

The present lofty village is of interest to numismatists, for Jewish coinage closed with the career of this famous Bar-cohab.

In February last, three native Moslem families, who own the land near the ancient Castle grounds, began to clear the stones for the cultivation of the soil. This occupied about four months. During this period, undisturbed by the Government, they unearthed one perfect flint spear-head, many broken specimens of spears, one large brass vessel, iron spear heads, iron door rings, stone balls, a quantity of pottery, a large cistern, and another cistern full of wheat. The most interesting discoveries, however, have been the extraordinary number of beautiful silver and copper specimens of Jewish coins. Several of these were current during the First and Second Jewish Revolts. Some of these types are derived from connection with the Temple and its services; *e.g.*, the Temple, and noticeably the star above the Temple, trumpets, lyres, sacrificial vases, the palm tree, vine-leaf, wheat, grapes, are also represented. Many of the samples found within the last five months at Bittir are now exceedingly rare, and have not been purchasable in Jerusalem of late years. Curiously, only one shekel of the first year has been dug up. The Turkish authorities have now strictly prohibited any further digging. Most of these coins have already been sold to purchasers in New York, and in Europe, at fancy prices. Jewish dealers in Jerusalem, who thoroughly appreciate their marketable value, are naturally unwilling to dispose of them without much unpleasant haggling.

AN ANCIENT GATE EAST OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

THE Jerusalem architect, C. K. Spyridonidis, sends the following account of an interesting discovery :—

“It seems probable that the present market Khan Ez Zeit, situated to the east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was originally part of the great court-yard, which in ancient times lay

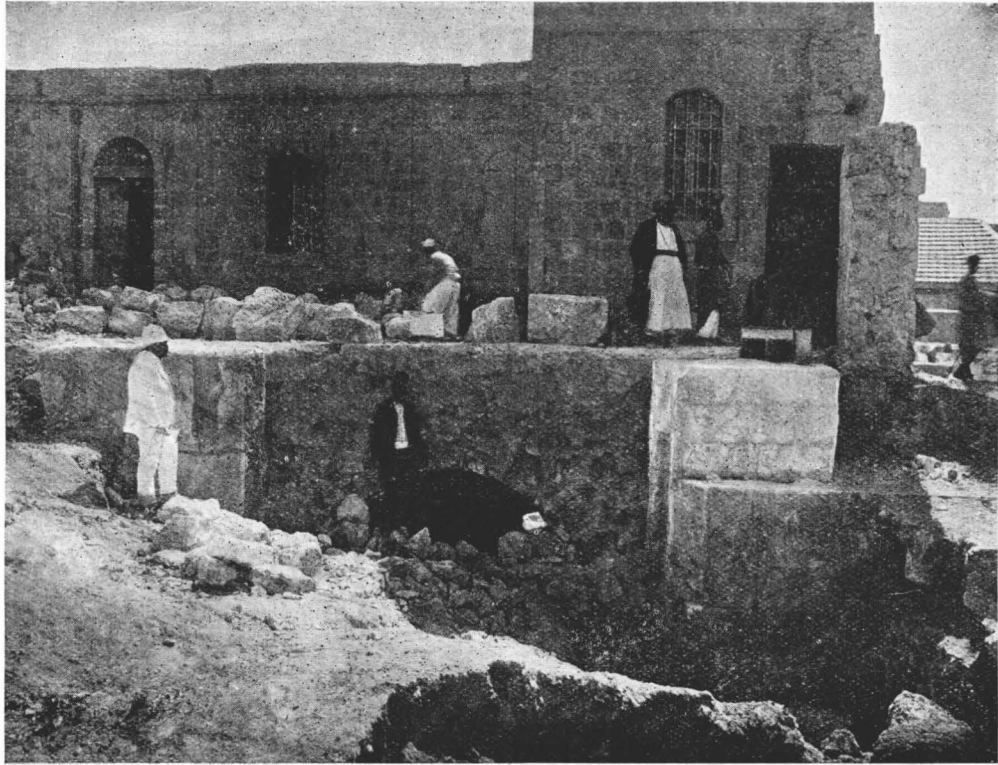
on the east of the great Basilica of Constantine, and through which ran a road and also the course of the second wall of Jerusalem. Portions of the latter are still to be seen in an excellent state of preservation, both inside the Russian hospice, and also at a lower level outside. During some excavations, undertaken on July 10th, close to these, remains of a very ancient gateway were discovered. Of this I forward the measurements in metres. The height of each course of stones was 1·10 metre, and the stones themselves were similar to those at the Jews' Wailing Place. I would remark briefly that this gateway, which lies directly to the east of the Church of the Propylaia of the Basilica, or else a gateway in the ancient wall of Jerusalem. However, leaving this question open, and supposing that the eastern portion of the *Ἀνάστασις* possibly separated this ancient wall of the city, we must not forget that it was just at this gateway that, some years ago, was found the Arabic inscription of which an account is given by Father Gelubowich on pages 302 and 303 of the *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1897, and which is also mentioned by Prof. Clermont Ganneau, in *Archaeological Researches*, Vol. I, p. 100."

