

THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM BY THE PERSIANS.
A.D. 614.

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I.

M. COURET's first work,¹ published some years ago, was a very carefully written account of the history of Palestine during the Byzantine period. He has now just finished an interesting study of the capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614.² In his former essay he summarised the story of the Persian invasion of Palestine in a few pages, taken from the only sources then known, that is to say, the scanty and ambiguous notices of the Byzantine chronicles,³ and the annals of Eutychius, otherwise known as Sa'îd Ibn el Batrîk.

At the present day M. Couret resumes the discussion of this question, relying upon fresh evidence which he has gathered from two MSS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale, consisting first of two elegiac or anacreontic odes written in Greek by Sophronius,⁴ the Patriarch of Jerusalem, a contemporary of the siege, and secondly, of a curious story in Arabic, which is probably a translation from the Greek.

The truth is that Sophronius's verses, which have already been published by Messrs. Ehrard and Studemund,⁵ do not give us much information, and do more credit to the Patriarch's feelings than to his talents as a historian. One page of good plain prose would have been of more use to us than all this second-rate and tearful lamentation. The chief point of interest in it is that it proves that there can only have been one siege of Jerusalem, and not two successive sieges, as had been conjectured from the Armenian chronicle of Sépéos.

While dealing with this subject of the siege, I shall make a remark upon a matter of detail, an inference which M. Couret has thought might be drawn from a passage in Sophronius's elegy.

¹ Couret, "La Palestine sous les Empereurs grecs (A.D. 326-636)," 1869.

² Couret, "La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614." Orléans, Herluison, 1896.

³ To these we must now add the Armenian Chronicle of Sépéos, which was not then accessible to M. Couret.

⁴ Sophronius died in 639, and consequently saw also that second tragedy, which, though less bloody, produced more important historical results—the taking of Jerusalem by the Arabs.

⁵ "Programm des Katholischen Gymnasiums an St. Stephan," 1886-87, Strasburg.

In his paraphrase of verses 80-83 he says (p. 10):—"To capture the place (Jerusalem) the besiegers had to make use of warlike engines, and, what is more unusual, to make the stones of the rampart crumble by enormous wood fires piled up at the foot of the wall, whereby they calcined the courses of stone and caused them to crack."

M. Couret does not seem to clearly understand this method of attack upon a fortified place, which was commonly practised both in ancient and in mediæval times, and is here distinctly described in a few words by Sophronius:—"Υποθίς δε πάντα τείχει φλόγα." What is meant are true mining operations, consisting of galleries dug by the besiegers underneath the foundations of the city walls; these galleries were supported by scaffolds of woodwork, which were set on fire at a given moment in order to bring about the fall of the wall above them. When the breach was thus formed the assault was delivered.¹ I find a corroboration of my conjecture in the Armenian chronicle of Thomas Ardzrouni,² who records that the Persian general "undermined the walls of Jerusalem and so brought them down."

Before I begin to discuss the third document, the real subject of this essay, I must be allowed to point out two facts connected with the Persian invasion. These facts seem to have escaped the notice both of M. Couret, who, as a rule, is so well informed, and of his predecessors.

The first is a piece of evidence, interesting from several points of view, which I have found in a document whose origin seems of itself to give it considerable importance. It is a synodical letter on image worship, written by the Fathers who attended a Council held at Jerusalem in 836.³

In this letter mention is made of great mosaic paintings which adorned the *external façade* of the Basilica of the Nativity at Bethlehem, which represented, among other subjects, the Adoration of the Magi. We learn from the letter that the Persian invaders recognised their national costume in the dresses worn by the Three Kings, and consequently spared the Basilica. This unknown incident has both an

¹ See, in the Arabic document which I shall quote hereafter, a distinct account of the breach made in the city wall of Jerusalem by the Persians. One of the most interesting descriptions of this warfare by mining is that given by the Emir Usama, in his description of the siege of Kafar Tab (ed. H. Derenbourg, p. 101). He describes it as an eye-witness. It is noteworthy that the corps of Mussulman sappers who conducted the operation belonged to the Khorassan contingent; we may conjecture that this corps inherited the ancient traditions of the Sassanides in military engineering.

² Dulaurier, "Recherches sur la chronologie Arménienne," i, p. 221.

³ 'Επιστολή συνοδική, edited by Sakkelion, p. 30 (Athens, 1874).

⁴ According to Euty chius ("Annals," vol. ii, p. 299), the other mosaics in the *interior* of the Basilica, which were respected by the Persians, were to be seen down to the time of the capture of Jerusalem by Omar. But in his time the Mussulmans forgot the pledges which Omar had given to the Christians, and obliterated these mosaics.

archæological and a historical importance. As we have seen, it is the external mosaics which are meant, not the great mosaics which are to be seen at this day within the Basilica at Bethlehem, which only date from the reign of the Emperor Manuel Commenus (1143-1180). This *external* mosaic decoration may perhaps be assigned to Justinian's restoration. It was quite in the style of that period. The Arabs had remained true to this artistic tradition in the seventh century, when they had the exterior surfaces of the Mosque of Omar decorated by the Byzantine mosaic workers whom they had at their disposal. In 1874 I discovered notable traces of this original external decoration, whose existence had never before been suspected, and which has been at a much later period replaced by the beautiful porcelain casing which we see at this day.¹

I have obtained my second facts from a Mussulman chronicler. The Arab historian, Tabari,² tells us of an amusing, although perhaps legendary, incident connected with the capture of the True Cross by the Persians. I do not remember to have seen this story quoted in any other place. When the siege began the Cross was put into a golden coffer (*Tâbat*) and buried in a garden. The better to conceal the spot where it was hidden, it occurred to them to plant vegetables over it. The Persian general discovered the truth at last by putting his prisoners to the torture, and it was with his own hand that he dug up the precious relic, which he immediately sent to his master, the King of Persia.

II.

