

THE EXCAVATION OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE SUPPOSED THIRD WALL OF JERUSALEM.

It is well known that Professor Edward Robinson in his *Biblical Researches* (Vol. I, pp. 314-315) maintained that he had discovered, some distance north of the present Northern Wall of the City, many traces of a city wall which he concluded was Agrippa's "Third Wall." These traces were pointed out to many travellers and residents during the following years. Dr. Merrill, for example (*Quarterly Statement*, 1903, p. 159) states that when he "first visited Jerusalem one of the first things to do was to visit Agrippa's Wall, of which 49 or 50 yards was visible. This was in 1869. Much of the wall had previously been broken up to supply stones for the new Austrian Hospice. Many people now living in Jerusalem remember this wall perfectly well. It is not more than twenty years since the last massive blocks of it that remained above ground to the north-west of the city were broken up." The special occasion of his writing was to point out there was a section of this wall six feet high then uncovered—in the making of a cistern—about "200 to 250 feet from the (C.M.S.) Arabic Church at a point a little north of west."

Whereas that section of the wall has disappeared, some great stones which were supposed to be part of a tower on this wall have survived to the present time. They form one side of a disused cistern and are situated in land which now forms part of the St. George's College playground to the east of a row of Jewish houses (Fig. 1). These remains were partially excavated by Professor Paton in 1904 ("The Third Wall of Jerusalem and Some Excavations on its Supposed Site." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. XXIV, 1905, pp. 205-11.) The excavations were not very conclusive. However, in March, 1925, the Rev. Garrow Duncan sent us a photograph of a large stone 11 feet long, 4 feet broad and 3 feet 7 inches high which had just been unearthed a few yards west of this cistern group of stone, at the angle formed by the branching off of Coeur de Lion Street from the Nablus road (Fig. 2). This stone fell in the line traced by Robinson and in a line drawn from the fragments described by Merrill and Paton respectively. On the day of our last Annual Meeting a somewhat sensational

paragraph appeared in *The Times* to the effect that the "Third Wall" of Jerusalem had been discovered. Our old and valued supporter, Mr. Herbert Bentwich, referred to this discovery at the meeting, and our Hon. Secretary, who had only recently seen this newly-found stone in Jerusalem and had heard rumours of other fragments having been found, suggested that the discovery was not the result of "serious excavations." We are glad to say that this first impression is incorrect,

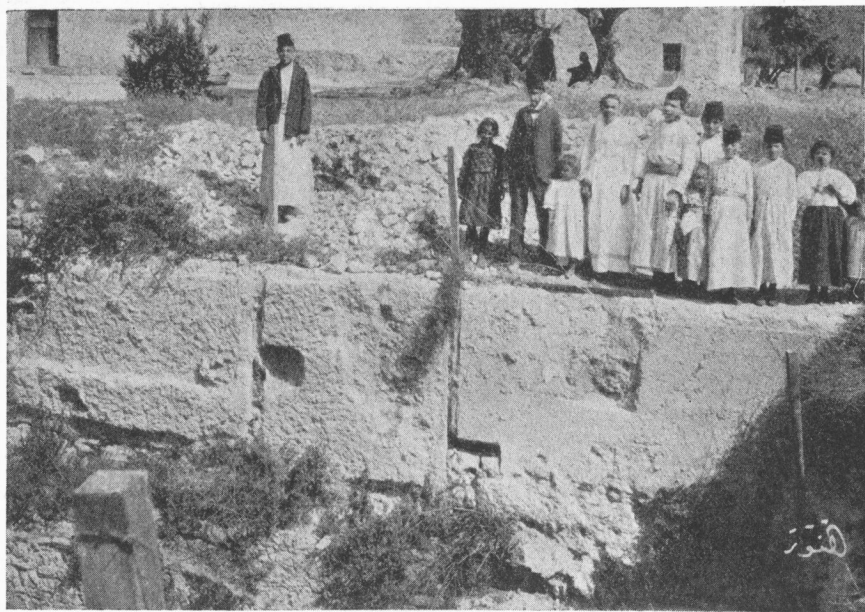


Fig. 1.—Section of the Supposed Third Wall.

for extensive excavations have now been made by Dr. Mayer, of the Government Department of Antiquities, and Mr. E. L. Sukenik, of the Jewish Exploration Society. We hasten to record that this work has been most successful and a long stretch of ancient city-wall foundations has now been uncovered, fully verifying Professor Robinson's surmises. The ground in which the excavations have been conducted was before the war occupied for many years by an olive grove and a cornfield. A gipsy encampment was also frequently to be seen there. The political situation, as well as the presence of the olive-trees, made it extremely difficult to undertake any diggings

there. The disappearance of the olive-trees during the war, the entirely changed political situation, and the fact that the land is now in any case to be broken up for building sites, all make the excavation not only possible but imperative.

