

Flagellation, midway between the latter and the Ecce Homo arch. What event of our Lord's sufferings or deeds may the builders have fixed here? I have no answer! It is also interesting, that this little church stands partly on the eastern of the Twin pools; and that just there was made later on a cistern *over* it, although a mouth of the pool below was near at hand. It is further interesting that now it is confirmed that east of the Twin pools there is no ditch or pool, and that the rock rather rises towards the east.

Several questions may be settled whilst the work of clearing the place is going on. But on the very day when I made the measurements, the 13th April, the work was stopped, and it has not since been resumed.

I had to give a copy of the plan to the Superior of the Convents, and when anything new is discovered he will allow me to examine and measure it, and so improve the plan. This is the reason why I could not send it earlier.

C. SCHICK.

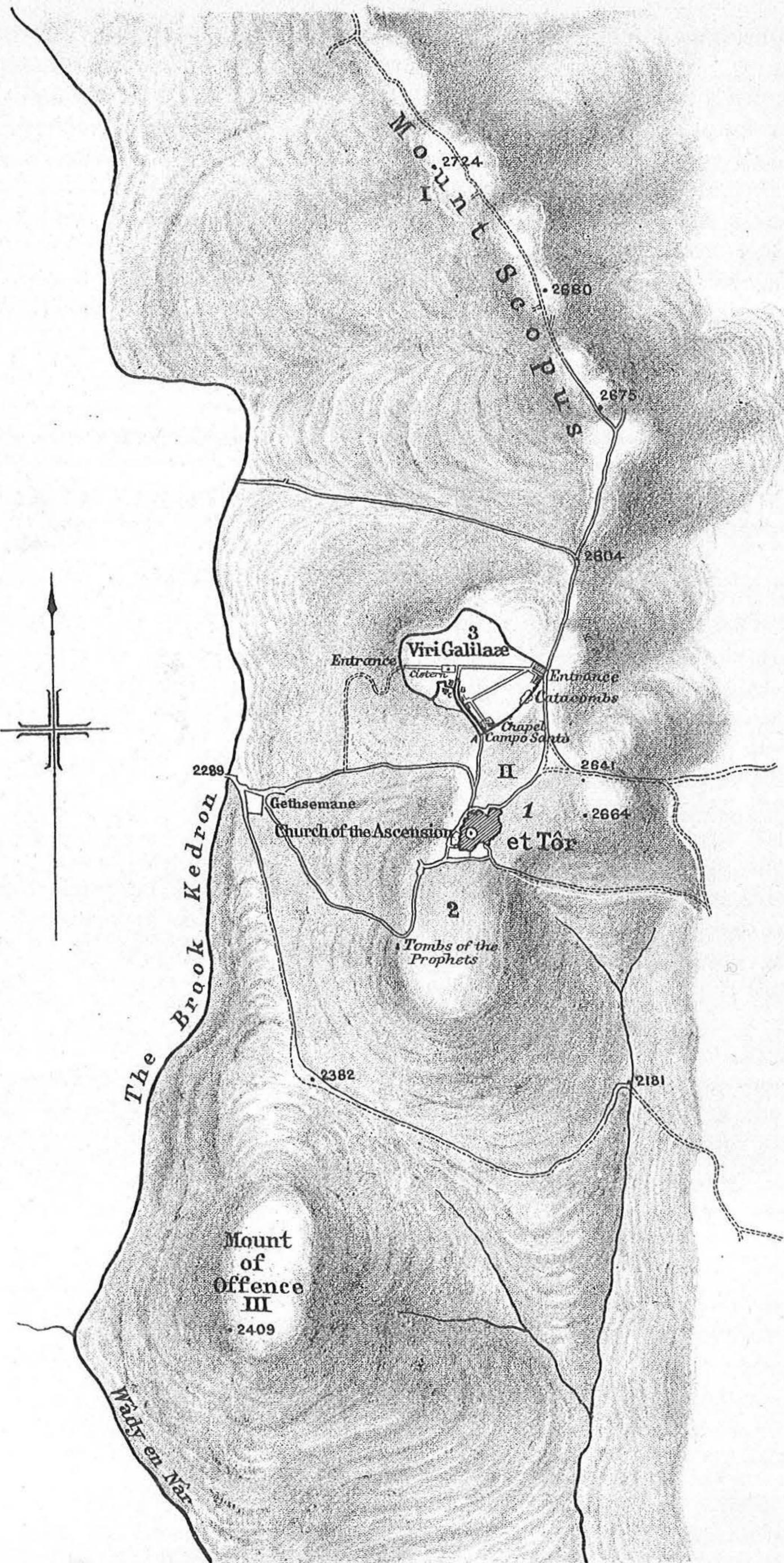
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### THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

Whilst the topography of the Holy City is in so many points doubtful, and a good deal of controversy on the real sites of places, walls, &c., has arisen, "Mount Olivet" alone is an exception. Everyone agrees that the Mount of Olives of Scripture is identical with the present "Jebel Tôr," east of Jerusalem, beyond the Kedron Valley, overlooking the City. The only question that can arise is, whether the whole range of the hills or only a part of them is included under the name? To make this question clearer a plan is appended of the whole ridge, which is commonly understood when the expression "Mount of Olives" is used, because it is *one* mountain.

