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The Fifth Season of Excavations at Beth She'arim, 1953

Preliminary Report

by N. Avigad

The excavations of the Society, interrupted in 1940, were resumed in a campaign which lasted from August 11th to September 8th, 1953. What was presumed to be the remains of a city-gate in the NW slope of the city hill was revealed as the gate from a street to a complex of buildings, including two rooms containing an oil press. The buildings were occupied during three phases of settlement; (a) the first half of the IV cent. C. E. (b) the second half of the same century (c) the VI cent. and the Arabic period.

Three catacombs were cleared wholly or in part at the bottom of the same slope.

Catacomb 12 consisted of a court, from which doors gave access to four burial halls (A—D) each in a different direction. The two largest halls were A and B. In *Hall A* two consecutive rooms formed a big central hall, with benches, but no burials, and with five tomb-chambers. *Hall A* was distinguished by spaciousness and a reduced number of burials. It was apparently made early and was in use for a short time. The principal Aramaic inscription refers to the burial of Sime'on the son of Yohanan and concludes with a curse "may he die of an evil end" on whosoever shall disturb the burial.—*Hall B* had a similarly symmetrical plan with three rooms in a row. This hall was much more crowded, with up to four tombs under one arcosolium. It was apparently used for the burial of Jews from Syria and Phoenicia, as is attested by the inscriptions, mostly in Greek. The other halls, C and D, are both smaller and poorer in execution. All four halls seem to belong to the end of the III and the early IV century.

Catacomb 13 consists of a corridor, with nine halls issuing from it; only two of these were cleared this season. The burials are more crowded and the measurements more modest. Here again the buried seem to have come from Syria; one inscription mentions an archisynagogos of Berytus; another, in Hebrew, refers to Yudan son of Levi; it contains the word יָד which is interpreted as "bedding" or as a verbal form "to set". This catacomb belongs to the same period as No. 12, but is slightly later in date.

Catacomb 14, which was only preliminarily explored, differs from the others in plan and façade. Its façade consists of three masonry arches (the one in the centre being higher than the rest) applied to a rock-cut face. The two entrances cut in the rock were earlier than the façade. Inside the catacomb was a long hall continued by another room and one side room. Numerous rock-cut niches and loculi served apparently as receptacles for bones. In the innermost room was a double tomb sunk in the floor, surrounded by a masonry wall and covered with slabs. Two of the graves were defined as those of Rabbis Simeon and Gamaliel. The evident veneration of these graves, expressed in the desire to be buried as close to them as possible, have given rise to the hypothesis that this catacomb was that of the Patriarchal house. Its origin belongs to the end of the second century; the arcaded façade was added in the first half of the third.

The Greek Inscriptions Found at Beth She'arim in 1953

by M. Schwabe

In Catacombs 12-13 47 inscriptions were found, 4 in Hebrew or Aramaic, all the remainder in Greek. The general tenor and character of the new inscriptions are the same as those previously found: they design the persons buried with their patronymica, titles and places of origin; often are also found warnings to would-be tomb-robbers. All are in prose. The author publishes here nine inscriptions.

Cat. 12, Room I: No. 202 Θάρσι / Καλιόπη ματρώνα / οὐδὶς ἀθάνα /
τος, ἢ / ἀπὸ Βίβλου "Be of good cheer, Calliope the matron, no one is
immortal. She is from Byblos"

No. 203 Ἀψις / Καλιόπης / Βιβλί / ας, ματρώ / νης
"The apsis of Calliope from Byblos, the matron."

Both texts refer to the same person. Calliope is a Greek name so far unique among Jews. The title "matron" was obviously an honorific appellation of the deceased and not only a mark of age. The "apsis" means here arcosolium, but cf. Nos. 207-8 below.

Hall B, IV: No. 207: Ἀψις / Αἰδεσίου / γερουειάρχου (= γερου-

σειάροχου) / Ἀντιοχέως. The ligature EI=CEI occurs elsewhere in Beth She'arim.

"The tomb-chamber of Aidesios, gerusiarch / of Antioch".

As this inscription is written at the entrance to a tomb-chamber, and in conjunction with No. 208, this shows that it refers to the whole room. The title indicates that Aidesios was the head of all the councils of seniors who were in the Jewish community of Antioch. The absence of a patronymicon shows that he was a well known and important personage.

No. 209 Αἰδέσις "Aidesios" — -ις for -ιος is common in the Talmud.

The name is common in Palestine, and refers here to the particular tomb of this personage.

