

NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION TO MOAB AND GILEAD IN MARCH, 1895.

By FREDERICK JONES BLISS, Ph.D.

IN December, 1893, the Sublime Porte established the Mutassarifik or sub-province of Ma'an, with a Governor resident at Kerak, under the Wali of Syria, whose headquarters are Damascus. This territory was formerly under the practical control of various Arab tribes, including the quasi-Bedawin, the Mujély of Kerak. How all travellers, from M. de Saulcy and Canon Tristram down to the most recent times, have been compelled either by prudence or by force to pay immense bakh-sheesh to wild rulers of the land, is too plain a matter of history to be dwelt on here. The entry of the Turks to Kerak has changed all this. Hearing that the country had been rendered safe, and inferring that travellers would consequently begin to pour in, I felt that the Palestine Exploration Fund should be the first to take advantage of the new condition of things. The Committee having authorised me to make a short expedition to Moab, I consulted with our Commissioner, Ibrahim Effendi, and together we were fortunate in interesting Hamdy Bey, who kindly requested me to report to the Imperial Museum anything of interest that might be discovered. The expedition thus took an official character, which was of great service, as I hope these pages will show. The season also was favourable, for I had experienced the storms of March in Jerusalem, and knew how difficult would be continuous excavation. Curiously enough, almost no rain fell here this year in January and February, and it is the rain of March, which poured down during our absence, that revived the hopes of the people for the summer's water supply. The rain did not prove a serious obstacle to our expedition, for the longest detention was at Madeba, where there was plenty of work to do.

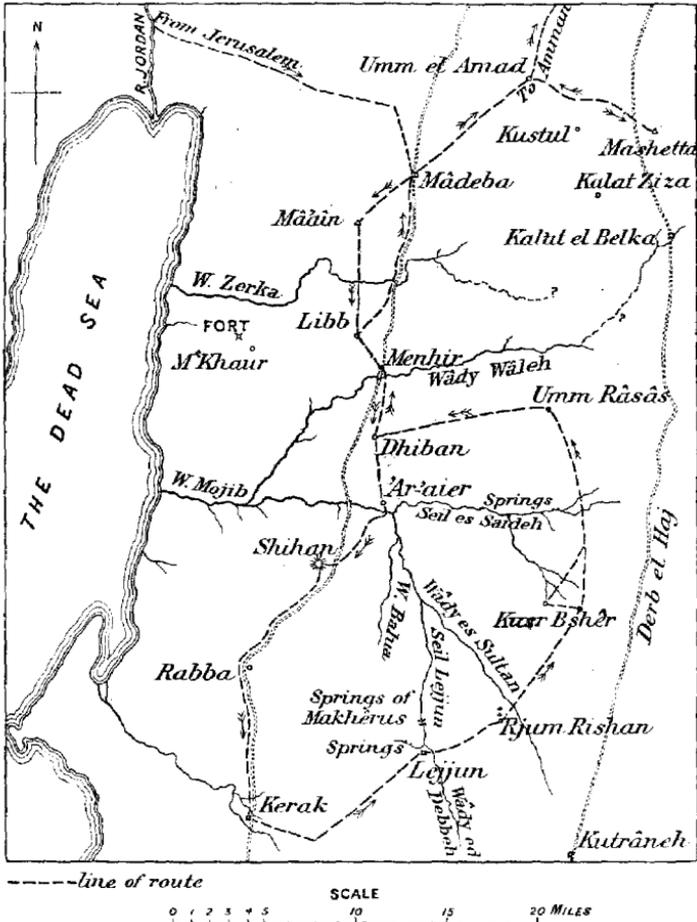
It is not my purpose to narrate in full the adventures of the journey, which would fill a volume, but to dwell only on what was real discovery, touching lightly on places and things described before.

On Wednesday, March 7th, at about noon, Ibrahim Effendi and I left Jerusalem for Jericho, accompanied by my foreman Yusif, or Abu Selim, as we generally call him, to distinguish him from Little Yusif, the cook. The latter had gone on ahead with our three tents, which we found pitched by 'Ain es Sultan. We also took two of our workmen from Silwân, whom we found very handy in exhuming buried stones with inscriptions. The presence of Ibrahim Effendi relieved us from the annoyance of a so-called guard from the sheikhs of Abu Deis who still impose themselves on all travellers to Jericho and the Jordan. I renewed my conviction that systematic excavations at Tell es Sultan would result

in valuable finds, resting my eyes with longing upon the bit of old mud-built wall revealed in a hole scooped out at the base of the Tell.

My visits to Jericho had always been for some special mission, and I had never found time to ride to the Dead Sea! So the next day we followed the throng of tourists along the well-beaten track. Arriving at

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE DR. BLISS'S JOURNEY IN MOAB.



the shore, I was amused to recall the Rev. Haskett Smith's description of the place during the tourist season. He likens it to Brighton beach, and indeed it only lacks a weighing-machine and the Salvation Army to complete the presentment. English children gathering shells, men bathing, parties galloping in from Mar Saba—it was an incongruous

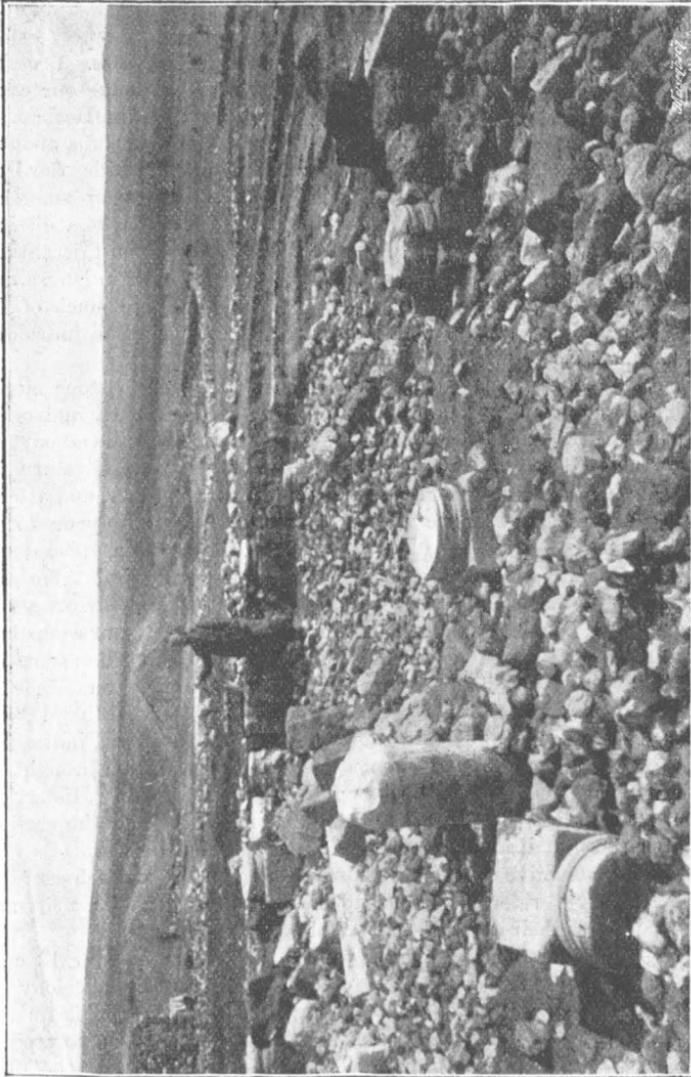
picture on this usually desolate shore. We lunched by the Jordan. Here no one was bathing, for an American had been drowned shortly before. Later his body was recovered by an officer who was exploring the river in a boat further down.

From Mar Yuhanna we attempted to strike across country to the bridge, but found this very difficult, owing to the deep ravines. Crossing by the bridge, and proceeding by the Madeba road, we found our camp pitched near Tell Rameh by the water that flows from 'Ain Hesbân. I was interested in the remains of a fort on the edge of the plain, about a mile to the east of the Tell. From the base of the foot hills, the land slopes gently down towards the west, and then a hill slopes up smoothly but somewhat steeply to a flat summit, which soon comes to a distinct edge with a sharp fall to the plain of about 120 feet. Upon this natural fortification I traced the signs of a building, some 70 yards in length, not rectangular, but following the contour of the hill. Like much of the building about Jericho, all was ruined but one course of stone imbedded in the soil, leaving the real ground plan.

Soon after striking camp we passed one of the Arab stone circles described by Conder, and noticed within it a plough, jars, and other objects left there on deposit. These are thus placed "to the account of Khalil," or Abraham, and are perfectly safe till their owners return for them. As we rode up the hills the clouds began to gather, and after a chilly lunch in a cave above the road, the rain began to pour down. Nebo was hid from view, and thus the hoped-for ascent was placed out of the question. On arriving at the top of the long climb from the Jordan Valley, we entered on the green plateau stretching before us to the east, veiled in the driving mist and rain. Fortunately our camp had been pitched at Madeba before the tents had got wet. The afternoon was passed profitably in studying the valuable article on Madeba, published in the number for October, 1892, of the "Revue Biblique," by the Rev. Père Sejourné. He gives a sketch map of the town, indicating the ancient buildings and other monuments that have been brought to light by the inhabitants in digging for foundations of houses. His article contains such full notices of the history of Madeba from the earliest biblical times to its disappearance from history, which he thinks may be due to the destructive march of Chosroes early in the seventh century, that I need only to refer the reader to his pages, written with a literary charm that rivals their accurate scholarship.

I have spoken of inhabitants, for after a desolation of over 13 centuries this ancient site was again occupied in 1880 by a colony of Christians—Greek and Latin—from Kerak. Hence Madeba is for the present a precious place for the archaeologist. Changes go on so rapidly that constant visits are necessary. Thus some ruins seen by the Père Sejourné have disappeared; while not only have others been brought to light, but more complete excavations in some places which he described have necessitated alterations of his plans, which, I am sure, no one will welcome more than himself.

