

Exploration in the Valley of Beth-Shan

by A. BERGMAN and RUTH BRANDSTETER

The authors visited practically all the *tells* in the Valley of Beth-Shan and studied the pottery found on the surface. The results of their preliminary study may be summarized as follows: The Valley of Beth-Shan was intensively settled during the Early Bronze, Late Bronze, Early Iron, Byzantine and Early Arabic Periods. A few sites only show traces of settlement during the Middle Iron and Roman ages. Almost no sherds of the Middle Bronze, Late Iron and Hellenistic Periods were found on the *tells* visited. The Early Bronze pottery was found mainly on the *tells* overlooking the Jordan Valley on the edge of the Ghôr, while the Late Bronze and Early Iron were in the Ghôr proper.

Excavations at Naharia, April 1941 (Provisional Report)

by M. AVI-YONAH

The writer describes the clearance of part of the necropolis east of the settlement. Three tombs deserve special mention: one, a barrel-vaulted rock-cut cave chamber contained the remains of fresco portraits of the deceased, man and wife; he was probably a priest. Another tomb consisted of a hall and six chambers; two chambers were found intact with clay coffins, glass vessels, etc. The third tomb had a shaft and two chambers; a narrow staircase led to them. The tombs are of the second-third centuries A. D.

The Roman Road and the Swamps in the Emeq Zebulun

by M. HECKER

The author combats the opinion expressed by B. Maisler in this *Bulletin*, VI, pp. 151 ff. viz., that the Roman road passing Tell Kurdâne formed part of the Acre-Caesarea coastal road by passing some swamps. He argues (1) that the road near Kurdâne was only a side road joining that settlement with the main road; (2) or that it represents the beginning of a road leading inland. In any case he contends that in Roman times there were no swamps in the Plain of Acre; these were created later on by a sinking in the level of the plain, for which he adduces several observations made by himself while surveying the area in 1926. If the road discussed was really part of the Acre-Caesarea line, its deflection was caused by the necessity to follow the watershed when passing from the Na'amân to the Qishôn basin.

The Date of an Earthquake at Tiberias

by M. MARGALIOTH

In the "Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of Hebrew Poetry" were published a series of liturgical poems: "For the Fast of the Earthquake of the Seventh", in which mention is made of an earthquake felt in Palestine and especially heavy in Tiberias. The editor of the poems suggested that the earthquake was that of 1033. The author, however, points out that the last referred to is already mentioned in one of the poems of Pinehas, a Palestinian poet who lived no later than the end of the ninth century. He proposes to read according to a Genizah M.S.: "the Seventh year" i. e., that the earthquake happened in a sabbatical year. This fact enables him to fix the date. Arab historians refer to an earthquake which shook Palestine in A. H. 130 or A. D. 748. The year is a sabbatical one, and the details given by these sources correspond to the description in the Piyutim.

Topographical Researches

by B. MAISLER

II. *The place of origin of the Maccabaeans.* The author connects the surname "the Hasmonaeans" borne by the priestly family of Mathias with the name *Hashim* the wife of Shaharaim the Benjaminite (I Chron. 8, 8 and 11). One of their descendants is mentioned among those who built "Ono and Lod with the towns thereof" (*ibid.*, 12). The author concludes that this proves a migration of the families of Benjamin into the territory of Lydda, which includes Modi'im, the home of the Maccabees. For the place of origin of the family he proposes *Hashim*, which should be located near Geba in the centre of the territory of Benjamin (I Chr. 7, 12).

The Origin of an Ancient Jewish Burial Custom

by G. ALLON

The author adduces various arguments against the theory stated by S. Yeivin (*Bulletin* VIII, 1, pp. 22-27), that the "Parthian" custom of placing a key in the coffin of a deceased person was introduced into Palestine by Babylonian Jews.

A Jewish-Greek Inscription from Sicily

by M. SCHWABE

The inscription Ζωσιμιανοῦ Ἀγορασεία ἐνβάσεως published by Frey (CII I, No. 654 = *Riv. di arch. Crist.* VIII [1931], pp. 122-5) has been misunderstood. Ἐνβάσει is not a proper name of the woman