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Archaeological Museum Newsletter

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Fall 2006

The Institute of Archaeology & Siegfried H. Horn Museum Newsletter Volume 27.4

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NEWSLETTER

The Institute of ARCHAEOLOGY Siegfried H. Horn Museum



Spring Study Tour

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From March 17-27, 2006 the Institute of Archaeology sponsored a short tour to Egypt and Jordan. The purpose of the tour was to visit sites in Egypt and Sinai, especially those that the Museum/Institute personnel had not previously had opportunity to see, as well as for the purpose of taking digital pictures for the ever-expanding archive at the Institute. A short two-day stopover in Jordan was also made in order to followup some post-dig issues from the previous summer's excavation.

The tour was led by Drs. Randall Younker, David Merling and Paul Ray. Other participants included PhD student Ronald Wakeman, several MDiv students (Caleb and Tara VinCross, Gregory and Melissa Howell, Jeremy Jacko and Samuel Millen) as well as a couple of spouses (Rebecca Jacko and Angela Millen), Zechariah Ray, son of Dr. Ray, and Boyd Lundell, a pastor from the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

While the group had hoped to visit some specific sites such as Kadesh-barnea, many of the participants had not previously been to Egypt or Jordan, so the itinerary was also designed to take in a number of the better-known sites within both countries. With the tour beginning in Cairo, sites such as the Giza Pyramids, Saqqara and the Cairo Museum were visited. The group also went to the site of Dashur, south of Saqqara, where the Bent Pyramid of Sneferu was built. Until recently, this pyramid, an intermittent type between the stepped and true varieties, and the others within this

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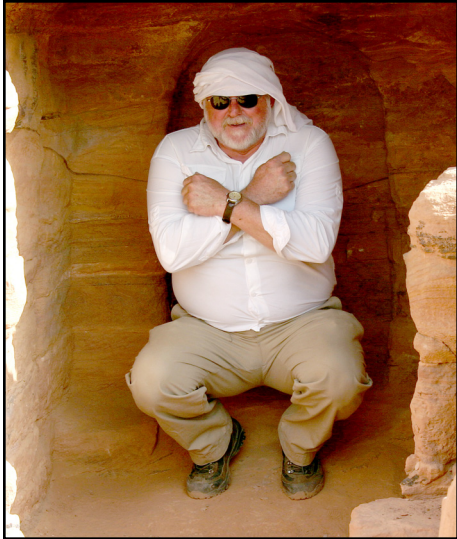
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Top-bottom: Gregory Howell, Randall Younker and Zechariah Ray descend from Gebel Musa.



Dr. Merling “deified” at Hathor Temple.

complex were in a military zone, and hence unavailable to the general public. While a couple of the Institute staff had at one time gained entrance to the complex with permission, photographs and free access to the site had proved fruitless until the present visit.

Due to recent security concerns in the Sinai, certain parts of the peninsula are currently off-limits to foreigners, so a couple of places on the itinerary were unavailable to visit. Hence, the time was spent exploring other sites in the area such as the Hathor Temple at Serabit el-Khadim, the proto-Sinaitic inscriptions and some camel petroglyphs in Wadi Nasib, the latter of special interest to Dr. Younker, and climbing Gebel Musa, the



Sam and Angie Millen befriend Camel.

traditional site of Mount Sinai. While relaxing at Nuweiba, the group took time to look into the claims that this was the Red Sea crossing point of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. Part of the group, who are certified scuba-divers, dove to the natural table coral formations, which some have thought to be chariot wheels. Pharaoh Island, possibly the site of Ezion-geber of the Bible, was also visited.

In addition to dig-related business in Jordan, the group took time to tour such sites as Amman, Petra and Jerash as well as dining at Kan Zaman, a unique Arab dining and cultural experience housed in an Ottoman-period building south of Amman. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)



Tappy Lecture

On April 6, 2006 Ronald Tappy presented an illustrated lecture entitled “Tel Zayit in the Early Iron II Period: A Biblical City on the Border of Judah” for the Horn Museum Lecture Series. Dr. Tappy is from the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary where he serves as G. Albert Shoemaker Professor of Bible and Archaeology, director of the James L. Kelso Bible Lands Museum at the Seminary, and director of excavations at Tel Zayit (Tell Zeitah in Arabic).

