

after which it is kneaded till it is soft and pliable. The goatskins used as water-skins are tanned by filling them with water in which pomegranate rind is soaked. They are left for about a month. The grass takes off all the hair. The best way to make water-skins is to skin the animal without cutting it open, so that it requires no sewing up again. They take off the head and then gradually get the whole body out without damaging the skin, and by leaving the hair on they make it much stronger. Some put a drop of tar in when the skin is ready. This gives the water an abominable taste to my mind, but for some reason or other it keeps it much cooler.

(To be continued.)

THE GEORGIAN CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.

By ARCHDEACON DOWLING, Haifa, under Mt. Carmel.

IN the time of Constantine I, St. Eustathius the Great, twenty-fifth Patriarch of Antioch, began to wrestle with the persecutors of Christianity.

Shapour II, king of Persia, attacked Antioch, and many Christians became his victims. Relieved from the Persian yoke by Constantine, Antioch began to extend the true faith into Georgia.

In A.D. 265 the Sassanian dynasty commenced in the person of Mirian, son of Shapour I, of the race of Chosroes, who was married to a daughter of the late King Asphagor. The honour of illuminating this country is due to St. Nina of Armenia.¹ Mirian (A.D. 265-318) and all Iberia were converted to Christianity. St. Eustathius, by command of Constantine the Great, set off to Georgia, with priests, and baptized the king and his people.

King Mirian, wishing to acquaint himself with the sacred places, went by the advice of St. Nina to Jerusalem, where he had an interview with the Emperor Constantine, and begged of him the site in Jerusalem called Lotosa, whereon to build a convent to the name of the Holy Cross.

¹ Some authorities represent St. Nina (or Nouna) as having been originally a poor captive, who had escaped the persecution of Teridates, king of Armenia (A.D. 265-318).

The Georgians, though at the present day scarcely known in the Holy City, yet claim special attention, next to the Greek Church, not by reason of their orthodoxy and consequent intercourse with orthodox Eastern churches, but on account of their early establishment in the neighbourhood of the sacred sites at Jerusalem, and the great importance which formerly belonged to them.

Tradition says that amongst the soldiers who divided Christ's garments among them was a young Georgian Hebrew, named Elios, to whose lot fell the seamless robe, and who carried it with him to Iberia. The commemoration of the miracles wrought by our Saviour's coat is still commemorated in Georgia on October 1st. The coat of our Lord was emblazoned on the arms of the kingdom of Georgia when the royal Davidic race of the Bagratides ascended the throne, towards the end of the sixth century.¹ This seamless robe, according to the late Rev. A. H. Hare,² was bestowed on Russia during the patriarchate of the great Philaret, by whom it was placed in the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin.

In Hare's *Studies in Russia*, p. 228, the following extract from Mouravieff is quoted :—"Philaret received from the Shah Abbas of Persia, A.D. 1620, the seamless coat of our Saviour, which, according to an ancient tradition, was brought into Georgia by one of the soldiers who parted His garments at the foot of the Cross, and was preserved for many ages in the Cathedral of Mtzkhatha. Abbas could not have selected a better guardian for such a holy relic, and the tunic of our Lord, which was distinguished by the working of numerous cures in the Russian capital, was placed by the patriarch in the Cathedral of the Rest of the Virgin, under the shade of a brazen tabernacle, near which he himself is laid down to his everlasting rest."

This tabernacle is in the south-western angle of the body of the Church of the Assumption in the Kremlin,³

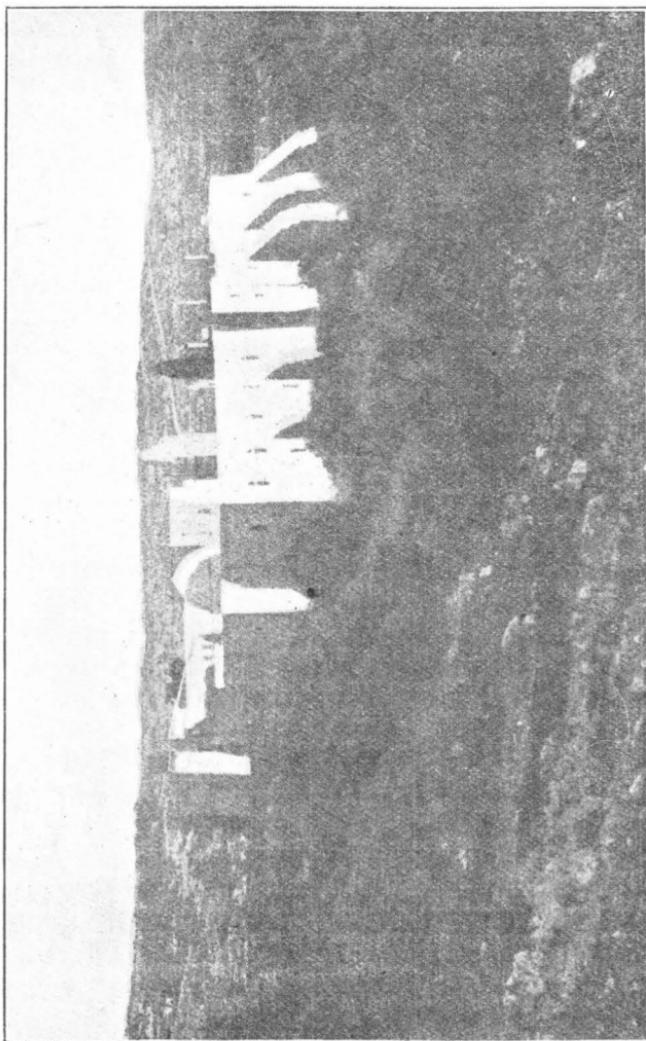
This Georgian tradition is earlier and better authenticated than that connected with "the Holy Coat of Treves."