If one looks to the mountain ridge itself, or examines this plan, it will be observed that the ridge is divided into *three* parts—*a. Mount Scopus*, on the north (I); *b. The real Mount of Olives*, in a stricter sense in the middle (II); *c. The Mount of Offence*, on the south (III). But the *centre-piece*, marked II, is also divided into *three* heads. The middle one, marked 1, has a double top; the eastern, which is the highest, now bearing a Russian Church and Convent, with a very high belfry, besides a Mohammedan Dome or Wely; and the western top, bearing the Village "Et Tôr" and the Church of the Ascension. The southern head, 2, is occupied by a French lady, who has built the Church of the Credo, a convent, and the "Pater noster," which is a kind of "campo santo," having cloisters surrounding an inner court. The northern top, 3, is called "Kurm es Saiad" = Vineyard of the Hunter, a modern name, but the old traditional name is "Viri Galilæ." It has been recently bought by the Greek Bishop Epiphanius, who has made some excavations and found things of which I will report in due course. In every age, even from very ancient times, the Mount of Olives was always more or

# PLAN OF RIDGE OF MOUNT OLIVET.



Scale  
 YARDS 100 0 500 1000 YARDS

less covered with buildings of various kinds, and hence it is not surprising that now things will be found on digging.

Without question the middle part (II) was always most used, being just opposite the city, and the part from which the best prospect is obtained. As to the northern portion, Scopus (I), we know very little of what occurred there during many centuries. On III, or the southern part, we know that Solomon built temples for idols for his strange wives (1 Kings xi, 7), and that it was hence called the "Mount of Corruption." On the slope of this hill there are also a good many rock-cut Jewish tombs, some of which were again used in later times by the Christians.

*The Mount of Olives proper.*

This is the middle part of the Olivet range, and for the antiquary by far the most important part. It consists, as already mentioned and as shown in the accompanying drawing, of three very distinct heads or tops, the middle of which is the highest and double, and is the most important of all.

It is mentioned in the Old Testament (2 Samuel xv, 30-32) that David took his way over the top on his flight before Absalom, and when they came to the top, "where he worshipped God," Husai came, and so on. From this we learn that even in David's time there was here an old *place of worship*. Later on, in the time of the Temple, the ceremony of burning the red heifer was performed here. It was ordered by the law, 4 Moses xix, 1-10, that the blood of it should be sprinkled seven times *towards the sanctuary*, and according to the Rabbis, the officiating priest, standing on the Mount of Olives, could see over the eastern gate of the Inner Temple into the porch, and through the open gate into the *holy place* of the Temple itself. Further, to this spot, "the glory of the Lord," the Shechinah, or presence of God in the cloud and fire, "went from the City" (*i.e.*, the Holy of Holies of the Temple, where it had been in Solomon's time), "and stood upon the mountain, which is on the east side of the City" (Ezekiel xi, 23; compare also xliii, 2); and according to Zechariah xiv, 4, the feet of the Lord will stand again there at the final judgment. Further, in the account given in Nehemiah xii, 28, of the *singers* being called to the dedication of the restored city wall after the Captivity, those of the villages of Netophathi (the present Lifta), also those from the house of Gilgal, are mentioned. I understand by them, those from the Mount of Olives, as the old worshipping place there was a Gilgal,<sup>1</sup> and the dwellings close to it, *i.e.*, the present village of Tôr = "the house of Gilgal." For after this, the singers north of Mount Olivet, but in its neighbourhood, those of Geba and Asmaveth, are mentioned, and the reason is added: "for the singers had builded them villages round *about Jerusalem*," towards the *west*, those villages stood on the heights, above and eastwards of Lifta.

<sup>1</sup> Gilgal = round, or circle.

We learn from the old Rabbis, that as the City of Jerusalem itself became too small for all Israelites at the great feasts to be able to eat their offering meals *in* it, as was ordained by the law (the *Camp*, meaning in later times the *City* of Jerusalem), a tract of ground outside the City was *sanctified* and *added* to it, and being regarded as *belonging to the City*, although outside the walls, was in dignity the same, *i.e.*, belonging to the *Camp*. It was on the *east* side of the town that such addition was made, from the wall eastwards to the Valley Kidron, and the slope and top of the Mount of Olives unto Bethany. This means, the *middle part*, marked II on the drawing, leaving out Scopus on the north and the Mount of Offence on the south. Within this holy circle the village Bethphage was situated, and within it took place the Ascension of our Lord.

The feet of our Lord very often stood on Olivet (*see* St. John viii, 1, 2, and Luke xxi, 38); on one of its rocks he sat looking westwards over to the Temple, and spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, &c. (Matthew xxiv, 3; Mark xiii, 3). Over this part of Olivet he came to his glorious entry into the City as King (Matthew xxi, 1; Mark xi, 1; and Luke xix, 29, 37, 41). At its foot he endured in Gethsemane deep sufferings of soul; from one of its tops, or near to one of them, he ascended triumphantly to heaven (Luke xxiv, 30; Acts of the Apostles i, 9-12).

