

The Institute of ARCHAEOLOGY Siegfried H. Horn Museum



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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER

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Hisban 2016

Madaba Plains Project: Tall Hisban returned to the field from May 15 - June 1, 2016. The Tall Hisban excavations are part of the larger Hisban Cultural Heritage Project (HCHP), sponsored by Andrews University, with the collaboration of the University of Bonn and Missouri State University. The Director of the project is Øystein S. LaBianca, with Bethany J. Walker as Director of Excavations. Maria Elena Ronza continued to serve as the in-country coordinator. Abdullah Lababdeh and Husam Hijazeen were the Department of Antiquities representatives this season, with Ehab Aljariri, as the Department Surveyor. The international team consisted of 35 students, the majority from the United States and Germany, and 16 workmen from the Hisban village.

Located approximately 25 kilometers south of Amman, Tall Hisban is a multi-period, fortified hilltop site just above the Madaba Plains. There is evidence at the site for over 4,000 years of occupation, spanning the Iron Age through modern periods. Lithic remains, furthermore, suggest a longer history of occupation, perhaps going as far back as the Paleolithic period. The architectural remains on the summit include the remnants of an ancient wall (of the Hellenistic period), a Roman period monumental building, and a Byzantine period basilica. The majority of the standing structures, however, belong to a 14th-century A.D. complex that included a military garrison. The summit over the millennia was thus transformed from a cultic to a military site, culminating with the town's function as an important military, administrative, and economic center on the Mamluk frontier. The slopes below the summit of the tell were densely settled, especially in the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods, as is evidenced by the many wall lines and the standing architecture on and surrounding the tell.

(cont'd on p. 2)



Jeff Hudon Showing Students the Various Features of the Reservoir in Field B at Tall Hisban.

The 2016 season, which focused on the western, northern and southern slopes of the tell, was designed to address questions related to the history and development of the medieval Islamic settlement, and specific stratigraphic problems. Fieldwork resumed in areas in which excavation had begun in previous seasons.

In Field B (the Iron Age reservoir) on the south slope, the goal of reaching the plastered bottom of the reservoir, which had been filled in considerably since it was first opened in the 1970s, was accomplished. Cleaning of the reservoir made clarifying many aspects of the relationship of this vast water system with the settlement on the southern slopes possible, as well as retrieving ceramics from the Iron Age and classical periods.

Above the reservoir, excavation continued from a Mamluk-period structure built into the ruins of a Byzantine-period house that had been excavated in the 2014 season. The stratigraphic relationship of a stone-lined pit, containing three large jars, constructed against a Mamluk-period structure, and a Byzantine-period house, discovered in 2013 and 2014, was also clarified. As a result, the nature of reuse of ruined buildings from the Byzantine period was better understood.

In Field M, on the upper northern slopes of the tell below the northeast corner tower of the Citadel, we continued to excavate a narrow, barrel-vaulted chamber downslope from this tower, which is one of many built against each other and covering the northern slope. This project was completed this season and the changing functions of this chamber and its history of construction and use were clarified. Built in the Mamluk period, likely on ancient walls, this space was used for the processing of grains, as confirmed by phytolith analysis. In the process of excavation, a large, vaulted, subterranean structure was discovered below this chamber, connected to a huge cistern.

In Field O, on the west slope, four individual domestic structures, built against each other and identified as single-room farmhouses, were uncovered. One was particularly well preserved and

produced a large quantity of imported glass and ceramics. While the foundations of the house were laid in the Abbasid period, the building was subsequently reused and rebuilt in the Mamluk period. Further study of such clusters of houses helps us to understand the social structure of village communities in the Middle Islamic period.

In Field P, on the lower west slope, we continued to excavate a large farmhouse, begun already in 2004, this season with the hope of dating the original construction, and documenting its physical and functional changes over time. The foundation trench was reached, confirming that it was built in the Late Byzantine or Early Islamic period. However, it was heavily restructured and occupied again in the Mamluk period, with further repairs and occupation throughout the Ottoman period. The structure includes a walled courtyard. An additional structure built against the façade of the house was also uncovered.

A systematic survey of the caves in the immediate vicinity of the tell began this season as a first step towards GIS mapping of subterranean sites associated with the tell.

The well-preserved architectural remains of farmhouses supporting the Mamluk-period castle, with their barrel vaults and beautifully plastered walls, floors and flagstone pavements were the most outstanding features of the discoveries this season. Also noteworthy, are the discovery of fragmentary lustered and enamelled glass vessels (expensive imports from Cairo in the 14th century), a chess piece of the same period (likely a knight), and a complete glazed contemporary lamp.

