

Ground-Water in Palestine / by L. PICARD

The borings of the later years, except those of the Negeb and the coastal plain, are examined. Among the selected 150-200 borings, 17 bore groups can be distinguished in 9 areas. Apart from the coastal plain, very deep borings in Northern Palestine have yielded no satisfactory results, while most shallow-depth borings gave plentiful supplies of water. This fact has a structural geologic foundation. The differences between porous and non-porous, permeable and impermeable formations and strata are important; still more important is the subterranean drainage phenomenon known as karst. If this is connected with tectonic flexures or, with *faulting*, water can be obtained at shallow depth; otherwise deep borings are necessary. This applies to most semi-arid sub-tropical countries with predominantly hard formations (limestone, dolomite, flint, eruptiva etc.) and the climate alternating between summer drought and winter rain. In such countries (as contrasting with the humid countries) water-beds and hillside springs are of little quantitative value. In our varieties of hard rocks (Cretaceous, Eocene, Basalt etc.) water percolates rapidly in the winter, accumulating in the interior of the mountains and originating at a certain depth a fairly constant level. This karstic ground water only reaches the surface in fissure or fault springs; it can be obtained by boring in the fault zone (fissure or *fault-water*).

"These are the Merits of the Just, of Blessed Memory, and their Tombs" / edited by M. ISH-SHALOM

A letter found among the Hebrew MSS. in the British Museum includes a list of Jewish sacred tombs in Palestine. It is written by an Egyptian Jew in the 15th century, but is clearly a copy of an older source.

A Graeco-Samaritan Inscription from Lydda / by I. BEN-ZEVIE

The inscription on a small tomb-stone found recently on the NW. outskirts of the ancient site of Lydda (Pl. II, Fig. 1), and now in the Palestine Archaeological Museum, reads: ... ΤΟΠΙΟC Η / ΤΡΩΝΟ[Υ] / ΦΠΟΝΤΙC / ΤΟΥ ΟΡ / ΦΑΝΩΝ "Resting-place of Yitron, the guardian of the orphans". The name Yitron[a] indicates that the inscription is Samaritan. The author quotes from Samaritan and other sources showing (1) the frequency with which the name Yitron[a] appears in Samaritan literature; (2) the existence in the Samaritan community of the post of an official "guardian of the orphans"; (3) the existence of an important Samaritan settlement at Lydda.

A Jewish Relief from Beth-Shan / by M. AVI-YONAH

The Palestine Archaeological Museum has recently purchased

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a small bone tablet found on the east side of Beisan (Pl. II, Fig. 2). It represents a seven-branched candlestick together with four other Jewish symbols: a *shofar*, an *ethrog*, a *lulab* and a fourth object, which has given rise much discussion (*V. QDAP*, III, p. 122). The form of the object on the Bet-Shan tablet proves conclusively that it was a shovel as M. Narkiss (in *JPOS* XV, pp. 14 ff.) had made most probable. Its symbolical value is still obscure. S. Yeivin in a footnote identifies it with the incense shovel used by the highpriests on the Day of Atonement. The author assumes that, together with the other objects shown, it continued in use after the destruction of the temple.

The Origin of an Ancient Jewish Burial Custom / by S. YEIVIN

The author surmises that the "Parthian" custom of placing a key in the coffin of a deceased person was borrowed by Babylonian Jews, and used in cases where the deceased, having no male issue, had to ensure his admission to eternal life by other means (hence the rarity of such finds). Babylonian Jews, who brought their dead to be buried in Palestine, introduced this custom into the latter country about the end of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd cent. A. D. (the life time of Samuel Minor).

Some Notes on the "Sefer ha-Yishuv" / by Z. BEN-HAIM

A series of remarks and corrections to the Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac and Arab texts published in the first volume of this work, issued last year.

Topographical Studies / by B. MAISLER

1. "From Geba to Beersheba".

The author examines the passage in II Kings 23⁸ which contains the above quotation and compares it with Zechariah 14¹⁰. The Geba referred to should be identified, not as hitherto with Jaba^c, but with et-Tell in the Wādi-l-Jīb, opposite Burj el-Isāne, ancient Isana. The northern frontier of the Kingdom of Judah (since Josiah) and the Persian province of Yehud passed north of Jaba^c, embracing Bethel, Hazor and touching Isana (cf. Neh. 3²; 12³⁹). et-Tell has been already identified with *Geba* of *Onomasticon* 74, 2; Iron Age pottery has been found on the site.

A General Meeting of the *Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* has been held at Jerusalem on Nov. 10th, 1940. Prof. S. Assaf was in the chair. Prof. D. Yellin opened the meeting. Prof. U. Cassuto read a paper on: "Ba'al and Môt in Ugarit mythology". Dr. B. Maisler reported on the archaeological activity of the Society, Mr. S. Yeivin on its publications. Prof. L. A. Mayer was elected President of the Society, in succession to the late Prof. S. Klein. Messrs. I. Ben-Zevie, Dr. B. Maisler, Prof. M. Schwabe, Z. Weizman and S. Yeivin were elected to the Executive Committee; Prof. S. Assaf, M. Avi-Yonah, Dr. I. Ben-Dor, Prof. N. Glueck, I. Gruenbaum, Prof. J. Klausner, Prof. L. Picard, I. Press, I. Rokah, Prof. N. Slousch and Prof. H. Struk to the Council of the Society.