

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

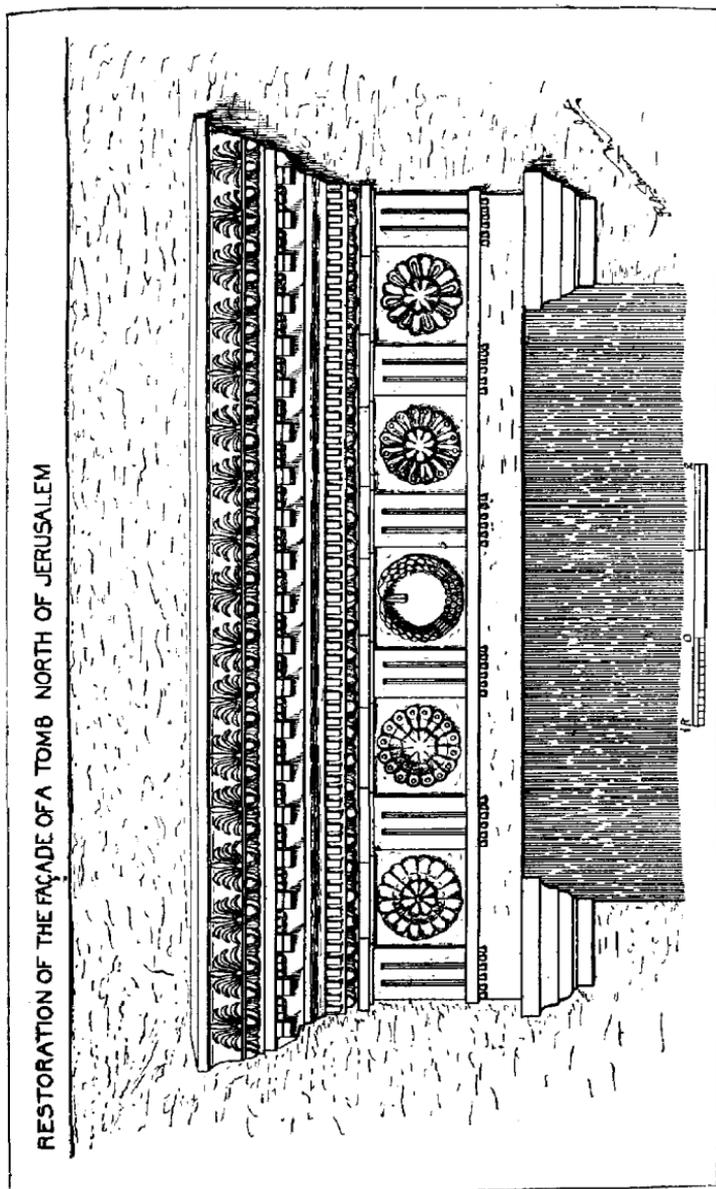
I.—THE NEWLY-DISCOVERED TOMB NORTH OF JERUSALEM.

PÈRE HUGUES VINCENT of Jerusalem rarely leaves any gleanings for his successors after he has examined an ancient monument, and there is little to add to his excellent article upon this fine tomb in the "Revue Biblique" (July, 1901, p. 448). There seems to me, however, to be one detail on which a further suggestion might be made. On the wall of the vestibule are several crosses, nearly all of which will be found to be accompanied with **A—Ω** on the sides of the stem (Père Vincent has recorded one only with these letters, but I think he will find at least four). In two of these the order of the letters is reversed, the **Ω** appearing on the left hand, the **A** on the right hand side of the stem of the cross. This very unusual arrangement suggests another reading to Père Vincent, who seems half inclined to regard the badly made **Ω** as a **Φ**.

I cannot follow this reading, and feel no doubt that the scribbler who cut these crosses intended the symbols *alpha* and *omega*. The reversal of the letters is capable of being easily comprehended if we call up the picture of a pious Hebrew convert, able to write his own national language, but with no knowledge of the Greek tongue beyond the alphabet.¹ Such a person would have no idea that an order of writing from right to left involved a reversal of the symbols. The crosses in which the letters appear in the correct order may have been executed by another person with more knowledge, or by the same man after his eyes had been opened a little.