Work began in 1999 at Tel Zayit, an ancient village believed to be biblical Libnah in ancient Judah, on the border of Judah and Philistia. Libnah is first mentioned in Joshua 15:20 as one of the cities of this region which is located in the central valley system of the lowlands. At first glance this site shows little indication of anything of significance, but recent discoveries are changing that opinion.

The site was inhabited during the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1500-1200 BC) at which time there are indications of Egyptian presence, as can be seen in the building structures, jewelry, and other artifacts found at this site. There are also

Cypriot imports such as Bichrome ware and evidence of a destruction (ca. 1250 BC). This destruction was followed by an occupational gap of about 250 years from 1250-1000 BC. During this time the Philistines were at their strongest as a distinct culture, but unlike Lachish, Tel Zayit appears not to have come under their domination.

At least three Early Iron Age II levels have been discovered at the site so far, consisting of local levels III-I, dating to the 10th, early 9th, and late 9th centuries BC respectively. Local Level I was destroyed by fire. This destruction appears to correlate with Hazael’s campaign (2 Kings 12:17-18).

In Square N-20 there was a beaten-earth surface against a flimsy wall with



Ron Tappy.

pits everywhere. Part of the floor was cut away and secondary deposits were found. Under this floor a large number of intact amphorae with rounded bottoms that could be set in a hole in the floor of a house were located. They are not typical Judahite jars, but Coastal Plain jars from the late 9th century BC also found at Philistine sites. Ash and grain from the local Level I destruction was dated to the late 9th century BC using Carbon 14.

In Square O-20 there were two pits contemporary with the late 9th century BC building, which appear to have been used for storage and contained Judahite pottery with red-slip vertical-hand burnish. There was also coastal plain one-

handled jars, Ashdod ware with black and white bands on 2-handled jars. In the bottom of the pit there were large clay balls of unbaked clay weighing about 900 grams that appear to be fermentation stoppers which they would stuff with cloth.

In Square O-19 there were more pits and a large wall with earthquake cracks dating to early 8th century BC (cp. Amos 1). A monolith was discovered, that turned out to be part of an interior wall. Another monolith was found 12 m away, with a third monolith at another 12 m distance, and so on all the way around the site. In the 10th century BC, when this site was rebuilt it appears that the inhabitants built a defense system enclosing the upper city. A two-story house with a collapsed upper room was also found. Underneath the debris was a flagstone floor. In the lower room there was a burned beam and a lot of sling stones indicating a destruction which dates to the late 10th century BC, after the reign of Solomon.

During the last two days of the season, a volunteer saw some scratches on a rock in a wall. Its position in the wall suggests it was intended to be seen. When the stone was removed, they found a cavity on the bottom side indicating previous use. The inscription contains all 22 Hebrew consonants, but there are some peculiar features. The normal order of some of the consonants is reversed and appears in following order: *wau* and *heh* (unattested), *het* and *zayin* (attested in Isbet Sartah), *lamed* and *kaf* (unattested), *pe* and *ayin* (attested in the Hebrew Bible acrostic poems in the Psalms and in a few other places in the OT). Whether the two unattested transpositions are scribal errors or simply an early tradition of the Hebrew alphabet is as yet undetermined. The form of the Tell Zayit letters appears to have more archaic traits than the Gezer calendar (also 10th century BC). The significance of this find is that it provides more evidence of written forms of Hebrew in the 10th century BC. (Carrie Rhodes)



Drehem Archive

Paola Paoletti, a PhD candidate at the Institut für Assyriologie und Hethitologie at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, was at the Horn Museum in May of 2006 to study some of the Neo-Sumerian tablets in the collection.

A particular characteristic of the written tradition of ancient Mesopotamia is the large amount of documents reflecting everyday life. From the time of the Ur III Dynasty (21st century B.C.) about 60,000 administrative documents have been preserved. These documents come, for the most part, from state or provincial archives and are written in the Sumerian language. In terms of administrative documents, the Treasure Archive of Drehem (about 10 km SW of Nippur in Iraq) occupies an important role in a cultural-historical sense and a central role socially.

