

NEWSLETTER

The Institute of ARCHAEOLOGY Siegfried H. Horn Museum



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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER

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LaBianca Lecture

Dr. Øystein LaBianca, professor at Andrews University and Director of the Tall Hisban excavations, lectured on “40 Years of Archaeology at Tell Hisban.” on April 14, 2008 at Andrews University. In 1967 the Heshbon Expedition was formed and from 1968 to 1976 five archaeological expeditions were carried out. During the first three excavation seasons the project was directed by Siegfried Horn in cooperation with Roger Boraas, with Lawrence Geraty becoming the director in the 4th season. James Sauer served as ceramicist throughout the excavations. The expedition was based on the concept of biblical archaeology, and the site originally chosen, as were many at the time, to answer biblical questions; in the case of Hisban specifically because of its toponymic connections to the biblical site of Heshbon. Horn hoped to find occupation levels dating to the Late Bronze Age, which would correspond with the biblical account of Moses and the Israelites conquering Sihon the king of the Amorites.

However, the majority of remains at the site turned out to be post-Iron Age, although a large Iron Age II reservoir was found, perhaps corresponding to the one mentioned in the Old Testament as being built by King Solomon. Despite the fact that remains from the time of Moses were not found, Hisban has proven to be quite significant archaeologically. For example, an intact rolling-stone tomb was found, one of only a handful in all of the Levant, that recalls the burial of Jesus. Horn and Geraty and their colleagues became known for doing good scientific archaeology, publishing finds promptly, and never overstating or twisting what they had found to fit any kind of agenda.

The second phase of excavations at Hisban began in 1996, directed by Sten LaBianca with Bethany Walker as chief archaeologist and ceramicist. Six seasons of excavations have been carried out through 2009, with a new season to take place in 2010. These excavations have focused on anthropological approaches to archaeology, as opposed to the more traditional biblical/historical

(con'd on p. 2)



Fortieth Anniversary Celebration of the Tall Hisban Excavations.

approach, used earlier. Dr. LaBianca's research on Food Systems between the two phases of work at the site have led to a wider perspective of how foreign groups interact with local people (focusing on the concepts of intensification and abatement, civilizations and empires, great and little traditions, and more recently globalization). Tall Hisban is a window into the interactions of the past, as there is evidence for empires (such as the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyads, Abbasids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, Ottomans, and the British) at the site. This newer anthropological approach to archaeology has once again led to Tall Hisban being at the forefront of archaeology in Jordan.

On July 5, 2007 the Institute of Archaeology celebrated the 40th anniversary at the site of Hisban. There were over 200 attendees, including HRH Prince Raad Bin Zeid, Senator Michel Hamerneh, Andrews University President Niels-Erik Andreasen, Madaba Plains Project Director Lawrence Geraty, US ambassador to Jordan David Hale, former DAJ director Ghazi Bisheh, and the director of ACOR, Barbara A. Porter. The speeches at the event focused on the history of the site, and the partnerships between the Kingdom of Jordan and the US, and celebrated the work that Andrews University has done at the site and in the surrounding village. (Owen Chesnut)



LaBianca Elected to ASOR Post

Dr. Øystein LaBianca, director of the Phase Two Excavations at Tall Hisban, Jordan and associate director of the Institute of Archaeology at Andrews University, has recently been elected to serve as the chair of the Committee on Archaeological Research and Policy (CAP) of the *American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR)*.



Øystein LaBianca.

ASOR is a nonprofit organization of about 1300 members that is dedicated to the archaeology of the Near East which was founded in 1900. Its mission is to initiate, encourage and support research into, and public understanding of, the peoples and cultures of the Near East from the earliest times to the present.

LaBianca has previously served and concurrently serves on the board of the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), an affiliated *ASOR* research center in Amman, Jordan. His new CAP responsibilities will include administering a group of 16 *ASOR* scholars who annually review and approve almost 60 *ASOR* affiliated archaeological projects in Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Turkey.

In addition, his other goals as CAP chair are to develop and test theoretical frameworks that bridge disciplinary, national and temporal boundaries; develop and test cyber technologies for field- and laboratory-based data acquisition; further site preservation and presentation strategies; and develop capacity within *ASOR* for successful competition for funding of various research projects. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)



Yunker Lecture

Dr. Randall Yunker, director of the Institute of Archaeology gave a public lecture entitled "Is the Bible Historically Reliable?" on Feb. 11, 2008.

