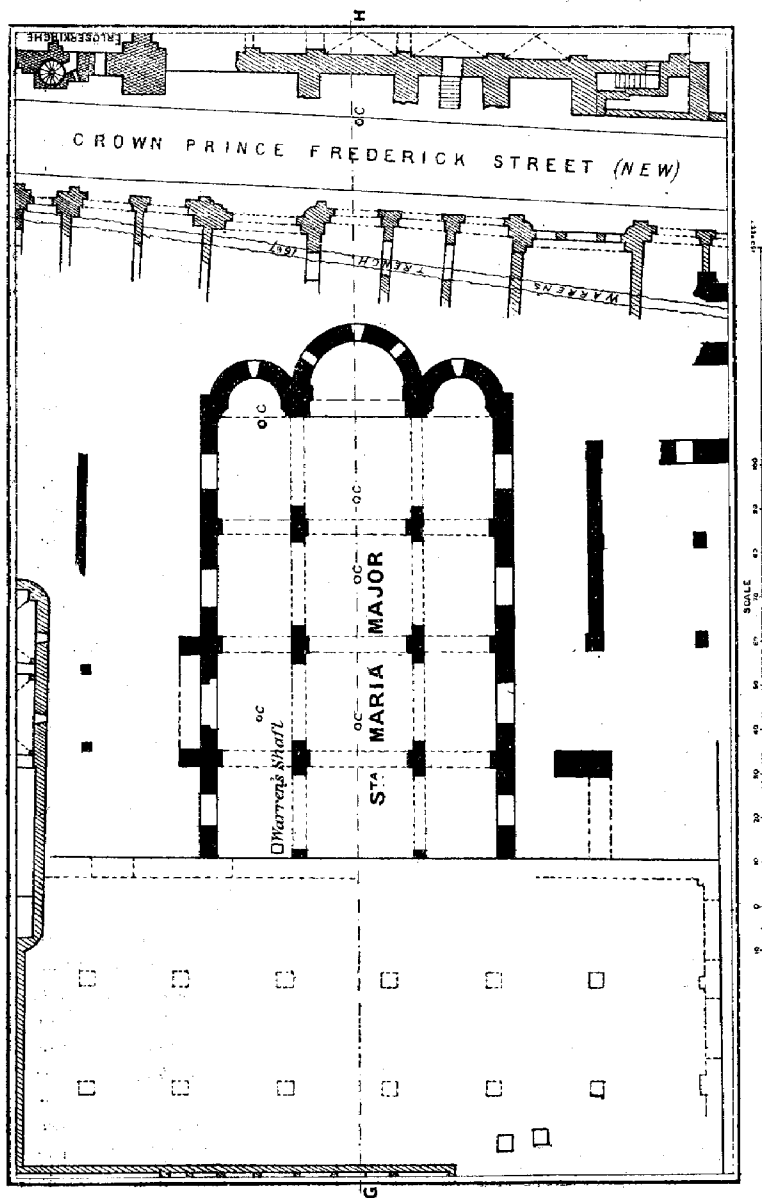


NORTH



CHURCH OF STA. MARIA MAJOR IN MURISTAN, AS RESTORED BY DR. CONRAD SCHICK, FROM RECENTLY DISCOVERED REMAINS.

THE ANCIENT CHURCHES IN THE MURISTAN.¹

By Dr. CONRAD SCHICK.

IN "Notes and News" I have reported changes which are being made in the western part of the Muristan, which belongs to the Greek Convent. The buildings which are to be erected will hopelessly cover up whatever remains of ancient structures may exist beneath the present surface, and I send herewith a plan of a large church, restored from discoveries recently made, which once stood over the large cistern discovered by Sir Charles Warren in 1867.

