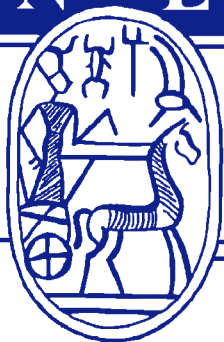


NEWSLETTER



INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER

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The Newsletter is published four times a year by the Institute of Archaeology, Andrews University. Annual subscription price is \$7.50. Museum membership, subscription, and editorial correspondence should be addressed to the Horn Archaeological Museum, Institute of Archaeology, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0990, Telephone 269-471-3273, Fax 269-471-3619, e-mail hornmusm@andrews.edu.

Volume 26.3
Summer 2005
ISSN 1095-2837

Excavations at Tall Jalul, 2005

Excavations were conducted at Tall Jalul, near Madaba, by Andrews University in consortium with the Madaba Plains Project from May 9 to June 16, 2005. Randall W. Younker and David Merling were codirectors and Bassam Al-Mahamed and Khaled Al-Hware were the Department of Antiquities Representatives. Field Directors included Dr Paul Gregor, Dr Mark Ziese, Prof Constance Gane, Ms Jennifer Groves, Dr Robert Bates, and Dr Paul Ray. Over 84 individuals participated in the excavations.

Excavations in Field A (at the north side of the tall) continued work in Squares A3, A4, A7, A8, A9 and A10. This is the area in which the late Iron Age II (7th century BC) tripartite building was found during the 1996 season. This season it was decided to remove the tripartite building, since it was poorly preserved and seemed to be a promising place for penetrating earlier occupation levels. Excavations in Squares A3, A4 exposed an additional 1.00 m of Iron Age II fill and 1.00 to 1.50 m of Iron Age I fill. As in 1999, significant amounts of Middle and Late Bronze Age sherds were recovered in addition to those from Iron Age I. The large number of these sherds, found this season, would seem to point to a significant occupation at Jalul during these periods, although no architectural elements have yet been found.

Excavations in Square A8 exposed a large pit whose contents consisted of Iron Age II (8th century BC) sherds. It was cut prior to the foundation of the 7th-century BC building. The purpose of this pit is as yet unknown. The ashy lenses on either side and under this pit were from the early Iron Age II (9th century BC) and late Iron Age I (10th century BC). In Square A9, the west wall of the 8th-century BC structure, found in 1996, was seen to continue to a SW corner. At a higher level another fragmentary stretch of wall that appears to date to the same period as the tri-

cont'd on p. 2



Jalul Team from the 2005 Season.

partite building (7th century BC) was found. Conspicuous in the ashy lenses mentioned above was the presence of a considerable number of bones of large animals such as horse, donkey, and large cattle. This increase in large draft animals would indicate a definite shift to a more intensive agricultural system during Iron Age I. There was also a notable presence of pig bones during Iron Age II. Small finds in Field A, from this season, included a ceramic figurine depicting what appears to be a robed, barefooted male figure, possibly an Ammonite king.

Excavations in Field B (the gate area on the east side of the tell) were conducted in four new squares (B1, B20, B21, B22). The goal this season was to trace the remains of the two approach roads dated to the mid-Iron Age II (9th and 8th centuries BC) originally found in the 1992 season. Excavations in Squares B1 and B20 uncovered an additional 3.00 m of the road heading downslope to the northeast. However, subsequent erosion or robbing destroyed the road beyond this point. Two additional Squares (B21 and B22) were opened further to the east in line with where it was expected that the older (9th century BC) Iron Age II road ran, but the excavation of over 2.00 m of fill failed to reach the lower road with the possible exception of three paving stones. A significant object that was found here was an ostrakon with three letters.

Three new squares (C6, C7, C8) were opened in Field C, southeast of the those excavated in previous seasons. The goal in excavating these squares was to continue to expose the late Iron II/Persian period building that was found in Square C5 during the 1999 season. Excavation in Squares C7 and C8 failed to reach a sufficient depth to expose this building. However, its northern wall was found to continue into the southern part of Square C6. Work in this square also showed that the building cut through a couple of pavements dating from mid- to late Iron Age II (8th-7th centuries BC). Immediately north of the pavement, another wall that was apparently associated with both of the pavements was

located. The date of this wall is not yet known.

In Field D, excavations were conducted in several rooms of the late Iron II/Persian period building (6th/5th centuries BC) found during the 1999 season, in an attempt to remove the roof collapse and other fallen debris. Work was concentrated in rooms within Squares D1 and D3 where several late Iron II/Persian period vessels were found. Bowls seem to dominate the ceramic corpus here. A large number of basalt stone food preparation objects suggest a domestic function for this building. A number of objects were found in this field including several figurines.

Excavations in Field E (located immediately north of Field B on the northeast side of the tell) continued work in the four squares opened in 2000. The goal in this field was to open a trench that would cut across what is thought to be a possible tower and the city wall north of the approach roads. While work in Squares E3 and E4 removed subsurface debris, excavation in Squares E1 and E2 came upon what appears to be collapsed mudbrick material on top of stony rubble, possibly an indicator of a destroyed structure (tower or wall). In Square E2 a small section of mudbrick wall was found, measuring about 1.00 sq. m. At least three courses of mudbrick could be discerned. The precise function of this stretch of mudbrick is as yet unknown. Also found in Field E were a number of small objects including a seal.