As an alternative to the use of drones for low-altitude photography, this season several complementary forms of photography were combined to create 3-D modelling of the standing structures, as well as the relationship of clusters of houses to one another, and the overall topography of the tell. (Bethany J. Walker)



Hasel Lecture

On January 25, 2016 Dr. Michael Hasel, professor Near Eastern Studies and Archaeology at Southern Adventist University, curator of the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum, and co-director of the *Fourth Expedition to Lachish* with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, presented a lecture entitled “The Battle Over King David: Excavating the Fortress of Elah” as part of the Horn Museum Lectureship Series.

Hasel began his lecture by stressing the importance of David as defining identity, whether Jewish or Christian, for without him much of what defines us in our faith and culture is lost. The Bible would be very different without him.

Hasel took time to present and examine the arguments of those on the other side of the debate, who argue against the historicity of David and his kingdom, and where (in scholarly opinion) they fall short. First, is the so-called “Mythological Argument,” which contends that ancient Israel and its history, as recorded in the Bible, was nothing more than a construct of later writers, and thus contains no historical truth at all. Philip Davies, e.g., once said that the “biblical empire of David and Solomon has not the faintest echo in the archaeological record *as yet*,” an argument proven false by the discovery of the House of David inscription at Tel Dan, in 1993-1994, which proved beyond doubt that David existed and was remembered over 140 years after his lifetime.

Despite the collapse of the theory of David as mythology, Israel Finkelstein contends that there is absolutely no archaeological evidence to support a Davidic monarchy, and that all the artifacts and destruction layers, previously dated to the 10th century BC (i.e., the time of David according to biblical chronology) could be adjusted to the 9th century BC, to the time of Ahab.

However, the inherent flaw in such a theory is that no evidence is simply a lack of evidence. It does not mean that there never was any evidence, or that the attest-

ed events never happened. Thus, there is no reason to disregard the biblical text.

In the case of 1 Sam 17:1-3, which describes how the Battle of Elah took place, there is a very detailed description of the geography; the names of sites and towns, and the positioning of the opposing armies strongly imply that the biblical author was trying to preserve a record of an actual event. The site of Khirbet Qeiyafa lies just inside a north-south ridge of hills separating Philistia and Gath, to the west, from Judah, to the east. The ridge also includes the site of Azekah. Past this ridge is a series of connecting valleys between two parallel groups of hills. Socoh lies on the southern ridge, with Adullam behind it. Khirbet Qeiyafa is situated on the northern ridge, overlooking several valleys with a clear view of the Judean Mountains. From the topography, it is believed this was the location of the Battle of Elah cited in biblical text, and that these valleys formed the border between Philistia and Judah.

The site of Khirbet Qeiyafa has been known for 100 years, and surveys conducted on the site indicated Byzantine, Roman, Hellenistic period, and Iron Age IIB occupation, but nothing from earlier periods. The one Iron Age phase on the site was founded directly on bedrock as a large fortified city with a casemate wall and two gates (one facing west towards Philistia and another facing southeast towards Jerusalem), within which large quantities of restorable pottery and whole vessels have been found.

The traditional dating of the transition from Iron Age I to Iron Age IIA is ca. 1000 BC, but proponents of Finkelstein's Low Chronology date the end of the Iron Age I to ca. 920 BC, downgrading the High or Conventional Chronology by almost 100 years. However, carbon 14 dating of olive pits recovered from Khirbet Qeiyafa indicate that the city existed between ca. 1052-974 BC (the time of Saul and David according to Biblical Chronology). The majority of pottery found at Khirbet Qeiyafa is domestic Judean wares, but a Cypriot imported vessel, and a seal that are typi-



Michael Hasel.

cally dated to the early 10th century BC were also found. Advocates of the Low Chronology maintain instead that the site is a Philistine city since some Philistine-type pottery (Ashdod ware) was uncovered there. However, since less than 1% of the total amount of pottery from the site was Ashdod ware, it would seem more likely that it represents an occasional Philistine import rather than being indigenous to the site. Pottery collected from pre-excavation surveys had dated the site, and others in the immediate region, no earlier than late Iron Age IIB (the early part of the Divided Monarchy). However, evidence from the actual excavations and discoveries at the site now confirm Khirbet Qeiyafa as the earliest site in southern Judah, dating to Iron Age I-IIA (early 10th century BC), which would suggest that the conclusions made by advocates of the Low Chronology are based merely on the earlier survey work, which evidently missed or overlooked this pottery at Khirbet Qeiyafa.

