

II.—At first sight I was inclined to read the legend on the stamped handle (*Quarterly Statement*, January, p. 18, No. 1, cf. p. 13), not, as has been done, לעזר חרי "belonging to Ezer, Hori," but rather "To Ezer (or *Azzur*) Haggai." The cast which the Committee has been kind enough to send me fully confirms this conjecture, which was suggested by the mere sight of the drawing; the second word is clearly written חגגי, *Haggai*. It is the same name which we have already met with on the seal discovered by Sir Charles Warren on Ophel, and is therefore a new mention of the very name of the prophet Haggai.¹ The Jewish name עזר appears also upon another seal which I published seventeen years ago.²

Since I examined the jar-handle on which I read the name of Nob (P) it has been cleaned, and I have no hesitation in accepting Professor Clermont-Ganneau's correction. The name is certainly Hebron.—A. H. SAYCE.

MAR METRI: OR THE GREEK CONVENT OF ST. DEMETRIUS AT JERUSALEM.

By DR. CONRAD SCHICK.

IN the Ordnance Survey plan is entered under the number 10, in the Hârat al Istambulîye, north of the castle, a place called in the "References," "Greek Convent of St. Demetrius." It will now cease to be a convent, and be converted into a school; a great part of the building will be pulled down, and the whole built up again as a new and more convenient place. It consists of an old church, and various rooms for a priest and his assistants, and to lodge a few hundred pilgrims. As the new building will be different from the old, I thought it expedient to make a plan of the old as a record, and have at the same time to make the following remarks and explanations.

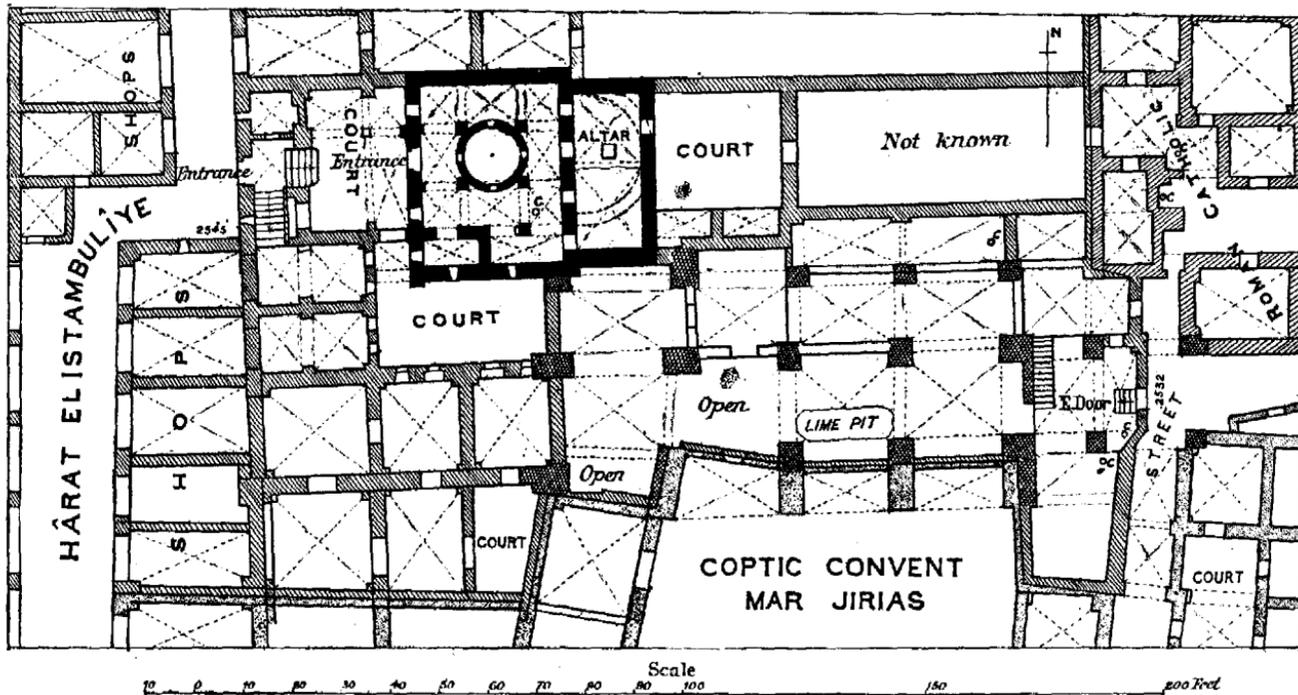
The entrance to the convent, or rather pilgrim's house under clerical superintendence, is from the western street, usually called Hârat al Istambulîye, and as in course of time the level of the street became

¹ The feminine form of this proper name, חגגת (*Haggit*), appears on a Phœnician seal which I have published elsewhere (Clermont-Ganneau, "*Sceaux et Cachets Israélites, Phéniciens, et Syriens*," p. 26, No. 23).

² Together with the foregoing one (*op. cit.*, p. 14, No. 4).

PLAN OF CHURCH AND CONVENT "MAR METRI."

(From a Drawing by Dr. Conrad Schick.)



higher, whilst the ground floor of the convent remains at its original level, it is now 5 feet lower than the street, and a person coming inside the door may go to the right hand up a flight of steps to the upper story, extending over the shops, or straight on down six steps into an open court, having on the north and east a corridor, which in the south ends in a short passage, leading into another and larger open court, and to the many rooms of the lower story. But going eastwards, across the eastern corridor, one comes into the church dedicated to St. Demetrius. It is an old building, square inside, 29 feet wide each way, and in the centre are standing four tall square piers, dividing the room into nine parts, of which the middle ones are wider than the outer ones. Eight of the spaces are cross-vaulted, and the ninth, or centre one, is worked up to a tambour which has four windows towards the four points of the compass, and supports a little dome with an iron cross on its top. The dome has a diameter of 15 feet. If the door is shut the church is rather dark, as the windows in the tambour are small, and overshadowed by buildings in front of them.