The third document which M. Couret lays before us is, to all appearance, of far wider application than Sophronius's poems. It is written in Arabic from christian sources, and gives a detailed account of the conquest of Palestine and the taking of Jerusalem by the Persians. This fragment, which is to be found in a MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale,³ had already been cursorily noticed in the "Inventaire des manuscrits relatifs à l'Orient latin."⁴ It is part of a collection of various short religious works, which have obviously been translated into Arabic from the Greek. The work in question must have had the same origin. At all events the translator is supposed to have been a monk of the convent of St. Saba, who, if he was not a witness and a victim of the siege must yet have been admirably well placed for learning the truth about it. Among a mass of tiresome declamation and groundless assertion one finds a number of topographical details which show at any rate that the writer had a thorough knowledge of the plans described. This part is what forms the chief value of the work, and it deserves to be carefully studied.

¹ See my Reports in the Palestine Exploration Fund *Quarterly Statement*, 1874, pp. 153, 262.

² Tabari, "Annals," series ii, vol. i, p. 102 (cf. Noeldeke, "Geschichte der Perser," p. 291).

³ "Catalogue du fonds arabe," No. 262, folios 140-153.

⁴ "Archives de l'Orient Latin," ii, A, p. 173.

M. Couret is not an Arabic scholar; he has entrusted M. Broydé with the task of translating the fragment, and has published the whole of his translation. He regrets that the shortcomings of the Orléans printing offices have prevented his giving the Arabic text therewith for reference. It is indeed much to be regretted, for in more than one instance the translator, who perhaps has done his work somewhat hurriedly, seems to have mistaken the meaning and reading of certain words and proper names. It must be said in his defence that the MS., as I know from my own experience, is often difficult to make out, especially from the absence of the diacritical points—it well deserves the epithet of “*pessime scriptum*” bestowed upon it by old Joseph Ascari in the short preface prefixed by him to the volume in which it is contained.

I have carefully examined the original MS., collating its text with M. Broydé’s translation.

Here is the result of my examination. I shall insert as I go along some observations which may perhaps throw additional light upon this important piece of evidence. I pass over mere trifles, and deal only with matters which are worthy of notice.

P. 32.—“A holy monk.” The text adds *ومن دير مر سابا*, “of the convent of Mar Sâbâ.”

P. 32.—“Cæsarea, the mother of cities.” The text has *أم المدن*, which M. Broydé has literally translated by “the mother of cities.” Here it clearly means “metropolis.” Cæsarea, in fact, as is proved by many historical documents,¹ was the official metropolis of *Palaestina I*.

P. 32.—“Arsûf.” The MS. writes this name *أرشوف*, with the *shin* instead of the usual *sin*.

P. 32, last line.—After the words “and the destruction of the churches,” the translator has left out a clause of the sentence, *حتى يبلغ الى داخل الهيكل*, “which extended even to the heart of the sanctuary.”

P. 33.—“A monk of the convent of *Davalis* (?)” The text has *راهب دير الدواكس مار سبطس*. *مار* seems, *prima facie*, to point to the name of some saint.²

Still, I wonder whether we may not rather have here what would be very interesting—the name of the famous abbot Modestus, upon whom, after the retreat of the Persians, devolved the hard task of repairing the ruins which had left behind them, and of restoring comparative

¹ *Καيسάρεια μητρόπολις*, “George of Cyprus,” I, 999. Cf. “*Novellæ*,” 103. The Talmud itself calls it *של מטרפולין מלכא* (Neubauer, “*Geogr. du Talmud*,” p. 92).

² The stem of the *káf* in the MS. shows the curve which distinguishes it from *lâm*; it is the *káf* which more often of the two appears without its upper stroke.

prosperity to Palestine. May not *مار سطس* (which has been left out by M. Broydé) stand for *مار سطس* = *مار سطس*? There is, I think, one strong argument in favour of this conjecture. We actually know that Modestus was abbot of a convent which stood at no great distance from that of St. Saba, and which Eutychius called *دير الدوكس*, or *دير الدواكس*. "There was," he tells us, "at the convent of *Deir ed Dawtkés*, which is the convent of St. Theodosius, a monk named Modestus, who was the Superior of that convent."

Clearly the identity of this convent¹ is completely established, and it seems to imply that of this personage who, it seems, played a leading part not only after the Persian invasion, but also during that invasion, a fact which was before unknown.

I cannot satisfy myself as to the derivation of the name of the convent, *الدوكس* (with the variants *الدواكس* and *الذوكس* in the singular). Compare, however, the Syriac *ܕܘܟܫܐ* = *δουξ*, *dux*, and the name of another convent in the same district, the *μοναστήριον τῶν Σχολαρίων*, "the convent of the Scholarius."²

The Convent of St. Theodosius is specially mentioned in the "Commemoratorium de Casis Dei,"³ which is supposed to have been written about the year 808.

P. 34.—"And covered their faces." The text has *لطموا*: "They beat (their) faces."

P. 34, line 13.—After the words "God was with us," the MS. has a phrase which is omitted in the translation:—

وكنا نقول للعدو باطل تسعا في خراب المدينة

"And we said to the enemy: It is in vain that ye strive to ruin the city."

P. 34.—"The Convent of St. Saba." *Mâr Sâbâ* is here spelt *عربسابا*, instead of the usual *سرابا*.

P. 35.—"That I might look in the direction of the Cross." The text has *لاصلى*: "That I might pray."

¹ Its position is well known. It is the ruin called *Detr Dosy* or *Detr Ibn 'Obeid*, about two leagues to the east of Jerusalem.

² I dare not hazard the conjecture that *دوكس* may be connected with the national origin of Theodosius, and may be a mutilated form of (*Καππάδοξία*)

³ "Itinera Hiersolym" (Orient Latin), i, p. 303; Tobler, "Descriptiones Terræ Sanctæ" (Leipzig, 1874), p. 80. We are there told that the convent had just been plundered by a band of Saracen robbers.