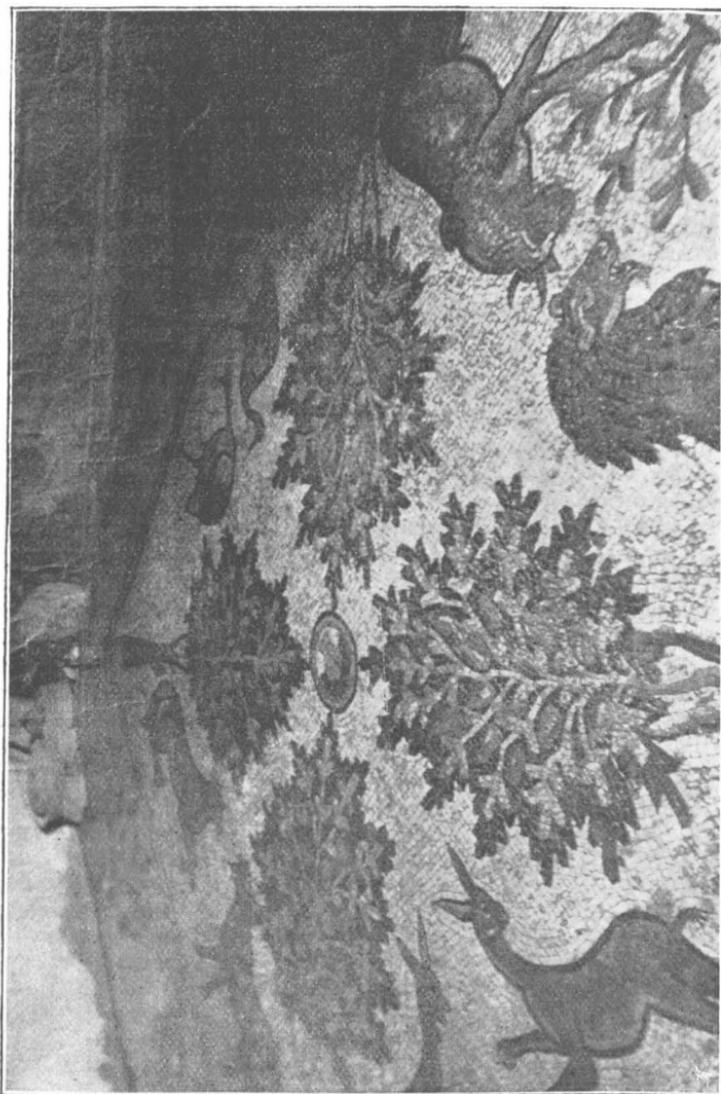
Madeba occupies one of the low eminences which rise here and there from the vast undulating plain. In its centre the ground rises more



MADEBA—RUINS OF CHURCH.

rapidly, forming a natural acropolis some 200 yards square, now occupied by the Latin Mission. It is more than probable that this height was once crowned by an actual acropolis, and the discovery of thick walls at

one point on the slope seems a confirmation. The whole town is barely a quarter-mile square. Gates were seen by the Père Sejourné at the



(From a Photograph by Dr. Bliss.)

MOSAIC AT MADEBA.

north and east. The eastern one I did not observe ; of the northern one only the face of the flanking tower remained at the time of my first visit, and when I returned ten days after, I found that destruction had even

then been at work. Gates, of course, imply walls, and on his plan the Père Sejourné traces their probable course, suggested by the contours, and by large stones at various points. At the south-west of the town, and placed by him outside the wall is the large pool, with solid walls, so often described by travellers.

On wandering about the town, one finds an extraordinary mingling of the ancient and the modern, of the grand and of the squalid. The meanest house has a beautifully carved lintel or door post; built in the rudest wall may be found a graceful Corinthian capital. In front of dirty, dark houses are courts paved with fine slabs of stone. One chamber, which is shared alike by the owners and their chickens and goats, is floored with the mosaic shown in the photograph. In the hope of bakhsheesh, which we met, they scoured the pavement, revealing all the beautiful colours—the fruit trees, lions, gazelles, birds, and other animals with the central human head. In many cases all you can see of a house is the front wall and the flat roof which terminates in the surrounding ground. The happy owner in chance digging had hit upon a buried wall—the face of this he cleared, and also a space in front, with a path descending from the road level. He then would find that this was the front wall of a buried house, and then would need only to clear out the *débris* inside, put on a roof, and leave the three other walls still buried on the outside. He has thus a truly subterranean dwelling.

Everything ancient is put to use. Of the four churches shown on the plan, Nos. 1 and 3 are each covered by two or more houses; No. 2 is to serve as the foundation of the new Seraya, or Government House; and No. 4 alone is to be kept for its original ecclesiastical designation, for I am rejoiced to report that the Greeks are to restore it, or rather rebuild it on the old lines.

The smallest, and at the same time the most interesting of these churches is No. 3. Its singular shape, and its faulty orientation, suggest



that it was not originally built for a church. It looks more like a pagan temple. But that it was used as a church there is full proof. The body of this building is a rotunda, having an inside diameter of 32 feet, with a

long arm, terminating in an apse, circular within, and of an octagonal form without. The entire inside length is about 71 feet. As one house occupies the rotunda part, and another the eastern arm, measurements to an inch were difficult, but the above figure is correct to within a few inches. Indeed, all measuring in Madeba is difficult: you must give notice to the family that you are coming to plan and photograph, humour them into promising to scrub the floor and clear up the litter, and then submit perforce to their presence and comments, while you dive into dark corners and make your plan.

The circular body of the church is covered with a tessellated mosaic. In the middle is a circular border, 6 feet 2 inches across, containing a Greek inscription. All my photographs of this failed, so I copy it from Père Sejourné:

ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙ
ΚΗΝΜΑΡΙΗΝΘΕΟ
ΜΗΤΟΡΑΚΑΙΟΝΕΤΙΚ
ΤΕΝ Χ̄Ν ΠΑΜΒΑΣΙΛΗΘΕ
ΟΥΜΟΝΟΥΙΕΑ ΜΟΥΝΣ
ΔΕΡΚΟΜΕΝΟΚΑΘΑΡΕΥ
ΕΝΝΟΟΝΚΑΙΣΑΡΚΑΚΑΙΕ
ΡΓΑΩΣΚΑΘΑΡΑΙΣ
ΕΥΧΑΙΣΑΥΤΟΝ
Θ̄ΝΛΑΟΝ . . .

I translate from his French, with a few small alterations due to notes on p. 271 of the "Revue Biblique" for April, 1895, in which the text is emended by the addition at the end of the word **ΕΥΡΗΣ**:

"In gazing upon the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and upon Him whom she brought forth, Christ the Sovereign King, only Son of the only God, be thou pure in mind, and flesh, and deeds, in order that thou mayest, by thy pure prayers, find God Himself merciful."

A second mosaic inscription of seven lines occurs in the part between the rotunda and the arm; the commencement of all the lines is covered by the wall of the actual house. In restoring and translating this, the Père Sejourné has thrown light on the age of the church.

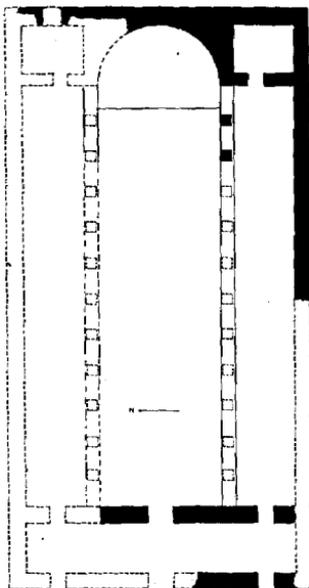
"The very beautiful mosaic work of this sanctuary, and of the holy house of the altogether pure Sovereign Mother of God (has been made) by the care and the zeal of this town of Madeba for the salvation and the reward of the well-doers, dead and (living) of this sanctuary. Amen, Lord! It was accomplished by the aid of God, in the month of February of the year 674, indiction 5." This Seleucidan year would

correspond to 362 A.D. For the learned father's notes on the date and on the inscription, I refer the reader to his article. At the right, on entering the church, he copied a third inscription of one line :

ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΒΟΗΘΙ ΜΗΝΑΤΩΔ

He translates : "Holy Mary, help Menas IV." This, he thinks, refers to some Bishop, or other illustrious man, buried in the church.

It is noticeable that the first inscription refers, not to the erection of the church, but to the laying of the mosaic, so that we may still think that the building may have originally been pagan. While I



was attempting to photograph, the interior of the room presented a picturesque scene. In a dark corner, two women, clad in the blue costume of the Bedawin, which the Christians of this district all wear, were seated on the floor by a rude tripod of sticks, from which was suspended a goat-skin full of milk, which they were shaking backward and forward to make butter. Standing by was a pretty child dressed in red, with a red handkerchief on her head, and a pearl cross on her hair, tightly grasping an orange and some sugar we had given her. Men and boys stood about, watching me at the camera, and anxious to give advice as to how the work should be done. They were all very good natured, and we parted excellent friends.

The original walls of the church stand to a height of 9 feet at least, and the two modern houses follow the same lines. The only point that is not clear is the western end of the church. Here modern walls have been built. However, I give the ancient columns and walls as I found them. Perhaps there was some sort of an atrium.

The recovery of the plan of Church No. 1 was a much more complicated affair. The blackened walls on the plan indicate the parts actually seen. And difficult was the task of seeing them! This ruin played hide and seek with us while we made our bewildered way through three rooms and an out-house of one man's dwelling, two rooms of another's, walked over the roof of a third man who was away and whose neighbours would not let us have the key, and finally found the west front in the open air!

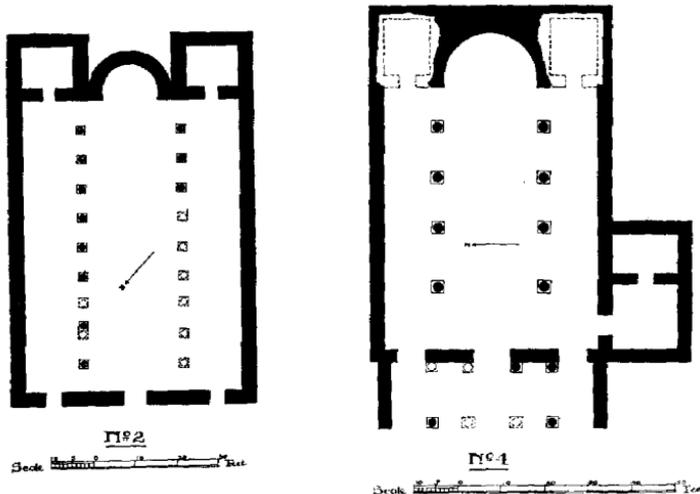
I was, however, able to collect the data for an accurate plan. The south-east part was the best preserved, giving the line of apse, the *altarium*, the exact width of nave and south aisle, the position of columns between them, the south-east corner, and a good part of the eastern and southern walls. The breadth of the church (outside measurement) is thus shown to be 72 feet exactly. The length is 125 feet, correct to a few inches. The nave is 29 feet broad, having exactly twice the breadth of the aisles. The bases for the columns rest on a line of slabs, 3 feet broad and about 3 inches high, forming a division between aisle and nave. The pavement of the aisle is of small tesserae. The *altarium* proper is raised $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the nave, and is paved with marble slabs about 18 inches square; this pavement is also found in the part of the church immediately below, forming a black and white diagonal pattern around a circle, extending 10 feet 8 inches westwards from the *altarium* and terminating near the western wall of the house which covers the eastern part of the church. The owner declared that the western part of the nave, included in the house we could not get into, was paved with tesserae, to which there were steps down from the marble pavement. If this is so, then it would indicate that the marble pavement formed part of the choir. This suggests the beginnings of the later development of church planning. This view is supported by the line of wall found running parallel to the much ruined west front, as we may consider the former to be a part of the narthex.

