

## NEW EXCAVATIONS IN JERUSALEM.

## I.

*Jerusalem, February, 1888.*

IN October, last year, I sent the Palestine Exploration Fund some drawings, with notes, of the old "Market"<sup>1</sup> to the south-east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. They were published in the *Quarterly Statement* for January, 1888, page 17, and I now send plans and sections of what was found to the north of the old "Market."

Plan No. 1.—At the bottom, on the left side, is part of the present *Sâk*, or Market. North of it is the street, *Khan ez-Zeit*, running to the Damascus Gate, or *Bâb el-Amûd*. Along this street there are shops; and at the north end of the plan are steps, and a raised road, passing over arches westwards to the Coptic and Abyssinian Convents. Near these steps are three granite columns, broken, but still *in situ*; a fourth was removed about twenty years ago, when a door was broken through the wall to make a wood-store. There are also some remains of a pier or stone jamb; and this, with the columns, formed in the Byzantine period the "Propylæum" of Constantine's Church; the columns probably extended farther north, but this cannot be ascertained on account of the buildings.

The wall which now closes the space between the columns was apparently built by the Crusaders. The open area between the columns and the east wall of Constantine's Church was vaulted as it is now. At the south end of the vault, which shows traces of restoration, there is an old wall, partly Jewish, but principally Byzantine.

At the bottom of this wall there is the ancient "threshold" (see Sect. 2); it is one stone, with a tread little more than one inch high, for the folding doors to shut against. The "threshold" of an ancient door is certainly Jewish, and in the Byzantine time it was used again as a door; but it opened (unexpectedly) outwards, proving that the open Propylæum could be shut up against the court of the Church. The lower part of the western wall of the Propylæum is of Jewish masonry, with drafted stones; higher up it is of Byzantine masonry, which can be well seen in the houses to the north; it formed the east wall of Constantine's Basilica. The southern wall of the Basilica was also built on old Jewish masonry, which forms a slightly obtuse angle with the east wall. This angle and the lowest course of stones in the wall are Jewish; the stones of the upper courses are smooth, smaller, and Byzantine. On the north side of this wall stone corbels were inserted at a later time (perhaps by the Crusaders), in order to vault the space. In the parallel wall to the north there are similar corbels. The Byzantine building, according to Eusebius, had no vaults or arches, but was roofed with timber, &c. South of the southern wall of the Basilica is a fine platform,<sup>2</sup> paved with very large

<sup>1</sup> The old market has been pulled down and no trace of it can now be seen.

<sup>2</sup> About seven feet above the surface of the street *Khan ez-Zeit* to the east. The rock is very near the surface of this upper platform.

flat smooth stones. On the north part was an open passage beside the Church ; on the southern part a cloister or covered passage. From this raised platform, broad steps lead down to a similarly paved platform, nine feet below, and to the old gate. (*See No. 3.*)

Some traces of rock-hewn steps can still be seen. In the Russian part of the vault, on the site of the Propylæum, a pavement was found, formed of large stones, from 1 foot to 1½ thick, more than 3 feet long, and 2 feet 6 inches to 2 feet 8 inches wide, nicely and exactly laid, with good joints ; the upper surfaces are very smooth, as if originally polished. This pavement extends southwards to the street *Ed-Dabbaghin*, or as far as the place was cleared of ruins, stones, and earth ; it probably extends further south, and perhaps also to the east. It has a fall towards the south, so that the water could run into the rock-hewn sewer, or, further south, to the masonry sewer. (*See Nos. 1 and 2.*) About the middle of the pavement is the so-called "Greek Arch," known for many years and figured in books about Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The north pier is apparently Byzantine, built of smooth and well-cut stones, which are much damaged by age. The south side is formed by a column with a block capital, unlike the one on the pier. This has puzzled everyone, and given the impression that it is a reconstruction and not the original arch ! Yet the column may be genuine with a wrong capital upon it. In this case the column must have stood in the centre, and the whole have formed a double arch. So the Russian Archimandrite understood it, and he intended restoring the arch according to his view. He built a new pier to the south, prepared a Corinthian capital, &c. ; but, on closer examination, I found there had been only one arch, and no column. It is quite clear that the northern pier was once broader (as shown in Nos. 1 and 2). No 2 gives, in elevation, the number and size of the stones where the joints do not run through.

