

REPORTS BY R. A. STEWART MACALISTER, M.A.

1. THE ROCK-CUT TOMBS IN WĀDY ER-RABĀBI, JERUSALEM.

(Concluded from the "Quarterly Statement,"  
April, 1901, p. 158.)

THE ten tombs which follow, and complete the series of tombs in the valley, are east of the monastery. They are arranged in three rows: six are on the edge of the precipice above the valley, three on the rocky platform behind the top of the precipice, and one remaining in the back wall of rock behind the platform. We shall take these in reverse order:—

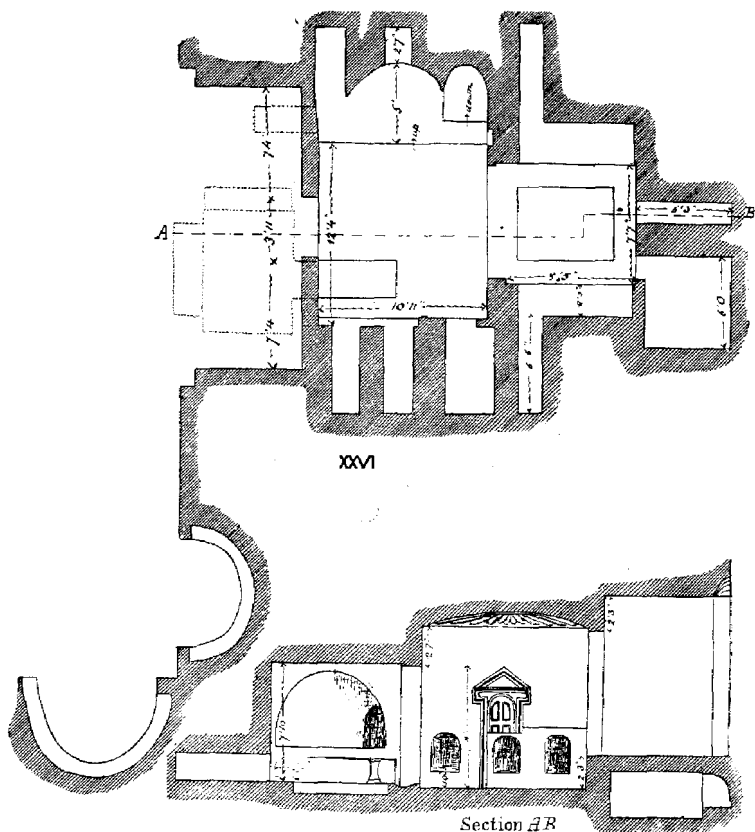
57. The back wall of rock, behind the platform on which the monastery is now built, is tunnelled with several caves which appear natural, and it seems also to have had more than one system of tombs in it. Only one of these remains, and even this is much injured by the quarrying processes that have completely destroyed the others. Two chambers are left, one of large size, having one kok on the west, two on the south, and two remaining on the east; the entrance, which is broken open and of which no original features are left, was to the north. There is a small door to the south giving admission to a small chamber, perfect but much clogged up with stones and rubbish, measuring 9 feet 4 inches by 9 feet 6 inches. There are nine kokim in this chamber—three in each side not occupied by the door.

58. This and the following tomb are under the walls of the monastery. It is a single-chambered tomb with kokim, seven in number. One of these is of the extraordinary length of 12 feet 4 inches. Another has a depression in its floor, filled with rubbish, possibly a secret entrance to some subsidiary chamber.

59. This tomb is beside the last. It consists of four chambers. The entrance chamber has but one kok, on the south side; beside this is the doorway of a chamber at the back, containing three kokim on the east, two on the south, and a blocked doorway (?) on the west. There is a shallow niche over the central kok on

the eastern side. To the west of the entrance chamber is a room with two kokim on the south and two on the west; this chamber has an independent entrance from without. To the east of the entrance chamber is an extension leading downwards to a small chamber having three arcosolia, one on each of the sides not occupied by the door.

60. (Plan XXVI; Tobler, 3; Baedeker, 3).—Architecturally this is the most interesting of the excavations of the Wády er-Rababi. It consists of two principal chambers, and one lower chamber, with the usual square vestibule at the entrance.

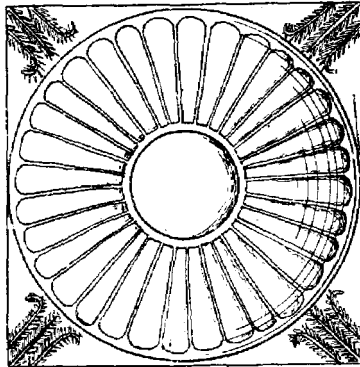


The first detail that calls for attention is the pair of remarkable apses at the west end of the rock wall in which the entrance

is cut. The purpose of these is quite obscure to me, and I have never seen anything like them anywhere else. Père Vincent has informed me that nothing similar is to be found nearer than Petra.

