

## The Institute of ARCHAEOLOGY Siegfried H. Horn Museum



### Dever/Gaber Lecture

On Oct. 20, 2010 Drs. William Dever and Pamela Gaber presented a lecture for the Horn Museum lectureship series entitled “Ethnography and Everyday Life in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Intersect.”

Dr. Gaber began the lecture by noting that people have always been conscious of the space they occupy and the way it looks. Thanks to places like Pompeii and Herculaneum there are beautifully preserved Roman-period remains. Both the elite upper-class villas, with their elaborate paintings and mosaics, and middle-class dwellings show signs that the people who lived in them cared about decorating their environment. Just like modern people, who proudly display their favorite sports pennants or posters on their walls, depictions of gladiatorial games and other sporting events adorned the walls of ancient homes. Scenes depicting gambling, drinking in taverns, and even a couple kissing at their wedding, are known from ancient Roman houses. Ancient businesses often depicted their trade: bakers showing paintings of bread; with pictures of leather goods, textiles, and shoes by those who specialized in those trades. These pictures were often located on the outside of their establishments in an attempt to advertise.

Mosaics represent an art form from the Roman through the Islamic periods. Rugs are yet another example of decorated environment. It took a rug designer a long time to make the various patterns, each representing thousands of hand-tied knots. These and other art forms went through changes in style over time and can be traced by the archaeologist and art historian.

The Bedouin, whose lifestyle is in many ways reminiscent of those who lived in Bible times, produce textiles and embroidery with their own specific styles and colors that represent local traditions. These works of art include dresses, wall hangings, tents, saddles and various bags.

(cont'd on p. 2)



Pamela Gaber and William Dever.

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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
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NEWSLETTER

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Dr. Dever picked up the lecture from there with a discussion on the ordinary people of ancient Israel, the ones often ignored in Scripture. Since the Hebrew Bible was written for the most part by the elite who talked about great men and major events, they were usually not interested in the common people, only mentioning them in passing. In order to learn about the ordinary folk from biblical times one must turn to archaeology.

Dever focused on the period of the Divided Monarchy. He suggested that most of the everyday folk would never have been to Samaria or Jerusalem. The ivory inlays and carvings along with the fine Phoenician-style ashlar masonry at Samaria indicate a luxurious, elitist capital with few or no commoners residing there. The Samaria ostraca mention only a few names representing the nobles who owned most of the land. It was the everyday people who worked for them. The ostraca also indicate that either the nobles were able to read and write or they could at least afford a scribe to do it for them.

It is important to know just how small places like Samaria and Jerusalem actually were in ancient times. Using Jerusalem as an example Dever noted that at its peak, during Solomon's time, its population couldn't have been more than 1000 people, mostly of noble/elite status.

Gezer, with its walls and Solomonic gate, represents monumental architecture and the best engineering of the time, something only a king could bring about on that scale. Hazor's colonnaded building was a government storehouse where taxes, in kind, were brought and stored. The only real government official that the majority of the population would have ever seen was likely the regional tax collector, and those commoners who did come in contact with the authorities might very well have been put into forced labor, working on such monumental structures as the water system at Hazor, which also represents the power of the state.

At Gibeon, people lived in the village and commuted to their fields where they grew their food. A large town such as Gibeon had an estimated population of

500, while most common people lived in villages of around 100-150 people. Many commoners lived in isolated farmsteads in the countryside. Dever estimated that 98% of the population of ancient Israel was rural. There were only a few large towns, Gezer being among the largest, with a population of about 3000. The whole population of Israel and Judah in the 10th century BC is estimated to have been no more than 100,000 people.

Tell Tell en-Nasbeh, (ancient Mizpah) was almost completely excavated in the 1920-30s. It had a city wall and towers, offset double-entry gate, silos, and houses built back-to-back along the city wall. About 800 people lived there, though it grew even larger over time. However, in the countryside the lifestyles and patterns remained unchanged for centuries, even until relatively recently.

Houses at Gezer, built in the 9th century BC, were used for perhaps 200-300 years. Excavated houses at Shechem had open courtyards, with ground floors and side stables. The people lived in the second-floor rooms and on the roof. The types of families that lived in the larger houses perhaps consisted of one or more surviving grandparents, the principal husband and wife and their children, with a married son and his wife and child. Altogether 3-4 generations could live together under one roof, sharing the agricultural responsibilities. When a son built his own home, he would build it right next door, attaching it to his father's house. In this way a sort of village grew haphazardly with no real town plan.

