The Eighth International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan was held in Sydney, Australia from July 9-13, 2001. The conference marks the eighth time scholars from around the world have convened for presentations on the history and archaeology of Jordan which are later published in Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan. HRH Prince Hassan began the triennial conferences at Oxford 24 years ago and continues as the series’ patron. The initial plan was for Amman to host every other conference, but various locations in Europe and now Australia have been involved more often. The basic focus of the conference varies each time. For this conference, most papers centered primarily “Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on Society, Culture and Identity.” In addition, there is always a slot provided for excavation updates since the previous conference.

The grand opening, which features speeches of welcome by important people, was hosted by HRH Princess Sumaya, who also gave the opening address. The University of Sydney was well represented as was the Department of Antiquities. Princess Sumaya spoke of her father’s wish to be in attendance, a wish unfulfilled because of the pressing responsibilities of state in Jordan. She spoke proudly and gratefully of the cooperative efforts between Jordan and the academic community of scholars who go there to study its culture and history and thanked archaeologists profusely, even mentioning the book that Madaba Plains Project dedicated to her father (MPP 4), and expressing her gratitude for that gift. During the week of the conference she also spoke at the opening of a major archaeological exhibit at the University of Sydney’s Nicholson Museum (From Pella to Petra), a book launching (Australians Uncovering Ancient Jordan: Fifty Years of Middle Eastern Discovery), and attended some of the sessions.

The remainder of the conference, involved mostly parallel sessions (two and three papers at a

(continued p. 2)
Hoffmeier at Andrews

James Hoffmeier, Prof. of OT and Near Eastern History and Archaeology from Trinity International University, spoke for the Horn Archaeological Lectureship on Oct. 15, 2001. Hoffmeier is the director of the North Sinai Archaeological Project and the Tell el-Borg excavations. His lecture was entitled: The Excavations at Tell el-Borg, Sinai: New Light on the Route of the Exodus.

According to the biblical exodus (Ex 13:20-14:2), the Israelites traveled from Pi-Rameses (Tel el-Dab’a) to Succoth (Tell el-Maskhuta) on the east end of the Wadi Tumilat until they reached Etham. Then, they turned and camped by the sea before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea opposite Baal Zephon.

Three names on the route of the exodus are unidentified (Migdol, Pi Hahiroth and Baal-Zephon). Hoffmeier believes that Tell el-Borg may be one of them.

In the Late Bronze Age (LB), Egypt was protected by a series of forts along the Mediterranean coast. The first three forts were called Tjaru, the Mansion of the Lion and Midol, respectively. Gardner associated Tjaru with Tell el-Abu Sefeh, the Mansion of the Lion with Tel Ahmar and Migdol with Tell el-Heir but recent excavations date these sites from the Ptolemaic period or later.

Dr. Hoffmeier has confirmed that Migdol was one first three forts that protected Egypt’s northern border near the east end of the Delta during the New Kingdom. Egyptian documents also mention Migdol as the last Egyptian fort that can be reached by water.

In order to locate Migdol, Hoffmeier and coastal Geologist Daniel Stanley used declassified satellite photos of the Delta. They were able to determine the coastal outline of the LB Delta region. They also discovered that a branch of the Nile passed between the Tell el-Borg fort and the supporting town.

Hebua 1 and Hebua 2 were also located within the LB Delta. Dr. Hoffmeier believes that either Hebua 1 and Heblu 2 are Tjaru, Tell el-Borg is the Mansion of the Lion and Migdol is uncertain or that Hebua 1 is Tjaru, Hebua 2 is the Mansion of the Lion and el-Borg is Migdol.

Excavations at Tell el-Borg have revealed many artifacts from the Armarna and Ramside periods. A deep moat with an enigmatic stepped structure was lined with fired bricks. Most bricks from the Armarna period were unfired. This led many Egyptian archaeologists to conclude that brick firing technology was not available at that time. Hoffmeier believes that these fired bricks were necessary to prevent moisture from destroying the moat. Unfired bricks used for domestic architecture would not be able to withstand the Mediterranean climate without crumbling. In addition, several stamped jar handles with the cartouches of Smenkhare and Tutankhamun and inscriptions from Thuthmosis III were found.

A stone block was found of a deity with the name “strong bull” behind it. Though many Egyptian king names included the words “strong bull,” K. A. Kitchen has linked the iconography with similar examples at Tell el-Maskhuta and the period of Rameses II. Another inscription on a name plate bears the name of “Hi,” the weapons bearer and a military officer in the Great Division of Amun. This confirms a possible Ramside military presence at Tell el-Borg and suggests that this fort was one of several that protected the narrow land route from Canaan to Egypt. (Robert D. Bates)
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Questions? Please contact G. London for the Archaeology in Jordan Institute.

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Return to Nimrud
Excavations at Nimrud have resumed after an absence of ten years. At the Ishtar Temple, Muzahim Mahmoud Husein uncovered two winged lions flanking the eastern gate. Between them was a stone slab inscription recounting Assurnasipal II’s construction of Nimrud. Other finds include cylinder seals, painted palace ware, decorated glazed bricks, a prism and a bronze head of Sargon.

Excavations at Nimrud will continue in 2002.

Nubian Temple Discovered
Thirty international expeditions from nine countries are attempting to excavate ancient Nubian temples, cities and burial grounds before they are destroyed by encroaching villages, agriculture or neglect. In one remote Sudanese town, a 2000 year old city built around a huge temple was discovered. Archaeologists believe that this temple was dedicated to the ram-headed Egyptian god Amun and dates to 100 A.D.

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Ancient Egyptian Cities Swallowed by the Sea
Herakleion and Eastern Canopus, two Egyptian cities on the Mediterranean Sea, disappeared suddenly more than 1,200 years ago, swallowed by the sea. Their fate remained uncertain until they were recently found approx. 20 feet (6 m) below the waters of Abu Qir Bay. The ruins of these Egyptian cities rest between 1-3 mile (1.6-5.4 km) from the shore. Researchers have concluded that the two cities collapsed when a major flood caused the land they were built on to suddenly become liquefied mud. The weight of the stone buildings and the heavy loads of sedimentation caused the cities to sink into the Mediterranean Sea.

Iceman Mystery Solved
Dramatic new evidence has emerged concerning the death of "Otzi", the Bronze Age hunter whose frozen body was found in the Alps in 1991. The 5,300-year old corpse caused a sensation, and launched a decade of debate as to precisely how he met his death. Recently, Italian scientists using X-rays to produce a multidimensional image of the body, found a flint arrowhead embedded beneath the Iceman's left shoulder. This arrow shattered Otzi's scapula and ripped through nerves and major blood vessels, causing massive internal bleeding and his death.

Tall Jawa Final Report