

SUMMARIES

THE FIRST SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS OF A PALAEOLITHIC
SITE NEAR TELL 'UBEIDIYA IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

by M. STEKELIS

The excavations revealed an open-air occupation site of the Lower Pleistocene Age, well founded on geological, palaeontological and archaeological evidence. This site is contemporary with old Pleistocene tool-maker's deposits of Algeria and East Africa. The Jordan Valley site, however, reveals the oldest cultural assemblage ever found in Israel and in the Near East.

HEBREW OSTRACA FROM MESAD HASHAVYAHU

by J. NAVEH

The full text of this article was published in *Israel Exploration Journal*, 10, 1960, pp. 129-139.

NABATEAN INSCRIPTIONS FROM 'AVDAT

by A. NEGEV

In the clearance of this city about twenty inscriptions in Nabatean were found, which can be divided into three classes: (a) votive inscriptions; (b) incisions on pottery; (c) inscriptions on stone objects. The inscriptions published in this first part read:

1. 'bdt wps' l wš'wdt bny ħrtt
2. [dnh tytr]' dy qrb š'yw [br... 'l hyy ħrtt] / [mlk nb't]w rĥm 'mh
w'[ħth šqylt mlkt nb'tw]
- 3a. [ħr]t / [šl]m 3b. šntm
4. nyw
5. dkrwn ṭb wšlm / lhryšw br / $\overset{\cdot}{P}$ [...] ' šlm
_b
6. [ʔw] šw br br 'n[mw]
- 7a. dnh skr' / dy qrb
- 7b. dnh drt'
- 7c. šim
8. dnh skr' dy/bn' grmw whbrwhy / šnt XVIII lmr'n' rb[ʔl] / dy 'hyy
wšyzb ['mh] (18 of Rabel II — A.D. 88/89).
- 9b. whbrwhy / bny swrt' 'rt /XXVIII šnt (A.D. 98/99).

The inscriptions of class (a) belong all to the reign of King Aretas IV (9 B.C.—A.D. 40), during whose reign the city expanded, the acropolis was built and a temple was erected. In one of these inscriptions a dedication of a portico(?) is mentioned, probably of a temple; in another three sons of Aretas are referred to.

Of great interest is the last mentioned group. These inscriptions are engraved on large stone objects, presumably libation altars. Of these inscriptions we learn that between the 18th and the 28th year of the reign of King Rabel II (A.D. 88/89–98/99), dams were constructed in the tributary valley of Naḥal 'Avdat. The Aramaic word denoting 'dam' is here used for the first time in the Nabatean language. We learn that these dams were constructed by a certain Garmo and his religious confraternity(?), or a military(?) unit, named here *Bnei Sarutah*.

In the opinion of the author the military camp, north of the Nabatean city of 'Avdat, should not be dated later than in the reign of Rabel II. With all probability the commanders and soldiers of this camp were responsible for the construction of the dams.

These inscriptions are the first direct piece of evidence that at least a portion of the agricultural remains in the central Negev should be attributed to the Nabateans. They may serve as a more solid basis for the chronology of the different periods of ancient agriculture in this area.

The full text of this article will appear in a forthcoming number of the *Israel Exploration Journal*.

A HEBREW INSCRIPTION ON AN OSSUARY

by N. AVIGAD

On the cover of an ossuary now in the American Colony (Jerusalem, Jordan) the following is incised: *Mrym ʾḥwty / blbdʾ* "Miriam my sister alone" and in continuation: *mryh bt yhwḥnn* "Maria the daughter of Yehohanan".

A HEBREW OSTRACON FROM BETH-SHEAN

by N. TSORI

The ostrakon was found on the southern slope of the tell; it was incised with two lines: in the first line the letter *l* could be read, in the second *byt*; a fourth letter could not be deciphered. The ostrakon seems to belong to the eighth–seventh century B.C.

