

NEWSLETTER



INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

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MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER

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Triennial Jordan Conference

The Ninth International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan was held from May 23-27, 2004, under the patronage of HM King Abdullah II. The triennial conference, initiated in 1980 by HRH Prince al-Hassan Bin Talal, is often held at an international setting, but was based this time at the Crowne Plaza Resort Hotel in Wadi Musa, outside Petra, Jordan. The theme of this conference, which was organized by the Department of Antiquities and the Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, was "Cultural Interaction Through the Ages."

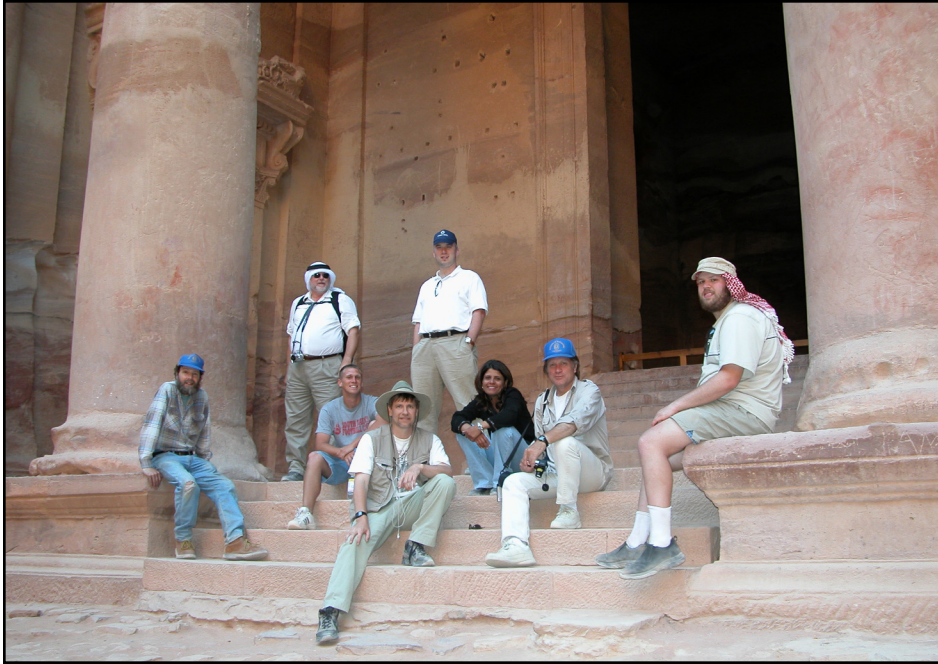
The opening ceremony was held at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, and was inaugurated by HRM Princess Sumaya Bint al-Hassan on behalf of HM King Abdullah II. A number of awards were presented to scholars and institutions, among them the Institute of Archaeology's own Øystein LaBianca and the *American Center of Oriental Research*, with the keynote address presented by Alan Walmsley entitled "Evaluating Cultural Interaction: Historical Perspectives on Conflict, Interchange and Plurality in Pre-Modern Society."

The conference itself consisted of 120 papers grouped around 11 themes. Papers of Madaba Plains Project personnel included: The Political Economy of the Hellenistic-Roman Settlements in the Dhiban Plateau (Chang-Ho Ji and Jong Keun Lee); The Politics of Land Management in Medieval Islam: The Northern Jordan Survey, 2004 (Bethany Walker); The Water Facilities at Tall Hisban: Diachronic Social Structures in the Tall Hisban Region (David Merling); Cultural Interaction through the Ages: The View from Tall Hisban and the Madaba Plains (Øystein

(cont'd. on p. 2)



The Crowne Plaza Resort Hotel in Wadi Musa where the Conference was held.



Conference presenters and participants visit Petra.

LaBianca); Cultural Interaction through the Windows of the Four-Room House at Tall al-'Umayri (Douglas Clark); Camel Petroglyphs in the Wadi Nasib and their Implications for the Use of Camels during the Late Bronze Age in the Levant (Randall Younker); and Two-Humped Camels: Trajanic Propaganda or Reality (David Graf).

As part of the conference there were field trips to the Palace of King Abdullah I, the founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in Ma'an, to Petra itself as well as the nearby Neolithic sites of Bayda and Ba'ja. The next conference will be in Washington DC in 2007. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)



Tall Hisban 2004

The 2004 season at Tall Hisban was conducted between May 24 and June 23. It was sponsored by Andrews University, with the support of Oklahoma State University and other academic institutions. This year's excavation focused, as in 2001, on Hisban's Islamic-period history. Fieldwork consisted of four excavation areas, three restoration projects, a survey of Wadi Majar, and ethnographic

work in the village of Hisban. The project was directed by Dr. Øystein LaBianca, with Dr. Bethany Walker as codirector and chief archaeologist, and Dr. Keith Mattingly as administrative director.

The four excavation fields produced excellent architectural documentation for the development of the medieval village through the nineteenth century. The 1998 and 2001 seasons uncovered the remains on the summit (Area L) of what is

believed to be the residence of the Mamluk governor of the Balqa' in the fourteenth century A.D. Further investigation here in 2004 produced the floor plan of a series of rooms connecting this residence to the fortification wall. Renewed excavation on the western slope of the tell (Area C) explored the Middle Islamic village. A large stone building, 11 m long and originally barrel-vaulted, was discovered and identified as a Byzantine farmhouse. The structure was reused and significantly rebuilt in the Mamluk period (fourteenth century) as a stable and then further refashioned in the nineteenth century for a similar purpose. The team opened up a new field of excavation (Area O), on the southwestern slope of the tell, to further investigate masonry identified at the end of the 2001 season. This turned out to be a heavily constructed, one-room building measuring 9.6 x 6.2 m, covered by a stone barrel vault, and enclosed by large walls (1-1.5 m thick and preserved to a height of eight courses). This apparent farmhouse has been tentatively dated to the early nineteenth century and appears to occupy the original site of the modern village of Hisban. Excavation also continued on the northeastern slope of the tell (Area M), where a Mamluk storage facility, built



Arched doorway of the Mamluk Governor's Residence at Tall Hisban.

above the remains of a Roman quarry and cistern, was documented. In terms of small finds, these fields produced evidence of local production of Islamic glazed wares in the late Mamluk period in the form of firing tripods (used to separate vessels from one another when stacking them in a kiln) and wasters (poorly fired vessels, usually discarded). There was also a large quantity of medieval glass vessels and metal objects recovered, mostly related to animal husbandry.