⁴ The same spelling occurs before, at p. 140A of the MS. (= p. 32 of the translation).

P. 35.—“As for the Roman armies (troops),” we must add, “which were at Jericho” (الذى فى اريحا).

P. 35.—“Military engines.” Observe that the text uses the technical word *مغنيقات*, “mangonels,” which recalls the same word (*μάγγαλα*), which is used in Sophronius’s hymn (v. 83).

P. 36.—“The crucifixion of the *Pure*.” The text has *المنخلص*, which M. Broydé has translated by reading the vowels as *mukhlis* or *mukhlas*. We ought to read it *mukhallis*, and translate it “Of the Saviour.”

P. 36, note.—The month of June (614) has already been noted in the Paschal Chronicle as that in which Jerusalem was taken by the Persians.

P. 36.—“As men mow straw”—more correctly “grass” (*العشيش*). “The sacrifices which lay upon the altars”; *قربان* is a singular, and its true meaning is “the host.”

P. 37.—“Secret places.” *عطاءير* really means “cellars.”

P. 37.—*القائد* is certainly not “the *cadi*,” but “the officer in command.” The word is used before p. 33 in the plural *كبار القواد*. It is worth noticing that in his account of the same event, Tabari¹ applies exactly the same word to the Persian commander-in-chief.

P. 37 (compare p. 30, note 2).—The tank near Jerusalem where the Persians penned up their prisoners is more likely to have been the Birket Mamilla than the Birket-es-Sultân. The former has in its favour a local tradition which has endured throughout the ages, connecting the name of Mamilla with the memory of the Persian invasion. Eutychius tells us, not indeed of the prisoners, but of the slain who were in “the place called Mamilla.”² Our author himself, as we shall see hereafter, mentions Mamilla (he spells it *عامله*). Moreover, the word *البركة* is followed in the MS. by another word of which the translator has taken no notice, *الما*. This is not likely to be the word for “water”; it would be superfluous, and in this case hardly appropriate, since we must suppose that the *birkeh* into which the prisoners were put was more or less dry, or else they must all have been drowned, which the context distinctly proves was not the case. Beside this *البركة الما* would be a piece of bad grammar. I am, therefore, inclined to think that this is the mutilated name of El Mâ [mila] itself (*الما [مله]*), as we find it written afterwards).

P. 40.—“A holy man’s a deacon of a church.” The text has

¹ “Annals,” series i, vol. ii, p. 102.

² Eutychius, “Annals,” ii, p. 113; *cf.* p. 242. See Tobler’s “Topographie von Jerusalem,” ii, pp. 62, 180, 219, for an account of Mamilla, and of the legends and traditions connected with it.

ومن شماسية القيامة, "one of the deacons of the (Church of the) Resurrection," that is to say, of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

P. 45.—"It is a wonderful thing that God should have safeguarded the Holy Ark of the Israelites and should not have abandoned the Great Cross."

This passage, with which the fragment ends just after the mention of the restoration of the previous relic to the Emperor Heraclius, is, perhaps, capable of a different interpretation. Here is the original text:—

ومن العجب أن الله حفظ التابوت من بنى اسوايل ر لم
ينفذ (?) الصليب المعظم من ختمه

What the writer appears to have meant is this:—It is a wonder that God should have preserved the *tábút* of the Israelites, and that the venerated Cross should have preserved its seals intact—I suspect that the word *ينفذ*, which does not make good sense here, is a copyist's mistake for *ينفك* (*يُنْفَكُ*), from the verb *نَكَى*, used technically in the sense of "breaking a seal" (*ختم*). To understand this passage, we must refer to Tabari's account, which I have already quoted, according to which the Cross was shut up in a golden *tábút*, *i.e.*, "coffer," and was buried as soon as the siege began. It may even have been the existence of this *tábút* which led our author to speak, by analogy, of the *tábút*, or "ark of the Israelites."¹ We know from other sources² that after the fourth century the Cross was generally kept shut up in a silver-gilt reliquary (*loculus argenteus deauratus in quo est lignum sanctum crucis*). As for the seal—the Patriarch's own seal—which for greater security was placed upon the box that contained the Cross, many writers³ bear distinct testimony to its existence.

III.

I now come to what is by far the most interesting passage, that wherein, at the end, the Arab writer enumerates a number of places in

¹ Perhaps, however, it is better to take the passage to mean that God had saved the *tábút*, containing the Cross, from the attacks of the Jews, who, as is well known, took the side of the Persians and did their utmost to have the Christians exterminated. *حفظ من* has indeed this meaning "to save from."

² "The Pilgrimage of St. Silvia of Aquitania," p. 67 (Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society).

³ See the passages quoted by M. Couret from Theodoretus, Alexander, Socrates, Nicephorus, and other writers, in his "La Palestine sous les Empereurs grecs," p. 244.

or near Jerusalem, in a sort of catalogue setting forth the number of the inhabitants who were massacred by the Persians. It would be a waste of time to stop to discuss the correctness of the author's figures, or of the method of calculation which he seems to have employed. Certain it is that poor Thomas and his wife must have had their hands full if they really counted and, what is more, buried the 62,455 corpses spoken of by our author! Taken by itself, the exaggeration of the figures is enough to cast suspicion upon the story; yet the story seems to be based upon real history. Probably the author merely embellished some true tradition. Indeed, the Armenian¹ chroniclers tell us that when the massacre was over, orders were given to count the slain, and it was found that 57,000 persons had perished. Some speak only of 17,000 killed and 35,000 prisoners, which still is a quite respectable figure. It is not impossible that a numbering of the victims really took place, and that the work before us reproduces, wholly or partially, the lists drawn up at the time, with considerable amplifications which can be all the more easily explained if these lists were made out in figures, or in Greek numerical letters. But, as I said before, the real value of the fragment consists in the topographical hints which it contains, and these, at any rate, appear to be founded on fact.

