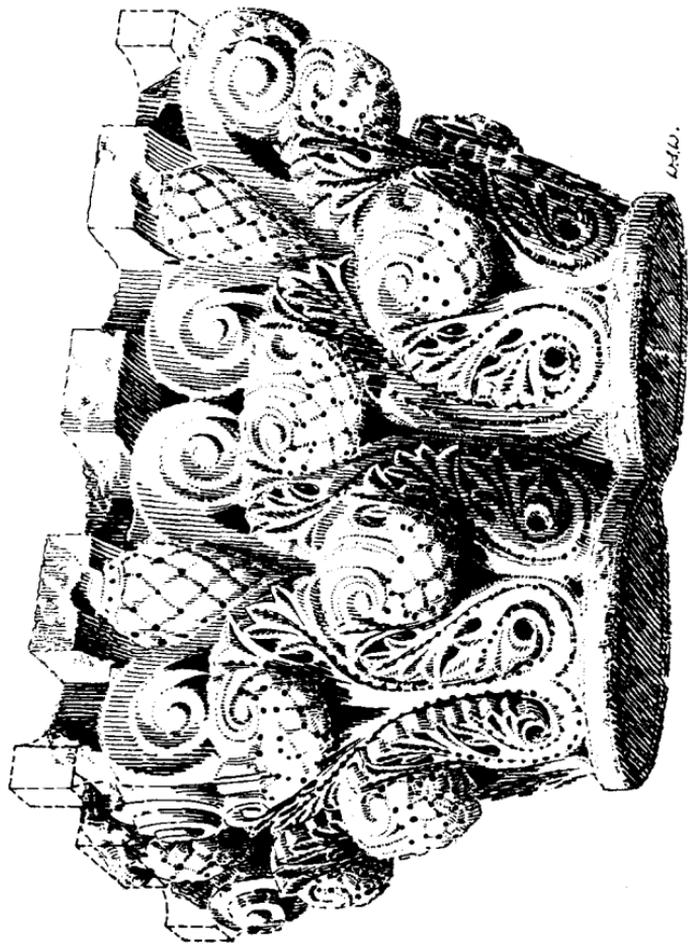


CAPITAL FOUND IN THE TEMPLE AREA.



W. S. Cottrell & Co. Eng'rs

## BYZANTINE CAPITAL FOUND IN THE HARAM AREA.

THE Committee have received a capital which has recently been found in some excavations at Jerusalem and saved from the lime-kiln. It was choked with lime and dust, but on being carefully cleaned appears now to be almost perfect, and the edges of the leaves, &c., as sharp as when they left the sculptor's hands. The material is a white marble slightly stained. The capital is a double one, over coupled columns, the horizontal line of the necking being continued through. The carving has the Corinthian abacus and volutes clearly indicated, the main features being bunches of grapes and flat leaves, with grapes in place of the curl of the leaf which is so prominent in mediæval capitals. The whole is very sharply cut and drilled in the true Byzantine style. The abacus is  $19\frac{1}{2}$  inches long,  $10\frac{3}{4}$  inches broad, and  $12\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height, and from centre to centre of column 9 inches, and it evidently formed part of a detached colonnade, as the carving is complete on all four sides. The drawing which faces this is very kindly presented to us by Mr. W. S. Weatherley.

There are several coupled columns and capitals in the building known as the Mosque of Omar in the south part of the Aksa, and there are also some in the front of the north porch to that mosque, these being of old work reused, as is plain from some of the bases being made up of finely carved capitals reversed. The carving of the capital just received is quite different from these, and Mr. P. Pullan (one of our best judges of Byzantine art) is decidedly of opinion that it is a work of the eighth or ninth century. Very probably it may have been carved by a Greek sculptor when the Aksa was nearly rebuilt and much altered, and again restored in the eighth and ninth centuries by Haroun al Raschid and his son Mamûn. I quite agree with Mr. Pullan.

As to the grandeur of this mosque, some quite unexpected relations have recently been given to us by the accounts in Makaddasi, an Arabic author of the tenth century, whose work has just been translated by Mr. Guy le Strange for the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, whose translation of Procopius, by Mr. Aubrey Stuart, was recently reviewed in the *Athenæum*.

A basket capital, pure Byzantine, nearly like those still remaining at the ruined colonnade in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and those to the eastern colonnade of the Aksa, has within a short time been found in excavations north of the Damascus gate, and other discoveries may confidently be expected. A small piece of another capital has been brought home recently by Canon Liddon, and is now let into the wall of the chancel south aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral. It is the upper part of one of the volutes of a capital which was, apparently, of the same design as that sent to the Fund.

HAYTER LEWIS.