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BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW

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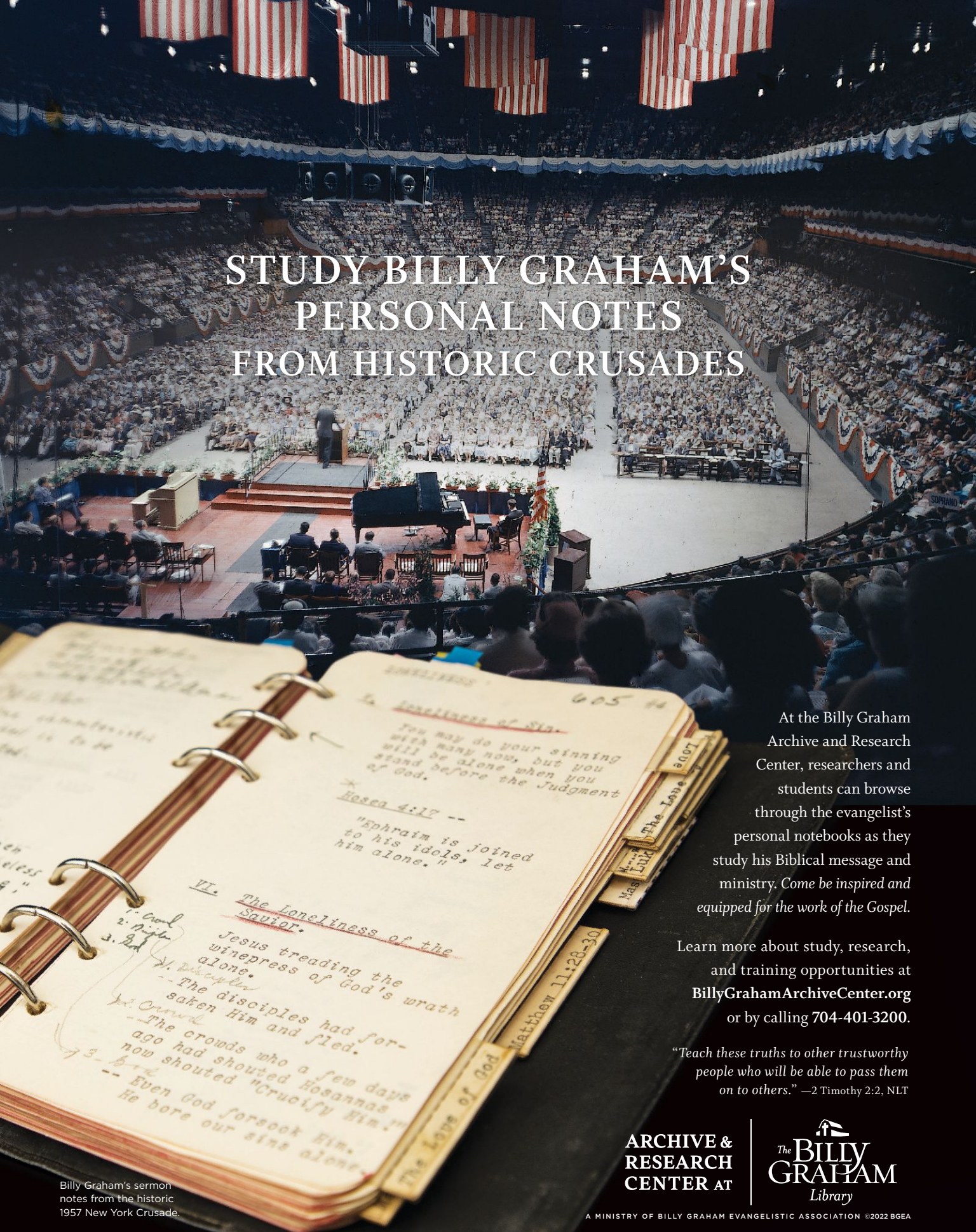