Many of these hints have puzzled the translator. It is worth while to go through the entire passage afresh. I think, therefore, that I cannot do better than give the whole of the Arabic text of the passage, and make a fresh translation of it. I write the place names just as I find them in the MS., without supplying the diacritical points where they are wanting. I shall then discuss those with regard to which I disagree with M. Broyd's transliteration or translation. For convenience I shall arrange the text like a catalogue, numbering the names of places, and putting opposite to each of them the number of corpses found there. These numbers, which I have put in figures, are written at full length in the original. It will be remarked that the total of these figures does not quite agree with the total given by the writer.

وكان رجل يقال له توما اخبر انه اقبر الذين قتلوا و حصرهم
هو وامراته قال

"There was a man named Thomas who reported that he had buried those who had been slain, and that he had counted them, he and his wife together, he says that there were—

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 7 at St. George's altar, | 1. في مدبح ماري حر حس |
| 18 from the House of El Amana (?), | 2. ومن دار الامانه |
| 250 from the cisterns (?), | 3. ومن الحيات |

¹ "Dulaurier," *op. cit.*, p. 229 (Thomas Ardzrouni et Sépéds).

- 290 from the altar of (the church of the Virgin), 4. ومن مدسح الينيه
- 369 from the church of St. Sophia, 5. ومن كدسه القديسه صوفيه
- 2112 from the convent of SS. Cosmas and Damian, 6. ومن دير قزيمان ودميان
- 70 from . . . 7. ومن الممل
- 212 from the House of the Resurrection, 8. ومن دار القيامة
- 38 from the market, 9. ومن السوق
- 723 from the street of Smrnkâ (?), 10. ومن حارد (?) سمرنقا
- 1409 from the house of St. Mark, 11. ومن دار مار مرقس
- 197 from (the west side ?) of Sion, 12. ومن عربى صهيون
- 2107 from the Sheep-pool, 13. ومن الابرو وناينيكى
- 1700 from the House of St. James, 14. ومن دار مار يعقوب
- 308 from Golgotha, 15. ومن الجبل الجملته
- 8111 from the Kabâil (?), 16. ومن القبائل
- 1708 from the Bkhârfn (?), 17. ومن البخارون
- 2318 from the fountain of Siloam, 18. ومن عين ساوان
- 24518 from Mâmila, 19. ومن مامله
- 1202 from the city (?) of gold (?), 20. ومن مدينه اذهب
- 4250 from the convent of St. John, 21. ومن دير مار يوحنا
- 167 from the Royal Gerokomion (hospice for old men), 22. ومن جرقوميدون الملك
- 1207 from the Mount of Olives, 23. ومن طور الزيتون
- 83 from the Mtrûniyât of the Resurrection, 24. ومن مطرونيات القيامة
- 102 from the little market, 25. ومن السوق الصغير
- 417 from the great market, 26. ومن السوق الكدسر
- 38 from the church of St. Serapion, 27. ومن كدسه مار سرابيون

- 80 from (before ?) Golgotha, ومن قدام الجلجلة 28.
 6707¹ from caves, cisterns, and gardens (?) ومن المغاير والجباب والجبائين 29.
 2210 from the Mihrâb of David (the Citadel), ومن محراب داود 30.
 265 from the interior of the city, ومن داخل المدينة 31.
 1800 from the place where the breach had been made in the enclosing wall. ومن الموضع الذى (هدم) فيه الحائط 32.

فجميع ما قتل في بيت المقدس من الفرس اثنتين وستين
 الف واربعمائة خمسة وخمسين

"The total of all those slain at Jerusalem by the Persians amounts to 62,455."

No. 1.—مذبح ماري جر جس. Note the form ماري instead of "Saint." It is difficult to identify the site of this church. It must, in any case, be the *Sanctus Georgius* of the *Commemoratorium de casi Dei*,² a list of names which is thought to have been drawn up in the year 808.

For an account of the various convents and churches of St. George at Jerusalem see Tobler's *Topographie von Jerusalem*, I, pp. 280, 281, 372.

No. 2.—دار الامانة, literally "the house of security" ("of the deposit," or "of the faith"). The second word seems to me to be a transliteration of some mutilated proper name. The first, دار, used here and elsewhere (Nos. 5, 8, 11, and 15), seems to be the exact translation of the Greek word *oikos*, in the Christian sense of "holy house, church."

No. 3.—This word, with its last letter unpunctuated, can be nothing but جباب the plural of جب, "cistern," as in No. 29. It would be rash, I think, to try to see in it Γαββαθα, or the Lithostrotos of the Gospels, a name which seems to have disappeared early from local tradition.

No. 4.—The reading of this name is doubtful: after *alif* and *lam* there are merely two curves followed by a final *he*; above the two curves there is a dot; below them there is a group of four dots, which would serve for several quite different combinations of letters. It is, however,

¹ Or 6907: the diacritical points are omitted in the word لسعة.

² "Itinera Hierosolym." (Orient Latin, i, p. 302). Tobler, "Descriptiones Terræ Sanctæ," p. 78.

possible, I think, to prove that what is meant is a certain *Church of the Virgin*, about which we have elsewhere distinct and copious historical evidence, although it has not hitherto been distinctly set forth.

I shall begin by proving that the church mentioned by our author is the same as another church in Jerusalem whose name, which likewise is extremely obscure, has been preserved to us by Eutychius; the كنيسة الدينة. It is evident, if we compare this الدينة with the الدينة of our text, that the word, however it may be really spelled, is the same. Their identity is finally proved by the fact that we are told by Eutychius that this very church, together with that of Gethsemane, was one of the first churches destroyed by the Persians;¹ both of them, he adds, are in ruins even to this day.² Pococke, the translator of Eutychius, has transcribed this name as *Ecclesia Eleniae*, thereby giving one to understand that it was a *church of Helena*.³ But it is certain that it is not a *church of St. Helena* that is meant; besides, the name of Helena is written quite differently in Arabic;⁴ still less is it a church of *St. Anne*, as some writers have arbitrarily guessed.