The Père Sejourné calls this the Cathedral of Madeba, and remarks on the remains of columns, capitals, architraves, &c., all in the Corinthian style, built in the rude houses round about. He tells me he noticed the eastern wall as I have drawn it, but thinks it later than the original church, hence in his plan he suggests the three apses.

The recovery of the ground plan of Church No. 2 was accomplished just in time. During the Dominican father's visit it had not been cleared out sufficiently to prove it a church, and he sets it down as a temple. A little later and it would have been buried under the new Government house. The whole is ruined down to a height of 3 or 4 feet. The form is an ordinary one. The church has been excavated from

within, and the exterior of the walls does not always appear, but the finding of the south-east chamber and of both the interior and exterior lines of the apse was enough to prove the plan that I give. In the southern line of column bases only three were found standing. In the northern line we have eight, indicated in black, but there were originally nine; the seventh is missing, and the eighth has evidently been slightly shifted; the dotted lines on the plan show its original position as well as the place for the seventh. The style is Corinthian, as may be gathered from the photograph. It is not properly orientated.

Church No. 4 is built upon vaults, so that whereas the interior of the church is ruined down to a foot the outer walls remain to a considerable height, sometimes 12 or 15 feet. These are built of small stones, with drafts and rough bosses. The column bases are massive,



and, notwithstanding that they occur at irregular intervals, are *in situ*. It has a narthex, and chambers to the south-west. The outside measurements, excluding the narthex, are 83 feet 6 inches in length by 55 feet 6 inches in breadth.

It is curious to find four churches in so small a town. No. 1 is to the south of the acropolis, Nos. 2 and 3 are to its north-east, near together, and No. 4 to the north. It is now two months since I measured them, and in the meantime I know not what other remains may have been found in this treasure-house of Madaba.

In this interesting place we were kept by the rain till Tuesday, March 12th. That morning we marched to Ma'ain or Baal Meon. This is like so many of the sites of the district, a mass of indefinite ruins on a hill, with many vaults visible. It is a place where you may stay an hour or a month; in the former time you can see all that the surface has

to show, while the latter period is the minimum demanded by the spade. Having neither the time nor the authority for a month's digging, we marched on after our hour was over, taking a pretty path *vid* Libb, a similar ruin, to the regular road from Madeba. About 2 miles north of the Wady Waly, we observed some columns on the hill to the left of our road. Riding up we found that they belonged to the "Menhir," marked on the map as directly on the Roman road. Three columns, broken at the top, are standing, and many others lie about partly imbedded. All are weathered, but show signs of inscriptions. They are monoliths, cut in the form of columns on a perfectly plain square base, whose side is only one inch more than the diameter of the columnar part. I directed the men to dig up the smaller part of an imbedded column which was fractured. As it rolled over, we were pleased to recognise a good Latin inscription. It was late, and we determined to return the next day, dig up the other part, clean, and copy. We rode in to our deliciously-placed camp. After the mud of Madeba, how grateful to find a clean, dry, hard flooring for our tents, with sparse grass. They were pitched in the Wady Waly, with a circle of gently rounded hills about, staidly green. Near by flowed the oleander-bordered brook, smoothly and quietly as far as the ruined bridge, where it suddenly plunged down a gash in the wonderfully worn and furrowed limestone to a pool below. The rocks are so smooth and white and slippery. A charming spot.

Returning early the next morning to the "Menhir," we found plenty to do. The wind was bitterly cold. We dug up first the fractured column and found it to be a Roman milestone with the inscription complete. The beginnings of most of the lines were weathered, but all was made out and squeezes were taken. It reads:—

· IMPCAESARLSEPTI
 MIVSSEVERVSPIVSPER
 TINAXAVGARABICVSA
 DIABENICVSPARTHICVVS
 MAXIMVSPPPONTIFEX
 MAXIMVSTRIBVNPOTEST
 VIIIIMPXICOSIIPROCOS
 ET
 IMPCAESMAVRELI
 VSANTONVSAVG
 PER
 MARIVMPERPETVVMLEG
 AVQPRPR
 XI
 IA

The number is 11, according to both the Latin and Greek numerals. The question is: 11 Roman miles from where? Madeba is too far, but Ma'a'in is just the right distance away. In coming from Ma'a'in we did not follow a Roman road, but one may exist in a somewhat different line.

We set up the stone and photographed it. We dug up another bit of a column, and found the lower part of another milestone inscription :—

..... PONT (?)
 TRIBPCOSIPPP
 PER
 FLAVIYMIVLI
 ANVMLEGAVG
 PRPR

A third stone had independent inscriptions on two sides, but too defaced to read. One of the standing columns appeared to contain the names of Constantine and his sons. Thus we had six or seven inscriptions here. Officers placed the name of their respective Emperors on milestones. The question is whether a new column was erected each time, or whether the so-called "Menhir" represents an older construction upon the columns of which the inscriptions were carved. I incline to the latter view.

While we were at work the Bedawin came up and attempted to bluster; it was amusing to note how they were quelled by our genial Effendi, who for the moment effectively assumed his official air. We returned for another delightful night at Wady Waly. The next day we marched to Dhiban, approaching this spot, where were enacted the exciting scenes relative to the Moabite Stone, with some thrill. The ruins have the same disappointing appearance as those of Ma'ain and Libb. The site is better. Dhiban occupies two hills, the western one being protected by two deep valleys. It was a large place. The ruins are in general not characterised by ornamentation and there is little classic work. This is an encouraging fact for the excavator whose aim is to get as soon as possible to the old Moabite levels. The sheikhs of the Hamideh were very civil and anxious to show us all the "torn stones," which is their phrase covering inscriptions and ornamentation. They led us down to the bed of the Wady, and pointed out part of the oil-press discovered by Tristram's party. They also declared that in a certain cave there was something or other which we could not get an idea of, and as I have been led on so many wild-goose chases by indefinite descriptions of caves we decided to ride on to 'Araier without hunting for the cave—a proceeding we regretted the next day, as the reader will see. Before remounting, however, we dug up a most interesting fragment. It is evidently a part of a pilaster with a human figure carved upon it in high relief. Only the trunk and the right hip remain. This pointed hip suggests figures of a well-known Phœnician female type (*see* Cut III in my "Mound of Many Cities"), but the absence of breasts rules out this idea. Mr. Dickie, after a study of the photograph, shows that it probably represents a man standing with his weight thrown on his right leg, which would cause the right hip to protrude, and would explain the lack of symmetry between the two sides of the body. The fragment is 13 inches high, which would give about 3 feet for the complete figure. It is of a warm reddish stone. We did

not bring it to Jerusalem, but I left it where I can find it again. It is a constant source of regret to me that Mr. Dickie did not arrive in Jerusalem till a day or two before I returned from the trip, on which his assistance would have been invaluable.

Notwithstanding the preparation given him by the detailed descriptions of former explorers, every traveller across these green plains must experience a thrilling moment of surprise on coming suddenly to the top of the almost perpendicular cliffs that bound the magnificent cañon of the Mojib or Arnon. We struck this view at 'Araier, which I place on my map somewhat east of the point it usually occupies. It crowns one of the natural buttresses that round out from the cliffs, and affords a capital bird's-eye view of the upper waters of the Arnon. Here we came upon a Christian from the Southern Lebanon, a sort of wandering merchant among the Arabs, who knew the country like a book. We also had an excellent guide from Madeba. They were thus two capital independent witnesses. Directly below, one sees the Mojib, formed by the junction of three deep wadies, one coming from the east, and two from the south; these two latter first join together and then unite with the eastern branch, a couple of miles above the bridge. For the eastern branch I recovered the name S'aideh, for the south-eastern, or main southern branch, the name Lejjún, and for the south-western, or smaller southern branch, the name Balu'a. I noticed that the maps give the name S'aideh to the main southern branch. However, I was delighted to find later, on consulting Tristram's "Land of Moab,"¹ that the names given him by Sheikh Zadam (which I prefer to write Zottam) corresponded to those I recovered for the three branches. The only difference is that for the central branch he was given the name Mkharrhas, whereas mine was Lejjún. Well, a few days later I encamped at the Springs of Lejjún, and found that a couple of miles down the valley there were the Springs of Makhêrus! My witnesses named the valley from the upper springs, Zottam from the lower. The agreement between the testimony gathered by Canon Tristram 23 years ago and my witnesses is complete, and we can unhesitatingly apply the name S'aideh to the eastern branch, Lejjún or Makhêrus to the central, and Balu'a to the small southern one. The memory of this view from 'Araier was of great service later on when journeying north-east from Kerak I passed across these wadies.

I am sorry to say that by taking the route from Dhiban to the river by 'Araier—where the ruins are not extensive, though the place must always have been important as a look-out—we missed copying a Roman milestone in the regular road. One of the Dominicans, passing later, took it for granted that I had copied it, as he knew I had copied several. The descent from 'Araier, which at first is along the face of the cliffs, was accomplished without difficulty, though it is almost impossible to remain in the saddle. Further down, the road becomes easier. We observed a stone circle of massive work, and near by the field was dotted

¹ See p. 131, footnote.

with dozens of little heaps of stones. Our guide said it was the site of a battle, and each heap marked the place where a man fell! We saw similar places later on. The rocks here are covered with the Arab tribe marks which we found so plentifully at Mashetta. Our camp was by the stream. The warmth of the air was very grateful. It seemed odd to be camping so securely in a spot so much dreaded, and rightly, by former travellers.

The next morning, March 15th, we accomplished the difficult climb up the south wall of the canon. This is fully 2,200 feet. The real difficulty is to get up the last two or three hundred feet. When we had arrived at the top, Abu Selim declared that he would not feel easy until he had seen the loaded mules at the top of the ascent. It seemed impossible that they could accomplish the feat without slipping and rolling back down the precipitous slope. While we watched their brave and successful attempt to climb the cliffs, I felt that had the Children of Israel ever come this way, with their women, and children, and baggage, we should have found some notice of it, not only in the history of their march, but in the Psalms which praise God for their miraculous deliveries.¹ To transport a vast multitude down and up this gorge would have been a serious affair in times of peace, but think how impossible while they were passing through a hostile country! The route of the Israelites is uncertain, but I think that the following points show clearly that they did not pass through the centre of the Land of Moab:—

- (1) They evidently passed to the east of Edom (Numbers xx, 21).
- (2) At Ije-Abarim they were to the east of Moab (Numbers xxi, 11).
- (3) They got to the other side of Arnon without complications with the Moabites.
- (4) Reference is made (v. 4) to the "brooks of Arnon," which well might mean the upper wadies near the present Haj Road where they are shallow. Thus being beyond the northern limit of Moab, with the awful chasm between them and their enemies, they turned next and camped at Dibon-Gad (Numbers xxiii, 45), the modern Dhiban, achieving a grand victory over Sihon, King of the Amorites. It is interesting to note that at the present day the Mojib is the limit between the lands of the Keraki and those of the Hamideh.