I have shaded the older or Byzantine portion, and am convinced that the southern pier originally had the same form and size, and that the Corinthian capital, which carries one side of the arch, stood on the southern pier, like the one on the top of the northern pier. In the Byzantine portion there are five courses of stones from the pavement to the spring of the arch ; I cannot tell the thickness of the missing abacus, but the curve of the arch can still be seen (in No. 2). In place of the abacus there is now a stone, with mouldings on its face, which I think must have been the key-stone. The key-stone certainly had some ornament ; it was probably broken by the falling of the arch, and then chiselled to fit its present place. In accordance with these indications, I have restored the arch in No. 3. The arch probably had an attic, which I have not attempted to restore. The entrance to the passage is 12 feet 8 inches wide, at the centre it is 14 feet wide, and it is 13 feet deep. It was once arched over, and I think it was a monument of some event ; very likely

<sup>1</sup> *See Sepp, "Jerusalem and the Holy Land,"* i, 226, where it is called an ancient town gate.

of the passing of our Lord to Calvary. It formed at the same time an entrance to Constantine's Church, for a road ran westwards from it, along the side of the southern cloisters of Constantine's Church, which stood at a higher level, to the present south court of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It might thus be considered part of the Propylæum mentioned by Eusebius. The column is of reddish limestone, and so is the cracked unfinished capital; but the basement is of white marble, which has apparently been used a second time. Another similar basement was found in the rubbish near the side of the column.

As the Russians found no cistern on their property, and water was required for any building erected upon it, they resolved to make a new cistern. North of the "Greek Arch" the rock was known to be everywhere near the surface, and as it would have been difficult to dig a cistern there, they determined to try the ground to the south. They removed the Byzantine pavement, and finding at first earth and stones, they were able to dig down 5 or 6 feet, they then came to hewn stones, lying in disorder as if they had fallen down on the destruction of a wall or building. They removed the stones until they had made a pit more than 20 feet deep, about 45 feet long, and 28 feet wide. As they had then obtained the requisite size for the cistern, and further excavation would have been dangerous on account of the loose stones on the three sides, and the proximity of the new Greek building, they did not dig deeper. They built the walls of the new cistern, and at the bottom ran in dissolved lime until all the empty spaces between the stones were filled up.

On the east side they found an ancient wall, running north and south, nearly under the present boundary wall of their property. Under the pavement the wall consisted of two courses of large smooth Byzantine stones resting on five courses of rather smaller stones, with dressed joints and rough faces. Each course is set back a few inches, as shown in Section 2A. This wall of seven courses stands on bad rubble masonry, built with small stones of all sizes and forms; what is lower down I do not know. When this wall was discovered it was rumoured that the ancient town wall had been found; this is only to a certain degree correct. It is now quite clear: first, that there was a trench here, and if this were the ditch of the town wall, the latter must have stood on rock, or above a rock-scarp, and not on rubble; secondly, the wall is not Jewish but Byzantine, with some Jewish stones built into it. Towards the south the stones are much smaller, and it seemed as if there had been a reconstruction. I cannot tell what will be found farther south, nor the real lie of the rock at the bottom of the trench, but I have embodied my views in the sections. Some of the over-turned stones in the ditch are really Jewish, with the draft on their faces, and these are the largest; the others are of different size, but all smaller and with smooth faces, I therefore call them Byzantine.

In the wall there was a door-like opening—the outlet of the sewer from the old market; I tried to clear it out, but after 5 or 6 feet found it walled up. Perhaps when the new pavement of the street is made by

the Municipality it will be opened. I think, farther east, it is rock-hewn, as a little east of this wall the rock rises above the ground. As the rock is near the surface beneath the "Greek Arch," and no rock was found 12 or 15 feet from it at a depth of 22 feet beneath the pavement, there must be a rock-scarp in the interval such as I have shown in Nos. 2 and 3. I asked the Russian Archimandrite to order the foreman of the workmen to clear away the stones for about 10 feet more towards the north, and told him he would certainly find a rock-scarp, and so have no need to build a wall there for the new cistern, whilst the cistern itself would be so much the larger. I also told him I was convinced he would find rock-cut tombs or other caves in the rock-scarp. I asked him, when the walls of the new cistern had reached a height at which there was no longer any danger, to sink a shaft in the centre of the cistern, so as to ascertain the real lie of the rock, and I offered to pay the expenses myself. The answer was that they could not do anything without an order from St. Petersburg.

