

a background of information, particularly if the material is well published, that increases the effectiveness of all subsequent excavation.

A final cause of progress during these years was the presence in Palestine of experts who were there continuously, not merely there for a few weeks of excavation. Among these should be mentioned Dr. William F. Albright, already alluded to above, and Dr. Clarence Fisher, an expert in the techniques of excavation, who personally began two of the great expeditions of this period.

2. The Great Expeditions.

The first of the three great expeditions was the excavation of Beth-shan, which was begun in 1921 and continued for many years. Beth-shan was a very large city, occupying a strategic place since it controlled the pass between the Valley of Jezreel and the Jordan Valley. In New Testament times the Hellenistic city at this place was called Scythopolis. While material was found here from many periods, the most interesting was from the Canaanite time. Four different Canaanite temples were excavated. It would seem that the Egyptians held the city as a fortress for many years and three stone monuments with large inscriptions in Egyptian hieroglyphics were found. Later on the city was occupied by a Philistine garrison and it was here that they hung the bodies of Saul and Jonathan on the wall (1 Sam. 31.10-12).

The second of the great excavations, that of Megiddo, threw more light on the time of Israelite settlement. Megiddo had an equally strategic position guarding a vital pass between the coastal plain and the inner valleys. It was necessary that any army going in either direction between Mesopotamia and Egypt, or between Asia Minor and Egypt, should pass near Megiddo. Many strategic battles have been fought there and the name, which in the Hebrew is har Megiddo, or "hill of Megiddo," is mentioned in the New Testament as Armageddon (Rev.16.16).