No. 208 Εἰσὶν ἐν τῇ ἅ / ψιδι κρηπῖ / δεσ ἕξ ς / διαφέρου / σαι Αἰδεσίω

"In the apsis are six 6 *crepidae* belonging to Aidesios"

Here is clear proof that ἅψις refers to the whole room; the word κρηπῖς usually meaning "boot" or "foundation" is here used in the new sense "tomb". Three other inscriptions refer to the family members of Aidesios:

No. 210 Ἡσύχις Hesychios i. e. Noah

No. 211 Μάγ/ος Magnus

No. 212 Κυρίλλα Kyrilla

Cat. 13, A II: No. 225 is of special interest:

Ὅς ἐὰν μεταθῆ ταύτην, ὃς ἐπαντιλάμενος / ζωποίησε (=ζωοποιήσει)
τοὺς νεκρούς, / αὐτὸς κρινε (=κρινεῖ)

"Whoever shall change the place of her (i. e. the deceased buried there), He who raises and revives the dead, He himself shall judge (him)".

The inscription is written in correct literary Greek and bears close resemblance to the LXX version of IV Kings v, 7 and still more to the Gospel of John v, 21. The last line reflects Psalms IX, 9.

μετατιθέναι occurs in the same sense in the famous Διάταγμα Κασσαρος found in Palestine. The text expresses belief in the resurrection of the dead; the Deity is referred to obliquely.

All these inscriptions belong to the third and the first half of the fourth century. Among the other texts there is a remarkable list of Syrian and Phoenician city names, including a man from Yahmur (Ἰαμουρίτης) and one from Phaene in the Trachonitis (Φαινήςσιος). Possibly the Beth She'arim necropolis was divided into groups by diasporas.

The Excavation of the Tumuli West of Jerusalem

(Preliminary Report of the Two Seasons 1953)

by Ruth Amiran

The problem of this group of tumuli has attracted the attention of archaeologists since the beginning of explorations in Palestine, but except for a trial dig in 1923 by W. F. Albright, who cut a diagonal trench

in tumulus No. 2 without reaching virgin soil and who had to stop work after 5 days, neither survey nor excavation work had been undertaken since the days of the PEF.

During the two seasons conducted by the writer on behalf of the Israel Exploration Society and the Department of Antiquities, a systematic survey and mapping of the area, the thorough exploration of one tumulus (No. 5) and partial digs in two more (Nos. 4 and 6) were carried out.

The result of the survey was the mapping of 19 tumuli distributed in three areas west of Jerusalem and of a single one, situated near Harel in the Shephela.

The excavation of tumulus No. 5, which was cleared completely, led to the following results: Albright's finding that the tumuli consist of heaps of stones without stratification was confirmed. Underneath this filling, a structure was found, containing a stone-terrace and a pit (0.90 m. deep and filled with earth, mixed with ashes and charcoal). Most of the sherds were found in the vicinity of this structure, which may have served as a high-place. The whole area of this tumulus was found to be enclosed within a polygonal ring-wall of 17 straight segments, through which (in the west and east) steps led into the interior. All the potsherds found belong to the second half of the 8th or to the 7th century B. C. (=II c, and partly II b, of Beth Shemesh, A 2 of Tell Beit Mirsim).

The excavation of tumulus No. 6 proved again that these stone-heaps do not cover any tombs. Here, no ring-wall was found, but two almost parallel walls which traverse the elliptic tumulus, and on top of them a small paved floor. These structures as well as the potsherds found here resemble those in tumulus No. 5.

The sounding in the large tumulus No. 4 (9 m. high and 42 m. diameter) disclosed a ring-wall of exactly the same type as that found in tumulus No. 5. Sherds found here were plentiful and belong again to the same period (Iron Age II).

Although the work completed during these two seasons has led to some definite conclusions, there still remains the question why these places of worship—if indeed they were such—were covered with monumental stone-heaps, which are so conspicuous in this particular area.

Two Chalcolithic Vessels

by J. Kaplan

The first intact vessel defined by the author as a "churn" (Fig. 1, p. 61) was discovered at el-Mughar near Gedera in 1945. In 1950 he found another one while excavating a Ghassulian settlement at Jammain, Tel-Aviv (Fig. 2, *ib.*). Fragments of similar vessels have been found before at Tuleilat Ghassul and in the Wadi Ghazzeah, but were not correctly recognized by the excavators. Other fragments turned up at Umm el

Qatafah, at Tell Far'a near Nablus and in other sites. Obviously it was a vessel widely used at the Ghassulian stage. Observations amongst the fellahin and the Beduins, both of whom use a goatskin for churning (cf. G. Dalman: *Arbeit und Sitte*, V, Pl. 40) and the similarity in shape (Fig. 3, p. 63) have led the author to suggest that this pottery vessel was used for churning milk.

