

## 'AIN EL-ḲUṢ'AH.

By R. A. STEWART MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

THIS curious rock-cutting is situated on the north side of the road from el-Bīreh to Beitīn. It is one of the most remarkable of the rock-cut waterworks in the Jerusalem district.

At the 'Ain the road runs at the foot of a perpendicular cliff, 15 feet in height. Above this is a smooth rock platform, about 11 feet 6 inches in average breadth, behind which the rock again rises up the hillside



FIG. 1.—Large Cistern in Lower Scarp, from the North-West.

though not so steeply as below. The various members of the system may therefore be described according as they are in the upper scarp, the platform, the lower scarp, or the pathway at the foot. The total length of the system is 150 feet.

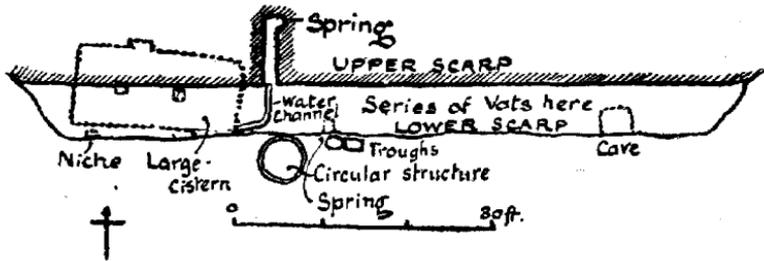
In the upper scarp the only detail is the channel from which some of the water issues. It is artificial, about 5 feet in height and 2 feet 6 inches in breadth; the length is 16 feet 4 inches. At the inner end it turns round at right angles into a small, low, roughly circular chamber about 5 feet in diameter. The direction of this passage is almost north and south (compass reading 170 degrees, facing the entrance).

On the platform are cut a series of shallow vats, round and square, some of them connected by channels. These are usually found about important sources of water supply, and no doubt were made for watering cattle, washing clothes, and similar purposes. The vats in the present example, however, are less deep than usual. Besides the vats, there is cut a long, deep channel, continuing the watercourse from the rock-cut tunnel already described. This runs straight across the platform, and then turns abruptly westward. It carried water down to the cistern in the lower part of the system.

The various members of the lower scarp and the pathway may be taken together. They are (proceeding from west to east)--

(1) A small niche in the rock.

(2) A large cistern, 24 feet 9 inches broad, 37 feet 3 inches long, and between 6 and 7 feet high. The roof is supported by two square pillars. The walls show remains of plastering. The cistern was once



Sketch-plan of 'Ain el Kuṣ'ah-

closed up to the top, and contained deep water, as water lines remain on some fragments of the plaster, but now a large irregular doorway has been broken in the south-west corner, and a small channel cut through the rock underneath it, so that the cistern cannot contain more than about 1 foot 6 inches depth of water. The floor is covered to a depth of about 1 foot with soft mud. The walls and pillars are covered with a luxuriant growth of maiden-hair fern.

In the north wall of this cistern there is a cruciform recess, about 4 feet wide and 2 feet deep, extending the whole height of the excavation. Water drips slowly from the roof in this recess, and possibly also rises from the floor. There is apparently a spring in connexion with the cistern, but, owing to its gentleness and to the mud deposit on the floor, it is impossible to determine where it is with exactness. There is also a hole broken through to the channel running from the tunnel in the upper scarp, but it is almost choked, and water merely trickles through it.

(3) In the middle of the path is a curious circular structure, built (not rock-cut), 11 feet 9 inches in diameter. One row of stones only remains,

fair-faced on the inside surface. It is impossible without excavation to tell what this may be : it is possibly the mouth of a large cistern at a yet lower level, which had been filled up before the path took its present direction. The channel from the tunnel in the upper scarp appears intended to direct water to this supposed cistern.

(4) In the face of the cliff is cut a small tunnel into which it is just possible to enter ; out of this flows a stream of water that takes its rise at the end of the tunnel (about 4 feet from the face of the scarp) in a small fissure in the rock. The water falls into a trough, and is conveyed thence into a second : the first trough is oval, the second rectangular. They are beside the pathway, and are used for watering cattle. From the second trough the water flows away over the surface of the ground.

(5) The last detail of the system is a small, square cave cut in the face of the rock, at the eastern end of the scarp.

There is no indication whatever of the date of the rock-cuttings.

My attention was first directed to this spring by Dr. Peters, of New York, who visited it with Mr. Hanauer. It does not seem to have ever been fully described, though Mr. Hanauer (who has referred to it in the *Quarterly Statement* of last January, p. 80) tells me it has been mentioned by different writers under different names—'Ain el-Ghazal, 'Ain el-Haramiyeh, and 'Ain el-Ḳassīs. The last is the name under which it is denoted in the Ordnance Map : there is no reference to it in the accompanying memoir. The true name, as Mr. Hanauer informed me, and as I verified by several inquiries on the spot, is عين القصة 'Ain el-Ḳuṣṣah, the "spring of the pot"—possibly referring to the circular foundation in the middle of the pathway.

## GREEK AND LATIN INSCRIPTIONS.

THE Rev. J. E. Hanauer sends squeezes of three small Greek and Latin inscriptions, for the readings of which we are indebted to Canon Hicks :—

1. A Greek inscription on a small marble slab, rather prettily carved, broken in several pieces, but now forming part of the floor of a room in the "Friends' Boys' School" at Rámallah. It is of unequal length, one side being 1·65 cm. long, and the other 1·20 cm. only. The breadth is 54 cm., the diameter of circular panels 27 cm. Mr. Hanauer remarks that the stone, which was shown to him by Mr. Grant, the Principal, is said to have been brought from Deir Diwân. It reads :—

† Ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύσεως Σηλάμωνος πρεσβ(υτέρου).  
 "For the repose of Selamon, a Presbyter."

Canon Hicks adds that the monument looks like part of a sarcophagus, and that the writing is probably of the third century A.D.