the chambers containing them entirely later works? Why was the awkward creep passage system of communication adopted, and how were the enormous and obvious difficulties of excavation attending their use surmounted? These and other questions demand solution. Sufficient material has not yet been accumulated to justify us in attacking the problems thus indicated; but I have, I think, said enough to show that, even did Tell Zakariya not possess the archaeological attractions set forth by Dr. Bliss in the foregoing report, its extraordinary series of rock-cut chambers would imperatively call for scientific attention.

Note.—The library available in a camp is necessarily too limited to enable questions of identification to be entered into thoroughly: but for various reasons, which I hope to be able to develop later, there seem to be grounds for equating Tell Zakariya, the site of our present excavations, with the Azekah of Joshua x, 10. It is as well to mention that, in suggesting this identification, I attach little or no importance to the superficial similarity of the names Azekah and Zakariya! Dr. Bliss has already written on the possibility of identifying the site with that of Gath.

REPORTS BY DR. CONRAD SCHICK.

I. Deir ed-Dose, or the former Convent of Theodosius.—The ruins of this convent are situated on the range of mountains to the right of the Kidron Valley south-east of Jerusalem and about 5½ miles distant. In 1879 when travelling to and fro in the Wilderness of Judea, east and south-east of the Holy City, to find out as much as possible all the sites of former eremites or anchorites, I came to this ruin, which I have described in the "Zeitschrift" of the German Palestine Society, 1880, p. 34, No. 22, and put down on the map added to the descriptions of 29 places. I furnished also a plan of Deir ed-Dosé (Plate II), called on it "Ubedieh," as the Bedawi call the place. This is the name of their tribe, which they give to the ruins because they use them for store-houses, and have near a place of worship, "Sheikh Khalife," a Moslem Makam.

In the "Name Lists," p. 303 (Survey of Western Palestine), the place is mentioned as "the Ruins of the Monastery of the Son of Obeid; also called Mar Theodosius," and in "The Memoirs," vol. iii, p. 111,
THE GREEK CEREMONY OF LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF DEIR ED-DOSE.
Bridge across the Jordan.

(From a Photograph by Bonnix.)
called Kh. Deir Ibn Obeid, "Ruins of a Modern Village." This latter designation is not sufficient—the ruins are not those of a village, but of a former convent, and only in modern times used as a storehouse for grain by the wandering tribe Ubedieh. Now it seems the Greek convent in Jerusalem had some rights of property in this place, and, having made an agreement with the Arabs to quit it, took possession of it last year. They began to remove the débris, and so laid bare the remaining walls, &c., and have begun to build it up again. The laying of the foundation stone, or a kind of resanctifying of the place, was celebrated in a grand manner and before a crowd of people. I did not know of it at the proper time, so I was not present, nor any of my friends who could bring me a proper report, but I have been able to acquire three photographs taken on the occasion, which I send to add to the collections of the Fund. On them will be seen the antiquities found on clearing the ruins, then the assembly, especially the bishop and clergy in their robes, and also a new tile-roofed house on the north-east side of the ruins.

The monastery will be restored, and again become a station for pilgrims visiting Mar Saba, which is a little more than two miles south-east of it. The founder of this old convent was Theodosius, who was born in the year 432 in Cappadocia. He came as a youth to Jerusalem, and was received as a novice in a convent situated near David's Tower, and then moved from there to "the old place" (most likely Mar Elias) on the road to Bethlehem. This place he also left, and went eastward into the wilderness. On a mountain he found a cave, where, according to a tradition, the wise men, when leaving Bethlehem (Matthew ii, 12) stayed a night. Here Theodosius settled, and with some companions built some cells, out of which, by and bye, a great convent arose. There was a pilgrim house, a house for sick people, lodgings and workshops for monks, lodgings for the clergy of various degrees, &c. There once lived in it 693 monks; it was like a city; all trades were represented. The establishment contained four churches, and services were held in various languages. Eighteen steps brought one down to the cave, where the wise men from the east had been. In 1185 the convent had towers like a fortress. In the middle, under the church, covered with a dome, were the tombs of the founder and others. In 1250 it was still mentioned by pilgrims as a marvellous place, also in 1400, but in 1620 it was already deserted, on account of the wild Arabs. Turkoman Arabs took possession of the place, and so it remained until recently.

