

A RECENTLY-DISCOVERED MOSAIC AT JERUSALEM.¹

BY DR. CONRAD SCHICK.

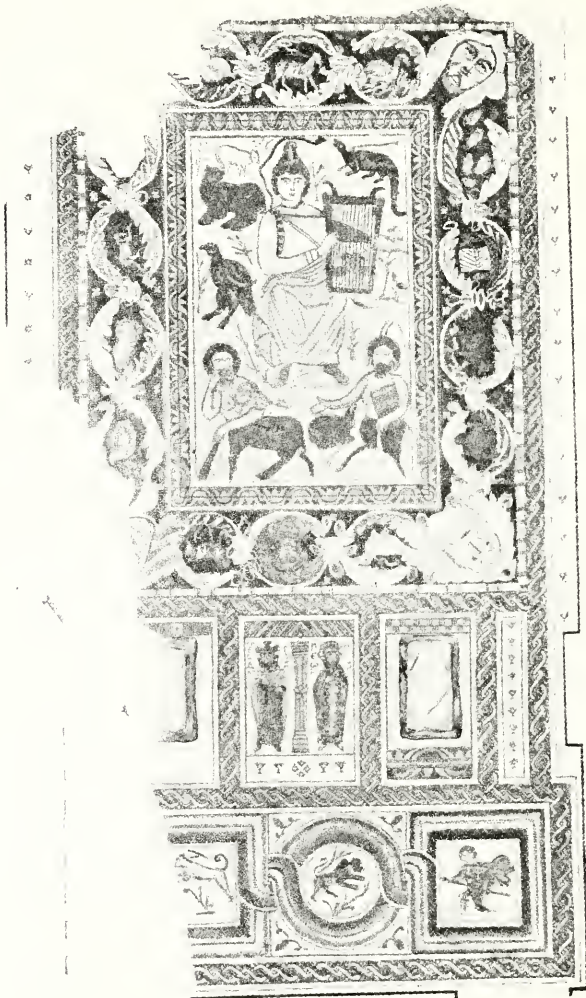
IN 1894 a fine mosaic was found in digging foundations for a new house north of Jerusalem, and Dr. Bliss and I reported on it in the *Quarterly Statement*, 1894, p. 257. Towards the end of March last a similar one was discovered nearer to the town, in the ground of the Jewish Colony, generally called Nissim Buck's Colony. The proprietor of the ground, wishing to dig in order to build a cistern for his house close by, came, scarcely three feet under the surface, to this fine mosaic pavement. He did not destroy it, but told others about it, and so people came to see it, and a negotiation for buying it, or to find means to get part possession in it, arose, and in consequence it became more and more difficult for others to see it. However, copies and photographs were taken, and of the latter I forward herewith a print.

The mosaic is laid out in various colors, and represents Orpheus, and below him Pan and a centaur, surrounded with a fine frame, around which is a kind of twisted ornament of branches of plants enclosing various figures with their faces directed to Orpheus; then comes again an outer frame. Beneath are three other frames, one in the middle containing two women, with an inscription in Greek letters around them, "Theodosia" and "Georgia." The frames to the right and left contain simply a plain, flat surface. The whole is between ten and twelve feet long, and seems to have been the flooring of a music room. The two women were once most likely celebrated singers.

The design is pagan, still the work itself may be Christian of the second or third century, as in the Early Church such symbols were often used. The Dominican brethren made a colored copy of the mosaic on a large scale, so that even each little square of

¹ Report to *The Palestine Exploration Fund*, July, 1901.

stone can be recognised. They showed it to me, and I found it exceedingly nice, and advised them to multiply it by lithography, but they said it would be too expensive, so I do not know what they will do.



ORPHEUS MOSAIC FOUND NEAR JERUSALEM.

The site is six hundred feet north of the present city wall, west of the Damascus Gate.

Mr. Consul Dickson writes that this mosaic "represents Orpheus, life-size, playing upon his harp, surrounded by several animals, all in beautiful colors and graceful attitudes. It seems to be a work of art of high order. There is also a head of Jupiter and of Minerva at the corners of the square containing Orpheus. Below these figures there are two other figures of women with an inscription in Greek around them, an exact copy of which I enclose. It is easily read, and I think the mosaic must be Christian."

The mosaic is now covered up with earth.