

Archaeology—Anthropology Notes

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Rock-fortress of Masada

Almost 19 centuries ago, 960 Jewish Zealot men, women and children, the last defenders of the precipitous rock-fortress of Masada in Israel, committed suicide by sword and flame rather than surrender to the Tenth Legion of the Roman army.

Details of this heroic stand, as well as of the reign of King Herod, ally of the Romans and puppet king of Judea, were discovered in a dramatic two-season archaeological dig.

The Masada expedition, organized by archaeologist Yigal Yadin of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, received response from some 5,000 volunteers representing 28 countries, from an inch-deep announcement in *THE OBSERVER* of London. With his many supporters, Prof. Yadin sifted out tiles and pottery from Herod's fortress, as well as mosaic floors, wall paintings, food, utensils, coins and valuable scroll fragments from the Book of Deuteronomy and parts of chapter 37 Ezekiel.

Artifacts from history of Masada are on exhibit recently opened in New York City's Jewish Museum, and scheduled for cross-country tour in 1968.

RELIGION

Shaking Spiritual Baptists

At certain times, the Shakers believe they are possessed by the Holy Spirit which is manifested as a trance or dissociational state, reports Jeannette H. Henney, anthropologist at Ohio State University, who has just completed a study of the religious sect on the island of St. Vincent in the British West Indies.

Shakers use no drums or other percussion instruments, but rely on handclapping and singing. They jerk their heads and arms, and move their feet when possessed, but they do not run or dance away from their places. They do not become violent, and only occasionally do they fall down. No drugs, drinks or herbs are used.

From 1912 to 1965 the Shaker religion was illegal on St. Vincent Island. Now these Spiritual Baptists apparently are becoming more socially accepted. The Shakers use Methodist hymnals.

MAGIC

Click-speaking Bushmen

The ! Kung Bushmen, a non-Bantu, click-speaking tribe of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana, believe that health comes from a physical substance that lies in the pit of the stomach of the medicine owner.

The ! Kung people (the exclamation point stands for the click sound) believe that men can transfer this medicine to another by means of sweat, reports Dr. Richard B. Lee in the November issue of *NATURAL HISTORY*. To reach the state of transfer, the entire village engages in an exhaustive ceremony of dancing, singing and leaping, during which the medicine owner falls into a trance during which he applies the cure. This trance performance "can be regarded as a drama in which the stresses and tensions of social life are transformed into a common struggle against the external source of malevolence," reports Dr. Lee, who spent 17 months studying the ! Kung Bushmen.

SALVAGE ARCHAEOLOGY

Relics snatched from bulldozers

A determined archaeologist raced bulldozers and piledrivers to unearth an ancient burial ground of the original Manhattan Indians beneath the southeast corner of Pearl and Frankfort Streets in modern New York.

Dr. Sterling A. Callisen, professor of archaeology of Pace College, also found deposits of huge oysters that were harvested by the relatively poor Indians who once traded their land for \$24 worth of baubles. Fragments of old Dutch and early English pottery, bits of glass and badly tarnished metal pieces are other relics salvaged from one of the last undisturbed sites beneath Manhattan's growing skyscrapers. Dr. Callisen swiftly removed as many artifacts as possible before modern equipment began ripping up the land to build Pace College's new Civic Center Campus, a complex for 10,000 students.

MESOAMERICA

Farming in ancient Oaxaca

The large, flat valley floor, high water table, low rate of soil erosion and a climate free from frost helped the ancient Indians of Oaxaca in central Mexico rise to power over a period of some 9,000 years before the invasion of the Spaniards.

The environment of the Valley of Oaxaca made it a better place than others for primitive agriculture, believe Dr. Kent V. Flannery of the Smithsonian Institution; Anne V. T. Kirkby and Dr. Michael J. Kirkby, both of the University of Cambridge, England, and Dr. Aubrey W. Williams Jr., University of Maryland.

By practicing many varieties of agriculture over a long period of time, the Zapotec Indians maintained this region as a "key" area among Mesoamerican civilizations, the scientists observe in *SCIENCE*, Oct. 27. Other key areas of Indian culture include the Valley of Mexico, the region of Cholula-Puebla, the Mixteca Alta, and the region of Guatemala City.

Among the agricultural methods used in the Oaxaca Valley were pot irrigation, canal irrigation, flood-water farming and hillside terracing.

ASIA MINOR

Bronze Age jars at Sardis

Recently unearthed burial jars, copper daggers and pins are among the oldest artifacts of early man yet discovered in the much explored area around Sardis in Western Turkey.

Archaeologists of the Harvard-Cornell Expedition, now in its tenth year of digging, uncovered remains of Early Bronze Age farmers buried in jars, five to six feet high, dating from 2500 B.C., 1,000 years earlier than other objects found in the area. The graves were unearthed on the southern shore of Gygean Lake, six miles north of Sardis, a great city of the ancient world.

Within the city of Sardis itself, an ancient altar was found, used for fire sacrifices around 550 B.C. during the reign of the fabulously rich and powerful Croesus, King of Lydia until he was overthrown by the Persians. Bits of gold jewelry, lion-shaped lamps and other rich artifacts were unearthed.