¹ Their motto is: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Ps. cxxxii, 11.

² *Student's History of the Greek Church*: p. 451, James Parker and Co., London, 1902.

³ Mouravieff's *History of the Russian Church*, p. 395 : Oxford, J. H. Parker, 1842.

The convent at Jerusalem dedicated to the "Holy Cross of our Salvation" (of the Holy Cross)—*Deir el-Musallebeh*—is said to have



The Convent of the Cross at Jerusalem.

been founded by the Georgian king, Tatian, in the fifth century. He is one of the three Georgian kings depicted over the inner portal of the church. The convent was built apparently on the land previously granted to Mirian, the first Christian ruler of

Georgia, by the Emperor Constantine I (A.D. 265–342), out of sympathy of his having undertaken, like Helena, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, at an advanced age. It is situated in a shallow, stone wâdy, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of the city walls. It derives its name from the Holy Cross, the wood of which is supposed to have grown near this spot.

In the flourishing days of Georgia, *i.e.*, the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this convent was adorned with many learned men. During the troublous times of Georgia, and the massacre of Georgian monks by invading Ethiopians, the Convent of the Cross passed into the hands of the Armenians. But the king of Georgia having asked it of the Sultan of Egypt himself, restored to the original possessors this ancient pile of buildings. It was formerly only one of eleven religious houses in Palestine belonging to Georgia. Destroyed by the Samaritans, rebuilt by St. Sabas, and sacked by the Saracens (A.D. 1099), it was eventually sold to the Orthodox Greeks by the Georgian monks.

The present seventh century church contains an exceptionally fine specimen of mosaic decoration which covers the floor of the old Georgian building. It still bears traces of the murders of the Christians who had sought shelter within the Sanctuary, when Chosroes II, the Persian king, and his heathen army, broke in upon them. The great purple stains, still visible, testify to the fate of these martyrs, while at the same time giving us some certainty as to the age of this most interesting mosaic floor.

Reliable information is so scanty in connection with the Georgian occupancy in Palestine, that some of the following details about Golgotha must be accepted with caution.¹ But one thing is clear. The Georgians were at one time among the wealthiest and most influential of the Christian communities in Jerusalem. As, however, their native land declined in its far-off mountain home, so also did its representatives in the Holy City. The Greeks and Armenians gradually bought up their convents and properties, and to-day the Georgians are dependent upon the former for hospitality, when their pilgrims visit any of the sacred shrines.

We find among other works of the Emperor Justinian, in the middle of the sixth century, that he repaired the convent of the

¹ Dr. Neale complains (*Hist. H.E. Church*, Vol. I, p. 61) that the accounts of the Georgian Church are deplorably inaccurate and ignorant. I am indebted to the Rev. T. P. Themelis for most of the details about Golgotha.

Iberians¹ in Jerusalem, and another of the Lazi, a tribe of the same family, in the desert of Jerusalem.

During the period of the Mamelukes, the patriarch of Jerusalem bravely received the Georgians, and gave them two convents : St. Nicholas, next the patriarchate, and Holy Cross. Eventually they also obtained the following convents : St. John the Theologian, St. Theodore, St. Demetrius, St. Thekla, and St. Catherine.

The Armenian Convent of St. James, the son of Zebedee, originally founded by the Georgians in the eleventh century, was sold by them to the Armenians four hundred years later.

Towards the middle of the eleventh century, King Bagrat, Cuperpalat of Georgia, received from the Greek Emperor one half of Golgotha, and set over it his own Bishop.

The fortunes of *Cata-Monas* (a place of retirement), the country official residence of the Orthodox Greek patriarch, seems in old days to have been associated with those of the Convent of the Cross. Catamon, traditionally the family dwelling-place, and enclosing the estate of St. Simeon (St. Luke, ii, 25), became, with the site of this convent, A.D. 1177, the property of Vachtang, the Iberian king, who built and established there a religious house. Georgian inscriptions were discovered by the Greek monk Abramios, in 1859.

