

BULLETIN OF THE ISRAEL EXPLORATION SOCIETY
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ENGLISH SUMMARY

ABRAHAM MOSHE LUNCZ

(1855—1918)

The first part of this number is dedicated to the memory of A. M. Luncz, Hebrew pioneer of the study of Eretz Israel, the hundredth anniversary of whose birth falls in this year.

President *I. Ben-Zvi* recalls the importance of Luncz as the precursor of modern Palestine research among the Jews, the first to open a public library in Jerusalem, the first to collect and publish in Hebrew material as regards the past and the present of the Holy Land. He recalls Luncz's activity as a public personage (with whom he was himself familiar) including participation in the foundation of the Israel Exploration Society 42 years ago.

I. Press and *A. J. Brower* furnish an account of Luncz's life: born in Kovno, Lithuania, he came to Jerusalem at the age of thirteen, and studied at the Etz-Hayim Yeshiva; here he founded the Tifereth Yerushalayim Association for the study of general culture. His attempt to set up a public library ended with his expulsion from the Yeshiva and a threat of excommunication. He had begun to work as a printer, when he was struck with blindness at the age of 25. Far from despairing, he intensified his activities, publishing for 36 years his periodical "Jerusalem" (12 volumes) as well as an Annual Calendar and a guide to Eretz-Israel; he edited the works of Eshtori ha-Farhi (14th cent.). "Kafthor wa-Ferah" and J. Schwarz (19th cent.); also an edition of the order "Zeraim" of the Jerusalem Talmud. Luncz's public activities, including his membership in the Hebrew Language Committee, the Committee of the Hasanovitz Library (the nucleus of the Hebrew University and National Library) and the Home for the Blind are also recalled.

Mrs. *Rachel Yannait-Ben-Zvi* supplies some personal memories of the early contacts of the Ben-Zvi family with Luncz, as organizers of the first Printers' Union in Jerusalem, and as scholars. She gives a moving account of Luncz's arrest by the Turks after the publication of a collection of poems entitled "Kinnor Zion", which included the poem "Set up the standard toward Zion" based on Jeremiah iv, 6, which was considered subversive. Mrs. Ben-Zvi served as Luncz's interpreter during the trial which ended with a fine and the closing down of his printing works.

N. Shalem provides the background for Luncz's endeavours in describing the decline of Palestine studies among the Jews in the 19th

II

century, the efforts to settle on land, the guiding of immigrants and youths, and the activities of Luncz as publisher and author.

THE EARTHQUAKE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL IN JANUARY 1546

by H. Beinart

The author has discovered in the Madrid National Library a MS newsletter, hitherto unpublished, which gives an account of this disaster. He publishes the text in the original and translation, and adds a comparative table of other accounts. The writer of this letter was probably a Spanish friar, either resident or visiting Palestine at the time of the earthquake.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN JERUSALEM IN THE 17TH CENTURY

by M. Ish-Shalom

The author analyzes the pilgrim's and traveller's accounts of the Jewish community, discussing its numbers (500-600 families, ca. 4000 persons), its economic position and occupations (moneylenders, craftsmen etc.) and its dependence on help from abroad; the pilgrimages to the Tomb of Zechariah, the information concerning synagogues and the relations between Jews, Arabs and Christians prevailing at this period.

NOTES ON THREE LETTERS FROM ERETZ-ISRAEL IN THE 16TH CENTURY

by D. Thamar

These letters were published by J. Prawer in *Yerushalayim*, 1948, pp. 139—159. The author disputes the attribution and dating by Prawer of two of these letters: he considers that the letter attributed to R. Israel of Perugia might very well have been written by that scholar; the letter of the students of the Yeshiva, probably written by the Cabbalist R. Abraham Halevy cannot be attributed to 1516 — the date 1521, to which it is commonly assigned, is the correct one. As regards Prawer's contention regarding the third letter, viz. that R. Raphael Tarbut wrote it in Safed, the author supports this view from the Responsa of R. Moshe Mitrani, who explicitly asserts the fact of R. Raphael's residence there.

THE RELIEFS ON THE SIDES OF THE SARCOPHAGUS OF AHIRAM KING OF BYBLOS

by M. Haran

The author deals with the interpretation of various details represented on this sarcophagus. On the short sides two of the women

are "smiting their hands together" (Num. xxiv, 10 *et al.*) in sign of mourning; the two others "lay their hands on their heads" (2 Sam. xiii, 19, xv, 30 *et al.*).