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BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW
VOL. 49 NO. 1
SPRING 2023

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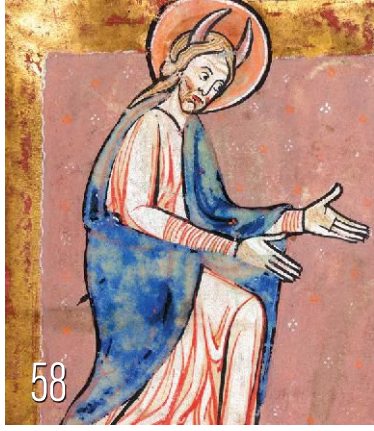
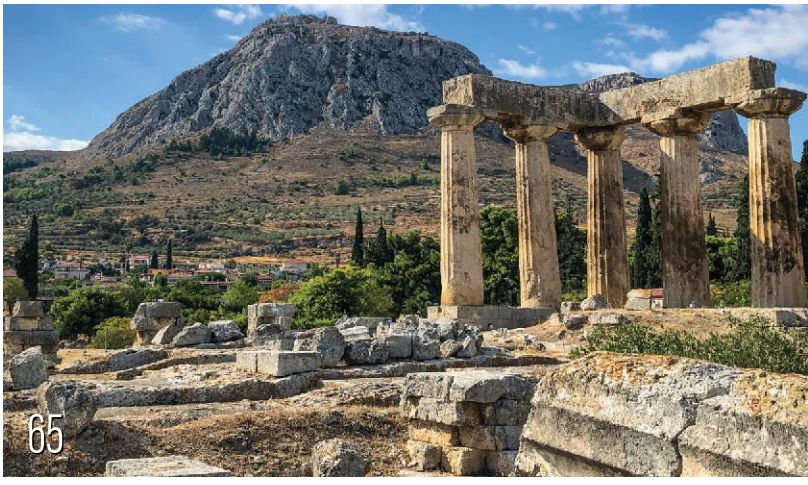
ON THE COVER: Betty Adams, Ph.D. student at the University of Reading and lab manager for the Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project, happily shows off pieces of pottery and bone while sifting at the site of Khirbat al-Balu'a in central Jordan.

PHOTO: COURTESY FRIEDBERT NINOW, BALU'A REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

FEATURES





STRATA

EPISTLES

PLUS

WEB EXCLUSIVE

BAS's New Dig Volunteer Guide

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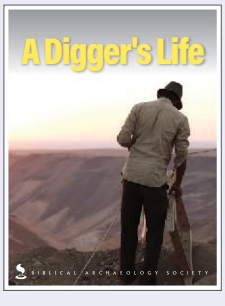

Since the 1970s, we have been connecting volunteers to archaeological excavations around the Holy Land. We want to help provide reasons, opportunities, and expectations for excavation. For that very purpose, we put together this new FREE eBook, *A Digger's Life: A Guide to the Archaeology Dig Experience*, filled with dozens of articles and exciting new content about digs in Israel and beyond.

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There's always something new from BAS on *Bible History Daily*. For the latest news, reviews, and more, visit **biblicalarchaeology.org/blog**.

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Back in the Trenches

OVER THE PAST YEAR, biblical archaeology, like many fields and professions, has thankfully seen a gradual return to the familiar rhythms of pre-pandemic life. Scholars are again meeting at conferences to present their latest findings, **BAR** readers and archaeology enthusiasts are once again traveling to BAS seminars and taking part in overseas study tours, and now, for the second year in a row, archaeologists will be back in the field, unearthing remarkable finds from the biblical past.

There is therefore a welcome and refreshing comfort in introducing our Spring issue, which by tradition is when **BAR** highlights volunteer opportunities for the upcoming summer dig season in Israel, Jordan, and elsewhere (pp. 21–24). In addition to seeing what sites are being excavated this season, you can also read about a few sites "off the beaten path" and why they have just as much archaeology to offer as better-known biblical sites and cities.

