

## The Synagogue of Eshtemo'a

by L. A. MAYER and A. REIFENBERG

In November 1934, the present writers discovered at the small village of as-Samû', the Biblical Eshtemo'a, the remains of an ancient synagogue. During the winter season 1935/36 they began to excavate the building, but owing to the outbreak of the riots further work had to be postponed.

The original building forms a broad-house 13.33 m. by 21.30 m., of which the western, the northern and the eastern walls are largely preserved; of the southern wall there remains only the eastern corner. The western wall is still more than 8.30 m. high. On the living rock there is a socle with a plinth and above it four rows of stones, serving as a basis. The remainder of the wall shows alternating courses of stones of great and medium height with headers and stretchers distributed irregularly over the whole masonry. Between the two faces of the wall there is a rubble filling set without mortar. The whole wall is 1 m. thick. The outer side of the northern wall is built on the same principle, except for the lowest section. Above the plinth of the socle there are 5 courses of stones, a layer of small ones resting on and followed by 2 courses of stones of medium size, all 5 forming a basis upon which the main part of the wall was erected with its sequence of big and medium stones. On the inner side, the stones are almost entirely of medium size. The northern wall was 3.32 m. thick, leaving ample space for 3 niches, a large niche flanked by 2 smaller ones. Such sections of the eastern wall as have been laid bare, are now occupied by the remains of 3 doors of the synagogue. The middle door must have been originally 2.12 m. wide and considerably higher. The northern door is 1.24 m. wide; its original height is not ascertainable. Of the southern door only the right-hand jamb is visible. In front of the doors, covering the whole width of the synagogue, there was a portico with 2 antae and 2 columns between, standing on square bases. Several steps led up to the portico. From the mosaic pavement of the original synagogue only a few tesserae were left.

Subsequently a thorough restoration of the synagogue took place, and another floor was laid of which slightly more is left than of the previous one. But the most important addition of that restoration period is a new niche on the lower floor. Abutting on the northern wall a small projection was built, in the centre of which appears a niche. There is a bench in front of this projection. The whole synagogue was covered with a gable roof and red tiles, fragments of which were discovered by the excavators; they may belong to this second period.

After the Moslem conquest this synagogue was turned into a mosque and a mihrâb added.

## Ba'al and Mot in the Texts of Ugarit

by U. CASSUTO

The author endeavours to determine the character of Ba'al and Mot, and the significance of the war between them. He discusses first the views of other scholars on this subject, and then exposes his own views. The struggle between the two gods does not symbolize simply the drying up of plants in the summer and their return to life in the rainy season. This phenomenon may be alluded to in one of

he episodes as a secondary detail, but the significance of the struggle must be much more comprehensive.

Mot himself describes his own activity in the following words: "as the lust of the lioness for the desert, as the yearning of the dolphin for the seas, as the buffalo panteth after the pools, and the hart panteth after the fountains of waters. o it is my desire to kill, to kill, so it is my pleasure to kill heaps upon heaps; with my two hands I do eat, seven portions they prepare for me, and a cup they ill for me, as big as a pitcher" (I\* AB, I, 14-22). And elsewhere: "I was going and walking... and withdrawing life from men, life from the people of the earth" (I AB, I, 15-19). It is said also that "the rod of bereavement "and., the rod of widowhood" is in his hand (SS, 8-9). Accordingly, Mot is not merely the Lord of the summer drought, but the Lord of Death, the personification of all the forces of destruction and annihilation of life. Therefore his abode is Sheol; in Sheol lies his city, in Sheol s found his throne; he is the king of the netherworld. He is often identified with Sheol: to enter the mouth of Mot means to descend to Sheol (I AB, II, 21-23; I AB, VIII, 15-25; I\* AB, I, 19-22; II, 2-6). This view on the nature of Mot as the God of Death may be confirmed: a) by the character of his assistants: b) by the tatement of Philo of Byblos; c) by the Biblical parallels relating to *Mawet*.

As to Ba'al, he is not only the Lord of the Rain, but the god of Life in general. The fertility of cattle (No. 68, 27-29; I\* AB, II, 16-17, 22-23) and of human beings (II D, I, 17 ff.) depends on him; he "feedeth gods and men" (II AB, VII, 49-50). His chief assistants are his sister 'Anat, the Goddess of Life and Kathir-wa-Hasis, who personifies the creative forces of man.

Accordingly, the struggle between Ba'al and Mot, represented as a competition for the throne, symbolizes the struggle between the forces of Life and the forces of Death in the world. Both tried to obtain dominion over the world, but in the end, notwithstanding all opposition and hindrances, the forces of Life emerge victorious and rule for ever.

## A Jewish Coin of the Fifth Century B. C.

by A. REIFENBERG

The author describes a coin in his collection: AR, 16 mm., 3.88 gr. *Obv.*: bearded head to l. with wreath. *Rev.*: Female head to r., wearing necklace. Below o r. in Hebrew script *bq'*—half a shekel (Ex. xxxviii, 26). The coin type resembles the Philisto-Arabian coins; the standard is Attic. The author considers it possibly a coin struck by Nehemia in connexion with his change of the Temple dues from half to one third of the old shekel (from 6 to 4 gr.) (cf. Neh. x, 32).

## Geniza Fragments Referring to Safed, Gush-Halab (El-Jish), 'Ibellin and 'Aqraba

by J. BRASLAWSKI

MS. fragments of the 11th cent., at present at Oxford and Cambridge, mention Jews living in these localities, and prove the existence of more Jewish settlements in Galilee before the Crusades.

## Ancient Maps to Hieronymus 'De situ'

I. SCHATNER

The author discusses two maps in a British Museum MS. of Hieronymus: *De situ et nominibus locorum Hebraicorum* (Map A and B). He finds that they represent copies of segments of a fourth century A. D. Roman map of the world, which also