The casemate fortification walls and two gates at Khirbet Qeiyafa indicate careful architectural planning. The gates are identical in dimension and size, suggesting that they were built by the same architect, during the same time period. This kind of town planning requires central organization, and it is the same architectural style that is used consistently at Judean sites such as Beth Shemesh, Tell

en-Nasbeh, and Beersheba; i.e., a style of urban planning never found at Philistine sites. Hence, Khirbet Qeiyafa is clearly a Judean site. In addition, on the basis of the identification of animal bones, archaeologists have generally found that there are no pig bones at Judean sites, though many (around 15-30%) have found at Philistine sites. No pig bones have been found in the excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa, suggesting that the ethnicity of the inhabitants were Judeans.

Inscriptions on at least two ostraca have been found at the site, both in a scribal hand dated to the 10th century BC. The first, not yet completely deciphered, includes several words (king, judge and slave) written in an early form of the Hebrew text. The second inscription reads "Eshbaal son of Beda," a name that has so far been found only in 10th century BC contexts, including the name of one of the sons of King Saul. Among the artifacts found during the excavation of the site were two curved swords. These finds are interesting because in the later Lachish Reliefs, from the 701 BC siege of Sennacherib at the site, the Assyrian soldiers are depicted carrying straight swords, while the Judean defenders had curved swords.

So what was the biblical name of Khirbet Qeiyafa? The text of 1 Sam 17, from which Dr. Hasel began the lecture, includes a geographical reference in verse 52 to a place called Shaarayim, located within the region of the Elah Valley, near Gath and Ekron. In Hebrew, Shaarayim literally means "two gates," and as already noted Khirbet Qeiyafa was a fortified with two city gates. This site is the only contender for Shaarayim, as all other sites in Israel dated to the 10th century BC have only yielded a single gate.

The site of Khirbet Qeiyafa has yielded a number of discoveries that clarify the archaeological understanding of the 10th century BC, in Israel; a time frame which according to the view of some scholars, was thought to have no biblical significance. (Dorian Alexander)



RANDOM SURVEY

New Egyptian Stele Found:

A stele measuring 1.05 x 0.65 x 0.18 m was recently discovered at Taposiris Magna, SW of Alexandria, Egypt, consisting of two registers with more than 20 lines in hieroglyphic and five lines in demotic script. It bears the cartouches of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes, his sister Princess Cleopatra I, his mother Queen Arsinoe III and his father King Ptolemy IV Philopator. It is contemporary with the famous Rosetta stone, also dedicated to king Ptolemy V Epiphanes, which was inscribed in hieroglyphic, demotic and Greek scripts.

Treasure Found:

A 4th century AD shipwreck has recently been found in the harbor of Caesarea Maritima, in Israel. Divers found a hoard of bronze artifacts, apparently on their way to be recycled. Among the artifacts were a statue of the moon goddess Luna, a lamp depicting the Roman sun god Sol, and thousands of coins of Constantine fused together in two large lumps in a ceramic vessel.

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Greek Tomb Found:

A Hellenistic-period tomb has been found at Amphipolis, Greece, possibly containing the remains of one of Alexander's generals. The remains consist of two middle-aged men, one who died of a stab wound, a 60+ year-old woman, who suffered from osteoporosis, a newborn child, and another adult who had been cremated. Additional bone fragments are both human and animal. The tomb itself consists of an underground vault of three chambers, with mosaic floors, behind a façade with two marble sphinxes, inside of which were a pair of caryatids.

Praetorian Guard House?

A building that is thought to have housed the Praetorian Guard of Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD), has recently been found in Rome, not far from the Colosseum. It consists of a 100 m (328 ft) hallway, off of which are 39 rooms, with mosaic floors, and numerous artifacts. The ruins cover an area of 900 sq m (9,700 sq ft), and are 9 m (30 ft) below the current street level. Historically, there were at least four other Roman barracks in this area of the city.

New Excavations at Ur:

Archaeologists have begun to excavate at Ur again. Significant discoveries include cuneiform tablets and a piece of ebony wood, a trade item which came over the Persian Gulf from *Meluhha*, a nation mentioned in a tablet dealing with the Indus Valley civilization.

NEWSLETTER



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