With many excavations now back in full swing, our features showcase the many ways that archaeology continues to open up new vistas on key figures and events from the Bible. In his article "Jeremiah's Journey to Egypt," archaeologist James Hoffmeier traces the textual, archaeological, and geological evidence for the prophet's little-known escape to Egypt following the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. Similarly, in "Jesus in the Synagogue," scholar Jordan Ryan examines the growing number of first-century synagogues that have been discovered and what they reveal about the early Jewish communities Jesus encountered during his ministry.

Just in time for our dig issue, archaeologist Shlomit Bechar invites **BAR** readers to join her in the new excavations of Hazor's Lower City to help answer the question, "Who Lived at Hazor?" Hazor was the largest Canaanite city during the Bronze Age and remembered by the biblical writers as "the head of all those kingdoms." And in "Set in Stone?" text scholars Matthieu Richelle and Andrew Burlingame question whether new photographs of the famous Mesha Stele presented in **BAR**'s Winter 2022 issue actually confirm the inscription's much-debated reference to the "House of David."

In Strata, archaeologist Laura Mazow explores the many bath-shaped vessels found throughout ancient Israel and why most were not actually used for personal bathing. Beyond our always interesting and thought-provoking news articles, tributes, and quizzes, observant readers will also notice our latest department, World Wonders, where we profile remarkable finds, sites, and monuments from across the ancient world, such as a wondrous clay mask from Iraq that depicts the face of the Mesopotamian monster Humbaba (p. 32).

In Epistles, Lee Jefferson discusses the complicated and sometimes troubling history of early Christian depictions of Moses and why later medieval and Renaissance artists often showed Judaism's most important prophetic figure with horns. Barbette Stanley Spaeth examines Paul's reference to the prostitutes of Corinth (1 Corinthians 6), often interpreted as sacred prostitutes. The surprising archaeological and historical evidence paints a far less salacious picture of cultic life in the prosperous Greek city where the apostle spent so much of his mission. Finally, Jean-Georges Heintz reveals the broader Near Eastern context for the language, meaning, and symbolism of the covenant relationship in ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible.

I hope that this issue of **BAR** serves as just one more sign that things are gradually getting back to normal. And the return to normal is also an invitation to try new things. If you have ever wanted to join a dig, this issue is your chance to start a new adventure!—**GLENN J. CORBETT**

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW

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A NOTE ON STYLE: BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era), used by some of our authors, are the alternative designations often used in scholarly literature for BC and AD. Biblical citations come from the NRSV, unless otherwise specified.

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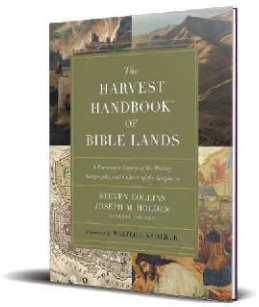

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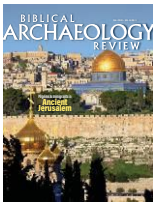


Thank you for sharing your thoughts and comments about our Fall 2022 issue. We appreciate your feedback. Here are a few of the letters and responses we received. Find more online at **biblicalarchaeology.org/letters**.

Out of the Park

YOUR FALL 2022 ISSUE hit it out of the park! It's common for me to find one or two articles per issue that I'm interested in. But I found every single article in this issue deeply interesting.

DOUG MARTIN
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Has BAR Become a Subjective Academic Exercise?

BEING A BAR READER for the past 20 years, I have noticed a shift in the magazine's focus. It now seems that "scholarly" archaeologists, with their independent interpretations of discoveries, are the sole repository of truth regardless of what the Bible states. This type of archaeology, which uses the pretext of being "biblical," amounts to nothing more than a subjective academic exercise. Biblical archaeology isn't meant to substantiate what the Bible relates; rather, it provides a deeper understanding of the cultures and peoples of ancient times.