After these events it is very natural that in Christian times also this Mount of Olives and its sites were kept up and much venerated; so we find there, in course of time, churches, convents, and other similar establishments, and also tombs of various nations. During the Mohammedan occupation nearly all these have gone to ruin, and it is only within the last three decades that much has been built up again, principally by Christians. Thirty years ago, besides the Moslem village, "Et-Tôr" (which has since been greatly enlarged and improved), there were only some olive trees, a few vineyards, and on the highest top the Moslem burial ground with a small dome or Weli, and near to it the threshing floor. Much of the ground has since come, by purchase, into the hands of Christians. The greater part of the middle, or chief top, now belongs to the Russians, who have excavated the ground and found tombs with very fine Mosaics over them and Armenian inscriptions. They also discovered the foundations of a church, which they have built up again on the same place and of the same dimensions and style. They have also built lodging-houses or small convents on old foundations, planted many trees, and above all erected a very high, square-shaped belfry, standing alone, with very many bells of various sizes, amongst which is one very large. The tower bears a gilded cross, which shines very far round about into the country. On the western slope, near Gethsemane, about one-third up the height, the ground has also become Russian property, and there has been built an entirely new church in the pure Muscovite style, with seven towers, surmounted by onion-shaped domes and crosses above them. It is a very costly building, and looks strange in this neighbourhood, where there is nothing else of the kind.

The southern top, marked 2, is occupied by the Roman Catholics. A French lady bought the greater part of it, and two churches are being built, also a convent for nuns of the Carmelite order, some other buildings, and a fine "Campo Santo"—*i.e.*, galleries in which are the Lord's Prayer in 24 languages extending round an inner court, with the tomb of the lady. A boundary wall has been made round the property, and trees planted and gardens laid out. East of this, where the middle top is connected by a narrow pass with another hill more to the east, on the eastern brow of which the village of Bethany is situated, were discovered some years ago some old foundations of a former church, with the celebrated "Bethphage" stone (see *Quarterly Statement*, 1878, page 51, or the "Jerusalem Volume of the Survey of Western Palastine," pages 331 to 340). The property was afterwards bought by the Roman Catholics, and the church is built up again, and a house for a watchman. There are many rock-cut tombs of the Christian time in the neighbourhood, and a little to the north there is a vineyard on the site of a former town or village. In tilling the ground, not only have stones come to light, but also pieces of marble and marble pillars, mosaics, cisterns, and water channels; also two open pools have been discovered. This place should be more systematically excavated. I consider it to be the village from which the disciples brought the ass (Luke xix, 30; Matthew xxi, 1, 2), leading it to the road going towards Jerusalem at the above mentioned pass, where the Bethphage stone now stands; for Jesus himself went not into the village, but only the two disciples, who brought from it the ass. Anyone coming up from Bethany, or leaving Bethany on the right hand, and coming through the vineyards, would have the site of this ancient village or town "over against" him.

The "*Kurm es Saiad*" or "*Viri Galilææ*" is the northern hill of the real Mount of Olives. Two pillars are standing on it in memory of the two men who appeared "in white apparel" to the disciples after the Ascension of our Lord, and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (Acts of the Apostles, i, 9-11). From this (according to the tradition) the name of the mountain originated, but I think the name is still older. As pointed out above, when the people of Israel came together at the great feasts, a good many encamped outside the town, and the Galileans made their camp on this mountain, as those from the other provinces, and from foreign countries, took their places on the middle and southern mountains. After the Resurrection of Christ, mention is made of "Galilee," and of a "mountain" in Galilee, where the disciples were to see Him, and on that mountain in "Galilee," according to Matthew xxviii, 18-20, the last words uttered by our Lord were spoken; they are nearly the same as those recorded in Acts i, 6-8, as having been spoken just before His Ascension on *Mount Olivet*, so that very likely this mountain may be meant, which would not debar His appearing also to His disciples in the *country* of Galilee itself, as we know from John xxi, 1-14, that He did.

The Greek Convent in Jerusalem having long had some share in the

ownership of the vineyard, their Bishop Epiphanius, about ten years ago, bought all the property and enclosed it with a new wall, which is 3,500 feet long. The top of the hill is, to a considerable extent, flat, and slopes off in every direction. The piece of ground is not an exact square, but has crooked boundaries and sides of different lengths. Its shape and position are shown on the plan, which has been reduced from that of the Ordnance Survey.

