

The Siloam Inscription, The Gezer Calendar
 and the Ophel Ostrakon

by H. TORCZYNER

Certain passages in these well known inscriptions are given a new interpretation.

In the *Siloam inscription* the word בעור occurring in lines 1 and 2 was hitherto interpreted in two different ways: in line 1 as "while" and in line 2 as "whilst yet". The author admits that although both meanings of the word occur in the Bible, here the same meaning "whilst yet" has to be given to both. Lines 1 and 2 have therefore to be reconstructed as follows:

[תמה] הנקבה / וזה היה דבר הנקבה / בעור [אמה לנגע]

גרזן אש אל רעו יבעור שלש אמות להנק[ב נשמ]ע קל אש ק

The word ים in the third line, usually translated as 'day' is interpreted as ים = sea, gathering of waters, pool, and probably refers to the stream of water inside the tunnel.

The word ירחו in the *Gezer calendar* does not mean 'two months' but is explained as forming part of a status constructus.

The text of the *Ophel ostrakon* is given the following reading:

1. ית[ז]קיהו בן קריה. בשעש — בקיהו

2. אחיהו בן השרק

3. . . . יהו בן קרץ בעמק יהו[שפט]

It is thus clear that the ostrakon contains not only names of persons but fixes place-names for various people. It may possibly be a list assigning places, perhaps for defence purposes in war time.

Remarks on the Study of the early "Paytanim" for Information
 on the History of Palestine

by S. KLEIN

The author contends that it is a mistake to search in early Hebrew Paytanim allusions to their own period. These poets took their references from Aggadic Midrashim, which the Piyut replaced in the synagogues in Byzantine times. It follows that the first duty of the editors of Piyutim is to ascertain the *Midrashic sources* of the Piyut. The author supports his view by a commentary on various passages of Yannai, Kallir and Samuel.

A Greco-Jewish Epigram from Beth Shearim

(Continued from BJPES VI, 3-4, 1939)

by M. SCHWABE

The v. 1, which is typical, contains metrical irregularities caused by the insertion of three names. The σοφία emphasized in v. 2 has parallels in Greek epigrams, especially in those from the Hellenized East. Σοφία means here knowledge of literature, poetry and rhetorics, of medicine or of law. In the Bible and in other Jewish texts σοφία is compared to a fruit-tree (Gen. 2, 9; Sira 6, 19 sq; 1, 20). The expression πᾶσα σοφία is also Jewish (Sira 1, 1; 19, 20; NT Act. Ap. 7, 22, Eph 1, 7 sq.). Accordingly, the Greek reader would find in this verse Greek affinities, whereas a Jew was likely to note the Jewish ones. That is what the author intended. V. 3. and the first half of v. 4 belong to the usual topoi of sepulchral epigrams. The metrical error in ἀκαχημένους shows the authors thorough knowledge of Homer. The unusual mention of the place name in connexion with the pronomen possessivum reflexivum, ἐ[ν] ἑοῖς Β]εσάθ[οις] can be explained by a Homeric reminiscence: the much used ἐν μεγάροισιν appears there as a rule with a pronoun — a reflexive pronoun e.g. in ο 354 (οἷς ἐν μεγάροισιν). The sound-equivalent usual among the Jews in proper nouns has here been transferred to a place name. Hades is the usual equivalent for the underworld in the LXX. The σὺν πολλοῖσιν ἑοῖς in v. 6 is apparently without parallel in Greek funerary epigrams. Jews want to be buried near their parents. Σὺν πολλοῖσιν ἑοῖς has its parallel in the Jerusalem Talmud Kil. 32b. The Jewish poet is not troubled by the Μοῖρα. His orthography is to a certain extent vulgar and his knowledge of literature in general seems incomplete. The date of the inscription may be established by comparison with the numerous inscriptions published by Prof. Welles in *Gerasa*. The form of the letters points to a date in the first half of the 3rd century A.D. This date agrees with the archaeological evidence of the site. Our epigram shows the considerable Hellenization not only of this family but of Beth Shearim in general. The author of this inscription was a local poet. — All that seems individual in this epigram, is of Jewish inspiration.

The Beginnings of the Jewish Community in Jerusalem after the Arab Conquest

by S. ASSAF

The author publishes one of the Cairo Genizah fragments, now at Cambridge. The fragment dates from the 10th century; it is written in Arabic, but in Hebrew script. It contains interesting information about the re-settling of Jews in Jerusalem in the days of the Caliph Omar. According to this source the Temple site was well known to the conquerors; they ignored, however, the position of the Holy Rock (eṣ-Ṣakhra) and enquired about it from the elders of the Jews. "And one of the Jewish rabbis pointed out to him the boundaries of the site till it was found". It appears from this document that — after negotiations with the Jewish and Christian communities — Omar permitted the Jews to settle in Jerusalem; the new settlers were restricted to seventy families, who came from Tiberias and vicinity. They chose as their quarter the southern part of the city near the Temple mount.

