

REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF PUBLICATIONS.

Capernaüm et ses ruines. By P. Gaudence Orfali, O.P.M., Docteur en Théologie. Paris: Auguste Picard, 82, Rue Bonaparte. 1922.

THIS beautifully printed and illustrated monograph upon Tell Hum and its ruined synagogue is the work of one who has made this charming but insalubrious spot his home for many years. To him every stone is a treasure with a tale to tell of its origin and position in the original building. All the finest sculptured fragments are illustrated here, and the reader will soon realize that the results of the excavations have been considered with the minutest attention. The most elaborate diggings were done by Professors Kohl and Watzinger, on behalf of the *Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* in 1905, but the good Fathers have made many discoveries since, as is here described.

P. Orfali disclaims to be any special authority on the topographical question of the identity of Tell Hum with Capernaum, but it is clear that he considers the ruins in and around the synagogue—extending one kilometre along the lake shore and 400 metres inland—are really the strongest proof. It would seem quite impossible in view of this further evidence to doubt that here we have the real side of Capernaum.

In the first chapter the author has gathered together the scanty references to Capernaum after N.T. times. He thinks the sudden and early downfall of this once flourishing city may have been due partly to earthquakes and partly to the rise of its favoured rival Tiberias. He also suggests that the inhabitants were particularly wicked, but this is, to say the least, doubtful. But he does show that we have no evidence that the city continued to flourish after the first century of our era. In later chapters the results of the excavations are described in detail. By means of photographs, plans, and suggested reconstructions the non-technical reader can obtain a very good idea of the former magnificence of this great white marble synagogue. It is one of the many ancient synagogues of Galilee, constructed on the same general plan, but both in the material employed and in the magnificence of the carving this synagogue is the finest and may well have been the model upon

which the others were built. There is an interesting discussion on the emblems and decorations of the walls, some of which recall the Herodian Jewish coinage.

The critical point to which we are led is—was this synagogue the actual one referred to several times in the Gospels in which Our Lord preached? Kitchener, who first examined the ancient synagogues of Galilee half-a-century ago, gave grounds for dating them to the end of the second or beginning of the third Christian century, and Professors Kohl and Watzinger ascribe them, on architectural grounds alone, to much the same period. P. Orfali will have none of this. He thinks that whatever may be architecturally probable with regard to so late a date is impossible on historical grounds. It is perhaps better to give the author's conclusion in his own words:—

“Nous maintenons que l'origine de la synagogue de Capharnaüm remonte au I^{er} siècle de notre ère, abstraction faite de modifications structurales postérieures. Assigner à sa construction la fin du II^e siècle ou le commencement du III^e nous paraît impossible; car en dehors des difficultés historiques déjà signalées, cette hypothèse nous met en face de problèmes dont on trouvera très difficilement une solution satisfaisante. Comment, au temps où l'académie rabbinique commandait en maîtresse surtout en Galilée, la synagogue de Capharnaüm, au lieu d'être bâtie au point dominant de la ville, aurait-elle été édifiée à une petite distance de la rive du lac, contrairement aux prescriptions sévères des Rabbins de Tibériade, alors qu'ils condamnaient à la destruction la ville dont les toits dépassaient la synagogue? En outre, serait-il admissible que du temps où les Rabbins de Tibériade décrétaient l'orientation des synagogues vers Jérusalem, à Capharnaüm on eût l'audace de faire tout à fait le contraire? Enfin, tout en admettant que la synagogue fût bâtie et orientée contrairement aux principes dictés par l'école rabbinique de Tibériade, serait-il admissible que celle même synagogue fût ornée avec profusion de figures d'animaux, interdites par la loi de Moïse et la casuistique des Rabbins d'Israël, adoptés à cette époque du Pharisaïsme à outrance? La synagogue de Capharnaüm n'a donc pu être édifiée qu'au commencement du I^{er} siècle.”

Although the synagogue discussion occupies the greater part of the book, there is an interesting account of an octagonal building,

the ruined foundations of which have been uncovered, revealing some large fragments of multi-coloured mosaics. The excavators believe the building to be a fourth century Baptistry.

E. W. G. M.

Jérusalem. Tome Second. Jérusalem Nouvelle. Fascicule III, par Les P.P. Hughes Vincent et F. M. Abel. Paris : Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 60, Rue Bonaparte. 1922.

