Royalty Visit MPP

The Madaba Plains Project was graced this summer by visits of the Royal Family of Jordan to Tall Hisban and Tall al-'Umayrī. The visit to Hisban was in conjunction with a celebration marking thirty years since the commencement of excavations at the site. The celebration was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Ra’d Ibn Said, who participated in the Hisban expedition led by Siegfried S. Horn in 1971. His Royal Highness (HRH) is a cousin of His Majesty King Hussein. In addition to HRH Prince Ra’d Ibn Said, other officials included Ghazi Bisheh, Director of the Department of Antiquities; His Excellency Akel Baltaji, Minister of Tourism; Pierre Bikai, Director of the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman; Akram Ajarmeh, Member of the Jordanian Parliament; Yusuf al Awawdah, Mayor of the village of Hisban; and Mustafa al Barari, Founder of the Friends of Hisban. Lawrence T. Geraty, President of La Sierra University and Director of the 1974-1976 Hisban excavations, and Niels-Erik Andreasen, President of Andrews University, also attended the celebration. Approximately 300 people participated in the festivities held in the ancient remains of a Christian church on the summit of the tall.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince El Hassan and his daughter HRH Princess Sumaya bint al-Hassan visited Tall al-'Umayrī. Bisheh and Baltaji accompanied the royal family. The visit was part of the inauguration of a new Jordanian program to promote the archaeological heritage of the country. As part of this program, a member of the royal family visits an archaeological site every week.

Larry G. Herr, Director of the ‘Umayrī excavations, provided a tour of the excavation areas as well as the facilities at the camp headquarters. HRH Princess Sumaya bint al-Hassan joined the (cont’d. on p. 2)

Royal visit to Tall al-'Umayri. L to R: Ghazi Bisheh; Akel Baltaji; Øystein S. LaBianca; Paul J. Ray, Jr.; Princess Sumaya bint al-Hassan; Crown Prince El Hassan; Larry G. Herr; Douglas R. Clark; Lawrence T. Geraty. (photo courtesy of Douglas R. Clark)
team for lunch at camp and later invited all of the MPP personnel to dine at Kan Zaman, a renowned local restaurant.

Through these visits to Hisban and ‘Umayri it is evident that the royal family has a genuine love for Jordan’s past and how it fits into the present of the Jordanian people today. (edited from correspondences from Øystein S. LaBianca and Larry G. Herr)

**Map Project**

The three-dimensional map of Jerusalem displayed in the Horn Archaeological Museum attracts many visitors. This model was made toward the end of the nineteenth century and it is extremely delicate. The plaster of paris surface breaks easily when touched.

Robert M. Little, professor emeritus at Andrews University and long-time friend of the museum, has retouched the edges of the map, making damage less visible (see Newsletter 18.4-19.1). However, in the few months since Little’s work, signs of new damage are apparent. Most of the this results from visitors leaning on the model or touching it. Zippers and belt buckles are particularly injurious to the edges of the map; oil from fingers and hands also mars the finish.

Unfortunately, the size of the map (6.5 feet in diameter) coupled with the limited display area do not permit space for a barrier around the model while still allowing visitors access to other parts of the viewing area. Without some kind of protection, the model will continue to be damaged.

Currently the Museum plans to create an interactive display of the Jerusalem model. Suggested prototypes would include a new base and protective lexan cover. Push buttons would selectively light certain areas of the map and provide audio-visual descriptions.

The estimated cost for this project is $10,000. These funds must be raised before the changes can be made.

Further damage to this artifact continues to happen on a daily basis. If you are interested in helping us save this model, please send donations to the Horn Archaeological Museum and note that it is specifically for the Jerusalem Model Development Project. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)

**Annual Meeting**

The 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research convened in Orlando, Florida from November 18-21. The meetings focused on all aspects of Near Eastern archaeology. Meetings were held at the Renaissance Hotel.

Randall W. Younker, Institute Director, Øystein S. LaBianca and Paul J. Ray, Jr., Director and Chief Archaeologist of the Tell Hisban excavations, respectively, presented papers at the convention. Younker spoke on Iron Age tribes of the Madaba Plains region and served as a discussant during a roundtable session focused on the biblical tribes of Reuben and Gad. LaBianca presented ten hypotheses regarding Iron Age tribal kingdoms in the southern Levant. Ray re-evaluated an Iron I bedrock trench at Tall Hisban, suggesting it functioned as a dry moat. (Jennifer L. Groves)

**Museum Visitors**

Over 140 people toured the Museum throughout the Spring Quarter. Although the Museum was officially closed during the summer, tours were arranged for several groups in July.

Thirty people from the Adventist River-Platte University in Argentina viewed the Museum display. The group also included educators and medical personnel from Uruguay and Chile. Another international group of five leaders from the Syrian Orthodox Church in Aleppo, Syria, took time to tour the Museum. Scholars attending a Conference on Science and Faith, hosted by Andrews University, also enjoyed the exhibit.

The Museum has resumed its normal viewing hours for the academic year. The Museum will be open from 9 am to noon and 2 pm to 5 pm (Monday-Thursday), 9 am to noon (Friday), and 2 pm to 5 pm (Saturday). (Philip R. Drey)

**Visiting Scholars**

The Institute is pleased to facilitate the work of scholars. In October, Cord Kühne, Universität des Saarlandes in Saarbrücken, Germany, studied several Old Babylonian tablets that are part of the Museum’s collection.

Bethany Walker, a recent doctoral graduate of the University of Toronto, will be studying the Islamic pottery from Tall Hisban this spring in order to bring it to final publication. (Jennifer L. Groves)
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O YES  O NO
In a recent (Newsletter 19.3) article concerning the 1998 excavations at Tall Hisban, several points need to be clarified. First, although the Hellenistic period began in the fourth century BC, Hellenistic material at Tall Hisban as well as most of Transjordan did not appear until the late second century BC. Second, the Late Islamic squatter house is located above the Middle Islamic rooms and not the Byzantine floors. Third, the whole underground structure in Area M (not just one of the vertical shafts) functioned as a cistern and later as a tomb. We apologize if this article led to some confusion.

The Jordan Satellite Channel (JSC) is now available in the United States on Telstar 5 Satellite. This service is provided by the Kelly Company (www.kbs-tv.com). If you are interested in receiving the JSC, you can contact the Kelly Company at (973) 736-0800 or (973) 673-1251.

His Majesty King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is reported to have been completely cured of lymphoma. The King will have undergone six treatment cycles of chemotherapy at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. We at the Institute of Archaeology wish to congratulate His Majesty on his speedy and successful recovery from the lymph cancer. For more information on HM King Hussein, the royal family, and the history of Jordan, visit the following Web address: www.kinghussein.gov.jo.

Bryant G. Wood, director of the Khirbet al-Makarter excavations and Director of the Associates for Biblical Research, will be speaking as part of the Horn Museum Lecture Series on January 11 at 8:00 pm in the Seminary Chapel on the campus of Andrews University. Plan now to attend!