We lunched on the top of Jebel Shihan, a gently-rounded hill, which serves as an excellent landmark, and can be seen from our present camp, south of the walls of Jerusalem. We observed an enclosure, about 150 yards square, at the end I recognised the apse of a small church, though Tristram took it for a temple. We saw two large vaulted Roman cisterns.

Part way up the slope was a Roman milestone with defaced inscription; I read the letters MPXII. From Shihan we rode rapidly

¹ Numbers xxi, 14, 15, certainly points to especial marks of God's favour in this district, but the "brooks of Arnon" and "the stream of the brooks that go down to the valley of Ar," &c., suggest the upper wadies.

to Kerak, having time merely for a glance at Beit el Kuhn (also called Kasr Rabba), and at Rabba, which have been described so often before.

On the way we were joined by a young sheikh of the Beni Sukhr, whose father, Zottam, had been such a faithful guide to Canon Tristram. We at last came to the end of the monotonous plain; Kerak, the impregnable, loomed before us with the Wady ez Zayatîn between. Plunging down from the town along the opposite slope came a fearless horseman, who met us in the valley. This was Mr. Forder, of the Church Missionary Society, who from the beginning to the end of our stay was most cordial in every kind of assistance. Our tents were pitched in the garden of the Greek Convent, to whose head I had a letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem. He gave us a cordial welcome, and recognised in Ibrahim Effendi an old friend. From the earliest days the noble Moslem family of the Chaldi have been patrons of the Greek Convent. In recognition of the official character of the expedition on our tents appeared the Turkish flag. Soon after our arrival the Governor sent down an officer, saying he would receive us in the evening and begging to know what he could do for our comfort. What a contrast to the former style of reception at Kerak! We were welcomed by the Turkish Governor, the English Missionary, and the Greek Abbot; our predecessors had the Mujêli for their hosts, and their method of entertainment was to keep their guests under close guard, and to demand a ransom for their release. Everyone knows that the Mujêli are a tribe of spurious Arabs, having none of the virtues of the race whose name they borrow, who it is said came from Hebron, and until recently have lorded it over the Land of Moab. The form Mujêli is the plural, the singular is Mujelli. Their day, however, seems to be over, and they are at present camping near Kasr Rabba.

After dinner we waited on the Governor in the spacious new Seraya built in front of the castle. His Excellency Hussein Helmy Bey Effendi is a man about 40 years of age, with a keen eye and most intelligent face. For years he was General Secretary at Damascus. He is well fitted for the difficult post of Governor of Kerak: acute of mind, fearless, and scrupulously honest, he is respected and feared by all. Moreover, he is well read in history. He read Ibrahim Effendi's letter from Hamdy Bey, and at once entered with enthusiasm into the spirit of our mission, promising every assistance. He is keen on the antiquities of his district, and had twice visited Petra, and seemed anxious to have us go. Ordinarily a special permit is required. However, my mission did not include Petra. But it was very tantalising to be so near this wonderful, and usually so inaccessible, spot, with every facility offered for visiting it.

Later, his Excellency called at our tents, and showed great interest in making out the squeezes of various Arabic inscriptions of the place. When we dined with him Sunday evening, we found that he had looked up the historical references in his Arabic library.

Although Kerak has been so well described by Canon Tristram, I may

be allowed to give my own impressions of this almost impregnable place. It is situated on a triangular hill, almost entirely surrounded by deep valleys which naturally cut it off from the higher encircling hills, except at its south-east corner, where an artificial trench across the two valleys, which at this point are close together, completes the isolation. The general trend of the triangle from base to apex is W.N.W. Nothing is more difficult in this country than to recover the names of wadies, as they often have two or more; however, I give them as they were given to me, though they differ from Tristram's book. The base of the triangle is formed by the Wady ez Zayatn (separated from the Wady Kerak by the neck of land which afterwards spreads out to form the triangle) descending rapidly to the Wady Jowwad, which, forming the right or northern arm of the triangle, joins the Wady Kerak at the apex; the Wady Kerak thus forms the left or southern arm. The town occupies the comparatively flat top of the hill at its south-eastern end; thus it is not a perfect triangle, but has a bend in the wall along its right arm, where it swings across the hill to meet the left arm above the Wady Kerak, leaving the north-western and longer half of the hill, narrowing to its apex, outside the town. The northern and southern wadies are, according to Tristram, from 1,000 to 1,350 feet deep, while the Wady ez Zayatn, under the castle, is much shallower.

The ancient wall surrounding the town is in ruins, but it can be traced all along the line. In places it stands for a considerable height. Besides the great castle at the south-east, there are four towers. These latter all date from Crusading times, and are in distinct contrast to the main part of the wall. The towers are built of hard yellow limestone cut in the usual style of the Crusaders; the wall is built of flint and sandstone; the stones themselves are not large, but are peculiarly long and thin; the courses are often not continuous. Between the towers there are small turrets, some of Crusading work and others of the style of the main wall. This latter style also occurs at the great castle; here we also find the long thin stones, only much larger; many, but not all, are drafted. The style of boss is peculiar, especially at the quoins, where it often projects for more than a foot, with a long square set back, ending in a rough mass. It is thus a unique combination of rough boss and smooth boss, giving the corners an extraordinary effect. From the point of view of defence, as well as of architecture, these projecting bosses, up which anyone could climb, seem an extremely stupid arrangement. The building is very bad: while the courses are preserved the wall has no smooth face, the stones project irregularly, and no attention has been paid to vertical bonding. Where the joints are particularly large, they have been pinned up with chips. The arrow holes may not have been a part of the original scheme, but may have been pierced later. The wall, especially above the Wady ez Zayatn, has a long raking base.

That this masonry antedates Crusading times is proved by its position; it is found in the north wall facing the city, in the eastern wall, and also in a wall running north and south through the interior of

the castle. The present south and west walls are of a totally different masonry which has all the marks of Crusading work. The inference is that the original castle was narrower in width than the present one, occupying the crest of the hill; the Crusaders not only re-built the southern end, but added to the width by erecting a new wall further down on the southern slope, not, however, destroying the old west wall, which still stands on the higher level, but now is within the castle, dividing it into two parts. To what period we are to ascribe the more ancient part it is impossible to say without further examination. It is not Crusading work; between the Romans and the Crusaders it is difficult to find a builder for it; the Romans certainly never built in this rough manner; and hence by a process of elimination we are brought to consider the question: Can it be Moabite? I will leave it to others more learned than myself to answer the question.

We spent Monday afternoon, March 18th, in visiting the interior of the castle, with a most intelligent officer for our guide. So complicated is its structure, it would require days to understand and plan it properly. I can only give a general description. It is in the form of a trapezium some 250 yards long, the south end being much shorter than the north. In the time of the Crusaders the castle proper was at the south end. Here it is isolated from the hill beyond by a broad trench cut across the neck; Tristram says that a wall of native rock had been left at each end, thus forming a gigantic cistern, but at the time of my visit only one was left. Between this scarped ditch and the castle there is a huge pool. High up on the wall there is an Arabic inscription, extending almost its whole length. This south castle contains a large, lofty hall. The chapel, so well described by Tristram, is in about the centre of the main fortress. And how to describe this fortress? As one wandered along the series of parallel vaults and galleries, story upon story, dimly lighted by shafts through the vaults, past the rows of beds of the respectful Turkish soldiers, who, being off duty, were engaged in different domestic pursuits, the mind was bewildered. I was able to notice, however, that the vaults under the western or Crusading addition were larger and more solidly built than the others. In this part there was also a large hall. The work of clearing out the vaults is, I believe, still to go on. Tristram speaks of large reservoirs, but I understood from the officer that none had been found. Opening from the Crusading part above the Wady Kerak there is a very lofty and narrow gate. The main entrance is now, as formerly, towards the city, from which the castle is isolated by another ditch.

To return to the town. In former times it was approached only by four galleries, cut in the rock. One near the north-west, or Bihar's Tower, is still used, and has an arched gateway at its outer opening, which is 9 feet 3 inches broad. The gallery itself is much broader, and twists inwards for about 70 yards, but its original length was about 125 yards, its inner part having been destroyed. I need to add nothing to Tristram's description of Bihar's Tower. Abu Selim copied the

inscription. The northern tunnel is now partially blocked up, and appears simply as a long cave. At the north-east there are three more tunnels, one of which is closed.

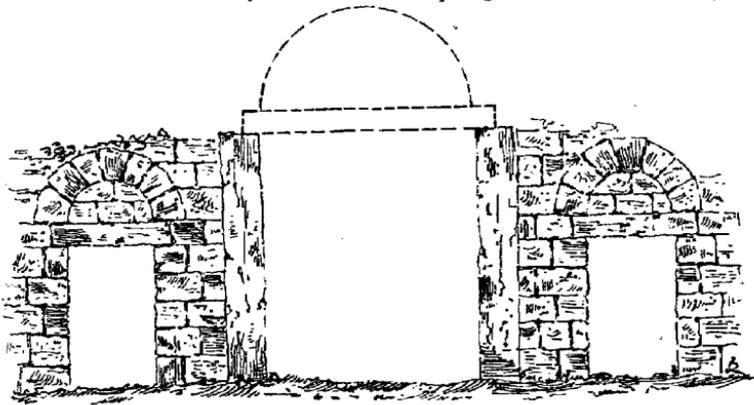
The town contains few monuments. Near the castle we visited a well-preserved Roman bath. In the centre of the town is the ruined mosque, once a church, as attested by the chalices still left on either side of the inserted Arabic inscription. This we copied, as well as one on a long stone, lying near by. I have sent home a squeeze of the latter; if my memory serves me right, it relates to the re-building of the mosque by the inhabitants of Kerak, and of the remitting of taxes in consequence. There are also Arabic inscriptions on two of the other towers. The town contains four old pools, two of great size. Ancient cisterns are most numerous, sometimes three occur in one house. Were they dug by the order of King Mesha? But this opens up the question of Kareha, and of the Moabite Stone and its original position, which I cannot enter upon now. Only about half the area of the ancient town is now covered by houses, so excavation in Kerak would be possible.

As we sat on the lofty top of Bihar's Tower, Mr. Forder told me that along the ridge outside the town there is a hermit's cave in the face of the rock. It must be approached by rope-ladders. Within is a small chapel, a recess for bed, a furnace, and a cistern with channels from without to catch the cliff drainage. In the Wady ez Zayatîn, beyond the castle, we visited a tunnel piercing the mountain, with another tunnel running directly below in the same line, the two connected at intervals by air-holes. What these lead to I was unable to ascertain. In the Wady Kerak are three good springs; the highest called 'Ain el Franj, connected with 'Ain es Sufsaf below the town by an aqueduct; the third is 'Ain Jara, after the junction of Wady Kerak with Wady Jowwad. The weather during our stay was very cold and cloudy, and I did not get the view of Jerusalem and Bethlehem that a fine day affords.

