals, and with inscriptions round them—so says Benjamin—probably in Latin. It is even possible that “lamps,” the old sconces and mortars for lights, set there by the Crusaders beside them may be still *in situ*.—(Though the light itself shining ever in the cave may be rather of the same sort as that in Michael Scott’s grave at Melrose, “No earthly flame blazed e’er so bright, It shone like Heaven’s own blessed light.” “Lay of the Last Minstrel,” Canto ii, 18, with Sir Walter Scott’s notes on such caves and magic lights, “Poetical Works,” vol. vi, Cadell’s edit., pp. 249–255. And for Ibrahim Pasha’s box on the ear, compare that the Dwarf felt when he opened Michael’s mighty book, “When on his cheek a buffet fell, So fierce it stretched him on the plain, Beside the wounded Deloraine.” Canto iii, 9, and note, pp. 260, 261.)—These stone effigies would in course of time become covered with a green discoloration and deposit, owing to the dampness of the cave, and hence the patriarchs’ bodies are described by those who have seen them since that date to be “clothed in green garments.” The wind also mentioned by all who have visited the inner cave would naturally be draughts of cold air that enter from the hole at D, and would blow through the caves towards the apertures in the pavement above. This supposition regarding the sculptured slabs would agree also with what Jelal ed Deen, quoted by Fergusson, p. 144, says, that “below the patriarchs lie in the flesh on their tombs with splendid beards”; and with what each of the Moslem visitors, quoted by Le Strange, further aver. These incised effigies would then have remained practically undisturbed since 1187 A.D., until Ibrahim Pasha’s abrupt intrusion. Rebekah’s figure probably represents her with long hair and her hands on her bosom, or possibly holding some symbol. One glance at this figure beneath the flash of the lamp held by the intruding Pasha reminded him of the attitude he had seen women assume when combing their hair in his own harem; he was suddenly smitten with a natural sense of the ghastly impropriety of looking upon another man’s wife—and he “the jealous” patriarch Isaac—in such a position, and started at the shock, as if his ears had been boxed, and fell to the ground in a fit. No other Moslem visitor had ever looked upon the effigies of the wives of the patriarchs, the latter they had seen, but they say that they had been deterred from gazing on those of the women, by “a voice that cried out” in their conscience, saying, “Beware, for it is the Harem.” This supposition regarding the sculptured slabs in the crypt accords with what at least three, if not more, independent witnesses report; and is, at any rate, more satisfactory than to merely assert that what the witnesses say, “make it certain they either never descended, or invented what they are reported to have seen” (Fergusson, p. 144).

7. It would appear that the spring rains were late that year, none having fallen till March, and that the preceding autumn rains had been scanty. This would cause the *sebil* to run dry. The spring rain fell copiously the three days while Reubeni was at Hebron at the end of Adar.



This was taken as a favourable omen by the guardians after they had allowed him to pray in the church. The guardians had expected some sign from Heaven, as their successors would to-day, to follow the admission of a stranger to the Haram. Water was coming into the *sebil* through the conduit from the country outside ("the distant land"). This conduit for bringing water into the quadrangle of the Haram is also expressly mentioned by Mukadessi (Pilgrims' Text Society, p. 51). This acceptable fall of rain after four years' drought appears to have much impressed Reubeni, for it probably prompted the question he afterwards asked of his brother Jews at Jerusalem (p. 52); compare Joel ii, 23.

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## STONE DRESSING OF JERUSALEM, PAST AND PRESENT.

By ARCHIBALD C. DICKIE, A.R.I.B.A.

COMPARATIVELY little is known about the tools used and the method of handling them by the workers in stone of old Jerusalem, hence I venture to submit to the readers of the *Quarterly Statement* the result of my observations on the subject in the city and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> In archæology, facts, whether of incidental occurrence or otherwise, are necessarily the only scientific data, from which important deductions may be drawn. My investigations have been strictly pursued with a view towards the possibility of characterising the different styles of masonry discovered in the present excavation to the south of the city as indicative of definite periods. Starting on a basis of certain popular ideas of the characteristic features of the Jewish, Herodian, late Roman, and Crusading stone dressing, I made careful notes on every style of masonry as it was uncovered, at the same time noting its position and bonding, in the hope of coming to some definite conclusion as to relative periods. As the work proceeded, every new piece of masonry raised a new complication, styles mixed together and alternately preceded and succeeded one another, until the whole question became so hopelessly confused that I was forced to turn in another direction to enable me to systematise my notes that they might be of any archæological value. A study of modern buildings and occasional association with native workmen gave me the key, and I decided that I must commence with the dressing of to-day and work backwards. Before touching on ancient masonry, therefore, I will give a list of the principal tools used by the masons of the present day, with short descriptions of the methods of handling them. The European hewer stands over his stone and works

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Schick, in his paper published in the *Quarterly Statement* for 1893, p. 198, *seq.*, gives a good deal of information respecting stone-cutting and stone-dressing tools.