The Rev. J. E. Hanauer kindly furnishes a photograph (see facing) with the notes subjoined:—

"The picture represents the inside of the gateway. Its outside is still hidden by the piers of the vault seen in the picture. The outer edges of the jamb-corners are ornamented by a vertical moulding, something like the 'egg and dart' pattern. It is only just discernable through a crack in the earth and masonry resting against the eastern side of the gateway. The sill and floor of the entrance have been ascertained to be rock. That this would be the case was to be expected. The gate is in line with the great wall in the Russian hospice. The back of the wall is formed of smaller stones, apparently of later date, like those described in Prof. Clermont Ganneau's *Archaeological Researches* (Vol. I, p. 91, paras. 2, 3), and has also several of the 'little square holes' there described."

We are further indebted to Mr. C. Dickie for the following additional observations:—

"The notable discovery by Mr. Spyridonidis adds another link of proof to the already accepted identification of the well-known



AN ANCIENT GATE EAST OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

fragment of masonry within the Russian hospice as part of the Eastern wall, either of Constantine's Basilica, or of the enclosure within which the Basilica stood.

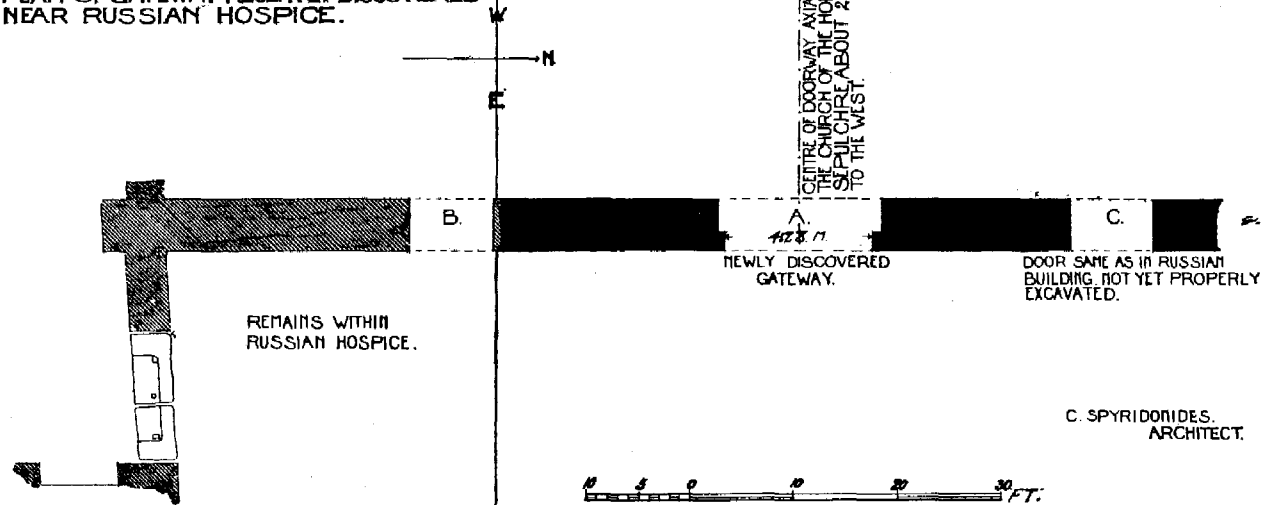
"The newly found gateway, A, lies about 22 feet to the right of the one which is in the wall within the hospice marked B. It lies in the same line and, as far as it has been excavated, shows masonry of a similar character. As yet only the inner face has been uncovered. We have no information as to the relative levels of the sills of the two openings. In Schick's records of rock levels at this point, however, he shows a low scarp of equal level, extending along the line of the eastern face of this wall, and Mr. Hanauer writes that the sill and floor are rock. I take it, therefore, that they are both on the same level.