The vestibule is much broken and badly repaired by rough stone walling, which has been erected in order to make this beautiful tomb serve the ignoble purpose of a cow-house. Remains of an ornamental alcove over the door show that the entrance had considerable pretensions to architectural effect. Half the vestibule roof is now broken away and replaced by built stone. The walls are blackened with smoke, but the outlines of some painted ornaments are just traceable under the dirt on the western wall.

A step downward leads into the principal chamber. This has evidently served some other purpose besides that of a tomb; I have no doubt that Tobler is right in regarding it as a chapel with tomb accessories. There is an apse at the eastern end, lighted by a (now blocked) shaft. In the western wall are three kokim, two of which were concealed by a movable slab which bore a completion of the false door that encloses the central kok; compare the similar device for concealment that we have found at Ferdûs er-Rûm, already described.



*Ceiling of Entrance  
Chamber*

The roof is domed and shows a rosette, deeply sculptured, occupying its whole surface.

A sunk passage to the west of the entrance leads to a small chamber under the vestibule having two arcosolia. There is a kok in the corresponding position on the other side, also extending under the vestibule.

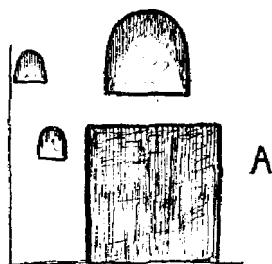
The south wall of the principal chamber was ornamented with panelling, but it is much broken and so smoke-blackened that the details are very difficult to make out. A large doorway in the middle of this wall gives admission to the inner chamber which contains two arcosolia, having kokim extending inwards from their northern ends, and with slightly ornamented faces (*see* the section), and two kokim in the south wall, one of which expands into a small square chamber.

It is not impossible that the adaptation of this cutting as a chapel may belong to a later period than its use as a tomb. This might be indicated by what appears to be an imperfect kok in the centre of the apse at the east; but this is doubtful, as it is not at the same level as the adjoining kokim, and therefore may be an aumbry.

Except the meagre remains in the vestibule, every trace of the frescoes mentioned by Tobler has disappeared.

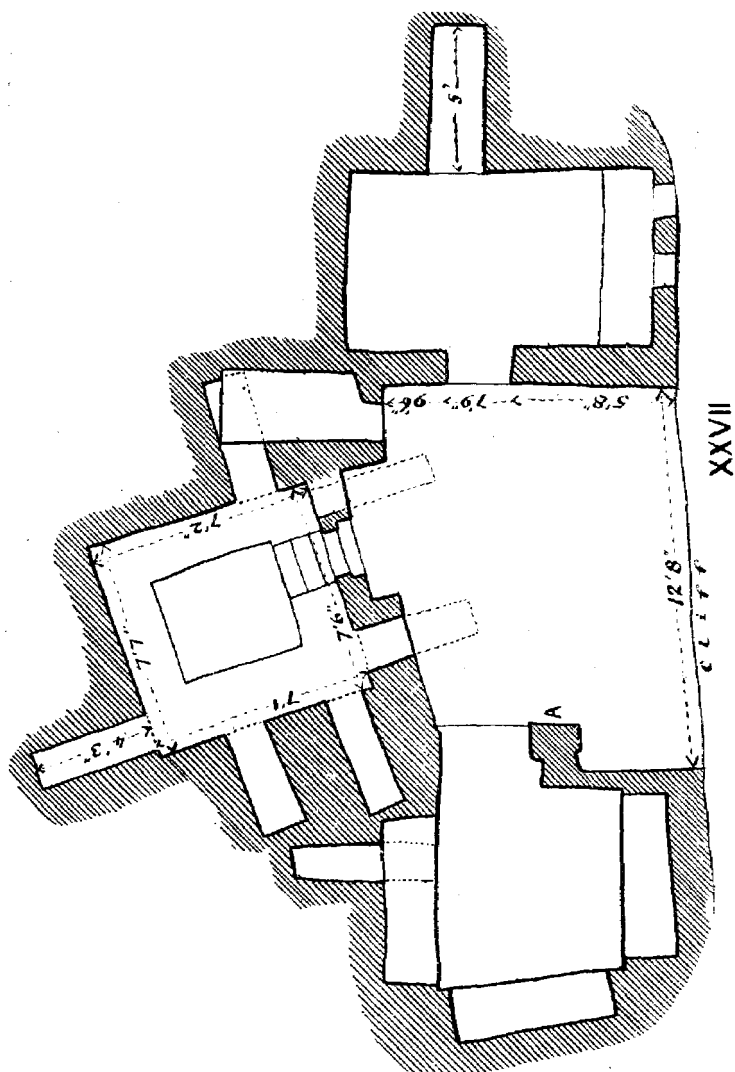
The remaining tombs are on the edge of the rocky precipice east of the monastery.