On the accompanying plate, an attempt has been made to restore the fine façade of this tomb, according to the remaining

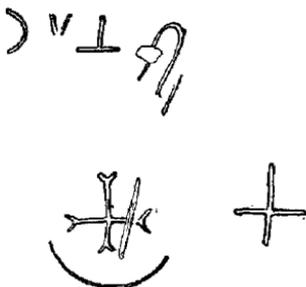
¹ [There is an interesting parallel to this in Halévy, "Revue Semitique," 1901, p. 370. Cuneiform is written from left to right, Phœnician from right to left. Now, on one of the Amarna tablets, which, as Halévy believes, were written by Phœnician scribes, the signs for *ag-ga* once appear as *ga-ag*, the scribe in a moment of inadvertence writing from right to left in accordance with the usage of his native language.—ED.]



indications. The projection of the cornice is the only purely hypothetical part of this restoration; enough remains of all the other members to make restoration certain, except, possibly, in the case of the row of honeysuckles in the top member; of this, the middle of one flower alone is left.

II.—INSCRIPTION FROM THE WÂDY SAMÂR.

I forward a sketch of the remains of an inscription I have noticed on a quarry scarp on the south side of the Wâdy Samâr, north of the Tombs of the Judges. The letters are Greek, but the remains are too meagre to be decipherable. The face with the remaining letters is sealed away. Close by is a tomb which has been destroyed by quarrying.



III.—THE ANCIENT NECROPOLIS AT KERM ESH-SHEIKH.

At the request of the Committee I examined this field, hoping to plan the tombs contained therein. I found, however, that all but two are closed up and inaccessible. These are Nos. 11 and 12 in Prof. Clermont-Ganneau's plan (*Quarterly Statement*, 1874, p. 96). Of the first of these, only one chamber can be entered; it is a commonplace cell with two sunk bench-graves, one on each side of the central passage. The second consists of a circular shaft, about 6 feet deep and 12 feet 6 inches in diameter, which has been used as a limekiln. On the south side is a doorway, 2 feet 4 inches across, leading into a rectangular chamber, 9 feet 8 inches north to south, 4 feet 7 inches east to west, and 5 feet high. The chamber is now plastered.

There are sunk depressions in the soil all over the field, evidently covering the shafts of tombs; and evident traces of mined chambers in the rock-scarps, on each side of the road running between Kerm esh-Sheikh and the city wall are visible.

IV.—FURTHER JAR-HANDLES WITH RHODIAN STAMPS.¹

Jar-handles, with the following stamps, have recently been picked up near Beit Jibrin :—

1.

* * *
ΑΡΙΣΤΑΡΧΟΥ
* * *

2.

HANNO

 in large, bold letters.²

3. A caduceus and rose in rectangular frame : no inscription.

4.

ΕΤΕΙ
.....

 (lower line rubbed).

5.

ΕΡΙΑΙΝΗΤΟ[Y]
ΡΑΝΑΜΟ[Y]

6.

ΕΠΙΚΑΛΛ
ΙΚΡΑ... Ε
ΥC

V.—THE "EGYPTIAN TOMB" AT SILWÂN.

I visited this most interesting little monument on January 21st, and made a careful study of the remains of the inscription over its door, found by Prof. Clermont-Ganneau.³

I cannot understand on what grounds its authenticity, as an actual old Hebrew inscription, has been called into question ; there does not seem to me any room for doubt that Prof. Clermont-Ganneau is right, and that we have the terminal letters (I should say probably **בר**) of an inscription destroyed by enlarging the door.

I have not seen in any account of the tomb a reference to the initial letter of the inscription, part of which still remains at the right-hand end. This is a **ל**, and is represented by the horizontal stroke at the bottom, and what seems to be the tip of the oblique upright stroke of the old Hebrew form of the letter (*l*). The rest is cut away.