Yunker focused on a National Geographic symposium where he was a respondent to Eric Cline's book "From Eden to Exile." His inclusion in this project was based on Andrews University's reputation for doing scientific archaeology in an evangelical environment, as well as his prominent role in a conference (and subsequent book) called "*The Future of Biblical Archaeology*" which was an evangelical/maximalist response to the minimalists who have attempted to deny the historicity of the Bible, over the last 30 years. Dr. Yunker's chapter in this book focused on how scholars at Andrews University along with those from consortium institutions combine good scientific archaeology and their Christian faith. He boiled this information down into six points (i.e., being honest with the data, not making unwarranted claims, publishing promptly, interacting with the scholarly community, including a diversity of people and specialists, and taking all the ancient documents, including the Bible, seriously), which were also quoted by Eric Cline in his book.

Yunker went on to point out that archaeology can not be used to prove the Bible. Even if the people and historical events mentioned in the biblical text are found in the archaeological record, such as Sennacherib and the siege of Lachish (2 Kings 18), the supernatural events that occurred therein can never be proven. These events must be accepted on faith, based on one's religious beliefs.

Cline's book focuses on seven of the most commonly asked questions related to the Bible. These include: the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Exodus, Joshua and the battle of Jericho, the Ark of the Covenant, and the 10 lost tribes of Israel. Cline focused on the idea of shared methodology and scientific research to answer these questions

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(based on the 6 points proposed by Dr. Younker). So, for example, Cline asked if the Garden of Eden was a real geographical place (and if so where would it be located) or was it mythological. Cline believes that Eden is mythological and so looking for it would be a waste of time. Younker also believes that Eden will never be found, but that no evidence would exist because of the Flood, which occurred later. Younker agrees with Cline that Noah's Ark has not yet been found and likely never will be (being wood it wouldn't have survived through the millennia). Essentially Cline and Younker approach these topics from opposite viewpoints, one believing much of Genesis is myth and legend and the other believing the stories are historically accurate.

However, they both would caution against the type of amateur sensationalism promoted in armchair archaeological publications and by the media as reflected in a number of recent pseudoscientific documentaries. Younker concluded the lecture by playing a few excerpts from the National Geographic symposium.

In addendum, the above-mentioned symposium was so well-received that it has since prompted the editors at National Geographic to invite Dr. Younker to be a general consultant for a new book project they are doing on Biblical Archaeology. The book's tentative title is *The Letter and the Scroll: What Archaeology Tells us About the People and Places of the Bible*. Dr. Younker is currently involved with this new project. (Owen Chesnut)



Randall Younker



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RANDOM SURVEY

Sarcophagus Discovered:

Archeologists doing a salvage excavation north of Jerusalem have discovered a fragment of a limestone sarcophagus cover of a son of one of the high priests who served in the Second Temple. It bears the inscription "the son of the High Priest" and should probably be identified with one of the priests that officiated between AD 30 and 70, though which priest's son the inscription refers to it is impossible to know. The sarcophagus fragment was found in secondary use in a later Islamic period building.

Bust of Ramses II found:

A red granite head of a statue has been discovered at the site of Tell Basta that is thought to portray pharaoh Ramses II. Tell Basta, about 80 km NE of Cairo, was dedicated to the cat-goddess, Bastet, and was an important center from the Old Kingdom until the end of the Roman Period.

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Crime Scene?

Roman archaeologists have found a cryptoportico, or underground corridor, beneath the imperial palaces on the Palatine Hill where they believe the Roman Emperor Caligula was murdered in AD 41 by his own Praetorian Guard in order to put an end to his deranged reign of terror. The passageway appears to match the description of place where the Emperor was put to death according to the Rome historian Suetonius. Builders stamps from the time of Claudius were found in the corridor, but there is evidence that it existed even earlier.

Ephesian Necropolis Discovered:

Archaeologists have recently discovered a necropolis at the city of Ephesus, a port city on the Aegean Sea, in modern Turkey. So far five graves with 55 interred bodies have been excavated. The necropolis, or at least the part so-far excavated, seems to be where the elite of the city were buried, as the tombs had mosaic floors and friezes on the walls. Grave goods include sophisticated gold jewelry and silk fabrics with gold fibers.

Chariot Found:

Archaeologists have recently excavated a bronze-plated four-wheeled chariot decorated with mythological scenes in an Thracian tomb in southeastern Bulgaria that dates to the end of the second century AD. Harnesses and horse remains were found nearby.

N E W S L E T T E R



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