61. (Plan XXVII; Tobler, 7; Baedeker, 7).—Close to the monastery wall an open landing or vestibule has been quarried in the edge of the precipice, with doors on the three sides. That to the east opens into a square chamber with the usual three arcosolia: there is a kok running under the southward bench. Over the door to this chamber is a large round-headed niche, and



at its side are two others of smaller size. The central door admits to a square chamber, approached by steps, being sunk below the level of the vestibule. This chamber has a bench or

step running round the walls and six kokim, disposed in the manner shown on the plan. The low level of this chamber seems



to corroborate Professor Clermont-Ganneau's suggested interpretation of the inscription (No. 13) which is painted over the

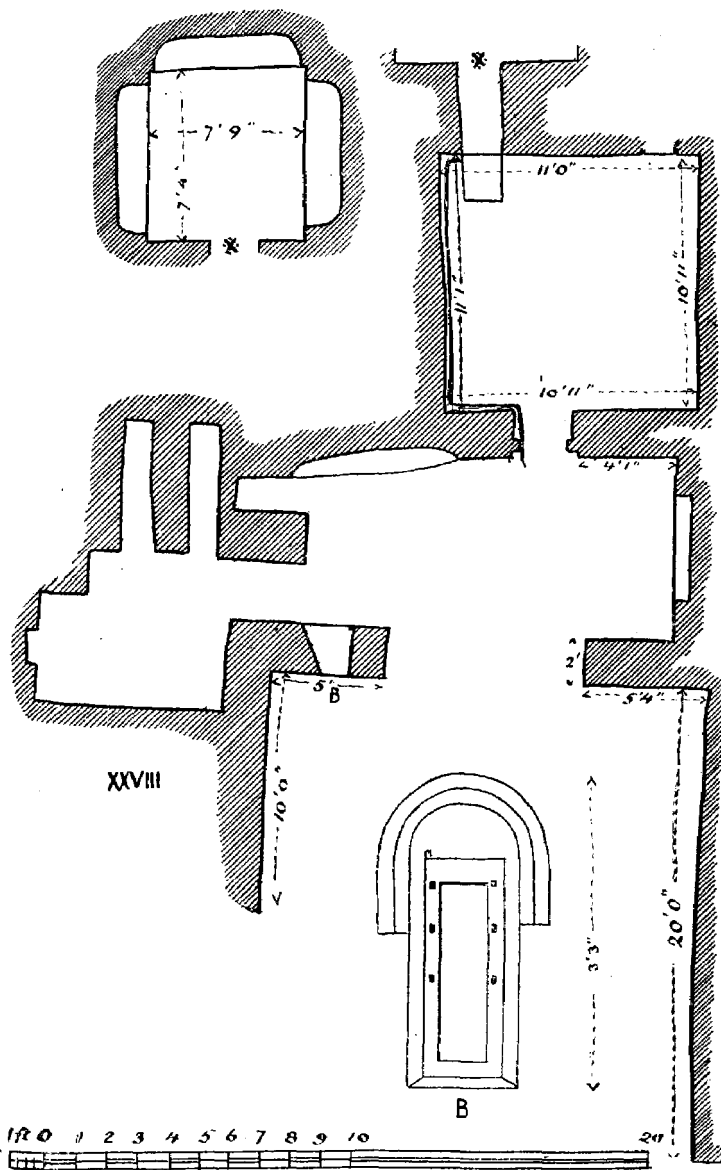
door. This of course involves the abandoning of the reading *ἀγαπήτου* at the end of the second line, though it is consistent with all the traces.<sup>1</sup> There is a raised kok or similar shaft to the right of the doorway leading to this chamber. On the west side is a roughly-quarried chamber with one arcosolium and one kok. Over the arcosolium are two holes broken through the rock-wall, which are either windows to the chamber, or else attempts at kokim that were started here owing to a miscalculation of the thickness of wall. The latter suggestion is barely credible; and as we have already found a window in the 41st tomb of this series, and will find a well-made one in No. 62, there is nothing incredible in the former hypothesis. Windows are very rare in rock-cut tombs. One well-known example is in the so-called "Garden tomb" under the so-called "Gordon's Calvary."

Beside the door of the last-mentioned chamber is inscription No. 14.