THIS new section of this monumental work includes Chapters XVI to XXVI upon the minor ecclesiastical buildings of Jerusalem. The historical and traditional material is dealt with chiefly by P. Abel, the archaeological and architectural by P. Vincent. The volume begins with a very detailed description of the ecclesiastical buildings upon "Mount Zion," chiefly those included by the Moslems under the name of *En Nebi Daoud*. Of these the Coenaculum or Chamber of the Last Supper is most familiar to tourists, though the building by the Germans, a few years before the war, of the great "Church of the Virgin" on the one known as the *Dormitio Sanctae Mariae* drew new attention to this traditional site. Near to these buildings is the "House of Caiaphas" in the Armenian monastery outside the walls; and on lower ground to the south-east lie the comparatively recent excavations of the Assumptionist Fathers around the remains of the Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu. The work of the late Father Germer-Durand is very fully described and illustrated by detailed plans. In the Armenian quarter within the walls lies the so-called "House of Annas," known as the *Deir ez Zeitun*. This, with the "Chapel of the Scourging" and the "Prison of Christ," is fully described. Two chapters are devoted to the remarkable Church of St. James at the Armenian Patriarchate. There is a section devoted to the "Pretorium" and certain small chapels connected with the Passion. Of peculiar interest is the full historical discussion on the Via Dolorosa. A full description of the Church of St. John the Baptist, briefly described by Prof. Dickie in the *Quarterly Statement*, 1899, as the Lower Church of St. John, concludes the volume. This brief outline of the contents of this most important work can give no idea of its thoroughness and of the wealth of detail both in the letterpress and in the illustrations. A supplementary volume with 22 sheets of plans is supplied.

This is a continuation of a work on Jerusalem which is truly monumental, covering all known history and all known antiquities.

We are sure that these learned Fathers will be the first to wish that the forthcoming work on the "Ophel" hill will reveal so much of early Jerusalem as to put their first volume out of date! The present volume is, one would suppose, the last word on traditions and buildings about which we cannot expect to learn much more. All Palestine students must remain debtors to such writers as Father Vincent and Father Abel, who deal with every subject they take up in a spirit so scientific and so exhaustive.

E. W. G. M.

The Handbook of Palestine. Edited by H. C. Luke and E. Keith-Roach, with an introduction by the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Samuel, G.B.E. London: Macmillan & Co. 1922. 12s. net.

THIS most timely volume gives in just under 300 pages the information which is needed by the public. In addition to the latest information for tourists it gives a condensed account of the system of administration in Palestine, with statistics relating to the commercial, industrial, and other public activities. Each section has been revised by one with special knowledge of the subject—the well-known names of a score of such are mentioned in the preface—and a high degree of accuracy has been attained. Some of the chapters are of permanent value. Thus the section on "Christian and Moslem Architecture" is a most valuable summary, as is that on Agriculture and Forestry, though one misses in the latter any reference to the pine which when once started grows so well on the western hill slopes. An original feature is the chapter on "Postage Stamps of Palestine and Transjordan, 1918-1922." The railway service in Palestine now consists of 353 miles of double track on the broad or Standard gauge and 129 miles on the narrow (3 ft. 6 ins.) gauge. There are also some 200 miles of the old Hejaz (narrow) gauge line east of the Jordan under the Palestine Railway Administration. In the Natural History Section we miss the crocodile as one of the animals of Palestine, unless the writers conclude that it is now at last extinct. The mole-rat, which is so ubiquitous, deserves a mention, and also the famous hyrax so common among the rocks around the Dead Sea. It is news to many that "a hyrax-like animal (*Procavia Schnitzi*) is found in the mountains surrounding Lake Huleh." Is it correct to state that the wolf is "still far from rare"? Stray wolves occasionally follow flocks down from the highlands of Anatolia,

but the wolf is not now an indigenous animal in Palestine. In a work so carefully prepared mistakes are uncommon, but the statement (p. 4) that the source of the Jordan at Baniyas is 3,000 feet above sea-level is certainly incorrect. Jebel Safed is not, as a passage (p. 235) implies, "an important mass of basalt." And on p. 100 there is a misprint of "north" for "south" in referring to the position of Jericho in New Testament times.

These very minor criticisms are hardly worth considering, however, in view of the great value of the Handbook, which, besides being a book of daily reference to all those living in the land, should have a wide circulation among the great numbers of those whose studies in the Palestine of history should make them interested in all that is going on in this land which in so short a time has already made such strides in development.

E. W. G. M.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

Mr. Pilcher kindly sends us for publication the following letter which he has received from Dr. Büchler (Jews' College), dated May 8.

"In connection with your reference to Jewish seals in Palestine in the first century, in the *Q.S.*, April, p. 97, I beg to draw your attention to two Rabbinic statements of that period. In *Tosefta* 'Abodah Zarah, Chapter V, 2 (ed. Zuckermann, p. 468, line 13), Rabbi Hananiah ben Gamaliel says: Those of my father's house used to seal with a signet having a *prosōpon* (face). R. Eleazar ben Šadok said: Any *prosōpon* was used in Jerusalem [before A.D. 70] except that of man. Compare the parallel in the Jerusalem Talmud 'Abodah Zarah, III, 42c, line 68, where the name R. Eleazar ben R. Simeon is a mistake, as various other reports about life and conditions in Jerusalem before A.D. 70 are due to R. Eleazar ben R. Šadok, who lived between 40 and 70. See also S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archæologie*, Volume I, pp. 201 and 661. It is difficult to say whether those seals were anepigraphic."