

## CONTENTS

1 EPHRAIM STERN: In Memoriam

5 VERED ESHED and UZI AVNER: A Late Neolithic Chalcolithic Burial Site in Eilat, by the Red Sea, Israel

**ABSTRACT:** The Eilat burial ground, on the western fringe of the city, consisted of a number of simple graves for primary burial, *tumulus* tombs for secondary interment and several cult installations. Artefacts and <sup>14</sup>C analyses determined its date to the fifth–sixth millennia BCE (Late Neolithic–Early Chalcolithic). All tombs were robbed in antiquity, and the site suffered modern damage as well. Nevertheless, many architectural elements, cult features, artefacts and bone remains (though poorly preserved) enabled study of the burial customs of this desert society and some of its physical anthropology. This article focuses on the human remains, but also presents a brief description of the site and a brief interpretation of the burial customs.

30 CHRIS MCKINNY, ORON SCHWARTZ, GABRIEL BARKAY, ALEXANDER FANTALKIN and BOAZ ZISSU: Kiriath-Jearim (Deir el-‘Âzar): Archaeological Investigations of a Biblical Town in the Judaeian Hill Country

**ABSTRACT:** This paper discusses the history of research at Deir el-‘Âzar (Tel Qiryat Ye‘arim), including a discussion of its traditional identification with Kiriath-Jearim and a preliminary report of both the recent archaeological survey and G. Barkay’s salvage excavation, which was carried out in the winter of 1995–1996. Significantly, this paper provides the first modern report on the nature of the archaeology of Kiriath-Jearim (Deir el-‘Âzar), which includes occupation from the Neolithic period until modern times.

50 ASSAF KLEIMAN and ISRAEL FINKELSTEIN: The Date of Building 338 at Megiddo:  
*Eppur Si Muove!*

**ABSTRACT:** This is a response to David Ussishkin's rejoinder to our article on Building 338 at Megiddo. None of Ussishkin's arguments, aimed at maintaining his affiliation of the building with Stratum VA–IVB, withstands scrutiny. Building 338 belongs to Stratum IVA, in the first half of the eighth century BCE.

56 DVIR RAVIV: The Artabba Fortress: An Unknown Hasmonaean-Herodian Fortress on the Northern Border of Judaea

**ABSTRACT:** The Artabba fortress, a site until recently unknown, is located at the summit of a high hill; its monumental remains were exposed by chance during development works carried out by residents of the nearby village of Deir Abu Mash'al. The remains included fortifications, architectural elements, the openings of five huge cisterns, ritual baths and storage pits, as well as various rock cuttings and numerous potsherds from the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. These finds, especially the fortifications and the impressive water-supply system, are the principal features of the sites in the Judaeen Desert and the settled areas of the country where there were fortresses from the Second Temple period. The archaeological finds, in conjunction with the geographical and historical data, make it possible to date the fortress from the time of Simon the Hasmonaean to the end of Herod's reign. The discovery of the Artabba fortress sheds light on the history of the settlement of northern Judaea in the Second Temple period.

77 MICHAEL EISENBERG, ALEXANDER IERMOLIN and SARIEL SHALEV: Archaeological and XRF Analysis of a Byzantine Weight from Hippos Sheds New Light on the Transition from Christian to the Islamic Rule

**ABSTRACT:** A unique Byzantine brass weight found in Antiochia Hippos (Sussita), bearing a concealed cross and an unfamiliar feature on its reverse, helps reveal some of the changes that occurred in Hippos during the transition between the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods. The weight illuminates the local Byzantine and post-Byzantine metrological weight systems, as well as the

administrative and religious relationships between the Christian city of Hippo and Umayyad Ṭabariya, the capital of the region. Discovered in the debris of a church destroyed in the earthquake of 749 CE, it is among the first archaeologically dated Byzantine weights used during the Umayyad period.

100 MOSHE SHARON: Witnessed by Three Disciples of the Prophet: The Jerusalem 32  
Inscription from 32 AH/652 CE

**ABSTRACT:** The nine-line inscription incised on a block of stone employed in secondary use in a tiny mosque outside the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount has been an enigma for half a century, since its discovery by B. Mazar in 1968. The only part of the text that I was able to read contains the names of three of the prominent comrades of the Prophet Muḥammad. There is also reference to the ‘protection’ and ‘guarantee’ extended in the name of the Prophet, but the nature of the inscription and more details about its contents remain obscure. Building on the verb *shahida* (from *shahada*, ‘witnessed’), which appears in the inscription and in parallel historical texts relating to the capitulation of Jerusalem to the Muslims, and on the names that appear in the inscription and in these literary sources, I suggest that the inscription commemorates the treaty between the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem and the conquerors.

112 NOTES AND NEWS

117 REVIEWS

124 BOOKS RECEIVED — 2017