In the front side the object held by the sitting personage is a sceptre and not a lotus flower, as it is held with the blossom downwards. Comparative representations (Zenjirli, Megiddo, Neirab etc.) show that the sceptre was held in the left hand. The Ugaritic phrase (IAB VI 28-29: *ksa mlkk/ht mtpik*) which places the "throne" and the "sceptre" in parallel, also supports this view. In the Bible the sceptre appears as the symbol of rule (Gen. xlix, 10 *et al.*). — As for the cup held in the right hand one should compare Gen. xl, 11, 13, 20-21; Hab. ii, 16; Jer. li, 7 *et al.*; as well as various references in Ugaritic writings (I*AB IV 16 *et al.*: *ks hrs*). The author opposes the view of Albright (BA 1, 1938, pp. 1—3) that the winged sphinxes should be identified with the Cherubs. He is inclined to present the thesis that the seated personage represents a god and not a king, because mythological scenes seem to suit better funerary ornament and because of the ritual objects and tributary sacrifices represented, including libations. The "spreading of hands" (Exod. ix, 29 *et al.*) indicates also an act of worship.

The back side continues the ritual scene, with women bringing ritual meals, and men libations or meal offerings, as well as a horned ram for sacrifice. Although the principal personage seated in the throne might have been a king in his apotheosis, the author prefers to see in him a god, possibly Moth.

"PERISH THE DAY!" A MISDIRECTED CURSE (JOB III, 3)

by Sheldon H. Blank

The curse was fundamentally directed against Job's parents; but as this appeared impious (cf. Lev. xxiv, 15; Ex. xxi, 17 etc.) it was directed against the day of his birth, cf. also in Jeremiah (v, 15). The author quotes various examples of similar evasions and circumlocutions in the Bible.

THE FORMATION OF THE HULEH PLAIN

by Y. Karmon

The author distinguishes in the Huleh the following formations: (1) The Northern terraces formed in the Middle Pleistocene. (2) The Southern Valley (Ard el Kheit) formed by drying in the same period, which was straightened out by soil brought down from the Dishon and Hazor Valleys. (3) The northern part of the Plain, which became dry land in the Upper Pleistocene, and in which the Jordan rivulets flow separately. (4) The southern part of the plain, filled by sediments in the Holocene; here the Jordan flows already in *one* bed. (5) The

swamp gradually drying and being filled with silt. A table comparing these processes with Picard's Pleistocene chronology is appended.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

THE SURVEY OF THE BETH-SHAN VALLEY

by N. Zori

The author continues the publication of the results of his survey from *BIES* 18, 1954, p. 90. The sites dealt with are: *Hemedyah* — flints Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic, Byzantine bust. *Kb. et-Tuwal* — Mesolithic and Neolithic flints, Chalcolithic flints and pottery, IA, Hellenistic (Rhodian jar handles), Byz. and Arab. *el-Hammam* — EB I pottery on slopes, Mesolithic flints. *Umm es-Safafa* — Byz. and EArab, one IA rim. *Bab el-Muntar* — MB; *Tell Idma* — natural hill, to S. Chalcolithic (especially Late) pottery, few EB I. *Kbirbet Idma* — IA I-II plentiful, also Late Roman-Byz. (including lintel inscribed ΕΛΘΘΕΙΣ, dam, cemetery of built tombs). *Kbirbet Umm Hujeir* — IA I and II, Byzantine. *Gesber* — Chalcolithic, EB IV. *el-Faz* — Mesolithic flints, Chalcolithic pottery (few), mostly MB II, few IA II. *el-Mazar* — Late Roman. *Kaukab el-Hawa* on slopes few sherds IA I and II, Roman-Byz. coins. *'Ain el-Jurni* — EB; IA I and II, Persian, Byz. *Kbirbet Badriya* — Byz., IA ring base, Chalcolithic handle and flints. *Kbirbet ez-Zawiya* — Byz., EArab. *Kb. ez-Ziwan* — Mesolithic flints, EB I, MB, IA I and II, Byz., EArab.

MISCELLANEA

M. Naor suggests the identification of Gerar with Tell el-Far'a. — *E. A. Urbach* suggests the explanation of the name "Entolios" as Zadoq "the just one". He also opposes the view of S. Appelbaum that *burgi* are mentioned in the first century, and dates the relevant passage of the Mekhilta to the second. — *I. Ben-Zvi* and *Z. Ben-Hayim* both discuss the Samaritan lamp published by N. Zori (*BIES* 18, p. 270); the text of the inscription is a curse against anyone stealing the lamp. — *A. Yaari* opposes the view of J. W. Hirschberg (*EI* 3, p. 214) that there existed a Jewish quarter near Mount Zion in the Arab period.

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

The Tenth Annual Convention at Ascalon — cf. the report in English, published in *IEJ*, 5, 1955, pp. 113 ff. — Other news include a report on the state of the Society's publications, its participation in excavations and surveys, meetings etc. A financial report for 1953/4 is given on pp. 142-3.