II. The Jordan Bridge.—About two years ago I sent you a photograph of the Jordan Bridge east of Jericho. This bridge was greatly damaged by the swollen river in the winter of 1896–1897, and had then to be mended and restored. I send you a photograph of the bridge as it is now. The passage is on a higher level than the old one, which also can be recognised in the picture. The entrance to the bridge at both ends can be blocked up by doors, and opened when necessary by the watchman and tax-gatherer.
Also I send a photograph of the so-called Jisr ed Damieh, or the ruins of a bridge higher up the river, about where the Nablus-Salt road crosses the river, but unhappily, on account of water and thickets, scarcely anything can be seen properly. The photographer said there was no place to take a proper view from, on account of the thickets on both sides of the river.

III. The New Church of St. Stephen.—In one of my reports I mentioned that the Dominican brethren were building on the old traces of the Church of St. Stephen, outside Damascus Gate, a new church. They did it marvellously quickly, and the shell stood finished about the beginning of the current year. But when snow and heavy rains came in January and February the arched roofing gave way, and one of the pillars began to sink, so in order to secure the new building they were obliged to put on both sides rows of buttresses to the outer walls, giving the building now quite another aspect. Buttresses are found in Gothic architecture, but not in Byzantine, in which this church is built. So, although from a distance it is picturesque, on a near view it looks a little strange.

IV. The North Wall of Jerusalem.—As the gate in the northern wall, called Bāb az Zahire, does not open directly to a street of the city, but is

![Map of Jerusalem's North Wall](image-url)

situated rather between two streets, it was thought by many that it was not made by Suleiman in A.D. 1535, when the present city wall was built, on the site of a former gate, but that a new site was selected. When the present carriage-road was made, no traces of an ancient road
ABRAHAM'S OAK, Hebron, circa 1853.

(From a Photograph by Butts.)
were found outside this gate northwards, and it became clear that for such one has to look further west. But no opening in the wall is visible, as there is a high layer of earth, and the opening, or marks of a former opening, would be situated deeper. Above ground there are some large long stones, most likely in situ, but not long enough to indicate lintels. Further west, where the city wall makes a large bending towards the inside, stones have been quarried for several years close to the wall. By this, when the earth was removed, it was found that formerly the old wall went through in a straight line, and a trench full of earth was detected under the wall. It was thought that this might have been an entrance through the rock, leading direct by the inner street to Antonia, as the military road. Yet some time later another such cutting was found, a little east of the first, which proved to be a rock-cut cistern, in use before the city wall was built over it; and so most likely it is with the other, which might be proved if the earth were taken out. This cistern, besides other signs, proves that the old city wall stood further out (more north) and in a straight line, as already said and the plan shows.

In the piece of ground where the rock table or block with tombs was found (which is reported in the Quarterly Statement, 1897, p. 105) the clearing away of earth is still going on, and a rock-cut cistern has been found.

Inside the city, at its north-eastern corner, the Russians have bought a large piece of ground extending from the large corner in the west eastwards towards "Burj Laklak" (see Ordnance Survey plan).

V. Abraham's Oak at Hebron.—It is not my intention to give a full history of this remarkable and celebrated tree, which would become rather a long affair, but to say something on its decay and present condition.

When, in the year 1847, I first saw this tree it looked thoroughly sound, green, and flourishing; I detected no damage or mark of decay. But recently, on June 15th, 1897, after 50 years, I saw it again and in a quite different condition as a ruin, making upon me a very pitiable impression—a graphic picture of the vanity of all earthly things, and even of mine own body and life. This decay, although gradual, had come rather quick. In the winter of 1853 a large branch became broken down by the heavy load of snow which had fallen on it. As visitors to the Holy Land wished always to get some particle from this old tree, the wood of this branch was purchased and brought to Jerusalem, where it was worked up into small fancy articles and sold to travellers, who carried them into countries all over the globe. This breaking down of a branch by a load of snow seems to have been the beginning of decay from the inside, although six years later, in the summer of 1859, when I pitched my tent for a week under its shade, I could see no other marks of decay except the missing branch, but the tree looked still green and in the same sound condition as 12 years before. Ten or 12 years later the Russian Archimandrite of Jerusalem bought the tree, with the ground on which