Except a number of olive and fig trees, a low mound with a cistern beneath, and the two pillars above mentioned, nothing was on the place. The vines had been rather neglected. The pillars were standing in the open field; they seem to have been *expressly made for the purpose*, not intended to receive a capital or to support anything, simply to fix a spot for remembrance. Their average diameter is 15 inches; they are round, each with a cross in relief on its side, and at the top are some not very neat or classical mouldings all round; they are of the native hard reddish stone, and from the present surface of the soil 2 feet 8 inches high. Probably they go down 3 or 4 feet, to the original surface of the ground, having been, when put up, pillars of about 8 or more feet high. It would be interesting to ascertain their real height, and the old *flooring* round about, which, I think, will be found to be paved, or of mosaics, perhaps with inscriptions. When the boundary was made, the mason went straight on, by which the pillars were left *inside*, and in the possession of the Greek Bishop. But the other Christian denominations, especially the Roman Catholics, became irritated, and the Government had to settle the matter. A narrow lane, 10 feet wide was made, so that the pillars are now outside the Greek property, and pilgrims of any denomination may visit them without hindrance if the door is open. The key is kept by a Moslem, who built some houses on his own ground in the neighbourhood of the pillars. These houses are now rented to Russians, and the door is always open.

#### (a.) The Bishop's New Buildings.

Three entrances have been made in the new boundary wall, and inside roads leading to them laid out. The entrance in the west is just opposite the city, and a new road leads up to it, branching off from the old road a little above Gethsemane, and going up in a serpentine line as indicated on the plan; inside the ground rises as far as the cistern, which is situated at the highest point. The chief entrance is towards the south not far from the "pillars," in the neighbourhood of an old cistern. It has three gates, a large centre one and a small one on each side; the large one is opened only on festival days. On each side of this entrance is built a square room, one used at present by the gatekeeper, and the other as a temporary Greek chapel until the permanent one is finished, when it will be used as a museum for the antiquities found on the property. At the north-eastern corner another large entrance has been made, and a small residence for the Bishop and his servants, together

with a stable for animals, &c., also a new cistern. As this point is already on the slope towards the east, it affords a marvellous prospect over many mountains and valleys, the Jordan Valley, and the Trans-Jordanic land. In front of this entrance the main road from the village Et Tôr northwards runs on the top of the hills to Mount Scopus, to the villages 'Aisáwiyeh, 'Anatá, and others, and to the Sultaneh road to Nablús.

South of the Bishop's residence a good many rock-cut tombs were found, which may be called *catacombs*. Also near the southern corner, tombs were found, and a new Greek chapel has been erected there, measuring inside only 20 feet by 14 feet, having a door on one side and windows on the other, and covered with a dome. The outside, towards the north, is decorated with a Greek inscription.

Many trees have been planted and terraces made, and in many places old foundations were worked through. It was found that there is now a layer of earth 6 feet, and in parts 7 feet, deep, above the former surface of the ground.

During the progress of these works many discoveries were made which I will now describe.

(b.) A "Campo Santo," or Christian Burial Place.

Near the southern corner, 7 feet under the present surface of the ground, were found remains of walls, pillars, shafts, and capitals of the Corinthian order, a base still in its original situation, and near the walls, with which they form an angle, 15 Christian *tombs* of a high class were found in rows of five. There is first a flooring or pavement of stones, under that some *earth*, and then other stone slabs. When the latter were removed, they were found to be the lids or coverings of single graves, built of masonry. In them were found little bottles and similar things, and there were crosses on the covering stones. A good deal of mosaic flooring was also found, where there is no stone pavement, especially under the new chapel. At the south-western corner of the latter a tablet, all in mosaic, was exposed, with a Greek inscription, of which I give a copy one-tenth of its real size (No. 4). I give also drawings of three Christian tombstones; the crosses on them are on one in relief and on two engraved; two have Greek inscriptions,<sup>1</sup> as shown in the drawing. From all this it is clear that in the Byzantine time a Christian burial place existed here, covered (at least partly) with roofing supported by marble pillars of artistic design. The extent, or form, cannot be ascertained until the whole is cleared.

<sup>1</sup> These appear to be early Christian texts, with Greek crosses, as far as can be judged from the copy; the word *Μνημα*, "Memorial," occurs on 3a and 3b. The text No. 4 is evidently Byzantine, and seems to be the tomb "of Thy servant Anna."—C. R. C.

