been assaulted by people trying to break in, but so far it has resisted their efforts. The painted tombs are still intact. The third tomb among those specially noticed by Dr. Peters (that with the owls) is, however, no longer accessible; it has been filled with earth thrown in to its mouth from small tombs opened in its immediate neighbourhood. A fellah from Beit Jibrîn recently offered for sale to an English lady in Jerusalem a piece of plaster with an animal figure painted upon it. This does not belong to the great tomb with the frieze of animals, all of which are intact; it may possibly belong to another which is being concealed, but on this I could get no information. The most curious recent discovery is a cave of the Sandalâannah type, consisting of three large bell-shaped chambers clustered round a central entrance shaft, with a staircase running down round its sides. In the floor of the central chamber of the three is sunk a square well shaft 41 feet deep; at the bottom is a spring, and about a foot of water.

THE PACHOMIOS INSCRIPTION IN WADY ER-RABÂBI.

By R. A. Stewart Macalister, M.A., F.S.A.

This inscription was first published in the Quarterly Statement for 1890 (p. 70) by Dr. Schick, in the course of a report on some newly-opened tombs near the Aceldama. A reading by M. Papadoculos (Papadopoulos), with comments by Dr. A. S. Murray, was appended. The
letter is perfect, and it is quite certain there never were any more characters than those given in the following transcript:—

ΕΤΑΦΗΤΙΧΕΚΟΣΤΙ
ΠΑΧΟΜΙΟΣΛΙΨΗ

The loop of the Φ is at the top of the upright, the little I strokes rather under the right-hand ends of the horizontal bars of the T's in the middle and at the end of the first line: the Υ is cut thus—aday, but with the horizontal bar rather oblique. In the second line the Ψ is sloping, but cannot possibly be anything but Ψ; the Η are in ligature, the horizontal bar of the H being oblique.

In my own attempt at interpretation I was reduced to the desperate expedient of treating Τι as a word-separator, and regarding the resultant ΕΚΟΣ as a humiliative epithet. The most that I could ever claim for this reading is that it is not impossible; if I am not wrong, such names as Ρςνη, Ίμα, Στέρκος, &c., are not unknown to Christian epigraphy.

The other readings, excepting Père Germer-Durand's, fail in the interpretation of the letters following ΕΤΑΦΗ. It is quite impossible to combine the Η into Η, or to read ινων ΤΙ as by any system of spelling the equivalent of ιν. This is the flaw in the brilliantly ingenious reading of Professor Clermont-Ganneau. The reading of M. Papadopoulos makes no complete sense, for "Pachomios of Lychisdos (?) was buried on the twentieth" means nothing; that of Dr. Murray assumes a lost beginning to the inscription, which is out of the question.

Père Germer-Durand's ΕΤΑΦΗ π. Η ΕΚΟΣΤΙ ΠΑΧΟΜΙΟΣ Λ. ΨΗ ("P. was buried on the 20th day of —— month, in the year 758") takes the Η as a symbol for a month, and Λ as an initial for "year." As a general rule, however, Λ is the abbreviation for "year," not Λ. This reading is the simplest and most straightforward, and the most in accordance with the actual letters as they are found on the rock-surface. But the insertion of the personal name between the month and the year strikes the reader as being strange and improbable. It is, of course, possible (but unlikely) that the first two words to be cut were:—

ΕΤΑΦΗ
ΠΑΧΟΜΙΟΣ

and that the date was afterwards filled in at the ends of the lines rather than below, where the rock-surface is rougher. For Λ ΨΗ, Λ ηψ should, of course, be read.

Here, then, we have a short inscription in Greek, absolutely legible and uninjured, and yet five persons who have turned their attention to
THE "BUCKLER" OF HAMZA.

DR. D'ERF WHEELER, the Honorary Secretary of the Fund in Jerusalem, writes that the photograph of the "buckler" of Hamza, the uncle of Muhammad, was taken by the Rev. J. E. Hanauer from a replica in metal which now hangs in the large hall of the Armenian Patriarchate. Mr. Hanauer stated that he remembered the original, which appeared to be of bronze. "It disappeared about 17 years ago, and was said to have been sent to Constantinople. The copy in the Armenian Convent was made about 30 years ago by the Armenian Patriarch himself, who was a very clever man."

According to Dr. Schick (Beit el-Makdas, 1st edition, 1887, p. 12), the "buckler" formerly stood on an antique marble altar at the south-west pier of the "Dome of the Rock," and was "a round metal plate about 80 centimètres in diameter,1 with very beautiful bird and animal forms in circles round it. . . . In the middle, on the reverse side, is a round.

1 The actual diameter of the replica is 67 cm., or 2 feet 2½ inches.