The population of Kerak is varying, as the inhabitants own both houses and tents, thus leading sometimes a nomadic, sometimes a town existence. During harvest time the town is comparatively empty, when they become real Bedawîn. The Keraki are estimated at between eight and ten thousand, but this includes those who never live in the town. The Christians number a few hundreds. There are scattered shops, difficult to find, but no regular market. The houses are built with the *débris* of former ages, often leaving causeways for the streets. In one of the houses we copied some Greek inscriptions. The people are cunning and mean looking—an appearance justifying their reputation.

We were four nights in Kerak, leaving at eleven on Monday, the 19th. The Governor kindly gave us an escort of two horsemen, more for guiding than protecting us, as both knew the district. One lad, whose family came from Damascus, had been brought up in a castle on the Haj road close by, and, as a cavalry soldier, had scoured the whole country. We were entering upon an unexplored region, for preceding travellers had always, I believe, marched north to Dhiban, and then struck off east to

Umm er Resas. My plan was to march north-east to Umm er Resas, to find out what I could about the upper wadies of the Arnon. Our road ran at first somewhat south-east and then north-east, till we came to the springs of Lejjûn. I took bearings at various points on the route, and was able to fix the position of the springs at a point about 10 miles north-east of Kerak. The water bubbles out from the bottom of a wady, and has a good taste, but is somewhat warm. Our guides said that it ran into the Mojib, giving its name to the Wady Lejjûn, or central wady as seen from Araier. On my asking for the Wady el Balu'a, old Khalil, of Madeba, whom we still kept with us, pointed off to the north-west, which placed it where it had been pointed out to us before. From Shihan the ruin of Baluà had been shown us in the same line, undoubtedly taking its name from the wady. Around the springs, for some distance, the



— Sketch of South Gate —

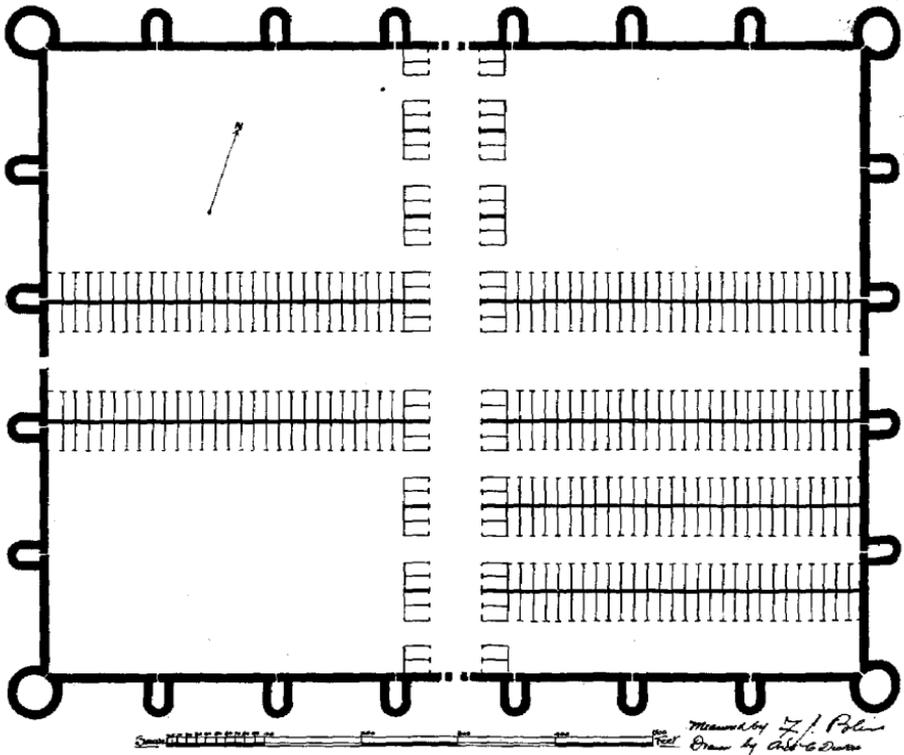
LEJJÛN.

land is well cultivated. The brook flows for a half mile east, and then joins the great wady coming from the south, called the Wady ed Debbeh, which our guides said crossed the Haj road "a day's journey below Kutraneh." Hence I was able to fix its general position. They also vouched for the Springs of Makhêrus, a couple of miles down the wady from Lejjûn, but I had not time to visit these. Indeed, I was always in a strait betwixt two on this journey; on the one hand was the desire to do everything thoroughly, on the other, my buried wall in Jerusalem was calling me back.

We had travelled slowly, stopping for lunch on the way, and did not arrive at Lejjûn till four. Mr. Forder had never visited the place, so though we were told that there were ruins we were not prepared to discover a genuine Roman town. But we had no time for expressions of surprise, for there was none too much daylight left for me to make a plan of the place. Moreover it had begun to rain. However, I am

able to furnish an approximate restoration that does not claim to be accurate to the foot. The town is rectangular, about 670 feet north and south, by 850 east and west. The town wall is built of small smooth stones, and is over 8 feet thick. It has gates on the four sides. The gate-posts are of massive stones. The southern gate is triple, the central opening being 11 feet wide. Besides the four corner towers there are towers along the walls between, six on both north and south, and four on both east and west. These intermediate towers are hollow; they

— Plan of Military Town of LEJJUN —



project 38 feet from the wall, and are 28 feet across. They have straight sides, with a circular termination. Many are simply a heap of ruins, but all could be traced. At right angles through the town there run two great streets, over 50 feet broad. Facing these streets there is a series of chambers some 30 feet deep by 13 broad. Side streets, about 25 feet broad, parallel to the main east and west avenue, were also traced in the south-west part, likewise lined with chambers. They may also have existed in other parts. In the south-east corner a high heap

of ruins suggested a more important building. Long thin slabs of stone, such as were used in the Haurán for roofing, occurred. The buildings inside the town are very much ruined, and seem to have been built roughly and without mortar. The whole suggests a Roman military town, with strong outside walls and towers, and barracks built symmetrically but roughly within for the soldiers and their families.

On the hill to the west of the springs I saw a ruin which I had no time to visit. Some weeks later my friend, Mr. H. W. Price (who has assisted Dr. Petrie in Egypt this last winter), during a trip in Moab, visited Lejjún at my request. His guide took him to this ruin on the hill, and was afraid to go down into the plain. Mr. Price supposed that this higher ruin was the one I had asked him to visit, and made a sketch plan of the place for comparison with mine, but it turns out he discovered the fortress.

It is a building much in the style of Kusr Bshêr (*see* plan of latter), with one entrance, corner towers, but having also an intermediate tower on two sides. It measures 50 or 60 yards square.

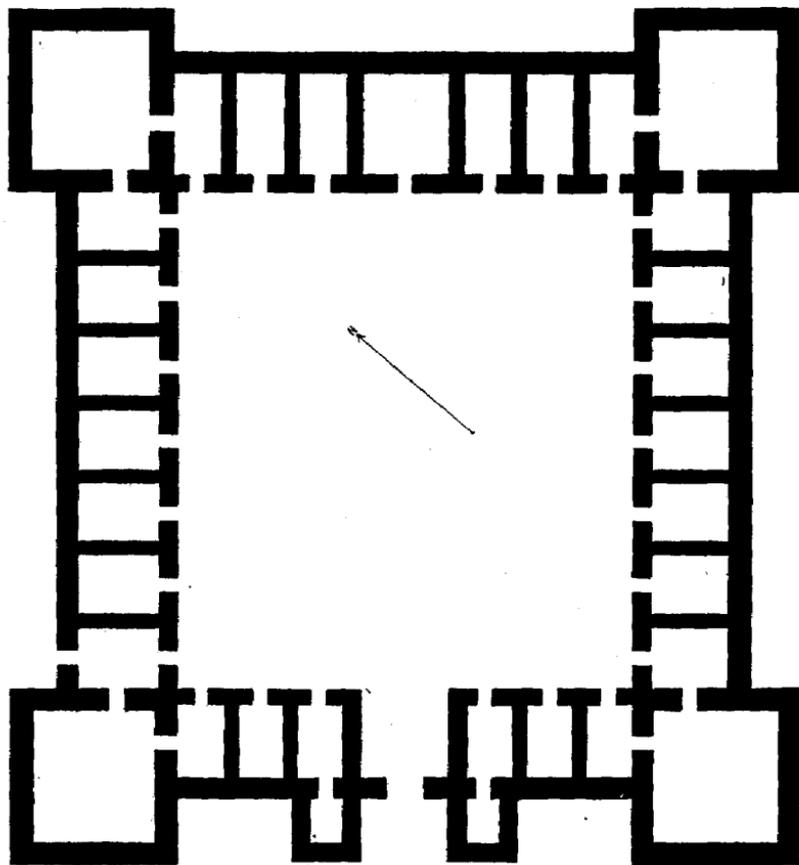
There is a resemblance between the wall of the military town of Lejjún and the outer wall of Mashetta. Outside the town there are other ruins that seem to be important, but the sun set before I could examine them, and early the next morning I was obliged to ride on. First we crossed the Wady ed Debbeh, which here is broad and shallow, and rode north-east over a rocky country, broken by wadies, to the R'jum Rishan, or heaps of Rishan. One of these, at least, is the ruin of a square watch tower, of which we saw many scattered all over the district. From this point I took an angle back to Lejjún, as the heaps stand on a slight ridge commanding a good view. A half mile beyond we crossed the Wady es Sultan, which is the last of the southern feeders of the Arnon, running into the Wady Lejjún. It is not deep at this point. Then we rode for about 7 miles over an undulating plain, tempting one to a canter, which I injudiciously attempted, for the treacherous ground is honeycombed with rat-holes, and just before we reached another watch tower my horse went down and I was lamed. So I confess that I did not experience the supposed joy of the discoverer a moment afterwards when on crossing a swelling of the ground, the stately and finely-preserved Roman fort of Kusr Bshêr stood out solitary on the featureless plain. Being in great pain my one idea was to get off the horse, and as he scrambled over the fallen stones that impede the entrance to the fort, I barely noticed a long Latin inscription on the lintel of the gate. However, lunch is the traveller's best panacea. My interest in the place revived wonderfully, and I began to hobble around, taking measurements and photographs. The inscription was out of reach, and as we were uncertain just where to find our camp, we decided to leave it for another visit.

The tents proved to be only 5 or 6 miles off, nearly due north. They were at the bottom of the Wady es S'aideh, the main east feeder of the Arnon, across whose main wadies we had thus ridden in one day.

The spot is very picturesque, with fine cliffs all about. It is a couple of miles above the springs which, unfortunately, I had no time to visit.

That evening I had an interesting hour over the map, which I was able to correct from my observations. The position for my fort—Kusr

—Plan of Roman Fort — KASR BSHER —



Scale Feet.