Messrs. Mayer and Sukenik are to be congratulated upon their good fortune on having struck upon a site of so much historical and archaeological interest. The latest news is that they have found a

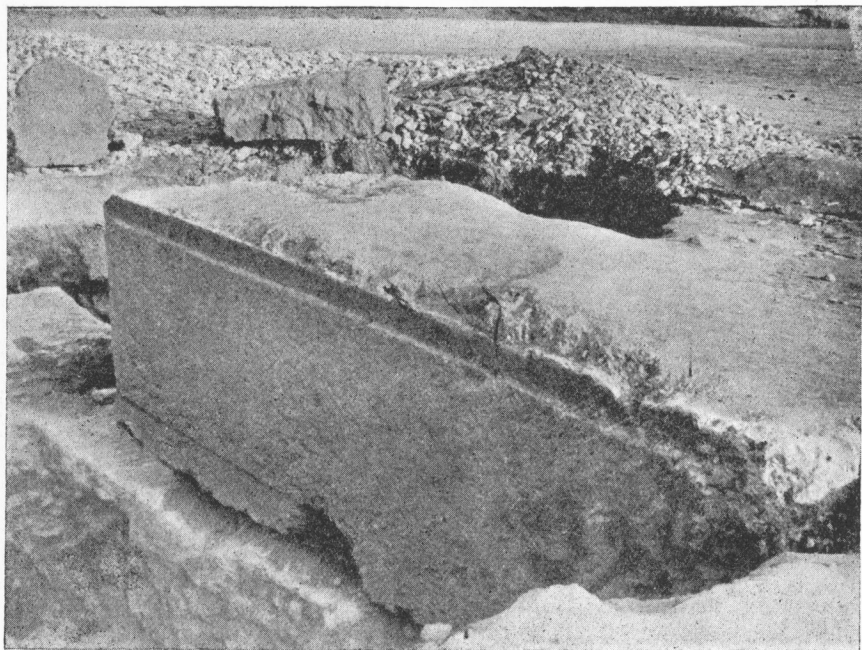


Fig. 2.—Large Drafted Block of the Wall.

“second century Roman inscription recording the burial of soldiers whose names are given.” (*The Times*, August 29th, 1925.)

Meanwhile, through their courtesy, we are able to produce here notes sent to us by two of our representatives in Jerusalem, together with some views which they have been allowed to send. Of the two articles below, that of the Rev. Canon Hanauer, which arrived first, deals mainly with the archaeological facts, that of the Rev. Garrow Duncan also with the important inferences which may be drawn from the facts.

THE REV. CANON HANAUER.

About a fortnight ago, and on the day after the arrival of the *Quarterly Statement* for July, I sent a short note and also a rough tracing in order to show the position of the recently discovered remains

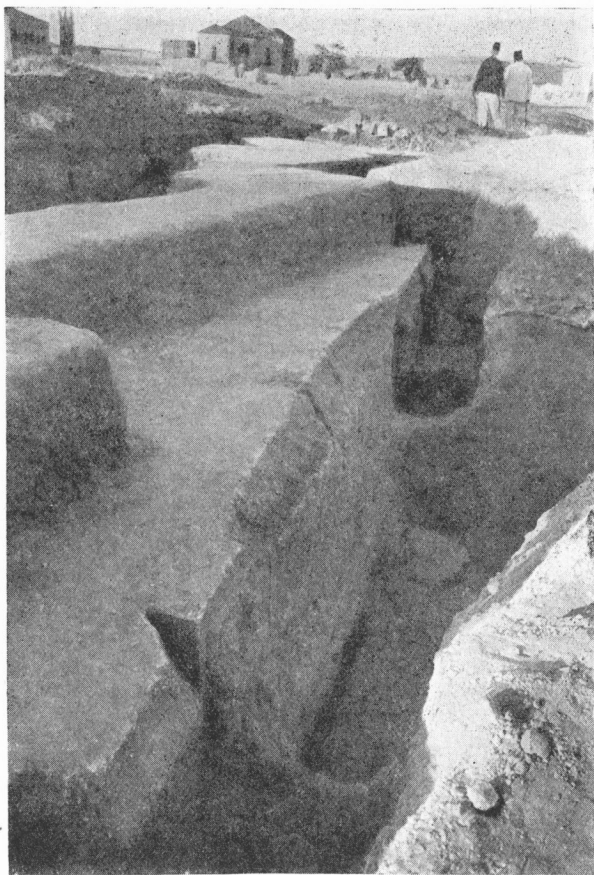


Fig. 3.—View of Part of the Supposed Third Wall.