The Archimandrite considers this proposed excavation interesting, and thinks my suggestions are right, but he has first to report upon it to St. Petersburg; the excavation may therefore still be made. The caves in Nos. 2 and 3 are shown as I think they will be found.

The internal measurement of the new cistern is about 40 feet by 13 feet; it is not arched but covered with iron rafters, as shown in No. 3.

The southern boundary wall of the Russian property proved to be made up of three walls; in the centre there is a thin Byzantine wall of finely hewn stones, probably standing on the pavement; this is strengthened on the inside by a Crusading wall, which stands on earth and goes down but a few feet beneath the surface. On the outside it is supported by a Moslem wall, standing on the surface of the street, which was built when the wall was beginning to give way under the pressure of the vaults with their heavy load of earth. In the Muristan, 120 feet south of the Russian property, the level of the rock is known, and if this be connected with the rock level under the "Greek Arch," it will give the original slope of the hill as shown in No. 2. The new southern boundary wall will be in a straight line with the new Greek building, as shown in No. 1. As a corner of the old building projected into the street it had to be removed, and this has partly been done. They first tried to make the new cistern there, but came upon an ancient massive wall, which, I think, is the old or Jewish wall, probably standing on a rock-scarp, as not far east of it the rock rises above the ground.<sup>1</sup>

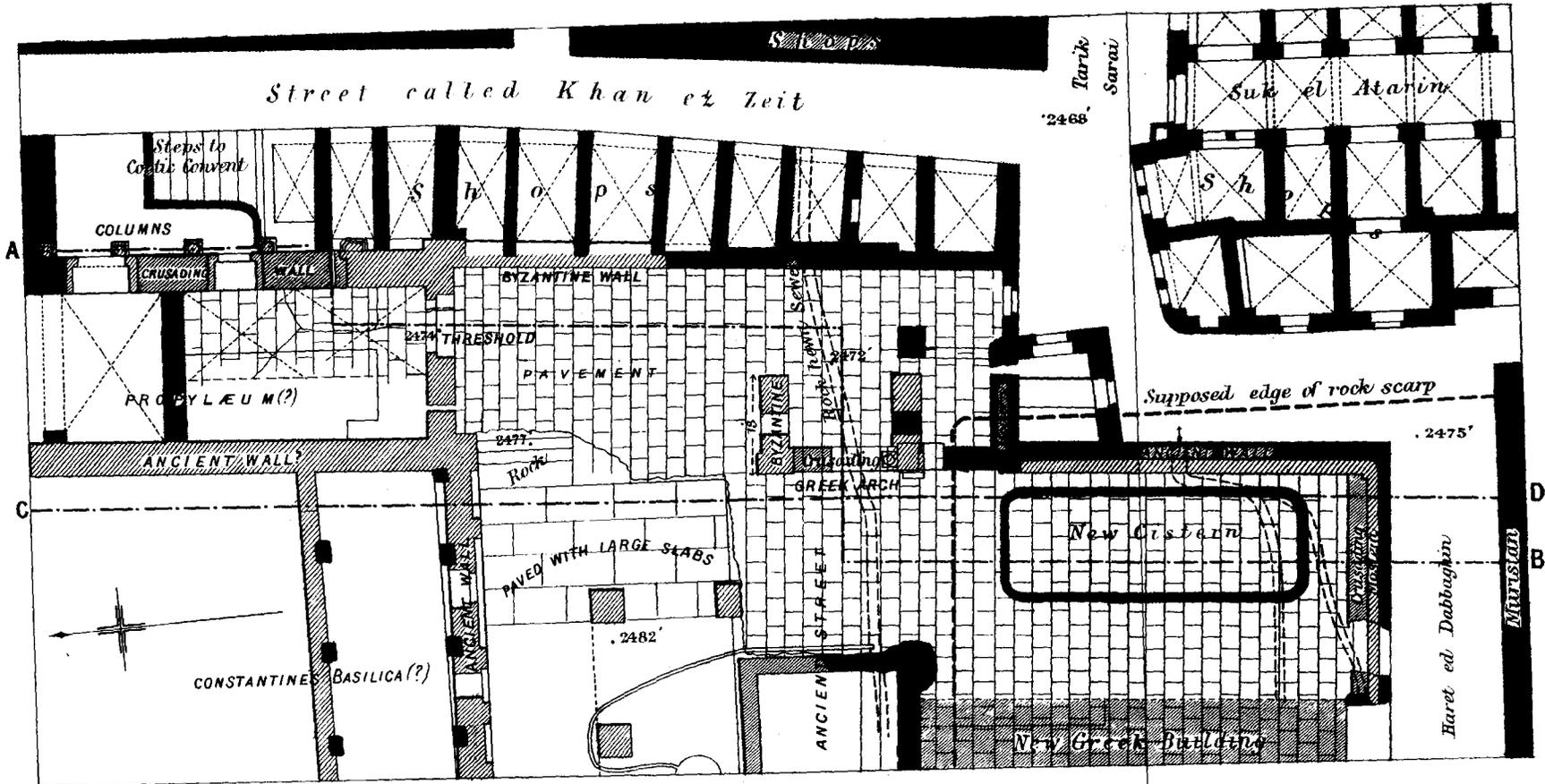
CONRAD SCHICK.