Measured by *L. J. Pollock*
 Drawn by *And. G. D. Jones*

Bshêr—ascertained by bearings taken at various points all the way from Kerak, I had been able to check, by a direct bearing on to that helpful landmark, Jebel Shihan. My two guides were jealous of each other, and I was able to keep them good-natured during a stiff examination by treating it in a jocosé way as a legal proceeding. These natives are

something like children, if you press them too far they are liable to invent. Their testimony was taken independently, so there was no collusion. On the way, Saïd, the soldier, said that Wady es Sultan flowed through Kutraneh, on the Haj road. In the evening I asked Khalil, the Madebite, who had travelled with the mules, for the names of the wadies we had crossed. When he mentioned Wady es Sultan, I casually enquired where it came from. "East, east, beyond the Haj road." "And at what point does it cross?" "At Kutraneh." "Some distance from it, I suppose?" "No, wullah, through the very centre." Hence the line of this wady was fairly well fixed.

That night we had a splendid camp fire, lighting up the picturesque rocks. The next morning I sent Abu Selim to the fort with men to build up a rude wall across the gateway, that the inscription might be reached, and rode myself with Saïd, the soldier, to see what the other Kur Bshêr is like. For the Arabs use the plural, Ksâr Bshêr, to indicate the large fort and another building $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles W.N.W. Heading towards this, we crossed several small gullies, the beginnings of wadies that run north-west to the Wady es S'aideh. This building turned out to be one of the many watch towers scattered over the district, but is the largest one I noticed. It measures 74 feet by 58 feet at the base. The walls have a distinct batter. They are 4 feet 6 inches in thickness, and are built of roughly squared stones, the largest being 7 feet. The base seemed to be solid (or possibly the tower was built on vaults), for the door is some 15 feet above the ground. There were no signs of steps.

Just before arriving at the fort we noticed a great open pool, or tank, similar to the one at Madeba. The men had built a fine temporary wall, and Abu Selim had already beaten in the squeeze; two men were standing on the wall beside him, keeping the papers in place till they should dry sufficiently to be taken off and laid in the sun. The stone was a very difficult one to squeeze, as its surface was rough and gritty. Fearing that the squeeze would not render the worn incisions, I determined to study the stone thoroughly. So I stood for $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours on the wall in the bitter wind, constantly wetting the inscription, and eagerly waiting for the sun to flash out from between the driving clouds. I recovered a large part of it, but the squeeze proved to be a more valuable witness than myself, for on my submitting it to the distinguished epigraphist of Jerusalem, the Père Germer-Durand, he made out the whole inscription.

The following is his reading:—

OPTIMISMAXIMISQVEPRINCIPIBUSNOSTRISCAIOAVRELIO
 VALERIOΔΙΟCLETIANOPIOFELICIINVICTOAVGVSTOET
 MARCOAVRELIOVALERIOMAXIMIANOPIOFELICIINVICTOAVGVSTOET
 FLAVIOVALERIOCONSTANTIOETGALERIOVALERIOMAXIMIANO
 NOBILISSIMISCAESARIBVSCASTRAETEURVMMOENIAFOSSAMENTIS
 AVRELIVSASCLEPIATESPRAESESPROVINCIAERABIAE
 PERFICIVRAVIT.

This is late Latin, as shown by the barbarous word *fossamenti*. I give a free translation :—

“ In honour of our most excellent and great chieftains, Caius Aurelius Valerius Diocletian Pius Felix Invictus Augustus, and Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus Pius Felix Invictus Augustus, and Flavius Valerius Constantius and Galerius Valerius Maximianus, the most noble Cæsar, Aurelius Asclepiates, *Præses* of the Province of Arabia, has undertaken to complete this Fort and its walls with ditches.”

The inscription is surrounded with a border, upon which ET, the last two letters of the third line, and TIS, the last three letters of the fifth line, run ; unfortunately, they do not appear in the squeeze, as Abu Selim naturally supposed that the whole inscription was included in the border. It is interesting to notice that there is not a single abbreviation. The names of the Emperors date the building at the very beginning of the fourth century.

It is a pity I could not read the inscription on the spot, for then I would have searched for the ditches, of which, however, I remember no signs. Perhaps the word refers to the large pool, as well as to the smaller cistern directly before the gate.

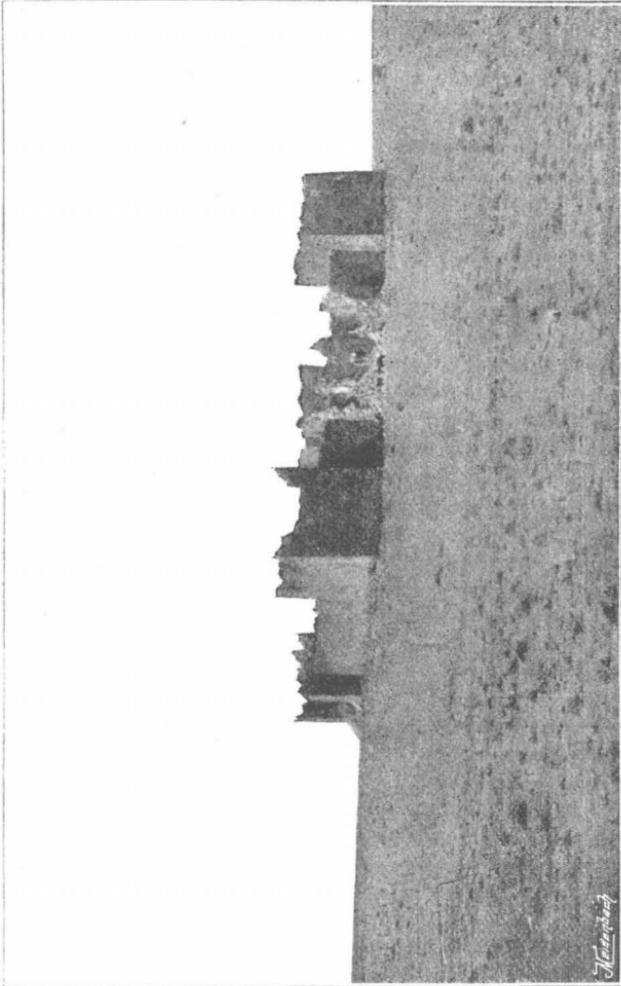
As may be seen from the illustration, the exterior of the building is preserved almost to the top, but the small towers on the side of the gate have fallen down, and there is a large breach in one of the corner towers. The fort is almost square, and measures (including the towers) 172 feet 6 inches along the front by 189 feet at the side. The masonry of the outside wall shows drafted stones in its lower courses, but higher up the stones are smaller and wider, and the joints primed up with chips. Small openings occur high up. There are two small windows above the main gate, the lintel of which is saved by a relieving arch and rests upon two pilaster capitals.

The interior is more in ruins. There is a large open court, with twenty-seven rooms, exclusive of the towers, opening off it, six on the front and seven on each of the other sides. Above these rooms there is a second storey. Owing to my accident, I was not able to climb the towers, but Abu Selim reports that they are in three or four storeys, with a stair in the corner ; the lower storeys consist of one chamber each, and the upper of two or more.

That evening I had an exceedingly bad quarter of an hour. In Kerak I had changed plates in the dark, and I now discovered to my horror that I had been exposing the back side of the plates ! I was strongly tempted to go back to Kusr Bshêr, but time was too pressing. However, I was relieved in Jerusalem to find that the plates developed all right, only in the interests of true science I must confess that in the wall of the Kerak Castle and in the photograph of Kusr Bshêr, right and left have changed places. Such are the vicissitudes of travel.

The next day, March 22nd, we rode to Umm er Resas, and thus were once again on the beaten track. Here we saw nothing to add to

Tristram's description of the Christian town. I have not altered its position on my map, but I believe it is east, rather than north-east of Dhiban. Our next point was Mashetta, which we wished to reach *via* Ziza, but it was necessary to return to Dhiban as we had heard further



KUSR BSHÉR.

particulars in regard to the cave of which the Arabs had spoken. While on Shihan a partner of the Lebanon Christian we had met at 'Araier, held forth at length on this cave and promised us an inscription. Accordingly we rode from Umm er Resas, in a high wind, to Dhiban, and at once were shown to the desired Maghara Abu Nathi, which is

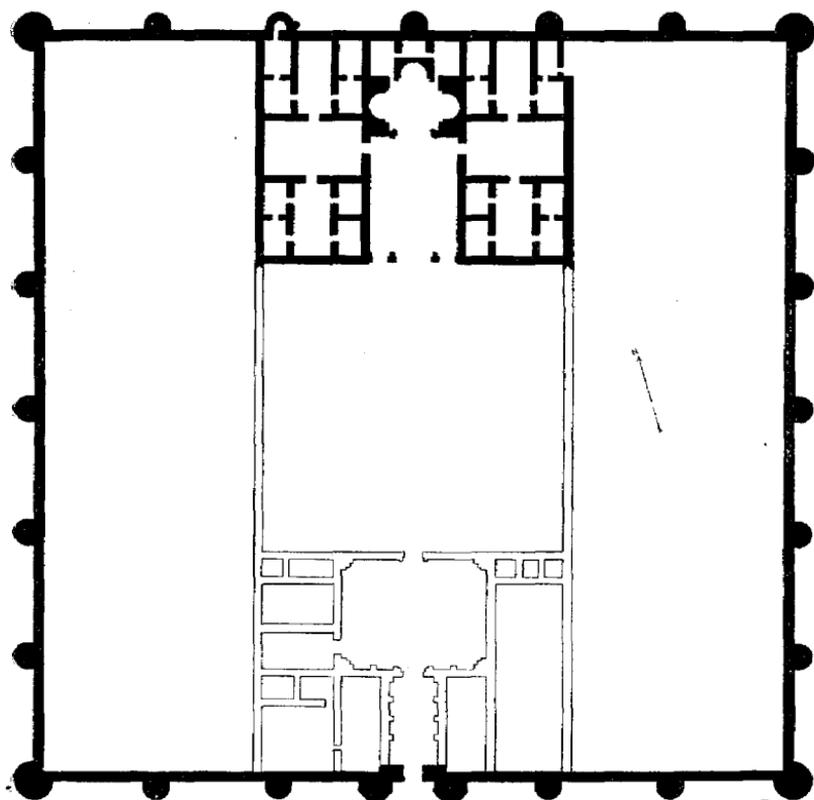
directly on the right of the regular road from Madeba. We entered by a sloping passage, 40 feet long, and found ourselves in a natural cave, irregular in shape, about 30 feet in length and 11 feet in breadth. Within there was an irregular shaft to the surface of the ground at the top of the hill, a section of which shows 8 feet of soil and 7 feet of rock. This shaft, as well as the passage by which we entered, seems due to a breaking into the cave by the Arabs. Opening from the cave are several natural projecting bays, one of which had been artificially squared, and contains a sarcophagus, measuring inside 6 feet 10 inches by 2 feet 5 inches, with walls 4 inches thick. The roof of the cave has been propped up with rude pillars built of older fragments. To the right of the entrance a well-built arch extends diagonally to the sarcophagus-niche; at about right angles to the entrance is a passage lined with well-jointed stones, leading to a chamber lined with beautiful masonry, having the well known shallow draft made by simply smoothing the margins of the stones, while the centres are finely dressed by the comb-pick. Along the wall runs a moulding, of which I give a drawing,¹ evidently some distance below the roof. This chamber was blocked up by stones. On going without I found that the hill sweeps around in a half circle to a point opposite the inner wall of the chamber, and so close to it that I infer that it was originally out on the slope, and is buried in its own *débris*. We thus have an external tomb-chamber, leading into the cave, which was the real burial-place. We were much disappointed to find no inscription, but it was interesting to have discovered some Roman remains at Dhiban, for Roman the chamber appears to be.