of the Third Wall. I revisited the place yesterday and was again received with all courtesy and conducted over the works. They consist of a line of parallel and transverse trenches over 200 metres

in length, and now extending not only over the space shown on the tracing in your hands, but also eastwards beyond the great stones close to the row of Jewish houses. The northern and southern sides of the great wall have been exposed. Its average thickness is $4\frac{1}{2}$ metres, equal to almost 15 feet, according to my metallic tape. The stones are large and of the same character as the one uncovered earlier this year. Their size and dressing resemble that of the Herodian courses visible at the Wailing Place. The trenches vary in depth from one to ten feet. The wall had towers projecting from its northern face. The rock-foundation of a skew-one at the western end of the excavations has been laid quite bare and is unmistakable. The lower course of the wall has at different periods been utilized as a foundation for edifices of later date, such as a Byzantine mortuary, chapels and Arab houses. Of the former, mosaic pavements (see Fig. 3), one of which had a memorial inscription in Greek with the name of Anatolia, have been laid bare (see Fig. 6); and of the latter, flagged floors and the remains of cisterns built against the wall in the same way as that marked F on Plate I of the last *Quarterly Statement*. The great stones on the northern side of the open cistern in the St. George's playground, as above-mentioned, have also been bared on their northern and western sides. They prove to be a part of the great wall, and not "rock" as was supposed by former explorers. The trenches are, as I have already mentioned, being extended further east. I have great pleasure in enclosing three photographs courteously placed at my disposal by the Directors of the excavation—Dr. Mayer and Mr. Sukenik—in order to illustrate my letter.

JERUSALEM. *August 19th, 1925.*

THE REV. GARROW DUNCAN, M.A., B.D., F.S.A. (Scot.).

The Jewish Palestine Exploration Society have for some time back been uncovering the foundation of a wall across the empty space in front of the Museum. Over six months ago a huge drafted block (Fig. 2), measuring 11 feet long, 4 feet broad and 3 feet 7 inches high, was uncovered at the junction of the Museum Road¹ with Nablus Road opposite to the pottery. Behind the pottery in St. George's School playground another section of the wall of the same enormous

¹ Marked in the new map as "Coeur de Lion Street."

blocks and similarly drafted has for long been exposed to view (Fig. 1). This latter section has been used as the wall of an Arab cistern and is in line with the first. These two sections belong to the same wall. Straight down at the south end of the playground I found what seems to be another portion of this same wall.

It is not really a new discovery. One Englishman, who has been resident here for forty years or over, tells me that when he

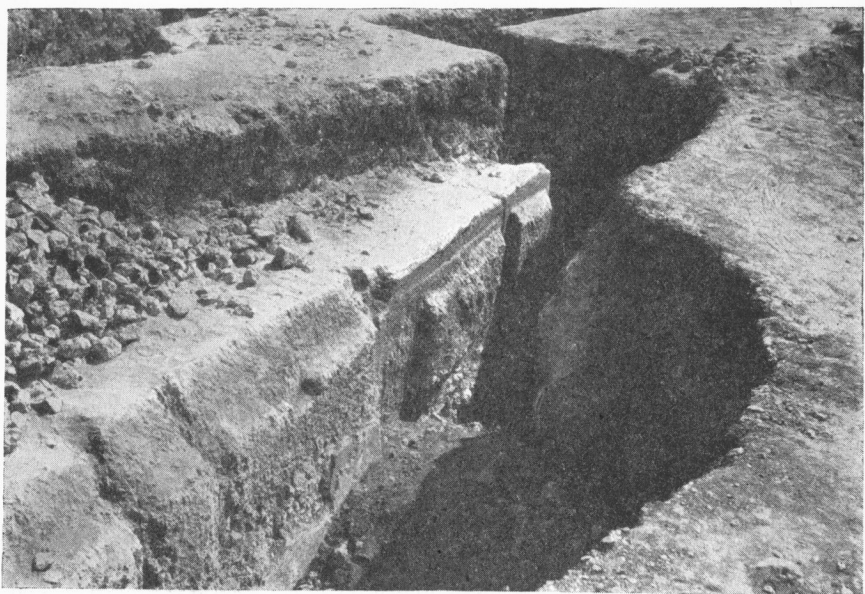


Fig. 4.—View of Part of the Supposed Third Wall.

came here the line of this wall could be traced from St. George's playground to where the Italian Hospital now stands, while another section was found in the foundation, and forms part of the cistern of Christ Church Vicarage. It is also freely asserted that many of the great blocks then visible on the surface were taken away, broken up, and built into the Austrian Hospice. I am informed also that in the excavation of a foundation for a house a section of this wall was uncovered at a comparatively recent date.