<sup>1</sup> The rock level here was originally 2,470 feet, but it has recently been lowered to 2,468 feet above the sea.

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PLAN OF RUSSIAN PROPERTY  
 EAST OF CHURCH OF HOLY SEPULCHRE  
 SHOWING RECENT DISCOVERIES.

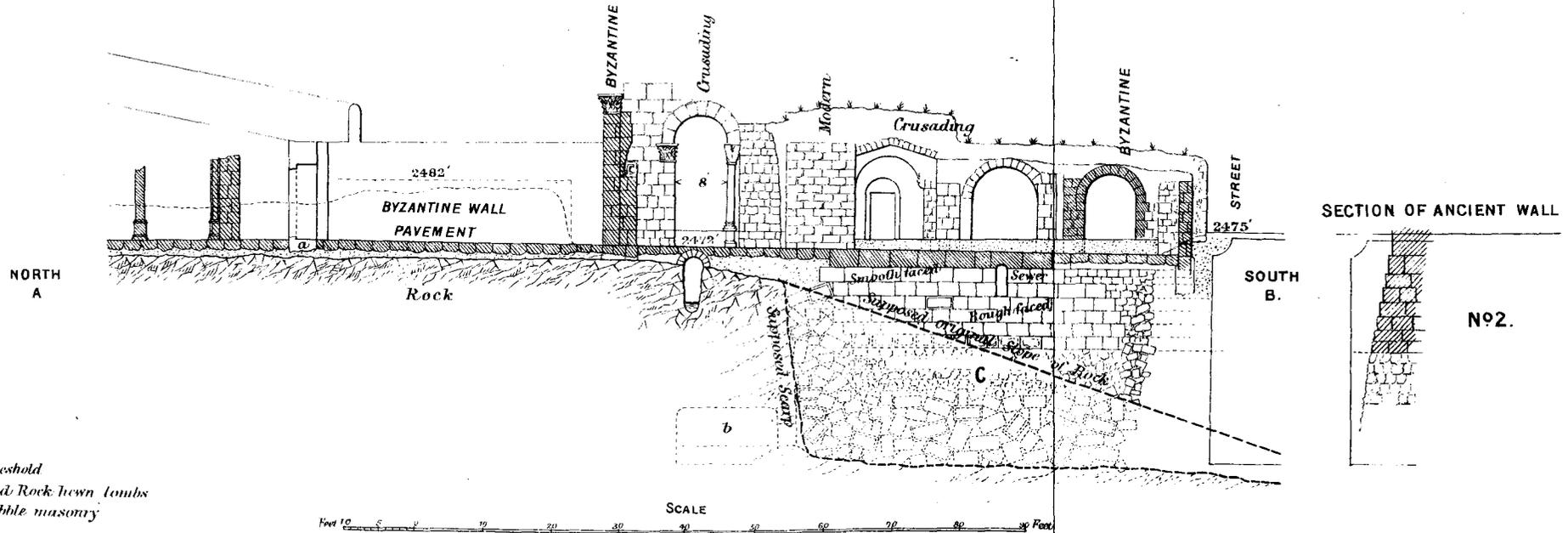
Nº1.



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SECTION ON A.B.

Nº2.



- a. The threshold
- b. Supposed Rock Tewn Tomb
- c. Bad rubble masonry

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Nº 3

SECTION ON C. D.