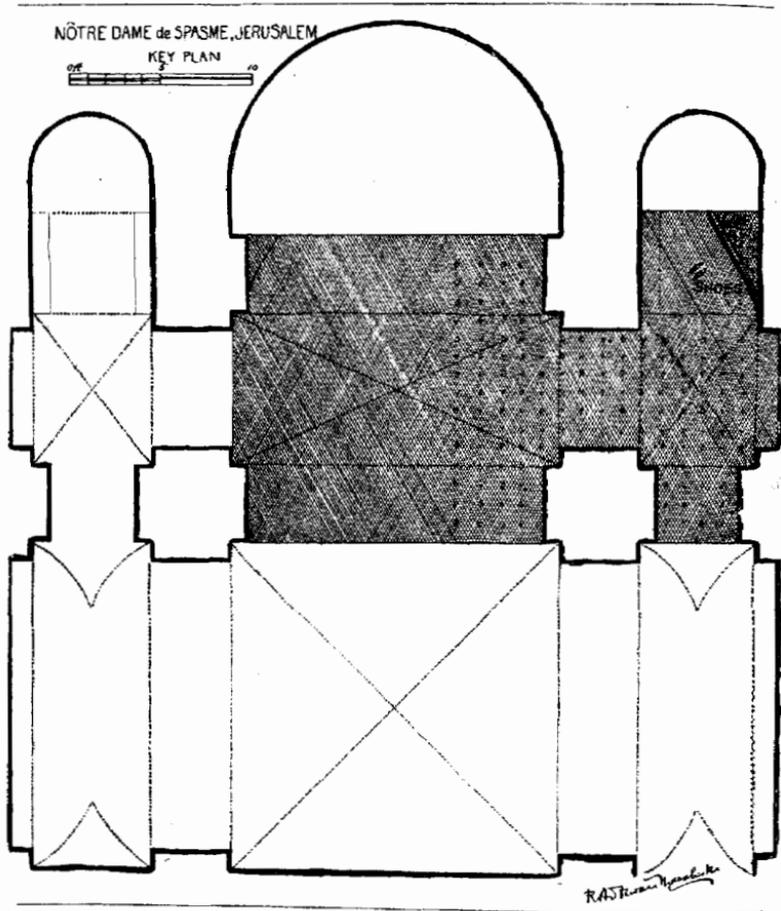
¹ See *Q.S.*, 1901, pp. 25, *et seq.*, 114, 124, *et seq.*, 394, *et seq.*

² [If correct, this is the most striking of the readings here published, on account of its curious identity with the Carthaginian name Hanno.—ED.]

³ "Archæological Researches in Palestine," vol. i, p. 313, *et seq.*

VI.—THE MOSAIC IN THE CHURCH OF NÔTRE DAME DE SPASME,
JERUSALEM.

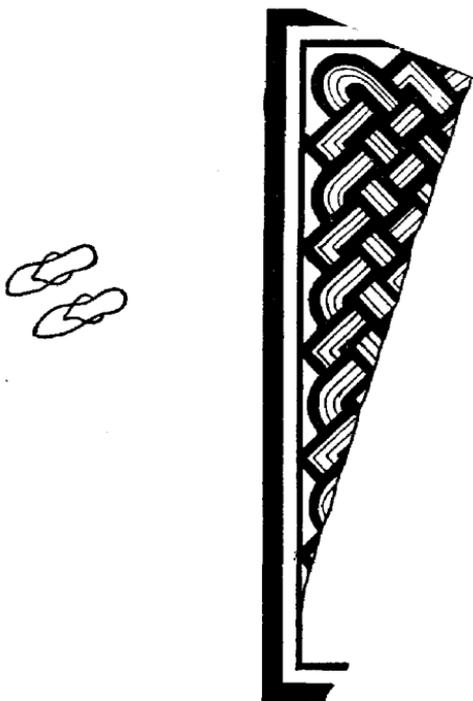
Here is shown the plan of the ancient Church of Nôtre Dame de Spasme, at the first corner of the Via Dolorosa, which will form the crypt of a handsome new building at present being erected by the Armenian Catholics.