The Samaritan Script in the Gaonic Literature

by I. BEN-ZEVI

The first European explorer of the Samaritan literature, Joseph Scaliger (1583), was preceded by Jewish explorers, one of them being Rabbi Moshe Bassola, who reproduces in his itinerary (1522-3) the Samaritan alphabet (this was published recently by I. Ben-Zevi, *Library of Palestinology of JPES* XI, pl. 1).

In the present article the author publishes the Samaritan alphabet as sketched in one of the Gaonic responsa of Rabbi Hai Gaon of the 11th century. It was found in the Geniza and is preserved in Cambridge. The Alphabet, reproduced in the article, is much more similar to the cursive script than to the majuscula of the Samaritans. The author concludes that already as early as the 11th century Jewish explorers were interested in important historical problems, and, looking for proofs for their ideas, were faced with the necessity to study their surroundings. This was the starting point for scientific explorations of the history of the Samaritans, and particularly of their script, thus preceding by several centuries the Christian explorers.

The Sharon on the Sea — Coast

by A. J. BRAWER

Contrary to the opinion of Mr. J. Waitz (BASOR VI, pp. 132 ff.) the author maintains that *Sharon* was originally a synonym of מישור ("plain", cf. Is. LV, 10 and also Cant. II, 1).

It appears as a proper name in ancient literature and in the Eshmunazar inscription, where it applies to the region from Jaffa to Dor. *Sharon* (Mesha inscription and I Chr. V, 16) is a town in Transjordan.

Summary of the Society's Activities in 1939

1. **Bulletin.** The increase in the scope of our quarterly, which began last year, has been maintained this year, inspite of the modest means at our disposal.

2. **Library of Palestinology.** This year two volumes appeared in this series: VII. M. Narkiss, *The Coins of Palestine*, Part 2; VIII. S. Yeivin, *The History of the Jewish Script*. Vol. IX: H. Torczyner, *The Lachish Documents* is to be published shortly.

3. **The excavations at Beth Shearim.** The third excavation campaign, directed this time also by Dr. B. Maisler, came to an end in February 1939. This season brought the discovery of a *Synagogue*, the earliest and biggest of all found so far in Palestine. An additional catacomb (the eleventh) was also found, as well as the remains of a splendid *Mausoleum* erected in the grounds of the cemetery. In the debris near the mausoleum were found fragments of the epigram dealt with by Prof. M. Schwabe.

This autumn the surface of the tell and the cemetery area were closely scrutinized. The new campaign is expected to begin shortly.

4. The archaeologists of the Society made **surface explorations** of various areas in Galilee and in Sharon.

5. A number of **lectures** were given on behalf of the Society at Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and Natania.

6. **The activities of the Society in England and France.** In connexion with Dr. B. Maisler's visit to London a *Beth Shearim Exhibition* was held at the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London; the exhibition was opened by Sir Charles Marston on April 26th. After Sir Charles, speeches were made by Chief Rabbi Dr. J. Hertz, Dr. B. Maisler, Rev. M. Adler and Prof. A. Yahuda. The opening was very well attended. Letters of congratulations and messages regretting their unavoidable absence were received from the Colonial Secretary, Mr. James de Rothschild, Viscount Samuel, and others. In May Dr. Maisler lectured at the Jewish Historical Society, the Scopus Club, the Anglo-Palestinian Club and the Tarbut Association.

As a result of these activities a branch of the Society was formed at London under the presidency of Chief Rabbi J. Hertz. The members of the Committee are: Rev. M. Adler, D. S. O. (Chairman), Prof. N. Bentwich, Prof. S. Brodetzki, Canon H. Danby, Prof. S. Krauss, A. Hyamson, O. B. E., Sir Charles Marston, Dr. Cecil Roth, Leon Simon, C. B. (Treasurer), and Prof. A. S. Yahuda. Mr. Z. Schwabe consented to act as Secretary. At its first meeting the Committee undertook to raise a fund for the future Beth Shearim campaigns, which are intended to include a systematic excavation of the ruins of the town.

In Paris too the Society has undertaken similar action. Through the good offices of Rev. M. Liber the necessary preparations have been made for the establishment of a branch of the Society. M. R. Dussaud has agreed to preside the Committee; the following scholars have already agreed to serve on the Committee: Prof. Isidore Levy, M.M. Liber, M. B. Shapira, Prof. R. Weill.