The local sheikhs paid us a friendly call, bringing a sheep, barley, and milk, for which they absolutely refused pay. They showed us a Greek inscription and promised to report any discovery to the Governor at Kerak; this they will do, for they desire his favour. After dinner we held a grand Council. I desired to camp by the nearest water to Mashetta. The winter had been very dry, and Ziza was reported waterless. On leaving Kerak, Saïd, the soldier, described a certain castle on the Haj road south of Mashetta, called Deb'aa, which I take to be the Kula'at el Belka of the map. Plenty of water and flour. "Barley?" I asked. "Barley?" he said, "enough to feed an army of horses." He painted the place with such glowing colours that I had visions of a billiard table. The next day he was doubtful about the flour. Later the barley became problematic. Finally the water showed signs of evaporation. Then his rival Khalil stepped in and declared there was *no* water there this year. The upshot was that I decided to go to Madeba, though very reluctant to leave the route by Wady Themed, and attend to our commissariat department. The decision was fortunate. We arrived at Madeba Saturday the 23rd. The next day a violent storm set in, one tent was damaged by the wind, and we were glad enough to avail ourselves of the kindly-preferred hospitality of the Latin Convent. The-

¹ This drawing is not published, but is preserved at the office of the Fund.

Head was away, but the priest in charge placed practically the whole establishment at our service. How the rain beat down for two days! But Tuesday there was a break, and we set off for Umm el 'Amad, having fixed upon it for our headquarters from which to visit Mashetta as often as was necessary. Passing Umm el 'Amad, and finding it favourable for a camp, we rode on to Mashetta, arriving in an hour and three-quarters.

— PLAN OF PALACE AT MASHETTA —



Scale 1/10000 feet. *M. S. B. / Drawn by A. G. D. S.*

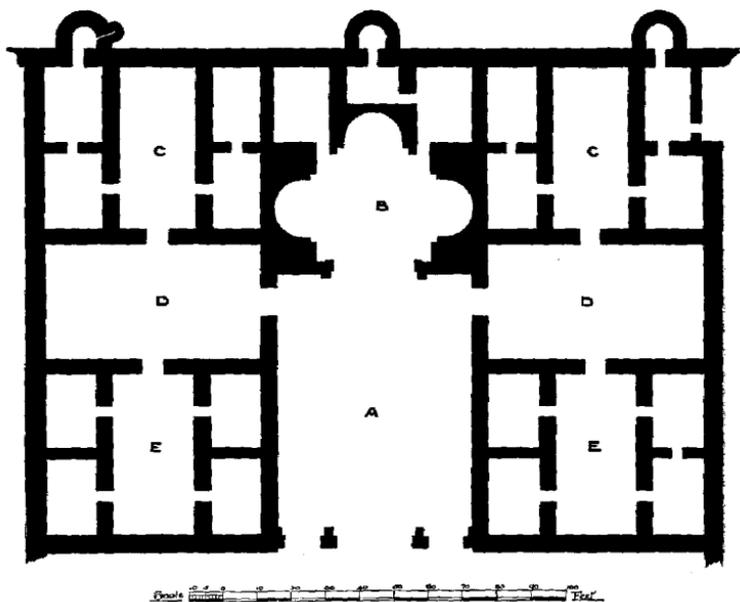
First, however, we crossed the Haj road, and a wonderful sight it is. Fancy over one hundred and fifty paths, made by the tread of the camels, side by side, sometimes parallel, and sometimes running into each other, and you will get some idea of the Haj road. Desolate it was, but one's imagination easily peopled it with the motley procession of thousands and thousands moving once a year gladly towards the south, and once a year sadly towards the north. For many fall by the way, and many perish

by plague. Interesting it is to remember that every year the sons of Ishmael repeat the journeyings of their cousins, the sons of Israel.

After a hurried glance at the rich magnificence of the sculpture on the southern façade and a general examination of the place, I began on my carefully-measured plan. As it differs only in some details and proportions from the one in Tristram's book I do not need to repeat the general description.

After a few measurements I began to see that the place had not been laid out with perfect symmetry. For example: on the east side the distance between the south-east tower and the bastion to the right is

PLAN OF INNER PALACE AT MASHETTA

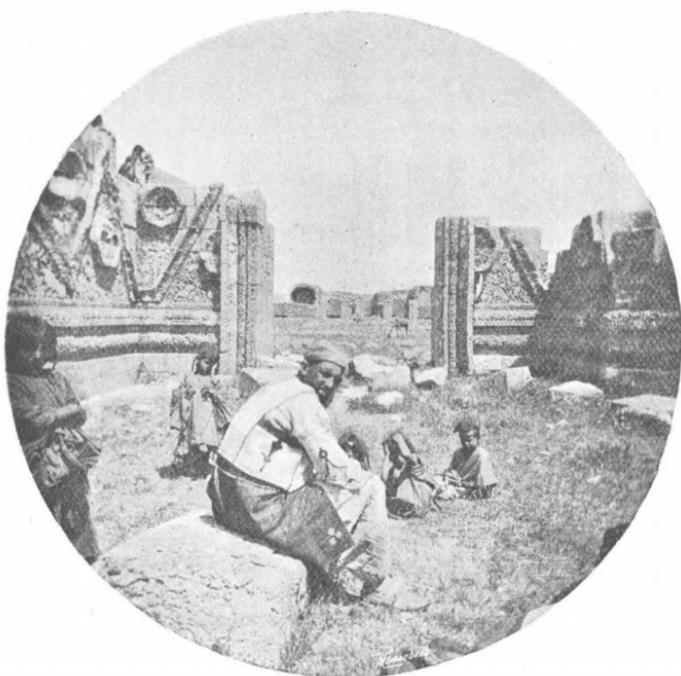


61 feet 9 inches, while the distance between the north-east tower and the bastion on the left, which should be the same, is 63 feet 9 inches; the distance between the intermediate bastions themselves have a maximum variation of 5 inches.

On Tristram's plan the tower behind the Inner Palace at its north-west corner is shown to be hollow. I had not his plan with me, but I also observed this feature, though I did not see the curious projection which he marks, and which I take the liberty of adding to my plan. He, however, does not place this bastion directly at the back of the palace, but gives an opening on to the courtyard; on my plan it opens on to the palace.

At my request Mr. Price examined carefully all the bastions with reference to their solidity, and he reports that the other two bastions at the back of the palace are hollow, also the one at the left of the west octagonal bastion, and probably the corresponding one on the east. I easily recognised with other travellers that the outside façade was never finished, indeed, the lack of fallen stones and of *débris* show that there remains *in situ* about all that ever was built.

Entering the gate, we find the enclosure divided into three parallelograms. Only the central or largest one contains buildings. As Tristram



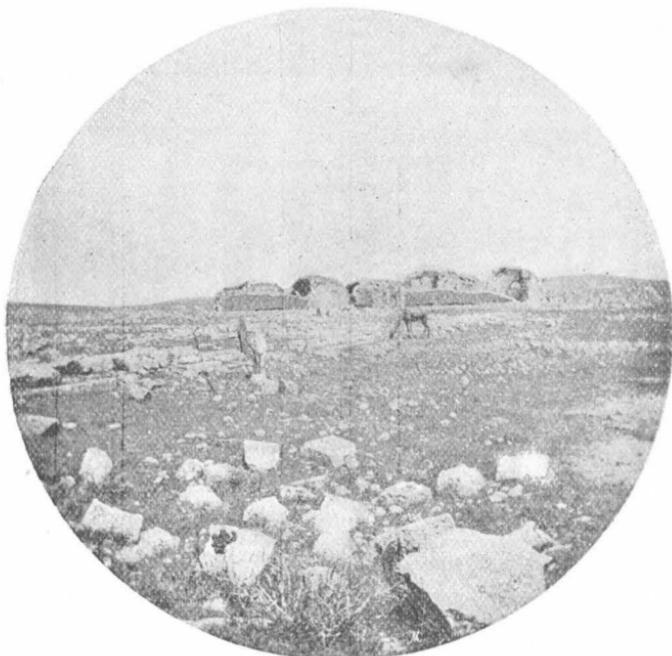
(From a photograph by Miss Mynors.)

ENTRANCE GATE OF MASHETTA.

points out, this is divided into three sections. The first, nearest the gate, contains a court, surrounded on three sides by chambers, and having two large door-openings, and massive piers in the four corners. All has been simply blocked out, the walls to all appearance never having been carried more than a foot above ground. There is almost no *débris*. The measurements show the same lack of symmetry as observed without. The second section is open, and the third contains the Inner Palace, which consists of brick walls resting on three courses of stone.

An interesting question arises as to how the Inner Palace was lighted. There is not a single window from without, and inside there are only a

few small round openings over the doors. Canon Tristram describes explicitly the dome over the chamber B, which has the apsidal recesses. but at the time of my visit no trace had been left of this. I agree with him that the large hall A was never covered, for there is no sign of vaulting, nor is there sufficient fallen brickwork to account for its destruction. But I go still farther. CC, DD, and EE, are now open; no signs of vaulting remain, and they are not choked with fallen brick. DD must have been open in order to have lighted the other chambers; and I believe that CC and EE were open as well, otherwise the chambers



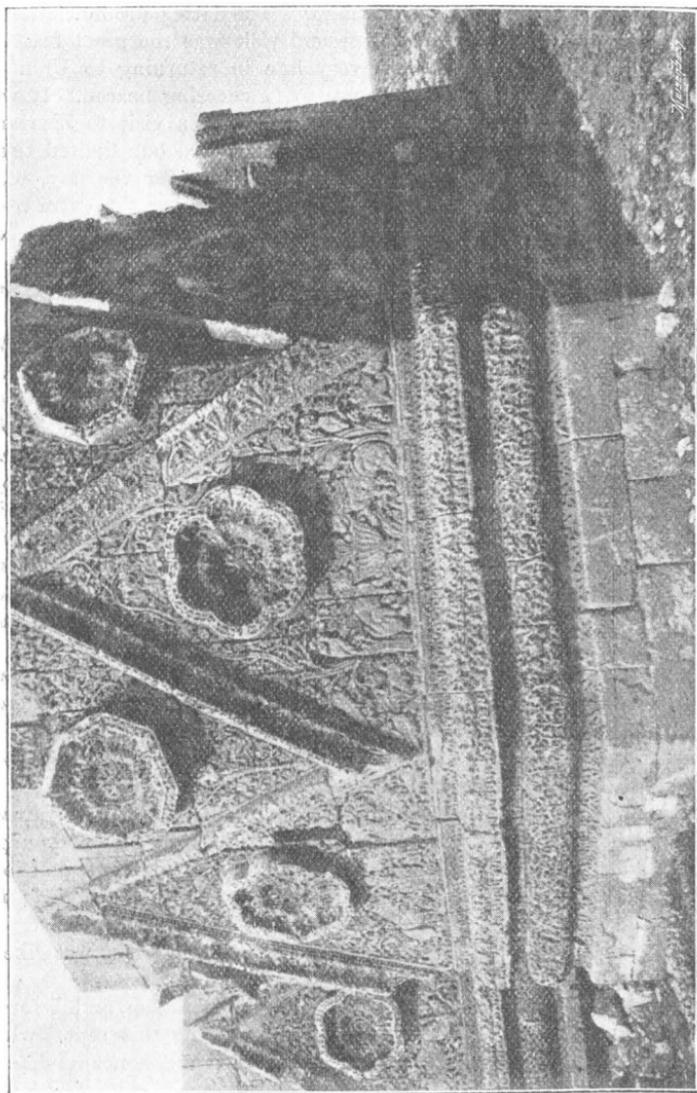
(From a Photograph by Miss Mynors.)

