

# NEWSLETTER

## The Institute of ARCHAEOLOGY Siegfried H. Horn Museum



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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MUSEUM  
NEWSLETTER

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## Tall al-ʿUmayri 2008

Archaeologists from the Madaba Plains Project digging at Tall al-ʿUmayri have discovered additional sections of a building with two rooms dedicated to the worship of ancient deities. The building, which contained five rooms and dates to ca. 1500 BC, was preserved almost three m high and was built of stone topped with mud bricks for the second story. The builders carved a small niche into a mud-brick wall and placed standing stones into a thick layer of plaster. Excavators found pottery gifts still lying in the niche next to the standing stones. Worshipers entered the structure from the east through a monumental gateway and passed by a large standing stone, probably representing an ancient god, set into a plastered base as they walked into the inner room for worship at the niche. The structure probably served as a temple, but no one has been able to identify the names of the gods or just how they were worshiped. The people who constructed the building were probably ancient Amorites who lived at the site before the Ammonites.

Tall al-ʿUmayri is a rich Bronze and Iron Age site which began about 3000 BC and lasted until the Persian Empire around 500 BC. At the very beginning of the history of ʿUmayri, a dolmen tomb was built of huge stones in the shape of a large box. While thousands of dolmens exist from southern Jordan around the Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean, only a handful have remains in them, including the ʿUmayri dolmen. This year a building associated with the dolmen was also found. As far as we know, an associated building has shown up nowhere else.

The largest settlement at the site is 4500 years old, from the middle of the Early Bronze Age. Farmers from the area banded together for protection to form a sprawling conglomeration of house compounds and narrow streets. However, the most important period of occupation at the site

(con'd on p. 2)



The entry room of the LB building with two fallen standing stones and the stepped entryway.

is Iron Age I, which dates to about 3200 years ago. Two houses from this period were excavated in earlier seasons. This summer, excavators began to uncover several other houses. They found a deep, fiery destruction layer overlying the houses. Under the destruction were many crushed pottery vessels, mostly large storage jars. A team of excavators also explored the ancient city wall from this time period. It stands almost five m high and they have not yet found the base.

Another team was able to clear an Iron Age II B house (ca. 2800 years old). It had both cobble and dirt floors with walls preserved over a meter high.

Two other teams discovered Persian-period houses. Their rooms contained typical domestic goods and bins for storage. One building contained a large tabun almost a meter in diameter and preserved almost 40 cm high.

Small finds from the various parts of the excavation include nine seals, figurine heads of humans and animals, jewelry, and pottery vessels. (Larry G. Herr and Douglas R. Clark)



## Vaughn Lecture

**D**r. Andrew Vaughn, Executive Director of American Schools of Oriental Research, presented a lecture entitled “The Success of Hezekiah: A New Look at Hezekiah’s Success Following Sennacherib’s Campaign in 701 BCE.” on Monday, December 3, 2007 at Andrews University.

Dr. Vaughn began the lecture by giving some background on Hezekiah, mentioning his reforms, including centralizing worship in Jerusalem. The king is looked upon favorably by the Chronicler, but it is the events surrounding the middle of his reign, when Sennacherib came from Assyria in 701 BC, that in some ways shaped the biblical perspective. Hezekiah’s reign has usually been viewed by scholars as a failure. However, Vaughn believes that even though Judah was



Andrew Vaughn.

almost completely destroyed, there was enough of the kingdom left to be rebuilt. If this was the case, then Hezekiah was “partially” successful.

Sennacherib almost completely destroyed Judah. This destruction is graphically represented by the siege ramp found at Lachish (Level III). The Assyrian Annals say he laid siege to 46 cities in Judah. The Shephelah, where many of these sites were located, was the breadbasket of Judah. When Judah was strong it was reflected in the strength of the Shephelah. Archaeological surveys indicate that during the first part of Hezekiah’s reign the Shephelah was very strong, but after Sennacherib’s campaign there was a dramatic drop in development. The consensus view is that Judah didn’t grow again until Josiah’s reign and then not as much because the Shephelah didn’t grow. However Vaughn doesn’t believe this was the case.