62. (Plan XXVIII; Query, Tobler, 6; Baedeker, 6. Tobler's description seems very inexact).—A deep vestibule, no less than 20 feet long on the western side, gives access by a fine high, moulded doorway to a chamber that has suffered considerably from quarrying. Its most noticeable features are the peculiar window (at B on the plan) already referred to. This has been closed at some time by a movable board, turning on a horn, and secured by bars, the sockets for which remain. There is a round-headed drip-mould over the opening. In this first chamber are two arcosolia, singularly shallow and low; though of the proper length, their smallness in other dimensions, and their exposed situation, makes it doubtful whether they were ever intended for the reception of bodies: but it is difficult to assign any other explanation of their existence. To the left of this chamber is a smaller cell, with kokim, so blocked with rubbish that it is next to impossible to enter and measure it. Behind is a square chamber, absolutely without features, except one blocked kok in the south wall; and a sunk passage, opening below the south wall and communicating with a chamber that has been adapted as a cistern: the walls are plastered, and a water groove has been cut running along the side of the plain square chamber already

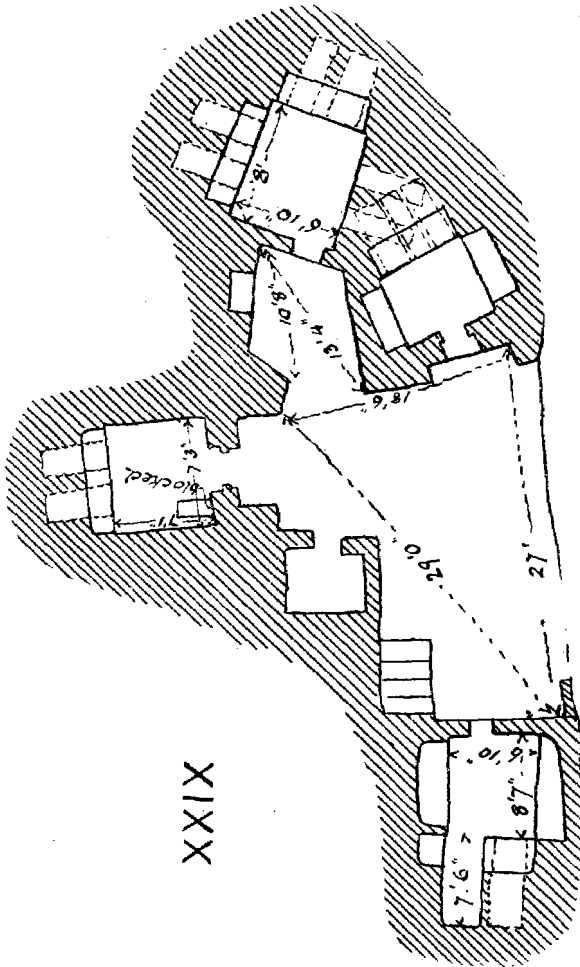
<sup>1</sup> I see that Tobler noticed this inscription in his account of the tombs, but he recovered a few letters only, just sufficient to identify it—

ΓΟ . . | ΕΡ . . . Ν . . . Γ . . . . | ΥΠ . . .



described. This chamber cannot therefore be entered except in summer. It will be found to contain three arcosolia.

63. (Plan XXIX; Tobler, 5; Baedeker, 5).—This is another tomb of the type exemplified by No. 61: a central open vestibule



with a number of independent single chambers opening off it. The vestibule is irregular in the present case, and possibly has been added to from time to time as occasion required. As in the case of No. 61, the north side of the vestibule is the edge of the



precipice. Commencing on the east and working round, we find, first, an irregular chamber, with an arcosolium on the north and on the south; there was also another on the east, the ends of which remain; but a passage has at some time been cut through it, interrupting it. There is a kokim under the arcosolium to the north of this passage, and possibly this passage is an adaptation of another. Unfortunately the suggestion did not occur to me till after I had left Jerusalem, so that I was unable to test it by examining the pick marks. Next to this chamber comes a flight of steps, four or five in number, overgrown with earth and grass; these formed the original approach to the vestibule. Next comes a small square chamber, containing no features that I could observe; as it was full of rubbish and the door was almost quite blocked up at the time of my visit, I was unable to measure it. We then come to a fine moulded doorway, behind which is a smaller door opening into a room with arcosolium and two kokim under it on the south side, and on the north the blocked sunk entrance to another chamber that must extend under the vestibule. After this we reach an irregular extension of the vestibule westward, perhaps a late addition to the system, which has on the south a niche, and on the west a chamber, having two kokim in each of the sides not occupied by the door, and in addition an arcosolium on the west and south sides over the kokim. Last comes another chamber, also too full of rubbish at the time of my visit to be measured, but containing arcosolia, one on each of three sides; under that to the west are three kokim. Over the door of the latter chamber is inscription No. 14. This has been cleaned since I saw and described it first, and it now appears (as Tobler noticed) that the incised letters were picked out in red.