THE ROMAN THEATRE AT BETH-SHEAN

by S. APPLEBAUM

The first season of excavations in this area, undertaken on behalf of the Landscape and Antiquities Committee and the Department of Antiquities, led to the clearance of fifteen rows of seats below the *praecinctio*, with pits for the supports of the *velum* and of the *scaenae frons*, the centre of which had an ornamental gate with a horizontal lintel. The line of the *proscenium* was established; on its western side was found an ornamental pillar of the third cent. A.D. On the south side the theatre was surrounded by an arched portico; near its northern end was a small building, perhaps a temple. It seems that the theatre was built in the late second or early third cent., and that it was not long in use as such. Among the various finds was a fragmentary inscription dedicated by the *boule* and *demos* to a provincial governor and 143 coins.

A TOMB FROM THE FOURTH CENTURY A.D. IN ḤELEŞ

by L. Y. RAHMANI

The tomb consists of a hall and five side chambers; the finds included ribbed amphoras, glass vessels and metal fragments. One of the amphoras was inscribed Παλμου "of Palmas". The pottery and other finds, as well as the inscription, point to a date at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth cent. A.D.

A CASEMATE WALL AT EZION-GEBER

by Z. MASHAL

The author suggests on the basis of material published by Prof. N. Glueck in his recent book: *Rivers in the Desert* that the foundry at Ezion-Geber I was surrounded by a small casemate wall, which dated to the time of Solomon. The larger enclosure of Ezion-Geber II with its double gate belongs to the 9th cent. B.C.

מָחֹר = HARBOUR

by Y. KUTSCHER

In an article published 24 years ago, the present writer showed that the meaning of מָחֹר in Biblical Hebrew, the Targumim etc. is 'harbour'. On the basis of place-names he assumed that the word was still in use in Judaea during the first centuries A.D. This assumption has been proved right by one of the Bar-Koseba letters, and also by מָחֹר עֵגְלָתִין which occurs in a Nabatean document found among the DSS, which seems to mean 'harbour of עֵגְלָתִין' = Beth Aglaim = ancient Gaza.

בַּת IN THE BIBLE — חֲבִית IN THE MISHNAH

by A. BENDAVID

The Biblical expression *bath* is occasionally translated *ḥabith* in the Peshitta to Isaiah v, 10. In the Mishnah *ḥabith* is frequently used to designate the measure and not the vessel. As there were many kinds of such measures, one of the *ḥabiyoth* could be the descendant of the Biblical *bath*. The capacity of this measure can be defined in several ways: 1. from the archaeological finds — 22 litres (Albright) or 23 (Barrois); 2. from the measure of the *bath* and the cubit in Solomon's temple. If we assume that the laver was cylindrical, and its capacity was calculated not according to the Egyptian measure ($\pi = 3\frac{1}{7}$) but according to the Babylonian ($\pi = 3$ and that the cubit was also not Egyptian (52.5 cm.) but Babylonian (± 50 cm.) we arrive at a *bath* of 23 litres. If we calculate the proportion between the *seah* and the cubit of the Tannaïtes, viz. the Egyptian-Hellenistic cubit (52.5 cm.) and the *seah* of Sepphoris (10.91 litres) we arrive at a *ḥabith* of 21.82 litres, which corresponds roughly to the Biblical *bath*.

A JEWISH INSCRIPTION FROM BERENIKE, CYRENAICA

by S. APPLEBAUM

The author discusses a Greek inscription of the Jewish community of Berenike (Benghazi), Cyrenaica, found in 1938 but since lost. It was first published by Caputo who utilized observations by the present writer.

The stone, dated to the reign of Nero (A.D. 56), commemorates the rebuilding or repair of the Berenike synagogue; it is the third known Greek inscription of the early Roman period set up by this community. The three are compared, and the proper names studied. It is concluded that the names of the archons and other contributors recorded reflect a distinct assimilation to the Cyrenaican onomasticon, and possibly a degree of democracy, as the number of archons has grown compared to those recorded on the previous inscriptions. Further, the *politeuma* is no longer referred to, the *synagogue* being mentioned instead; a change of constitution is thus possible.

THE ROMAN ROAD FROM LEGIO TO SEPPHORIS

by M. HECKER

A recent survey has led to the clarification of the exact route of this Roman road; of its 16 miles thirteen milestones have been found. It is now clear that the road was made in the 14th year of Hadrian (A.D. 130) probably in connection with the emperor's visit to the provincia Judaea, and not in connection with the Bar-Kokhba war, as has previously been assumed.