The goal of the survey in the Wadi Majar was to trace the development of agriculture in the Hisban region by identifying Mamluk and Ottoman “farmsteads” and to gather data on environment, crop patterns, and agricultural markets. Six large sites related to planting and food preparation were mapped and recorded in detail. Several of the sites were Late Ottoman water mills, which attest to the “grain boom” of the nineteenth century that played a pivotal role in the revival of villages in the Madaba Plains.

As part of its continuing commitment to site preservation, Andrews University reinforced and restored several key architectural components on the summit, including the northeast tower, the northern gate of the Roman fortification wall, and an arched doorway in the Mamluk governor’s residence. (Bethany J. Walker)



‘Umayri 2004

The tenth season of excavation at Tall al-‘Umayri was conducted between June 23 and Aug. 4, 2004. It was sponsored by La Sierra University in consortium with Canadian University College, the Division of Architecture at Andrews University, Mount Royal College, Pacific Union College, and Walla Walla College. Excavation took place in four fields. Earlier seasons have produced finds from the Early Bronze Age through Persian periods with limited remains from the Hellenistic through Byzantine periods.



Cultic Niche in mudbrick wall of Late Bronze Age Building at Tall al-‘Umayri.

In Field A, on the western edge of the site, excavation was expanded towards the north in the hope of exposing earlier remains between the later Ammonite Administrative Complex and the Iron Age I remains already excavated in Field B.

In the northwest corner of the site, in Field B, two rooms of a palatial-type structure found in earlier seasons, and dating to the Late Bronze Age, were excavated deeper in order to locate their floors. Conventional wisdom since the time of Nelson Glueck argues for a rather limited population during the Late Bronze Age in Jordan. Architecture from this period is notably rare, especially in central Jordan. This discovery adds to the material remains a remarkably well-preserved building, lending some credence for a larger population than previously thought.

The floors, further down than anticipated, were not exposed, but the limits of the building were outlined and a unique cultic installation was discovered in a mudbrick wall in the largest room (measuring ca. 5 x 8 meters). The cultic niche was whitewashed and consisted of a platform with at least two plastered steps. On the upper step was a large dome-shaped standing stone with four smaller ones, two on each side, and votive pottery vessels

placed above the two stones on the right. The smooth stones of the niche are unlike any other stones at the site and probably represented deities in the ancient world, the large central stone perhaps indicating the main deity of the temple. The major deity of the region at that time was a god named *Il* (or *El*), well-known in the Bible. In remains above it, a seal impression mentioning the Persian province of Ammon was found, bringing the total number of such impressions to five.

In the southwest corner of the site, Field H, a large cobbled courtyard where fragments of model shrines and anthropomorphic statue parts had been found in earlier seasons was excavated. Several later walls were removed and the early Iron Age II courtyard was traced over a wide area (ca. 6 x 10 meters).

Along the southern edge of the tell, in Field L, a rural domestic structure from the Hellenistic period was better defined. Partially uncovered in previous seasons, it demonstrated two phases of use. A series of large walls made up of huge boulders seems to date to Iron Age I. Small walls from late Iron Age II were sandwiched between. (Douglas R. Clark and Larry G. Herr)



RANDOM SURVEY

The Throne of Darius

Iranian archaeologists believe they have found a part of one leg of the throne of Darius the Great during their excavations at Persepolis, the ancient capital of the Achaemenid dynasty. The piece was made of *lapis lazuli* and was discovered in the excavation of a water canal passing under the treasury in south-eastern Persepolis. Historical sources maintain that the upper part of Darius' throne was made of gold, silver and ivory, while its legs were made of *lapis lazuli*.

4th Century BC Village Found Near Tel Aviv

A 4th cent. BC village was recently found near Tel Aviv, providing scholars with a rare insight into village life during the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods of the region. Finds include an area of industrial pottery production, a large mausoleum, a cemetery, and several mudbrick buildings.

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Vesuvius Threatens Herculaneum Treasures

New technology has allowed students of the Herculaneum Papyri (which survived the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 AD) to read the badly charred manuscripts. Now archaeologists are attempting to hasten further excavation of the villa where the papyri were found in an attempt to recover more manuscripts (possibly including the lost books of Aristotle) before another natural disaster occurs. Still another challenge to the operation is to secure the villa from the elements before further excavation.

Hercules Shrine Found at Thebes

Recent excavations at Thebes have uncovered the remains of an altar and ancient dwellings that conform to a 2,500 year-old description by the poet Pindar of a Hercules shrine commemorating his birthplace. Among the finds are signs of Hercules worship including small bronze figurines, one of which shows Hercules wrestling with a lion, which is a clear reference to one of his famous 12 labors.

The Death of King Tut

King Tut's body has recently been subjected to a CT scan in order to discover whether the cause of his death was murder or natural causes. About 1,700 images were taken. These are expected to provide a much more detailed, 3-D, view of his bones and skull.

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