

## CENTURIAL INSCRIPTIONS ON THE SYPHON OF THE HIGH-LEVEL AQUEDUCT AT JERUSALEM.

By Major-General Sir CHARLES WILSON, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., &c.

THE inscriptions found by Mr. Hanauer on the tubes of the stone syphon (Fig. 1), discovered by Mr. Dickson near "Rachel's Tomb,"<sup>1</sup> belong to the same group as those published by

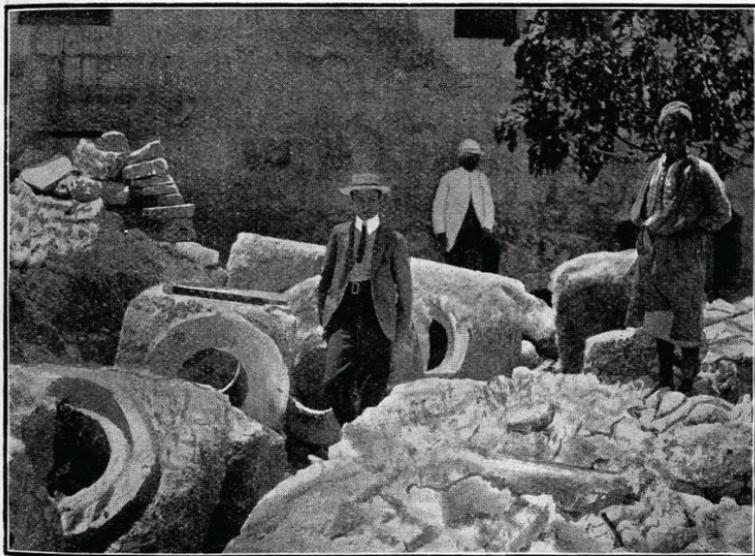


FIG. 1.—Disjointed Tubes of the Stone Syphon.

M. Clermont-Ganneau and Father Germer-Durand.<sup>2</sup> The latter furnish the names of five centurions—Pomponius, Severus, Quartus, Vitalis, and Aurelianus (?) The new inscriptions<sup>3</sup> may be read > (*centuria*) *Valeri(i)*, *Aemili(ani)* (Fig. 2, p. 76), and > (*centuria*) *Natalis*,—the "century commanded by Valerius Aemilianus" and

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Statement*, 1904, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Recueil d'Arch. Orient.*, vol. iv, p. 206 *sqq.*; *Quarterly Statement*, 1901, p. 119 *sqq.*; *Echos d'Orient*, December, 1901.

<sup>3</sup> A third inscription is illegible on the photographs and squeezes which have been forwarded.

the "century commanded by Natalis." Mr. F. Haverfield, the highest authority in this country on Roman antiquities, informs me that they are centurial inscriptions of the ordinary type, and such as occur by scores on the Roman wall between Newcastle and Carlisle. They denote that the two centuries, with the aid possibly of forced native labour, constructed that part of the work in which the stones occur. The natural inference from the series of "centurial stones" found in the syphon is that the aqueduct is Roman, and

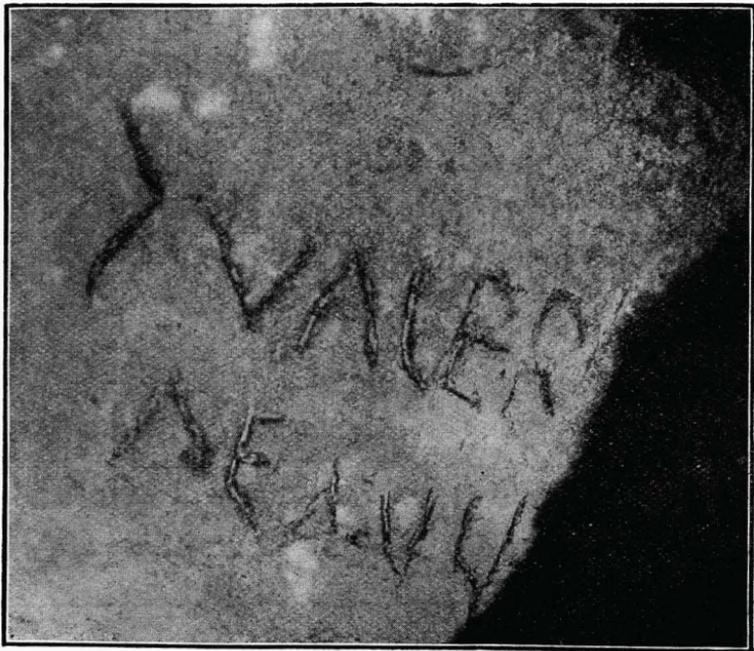


FIG. 2.—Centurial Inscription.

military.<sup>1</sup> The date of the inscriptions is uncertain. The lettering is rude, but need not be late; the explanation of COB · ICLEMENT~~ZZ~~, in *Quarterly Statement*, 1901, pp. 119 *sqq.*, is almost certainly wrong.

It is possible, however, that the "High-Level Aqueduct," with its inverted stone syphon, is pre-Roman, but very extensively

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Haverfield points out that there was an inverted syphon under the river in the course of a Roman aqueduct at Lyons. He refers to Lenthéric, *le Rhône* i, 384; Merckel, *Ingenieurtechnik im Alterthum*, pp. 560, 562; and Vitruvius, viii, 6.

repaired by the Romans. There are examples of similar syphons at Patara, Laodicea, and other places in Asia Minor which are usually supposed to be Greek; and the syphon in the Jerusalem aqueduct may have been constructed by Greek engineers<sup>1</sup> for Herod the Great. It may reasonably be inferred from the description which Josephus gives<sup>2</sup> of the irrigated gardens and fountains of Herod's fortified palace in the "Upper City" that they were provided with a constant supply of running water; and the only known conduit capable of delivering a steady stream of water at the required level is the "High-Level Aqueduct." Before the Roman army closed round Jerusalem the Jews, after filling all the tanks and cisterns within the city, would break the aqueducts so as to increase the difficulties of the besiegers; and it is quite conceivable that a large portion of the stone syphon was destroyed at this time. When Jerusalem fell, and the "Upper City" was converted into a Legionary Fortress, the complete restoration of the "High-Level Aqueduct" and its stone syphon must have been a matter of prime importance to the garrison; and it is possible that the centurions mentioned in the inscriptions were officers of the famous Tenth Legion, Fretensis. If the "High-Level Aqueduct" be not Herodian, the arrangements for the supply of water to the royal palace and its gardens must remain for the present an unsolved mystery.<sup>3</sup>

A closer examination than has yet been made of the rock-hewn portion of the conduit, and, if possible, of the tubes at the commencement of the syphon, is very desirable. If the "High-Level Aqueduct" was originally military and Roman, inscriptions will be found, probably, in the rock-hewn channel, in the filtering tank,<sup>4</sup> and on the stone tubes on the slope of the hill south of "Rachel's Tomb." It may be added that Mr. Dickson has very kindly secured one of the inscribed tubes for the Fund, and had it brought to Jerusalem; the others have been destroyed.

<sup>1</sup> The evidence of Greek influence is very apparent in the masonry of the Wailing Place and of the base of the "Tower of David."

<sup>2</sup> *B. J.*, v. 4, § 4.

<sup>3</sup> The conduit, of which portions have been found outside and inside the walls, to the north of the citadel, appears to have been for the collection of surface drainage only; and the supply from the *Birket Mamilla* would have been insufficient for irrigation.

<sup>4</sup> A rock-hewn tank for the deposition of sediment before the water entered the syphon.