DAVID ROSSI
MARION, OHIO

BAR has always aimed to bring the latest and best scholarship in biblical archaeology to a popular audience, without any specific religious or ideological agenda. Sometimes this scholarship affirms and supports the biblical narrative, while at other times it poses challenges to the Bible's version of events. Where we certainly agree is that biblical archaeology can be an invaluable tool for gaining a deeper, real-world understanding of the societies and cultures that produced the biblical text.—ED.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Write us at letters@bib-arch.org or **BAR** Editorial, 5614 Connecticut Ave NW #343, Washington, DC 20015. Please include your full name, city, and state. While we welcome all reader comments, we are unable to reply to or publish every letter we receive. Published letters may be edited for length, clarity, and readability.

David and Goliath

I GREATLY ENJOYED the article "Taking a Sling." I would like to add a medical dimension. Gigantism is often the result of a pituitary tumor that secretes abnormal amounts of growth hormone. As this tumor enlarges, it presses on the optic chiasm (the crossing point of the optic nerves), which causes a loss of peripheral vision. Goliath was prepared to do battle with sword, spear, and javelin—all frontal weapons. But David used a sling to take advantage of Goliath's lack of peripheral vision and launched his missile laterally. Goliath offered no resistance, probably because he couldn't see. He literally did not know what hit him.

SIDNEY P. KADISH
WEST NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Pilgrims and Immigrants

JODI MAGNESS'S ARTICLE "Journey to Jerusalem" was fascinating, but we noticed one error. She describes three burial caves in the Kidron Valley, stating that the Ariston Family Tomb was one of these. However, the accompanying photograph (p. 48) does not portray the Ariston Tomb, but rather the Tomb of the High Priest Annas, which we identified and described in **BAR** almost 30 years ago ("Potter's Field or High Priest's Tomb?" November/December 1994).

LEEN AND KATHLEEN RITMEYER
SULLY, UNITED KINGDOM

Thank you for the keen observation. To learn more about the Ariston Tomb and see photographs of this remarkable site, readers can refer to Gideon Avni and Zvi Greenhut's article "Akeldama: Resting Place of the Rich and Famous," in the November/December 1994 issue of BAR.—ED.

Yahweh's Desert Origins

THE ARTICLE "YAHWEH'S DESERT Origins," by Juan Manuel Tebes, may be one of the worst that **BAR** has ever printed. It is full of unscriptural assumptions and near blasphemy.

Tebes writes that little is known about how God "came to be worshiped by the peoples of Israel and Judah." The Book of Genesis clearly relates how the Israelites came to worship God. God called Abraham to father a great nation. Abraham, along with his descendants (Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph), worshiped God. Within three generations, his descendants moved to Egypt for 400 years. Then God led them to Canaan in the Exodus. By then, Yahweh had been the national God of Israel for over 500 years. Doesn't Tebes read the Bible?

LESTER L. STEPHENSON
WELLFORD, SOUTH CAROLINA

TEBES'S ARTICLE begins with the story of Moses (Exodus 2–4). However, I would suggest that belief in Yahweh originated in the central hill country, not the desert. The first mention of Yahweh is in Genesis (13:2–4; 15), with the stories about the

interaction of Yahweh and Abraham set in the hill country of Judah. Genesis, not the later books of Exodus or Deuteronomy, should be where we look for Yahweh's origins.

KENNETH KUHN
TOMAH, WISCONSIN

JUAN MANUEL TEBES RESPONDS:
Indeed, the name Yahweh is mentioned several times in the Bible before Moses's time. It was Cain and Abel who first spoke the name Yahweh and made offerings to him (Genesis 4:1–4), while it was in the days of Enosh that people "began to call upon the name of Yahweh" (Genesis 4:26). We are clearly dealing with a parallel tradition about when the worship of Yahweh began. However, no epigraphic evidence of Yahweh has appeared in the Levant before the Monarchic period (c. 1000–586 BCE). The Canaanite god El was the most favored deity before that period, as attested by inscriptions from Ugarit, Canaanite place names, the prominence of El names in the patriarchal narratives, and even the name "Israel." The Bible itself, therefore, seems to preserve memories of El worship before the beginnings of Yahwism.