What was the "good life" according to the Hebrew Bible? Was it in the cities? No, cities were often the centers of sin and corruption. The good life according to the biblical text was where a man could sit under his own fig tree with his family without having to answer to any sovereign except God. That was the life of most people. Yet while this was the "good life" they probably had it hard, as life expectancy was not much more than 30 years of age. Most woman would bear 12-20 children, yet on average only 3-4 survived to adulthood. Most people were

diseased in one way or another. There was little sanitation, and life was brutish and short.

Typical pottery consisted of numerous large jars to store food from season to season. It was basic; no decoration, and designed for use. Bread was the staple of life, and many hours a day went into grinding and making dough and baking bread. Olives and olive oil were also important as well as fruits and vegetables in season, such as chickpeas and lentils; there was very little meat.

We know that the common people did have fun; telling stories and playing games were also important, as indicated from written and archeological evidence.

Hack-silver was used before coinage was invented (in the 7th century BC) and was weighed out in trading. Business transactions often took place at the city gate. Scales used in these types of transactions have been excavated, as have small hoards of hack-silver within people's homes. Yet, while people may have had some silver, the majority of a person's wealth was in the land and animals they owned.

Dever believes that most common people couldn't read or write and that in a town or city one could hire a scribe for such purposes. He referred to the Gezer calendar as an example of a scribal boy's practice tablet, indicating that by the 10th century BC there were scribal schools set up where boys could be trained as scribes. Bullae with the names of elite individuals in Jerusalem are examples of seals that people used. Ostraca and stamped handles also show examples of writing.

During Iron Age II family tombs consisted of benches and a repository where the bones of the deceased were "gathered to their fathers." Some of these tombs were used for over 100 years.

Dever ended the lecture by saying that archaeology is the best way of looking into the lives of the everyday people who lived during biblical times.

(Jacob Moody)



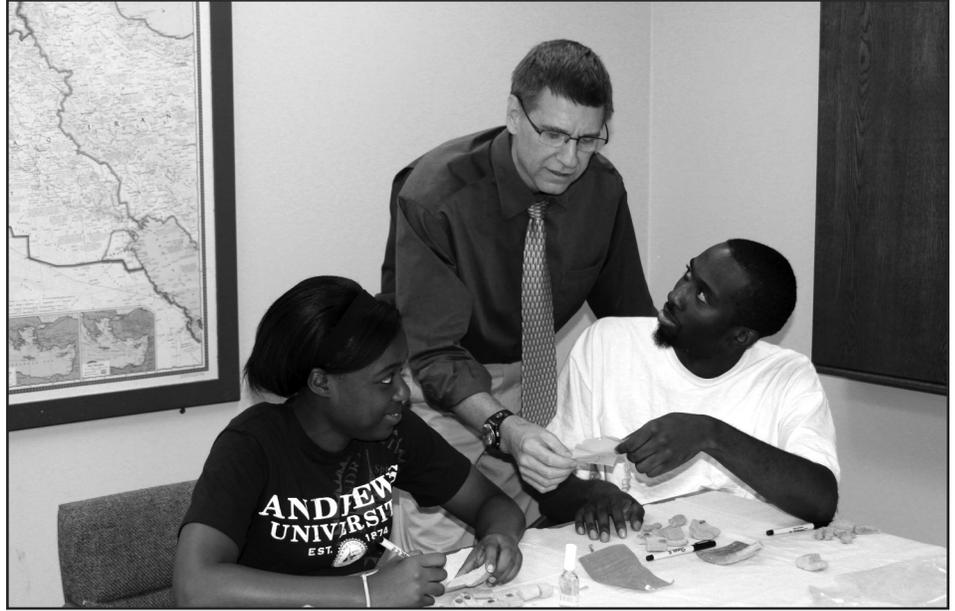
## Student Workers

Undergraduate students taking the required classes Civilizations and Ideas I-II and Culture, Place and Interdependence, during the 2010-11 academic year were able to participate in research projects at the Institute of Archaeology/Horn Museum. Students were given an option to complete 10-20 hours of research at the Institute/Museum as a part of the research requirement for their classes. More than 60% of the students chose this option and worked over 650 hours doing research.

