

stones standing east and west. There is a view of this in Fig. 2. The central stone of this row stands 90 cm. above the ground, but the top has been broken—not recently, but subsequent to the original erection. These cannot be pillars or have any structural purpose: are they a survival of the practice of erecting *masseboth*? The western stone of the row has fallen. South of the middle stone a prostrate monolith is lying. The whole of the village of *Khurbet Shem'a* is of the Roman period.

THE RECOVERY OF THE "HOLY PLACES" IN JERUSALEM.

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THE late Sir Charles Wilson thus sums up his final decision on this burning question: "There is no decisive reason, historical, traditional, or topographical for placing Golgotha and the Tomb where they are now shown. At the same time there is no direct evidence that they were not so situated." *Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre*, 1906, p. 120. This cautious and eminently judicial utterance leaves every one at liberty to form his own conclusions on the subject; and many will doubtless be comforted by Sir Charles Wilson's opinion that there is no reason for disbelieving the authenticity of places which are hallowed by the prayers of countless pilgrims since the days of Constantine. There are, however, some general considerations which Sir Charles Wilson has not noticed, possibly because his arguments were mainly confined to the literary aspects of the question. These considerations cannot be ignored; and unless the facts on which they are based can be controverted, they are calculated to throw some new light on a very obscure and difficult subject.

Many writers have commented on the practical impossibility of attempting to identify any particular tomb or place of Jewish burial in the midst of the vast necropolis surrounding Jerusalem. It is matter of notoriety that the tombs of David and his successors have perished, and even their approximate position is entirely unknown. Can there be any reasonable doubt that the practical difficulties of identifying the actual scenes of Christ's sufferings and

death were present to the minds of Constantine's advisers when the question of recovering the holy sites first arose?

Upwards of three hundred years had passed since the Death and Passion of Christ, and during that time Jerusalem had been totally destroyed, especially (as Dr. Adam Smith points out) that part of it where the "holy places" were believed to have been located. If under the circumstances the futility of searching for a Jewish tomb was then evident, may we not assume that Constantine's original idea was likely to have been little influenced by any questions of antiquarian or historical research, and to have been confined to one simple point, viz.: To erect¹ Churches at some convenient spot in Jerusalem in remembrance of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.

It is perfectly easy to understand how by a natural train of thought the proposed erection of Memorial Churches may have led to the idea of a Memorial Tomb. Many such tombs in honour of Saints and holy men were already in existence at Jerusalem and elsewhere. Why should not a similar Memorial Tomb be constructed in remembrance of the Saviour of the World on the spot selected for the erection of the Memorial Churches?

There was no necessity of any kind for the construction of a Memorial Tomb *on the real or supposed place of Christ's burial*, even if this had been traditionally known. All that was wanted for religious or ecclesiastical purposes was the construction of a suitable memorial in remembrance of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. This memorial of Christ's sufferings and death would naturally take the shape of an Eastern tomb or catafalque. Its position with reference to Christ's real or supposed place of burial was, for mere memorial purposes, entirely immaterial. Such a memorial might in fact have been appropriately constructed on any spot in Jerusalem either within or without the walls; and there is no reason for supposing that the question of fixing the real site of the Tomb ever assumed any real importance until the Crosses were actually discovered, *circ.* A.D. 335. That amazing miracle, like the annual production of the Holy Fire in more modern times,

¹ Dr. Merrill's remarkable suggestion at p. 313 of his recently published work *Ancient Jerusalem* (1908: Fleming H. Revell Co.), that Constantine's memorial buildings were not Christian churches, but a magnificent Basilica-market intended for purely secular purposes, has been noted since this paper was written.

committed the Latin Church to all the arguments which a doubtful position naturally involved. The Memorial Tomb constructed in the Church of the Anastasis was of course declared (notwithstanding its improbable, and as some would say, its impossible position) to be the real place of Christ's burial. Golgotha, the charnel house and most ill-omened spot in Jerusalem, which everybody knew to be outside the walls, was for the purposes of the same story located within the walls. And in order to fit the facts of this improbable theory, some of the chief facts of Jerusalem topography, such as the position of the city walls, main highways, and public cemeteries have been distorted, and have confused the arguments of partizans on both sides ever since.

Whether the real cave of Joseph of Arimathea was in existence or not, *circ.* 335, was (as the whole story shows) absolutely unknown until it was miraculously revealed; and even if the approximate position of Golgotha could have been ascertained, it seems inconceivable for many reasons that a site so ill-omened and inappropriate should have been deliberately selected for the construction of Constantine's memorial buildings. If Golgotha was, what Jerome and many other writers believe it to have been, the public place of execution outside the city walls, can anyone imagine that so hateful and accursed a spot would have been chosen for the site of Christian churches? Secondly, is it conceivable that a defenceless spot in this position with associations of this horrible kind would ever have been chosen by Macarius and his advisers when they had the whole city to choose from? To suppose that they would sacrifice all the advantages of security, convenience, and general fitness for the sake of a pedantic adherence to mere topical accuracy argues a strange view of human nature, and one totally opposed to all Eastern ideas. Macarius of course acted as any man in his position might have been expected to act. He chose for the Memorial Churches the best site available within the walls, and having erected his famous group of Churches he constructed within the Anastasis, or Church of the Resurrection, the famous imitation of Calvary and the Tomb, which since the time of Helena has been shown as the veritable Holy Sepulchre.