While the largest administrative archive of Drehem pertains to the state livestock administration, the subjects of the Treasure Archive are prestige items. The dissertation of the present writer includes a detailed treatment of 180 of these documents (30 so far unpublished).

The tablets can be categorized into two basic types: delivery of goods (raw material and with it the credit balance at its disposal) and expenditures (finished products). Raw material, especially precious metals, was probably delivered by individuals (often as exponents of institutions), or reflects booty from military campaigns, or tribute. Personal deliveries, possibly in form of tax, play an important role in the system of silver circulation in old Mesopotamian society.

Expenditures can be divided into cultic and secular. The former were offerings, usually from the king to the deities. The deliveries to persons are defined as "gifts" (*niĝ₂-ba*). The expenditures mention only the delivered object and the respective recipient (often a member of the highest social stratum). The occasion for the delivery is also frequently mentioned. As with deliveries to the state



Paola Paoletti.

archive, these expenditures are ultimately donations of the king, even if not personally ascribed to him. Some of the deliveries in the Treasure Archive might fall at regular intervals, but the expenditures (gifts and offerings) are always unique acts, not regular allotments.

Besides this administrative aspect of the redistribution of goods, a political and social function is also connected to the gifts. The king distributed gifts to foreign emissaries, that were to be repaid with counter-gifts. The diplomatic exchange of gifts could result in a dynastic marriage, and builds on the practice of peaceful relations between neighboring regions. The king distributed gifts to his followers in large quantities, assuring the affection of the recipients. Comparable expenditures have been found in the archives at Ebla and Mari. Through these gifts, the royal clientele is rewarded and its loyalty to the royal house fortified.

The presence of foreign emissaries and the elite of the Ur III Dynasty reflected in the texts of the Treasure Archive make it an important historic resource as the figures of the royal circle and the practices of the court are decisively indicated by the frequent description of the occasion for the distribution. Hence, a systematic analysis of these documents makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the social and political interactions of the Ur III Dynasty. (Paola Paoletti)



RANDOM SURVEY

Pharaonic Hall Discovered:

An Egyptian-Spanish archaeology team working in Zira Abu al-Naga on the west bank of the Nile River in southern Egypt has discovered a pharaonic hall while excavating a tomb site there. It is believed that this hall belonged to an official responsible for temple and tomb decorations during the reign of Queen Hatshepsut (1502-1482 BC). The building is 34 m long and contains many carved drawings on the walls. The hall, which opens into the tomb area, appears to be the longest one of its kind discovered to date.

Ancient Thracian City Found:

Archaeologists working in central Bulgaria have found what is believed to be a Thracian city, dating to the fifth century BC, covering ca. 2.5 ha. in area. It contains a large royal residence that has roof tiling unlike other Thracian buildings discovered to date.

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Thera Eruption:

Scientists have recently discovered evidence that the Bronze Age eruption of the Thera volcano was more severe than originally estimated. It has been thought for some time that the volcanic eruption had devastated civilizations in the region. New surveys of the Santorini island arc have revealed volcanic pumice to a depth of 80 m, covering the ocean floor in all directions. The volcano may have propelled 60 cubic km of magma out of the crater. It appears the residents of nearby Akrotiri evacuated, as no human remains have been found.

Scythian Mummy Found in Mongolia:

During the summer of 2006 a Scythian mummy was discovered in a burial mound in the Altai Mountains at a height of 8,500 feet. The mummy's skin is in good condition and shows several tattoos. The burial was complete with two horses and saddles, along with weapons and vessels. The Scythians were nomadic Iranians and their remains had previously only been found on the Russian side of the Altai Mountains.

Byzantine Port Unearthed:

Archaeologists have discovered an ancient Byzantine port in Istanbul, thought to be the port of the emperor Theodosius. Wall sections that appear to be part of Constantine's Wall have also been unearthed in the western part of the site, and graves of the 4th century.

N E W S L E T T E R



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