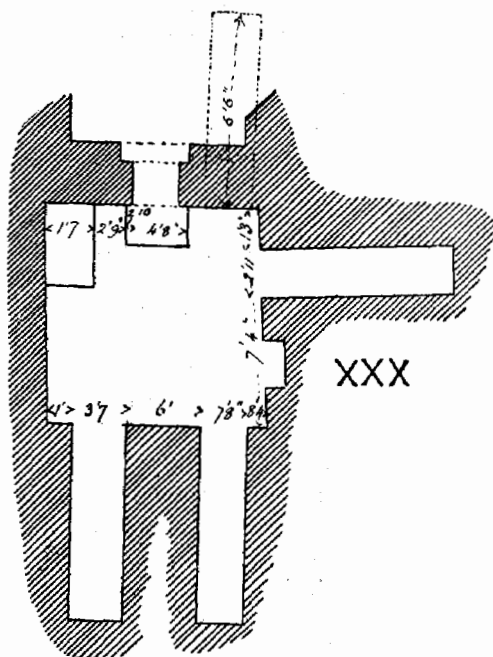
64. (Plan XXX; Tobler, 2; Baedeker, 2).—This is a single chamber with four kokim and a niche, disposed as shown on the plan on next page. In the north-west corner is a rectangular sunk depression.

65. Remains of a moulded door, all that is left of a chamber that has fallen in; the ruins have become full of earth, and are concealed by grass. The chamber measured about 11 feet 5 inches by 9 feet. This may be Tobler's No. 4, described by him as a buried chamber with 10 kokim towards the east.

66. (Plan XXXI; Tobler, 1; Baedeker, 1).—A tomb consisting of three chambers one behind another. The first, which has a fine moulded door, is of the nature of a vestibule, and has no

features; the second has six kokim, three on each of the sides, not occupied by doorways; the third is of the common type, with three arcosolia.

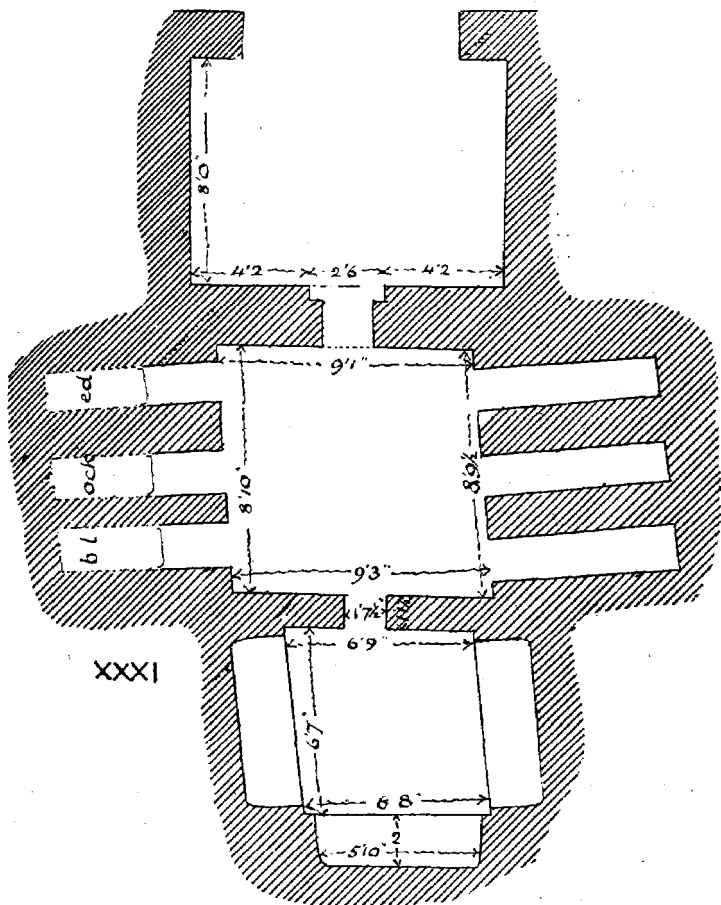
This completes the series of tombs existing in the Wâdy er-Rababi. It is probable that they belong to widely different dates, though there is little to help us in assigning a period to any of them. The very late date that has been fixed upon this cemetery—ninth or tenth century—rests mainly on the false reading that



connects the Abbess Thecla of inscription 14 with the Princess Thecla Augusta; this identification cannot be maintained. Some of the tombs, like Ferdûs er-Rûm and the elaborate excavations now inside the Aeldama Monastery, I believe to date from before the destruction of Jerusalem; relying on a comparison between them and a small but similar tomb north of the city, which, having a Hebrew inscription upon it, is presumably older than 70 A.D. The tombs which show Christian inscriptions or symbols must naturally be of later date, but it is remarkable that none of

these more ornate tombs display any such marks. The diaper of crosses outside the door of Ferdûs er-Rûm has, of course, nothing to do with its original purpose.

The signs of reappropriation (in the "chapel," No. 60) and of extension and alteration (in No. 63) seem to show that we



cannot place all this series of monuments in the latest period of tomb-cutting. The date on the tomb of Pachomios would be more valuable if we knew for certain to what era it is calculated.