1 See Note by the Rev. Andrew J. Gregg, p. 65.
it stands, from the main road going down towards Gaza, a piece of the shallow valley, and the whole hill with the ruins on its top. So the place became cultivated, and much care was bestowed on the tree. A low wall was built round it and filled with earth to some height and the branches were propped to prevent them breaking down. Notwithstanding all this, in the course of years, one branch after another broke down—once owing to a lightning stroke—so that decay made rapid progress. A few years ago—as the photograph shows—a branch towards the east was still living, but this branch also is now gone. In order to keep this famous old tree in some remembrance, a row of young cypresses was planted in a circular line round it, showing the space which the tree in its flourishing state had in summer at noon shadowed, which, of course, was not an exact circle. As the ground is in some places rocky, especially up the hill, there are for this reason intervals in the line of these trees. It has a sad look, the contrast of the already dead tree, its branches stretching leafless towards Heaven, between and over the fresh green of the younger trees, as behind the cypresses are other trees of all sorts. Even the trunk is barkless, and covered with little worm-holes. The time will soon come when this remaining relic will fall, and then a new tree will have to be planted in its place.

From the place where the tree stands a broad road leads higher up the hill to the rather large and nice and comparatively new Russian hospice, standing on a large and flat rock platform half-way up the hill. Here the key may be got, to go up to the top of the hill, where a look-out tower is built about 36 feet high, from which, on ascending its 45 steps, one may obtain an extensive view towards the Mediterranean Sea and the land of the Philistines. I was told that on clear days even the Russian Tower on Mount Olivet at Jerusalem can be seen, but this I doubt; at least I could not see it, but the sky was cloudy in that direction. But one thing struck me, namely, to see that in the last 40 years the cultivation of the land, hills, and valleys had made marvellous progress round this site and Hebron in general. Everywhere it was green with vines, trees, &c., and between them are many new houses in all directions. Moreover, wherever I went there was plenty of water to be found either in biars (cisterns) or springs, and I could see several rivulets or little brooks. The town itself has very many new houses, so that the former four distinct parts are, by new buildings between, become as one whole. But most of the new houses are west of the Sheikh's quarter, and especially along the road to Jerusalem. The carriage-road I found excellent; it ends at the eastern quarter, a little below the large pool, which I found full of water. Along this road are kilometre stones put up, with the respective numbers written on them; at the beginning of the new houses it is 36, and opposite the Haram or the Quarantine—now used as barracks for soldiers—37, and to its end half a kilometre more.

In Hebron the Jews have greatly increased in number. There are now also many Christians, and, as I was told, the English Medical Mission is doing much good. Hebron has no telegraph station—the nearest is Bethlehem.
ABRAHAM'S OAK, HEBRON, 1897.
(An iron railing has since been placed round the tree.)
VI. Ancient Rock-cut Jewish Wine-presses at 'Ain Kārīm.—A few weeks ago I had to go to 'Ain Kārīm with other experts to inspect
a vineyard or piece of ground with some buildings on it. In inspecting and examining things I found two old Jewish wine-presses cut into the rock, and in good preservation. I measured them, and send the accompanying plans and sections of both. They are situated about 100 feet higher than the copious spring of the Virgin Mary, and on the steep slope of the southern mountain about twenty minutes' walk from the spring. On the housetop there one has a fine view of the gardens, the many-scattered houses of the Russians, their Church, the Chapel of Mar Zacharias, and the Convent of St. John the Baptist, besides many valleys and hill tops northwards to Nebi Samwel. One of the wine-presses is situated higher than the other. Both are much alike, but the lower one, of which plan and section are given, is more elaborate.

When the grapes were in some degree trodden and bruised (in a) the mass running off could pass into b, the flooring of which is 3 feet deeper, and also much wider, calculated to take a much greater quantity. On its south wall, which is situated a little higher, are three niches; the use of the middle one I cannot tell, but the two side ones are remarkable; they have each in the lower parts holes on both sides. On consideration one gets the idea that these niches were receptacles for the thick ends of levers, having a strong iron nail across, fitting into the holes, so that the levers might be turned up and down, as shown in the drawing No. 3.

The bruised grapes in the basin or tank, a, could run through the hole at the bottom (as shown in the section) into b, and when some pieces of wood were placed across, by pressing down the levers the mass could be squeezed and the fluid run away by two holes into the two receptacles, c and d; c is much narrower than the other and only 4 feet deep, whereas d is 5 feet by 5½ feet wide, and 6½ feet deep, having on the flooring at the south side a deepening to enable the remainder of the wine to be taken up. From c to d is also a round hole, so that the fluid contents of the first might run into the second. This latter has on the north and east sides steps, and on the latter side even a second projecting step, as shown in the plan and section. On the surface of the rock near the eastern step and north-east corner is a round bowl-shaped pit, e, where an earthenware jug or jarra, as it is called, may be placed secure against tumbling over.