

THE WORSHIP OF THE PATRIARCH LOT IN PALESTINE.

By JOSEPH OFFORD.

In the *American Journal of Archaeology* for December last, Mr. Willard H. Robinson, Jr., has published two Greek inscriptions from Palestine referring to the "Holy Lot," and in one case to intercessions being made to him as to a saint. The first of these was found in the floor of a church, accompanied by a mosaic, near to Mount Nebo, and in the neighbourhood of Madaba, where the famous Mosaic Map of Palestine and the Egyptian Delta, was discovered some years ago. This text was edited from copies by Père F. M. Abel, in the *Revue Biblique*, in 1914; but some of the lines were misplaced and other minor errors made in the copies of the learned father. Mr. Robinson's more correct copy is therefore probably final, and we here give it together with his translation:—

1. ἐπὶ τοῦ ἁγίου(τάτου) καὶ ὡσιω(τάτου) Ἰωάννου εἰπισκό(που) ἐκτίσθη
καὶ ἐτελώθη ὁ ἄγιος τόπος σου διὰ
2. Βαριχᾶ πρεσβυτέρου καὶ παραμοναρίου αὐτοῦ ἐν μηνὶ Νοεμβρίῳ
χρόνον ἕκτιν ἰνδικτιῶνος.
3. Ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Λὸτ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Προκοπίου, πρόσδεξε τὴν
προσφορὰν καὶ τὴν καρποφορ(ίαν)
4. Στεφάνου καὶ Ἡλία ἀδελφόν τέκνα Κομιτίσσα. Ὁ Θε(εὸ)ς τῶν ἁγίων
μαρτύρων, πρόσδεξε.
5. τὴν καρποφορίαν Σεργίου καὶ Προκοπίου τέκνον αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρ
σωτηρίας Παβθαῶς Ἀναστασίας
6. καὶ ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύσεως Ἰωάννου Ἀναστασίου καὶ ὑπὲρ ὧν προσένικεν
Κ(ύριο)ς γινόςκι τῶ ὠνόματα.

TRANSLATION.

"When the most holy and saintly John was bishop, there was
"built, and completed, thy holy place by Barichas the Presbyter,
"and his warden, in the month of November, the sixth year of the
"indiction.

“The God of the holy Lot and of the holy Procopius receive the tribute and offering of Stephen and Elias, brothers, children of Comitissa’s. The God of the holy martyrs receive the offering of Sergius and Procopius, his children, for the sake of the salvation of Rabatha Anastasia, and for the repose of John Anastasius and for those who contributed (the Lord knows their names).”

From the inscription it is evident that Lot, like Procopius, was a patron saint whose God is to receive the offerings.

The second inscription, found close by, is still more explicit regarding the veneration of Lot; it reads:—

Αγιε Λωτ προσδεξε την
προσευχην Ρώμης (και) πορφυρ(ίας)
(και) Μαρίας των σών δούλων.

“Holy Lot, receive the prayer of Rome (or Roma) and of Porphyrina and of Mary, your servants.”

The *δούλων* in the final line is evidently a lapidary error for *ουλων*.

This sanctification of Lot revealed by these ancient memorials of about the fourth century, is not entirely new to Christian history, because in an Armenian version of a Jerusalem ritual which gives considerable geographical and antiquarian information concerning Palestine, it tells us that Abraham and Lot were both revered in Galilee in the seventh century.

Moreover, in a work entitled *Liber Vitae*, by Mr. Walter de Grey Birch, the author mentions Lot as included in a list of Sanctified and Beatified Patriarchs of the Old Testament; the manuscript he quotes for this fact is “Stone 960,” in the British Museum.

The Koran, *suras* 7 and 11, assert that Lot was sent as a preacher to the people of the five cities to deter them from their vices, and these views have probably been taken over by the Prophet from some Moabite or Ammonite traditions, which were also familiar among the Madaba people at the period the newly-found inscriptions were engraved, and later up to the Hegira.