

An EB Age Tomb Found at Kinnereth (Preliminary Report)

by B. MAISLER

The tomb was cleared by the author on behalf of the Society on the 21-29th July 1940. It clearly formed part of the necropolis of ancient Beth Yerah (Khirbet Kerak), 1¼ km. to the SE. The tomb consisted of a vestibule (2.30 by 2 m.) and an oval chamber (3.30 by 1.93 m.), the roof of which rested on a rock-pillar. It contained three burial levels separated by sand and earth, but all of the same period. The bones were found calcinated, proving the cremation of the bodies (for which the Gezer crematorium is the only Palestinian parallel). The funerary equipment included 50 whole vessels and numerous potsherds, all but four of which were found in the chamber. The pottery is mostly of common EBA type, but includes some rather rare forms.

An examination of the pottery has lead the author to the conclusion that the Kinnereth tomb precedes Tomb A at Jericho and is contemporary with et-Tell, Beth-Shan XII-XIII, Megiddo Stages I-IV and Jericho III-IV (mainly), i.e. that it belongs to the period of the First to Fourth Dynasty, or the transition from EB I to EB II. The pottery corresponds to that of Kh. Kerak, except for the total absence of the so-called *Khirbet-Kerak ware*. The latter the author considers a specially decorative series not used for ordinary funerary purposes, and he also considers that its date should be put back to an earlier stage of the EBA than has hitherto been accepted. The finds also include ca. 300 beads and other ornaments, amongst them a fine circular gold disc, decorated in repoussé and pierced in the centre. Plaques of a parallel kind, dating from the third millenium B. C., have been found in the whole Orient; still closer parallels to the disc exist at Troy and Mycenae. Other finds include a limestone mace-head and an ivory plaque.

The Synagogue of Eshtemo'a*)

by L. A. MAYER and A. REIFENBERG

In the original synagogue the large niche was placed 208 cms. above the floor, and was flanked on both sides by small niches, an arrangement recalling numerous Roman buildings in the Near East, especially some that were excavated at Karanis (see pl. II, 2). The

*) Continued from *BJPES* IX, No. 2-3, pp. 1 foll.

middle niche served perhaps as Thora-shrine, and the side ones as receptacles for seven-branched candlesticks.

The high position of the Thora-shrine was maintained in various other Oriental, Spanish and French synagogues; even at Dura-Europos it was 106 cms. above the ground. Thus the Thora-shrine was too high to appear on the plan, if only two or three layers of stone remained after destruction, as was so often the case in early synagogues. Whether the Thora-shrine in Eshtemo'a was accessible by a flight of steps, as in Dura-Europos, is not evident.

The subsequently-built niche in the synagogue of Eshtemo'a was only two steps above the floor, similar to those of other Byzantine synagogues in this country. But since we find the thora-shrine high up in the wall during the Roman period and then again throughout the Middle Ages, it may be asked whether these niches of the Byzantine period really represent the Thora-shrine, as is generally supposed, or were rather meant to receive the Chair of Moses, specimens of which have been found at Khorazin and Hammath-by-Tiberias. But not all ancient synagogues had a Chair of Moses, and most of them had no architectural arrangement for it. We are, therefore, safe in assuming that Thora-shrines in the Roman synagogues in Palestine were generally placed high up in the wall, and that some of the older synagogues without Thora-shrines should be reconstructed on the model of Eshtemo'a.

A Jewish Settlement near the Tomb of the Prophet Samuel

by I. BEN-ZEVI

The Arab traveller Mustafa es-Sa'id el Luqeimi, who visited Palestine in 1730/1, reports that Sheikh Muhammad el-Khalili had in his time driven out the Jews from Samuel's tomb and had built a mosque on the spot. The author traces the history of this settlement at Nebi Samwil from the time of the Mamelukes downwards, through its many vicissitudes, and describes the pilgrimages and rites practised on the spot, by Orthodox Jews as well as the Karaite community.

Topographical Suggestions

by M. AVI-YONAH

The author proposes to identify Arethusa (*Ant.* XV, 4, 4, and *BJ* I, 7, 7) with Tell Râs el-'Ain. He considers the Pegai of Pap. Zenon and of *Ant.* XIII, 2, 9 to be the name of a district. Antiochia near the Ulatha (Ref. in Tscherikower, *Die hellen. Städtegründungen*, Ss. 70 ff.) he identifies with Tell el-Qadi. He also points out the survival of the Talmudic name Kefar Tabi near el-Kanise in a waqfiye of A. D. 1552 (*QDAP* X, p. 184, n. 1).