

IDRÎSÎ'S DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM IN 1154.

IN connection with Professor Hayter-Lewis' excellent paper on the Aksa Mosque (see *Quarterly Statement* for January, 1887), the following translation of Idrîsî's description of Jerusalem in the year 1154 may be found of interest. Idrîsî wrote at a time when Jerusalem was still in the possession of the Crusaders.

My translation is made from the Arabic text printed by J. Gildemeister (*Zeit. des Deutsh. Pal. Ver.*, Band 2, Heft 2, 1885), from a MS. copy lent to him by the Dutch Orientalist, de Goeje, which had been carefully collated with the MS. preserved in Paris and at Oxford.

GUY LE STRANGE.

The Holy City.—Baît al Mukaddas, a beautiful city of ancient foundation, lasting for ever. It was anciently called Iliyâ (Ælia). It stands on a mountain, and you ascend to it from all sides. In plan it is long, and its length stretches from west to east.

Bâb al Mihrâb¹ is on its western side; and this is the gate over which is the Cupola of David, Kubbat Dâûd—peace be upon him.

Bâb ar Rahmah² is on the eastern side of the city. It is closed, and is only opened at the Feast of Olive-branches (Palm Sunday).

Bâb Sihyûn (Sion Gate) is on the south of the city.

Bâb 'Amûd al Ghurâb (the Gate of the Crow's Pillars)³ lies to the north of the city.

When you enter (Jerusalem) by the (Jaffa Gate) Bâb al Mihrâb, which as aforesaid is the western gate, you go eastwards through a street that leads to the great church known as the Kanfsah al Kayâmah (the Church of the Resurrection), which the Muslims call Kumâmah (the Dunchill). This is a church to which pilgrimage is made from all parts of the Greek empire, both from the eastern lands and the western. You may enter (the Church) by a gate at the west end,⁴ and the interior thereof occupies the centre space under a dome which covers the whole of the church. This is one of the wonders of the world.

The church itself lies lower than this gate, but you cannot descend thereto from this side.

Another gate opens on the north side,⁵ and through this you may descend to the lower part of the church by thirty steps. This gate is called Bâb Santa Maria.

¹ The Gate of the Oratory (of David), i.e., the Jaffa Gate.

² The Gate of Mercy. One half of the so called Golden Gate.

³ The "Damascus Gate" is at the present day known as Bâb al 'Amûd, "the Gate of the Piliar," what the "Crow" was I know not.

⁴ No longer, I believe, in existence.

⁵ Also closed at the present day by external buildings occupying the part north of the "Aisle of the Church of the Crusaders."

When you have descended into the interior of the church you come on the most venerated Holy Sepulchre. It has two gates, and above it is a vaulted dome of very solid construction, beautifully built, and splendidly ornamented. Of these two gates, one is toward the north, facing the gate Santa Maria, and the other is toward the south, facing which is the Bâb as Salûbiyyah (the gate of the Crucifixion). Above this gate is the bell-tower¹ of the church.

Over against this,² on the east, is a great and venerable church, where the Franks of Ar Rûm (which is the Greek Empire) have their worship and services. To the east (again) of this blessed church, but bearing somewhat to the south, is the prison in which the Lord Messiah was incarcerated; also the place of the Crucifixion.

Now as to the great dome (over the Church of the Resurrection), it is of a vast size, and open to the sky. Inside the dome, and all round it, are painted pictures of the Prophets, and of the Lord Messiah, and of the Lâdy Maryam, his mother, and of John the Baptist. Over the Holy Sepulchre lamps are suspended, and above the Place (of the Grave) in particular are three lamps of gold.

On leaving the great Church (of the Resurrection) and going eastwards, you come to the holy house built by Solomon, the son of David. This, in the time of the Jews, was a mosque (or house of prayer) to which pilgrimage was made, but it was taken out of their hands and they were driven from thence; but when the days of Islam came, under the Kings of the Muslims, the spot came once more to be venerated, as the Masjid al Aksa.

The Masjid al Aksa is the great mosque (of Jerusalem), and in the whole earth there is no mosque of greater dimensions than this; unless it be the Friday Mosque at Cordova, in Andalusia, which they say has a greater extent of roof than has the Aksa, but the court of the Aksa Mosque is certainly larger than is that of the mosque at Cordova.

(The Haram Area of) the Masjid al Aksa is four-sided, its length measures 200 fathoms (*bâ*), and its breadth is 180 fathoms.