The portion of the ancient church covered with mosaic is indicated on the plan. This is almost entirely a commonplace alternation of simple dots, alternately lozenge- and V-shaped,

outlined in black and filled in with red tesserae. At the corner of the southern apse, however, is the corner of a square filled with a guilloche of black, red, and yellow tesserae, in front of which are two shoes outlined in black and filled in with red.

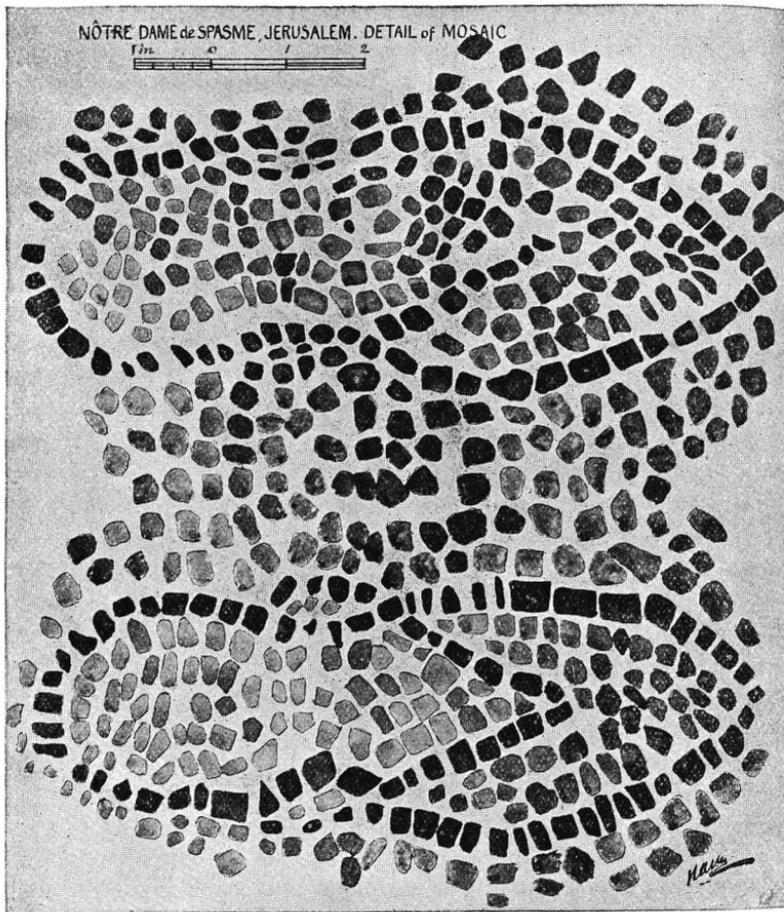
It is obvious that this square and the shoes belong to a mosaic older than the church, and older than the mosaic covering the rest of the church. The work is finer, and the difference in the tesserae perfectly clear on inspection of the original. There is,



moreover, an intermediate period, represented by a plain surface of yellow tesserae between the fragment containing the shoes and the surface ornamented with dots. That the fragment is older than the church, and not merely a portion of its original pavement, is demonstrated by the fact that the greater portion of the design is covered by the present wall. The portion not indicated on the plan is concealed.

The church marks the traditional site of the meeting of Christ and His mother; and there is little doubt that the shoes mark the

traditional foot-prints of the one or the other. Had the square been in front of the shoes it might have marked the standing-place of Christ; being behind we are left without data to aid



us in conjecturing its purpose, or the reason of its peculiar orientation.¹

¹ Father Morrison, whose name is well known at Jerusalem, informs me that in the Sacristy of the Church of Nôtre Dame de Beaucaire, joined by a bridge to Tarascon, he has seen a little shoe, said to have belonged to the Virgin, which in size and appearance resembles that shown on the mosaic copied by Mr. Macalister.—C. W. W.