



Southern Projection from the Masjed Al Aksa, Jerusalem

George Octavius Wray

To cite this article: George Octavius Wray (1891) Southern Projection from the Masjed Al Aksa, Jerusalem, Palestine Exploration Quarterly, 23:4, 320-322, DOI: [10.1179/peq.1891.23.4.320](https://doi.org/10.1179/peq.1891.23.4.320)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1179/peq.1891.23.4.320>



Published online: 20 Nov 2013.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 4



View related articles [↗](#)

SOUTHERN PROJECTION FROM THE MASJED AL AKSA, JERUSALEM.

BY THE REV. GEORGE OCTAVIUS WRAY, LL.D.

THE publication in the *Quarterly Statement* of July last of the plan of the "Southern part of the Haram Esh Sherif," in connection with Herr Schick's Report, enables me to ask for information, which I have for many years longed for, concerning the oblong building, which measures, according to the plan, some 50 × 15 feet, and projects below the letters "Al Aksa," from the main building at the extreme south; it is distinguished by the shading of the walls from the figure in faint outline about 55 feet to the west of it.

It may be premised that the visit to the Holy Land of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, in 1862, led to the relaxation, in some measure, of the rules of the Turkish Government, which had previously excluded all but a favoured few from the Temple inclosure.

My late brother, the Rev. William Mark Wray, R.N., was then chaplain of H.M.S. "Doris," which escorted His Royal Highness on his tour.

In the following year, on my own visit to Jerusalem, my brother warned me against the trouble to be expected, judging from his own experience, in visiting Al Aksa.

Turning to my journal I find that upon the 24th of March, 1863, having, on payment of the fee of 10s., obtained from our Consul, Mr. Moore, an order to visit the Temple area, I attended, with my dragoman Michel Hene, punctually at six in the morning, being cautioned not to stay after seven, when the faithful were expected, and it was not safe for infidels to linger.

We waited some time for the Consular dragoman, and when he arrived it was deemed *infra dig.* to start without the cavasse, with his pompous silver staff, like that of a drum-major. But as I refused to wait any longer we started without him, and he afterwards joined us in the inclosure, looking much ashamed of himself.

The venerable Temple Sheikh had already taken charge of our party. Being unincumbered with fellow travellers I visited every hole and corner of the place; I had no difficulty with the Sheikh, so soon as he found that I was resolute and in high good humour with him.

After seeing the Dome of the Rock and as much of Al Aksa as is above ground, we went down to the lower regions, or crypt. Being built on the southern slope of the hill the northern part of this crypt is underground, but the opposite end emerges into daylight.

As the old man, contrary to his nature, hurried over the ground, I

assumed an air of Oriental phlegm. My brother had advised me to explore the south-west corner, as that had not yet been done. But on coming to the continuation of the crypt under that part of the building named on the plan "*Al Baka'at al Baidha*," our further progress was barred by solid masonry filling the archway.

Turning back I observed, at the right-hand corner, the top of an archway, just visible by a faint glimpse of daylight over the heap of stones and rubbish which blocked the passage. The Sheikh violently protested against my exploring this: no one had ever done so, as it was guarded by Jins, and Michel added his entreaties. But I assured them that the Jins would not hurt me; and having wheedled the old man out of his candle, scrambled over the heap of stones and rubbish till I reached the outer building. This I found to be long and narrow, divided into two chambers, shown on the plan to be—the northern 35 feet, and the southern 15 feet in length, both of them 15 feet wide.

The western wall of one of these chambers—if I rightly recollect, it was the larger one—contained an arch, which was walled up with solid masonry. Whilst examining the building the Sheikh and the dragoman were shouting out their entreaties for me to return, but I had our one candle, and was safe from pursuit. The only daylight was from an opening to the east, pierced, I presume, as a doorway, but obstructed with rubbish. As my eyes adapted themselves to the dim light I found a number of large white marble slabs, beautifully carved with arabesque or Jewish tracery, which had probably formed part of a cornice.

The old Sheikh by this time showed signs of frenzy, and as I had, so far as I was then able, satisfied my curiosity, I returned to the crypt, and saw the rest of the place; but found no other entrance to the vaults or cloisters at the south-west corner than those walled up. I have an impression that these were called "*The Crusaders' Stables*;" and that they are shown on the map which was published for M. Pierotti by Koepelin, 17, Quai Voltaire, Paris.¹

Having but partially satisfied my curiosity on the spot, I now seek to do so fully by asking Herr Schick, or any other of your readers acquainted with the site, to say:—What was the cause of the jealousy shown against access to this part of the building in particular? what was the use or purpose of the projection from the main building which, aided by the plan, I have described? into what did the doorways which were walled up open westwards? what does the figure signify which is drawn in outline to the west of the building in question? are the marble blocks still there? what can be told or conjectured of their history; did they form part of the building to which the pillars belonged which are

¹ The Crusaders' "*Armoury*," not "*Stables*," on Pierotti's plan is the chamber marked on the Ordnance Survey plan *al Baka'at al Baidha*. It is now commonly regarded as the former refectory of the Knights Templars.—Ed.

described in *Quarterly Statement* for 1871, page 176? is the mass of rubbish removed which blocked the arch opening from the crypt into this building by which I entered?

Any other information bearing on the subject will be of interest.

DINHABAH.

A New Identification.

BY THE REV. HENRY GEORGE TOMKINS.

WE are able to add a new identification to those on the east side of the Jordan with some confidence of its correctness. It has emerged out of a correspondence in the *Academy* some half year since in which the important place Tunip, or Dunip, now Tinnab, or Tennib, very near the ancient Arpad (Tel Erfad), in Northern Syria, was in question.

A remark by Mr. Howorth on its etymology led to a short letter from Dr. Neubauer (*Academy*, March 14, 1891, p. 260), as follows:—

“Oxford, March 9, 1891.

“Whether Tunip is Semitic or not, it seems to me to represent the name of the locality mentioned in Gen. xxxvi, 32, as דִּנְהָבָה, Dinhaba, the residence of Bela, the son of Beor, who reigned in Edom. This king is probably identical with “Balaam, son of Beor, of Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people,” Numb. xxii, 5; *Variorum Bible*, “of the children of Ammon.” Balaam was, according to Deuter. xxiii, 4 (5), of Pethor, in Aram Nahraïm, or Naharina (A. V. Mesopotamia). It is most likely that Dinhabah was not a locality of Edom in the restricted sense, unless the dominion of Edom extended in Balaam’s time to Aram Nahraïm or Naharina. The list of the kings of Edom (Gen. xxxvi, 32 to 40) seems to point to rulers who were not of Idumæan origin. In Numb. xxxi, 8, and Joshua xiii, 21, Balaam is put to death, together with the princes of Midian and Sihon.

“A. NEUBAUER.”

This interesting letter drew from me one in the *Academy* of March 21, p. 284, to the following effect. It appeared to me—1. That Dr. Neubauer was right in identifying the name of Dunip, or Dunipa, with Dinhabah, Ιxx Δενναβά; Vulg. Denaba; but, 2. That the latter must be a different place, viz., Thenib, east of Ele’aleh, west of the great Hajj road, described by Canon Tristram (“Land of Moab,” p. 222). “The buildings of Thenib cover the whole area of an isolated hill, and are much more dilapidated and ruder than those we had recently been visiting [at Kustul,