INNER PALACE OF MASHETTA.

off their extreme corners would have received practically no light from DD. I asked Mr. Price to look into the matter, and he agrees with my observations and conclusions.

We spent a second day at Mashetta, arriving at 8.30 a.m., and leaving at 5.30 p.m. I completed my plan, and photographed, and Abu Selim took squeezes—I will not say of the inscriptions, but of the *graffiti*, which are scrawled on every available stone both inside and outside the enclosure. Of original inscriptions, really belonging to the building, there are none. These *graffiti* are of three kinds. (1) Cufic, with possibly some that are Nabatean; (2) Arabic, and (3) Arab tribe-marks.

We took 18 squeezes, including all varieties. The Arabic ones may be ascribed to the Haj pilgrims. The Arab *wesem* or tribe-marks, are found



(From a Photograph by Dr. Bliss.)

TOWER AT MASHETTA.

everywhere in the district. Here, at Mashetta, some are quite recent—must have been carved within a few months. Among these are certain forms that bear an accidental resemblance to Greek letters. The com-

ination $\pi \tau \pi$ occurs often, both among the recent scrawling, and the older. It is also found with other *wesem* at 'Amman.

A word about the name of the place. It may be written Umm Shetta or Mashetta, but certainly not Mashita. The latter pronunciation I never heard once. The day of our second visit was the great feast at the close of Ramadan. We were very late in returning to Umm el 'Amad, and the camp fire in the distance was a cheering beacon. It was a disappointment to have no time to turn aside for a visit to Ziza and Kustul, so near, and yet so far when we considered our limited time. On arriving at camp we found an especial dinner for the day, with flowers on the table, while the muleteers were enjoying the extra treat of a sheep. Canon Tristram will be interested to learn that his old friend and guide, Zottam, is buried at Umm el 'Amad.

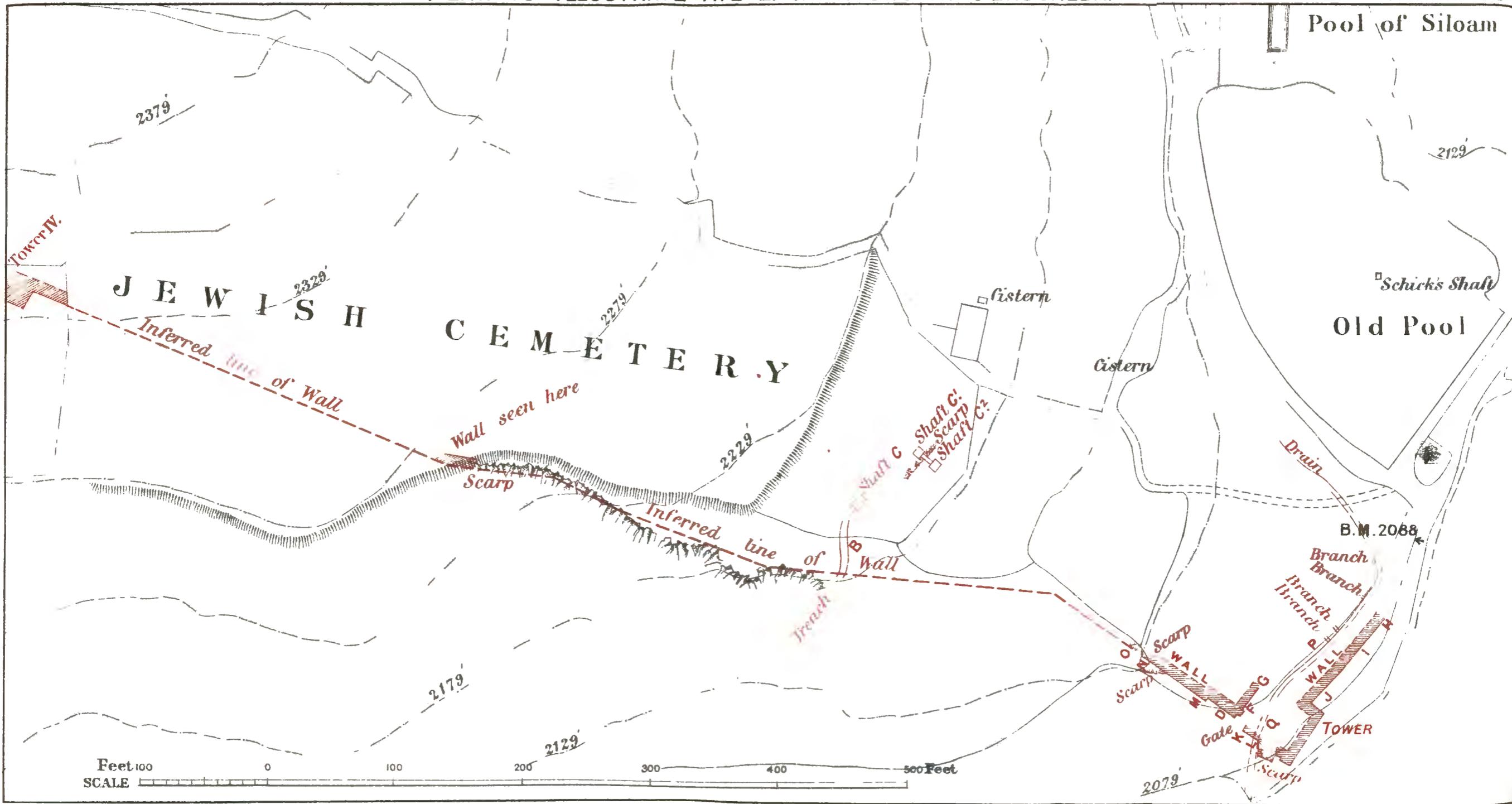
With the work at Mashetta I felt that the main objects of our trip had been accomplished. Our route back to Jerusalem lay by 'Amman and Salt. At 'Amman we were again detained by a violent storm. We camped near the theatre, that magnificent and almost complete Roman monument. 'Amman has much changed since the Circassians came in 1880. They now number 10,000 souls. Their houses are built of old materials as well as of mud brick. The town has a neat, thrifty appearance. Every room has its chimney; every house its porch or balcony. The yards are nicely swept. The people have a free and independent air. At first the destruction of the monuments, consequent on the establishment of this colony, was great; the Basilica has disappeared, and one apse of the interesting Thermæ; but the Mukhtar told me that they now have orders to leave the ruins alone. Fortunately they appear not to have touched the theatre.

We spent Sunday, March 30th, at Salt, and on Monday turned our faces directly towards Jerusalem. And how to describe the ride down the beautiful Wady Sha'ib? Were we in sterile Syria or in some valley of Switzerland? Wooded hills, the rushing stream, the green glades—how delightful it all was! And then the flowers—not solid patches of one colour, such as I have seen in the Lebanon, but each square yard at the side of the road seemed a natural nosegay—red and blue and purple and pink and yellow, all growing together and embedded in delicious green. But this was too beautiful to last. As we descended the vegetation grew scantier, and the heat greater. When we reached the Ghôr it became almost unbearable, and the ride into Jericho was like a throbbing nightmare. Never was I gladder to reach camp.

On Tuesday, April 2nd, we arrived safe in Jerusalem, and I found Mr. Dickie awaiting my return. The task of writing this report while my excavations have been going on has been a hard one, hence its defects will perhaps be pardoned. I have sent a brief report with plans and photographs to his Excellency Hamdy Bey, who has expressed himself much pleased with the results of the trip, and asks me to keep him *au courant* with all my work, as well as to write him of future trips. I cannot close this report without testifying to the great assistance rendered

PLAN TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXCAVATIONS AT JERUSALEM.

PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND



me on the trip by Ibrahim Effendi, who seemed never to mind hardship and fatigue, provided the mission could be accomplished.

JERUSALEM,

May 21st, 1895.

FIFTH REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS AT JERUSALEM.

By ARCHIBALD C. DICKIE, A.R.I.B.A.

It is with much regret that I find the duty of writing this report has fallen upon me, in consequence of Dr. Bliss's unfortunate illness. Just after sending off his report on the expedition to Moab, his health began to break down, from the effects of over anxiety and work, combined with the unusually excessive heat we have experienced here for some weeks, culminating in extreme nervous prostration. This necessitated his removal from the camp to the Grand New Hotel, where he was for a week under the care of Dr. Wheeler. I am glad to say he is now much better, and has left for Beyrout, where the doctor has ordered him to take complete rest for a time.

This report ought to have been written a week ago, but, on account of the before-mentioned difficulties, Dr. Bliss was unable to give any attention to it.

I do not intend to go into a complete report of the excavations, but only to give a running description of the work since its commencement, as Dr. Bliss will enter into more minute details later on.

As will be remembered, the wall at the end of last season was left at the point where it emerges from the Jewish Cemetery. Consequently, on April 15th, the work of Season 1895 was commenced at this point, the wall being picked up where previously seen, and followed for a distance of 30 feet, where it stepped up on to a rising scarp, and was unfortunately lost. From this point, the digging was transferred to a point about 90 yards to the south-east. Dr. Bliss's reasons for digging here were: First, the wall, where last seen, running as it did up against a scarp which rose gradually up to the surface of the ground, leading on to the natural rock—which was almost all exposed—gave little hope of it ever being seen again, until it came to a point where the *débris* had accumulated to some degree above the top of the rock. Secondly, the contour of the rock followed the swing of the wall and scarp where seen, and at several places had been stepped out to form beds for the stones. A trench, B, was dug, cutting in a line at right angles to the contour, but nothing was found unless a bed of lime on a rock bottom 3 feet below the surface at the point where the inferred dotted line cuts the trench. To exhaust the possibilities of the wall being further to the north, taking the direction of