He sees a significant problem with viewing Hezekiah as a complete failure. First, Hezekiah was the only ruler in the area who escaped with his life. Sennacherib was not known as a gracious conqueror; he killed anyone who revolted. The reason Sennacherib didn’t kill him was because he couldn’t. Hezekiah began a large economic build up several years before Sennacherib came to Judah. It is incorrect to view the *LMLK* jars as an isolated occurrence at the end of the 8th century BC. They are important for understanding Hezekiah’s reign. Their distribution is evidence of a kingdom-wide infrastructure based around strong cities. Vaughn believes that Hezekiah began to

prepare the kingdom in 715 BC. While doing so he also improved Jerusalem. He reconstructed a stronger city wall, as evidenced by the “Broad Wall,” that excluded extramural settlements. Second, the siege of Lachish and other fortified cities drained the Assyrians to the point that Jerusalem could be saved. Third, Manasseh could not have taken part in the building project described in Chronicles if Judah had been completely wiped out. Thus, it seems that a remnant of Judah was left for such a quick rebuilding effort.

In the last section of his lecture Vaughn focused on the site of Ramat Rachel. He argues that the site was initially built by Hezekiah and then rebuilt just after the destruction in 701 BC. There are two Iron Age strata at the site; Level 5a (the later one, with parallels to Lachish II) destroyed in the early 6th century BC, and the earlier, Level 5b, 8th century BC stratum, with architectural features that include proto-Aeolic capitals and header-stretcher masonry, typical of the Phoenician-influenced palaces at Samaria. Vaughn believes that Hezekiah was the last king of Judah to know of the glorious palaces in Samaria. It is even possible that builders and artisans fled to Judah after the destruction of Samaria in 722 BC. After the destruction of Ramat Rachel, in 701 BC, either Hezekiah or his son, Manasseh, restored the site and built the Level 5a palace. Level 5b architectural elements were reused in this palace, and there is evidence of rebuilding, renovation and different use phases. The Level 5a palace was in use for around another 100 years.

Vaughn concludes that Hezekiah was not a complete failure. After 701 BC important parts of his kingdom remained and other parts were rebuilt. Understanding the results of Hezekiah’s reign in such a manner helps us better understand the accounts from 2 Kings and Chronicles, and also the prophecies of Isaiah and how the city of Jerusalem was restored in the 7th century BC and later. (Owen Chesnut)



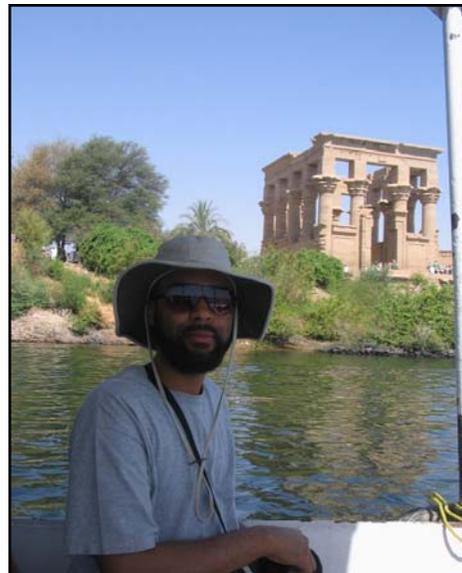
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Students at Temple of Karnak.