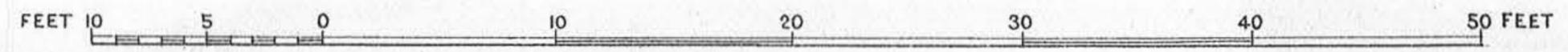
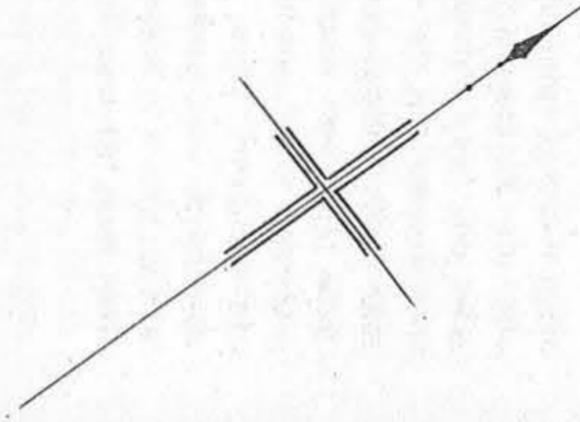
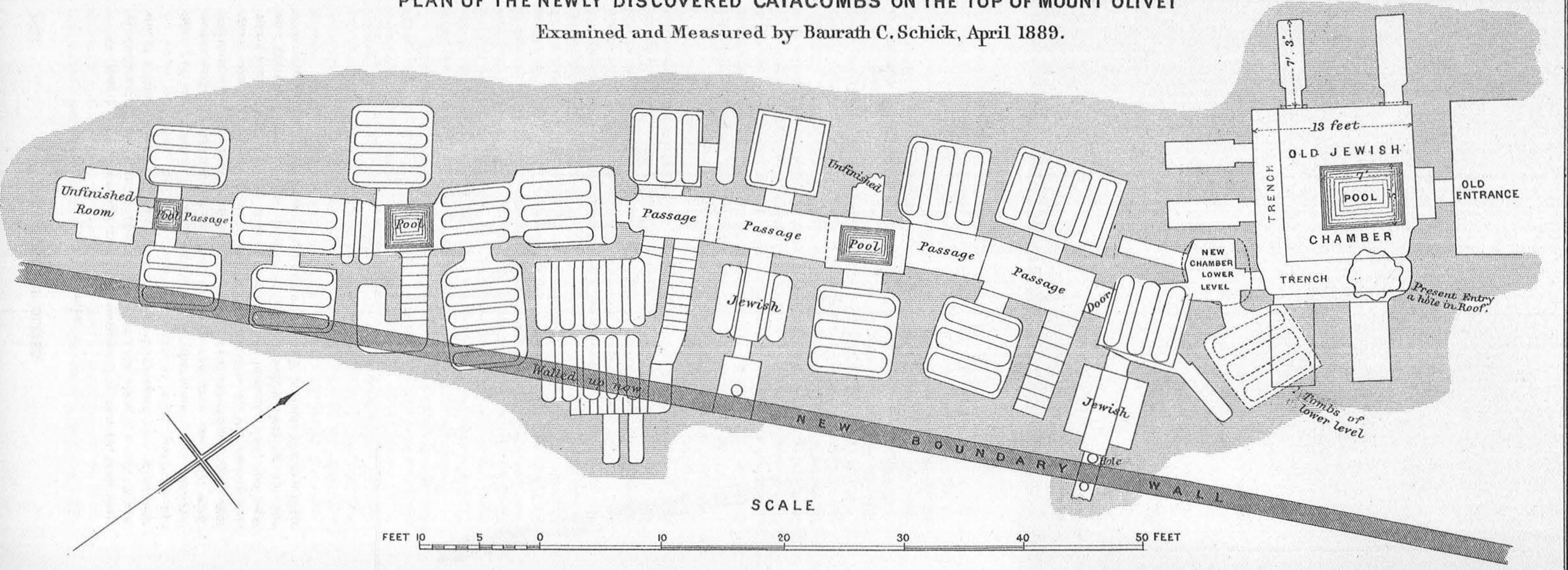
## (c.) Catacombs.

Of these I present a rough plan, and have first to remark, that these excavations are all hewn in the rock, but the rock being of a soft nature, and of a sandy structure, and becoming wet and dry again year after year for many centuries, they have suffered greatly, as small particles are falling off every year. The edges are no longer sharp, and hence measurements and bearings cannot be taken with the exactness one could wish. Further, when the new boundary wall which runs in several places over these excavations was made it wanted foundation, so the excavations were walled up, or some unsafe parts of rock broken away, and new and good masonry put in. Moreover, in thoroughly clearing out the excavations for convenience sake they were made in some places a little wider or higher, so that the workmen might stand, and in consequence of all this, a plan may give a good idea of the whole, but will be far from representing exactly the original state of things. Apparently there were originally three groups of ancient Jewish rock-cut tombs, which later on were partly altered and used again by Christians, and at the same time many new caves and tombs were excavated.

The present entry to these caves is a hole, broken into the roof of a large room, where one has to descend about 15 feet. The old entrance is now walled up, it is in the north; a square hole, 2 feet wide and 2 feet 4 inches high, exactly as all the Jewish rock tombs have. A few steps lead into a Jewish room, 15 feet long and 13 feet wide, and 6½ feet high. In the flooring is a kind of pool 2 feet 8 inches deep, 5 feet wide, and 7 feet long. On the side walls of the room are, towards the west, two ordinary *kokim*; towards the east also two, but very wide ones; towards the south, two of the usual ones, and another originally of the same size, but at a later period (very likely by Christians) enlarged, and its bottom made 3½ feet deeper, so that a second, but small, room, was created. From this on the east, an opening leads into a cave with three Christian tombs, or rather graves. On the south is one *loculus*, and on the south-east an opening leads to a kind of passage. This was originally a square Jewish chamber 6½ feet wide in each direction. In its flooring are cut three Christian graves, and on the east is a small regular Jewish chamber with two *bench graves*, *i.e.*, a bench on which the corpse was put, one on each side of the passage, which went further eastward, but is now walled up. There is here a hole in the roofing, and consequently some daylight. In the corner of the square room one tomb (*koka*) runs obliquely into the rock. A kind of doorway leads from this chamber to a passage going in a nearly straight line southwards as far as the end of the excavations. On its right side there is a cave, accessible by a kind of doorway, with four Christian tombs, and to the left, first a flight of steps, and then an opening to a cave with three Christian graves parallel with the passage. Going on in the latter there is on the right side an open cave with three Christian graves at right angles to the pathway; then in the flooring of the latter is a pool about 5 feet long, 2 feet wide, and a little more than 2 feet deep. On the