In A.D. 1308 the Georgians occupied the whole of the Sanctuary of Golgotha. The Latins sometimes associated this portion of the Church of the Resurrection with Spaniards, not an unusual mistake, as Spain was anciently called Iberia, the principal river being Iberus (Ebro). In A.D. 1350 Rudolph von Suchen states that the Iberians possessed the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. In A.D. 1475 the Iberians are reported to have taken Golgotha under their protection. When the prosperous days of Georgia began to wane, one half of Golgotha was purchased partly by Greeks and partly by Armenians.

In A.D. 1507 the German Councillor Baumgarten, who visited Jerusalem, speaks of the Iberian establishment on Mount Calvary. At the commencement of this century they enjoyed immunities which were conceded to no other Christians in Jerusalem. Their pilgrims, according to the Rev. George Williams (*The Holy City*, Vol. II, pt. ii, ch. 6) were free from those vexatious imposts which others had to pay, and their men and women entered the Holy City in full armour, with their banners displayed in martial array, nor did the infidels dare to molest them. They ranked fourth in the

¹ Iberians = Georgians.

Church of the Resurrection, and owned the chapel of the Discovery of the Holy Cross.

The Franciscan Convent of St. Salvator was first occupied by the fraternity during the latter part of the sixteenth century, after their expulsion from the Coenaculum, in A.D. 1560. St. Salvator, recently re-built, probably occupies the site of the famous Iberian convent, erected by King Vachtang (A.D. 446-499).¹ The advancement of the Franciscans in Jerusalem has been contemporary with the decline of the Georgians, who were their predecessors in the care of the Holy Places.

In A.D. 1606 the Orthodox Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius V, by paying a liberal sum of money, once more secured Golgotha for the Iberians.

It is strange that in the late Dr. C. Schick's excellent historical *Guide to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre* there is not the slightest allusion to any Georgian occupancy in Golgotha.

About the beginning of the seventeenth century, Mr. G. Williams states that King Vachtang VI sent a present of 2,000 tomans,² as an offering to the Holy Sepulchre.

Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem (A.D. 1672-1715), secured all the Jerusalem property of the Iberians for the Greeks.

In the nineteenth century the Iberian Superior of the Convent of the Cross was murdered by Arabs.

No attempt has been made by Russia to restore to the Georgians their former privileges in the Church of the Anastasis, viz., the Chapel of Adam, and one of the altars on Calvary, of which the Greeks came into possession after the rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre was destroyed by fire in 1808. As a matter of fact the Russians themselves have no vested rights in this historic church.

At one time the Georgians possessed eleven religious houses in Jerusalem, especially upon the Mount of Olives. To-day there is not, according to Nicandros, the Metropolitan of Ptolemais, a single resident Georgian within the Holy City. Only pilgrims from Tiflis visit Jerusalem for the Easter festivities.

There are many Georgian manuscripts in the library of St. Constantine, Jerusalem.

In September, 1879, at the large Greek Convent of St. Constantine, the late Herr Schick discovered a stone in the corner of a wall, on

¹ Hanauer's *Walks about Jerusalem*, pp. 31, 32.

² Toman = Persian coin, value a little over 3s.

which was a large and very well cut inscription. Prof. Zagarelli, of St. Petersburg, pointed out, in 1881, that it was of considerable importance to Georgian history, as it proves the long continuance of the Georgians with the Holy Land by the fact that at various times they built and supported cloisters. The Professor also drew attention to its importance palaeographically, as being a specimen of the ancient Georgian ecclesiastical characters.

The following is the translation :—

“Christ. Holy Nicholas be thou intercessor with Christ for
the Queen (= Princess) of Kachetien, Elizabeth, formerly
Helena.”

This Helena here mentioned is doubtless the daughter of the king of Kachetien, David II (A.D. 1604),¹ and sister of Teimuraz I (1605–1665). She first journeyed (*c.* 1615) to Persia, and later (1625) to Jerusalem, where she founded the cloister of St. Nicholas, in which she became a nun, under the name of Elizabeth, or according to some inscriptions, Anastasia.²

THE CITY AND TOMB OF DAVID ON OPHEL (SO CALLED).

By THE REV. W. F. BIRCH, M.A.

THE *Standard* of October 21, 1909, gave an interesting column on the fine attempt under Captain Parker to reach quietly the tombs of David and of the kings of Judah. The explorers wisely concluded that these rock-cut catacombs were on Ophel, the entrance (it may be but two feet square) being concealed by soil, stones, etc., and nobly refused to bore downwards to the ceiling of the cavities ; but consequently (it would seem) failed of success. Complete investigation without delay is much to be desired.

Meanwhile, as *The City of Jerusalem* (by the late Col. Conder) if not also *Ancient Jerusalem* (by Merrill) may perhaps lead some to think the wrong hill was searched, it may be well to point out that

¹ Lynch, in *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, Vol. I, p. 365, gives David II a much earlier date.

² Palestine Exploration Fund *Quarterly Statement*, April, 1883, pp. 112, 113.