In another passage⁵ Eutychius tells us about this same church. Peter, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, he says, sent St. Saba to the Emperor Justinian, with instructions to obtain from him several favours, among others, the building of a hospital (*bimarestân*) for strangers, and the completion of the Keniset Elneh, the building of which had been begun by Elias and had not been finished⁶—which favours were granted and straightway carried out.

If we now refer to the Greek writers of the same period, for instance to the *Life of St. Saba*, by Cyril of Scythopolis, what do we find?⁷ St. Sabas, sent by the Patriarch Peter, begs Justinian to establish at Jerusalem a hospital (*nosokomeion*) for sick pilgrims, and to finish the

¹ Eutychius's "Annals," ii, p. 213—

اول ما انزل خرب كنيسة الجسمانية وكنيسة الدينة

² Eutychius died in 939.

³ In another passage, which I quote hereafter, he translates it boldly *Helenae templum*, and to establish this reading he corrects in an *erratum* (II, p. 212, line 15) *Eleniae* (*Eleniae*) into *Helenae*.

⁴ هيلانة, as Eutychius himself spells it in other parts of his work ("Annals," i, p. 408).

⁵ Sepp. "Jerusalem," i, p. 674, evidently trusting to an identification of Tobler's "Jerusalem," i, p. 428, note; but this identification of Tobler's was put forth by him with far less confidence. Compare Tobler's "Die Siloahquelle," p. 173, note 2.

⁶ Eutychius, indeed, tells us earlier in his "Annals" (ii, 109), that the Patriarch Elias (who died in 513) built many churches, among others the

كنيسة الدينة (ولم يتمها) which he did not finish.

⁷ § 72, Cotelierus, "Monum. Eccl. Graec.," iii, p. 343.

new church of the Virgin, which had been begun by Archbishop Elias. Καὶ τὴν αὐτόθι θεμελιωθεῖσαν νέαν τῆς Θεοτόκου ἐκκλησίαν πρὸ χρόνου ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἠλία δικοδομήσαι καὶ διακοσμήσαι.

Justinian granted the wish of Peter and St. Saba, and sent to Jerusalem the architect and *machinarius* Theodorus, to build the new church of St. Mary, the Holy Mother of God, Ever Virgin. Ἐπὶ τῷ τῆν νέαν οἰκοδομήσαι ἐκκλησίαν τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας.¹

The work lasted for no less than 12 years. The author describes this church, which he calls ἡ νέα ἐκκλησία τῆς παννυήτου Θεοτόκου—as a wondrous building, surpassing all those of which the Greek writers tell us.

This identification will, I think, be regarded as proved: that which Eutychius calls the كنيسة الیة, and our text calls the church of الیة is indisputably the *new church of the Virgin* mentioned in the “Life of St. Saba,” which was begun by the Patriarch Elias, and finished by the Emperor Justinian. This is an important historical point which has hitherto been overlooked by modern writers on the history of Palestine.

This point being established, it becomes, on the other hand, more than probable that this church is no other than the famous Basilica of the Virgin, which, according to Procopius,² was built at Jerusalem by Justinian's orders, of which church the Byzantine historian has left us that detailed description, which is the subject of so many controversies among archaeologists. Procopius distinctly says that this matchless sanctuary was commonly called by the people the “*new church*” (νέαν ἐκκλησίαν κοινῶσιν (?) οἱ ἐπιχώριοι)—which, as we have seen, agrees exactly with the expression always used by the writer of the “Life of St. Saba” when speaking of that Church of the Virgin which I propose to identify with this one.

This distinguishing name of *the new church* seems to have remained in use for a long time, for the *Commematorium de casis Dei*, which was written at the beginning of the ninth century, says distinctly “In *Sancta Maria nova*, quam Justinianus imperator extruxit, xii.”³ This work draws a clear distinction between this Sanctuary of the Virgin, built by Justinian, and the two other churches at Jerusalem under the same invocation, to wit:—

1. The church of St. Mary,⁴ marking the spot where the Virgin was born, in the *Sheep-pool* (“in *Sancta Maria ubi nata fuit in Probatica*, V.”).
2. The church at *Gethsemane*, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which

¹ Cotelarius, “*Monum. Eccl. Græc.*,” iii, p. 346.

² Procopius, “*De Aedificiis Justiniani*,” V, 6. On this subject see the various theories supported by Williams, Robinson, Tobler, Fergusson, Sepp, de Vogüé, &c.

³ “*Itinera Hierosolym.*” (*Orient Latin*, i, p. 302).

⁴ Theodosius, A.D. 530, *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society*, vol. ii, p. 11.

marks the place where the Virgin was buried (“in valle Josaphat, in villa que dicitur Gethsemane, ubi Sancta Maria sepulta fuit, ubi sepulcrum ejus est venerabile”).

This accurate description now enables us to make out distinctly among the three churches of the Virgin mentioned by Antoninus Martyr, as being in existence in Jerusalem in 570, which have too often been confused by modern critics, the following :—

1. St. Mary, of Gethsemane (“basilica Sancte Marie, in qua monstratur, sepulcrum”).
2. St. Mary, of the Sheep-pool (“ad piscinam natatoriam, que quinque porticus habet, et in una earum est basilica Sancte Marie, in qua multe fiunt virtutes”).
3. The St. Mary’s which Antoninus Martyr found when he came from Sion, with its numerous household of monks, its hospices for lodging male and female pilgrims—in which he himself was lodged—and its hospital for the sick (“de Sion venimus in basilicam Sancte Marie, ubi est congregatio magna monachorum, ubi sunt et xenodochia virorum et mulierum ; susceptus peregrinus sum ; mense innumerabiles, lecti ægrotorum sunt amplius tria millia”).

