

Gazæorum.' There is a small mosque in the village, which may occupy the site of the old temple. (See Rel. Pal., p. 638).

'Peopled by 250 inhabitants, it occupies an oblong valley, well cultivated, and surrounded by high sand-dunes, which cause a great heat. It is a little oasis, incessantly menaced by moving sand-hills, which surround it on every side, and would engulf it were it not for the continued struggle of man to arrest their progress.'—Guérin, 'Judea,' ii. 176.

3. Deir el Belah (B x).—A large mud village on flat ground, with wells and a small tower in the village. To the west is a grove of date-palms, whence the place is named. The small mosque is built over a former chapel. (See Section B.) This place is perhaps the mediæval Darum (explained by Jaques de Vitry to mean 'Greek house'—Deir er Rûm), which was fortified by King Amalric with four corner towers (Will. of Tyre); Marino Sanuto places it south of Gaza; Geoffrey de Vinsauf (1192 A.D.) makes it near the sea (Itin. Ric. bk. v., ch. xxxix.), and north of the Egyptian border (ch. xii.). It was taken by Richard Lion-Heart, and had then seventeen towers and a ditch. The place is now the See of a Greek Bishop resident in Jerusalem, and its former name is stated by the inhabitants to have been Deir Mâr Jirius, 'Monastery of St. George.' The mosque is now called el Khûdr, or St. George. The gate of Gaza, on the road leading towards the village, was called Bâb ed Dârûn. (See Section B.) The village had Christian inhabitants some thirty years ago.

4. Deir Sineid (E v).—A moderate-sized mud village with wells, gardens, and a pond.

5. Ghûzzeh—GAZA (O w).—The capital of the district; is a town principally of mud houses, but with mosques and other buildings well built of stone. It stands on an isolated hill in the plain, rising 180 feet above the sea, and some 100 feet above the surrounding flat ground. The place is divided into four Hâret, or quarters, occupying about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile either way. (1) Hâret ed Deraj, on the west, occupies the west slope and the top of the hill; (2) Hâret et Tufen is on the flat ground to the north; (3) Hâret es Sejjiyeh, on the east, is also on the lower ground, and built of mud; (4) Hâret ez Zeitûn, on the south, extends down the sides of the mound.

There are two principal mosques, besides others smaller. The one on the hill in the middle of the town (Jâmiâ el Kebîr) is an ancient

when English sailors were unable to bring food to the starving army. It is true that the sand has covered a great deal of the ruins, but the existence of a *creek* is rendered, I think, impossible by the unbroken line of cliff, at the foot of which low reefs run out into the sea.

'Next to the question of the Maiumas comes that of the sacred lake of Derceto, but of this we could find no traces, unless the name of the modern village north of the ruins el Jûra, "the hollow"—generally applied to an artificial reservoir or pond—be supposed to preserve a tradition of the site. The village itself stands pretty high, but there is a low tract full of beautiful gardens between the ruins and the houses.'—'Quarterly Statement,' 1875, pp. 152—155.

Ascalon has also been visited and described by Tobler, Dr. Porter, Barclay ("City of the Great King"), Herr Schick, and Herr Guthe. The last writer, in a description of the place (published in the 'Zeitschrift' of the German Palestine Exploration Association), thus speaks of the western wall and the bay:

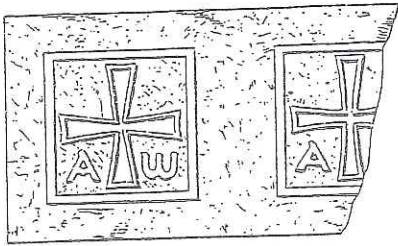
'The western wall, the "string of the bow," follows the line of rocks exactly, and is therefore indented with little bays. It is about 1,200 feet long; at its opposite ends, *i.e.*, at the south-west and north-west corners of the town, there are extensive ruins of fortifications that were undoubtedly intended for the protection of the coast. The "sea-gate" or "*porta maris*," mentioned by William of Tyre, is nearly in the middle of the western wall. The ground reaches its lowest point near the south-western corner. At this place a little bay stretches into the city; it somewhat resembles a moderate-sized basin. In spite of the drifting sand, the ground here is even now but little higher than the level of the sea. This bay in old times was most assuredly a dock or harbour within the walls; the fortifications on either side of it were particularly strong. A great number of solid columns of grey granite were laid like beams across the thickness of the fortifications; when the walls fell into ruins, many of them tumbled upon the beach, where they now lie, and are washed by the waves of the sea; the rest are buried under the *débris* of the masonry. This use of the columns is not only to be seen near the harbour, but also in other parts of the fortifications of Ascalon. Guérin says that those built in columns seemed from a distance like loopholes with the muzzles of the cannon peeping out. Of course the columns originally belonged to the grand halls and temples of ancient Ascalon. The Saracens first, and then the Crusaders, used the pillars and stones of the old buildings for the defence of the city without a thought about their historical or artistic value, a state of affairs that Guérin remarked had also obtained at Cæsarea. From this we perceive that the ruins of the walls of Ascalon which now exist are the remains of the fortifications built by the Saracens and Crusaders.'

Beit Hanun (D v).

Among the gardens of this village Guérin observed indications of ancient constructions in the shape of cut stones, fragments of columns, and bases.

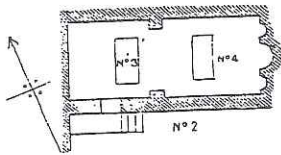
Deir el Belah (B x).—The mosque in the village is called Jâmiâ el Khüdr, and stands, traditionally, on the site of a large monastery. The building was entered from a courtyard on the south. It proved to be a Christian chapel, 5 paces north and south

by 11 paces east and west, on a line 112° west. On the north, and on the south wall is a buttress. On the east are three apses, the side ones being mere niches. One of the steps from the

N^o 3

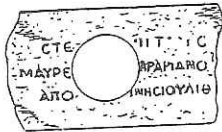
door in the south wall has on it remains of a Greek inscription. On the floor of the chapel is a slab, now broken. It appears to have been a tombstone, 6 feet long by 2 feet 6 inches high, having on it two Maltese crosses, each with the letters A and Ω.

In the wall of the court pillar-shafts of marble, and a bit of well-moulded cornice have been built in. There are also two Greek inscriptions, one on the floor of the chapel near the east



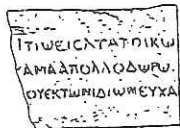
end, one on a slab now used on a well in the courtyard; this second has a hole cut through the slab, 10 inches diameter, obliterating part of the inscription. There is a modern masonry cenotaph, placed

north and south, in the middle of the chapel, said to be the tomb of Mâr Jirjis or el Khûdr, both names for St. George.



No. 1, on the interior, reads as below, the slab being 25 inches by 18 inches. The letters are $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, the three lines 9 inches high.

The second slab measures 31 inches by 18. The letters are the same size as on the first.



In the village there are pillar-shafts of white marble built up into walls, or lying about. One of them has a twisted form, like some of the mediæval pillars in the Haram at Jerusalem.

Visited 28th April, 1875.

Ghūzzeh (D w).—The principal archæological points of interest are the Jâmiâ el Kebîr, Bâb ed Dârûn, and Meidân ez Zeid. Green mounds extend round the houses on the hill, and seem to indicate the ruins of former fortifications. These show probably the site of the walls of Crusading Gaza.