A new field was opened in 2005 on the north side of the acropolis in the hope of illuminating the nature of the entrance into this area. Two Squares (F1 and F2) were opened. Excavations here penetrated about 0.5 to 1.00 m of subsurface debris. The ceramics in Square F1 were a mixture of Early Islamic, Byzantine, Hellenistic, and Iron Age II. In Square F2, late Iron Age II sherds were more common. However, late Iron Age II sherds were dominant in both squares. (Randall W. Younker and David Merling)



Tsouparopoulou Lecture

Christina Tsouparopoulou, Research Associate at the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Cambridge University, presented a lecture entitled *What Can These Tiny Clay Tablets Tell Us About Ancient Drehem?* on Jan. 31, 2005, as part of the Horn Museum lecture series. Ms Tsouparopoulou was at Andrews University to study the cuneiform tablets from the Mesopotamian site of Drehem which are part of the collection at the Horn Archaeological Museum.

Located on a branch of the Euphrates River, about 10 km southwest of Nippur in modern Iraq, Drehem (ancient Puzrish-Dagan) was established as an administrative distribution center during the 39th year (2057 BC) of the reign of Shulgi. The site remained in operation for 40 years, producing a significant portion of the Neo-Sumerian cuneiform tablets of the Ur III Dynasty, along with the cities of Ur, Umma, Nippur, and Gisha.

As an archaeological site, Drehem has never been properly excavated, though numerous illicit excavations during the 1880s-1920s, have occurred. The existing corpus of tablets was collected during these illicit digs, including those



Christina Tsouparopoulou.

currently housed at the Horn Museum. It has been estimated that there were originally over 60,000 tablets in the Drehem archives, but only about 15,000 are known today. In the absence of archaeological excavation, these clay tablets, written in cuneiform script and in the Sumerian language, provide the only clues to this site's ancient role.

The site of Drehem played a major role in the accounting and distribution of animals throughout the kingdom of Ur III. The tablets track the transactions whereby animals were collected, transported, and distributed. Collection usually fell into one of three categories: private donations by wealthy individuals, payment of government taxes such as the bala tax, and

booty collected from military campaigns. There are many references to animals taken from the Amorites. Once collected, the animals were then distributed throughout the kingdom. The majority were sent to kitchens to feed priests, officials, troops, and government workers. The best animals were used as sacrifices to the gods. It has been estimated that ca. 70 animals were sacrificed daily.

The predominance of animal accounting in the Drehem tablets has led most scholars to assume that the site was a stockyard. Tsouparopoulou contests this view, suggesting rather that it was an accounting center through which most animals never passed. To support her claim, she cites the tablets themselves,

which often mention animals sent by the priest of a temple in a far-off city being used as a sacrifice in that particular temple. It is unlikely that an animal would be transported across the country only to be recorded and sent right back. Also, the numbers of animals recorded would have required a large workforce to care for and manage the animals at a central facility, and there is little evidence of this at Drehem. Still, since excavations have never been carried out, and many of the tablets from the archive are no longer available, further evidence is required to adequately determine the role of this site, which was unquestionably important to the Ur III economy. (Darrell J. Rohl)



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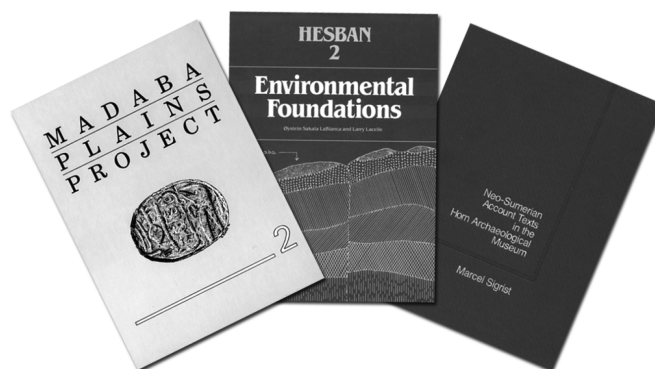
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RANDOM SURVEY

Ancient Hebrew Alphabet Discovered

At Tel Zayit archaeologists have found the oldest Hebrew alphabet inscribed on a reused stone within a wall. The discovery was made this July of 2005. The letters are roughly in the present order of the Hebrew alphabet. The inscription dates to the 10th century BC. Ron E. Tappy of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, who directs the excavation of the site, says that all successive alphabets derive from this one, including Greek. Tel Zayit is located southwest of Jerusalem near Lachish.

Robot in Pyramid shaft

Egyptian archaeologist, Zahi Hawass, is planning to send a robot into a shaft in the Pyramid of Khufu at Giza. The shaft belongs to a 4,500-year-old mausoleum. He hopes to find an undiscovered burial chamber of Khufu, also known as Cheops (via Herodotus).

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Return of Papyri to Berkeley

UC Berkeley has recently received papyri which have resided at Oxford for several decades. The papyri originally came from Tebtunis, Egypt, a site which was excavated from 1899-1900 by British archaeologists Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt on behalf of UC Berkeley, after which the papyri many remained at Oxford. Though some papyri were eventually sent back to Berkeley, many fragments remained at Oxford until now. Some of the works written on these papyri are from Euripides and Homer as well as a medical handbook.

Bolaghi Gorge Flooded

Bolaghi Gorge is an important area in Iran that is about to be flooded. It is undergoing a large salvage excavation project. The project has broad implications, as the area contains important information about the Achaemenid Period. In 2003 experts from the Parse-Pasargadae Research Center discovered that it was not just the bed for the king's road, but that numerous artifacts and monuments were also buried there.

Goliath at Gath

An ostrakon with two names similar to Goliath has recently been found at the site of Tell es-Safi (Gath). The find dates to ca. 950 BC and represents the earliest Philistine inscription found so far.

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