This last basilica of St. Mary is beyond doubt that which had been built by Justinian a few years before. What, in my opinion, renders this certain is that Procopius informs us that Justinian founded and attached to the sanctuary a hospice for pilgrims and a hospital for the poor. It may be remembered, also, that St. Saba asked Justinian to build both a hospital for pilgrims and the great basilica of the Virgin.

To sum up, the result of all these identifications is that the basilica of the Virgin, built by Justinian, and spoken of with so much admiration by Procopius, is the same as the church of *البنية* mentioned in our text. Though this piece of evidence opens a new field, still this is not the place to discuss the much-vexed question of the true site of this basilica. I shall confine myself to saying a few words about the possible derivation of this obscure Arab name. When I compare the certainly cognate forms *البنية* and *البنية*,¹ given by Eutychius and our text respectively, I ask myself whether there may not lurk in these forms a transliteration of the Greek *ἡ Νέα*, *the new*, which, according to the testimony of Procopius, confirmed by the “Life of St. Saba” and the treatise “De casis Dei,” seems to have been the specific and popular title of Justinian’s great Basilica.² If so, we ought to restore it to its normal form, as *النية*, or *النبية*, *en-neia*, *en-neiya*, or even *en-nëa*,

¹ This latter form being subject to the incidences of paleography, which I have laid down, *supra*.

² Compare the form *νεώτατος* co-existent with *νεώτατος*.

pronounced with a short *i* between "e" and "a," which seems to argue that there was a vulgar form *neia* for *véa*, which we may admit¹ without going so far as to refer it to the influence of the Ionian dialect, which is unlikely. Strictly speaking, we may conceive a form *النَيْة*, which would be a very faithful transliteration of *véa*, with a hamzated *ya* to mark the hiatus between the two vowels. As for the final alpha represented by *ha*, our text itself furnishes us with a certain example, and one very much to the purpose (*see* the following number): *صوفية* (and not *صوفيا*) = *Sophia*.

No. 5.—*كنيسة القديسة صوفية*, "the Church of St. Sophia."
—This is the basilica mentioned in many of the accounts of pilgrimages² in the seventh century, which was supposed to be built on the site of the Prætorium, or "House of Pilate." Perhaps it is also mentioned in a fragment of a Greek inscription in Jerusalem, hastily reproduced in Waddington's collection (No. 1903), of which I took a better copy in 1869.

No. 6.—*قزمان*, which M. Broydé translated *Kesman* (?), should be corrected to *قزماز*, or rather *قزماس*³; it comes from the vulgar form *Kozmās* for *Kosmās*. The treatise "De casis Dei,"⁴ mentions, about the year 808, the existence of a sanctuary at Jerusalem dedicated to the two saints, patrons of physicians, "In sancte Cosma et Damiano, ubi nati fuerunt, III, et ubi medicabant, presbyter I." This must be same of which Moschus speaks in his "Pratum Spirituale":⁵ *εις τὸν ἄγιον Κοσμᾶν καὶ Δαμιανόν*. We hear also of a church of St. Cosmas⁶ at Jerusalem at the time of the Crusades. As is well known, the saints Cosmas and Damian are worshipped together, and in many places churches are built under their united invocation.

No. 7.—M. Broydé reads *الصليب*, "the Cross," but there is no *sad*; the group of letters is very uncertain; the fourth may be a *kaf* instead of a *lam*; *المكتب*, "the school," is not likely to be the true reading.

¹ I have not the original text at hand, and cannot say whether the monastery of Neas mentioned by St. Gregory the Great (*ap. Courret*, "La Palestine," p. 214, n. 7), has any connection with Justinian's *ἐκκλησία νέα*.

² "Breviarium de Hierosolyma" ("Itinera" of the Orient Latin Society, vol. i, p. 59; Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, vol. ii, p. 16) "*basilica grandis . . . et vocatur Sancta Sophia*"; Theodosius, § 7, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, vol. ii, pp. 10, 11, "*ecclesia Sancte Sophie*"; Antoninus Martyr, § 23, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, vol. ii, p. 19, "*basilica Sancte Sophie*."

³ Compare *مار قزماس* in Eutychius's "Annals," vol. ii, p. 513.

⁴ "Itinera Hierosolym.," p. 302.

⁵ Migne, "Patrologie grecque," vol. lxxxvii, § 127 (twice).

⁶ Paoli, I, 236, "Guido de S. Cosma de domibus . . . juxta S. Cosmam."

No. 8.—For *دار القيامة*, see above, in the comment on No. 2. *دار القيامة* = *oikos tēs 'Anastáseōs*; exactly what we call “the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.”

No. 10.—I do not see what name can lurk under this formula: probably some more or less mutilated transcript of a Greek name. The first letter may not be a *sin*: the whole figure may be divided into two curves, which, by the addition of different diacritical points, might form any combination of letters whatever.

Could it be a transliteration of the name Veronica (*Βερονική*, Vironice, Vironica, Veronica, Beronica)? If so, we must assume a primitive form *بيرونقا* or *بيرونقا*. It is true that the localisation of the legend of St. Veronica at Jerusalem is of late date. Tobler (*op. cit.* I, p. 251) says that the House of St. Veronica is mentioned by pilgrims for the first time in 1449.

No. 11.—It is hard to prove that this Church of St. Mark is the same as the *مار مرقس* of the present day, where the Syrian convent is, for the historical notices of the latter do not extend beyond the fifteenth century.¹

No. 12.—M. Broydé reads *غربى* “on the west side of Sion”; one may be permitted to feel some doubt about this.