# PLAN OF THE NEWLY DISCOVERED "CATACOMBS" ON THE TOP OF MOUNT OLIVET

Examined and Measured by Baurath C. Schick, April 1889.



right (west) of it is an unfinished cave, and to the left (east) a cave with three Christian graves. Further on there is on the right a square cave with two very wide graves, or troughs, probably Jewish, and to the left a real Jewish chamber with two bench tombs, the passage between them going eastward into another small chamber, which originally had a hole in its roof.

Proceeding along the pathway southwards, there is on the right hand an open cave with three Christian graves, from the northern of which an opening leads to another. On the left side of the road there is first a flight of steps leading up eastward, and from it another stair leading down southward to a number of Christian graves; I counted seven, but the wall towards the west is broken, and when creeping through, one comes to five other Christian graves, and passing over them westward comes up by a few steps into the pathway again. Passing southward through a kind of gate, one comes to a widening of the roadway, and has to step over graves hewn in the bottom; first over one situated across, then over two rows or sets of three each, parallel with the pathway. From the southern row, a wide door opens eastward to a cave with five Christian tombs, placed in the same way as the former. Towards the west there are none, but simply the rock wall.

Then comes again a pool in the flooring of the passage, to the left a flight of broken steps leading to a cave, and to the right (west) of the pool there is a wide opening of a cave with four Christian graves. Going on still, in the passage one has to step again over Christian graves; first over two lying across, and then over two very long ones (the longest in the whole catacombs) parallel with the passage. To the left (east) of them there is a cave with three Christian graves lying in the same direction, and on the right (west) side, only rock. The passage now becomes narrower, and one comes to another pool, a small one, with the usual depth, but under 3 feet wide in each direction. To the right and left of it are openings into caves, each of which has three Christian graves. Then opposite the pool is rather a narrow door leading into a chamber, apparently not finished and without any graves, and here the catacombs come to an end.

From this examination of these remains it appears—

(a.) That the tombs are of two distinct kinds, namely, Jewish and Christian. Running through the whole Jewish system there seems to be an idea of singularity, each tomb or grave is for one person, separated from others, and if ever two are found together there is a passage between them, and so no real connection, whereas in the Christian tomb the idea of brotherhood, one belonging to the other, is very striking. Through the whole goes the idea of community.

(b.) It is striking to find the number three so often. It seems to have been the rule to put three graves together.

(c.) One gets also the impression that they utilised space as much as possible. Straight lines and symmetrical effect they had not at all in view, simply usefulness; of beauty there is none.

(*d.*) One sees also that they were not particular as to the direction in which the corpses had to be laid. It is now the endeavour to put dead bodies in such a way that they may look eastward to the face of Christ, when coming from the east, as the sun rises, the "sun of righteousness" being Christ.

(*e.*) If there were any inscriptions on the walls they have become obliterated. I found none; but in several places crosses were chiselled on the walls.

(*f.*) The "pools," I suppose, were made to gather the water coming down into these caverns or tombs in the wet season, in order that the tombs and the pathway might remain dry.

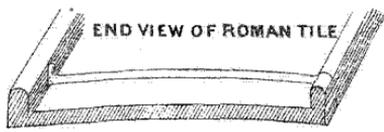
I have still to add that there is in the large (Jewish) room, along two sides, a trench  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide and nearly the same deep, apparently constructed at a later time.

(*g.*) Similar Christian tombs are found elsewhere in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, especially on the Mount of Olives, but always a single group of three to seven graves. This excavation is the most extensive of the kind, and as the tombs are for the most part Christian, I give them the name of Catacombs.

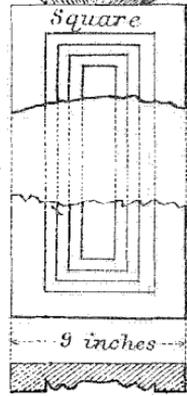
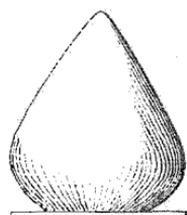
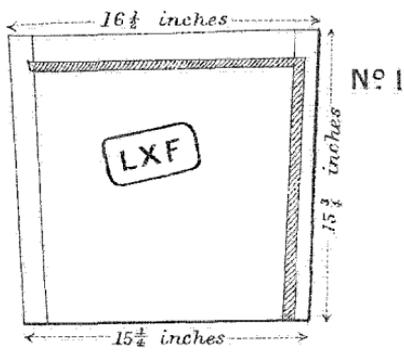
As there were found in this excavation a good number of Roman tiles, of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Greek Bishop thinks it may be the "Peristereon" mentioned by Josephus, Bell. v, xii, 2, where he says, in describing the circumvallation of Jerusalem: "From the lower parts of Cenopolis it went along the Valley of Kidron to the Mount of Olives; it then bent to the south, and encompassed the mountain as far as the rock called Peristereon, and that other hill which lies next it, and is over the valley which reaches to Siloam, where it bended again to the west."

