



## INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MUSEUM  
NEWSLETTER

Paul J. Ray, Jr. Editor  
David Merling Assoc. Editor  
Randall W. Younker Assoc. Editor  
Robert D. Bates Asst. Editor

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## Tall al-'Umayri 2002

Finds from three major time periods in Jordan's history were excavated at Tall al-'Umayri this summer: the Bronze and Iron Ages between 1500 and 500 B.C., and the Hellenistic period around 150 B.C. Significant discoveries have once again been made, during the ninth excavation season at the site. A team of 37 archaeologists from La Sierra University in Riverside, CA; Canadian University College in Alberta; Walla Walla College in Walla Walla, WA; and several other locations around the US, Canada and Poland worked six weeks at the site where the team has been working since 1984 with a crew of workers from the nearby village of Bunayat.

What appears at this stage of excavation to be a palace (or at least more than a domestic building) almost 3500 years old was discovered with walls preserved to about 1.3 m thick and 3.5 m high. Parts of four rooms of this Late Bronze Age building have been discovered along with pottery vessels and crudely made ceramic figurines dating to the time just prior to its construction.

The remarkable state of preservation of the building is all the more spectacular because of the rarity of other buildings from this time period throughout Jordan. Although other buildings of this date exist at sites in the Jordan Valley, none are nearly as well preserved as this one and only two or three others have been found in the highlands.

The excavators reached the floor in two of the rooms, but will need another season to do the same in the other two. Portions of a large perimeter wall were discovered surrounding the building. An earthquake distorted many of the north-south walls from this period at the site, including some of those in the palace. The palace probably reused a strong perimeter wall and rampart constructed at the end of the Middle Bronze Age (about 1600 B.C.).

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Northern portion of the Late Bronze Age Building in Field B.

Another period represented at 'Umayri is the 11th to 9th centuries B.C., a time when the site was probably first occupied by the Ammonites. We have previously found thousands of pieces of pottery from this period, but never buildings and floors. This season we found a complete cobbled courtyard, perhaps a religious area because of several ceramic shrine models discovered here. Along with the shrine models were stone benches placed in a line and a wooden awning or shelter lining one side of the courtyard perhaps to cover a particularly holy place.

In fact, two courtyards existed, one on top of the other. The lower floor dates to the 11th century and the upper one comes from the 10th-9th centuries B.C. Only the lower one, however, contained the shrine models. These had been smashed and sealed beneath a renovated surface. Very few sites in Jordan have buildings from this time period that have been excavated.

The third time frame is the Hellenistic period, dating to ca. 300-100 B.C. At the southern edge of the site we have found the walls of a farmstead from this period. Although the walls, floors, and pottery from the building are crude, two nicely made coins minted by the Ptolemaic rulers in Egypt were found. A third coin was found in a previous season.

The floor of a storeroom contained many finds including several lamps, six or seven hand-made juglets, a few store jars, and other domestic objects, such as grinding stones, loom weights, and spindle whorls. These objects reflect daily life of the people.

Not many cities and towns appear to have existed during the early Hellenistic period in Jordan. However, several small rural sites were located in the 'Umayri region, some of which we have previously excavated. We can only hope that we will find more in future seasons. (Larry G. Herr, Douglas R. Clark and Lawrence T. Geraty)



Monson and Master answering question after their lecture.

## Monson and Master Lecture

John Monson and Daniel Master, Assistant Professors of Archaeology at Wheaton College, spoke for the Horn Museum Lectureship, April 15, 2002. Dr. Monson has excavated at several sites in Palestine including Ashkelon, Lachish, and Timnah. Dr. Master has excavated at Ashkelon and specializes in deep-water excavations and trade routes. Their joint lecture was entitled *Searching for Solomon in the Archaeological Record*.

Dr. Monson compared the Solomonic temple with other temples in the Ancient Near East. He found that the 'Ain Dara Temple in northern Syria has many features that are similar to the Solomonic Temple. Both temples have the same three-division, long-room plan. The 'Ain Dara temple has an entry portico, an antechamber and a main chamber with a screened-off shrine; whereas Solomon's Temple had an entry portico, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

Monson demonstrated that the 'Ain Dara Temple shares 34 of the 65 architectural features found in biblical description of Solomon's Temple. Both temples are relatively the same size (98-120 ft x 34-65

ft), built on a raised platform with a monumental staircase and courtyard in front. The stylized floral designs, lily patterns, palmettes, winged creatures and lions of 'Ain Dara are similar to the flower patterns, palm trees and cherubim of the Solomonic temple.

Dr. Monson concluded that the many similarities between the Solomonic Temple described in 2 Chron and the 'Ain Dara Temple provide new evidence that anchors the Temple of Solomon in the cultural traditions of the tenth century B.C. regardless of the date assigned to the composition of the biblical text.

Dr. Master discussed the various state-formation models of ancient Israel and compared them with major archaeological sites during the related periods.

Most state formation models are based on the presence of a strong authoritarian figure. However, Israelite society was based upon patrimonial relationships that only appointed strong temporary leaders in times of crisis.

By the Iron Age, Israel's patrimonial society faced new challenges. According to Masters, the tenth century B.C. "picture in Palestine is one of growth and urbanization." Within a very short time, Gezer, Hazor and Megiddo grew from small settlements to fortified cities with casemate walls and six-chambered gates.