No. 13.—Instead of M. Broydé’s meaningless *El-Ibrounatik* we ought simply to read *الابروباتيكي* *el-Ibroubatiki*, an exact transliteration of *προβατική*, the Sheep-pool, *Probatica*. This Gospel name for the church which afterwards became *St. Anne’s*, by a curious alteration of the legend which I have explained elsewhere, was still perfectly well known in the time of Sophronius, who uses it in one of his odes.²

No. 14.—“The House of St. James.”—Perhaps this is the Church of St. James now in the Armenian Convent, although this church does not appear in any descriptions of Jerusalem earlier than the eleventh century. I find, however, in the treatise *De casis Dei*, written about 808, mention of a monastery or church under this invocation (*in Sancto Jacobo*).³ Theodosius⁴ also speaks of a place near the city (south of the

¹ Theodosius (“*Itinera Hier.*,” i, p. 65; Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, p. 10), writing in the sixth century, places “the House of St. Mark the Evangelist” on Mount Sion.

² Migne, “*Patrologia graeca*,” vol. lxxxvii, p. 3822 (compare St. John Damascenus). (See Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, vol. xi, Extracts, &c., pp. 31, 32). This ode is of rare interest, for it shows us in process of formation the legend which by a play upon words has made out of Bethesda “the House of Grace,” the *Bett Hanna* of the Arabs, with the double meaning of “House of Grace” and “House of Anne” (which means the same thing).

³ “*Itinera*,” &c., i, p. 302; Tobler’s “*Descriptiones*,” p. 78.

⁴ “*Itinera*,” &c., i, p. 65.

Haram) which was called *Sanctus Jacobus*; but he does not say that there was a church there.

No. 16.—In spite of its apparently Arabic form, this name must also be a transliteration. One might be tempted to read *قبا نيل* = *campanile*; but any mention of the belfry of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre would have the effect of bringing the date of the fragment down to the period of the Crusades, seeing that this belfry, which is altogether built to suit Western usages, only dates from the twelfth century.

No. 17.—*البنخارون* is perhaps a transliteration of some Greek name (ending in *ov* or *ων*?). Palæographic alterations possible.

No. 18.—“The Fountain of Consolation.” This is merely the *Fountain of Siloam*, with its Arabic name correctly written *‘Ain Selwân*.

No. 19.—“Namila” should be *Mâmila*, *ماملية*; it is the name of the Pool Mamilla, of which I have already spoken at length, and where the prisoners were penned up. It should be noted that this place yielded the greatest number of dead bodies (24,518!).

No. 20.—I have sought in vain for the meaning of “the golden city.” It seems difficult to connect it with the *Golden Gate*, a mistaken title which did not come into being till later, apparently through the Crusaders (*Porta Speciosa*, *Πύλη Ωραία*, *portes Oïres*).¹ The two words in the MS. are perhaps two misspelt transcripts from the Greek. Can they possibly allude to some church dedicated to St. John *Chrysostom*?

No. 21.—There were several churches and convents of St. John² at Jerusalem, and we have only too many to choose from. This church is perhaps that mentioned in the *Commemoratorium de Casis Dei*,³ in the words “in sancto Johanne, ubi natus fuit.”

No. 22.—“Of Hercanien—the—King” (?).—The quite different reading which I propose instead of this, “Of the *djerokômion* of the King” seems to be indisputable. The Arabic word, *جرقوميون*, which is very accurately punctuated, is nothing more than an exact transliteration of the Greek *γηροκομείον*, “hospice for old men.” This is perhaps the same establishment which is spoken of in the year 531, in the life of John the Silent, by the Monk Cyril. “He (St. John) came to Jerusalem and abode in the first *gerocernium* (*sic*) of the Holy City, in which is the oratory of St. George, the Martyr.” I take the word *gerocernio* in this passage to be merely a mistake for *gerocomio*. In 1868 I took a copy and squeeze of a Greek inscription which is built into the north wall of the city upside down, near the Gate Bâb ez-Zâhireh.

¹ “La Citez de Jherusalem,” §§ 11, 12, 13, 15, 17.

² “Saint Joh” in M. Broydé’s translation is apparently a misprint.

³ “Itinera,” &c., vol. i, p. 302; Tobler’s “Descriptiones,” p. 79.

⁴ “Acta Sanct,” Bolland., May 13, III, p. 233. I have not by me anything more than a quotation in *Contributions towards an index bearing upon the topography of Jerusalem* (p. 30), by B. M’Grigor.

It contains the dedication of a *γεροκομείον* (*sic*) which cannot be the one in the text: it was a hospice for women, founded by John and Verine of Constantinople under the invocation of the Virgin.

The *gerokomion* of our Arabic text, being qualified as that "of the King," must be an establishment founded by some Byzantine Emperor. Can it be one of Justinian's¹ hospices? or is it one of the *gerokomia*, *ptochia*, or *monasteria*, built by the Empress Eudoxia?²

No. 24.—M. Broydé has left out this passage. What can the *مطرونيات* of the Resurrection be? What is meant is apparently some outbuilding connected with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Can it be a mutilated transcript of *Μαρτύριον*? Perhaps it is the plural, "the chapels." We know that *Martyrion* was, strictly speaking, the name of one of the three buildings which, together, formed the church; namely, the *Anastasis*, or Church of the Resurrection proper, with the Holy Sepulchre; *Calvary*, or Golgotha, and the *Martyrion*, or Constantine's basilica, including the place of the Invention of the Cross. The text has already spoken of the *Kidmeh*, or *Anastasis*, and of the *Juljuleh*, or Golgotha, so that we may have here the *Martyrion*, which would complete the group. The distinction between the three buildings which bear these names had already been clearly laid down by Eucherius (§ IV) about the year 440. Compare Arculfus (§ VII) "basilica . . . a rege Constantino constructa, que et *martyrium* appellatur." Also Bede, § II.