This empty space, west of the Museum, where the new excavations are, is now marked off for streets and houses. In fact, building

operations are begun. This fact and the desire to definitely fix the line of this wall as far as possible has, I imagine, led the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society to conduct an immediate investigation before the foundation remains should be built over and lost sight of for good.

Up to the present they have traced the line of this wall from the edge of the Museum Road to about two-thirds the length of the



Fig. 5.—Kitchen Floor on top of Wall.

open space. It now turns out that the great block at the junction of the Nablus Road and Museum Road (Fig. 2) is part of a tower which stood there.

Just west of this point the excavators have uncovered the foundation of remains of a late Byzantine or early Arab house. The kitchen floor of stone slabs and the Mosaic floors of two rooms are visible, only a foot or two under the present surface (Figs. 5 and 6). The floor is laid on the very surface of the wall ; and outside of the wall there is a small plastered drain about 12 inches wide by 5 or 6 inches deep,

which had been used to run the roof water into a cistern near by. It is too small for a sewage drain. This drain is quite near the present surface and the plaster seems to be late Byzantine or early Arab.

All over its length this wall had been freely used by Arab builders to serve as one side of their cisterns. I have seen four or five of these cisterns, some inside and some outside of the wall, and all of them seem to me to be Arab work.

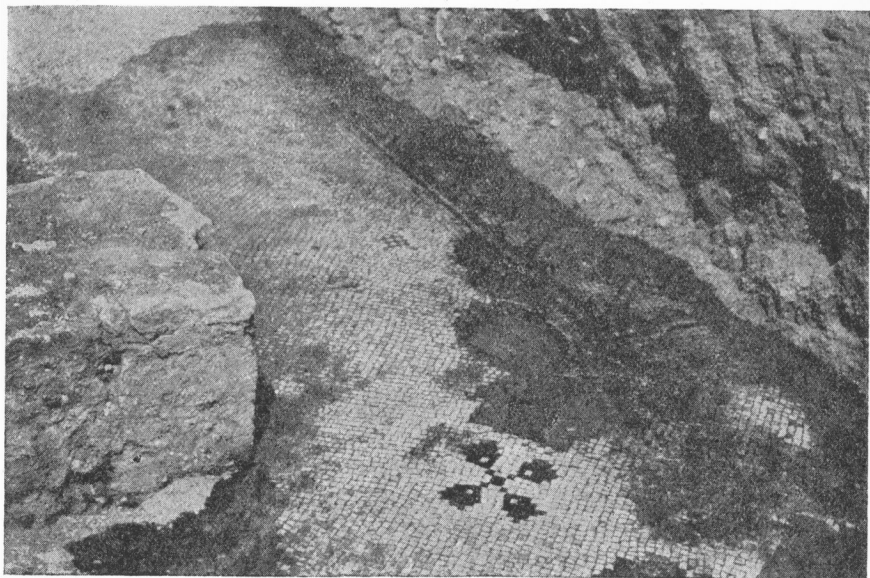


Fig. 6.—Mosaic Pavement.

The fact that this Byzantine or Arab house is built on the top of the wall suggests that the wall had disappeared to its foundation by A.D. 600—800, although it is quite possible that the builders of this house broke down what was left of the wall and used the blocks in building their house. Apart from this house, nothing much of interest, except cisterns, has been found in the operations, so far as I have seen. Altogether the excavators have uncovered about 200 to 220 yards. Within this space they have found three towers. The space covered by these three towers is 180 yards. Josephus says there were 90 towers on the wall of Agrippa, with a space of 200 cubits between each tower.