THE ARTICLE ON YAHWEH is almost entirely in the realm of speculation, and the evidence Tebes presents is not compelling. For example, he claims that "during the tenth century, Yahweh was rapidly assimilated into the Israelite pantheon" (p. 40), supported with only a footnote to a book. How do we know Yahweh's assimilation was rapid and did not occur more gradually?

BRIAN STOCK
PENNINGTON, NEW JERSEY

JUAN MANUEL TEBES RESPONDS:
The referenced book The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel *(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) highlights the significant role of the monarchy during the tenth century BCE in supporting the new deity. We know from the Mesha Stele that already in the mid-ninth century, King Mesha associated Yahweh with the Israelites, so the process of assimilation was already well underway by then. Also note that we are talking about the adoption of Yahwism by the monarchy; for the general population, it was another matter, as I recalled also in the article (p. 40).*

Identifying Scroll Scribes

THE ARTICLE BY MLADEN POPOVIĆ ("Using AI to Identify Scroll Scribes") does more than present a clever application of artificial intelligence (AI) to the paleography of the Great Isaiah Scroll. It also provides insight into management decisions and production methods. One can imagine that perhaps there were only two scribes available for the project so, for efficiency, they divided the labor, with each scribe taking half the scroll. I can almost hear the master saying to his apprentice, "I'll race you, Eli. Let's see who finishes first!"

NEAL POWERS
FULTON, MISSOURI

Three Cheers for Hieroglyphs!

I WAS VERY HAPPY to see two articles about hieroglyphs ("The Decipherment of Egyptian Hieroglyphs" and "The Rosetta Stone: Key to Egyptian Hieroglyphs"). But you do not mention the key that helped Champollion decode the ancient writing. The key was that he noticed the same hieroglyphs appearing together *within the same format* on the Rosetta Stone. Champollion realized that the format of royal names resembled the cartridge pouch carried by the French soldiers in Napoleon's army in Egypt. Thus the humble name of a French soldier's pouch—*cartouche*—came to denote the names of ancient Egypt's greatest kings.

JOHN F. MURPHY
YEADON, PENNSYLVANIA

Indeed, the ancient scribal habit of encircling royal and divine names in what we call cartouches offered a priceless visual key for isolating, in hieroglyphic texts, names known through Greek (e.g., Ptolemaios, Cleopatra). Crucial in Champollion's decoding of the Egyptian script, the function of cartouches was probably first guessed by Champollion's English competitor, Thomas Young.—ED.

Origins of the Gospels

I APPRECIATE Robyn Faith Walsh's effort to position the Gospels among the noteworthy literature of the first and second centuries ("The Origins of the Gospels"). However, the arguments offered for situating the Gospels in that company deprive them of their uniqueness as the "good news." John tells us that he wrote his gospel so that people may believe that Jesus is the Christ and so have life because of him (3:15; 20:31). This declaration must count for something in determining the "gospel genre" in relation to its intended audience.

JIM BARRON
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

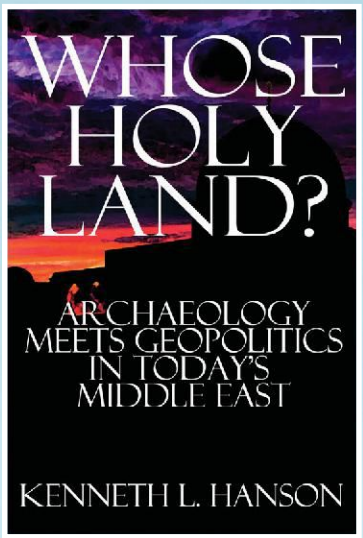
ROBYN FAITH WALSH RESPONDS:
Independent of their stated motives, all writers are shaped by their social position, education, and experience. The gospel authors write in Greek, cite Jewish scriptures, use Stoic terminology and concepts, and engage common literary tropes. That they might be part of a religious group doesn't preclude us from noticing connections and allusions that help us better understand the world from which Christianity emerges. The Gospel of Luke, for instance, gives a formulaic preamble consistent with ancient biographies, positioning itself within a genre that ancient readers would have immediately recognized.