In that half (of the Haram Area) which lies (south) towards the Mîhrâb (or prayer-nich) is (the main building of the Aksa Mosque), which

¹ Written in the Arabic *Kanbinâr*, Campanarium. This would go to prove the Tower of the Church of the Resurrection to be older than M. de Vogüé supposes (judging it on architectural grounds only), in his *Eglises de la Terre Sainte*, p. 207. The great south portal of the Church, the only one at present in use, and immediately to the north of which stands the Bell Tower, is the one, as I take it, here called the "Gate of the Crucifixion." It is noteworthy that in Idrîs's days the Church had three entrances, the one just mentioned, to the south; one opposite, opening north (Gate of Santa Maria), and the West Gate, from which you could *not* descend into the body of the edifice.

² The Arabic has "opposite to her," *i.e.*, the Church of the Resurrection as I understand it. The Church of the Greeks is, I imagine, the present Catholicon, lying immediately east of the Rotunda of the Sepulchre, and to the present day belonging to the Greek community.

is roofed with domes of stone set on many rows of columns. The other half (of the Haram Area) is an (open) court, and is not roofed over.

In the centre of the (court of the) mosque rises the mighty dome known as the *Kubbat as Sakhrāh* (the Dome of the Rock).

This dome is overlaid with gold mosaic, and is of most beautiful workmanship, erected by the Muslim Khalifs. In its midst is the Rock (the *Sakhrāh*), which is said to have fallen down (from heaven). It is a mass of stone of the height of a platform, and occupies the centre under the dome.

The extremity of one of its sides rises above the floor to half a man's height or more, while the other side lies even with the ground. The length of the rock is near to equal with its breadth, and is some ten ells (*dhirā'*) and odd by the like. You may descend into the interior thereof, and go down into a dark chamber, like a cellar, the length of which is ten ells, by five in the width, and the ceiling is above a man's height up. No one can enter this chamber except with a lamp to light him.

The Dome (of the Rock) has four gates. The western gate has opposite to it an altar whereon the Children of Israel were wont to offer up their sacrifices.¹ Near the eastern gate of the dome is the church which is called the Holy of Holies;² it is of an admirable construction.

(The gate) to the south faces the roofed-in portion (which is the main building of the *Aksa*), which same was in former times the place of prayer of the Muslims. Since (the Holy City) was conquered by the Greeks (*i.e.*, the Crusaders), and it hath remained in their hands even down to the time of the writing of this book (in the year 1154 A.D.), they have converted this roofed-in portion (which is the main building of the *Aksa*) Mosque into chambers wherein are lodged those companies of men known as *Ad Dāwīyyah* (the Templars), whose name signifies "Servants of God's House." Opposite to the northern gate (of the Dome of the Rock) is a beautiful garden, planted with all sorts of trees, and round this garden is set a colonnade of marble, of most wondrous workmanship. In the further part of this garden is a place of assembly, where the priests and deacons are wont to take their repasts.

Leaving the mosque (and crossing the Haram Area) you come, on the eastern side, to the *Bâb ar Rahmah* (the Gate of Mercy), which is now closed, as we have said before; but near to this gate is another, which is open. It is called *Bâb al Asbât* (the Gate of the Tribes), and through it there is much coming and going. When you have passed out by the Gate of the Tribes you reach the limits of the archery-ground, and find there a large church, and very beautiful, dedicated to the Lady Mary, and the place is known as *Al Jismâniyyah* (which is Gethsemane).

At this place also is her tomb, on the skirt of the Mount of Olives (*Jabal az Zaitûn*). Between it and the Gate of the Tribes is the space of about a mile.

¹ What this was I am unable to discover.

² This must be the present Dome of the Chain, *Kubbet as Silsileh*.

On the road ascending the Mount of Olives is a magnificent church, beautifully and solidly built, which is called the Church of Pater Noster ; and on the summit of the mount is another church, beautiful and grand likewise, in which men and women incarcerate themselves, seeking thereby to obtain favour with Allah—be He exalted ! In this aforementioned mount, on the eastern part, and bearing rather to the south, is the tomb of Al'Azar (Lazarus), whom the Lord Messiah raised again to life. Two miles distant from the Mount of Olives stands the village from which they brought the she ass on which the Lord Messiah rode on his entry into Jerusalem. The place is now in ruins, and no one lives there.

From the Tomb of Lazarus you take the road down to the Valley of the Jordan (*Wâdi al Urduunn*), and between the valley and the Holy City is the distance of a day's journey. Before reaching the River Jordan is the City of Jericho (Arîhâ), lying three miles distant from the bed of the river.

On the banks of the Jordan stands a magnificent church, called after Saint John (Sant Yûhannâ), where the Greek monks dwell.