The biblical stories of Saul and David demonstrate that a need arose for a more permanent solution to deal with the increasing threats associated with the growing urbanization. A monarch was installed to create a more coordinated defense against the Philistines and other nations.

Masters believes that when monarchs began to assume other more powerful roles it created conflict within the existing patrimonial tribal structures. Soon the kingdom divided over the issue of forced labor, but the resulting territories did not break into anarchy because the tribal authority structures remained intact. The kin-based authority relationship remained intact despite the shifting tribal allegiances. (Robert D. Bates)



## Velazquez visits British Museum

In May 2002, Efrain Velazquez, assistant curator of the Horn Archaeological Museum, received a grant from the Hispanic Theological Initiative to travel to England and France and study artifacts relevant to his Ph. D. dissertation.

Velazquez visited London and met with Jonathan Tubb, curator of the Dept. of the Ancient Near East at the British Museum. Dr. Tubb arranged for Velazquez to have access to the reserved collections and the research facilities.

Dr. Tubb also introduced Velazquez to the Conservation and Restoration Departments. Several experts in artifact conservation demonstrated the latest curatorial techniques used for preserving antiquities and displaying artifacts. They also explained how large collections of ceramic and metal artifacts are managed.

Velazquez photographed and collected information on many ancient artifacts in the British Museum including the Rosetta Stone, the reliefs of Nimrud, the Black Obelisk as well as seals, ostraca, coins and other epigraphic material.



Efrain Velazquez with Jonathan Tubb, Curator of the Dept. of the Ancient Near East at the British Museum, London.

Velazquez also visited the offices of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Felicity Cobbing, Curator of the PEF, showed him the collection of documents from famous archaeologists that excavated for the PEF.

Velazquez traveled to Paris and visited the Louvre. He met Kenneth Kitchen, who was admiring the temporary exhibit, "The Artisans of Pharaoh at Deir El-Medineh." Dr. Kitchen shared his insights on Egyptology and the biblical connections of many of the artifacts found in the Louvre. (Robert D. Bates)



## Zadok Studies Tablets

Ran Zadok, professor of Mesopotamian, Iranian and Judaic Studies at Tel Aviv University, was at the Horn Archaeological Museum on May 9-10, 2002 to study some of its Neo-Babylonian cuneiform tablets. He is currently compiling a prosopography of several temple cities (Borsippa, Dilbat, Kish and Nippur) in central Babylonia. This prosopography is based on several thousands of the unpublished Neo- and Late-Babylonian tablets housed in various museums and collections in Europe and U.S., in addition

to published material. The Horn Museum has about twenty unpublished tablets from these temple cities. Dr. Zadok has published six books and over 200 articles and book reviews. His fields of interest are history of Mesopotamia and Iran during the first millennium B.C., West Semitic, Old Iranian and Elamite onomastics, prosopography and lexicography, as well as the prosopography of the Old Testament, the ethno-linguistic character of the pre-Islamic Fertile Crescent, and Syro-Palestinian toponymy. Dr. Zadok is a native of Israel, born in 1944 in Petah-Tikva. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)



Ran Zadok

# RANDOM SURVEY

## *Aššur Underwater*

The ancient city of Aššur will soon be submerged underwater as a result of an Iraqi Dam project. Aššur and the ruins of nearly 100 archaeological sites are in the path of a reservoir that will cover the entire region when the Iraqi government completes Makhoul Dam across the Tigris River approx. 125 miles south of Mosul, Iraq. The dam is being built to provide electricity and irrigation water for local farms. Though the upper city may not be damaged, the largely unexcavated residential area will likely be completely submerged or destroyed by the rising water table.

## *Egypt Comes to America*

An Egyptian exhibit has recently opened at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. entitled, *Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt*. Many of the items in this collection have not been displayed before or seen outside of Egypt. The exhibition will continue through Oct. 14, 2002 before moving on to Boston, Denver and other cities.

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VOX: 616-471-3273

FAX: 616-471-3619

E-mail: [hornmusm@andrews.edu](mailto:hornmusm@andrews.edu)

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## *Antiquities Recovered*

The Egyptian government and the International community have begun a crack-down on antiquities smuggling. Recently, several artifacts were returned to Egypt that had been sold as "cheap souvenirs." Smugglers had dipped the rare antiquities in plastic and painted the items black like many souvenirs found on sale in the markets of Egypt. Later the objects were sold as part of a fictitious collection. Egyptian authorities hope that all the antiquities sold by this smuggling ring will be recovered.

## *ASOR in Saudi Arabia*

In an effort to create an academic partnership with Saudi Arabia, ASOR member David Graf of the University of Miami conducted an epigraphic expedition to the Hijaz of Saudi Arabia. He recorded approx. 40 new Nabataean Aramaic inscriptions with Dr. Hussein Abu al-Hassan. He also toured many archaeological sites including Mada, Al-Ula, Tayma, Tabuk and possibly a Nabataean port at Ayn Una. Dr. Graf will serve as a consultant for Arabian Heritage and ASOR hopes to launch an archaeological project to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the near future.

## *Palmyra Cemetery*

A Syro-Japanese team of archaeologists has recently discovered an A.D. 98 cemetery 6 meters below ground level. The richly carved and ornate burial chambers were found largely intact, including clothing and jewelry.

# NEWSLETTER



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