The account given by Josephus (*War of the Jews*, Book V, Ch. IV, §2 and 3) is as follows :—

“The beginning of the third wall was at the tower Hippicus whence it reached as far as the north corner of the city and the tower Psephinus, and then was so far extended till it came over against the monument of Helena, which Helena was Queen of Adiabene, the daughter of Izates ; it then extended further to a great length and passed by the sepulchral caverns of the Kings and bent again at the tower of the corner, at the monument which is called the ‘ Monument of the Fuller,’ and joined to the old wall at the valley called the ‘ Valley of the Cedron.’ It was Agrippa who encompassed the parts added and the old city with this wall which had been all naked before Since, therefore, its inhabitants stood in need of a covering the father of the present king and of the same name with him, Agrippa, began that wall we spoke of ; but he left off building it when he had only laid the foundation, out of fear he was in of Claudius Cæsar, lest he should suspect that so strong a wall was built in order to make some innovation in public affairs its parts were connected together by stones twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad The wall was, however, ten cubits wide, and it would probably have had a height greater than that, had not his zeal who began it been hindered from exerting itself. After this it was erected with great diligence by the Jews as high as twenty cubits, above which it had battlements of two cubits and turrets of three cubits altitude Now the towers that were upon it were twenty cubits in breadth and twenty cubits in height ; they were square and solid as was the wall itself, wherein the niceness of the joints and the beauty of the stones was in no way inferior to those of the holy house itself Of these towers then, the third wall had ninety and the spaces between them were two hundred cubits The whole compass of the city was thirty-three cubits.”

These are the main facts as given by Josephus having bearing on this wall. He definitely states also that Agrippa merely laid the foundations and desisted from fear of Claudius, and that the Jews afterwards finished the wall.

As to the width, the wall as uncovered is exactly 14 feet 3 inches broad (10 *cubits*) where I measured it. The stones are very massive, but Josephus' measurements of the individual blocks (20 *cubits* by 10) will not suit any of the blocks which I have seen or measured. It is possible his measurements refer to the largest block he saw. Further, he gives the distance between the towers as 200 cubits, which would be 100 yards, if the cubit is taken as 18 inches. This is difficult to reconcile with 33 stadia as the length of the wall of the whole city if these are equivalent to $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

If the latter equivalent is correct, the cubit of Josephus cannot be quite 18 inches. If this is correct, his measurements of the blocks used in the wall may not then be very far out. I measured one tower and found it projected exactly 29 feet 6 inches from the wall. The length of its face is not uncovered. My measurements of the length of the wall excavated were taken with a tape.

The points to be decided by excavation (if possible) are :—

1. The exact line of the wall from the Italian Hospital towards the Jaffa Gate.
2. The position of the tower Psephinus.
3. The exact line of the wall from the south-east end of the excavations toward the present city walls, and
4. Where this wall joined the second wall.

Josephus says it joined "the old wall at the valley of the Cedron." Previously he said the old wall "ended at the west cloister at the Temple." These facts and statements show how much there is to elucidate and to establish; and we can only hope that the excavators will be able to carry on till they have settled all these points.

So far we may summarise the results as follows :—

1. This is unquestionably a city wall which is being uncovered.
2. The masonry is undoubtedly Herodian.
3. As we know that Herod Agrippa built a third wall to enclose a northern suburb, this wall cannot be anything but the Third Wall of Agrippa which was interrupted in its erection by Claudius, and 30 years later was hurriedly finished by the Jews, and was finally destroyed by Titus.
4. The wall uncovered runs on a line a little to the south-west of the Italian Hospital at its northern end and a little to the south-west of the English Cathedral at the southern extremity of the excavations.

5. The breadth and massiveness of structure corresponds with Josephus' statements.
6. The towers and the distance between them seem also to correspond with Josephus. The towers seem to be 30 feet (20 *cubits*) square.
7. The wall seems to be making straight for the north-east corner of the present city wall or somewhere near to it.

With regard to the bearing of this wall upon the line of the *Second Wall*, the problem seems to me to be as it was before. The definite fixing of the line of this Third Wall, and the proving that it is the Third Wall of Agrippa does not necessarily fix the line of the present wall as being the line of the Second Wall of Christ's time. It may afford a presumption that the Second Wall ran on its present line in Christ's time as far as the Damascus Gate. Even that cannot be definitely asserted.

The problem of the place of Crucifixion and the position of the Holy Sepulchre, therefore, is not much, if in any way, affected by the admission that this is the Third Wall of Agrippa, which is now being uncovered. Nothing definite can be known of the line of the Second Wall of Christ's time except by excavation. At present the most we can reach is a presumption that it ran on one line, or that it ran on another, including or excluding the Holy Sepulchre according to the opinions and predilections of critics.

The excavation work is being superintended by Mr. L. B. Mayer, Ph.D., for the Museum, and Mr. E. L. Sukenik for the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, who have kindly permitted me to take photographs and to record my observations.
