

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

In Sivan 5768 (May 2008) the annual conference of the Department of Eretz Israel Studies of Herzog College was held in Jerusalem and devoted to the topic "Inscribed on Stone: Hebrew Inscriptions in Eretz Israel from Ancient Times to Modern". Some of the papers delivered were turned into articles and they form the nucleus of this issue of *'Al 'Atar*. Thus four of the articles in this issue deal with various inscriptions from Eretz Israel and the surrounding area from ancient times to modern. The other articles, however, concern a variety of subjects reflecting the subjects taught in the Department of Eretz Israel Studies at Herzog College.

The first article, by Dr. Yoel Elitzur, uses the information in the famous Medba map as a starting point for identifying the location of Nahal Zered, for which a number of identifications have been suggested. The author uses the Biblical data as well as that in *Baraita Tehumin*. On the basis of all the data he proposes a new identification of Nahal Zered, which has significant exegetical ramifications.

Dr. Haim Ben David also discusses toponyms in the area of Eretz Israel and their identification. The article centers on a few dozen milestones from the Roman provinces of Judaea (Palestina) and Arabia, which cite the name of the town from which the measurement started. An analysis of the names on the milestones raises various questions, and sometimes provides unique information on demographic, urban and cultural changes in various parts of Eretz Israel and the surrounding countries.

The article by Daniel Moshe Levy, which focuses on the cite *Qavur Benei Israel* (= burial of the Children of Israel) north of Jerusalem, deals with the identification of Biblical toponyms. However, in this case the new proposal for identifying it is based not on epigraphic evidence from the place, but on a textual analysis of various sources – Biblical and post-Biblical – as well as a new examination of geographical characteristics of the cite and its environs. Thus the author suggests identifying *Qavur Benei Israel* with the burial place of those who died in the affair of the Concubine on the Hill (Judges 19), and also links the events to the name of the nearby settlement *Hizma*.

The halakhic-historical article by Dr. Hannan Birenboim deals with the changing character of the Sukkot festival during the Second Temple period and traditions regarding the festival over generations. The article focuses on the question whether the festival was observed in the Temple alone, all over Jerusalem or throughout Eretz Israel. The question is considered on the basis of an in-depth analysis of references to Sukkot in the Torah and different references to the festival in the Temple Scroll, the Book of Jubilees and a number of other sources from the period.

The article by Dr. Eyal Davidson also concerns inscriptions and their historical interpretation. It deals with inscriptions from the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem from the 19th century, mainly a number of undocumented dedicatory inscriptions from the Sephardi Talmud Torah (elementary school) in Jerusalem from 1860. These inscriptions contain new and unique information regarding the history of the school and its founding, the way in which the Sephardi community operated in the city at that time and its connections with Sephardi communities in other locations.

Nati Broner deals in his article with the historical geography of settlements in Eretz Israel, surveying two attempts at Jewish settlement in the Jordan valley in modern times: agricultural settlement attempts in Jericho and its environs in the late 19th century, and an attempt at urban settlement in Beit Shean in the first half of the 20th century. The author also compares the characteristics of different attempts in each cite and tries to explain why they did not succeed.

Reuven Gafni looks at another kind of inscription that has not been studied: memorial and dedicatory tablets in 19th century and 20th century Jerusalem synagogues. He presents the cultural and social elements that can be discerned by an analysis of the memorial tablets and dedicatory inscriptions and also different criteria for gleaning historical information about the communities and the synagogues in which they were mounted.

In the section of notes and responses in this issue a few subjects are discussed briefly: Prof. Ephraim Kleiman discusses the question of whether Tiberias was a center for raising fowl during the period of the *Mishna*, relating to different interpretations of the passage in B.T. *Baba Mezia* 24b and of *Tosefata* B.M. 6:5; Prof. Zeev Herzog and Dr. Yitzchak Meitliss discuss again the religious character of the rites and altars in *Tel Arad* and *Tel*

Beer Sheva and the question of whether they were cites of a pagan cult or a Hebrew one; Rabbi Moshe Nussbaum and Prof. Yisrael Rozenon offer different interpretations of the expression *Sulama shel Zor* (= the ladder of Tyre), in the light of Rashi's commentary on the expression.

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