

THE SURVEY OF PALESTINE.

RETROSPECT FOR 1875.

CONVENT ON CARMEL, 12th August, 1875.

As a detailed report is due from me, but impossible under present circumstances, I send home a few notes on our discoveries during the course of this year.

On the 28th of February we succeeded in leaving Jerusalem, and in twelve days filled in and triangulated 330 square miles of the desert west of the Dead Sea, visiting and planning Masada. We experienced at the close of this work some of the most boisterous weather we have ever withstood.

Crossing to Beit Jibrin at the edge of the Philistine plain we commenced on the 12th of March the survey of this most interesting district, and completed the whole, except a very small portion near Beersheba, by the 15th of May. Our main results were as follows:— We visited the ruin of Sheikh el Madhkúr, where we verified M. Ganneau's discovery of the existence of the name 'Aid-el-Mieh, attaching to a part of the ruins. In my report I showed the fitness of the site for identification with Adullam, as suggested by M. Ganneau, including the existence of caves still inhabited.

We were next able to throw light on the difficulty as to the existence of two Mediæval Ascalons by our discovery of a Khirbet 'Ascalún, evidently an early Christian ruin. We made a careful survey of Ascalon to a large scale, with photographs by Lieut. Kitchener.

In the neighbourhood of Gaza we discovered five new Greek inscriptions, and obtained some information as to the ancient extent and site of this city. Lieut. Kitchener was the first to photograph the interior of the cathedral of St. John Baptist, now a mosque, formerly a church, even earlier than Crusading times.

We also visited and described the ruins of Khirbet Umm el Jerar, generally supposed to be the Gerar of Abraham.

Turning north, our most interesting exploration was the village of El Moghar, suggested by Captain Warren to be the site of Makkedah. We found caves here, being the only place in the plain where such caves exist. We also discovered a site called Deir el Aashek, which I have proposed to identify with the long lost Azekah. We visited the sites of the valley of Elah and the valley of Sorek, of both of which Lieutenant Kitchener took effective photographs.

The following is a sketch of the identifications which I imagine to be new, which I would suggest for reasons afterwards to be given in full. They extend over the whole of the tribe of Judah :—

1. *'Azekah—Deir el 'Aashek*, from its position and the similarity of name.
2. *Shaaraim*, in the LXX. *Σεκαριμ* with *Tell Zekariyeh*, from its position.
3. *Gederah—Tell Jedeideh*, from position and name.
4. *Zaanan—Kh. Sámeh*, from position and name.
5. *Hadashah—'Abdas*, from position and name.
6. *Dilean—Beit Tima*. Vandevelde's identification with Tineh, which on some maps is confounded with Beit Tima, can be proved inadmissible.
7. *Mispch—Khirbet el Musheirefeh*, near Gaza. The position fits, and the name is the Arabic equivalent of the Hebrew.
8. *Cabbon—El Kubeibeh*, from proximity to the next.
9. *Lahmas—Khirbet el Lahm*, near the last.
10. *Kúhlsh*, may be, I suggest, *Kh. Makkus*: in the LXX. *Μακχως* takes the place of Kithlish.
11. *Gederoth—Gatrah*, from name and position.
12. *Naameh—Na'ani*, from name and position. This may be known to some scholars, but has not, I believe, been published as an identification.
13. *Libnah*, it is suggested in a former report, may be *Beit Jibrin*.
14. *Ether—Khirbet 'Atr*, from name and position.
15. *Ashan—Kh. Hazzanah*, from name and position. The Hebrew *'Ain* becomes the Arabic *He*.
16. *Ashnah—Idhna*, from name and position.
17. *Achzib—Kussa*; the name has the same signification; in the Hebrew "a lie," in the Arabic "a fable;" the position fits well.
18. *Dannah—Domeh*, from position.
19. *Debir—El Dhohertyeh*.
20. *Holon—Khirbet Kohelah*, name and position.
21. *Arab—Kh. el 'Arabyeh*, name and position.
22. *Dumah or Rumah—El Rameh*, from position.
23. *Eshean—Es-ha*, from name and position. The Arabic *He* takes the place of the Hebrew *'Ain*.
24. *Janum—Beit Chanán*, from position.
25. *Zanoah—Kh. Sínút*, in a position better fitting the lists than that of Robinson's *Zanuta*.
26. *Maarath, el Mogh'air*, from position and name.
27. *Galem—Beit Jala*, from name and position.
28. *Bezedel—Deir Esneid*, from position.

About a dozen other identifications in Judah have been mentioned in former reports. I am not aware that any ordinary philological rules are infringed in these proposed identifications.

Dr. Chaplin upholds the identity of the strong village of *Soba* with *Kirjath Jearim*. I have found a curious apparent confirmation of this in the possible identification of *Mount Seir* on the boundary of Judah with the present *Batn* (hill-top) *el Saghir*, just in its proper place. Dr. Chaplin has also shown me very strong arguments for the identification of Ebenezer, Shen, and Mispch.

Whilst resting in Jerusalem we examined the *Asnerie*, a Crusading inn for pilgrims, which has been excavated by Herr Schick, and shows long rows of mangers. It is close to the Grotto of Jeremiah.

Passing up the country we made several notes of interest. We found that a *Khirbet Lozeh* or *Kh. Wad Lozeh*, not yet placed on the map, really exists near Bethel. At Nablus we found that nearly the whole of the floor and foundations of the early church built over Jacob's well exists, hidden by modern vaults. We also discovered that the name *Khirbet Luzeh*, about which there has been much argument, applies to some ruins on the south side of Gerizim.

Arriving in the north, we commenced the ordinary survey in conjunction with the running a line of levels across from the Mediterranean to the Sea of Galilee. Before the outrage at Safed, on 10th July, we completed 180 square miles, and twenty out of thirty miles of levelling. Some 1,200 square miles, or six months' work, now remain to be done.

Our discoveries in the north promised to be of great interest: many identifications want only confirmation to be proposed, such as *Beth-Dagon*, *Shihor-Libnath*, *Zebulon*, *Neah*, &c.

At Shefa 'Amr we found a magnificent sepulchre with inscription and elaborate ornamental work, which Lieut. Kitchener photographed. We found the present church to be built on the remains of one seemingly previous to Crusading times. We also fixed the date and authorship of the fortifications.

We next found in *Khirbet Rumeh* a site of no small mediæval interest. According to an early Jewish traveller there was in the very neighbourhood of this ruin a place called *Ruma*, where was the sepulchre of Benjamin, and a cave called *Caisran*, whence the Messiah was expected to appear. At *Kh. Rumeh*, which eighty years ago was a village, I found a rude Jewish tomb much ruined, and a cave of some size beyond it, also remains possibly of a synagogue.

We visited the rival sites of Cana of Galilee at *Khirbet Kána*; I discovered traces of antiquity and a grotto, apparently that said to be used as a church in the middle ages. We also ascertained the existence of an ancient site called *Khirbet Kenna*, west of and near to *Kefr Kenna*.

We photographed and planned the fine church of St. Anne in *Seffurich*, and found the date of the castle.

We are able to identify the *Mount Asamon* of Josephus with *Ras el Hazweh* north of the *Buttauf* plain.

I have found the date and builder of several of the synagogues discovered by Major Wilson, and I hope to obtain evidence from them as to the length of the cubit.

The total amount surveyed in 1875 has been 1,200 square miles.

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieut. R.E.