The River Jordan flows out from the Lake of Tiberias (Buhairah Tabariyyah), and falls into the Lake of Sodom and Gomorah (Buhairah Sâdûm wa Ghâmûrâ), and these were two cities of the people of Lot which God overwhelmed because of the sins of their inhabitants. The land lying to the south of the River Jordan is one continuous desert.

Now as to what lies adjacent to the Holy City on the southern quarter :—When you go out by the Bâb Sihyûn (the Gate of Sion) you pass a distance of a stone's throw and come to the Church of Sion, which is a beautiful church, and fortified. In it is the guest-chamber wherein the Lord Messiah ate with the Disciples, and the table is there remaining even unto the present day. The people assemble here (for the Festival of Maundy) Thursday.

From the Gate of Sion you descend into a ravine called *Wâdi Jahannum* (the Valley of Gehenna). On the edge of this ravine is a church called after the name of Peter, and down in the ravine is the 'Ain Sulwân (Spring of Siloam), which is the spring where the Lord Messiah cured the infirmity of the blind man, who before that had no eyes. Going south from this said spring is the field (*al Hakl, Acedama* ?) wherein strangers are buried, and it is a piece of ground which the Lord bought for this purpose (!) ; and near by to it are many habitations cut out in the rock wherein men incarcerate themselves for the purposes of devotion.

Bethlehem (Bait Lahm) is the place where the Lord Messiah was born, and it lies six miles distant from Jerusalem. Half-way down the road is the tomb of Rachel (Râhîl), the mother of Joseph and of Benjamin, the two sons of Jacob—peace be upon them all. The tomb is covered by twelve stones, and above it is a dome vaulted over with stone. At Bethlehem is a church that is beautifully built, of solid foundations, spacious and finely ornamented even to the uttermost, so that not among all other churches can be seen its equal. It is situated in a low-lying ground. The gate thereof is towards the west, and there are (in the

church) marble columns of perfect beauty. In one angle of the choir (*al haikal*), towards the north, is a cave wherein the Lord Messiah was born. It lies below the church, and in the cave is the manger wherein the Messiah was found. As you go out from Bethlehem you see towards the east the church of the Angels who told the good news of the birth of the Lord Messiah to the shepherds.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE ABBOT DANIEL.¹

Russian pilgrimages to the Holy Land date from the conversion of the Russians to Christianity towards the close of the tenth century. As early as 1022 A.D. allusion is made, in the life of St. Theodosius of Kiev, to the presence of Russian pilgrims in Palestine; but the first whose name is known is St. Varlaam, Abbot of the Laura of Kiev, who visited Jerusalem in 1062 A.D. The earliest extant record of a Russian pilgrimage to the Holy Land is that of Daniel, the Abbot, or Prior (*Ἡγούμενος*), of a Russian monastery, of whom nothing certain is known. It may be inferred from Daniel's reference to the river Snov, as a stream that possessed several of the characteristics of the Jordan, that he came from the province of Tchernigov, in Little Russia, through which the Snov runs; and he is supposed to have been the same Daniel who was Bishop of Suriev in 1115 A.D., and who died the 9th September, 1122 A.D.

Daniel was a contemporary of Nestor, the oldest of the Russian annalists, and his narrative is one of the most important Russian documents of the commencement of the twelfth century; its intrinsic merits seem to have made it extremely popular, and there are no less than 75 MSS., of which the earliest dates from 1475 A.D. The date of the pilgrimage can be fixed with considerable certainty from Daniel's own statements. He mentions the Russian Grand Duke Michel Sviatopolk Isiaslavowitsch (1093-1113), and Baldwin, King of Jerusalem (1100-1118); he also states that Acre belonged to the Franks, and as this city was taken by the Crusaders on the 26th May, 1104, the date must lie between 1104 and 1113. A closer approximation is, however, possible. Daniel tells us that he accompanied Baldwin on his expedition against Damascus, and M. H. Hagenmayer has shown (*"Ekkehardi Urangiensis abbatis, Hierosolymita,"* Tub 1876, pp. 360-362) that this expedition must have been one of those undertaken by the king between 1106 and 1108. Again, Daniel speaks of the attacks to which pilgrims were exposed from the Saracens of Ascalon; and William of Tyre mentions one of these attacks on Christians passing from Jaffa to Jerusalem, which took place in the year 1107 (*"Des choses avenues en la terre d'Outremer,"* xi, 4, Paris, 1879, vol. i, 384). Lastly, it will be observed that, in the very minute description which Daniel gives of the

¹ This tractate forms the latest issue of the Palestine Pilgrims Text Society.