## Egypt Tour

From May 11-25, 2008, a 28 member Old Testament tour group traversed the length of Egypt from St. Catherine's to Abu Simbel. Two days were spent in the Sinai, three days in Cairo and vicinity with its great Pyramids and camel rides. An overnight train took the group to Karnak where it visited the temples of Karnak and Luxor, the Valley of the Kings and Hatshepsut's Mortuary Temple. The group luxuriated on a cruise ship, spending four days drifting down the Nile with Roy Gane teaching exegesis classes from its deck. From Aswan, *faluccas* brought us to Elephantine and Philae, and a small plane took us to Abu Simbel. The students were terrific, as was Randall Younker's leadership. It was an unforget-



Reginald Exum on the Nile River.

table experience for all. (Constance E. Gane)



Schoolteachers from around the US will call the Institute of Archaeology/Horn Archaeological Museum home next July, thanks to a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH). Professor Rhonda Root and Dr. Gloria London are codirectors of the NEH Summer Institute for Schoolteachers: "Daily Life in Ancient Times: Archaeology of Israel and Jordan." There are ten different NEH Institutes nationwide each summer.

Teachers will access museum artifacts to learn: 1) how we know what we know about the past; 2) why the past is important; 3) daily life in the Fertile Crescent; and 4) how to use archaeology in the classroom. Seminars and laboratories with Institute archaeologists and invited speakers from North America focus on Madaba Plains Project excavations.

Application dateline: March 2, 2009. The NEH awards stipends of \$3,200.00 to 30 full-time teachers.

For details contact Dr. Gloria London, [glondon@earthlink.net](mailto:glondon@earthlink.net) or AU Professor Rhonda Root, [root@andrews.edu](mailto:root@andrews.edu).

Application information: <http://home.earthlink.net/~galondon//NEH2009/>.

## NEH Summer Institute for School Teachers

### Daily Life in Ancient Times

Archaeology of Israel and Jordan

July 1 - July 24, 2009



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Contact for further information

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Stipends (\$3,200)  
Available for 30 teachers  
Application deadline:  
March 2, 2009

# RANDOM SURVEY

## *Fire Temple Found?*

Archaeologists working in Kermanshah Province, Iran, have found what appears to be a Sasanian Fire Temple annexed to the southern corner of a Parthian manor house at the site of Sarab-Mort. It consists of a Chahar-Taqi (free-standing Zoroastrian Fire Temple), which functioned as a private chapel to the manor. The manor house was built during the Parthian Dynasty (248 BC - AD 224) and continued in use during the succeeding Sasanian Dynasty (AD 224-651), when the temple was added.

## *Roman Temple Found:*

The ruins of a 2nd century AD Roman temple have been found at Zippori, the ancient Jewish capital of the Galilee, in Israel. This discovery indicates that the city housed a pagan population during the Roman period. A church from the Byzantine period sits on top of the ancient temple.

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## *Way of Horus Discoveries:*

Archaeologists exploring the old military road in northeastern Sinai have unearthed the remains of a fortified city, a 19th Dynasty (1295-1185 BC) temple built on top of an 18th Dynasty (1576-1295 BC) fort, another mud-brick fort with towers dating to Ramses II (1279-1213 BC) and rows of warehouses used by the Egyptian army during the New Kingdom (1576-1069 BC). Inscriptions about the Way of Horus on the walls of the Karnak Temple indicate that 11 fortresses protected Egypt's eastern border. Five of these forts have been discovered to date.

## *Gladiator Tomb Found:*

Archaeologists have discovered the tomb of the person who inspired the character of the film "Gladiator." The tomb is on the Tiber River near the via Flaminia, north of Rome. It was collapsed, but its columns, roof and decorations were intact. Marcus Nonius Macrinus, born in Brescia in northern Italy, was a general who led military campaigns for Emperor Marcus Aurelius from AD 161-180. He was one of the Emperor's favorites, also serving as proconsul in Asia.

## *Solomon's Mines Discovered?*

Archaeologists have discovered a copper-production center in southern Jordan, dated by C14 analysis on organic materials to the 10th century BC, the time of King Solomon. The discovery was made at Khirbat en-Nahas, located south of the Dead Sea, in Edom.

# N E W S L E T T E R



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