Now, as the Greek word "Peristereon" is generally translated in the Latin Columbarium, and the latter word means, in the first place, a pigeon house, and is here spoken of as a rock, some have applied Josephus's expression to the rock at the threshing floor of the village Silwan, just where the village on the north begins. But if applied so, all the rest of the expression becomes unintelligible. "Peristereon" has accordingly been looked for higher up the mountain and more to the north. Dr. Schulz takes it to be the "Tombs of the Prophets," as the word "Columbarium" means not only a pigeon house, but also caves with many excavations for dead bodies, or urns with the ashes of burned ones. But even the tombs of the prophets seems to be situated not high enough or far enough to the north, as near the "Peristereon" the bending of the wall took place from an easterly to a southern direction. On the other hand, everything becomes intelligible if the newly discovered catacombs are taken to be identical with the "Peristereon," for then the whole western slope of Mount Olivet will be embraced, and the wall would come to (or near) the camp of the 10th Legion "six furlongs from the town at the mount called the Mount of Olives" (Bell. v, 2, 3). This camp itself formed part of the circumvallation, and no better place for

ANTIQUITIES FOUND ON MOUNT OLIVET IN THE PART CALLED VIRI GALILAE.  
 Measured & Drawn by Baurath C. Schick. April 1889.



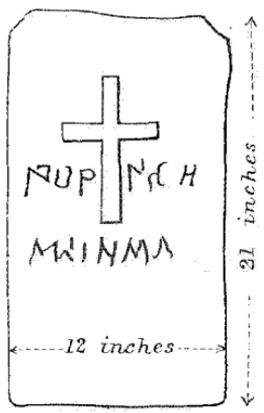
PLAN OF ROMAN TILES



SQUARE PILLAR OF MARBLE (WHITE)

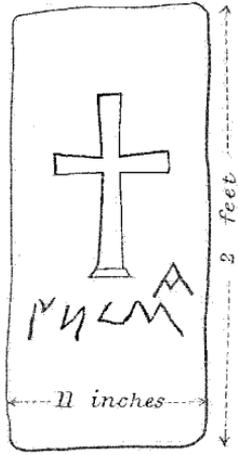
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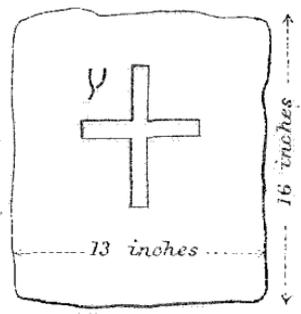
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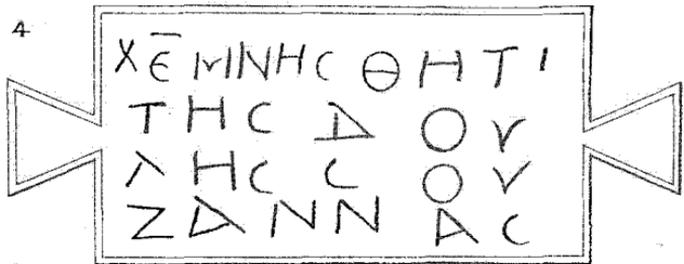
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CROSS CUT IN STONE

ON MOSAIC FLOORING AT CAMPO SANTO ON MOUNT OLIVET

No 4



SCALE

the camp could be found than the top of "Viri Galilæ" mountain. So the idea of identifying these catacombs with the "Peristereon" has some good ground on which to rest.

It may be objected to this identification, that the catacombs are the greater part Christian, and hence could not have existed at the time of Josephus. But to this it may be answered that there were certainly Jewish excavations before the Christians did anything, and the Christians only modified and enlarged these, which may very well have been done in the 37 years between the Ascension of our Lord and the siege of the City by the Romans. That the Ascension had taken place somewhere on Olivet made this mountain a hallowed place for the Christians, and very likely they got access to and utilised these old Jewish tombs which had already become profaned and polluted by the Roman soldiers, their hated enemies, being buried there.

(d.) Antiquities found on "Viri Galilæ."

In clearing the catacombs, digging foundations, planting trees, etc., many old relics were found, of which the Bishop has made a collection. Besides a number of coins with Greek inscriptions, and of late date, there are also some from the Jewish time, amongst them a genuine half shekel. There were also found a great many small stone cubes for mosaics, some small ornaments of silver, iron nails and rings, hooks of copper, &c. ; also various vases, capitals, shafts, &c. of marble and other stones, pottery, pieces of tiles, and so on.

Roman tiles (No. 1) were found as coverings of graves in the catacombs, 42 pieces in all. They are, on an average, about 15 inches square, but  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch narrower at one end than the other, so that the narrow end of one can be put into the wider end of the other, they have, like the modern French tiles, raised and curved edges. The most important thing in connection with them is a stamp made in the clay before being burned of the Roman letters L X F, in some instances L X F R E, meaning the tenth legion called Fretensis.