Calvary was displayed as a rocky mound situated only *a few feet* above the Holy Sepulchre, and approached from the floor of the church by a short flight of steps. The Tomb itself was an artificial construction of stone and marble in the conventional shape of an

Eastern tomb or catafalque, surmounted by a canopy. The place where the Crosses were discovered was shown as a square vault close by the Sepulchre, to which pilgrims descended by a stair. Apart from the fact that all these constructions were made for a deliberate purpose within the walls of the city, and purely as adjuncts to a Christian church, their artificial character was so patent and unmistakable that they could not deceive the meanest intelligence, but for one overpowering fact. Their truth was vouched for by an astounding miracle. That miracle was no less than the discovery of the true Cross upon the spot where these constructions were made.

This bald narrative of a few notorious facts is amply sufficient for the present purpose. They appear to carry on the face of them sufficient proof of the real character of the traditional Holy Sepulchre, and of the real motives which influenced its construction.

That Marcarius was fully justified in selecting for the Memorial Churches a site within the walls seems to admit of no reasonable doubt. Whatever view might be entertained about the proposed memorial, there could be no two opinions about the importance of selecting a site for the Churches where they would be safe from external danger, and convenient for ecclesiastical management. These considerations made it imperative to select a site for the Churches *within the walls* of Jerusalem, and it seems improbable for many reasons that any question of identifying the real sites of Calvary and the Tomb would have been allowed to interfere with these objects of main political importance.

Apart from the miraculous discovery of the Cross, it is easy to understand the general motives which may have influenced Macarius and his suffragans in desiring to reproduce for the eyes of the faithful, under one roof, an exact *facsimile on a small scale* of Calvary and the Tomb. Had they been content with art alone, the burning controversy about the exact position of the "holy places" might never have arisen. But they are likely to have feared the "doubting Thomases," and the scornful critics of their own day. These could only be silenced in a superstitious and credulous age by an appeal to miracle and Divine help. *Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus incidereit.* This may have been the origin of the miraculous "Invention of the Cross," and of the efforts made to persuade an incredulous world that the artificial tomb within the walls was the real Holy Sepulchre of the Gospels.

The view suggested is, of course, opposed to the accepted account

which is founded on the miraculous discovery of the cave, as related by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine*. But no one can read Sir Charles Wilson's description of this famous discovery without seeing that the literary evidence is most imperfect, and leaves much to the imagination. (*Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre*, Chap. IX.) Eusebius, in fact, while describing, in great detail, the discovery of the cave, omits all mention of the finding of the Cross. This omission, however it may be explained, is clearly a fact of much significance. It may have been intentional, as Sir Charles Wilson thinks, but no one can doubt that the history of the official identification of Golgotha is not fully known, and any attempt to reconstruct it is perhaps hazardous. But the hazard has not deterred him from stating fully his own views (pp. 96, 97), and it may be permissible to invite attention to other evidence unnoticed by Sir Charles Wilson, and to general considerations which are at least as plausible as the legends discussed. Whether the discovery, first of the "Sacred Cave," and afterwards of the three Crosses, involved two separate and equally notable miracles, or whether both discoveries are merely two separate versions of the same story, is perhaps uncertain. But one fact seems clear enough, viz., that both miracles, however explained, were closely connected with each other. Until the true Cross was found, and identified, no one could feel certain whether the cave miraculously discovered was the real place of Christ's burial or not. But the most remarkable circumstance connected with the discovery of the Cross was, *that it was found on the very day (September 14th, A.D. 335) that the Memorial Churches were dedicated*, showing clearly (1) That the discovery was a matter of deliberate arrangement by Macarius and his suffragans; (2) That the site of Constantine's Churches was selected within the walls of the city long before the miraculous "Invention of the Cross" took place.

The date of the discovery of the Cross is thus referred to in the *Pilgrimage of S. Silvia of Aquitania*, written between A.D. 379 and 388, translated from the Latin for the Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society, by John H. Bernard, B.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and Archbishop King's Lecturer in Divinity, 1891.

"The dedication festival of these Holy Churches is observed "with the greatest honour since the Cross of the Lord was found "on that day. For so it was ordained that the day on which first "the above mentioned Holy Churches were consecrated should be

“the day on which the Cross of the Lord was found that it should “be thus observed with all manner of joy.” *Pal. Pil. Text Soc.*, 16, p. 76. The Latin version will be found on p. 135 of the same work.

This account was written by S. Silvia only about fifty years after the discovery of the Cross, and while the events related were fresh in the remembrance of all. The date could never be forgotten, because the dedication festival of Constantine’s Churches was arranged to take place on the traditional date when Solomon’s Temple was dedicated, viz., on September 14th, during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles; and Sir Charles Wilson notes the fact that the orthodox Greek Church still observes September 13th as the day of dedication (*dies enceniarum*) and September 14th as the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, which, in the East, was not distinguished from the Festival of the Invention. (*S. Silvia’s Pilgrimage*, p. 76, note 2.) This evidence seems to be conclusive regarding the date of the discovery of the Cross, and shows clearly: (1) That the site of Constantine’s Churches must have been selected long before the alleged miracle occurred; (2) That this selection was altogether uninfluenced by the position of an unknown cave or tomb. These considerations appear to lend much force to the general argument of this paper, that the position of the traditional Calvary and the Tomb within the walls was due to the original choice of the site for Constantine’s Churches, and had no reference to Christ’s real place of burial.

FURTHER NOTES FROM DAMASCUS, ETC.

By the Rev. J. E. HANAUER.

1. *The Arab eš-Şüleyb* (*Q.S.*, p. 120).—I find an interesting account of this obscure tribe in Dr. W. Wright’s *Palmyra and Zenobia*, under the title of “Desert Quakers” (chap. vi, pp. 48–53).

2. *An Ancient and widely spread Legend*.—On my return from Blûdan I was informed that, whilst digging the foundations for a house outside Bâb Tûma, a large slab had been lately found. When removed a rock-cut and deep shaft, at the bottom of which was a swift stream of running water, was discovered. A bucket let