

on the money of the Maccabees, it is due to a voluntary archaism, instances of which it will be easy to find in the coinage of other peoples. Would it not, for instance, be rash to conclude from the presence of Gothic characters upon certain English coins of the present day that the Gothic was the alphabet current in England in the nineteenth century? In the case of the Maccabees, moreover, we have perhaps to take another circumstance into consideration. It is this: The Asmoneans who came originally from Modin probably belonged to the northern group of Jews who had remained attached to the ancient Israelite alphabet, as is shown by the survival of this alphabet among the Samaritans. Nothing more natural, then, if they gave the preference to this alphabet upon their money; and thus, on the other part, are explained the palæographic affinities of this alphabet with that of the Samaritans which are so remarkable.

(5) I shall have many and important observations to present upon the question of the Tombs of the Kings raised by a passage in the report of Dr. Bliss (p. 180). I have communicated them to the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (of 30th July and 6th and 13th August), in a Memoir which will be published *in extenso* in the next number of my "Revue d'Archéologie Orientale" (§ 66).

THE TEMPLE AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

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MR. LETHABY'S communication in the January number of the *Quarterly Statement* reminded me that I have the report of an observation made as far back as 1874 on the relative positions of the Sakhra and the Church of the Ascension. I had asked Sir Walter Besant, who was then Secretary of the Fund, if he could get anyone in Jerusalem to note, either at the vernal or the autumnal equinox, where the sun appeared on the Mount of Olives to a person standing on a line with the Sacred Rock. M. Clermont-Ganneau was then, I believe, acting for the Fund in Palestine, and the communication was sent out to him. Here is his note in reply, which is worth publishing, as it may be of use to those who speculate about the site of the Temple:—

"Je n'étais pas présent à Jerusalem . . . de l'équinoxe d'automne: mais j'ai chargé mon ami M. Bertrand, Chancelier de notre Consulat, de faire à ma place l'observation recommandée. L'observateur placé devant le Sakhra a vu le soleil se lever à droite de la mosquée de l'Ascension, au dessus de l'établissement religieux du Pater Nostre: il a calculé que pour voir le soleil se lever au dessus du minaret de la mosquée de l'Ascension il fallait se reporter à environ 60 pas au Nord de la Sakhra."

Observations that might be made in Jerusalem.

Leake and others have touched upon the subject of mountains having been used as gnomons or pointers. And Mr. Norman Lockyer has lately propounded a theory about Egyptian temples being so arranged that they pointed to a spot on the horizon where the sun or some prominent star rose at a particular date.¹ Josephus says that the tabernacle was so placed that the rising sun shone into it.

With ideas of this kind theories spring up, and in the future speculations of this nature are certain to be proposed from time to time about the orientation of the Temple. Now, a few observations, if made in Jerusalem, with regard to the Haram and, say, the Mount of Olives, would be very useful not only as a guide for any theory of orientation that might be applied to the Temple, but at the same time such observations should be of great value as a means of preventing incorrect notions from being adopted.

It would be difficult to make observations from the Sakhra, even if access could at all times be permitted to it, but the position chosen should be one that would be the same as the Holy Rock, as it is the top of Mount Moriah, and the prominent point in the Haram. But observations from any point would be useful, and might be made according to the judgment of the observers.

Observe exactly, say, where the minaret on the Mount of Olives throws its shadow on the Haram platform when the sun becomes visible on the equinoxes and the solstices. Observe on what particular date when the sun rises, that it might shine in a direct line from the minaret—or the highest point of the Mount of Olives—so as to reach the Sakhra—that is supposing the Temple stood on the Sakhra. The days of the important Jewish ceremonies might be observed. Observations of the rising of the moon might also be of interest. There were men who watched the new moon when the Temple existed. Even Orion and the Pleiades might be worth making a note about.

If any other observations suggest themselves, let them be made. Rather err in making many, than doing too few, and perhaps missing some important point.

The observations suggested above are supposed to be made on the assumption that the Temple stood somewhere on, or near, the Sakhra. But the same observations might also be made with reference to the site of the Temple which Mr. Fergusson proposed, *i.e.*, at the south-west corner.

If such observations could be made and laid down on a plan of Jerusalem, they might be of great use for reference.

¹ Stonehenge is now assumed to have been arranged with a pointer to indicate the summer solstice by the sun on rising appearing, as it clears the horizon, on the top of the pointer, which is an erect stone placed outside, and at some distance from, the circle of great stones. The observer in this is supposed to stand on what is known as the Altar Stone.