But one thing is clear: that no deductions can be drawn respecting the date of a rock-tomb from its plan or from the

nature of the graves it contains. Kokim and arcosolia seem to have been used quite indifferently at the same periods.

As an appendix to this paper I give revised measurements (for which I have been requested) of the rock-tomb north of Jerusalem that I described some time ago in the *Quarterly Statement* :—

| —                | Kokim.            | North.                              | South.             | East.              | West.              |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                  | ft. ins.          | ft. ins.                            | ft. ins.           | ft. ins.           | ft. ins.           |
| Vestibule .. ..  | —                 | 10 7 $\frac{1}{2}$                  | 11 2               | 17 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 16 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Chamber II .. .. | —                 | (broken)                            | 13 9               | 13 3               | 12 9               |
| "  III .. ..     | 6 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 7 8                                 | 7 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 7 9                | 7 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  |
| "  IV .. ..      | 6 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 7 9                                 | 8 3                | 7 10               | 7 11               |
| "  V .. ..       | 6 7               | 8 0 $\frac{1}{2}$                   | 7 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 8 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  | 8 2                |
| Passage .. ..    | ..                | 7 feet 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. |                    |                    |                    |
| Chamber VI .. .. | —                 | 7 4 $\frac{3}{4}$                   | 7 6                | 7 10               | 7 7                |

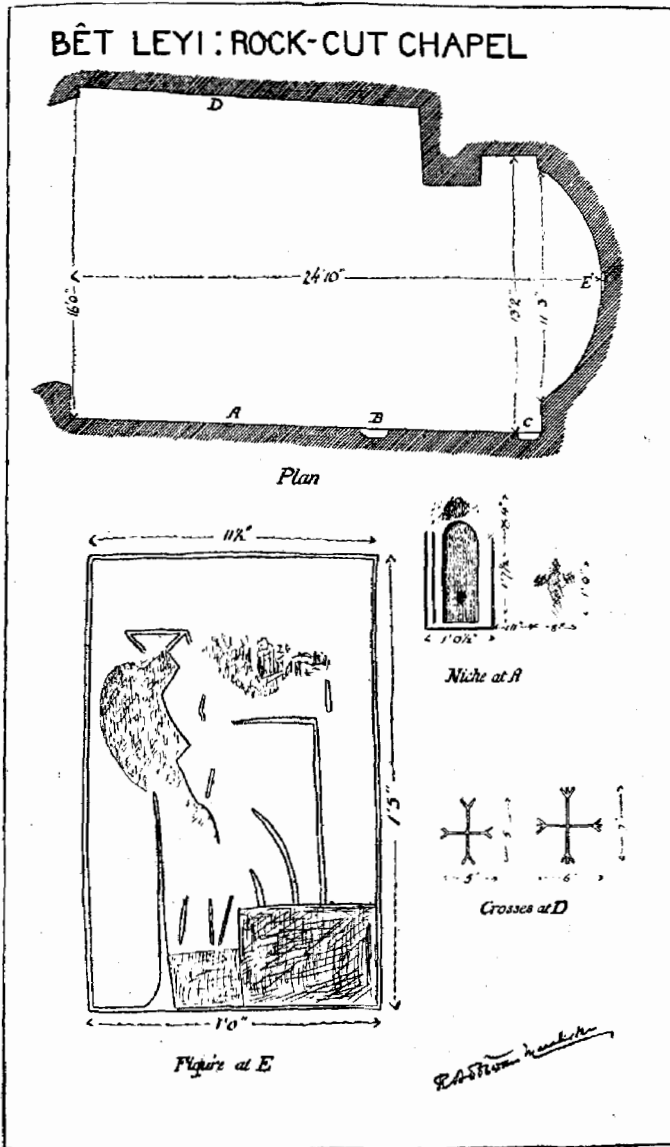
I have attempted to draw no metrological inferences from these or other measurements. Before such speculations are entered upon, it is necessary to assure ourselves that these rough excavations were not cut more or less by "rule of thumb"; and in the majority of cases I cannot feel convinced that this was not the method employed.

## 2. ON A ROCK-CUT CHAPEL AT BEIT LEYI.

In examining the literature of the rock-cuttings of the Shephelah, my attention was arrested by the following passage in M. Clermont-Ganneau's "Archæological Researches," vol. ii, p. 444:—

"At E'râk Abu 'l-'Amed . . . there are some graffiti and curious symbols on one of the inner walls, which would be worth copying. We had no time to do this."

Desirous of examining these symbols, I asked one of our workmen, who had a considerable acquaintance with the local topography, if he was acquainted with the cave in question. He assured me that he knew it well. I put myself under his guidance, and he brought me to a cave under the mound bearing the uninteresting ruins of Beit Leyi, which he assured me was the cave I wanted; but I could find nothing on its walls except some



crosses with bifid, and others with crosslet, ends to the arms—the former a common type in this neighbourhood. I examined several other caves that I saw close by, in the hope that in one of these the marks which I was seeking might be found, but without result, and was forced to give up the search. Some days afterwards my guide came to me and placidly informed me that none of the caves we had visited was the genuine 'Arâk Abu 'l-'Amed,<sup>1</sup> and that he was in a position to show the right cave to me. Unfortunately our stay at Sandahannah was at the time rapidly drawing to a close, and no other opportunity presented itself.