"The opening A measures 4.28 metres, which is very much wider than the opening B. The plan also shows an opening on the right, at C, of a 'newly-found door, the same as in Russian building, not yet properly excavated.' This seems to identify the large opening as the principal of a typical triple entrance. Moreover, Mr. Hanauer reports that on the outer face of the jamb he has noticed a piece of carving, which, from his rough sketch, appears to be the usual classic 'bead and reel' enrichment one would expect to find on the architrave moulding. There is no carving on the jambs of the opening B.

"Mr. Spyridonidis plots this centre opening axial with the Greek sanctuary of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is about 250 feet to the west. On plotting the discovery on to Schick's plan, published in *Quarterly Statement*, 1898, p. 144, I find that it practically agrees. Schick's published plan was traced from the original to illustrate certain of the rock contours, and on this account building details were omitted. On his original plan the axial line is shown cutting through an opening in the same position as the one now discovered. The photo here published shows the apex of a later vault within the width of the ancient opening, and this is, in all probability, what Schick saw. It is interesting to note this, and the inference is, that no portion of the ancient masonry was visible at that time, as Schick makes no mention of it in his report.

"The great width of the opening, 4.28 metres (about 14 feet), suggests a gateway to an enclosure as readily as a doorway to a Basilica. Assuming that it is in the centre of the façade, it

PLAN OF GATEWAY RECENTLY DISCOVERED
NEAR RUSSIAN HOSPICE.



C. SPYRIDONIDES,
ARCHITECT.

would seem that the whole eastern frontage, extending to a width of about 130 feet, has been practically recovered.

“The completion of the excavation is now so near at hand that it would be well to leave further theory alone, and allow facts to speak when they have been revealed. This much may be said: that at the present moment everything favours the abandonment of the second wall theory.”

DEAD SEA OBSERVATIONS.

(Continued from *Q.S.*, 1906, p. 234).

By DR. E. W. GURNEY MASTERMAN.

AUTUMN VISIT, 1906.

VISIT made November 17th by Mr. C. HORNSTEIN.

Weather.—Hot; slight S.E. wind; sky cloudless. Temperature of air, 80° F.; temperature of water, 75° F.

Surface of lake.—‘White line’ in broken pieces running N.E. to S.W.

State of level of sea.—Observations taken both at the ‘Observation rock’ and at pool showed a fall of 15 inches since the previous April.

Barometer.—Jerusalem, 27·5; ‘*Ain Feshkhah*’, 31·5.

General observations.—Plenty of rock and sand partridges seen. One of the latter and also one hare shot. Five gazelles seen near the ‘*Arḍ ḥajar el asbah*’. Only person encountered was a man met on the return journey, who was going to ‘*Ain Feshkhah*’ to get rushes for mats.

SPRING VISIT, 1907.

Visit made from Jericho, April 13th.

I left Jericho at 5.25 a.m., rode by the new road for first hour, then turned S.E., crossed *Wady Dabr* at the usual place, and reached the oasis about 8.15.