Another vessel of the Ghassulian period is called a "bird vase" (vase en forme d'oiseau); it was discovered first at Ghassul and later on at Affuleh. This vessel has probably an immediate forebear in a goatskin (Fig. 4, p. 64). It appears highly probable that this vessel is modelled on a shepherd's water-bottle made of lambskin or the skin of a kid, by folding the skin broadwise and sewing the edges.

The clay spoons discovered mainly in the Ghassulian period are doubtless imitations of wooden spoons. We have here an additional proof of the theory that all clay utensils originated as imitations of objects made of animal or vegetable matter, such as gourds, osiers, goatskins etc.

Sevel-Sablum

by P. Artzi

The Mari documents contain an exact parallel to this political term. This fact is evidence of the independent existence of this institution among the various West-Semitic kingdoms in the age of the Patriarchs; and from them it passed on to the Israelite tribes. On this basis we may assume the transmission of other institutions which should be examined in this respect, such as the commander: *dawidum* etc. The view of Zimmern as regards the influence of *zabālu* and its history on the Biblical institution can no longer be maintained.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Prehistoric Survey of the Carmel

by I. Olamy

In the course of this survey the caves at Farsh el 'Iraq 7 kms S of Haifa were explored and the material found there collected and classified. Five caves were found: A and B are big connected caves (A: 16 by 8 m, B: 20 by 11); a two-storeyed cave (C) at the entrance of which were ancient marks made with a three-pronged tool; the roof of cave D had fallen-in; on the terrace in front of it much breccia was found. 134 flints of the Levallois-Mousterian type consisting of 70 implements (10 cores, 19 points, 30 knives and blades) and 64 flakes were collected (l. c. Fig. 4, p. 72). In the fifth cave (E) no flints were found.

Beth-Shan Valley

by N. Zori

This survey extended from the Roman bridge at Jisr el Majami' till the State boundary south of Tirat Zvi; however here only the northern section of this area (down to the Beth-Shan — 'Ain Harod River) is given. The total results of the Survey were: Early sites (Neolithic-Chalcolithic to Israelite inclusive) 29 sites; Hellenistic and later 28 sites (of these 18 belong to both periods). Twenty sites are discussed in detail: Khan el Jisr-EAr; Quarantine Station-Chalc., EAr; Tell esh Shamdin-Chalc., EB, MB, LB, IA 1, Pers., EAr.; Tell ez Zanbaqiye East—EB IV, MB II, IA 1; Tell ez Zanbaqiyeh West—EB, IA 1 and 2, Hell., Byz., EAr.; Hadid-Chalc.; "Mine Hill" (202244) — EB I—III, Chalc.; Munhata — Palaeolith., Neolith., Chalc., EB, Byz., EAr.; Kh. el Mazar — Byz., EAr.; Pipe line (203222)—Chalc.; Tell Musa—Chalc., EB I, MB II, LB, IA 2, EAr.; Beth Yosef—Roman milestones, EB IV; Zur Razineh — Chalc., EB II; Tell Isma'il A—Byz., EAr.; Tell Isma'il B — Chalc., EB, IA 1 and 2, Byz., EAr.; Tell Hamud, nil; Sheikh Saleh—Neolithic or Chalc., LB, IA 1 and 2, Pers., Byz., EAr.; Tell Barta'a—EB, MB II, IA 2.; Kh. es Suda — flints; Yarmukian pottery (Middle and Late Neolithic — no Chalc.); MB II, IA 1-2, E Ar.

MISCELLANEOUS

A further note on the "Double bowl" found at Tel-Aviv — With reference to the articles of Ruth Amiran and M. Dothan in this *Bulletin*, XVII, Nos. 3-4, J. Kaplan defends his view that the double bowl was a lamp, as expressed by him in the *Bulletin*, XVI, 3-4.

A rare coin of Agrippa II — A. Kindler adds to the article of the late Stella Ben-Dor on this subject the description of this type of coin from his collection, in which the letters OΔIMT (= Domitianus) can be made out. The date of the coin should be corrected to 85/6.

The Report on the Activities of the Society includes a summary of the papers read at the Eighth Archaeological Convention at Beth Yerah in 1952 (cf. *Israel Exploration Journal*, 2, 1952, pp. 253-4), this is followed by a *Financial Report* for 1951-53.