I am therefore unable to say anything of the graffiti found by M. Clermont-Gauneau; but my journey was not altogether fruitless, for one of the caves turned out to be a remarkably interesting little rock-cut chapel, which seemed to me well worth measuring and describing.

The plan and details are shown in the accompanying plate. It consists of a four-sided nave, no doubt meant to be rectangular, with an aisle-like extension northward, and a shallow apse at the eastern end. The entrance is at the west. The excavation has long been used as a sheepfold, and the floor is covered to within 5 feet of the roof with rubbish and dirt. The tooling of the walls is rather different from that commonly found in the rock-cuttings; on the south side it resembles that of the Romanesque chamber in 'Arak el-Khêl, but on the north the surface is not so smooth. The west wall is broken away, and its place is supplied by loose stones. The apse is shallow and wide; the sweep of the curve is not regular.

On the south wall, at A on the plan, is a niche, apparently for a statue, with a plug-hole to secure it at the back. There are attempts at moulding on the sides of the niche. At the side of the niche a cross was cut, now partly hacked away; and at the top there seems to have been another, which has been entirely destroyed. At B is a plain niche, apparently for a light; it has a semi-circular top, and measures 1 foot 5 inches by 1 foot 5 inches by 7 inches in depth. At C is a similar niche or light-hole.

On the north wall, at D, are two crosses with bifid ends to the arms.

In the centre of the apse a figure subject has been cut, in a

<sup>1</sup> From the map I see that the cave is quite close to Beit Leyi, but I somehow missed it.

sunk panel, but it has been nearly destroyed by Fellaḥ iconoclasts. On the plate is given a copy of what remains, with dimensions figured; this is a facsimile of a drawing made on scale paper on the spot. It is, perhaps, hazardous to offer a suggestion on the subject of this engraving. The lower portion seems evidently intended for drapery, and the few fragments that remain are, perhaps, not wholly inconsistent with a figure of the Virgin and Child. In making this suggestion I am possibly influenced by the fact that there are persistent rumours of the existence somewhere among the caves of Beit Jibrīn and its neighbourhood of an engraving of a woman and her child—no one could say where, though I made particular enquiries. All attempts at localising stories of figures engraved on the walls of caves filtered down to the well-known *orantes* in 'Arak el-Mâ, which were the only such graffiti to which any natives I interrogated were able to point. Apparently they were not aware of two similar figures which I found for myself in the Sandahannah caves. The woman and child story (immensely exaggerated beyond anything I heard) was told to M. Clermont-Ganneau by one Ya'kûb Banayôt, and by him localised in a certain *Mugharet esh-Shems*. I made several enquiries after this cave of the sun, but got so many different answers about it that I gave up the search for it in despair. Everyone knew it well, of course, but no two agreed as to whether it was close beside Beit Jibrīn, or two hours' journey from it, west or south from it; or whether it was a small ruined hole filled up with its own *débris*, or an immense excavation of the Beit Jibrīn type.

Returning to the Beit Leyi chapel, it should be mentioned that the panel containing the figure is 1 foot 6 inches below the roof, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches above the present surface of the ground. There is a small plain cross scratched on the wall to the left of it.

The other caves visited by me at Beit Leyi are as follows:—

- (1) Large cave with five chambers of the ordinary type; three crosses and some niches on the walls.
- (2, 3) Uninteresting caves, one adapted as an olive or wine press.
- (4) Irregular four-sided chamber, 16 paces by 11 across, with a number of shallow cells (like wide, short kokim) all round.

- (5) Two irregular chambers, of common type, united by a passage.
- (6) Large excavation supported by three pillars; several grain pits sunk in its floor. There is a doorway raised some height above the ground, approached by a dangerous series of foot-and-hand holes; this no doubt leads to an extension of the cave, which, however, I did not explore.

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### 3. TOMB-KOHL.

Among the objects found in the tombs briefly referred to in the *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1900, p. 337, and to be more fully described in the forthcoming memoir, was a minute fragment of a glass vase, containing a small quantity of black powder, apparently Kohl. An analysis of this powder, and of the scrap of glass enclosing it, was kindly undertaken by Mr. J. E. Purvis, assistant to the Professor of Chemistry in Cambridge University. He reports as follows:—"The glass vessel I found to be an ordinary silicate, which had become devitrified and coloured by oxide of iron, the iron being probably in the sand (silica) used in the manufacture of the glass. The contents were principally finely divided lead along with some dirt." There was no trace of antimony in the composition, which thus appears to have been a cheap imitation of the cosmetic prepared for purposes of sepulture.