Robert Bates, a Research Associate at the Institute of Archaeology, was the instructor for the classes. He said: "Most undergraduate students would never have an opportunity to work with ancient artifacts and I wanted to give them an opportunity to learn about history and culture through archaeological research."

Over 60 students from various disciplines gained valuable experience through hands-on projects that analyzed pottery, took photos and developed museum displays. Students were divided into groups of 10-15 in three six-week sessions. As groups of students overlapped they trained new students for the next session.

The Institute of Archaeology houses the ceramic remains from every season of



Robert Bates helps students Fredrica St. Hillary and Samuel Joseph analyze pottery.

excavation. Many students were assigned to analyze the pottery sherds that were found at Tall Jalul, in Jordan. Students examined the rims of broken vessels to determine the color, fabric, diameter and surface treatment of each sherd. Using a magnifying glass and a Munsell color chart, they identified and recorded important characteristics of each sherd so that it could be compared with similar vessels.

Students also learned how to use a high-tech 3-D scanner to analyze pottery

and prepare it for publication. In the past, archaeologists had to make drawings of a sherd by cutting it in half, tracing its outline and then inking the shape of how the vessel would look reconstructed. The students used the scanner to make a 3-D computer image of each sherd so that the computer could create the drawing that will be included in a future publication.

Some students worked on projects for the Horn Archaeological Museum, which houses over 8000 artifacts. As the museum has converted its card file system to a digital database, many artifacts need to be reexamined. Several students photographed the artifacts in the collection for the digital database. They used the museum photography equipment and set up a studio to create high-quality digital images suitable for publication. Other students worked on creating museum displays. Using artifacts from the collection they selected pieces that best illustrated the early Roman period. The artifacts were mounted in shadow boxes and may be used in the New Testament display room currently being renovated.

About 25% of the students who participated in the research project during the Fall Semester returned in the Spring to continue their work. (Robert D. Bates)



Claudia Allen and Andrew Shin using 3-D Scanner.



# RANDOM SURVEY

## *Thracian Temple Excavated:*

Excavations at Heraion-Teichos, an ancient city in western Turkey, have unearthed a temple on the city's acropolis. The temple belonged to the ancient Thracian civilization, and was destroyed by fire in 2 BC. Continuing work at the temple has revealed many interesting finds including statues of the gods Cybele, Eros and Aphrodite as well as bronze coins and ceramic amphora. In addition, a square tower, which is believed to have been a part of the city wall, has been found, measuring 2.5 m in size.

## *New Finds in Syria:*

Archaeologists have found a Hellenistic-period temple and a Roman-period stone bridge near Apamea, in Syria. The temple was made with 210 x 170 cm stones, some inscribed on their interior side. The bridge is 10 x 3 m, and built on three asymmetrical arches.

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## *New Discoveries at Gath:*

Archeologists have recently discovered a Philistine temple at Tell es-Safi, biblical Gath. The architecture of the temple seems to shed light on the story of Samson, who in the biblical story brought the temple of Dagon, at Gaza, down upon himself. Like a Philistine Temple found earlier at Tell Qasile, the one at Gath has the two pillars, anchoring the center of the structure. In addition, there is evidence, such as collapsed brick walls, that a major earthquake leveled the site in biblical times, perhaps the tremor mentioned in Amos 1.

## *Ancient Causeway Found:*

Archaeologists have uncovered a 140 m long, 3 m high, plastered mudbrick causeway with the remnant of a vaulted roof, which connects one of the temples of the Bent Pyramid, built by Snefru, at Dashur, in Egypt, with a large U-shaped 90 x 145 m structure, perhaps a harbor. Snefru was the first ruler of the 4th Dynasty of Egypt. He is credited with constructing the first true pyramids; two at Dashur, one at Medium, and one at Seila.

## *Recent Finds on Cyprus:*

Recent excavations at the site of Nea Paphos, on Cyprus, have exposed a paved Roman-period road running from the Nymphaeum to the theater, a quarry that may have supplied stone for the original phases of the theater, and a 5th-century AD mosaic.

# N E W S L E T T E R



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