The Pilgrimage of St. Sylvia, whose date is about the year 385, speaks in express terms of the *Martyrium*, which, nevertheless, was regarded as forming part of Golgotha (ed Gamurrini, p. 63, *et passim*).³

Nos. 25 and 26.—The little and the great markets. The author has already spoken (No. 9) of "the Market" without any qualification. This would make three distinct markets; and this was indeed the number of the markets of Byzantine Jerusalem at the time of the Arab conquest, as we learn from an ancient and curious tradition preserved by Mudjir ed-Dîn.⁴

No. 27.—"Church of St. Serapion." The MS. has at full length *Serabiûn*, that is, *Serapion*. I find no mention in any other writer of a church at Jerusalem dedicated to St. Serapion. Perhaps it may be a copyist's error, and instead of the *sin*, with which it begins, we ought to read two curves representing letters with diacritical points. But the

¹ Procopius *De Aedificiis*, V, 6.

² Life of St. Euthymius, ed. Cotelierius, "Mon. Eccl. Gr.," vol. iii, p. 282.

³ This last and most interesting description of a pilgrimage is generally attributed to St. Silvia of Aquitania. Is this attribution certain? May we not have here the detailed account of the pilgrimage of St. Paula, which took place at about the same period, and of which we hitherto knew nothing save from St. Jerome's very brief notice? or may it not be the pilgrimage of Marcella?

⁴ *El-uns el-djelil*, Cairo, p. 40L. He adds that these three markets are of Byzantine construction (min binâ er-Rûm).

combinations which I have thought of based upon this notion have given me no satisfactory result. The *Life of Peter the Iberian*¹ tell us of a convent at Jerusalem founded by St. *Passarion*; can سرابيرون be an inverted form of بساريون *Bassarion = Passarion*?

No. 28.—One could read this قدلم, but the word or name intended could hardly be explained. It seems better to read it, as M. Broydé does, قدام, and understand it to mean “in front of Golgotha”; what is intended is probably the parvise, or open courtyard before the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

No. 29.—The second word is not الجبال, as M. Broydé seems to have read it, to judge by his translation (“mountains”), but rather الجباب (see before, No. 3). جنائين if it be really the word meaning “gardens,” must be regarded as a plural formed from a plural, جنة, جنان.

No. 30.—“The ruin of David.” M. Broydé has read and translated this as though it were مختراب (a form, by the way, which is not Arabic.) It is really the word *mihrâb*, “oratory.” The *Mihrâb* of David, at Jerusalem, is well known from Arabic writers² and traditions; it is the name which is given at the present day to the Tower of David, or the Qal’a, “the fortress,” which is on the right hand as you enter by the Jaffa Gate.

No. 32.—“From the place where the wall is.” This means nothing at all, as the wall, of course, reaches all round the city. The text really has also the word هدم, “has been destroyed”: the copyist has written this word badly, has crossed it out and rewritten it correctly on the margin. It means the place where the breach was made by the besiegers, by means of the mine, as I have already explained at length (p. 37). Moreover, in another passage (p. 36 of the translation), the author distinctly states that the Persians *made a breach* with their siege engines in the wall of the Holy City, and he uses the same word, هدموا حايط المدينة.

In this long list of holy places there are two, of which one is surprised to find no mention: first, the important Church of Gethsemane, which Eutychius distinctly tells us was destroyed by the Persian invaders; and secondly, the great basilica of St. Stephen, built in 460 by the Empress Eudoxia, the wife of Theodosius, at the gate of Jerusalem. It was, by reason of its position, exposed to the first attacks of the Persians, and it is probable that it did not escape from destruction and slaughter.

¹ “*Raabe Petrus der Iberer*,” pp. 33, seq. (cf. Chabot, *Revue de l’Orient Latin*, 1895, p. 372).

² See, for example, Eutychius’s “*Annals*,” vol. i, p. 354.

Perhaps the names of these two churches lurk under some of these in the Arabic text which have been misspelt, and whose original form I have been unable to restore.¹

P.S.—One might also think that دار الامانة, No. 2, p. 43, alludes to the Convent of St. Melanie (الامانة for ملانة ?); and that under No. 4 البنية (البنية of Euty chius) might be corrected to البنية *el-Banaya* = Παυλία. But it is with all reserve that I indicate these conjectural restorations.

NOTE ON RECENTLY FOUND NIPPUR TABLETS.

By Professor H. V. HILPRECHT, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.

I EXAMINED recently 730 clay tablets of Nippur which had been discovered in a room (5.5m. by 2.75m. wide) about 6m. below the surface in the central part of the north-western ridge of the ruins of Nuffar. A considerable number of these cuneiform documents were intact and in a fine state of preservation, but the rest of them were cracked and broken or otherwise more or less damaged. After a careful examination of the building itself, and of the condition, position, and, first of all, contents of the tablets found therein, it became evident to me that the excavated room had been once used as a business archive by the wealthy and influential firm of *Murashû Sons of Nippur*, who lived in the time of Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.) and Darius II (423-405 B.C.), in whose reigns the documents are dated. The importance of these tablets, which furnish us valuable information concerning the cultivation of the ground around Nippur, the lease of canals and works for irrigating the fields and date-groves, and, first of all, concerning the payment of taxes by the different classes of the population, is increased by the fact that they give us a faithful picture of the life in Babylonia at the time when Ezra led the second party of Jewish exiles from Babylonia to Palestine.

Particularly interesting are the proper names of these tablets. The early Babylonian names begin to disappear, and foreign names taking their place become very common. Especially numerous are Persian and Aramean personal proper names, such as *Arabak*, *Arsham*, *Artû*, *Artabarri*, *Artahshar*, *Attarapâta*, *Bagâ*, *Bagâ'dâta*, *Bagâishshu*, *Bagâ'mîri*,

¹ For example, it may be that No. 3 is a corrupted form of الجسمانية, Gethsemani, especially considering the passage in Euty chius which speaks of the Church of Gethsemane and the Church of the Virgin (البنية = البنية, No. 4 of our text) side by side. As for the basilica of St. Stephen, we might think of No. 2 (دار الامانة). But these are merely guesses.