Further, Mr. Purvis reports:—"Between the contents and the glass, and forming a thin coating to the glass, was a greenish layer of a copper compound, probably a basic carbonate of copper." As no copper appears either in the glass or its contents this must have been independent of both, and it seems most probable that there was originally a thin sheet of copper foil in which the Kohl was wrapped up for sale or storage. The packet, foil and all, was deposited in the glass vessel; but the foil has disappeared, and its existence can be demonstrated by chemical tests only.

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### 4. THE ES-SÜK INSCRIPTION.

I must thank Professor Clermont-Ganneau for his valuable comments on my reading of this inscription (*Quarterly Statement*, 1901, p. 116). I did not leave it without considering the translation which he proposes; had I known of the existence of Simé





FIG. 1.—Assyrian Tablet found at Gezer.



FIG. 2.—Assyrian Tablet found at Gezer.

as a proper name I might probably not have rejected it so easily, but I am obliged to confess that I was either unaware of or had forgotten the fact that such a name is to be found. Taking *σιμή* as an adjective, the inscription "the snub-nosed girl seems pretty to me," appeared a much less likely sentiment to be found scribbled in a burial-place than an expression of appreciation of the obvious symmetry and beauty of the cave itself. I knew, of course, that in taking *σιμή* as a noun = *cave*, I was assuming a *ἄπαξ λεγόμενον*, and that this was a weak point in my rendering; though *ἄπαξ λεγόμενα* are not unknown in readings generally accepted without question.

As to the use of *σιμός* in the sense of "hollow," Liddell and Scott give two apposite quotations: *ἡ γαστήρ τῶν ἀδείπνων σιμή* from Xenophon's *Cyropædeia* and *χείρ σιμή* from Athenæus. However, taking *Σιμή* as a proper name, I have no difficulty in accepting Professor Clermont-Ganneau's interpretation.

I think, however, that the name of Simê's admirer cannot be *Ἀνικατείδης*, as I carefully examined the first letter in order to see if it could unite with the following characters to make anything articulate. In my opinion, we are restricted to *Νικατείδης*, with a preceding initial.

There is a squeeze of the inscription, which I took and forwarded to the Fund office some time ago.

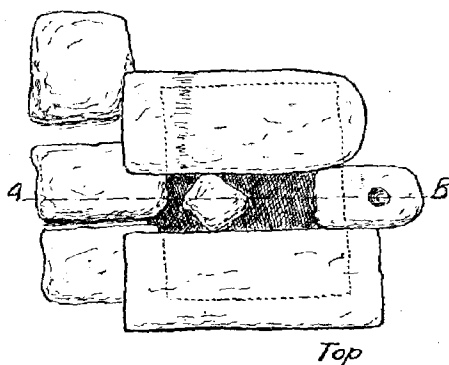
##### 5. ON A SEPULCHRAL CIST NEAR TELL SANDAHANNAH.

In the *Quarterly Statement* for July, 1900, p. 222, I described a dolmen which I found in the neighbourhood of Bêt Jibrin, and which was then the first example of a megalithic sepulchral monument discovered in Western Palestine. I have since had the good fortune to find another, of a different type and in many respects even more interesting, which lies in a valley about a quarter of an hour's walk south of Tell Sandahaunah.

It lies by the side of a road, which has been levelled up to the top surface of its eastern end; the whole of the western end is above ground. It consists of a chamber, 60 centimètres (2 feet) high, 1·98 mètres (6 feet 6 inches) north to south, 1·67 mètres (5 feet 6 inches) east to west,<sup>1</sup> built up of small boulders; the three at the western end of the chamber are of larger size than

<sup>1</sup> The orientation is slightly south of east.

the others. Upon these, and on the sides of the chamber, rest two great stones, about 2.15 mètres (slightly over 7 feet) long, 91 centimètres (3 feet) broad, and 32 centimètres (1 foot 7 inches) deep. There is a space between them 50 centimètres (1 foot 8 inches) wide. In this space, about the middle, is intercepted an irregular stone which apparently has accidentally fallen or been thrown into its present position; and, at the eastern end, a stone 91 centimètres (3 feet long), 50 centimètres (1 foot 8 inches) broad, and of the same depth as the cover stones, which certainly is part of the original design of



*Top*



*Section AB*

the monument. The outline of the chamber is represented by dotted lines in the cut.

Most interesting of all, in the centre of the upper surface of the latter stone is a small cup-mark, 1.78 centimètres (7 inches) broad, and 1.52 centimètres (6 inches) deep. It seems quite reasonable to assume that this cup is a receptacle for offerings to the shade of the deceased, as has been assumed by Professor Montelius and other archæologists of universal reputation, in the case of similar markings found in association with similar monuments in other parts of the world.