The tiles have a whitish appearance arising from sand having been strewn on them whilst they were still soft, the inside, or clay itself, is more red, and the tiles give a good sound when struck.

No. 2 represents pieces of white marble, belonging to a square post, the middle piece wanting, so that the length (or height) of the post cannot be told. It has on two sides the remarkable mouldings, which are so frequent on such pieces, and which are still found on posts in the Haram Es Sherff, and on a larger scale on the inside of the so-called Golden Gate. They seem to me a Jewish ornament, and I think such were on the piers or pilasters on the outside of the Temple itself, which the Talmud<sup>1</sup> compares to "waves of the sea."

The posts have in general on one or two sides, grooves into which were

<sup>1</sup> Beth Habbechereh, I, 14.

the camp could be found than the top of "Viri Galilæ" mountain. So the idea of identifying these catacombs with the "Peristereon" has some good ground on which to rest.

It may be objected to this identification, that the catacombs are the greater part Christian, and hence could not have existed at the time of Josephus. But to this it may be answered that there were certainly Jewish excavations before the Christians did anything, and the Christians only modified and enlarged these, which may very well have been done in the 37 years between the Ascension of our Lord and the siege of the City by the Romans. That the Ascension had taken place somewhere on Olivet made this mountain a hallowed place for the Christians, and very likely they got access to and utilised these old Jewish tombs which had already become profaned and polluted by the Roman soldiers, their hated enemies, being buried there.

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Roman tiles (No. 1) were found as coverings of graves in the catacombs, 42 pieces in all. They are, on an average, about 15 inches square, but  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch narrower at one end than the other, so that the narrow end of one can be put into the wider end of the other, they have, like the modern French tiles, raised and curved edges. The most important thing in connection with them is a stamp made in the clay before being burned of the Roman letters L X F, in some instances L X F R E, meaning the tenth legion called Fretensis.

The tiles have a whitish appearance arising from sand having been strewn on them whilst they were still soft, the inside, or clay itself, is more red, and the tiles give a good sound when struck.

No. 2 represents pieces of white marble, belonging to a square post, the middle piece wanting, so that the length (or height) of the post cannot be told. It has on two sides the remarkable mouldings, which are so frequent on such pieces, and which are still found on posts in the Haram Es Sherif, and on a larger scale on the inside of the so-called Golden Gate. They seem to me a Jewish ornament, and I think such were on the piers or pilasters on the outside of the Temple itself, which the Talmud<sup>1</sup> compares to "waves of the sea."

The posts have in general on one or two sides, grooves into which were

<sup>1</sup> Beth Habbechereh, I, 14.

put stone slabs to form low partition walls. The cone-shaped top or head of these posts must have been a very favourite form with the Jews. As it is found so often, I think it represents in some degree the cap of the high priest, as the Oriental Arabic-speaking Rabbis have even to this day a similar one.

No. 3 shows three tombstones: (a) with an inscription in Greek; it has a cross in relief, as shown in the drawing; (b) is a similar one, but the cross is not in relief but engraved; (c) the same, but bearing only one letter.

C. SCHICK.

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### CURIOUS CAVE AT SARIS.

Some time ago M. Henri Baldensperger, of the well-known French bee-keeping firm of Baldensperger Brothers, who own an apiary near Saris, called on me, and in the course of conversation told me that some fellahin of the village of Saris had quite recently, whilst cutting firewood, discovered a cave in which were sculptured human figures.

Noticing the interest he had awakened, M. Baldensperger invited me to join him on a visit to the spot. I was yesterday (June 6th, 1889) able to avail myself of this kind invitation, and the following brief notes on the discovery may interest readers of the Palestine Exploration Fund's *Quarterly Statement* :—

On the hill to the south-west of Saris is a small pine grove called El Arb'aïn, which, like its sister grove at the shrine of El 'Ajamî, is one of the last relics of the forests which in ancient times covered this part of the country. From El Arb'aïn a bridle-path leads westward, and at about one-third of a mile distant runs along the top of a rock terrace, the edge of which is fringed with bushes. In the face of the low cliff behind these bushes is a hole by which we gain access to an artificial cavern 10 feet square, and at present from 3 to 4 feet high from earth-covered floor to flat ceiling. The entrance is at the eastern end of the north wall, and exactly opposite, in the south-east corner, is a rectangular hole or pit, lying east and west, 5 feet long and 2 feet 10 inches wide. It looks very much like the lower pit in the rock-cut wine-presses which are so frequently met with on our Judean hillsides. The walls of this pit or trough, which is almost full of earth and dried bones, rise from 3 to 4 inches above the floor, and are from 6 to 8 inches thick. In the centre of the north wall there is a channel cut just like those in wine-presses. The fellah who first showed the place to Mons. B. told him that there was writing on the top of these walls, but that a fellah who had dug in the cave in hopes of finding treasure, in his disappointment defaced it, lest it should reveal the exact spot to some more instructed and fortunate seeker. I noticed some marks or characters (?) here, which I copied.