The present church has no apse, but certainly had one originally, which, as it seems to me, was not once only, but twice in part destroyed and restored again, as the old remains in the present walls and vaultings prove. It was probably only one large apse (as marked on the Plan by dotted lines), not the usual three, as three would have come out rather too small, and not afforded space enough for the altar. Still it is possible there may have been three, as the church of which traces were found in 1889, north of the barracks and the Haram esh-Sherif, reported upon by me (*Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 172), has also such small apses, three in number, the church being very nearly of the same size as Mar Metri. But behind this church there was rock, and consequently not room for a large one, and so small ones were made. But here, at a later time, the eastern wall of Mar Metri was just 17 feet back from the main church, which indicates that the apse reached originally there, and so it must have been a single large one. The wall with the three doors between it and the church, is a later construction. It forms now the Iconostasis, which originally was most probably, as in all these churches, of wood, and not so thick. Behind is the Hagion, with the altar, now square and too large for such a small church. It was erected when the last restoration was made. The apse is lighted by only one window in the new east wall. The main church has on the south side an addition, just as the one referred to (*Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 172) has on the north side.¹ Here the western half is made into a room, with an open doorway; the eastern part forms an addition to the main church, to be used as a baptistery, the font is close to the pier standing there, and close by is the mouth of the cistern. From this place a door on the east formerly led into a little room on the outside

¹ And the Church of the Saviour at Constantinople, see "Procopius," p. 169.

of the apse wall. Behind the church is an uncovered court, and a tree is growing there. South of it, and for some 50 feet eastwards, is an underground flooring at a lower level than the western part of the convent, for there the road in the western street is marked on the Ordnance Survey Map 2545, and the eastern road at the eastern limit of Mar Metri 2532; hence a difference of 13 feet. When coming in by the east door one has also to step down several feet, and this makes the eastern part an underground story, which is interesting, as there are a number of piers there, all of them made of large and very finely dressed stones. The piers of the southern row are remarkable for their great size—14 feet long and $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet to $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide—just like those at the Muristan, and bearing girdle arches of similar hewn stones, supporting cross vaults. It is clear that some building of importance formerly stood here, but what it was is difficult to say. Its chief part or the south front stood apparently under the present Coptic Place (the Convent and Church Mar Jirias or St. George). Where the ground is filled up to a higher level there are small chambers for lodging pilgrims.

The history of this place, as far as I could ascertain, is very short. In ancient Jerusalem most likely the second wall ran here, coming from David's tower, or a little west of it, from the Gate Gennath northwards, and making about here a turn and passing eastwards, south of the Church of St. Sepulchre to the northern part of the Muristan, where it turned again northward.¹ As Titus did not destroy the western part of the second wall, but put soldiers in the towers thereof, so it was certainly used after the city had been destroyed, for the Roman garrison left here, as we are told by Josephus.

When in the fourth century the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built, the site was outside the then still recognisable wall, a new wall was built west of the Anastasis or New Church, to bring it inside the wall, which new wall must have started from some point in the old second wall, north of Hezekiah's pool, as explained and proved by existing remains in *Quarterly Statement*, 1891, p. 277.

As the Mar Metri Church is not Crusading but Byzantine, for it already existed when the Christians took possession of the town A.D. 1099, so these underground buildings must also have been there already, as the south-eastern corner of the church stands on one of the piers, and the latter also are probably either Byzantine or, as I suppose, Roman. From the year 1150 A.D. we have a plan of the city,² as it was not long after being taken by the Christians, in which just at this place is shown a church: "Ecclesia in funda S. Georgii." At that time it bore the name "S. George" only, and the buildings afterwards became divided into two, "St. George," and "Demetrius." Tobler, even as late as 1853, describes in his "Topography of Jerusalem," Berlin, 1853, vol. i, p. 279, the very building as one, "in a fine situation, having two

¹ Compare plan in *Quarterly Statement*, 1893, p. 191.

² "Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina Vereins," 1891, p. 136.

churches, Demetrius and St. George." But now the latter belongs to the Copts, and was described by me in *Quarterly Statement*, 1896, p. 217, under No. 5, whereas St. Demetrius, and the better part of the buildings, belong to the Greeks, a thing which Tobler has overlooked. He says that the name Demetri he has not found before A.D. 1400. It was west of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at that time it was described as a pretty church with a chapel of St. George. It was always a lodging home for pilgrims. May the words "Ecclesia in fundi" (on the plan) perhaps mean the church on the arches or foundations? If so, it would also prove that the piers are not Crusading, but earlier, and as they are similar to those in the Muristan, the latter may also be older, and perhaps Roman (?). It was always a puzzle how the Knights of St. John could, besides their many other labours, do such an immense and fine work, extending over so large a space, and with such deep foundations, in the short period of scarcely half a century. But if these piers already existed with some of their arches, one can understand that the work would not have been so difficult of accomplishment.

It will be seen that on my plan in the east, one of the old arches (the southern) goes over the street there, whereas the opposite one on the north is destroyed, but the piers are still observable. These are the end, or most eastern piers, and till here the ground is rather level, whereas further east the ground, and so the street, falls rapidly down to Christian Street. So this old building stood on an elevated spot, or high terrace, 35 feet from the western limit of Hezekiah's Pool. This upper terrace was about 135 feet broad, and bounded on the west by the southern part of the second wall.

JERUSALEM, *July*, 1899.