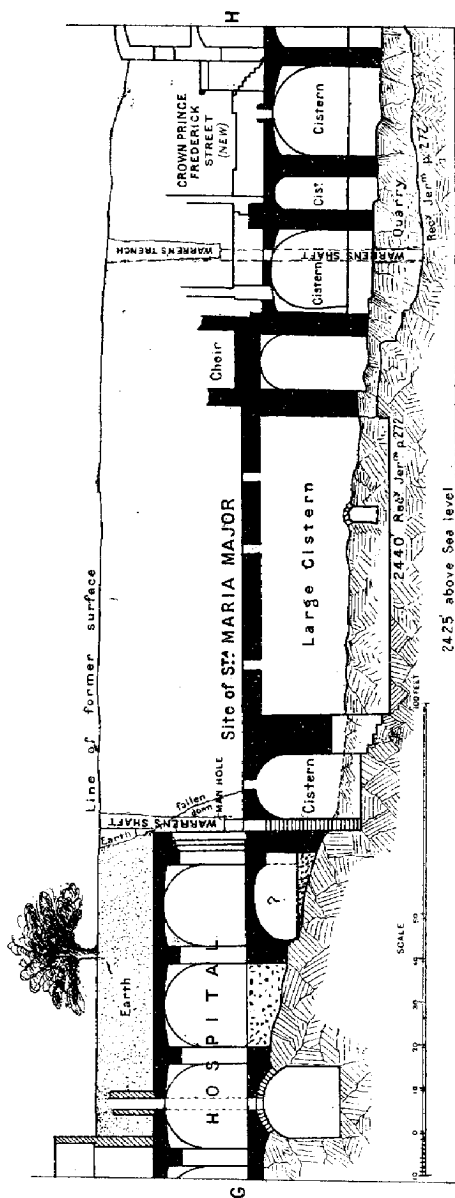
The place contained three churches, two of which have been known for a long time, and the third, or remains of it, were found by the excavations of the Greeks a few years ago. The eastern church, the latest built of the three, has now been rebuilt as the German "Erlöserkirche," and it is not necessary to describe it here. It was the Maria Latina minor, not major, as it has been hitherto considered.

The second or, as it is now proved, the Maria Latina major, was found 25 metres distant south-west of it, and just over the tanks Sir Charles Warren discovered in the year 1867, and described in "The Recovery of Jerusalem," p. 272. Of the southern (smaller) apse, as well as of the large or middle one, two courses of masonry had been preserved, whereas the northern apse had disappeared, and in its place a cistern mouth was found. There were also a few basements of the former piers still *in situ*, as also some parts of the walls, so that the plan of the church could be restored (*see* Plan). Several very fine large carved capitals were also found, not of pillars but of piers, and the best preserved of these may be still seen. Small marble pillars were on the edges of the apses *in situ*. The workmanship of all this was better than on the first mentioned church. In plan and size both churches were very nearly the same. Some other carved stones were also found, similar to those at the northern entrance of the Erlöserkirche, and at a spot indicating that also this church had an entrance at its north side. Under the northern side aisle cisterns were found,

¹ This is part of a larger essay by Dr. Schick on the Muristan and its history, which it is intended to publish subsequently.

but it was not so under the southern aisle, where there seems to have been a crypt in two stories, one above the other. A stair leading down into this crypt has not yet been found. As south of it new foundations were being dug, the workmen came upon a stone sarcophagus, the lid of which is gone, proving that also this part had been a crypt. As the Erlöserkirche and its predecessor had in the south-west corner a bell-tower, so it probably was here, as the very strong piers and the great masonry below (Sir C. Warren's southern little cistern) show.

The third church is the well known Mar Hanna (John the Baptist) in the south-west corner of the place, consisting of a church underground, and over it another church above ground. So it was even in ancient times; it is one of the oldest churches in Jerusalem, much older than the two others mentioned. In the *Quarterly Statement*, 1899, p. 43, is a plan and some sections of the lower church, by Mr. A. C. Dickie, A.R.I.B.A., showing that under its flooring is a kind of crypt. It is clear that once the underground church stood free round about, perhaps with a prolongation towards the west, as the chief entrance door was on the south side. On the side of the present stair at the southern end of the narthex is a triangular-shaped mass of masonry which may have been made by the Crusaders to get a basement for a bell-tower. The church itself was Byzantine, even the upper one, which at a later period was destroyed and again rebuilt. That there were three churches on the place, each with a bell-tower (hence also Mar Hanna had one) is proved by a drawing made about 1150, and published in the "*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*," 1891, p. 137, showing in one line, beside the hospital, the three churches—Ecclesia St. John, Ecclesia Maria ad Latinam major, and Ecclesia Maria ad Latinam minor, each with a bell-tower.



SECTION ALONG G.H.