John 3:15 is not so much a creed but represents a didactic strategy; the author references specific passages from the Torah and Isaiah, giving Jesus greater authority while simultaneously explaining to the audience what to expect from the Son of Man. Ultimately, this "good news" may tell us more about how these writers are inserting Jesus into an established literary mold than anything about the historical person.

For detailed author responses, go to **biblicalarchaeology.org/letters**.

WHOSE HOLY LAND?

Archaeology Meets Geopolitics in Today's Middle East



Biblical Archaeology is more than just an obscure field for academics. It's a modern mine field, with implications that may well determine the course of future events for the Middle East and the entire world. Ancient artifacts are more than just museum pieces—they're the storytellers, witnesses to the truth of who lived in this ancient land and when. Archaeology is ultimately about history, and history is the *raison d'être* for Jews living in this land at all.

Whose Holy Land? gathers archaeological evidence for the Jewish presence in Jerusalem and environs extending back into the Bronze Age during the twentieth century B.C.E. The Canaanites have of course disappeared, as has the entire lineage of the ancient Romans and Byzantines. ***Of all ancient peoples, only the Jews have survived.***

Scan the QR code or visit the link below for a FREE copy of *Whose Holy Land?**

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Photo by: Jenna Solomon

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Lachish ivory comb

DAFNA GAZIT, ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

Oldest Canaanite Sentence

THE OLDEST WRITTEN CANAANITE SENTENCE has been discovered at Lachish. The inscription, carved into an ivory comb, dates to around 1700 BCE, only a century after most scholars believe the alphabet was invented. Written in an archaic Proto-Canaanite script, the inscription sheds light on the early development of the alphabet and the daily life of Canaanites.

Although several Proto-Canaanite inscriptions have been found, with some even older than the Lachish comb, this is the oldest alphabetic inscription that contains a full sentence. It reads, "May this [ivory] tusk root out the lice of the hair and the beard," a fitting inscription to grace a comb. Remarkably, analysis of the comb provided evidence that this inscription, possibly a spell, was effective, as the remains of a louse were discovered on one of the comb's teeth.

Crafted of elephant ivory, likely imported from Egypt, the comb would have been a prestige object, owned by a wealthy family. Although the teeth of the comb were broken off in antiquity, their bases remain. One side of the comb featured six thick teeth, used to untangle knots. The other side had 14 finer teeth, used to remove lice.

The ivory comb was excavated from a secondary deposit at Lachish. Because of this, it was not possible to date the comb according to other finds in the area. Instead, the comb's date was determined through paleography (the form of the letters), which showed the inscription was very archaic.

READ MORE ON *BIBLE HISTORY DAILY*

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Ivory Riches from Ancient Jerusalem

DAFNA GAZIT, ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

An ivory frame incised with rosettes with a stylized tree in the center.

MORE THAN 1,500 IVORY FRAGMENTS were discovered during wet sifting at the Givati Parking Lot site adjacent to the City of David. Following extensive restoration, the team was able to reassemble the skillfully crafted plaques, each measuring roughly 2 by 2 inches and about a quarter of an inch thick. A rare and expensive material, decorated ivory had previously been discovered only in the capitals of powerful Iron Age kingdoms (c. 1200–586 BCE), such as the Assyrian capitals of Nimrud and Dur-Sharrukin, as well as Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Now Jerusalem has joined this impressive list.

Ivory is mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible in connection with wealth and royalty. King Solomon was said to have made for himself a "great ivory throne" overlaid with the "finest gold" (1 Kings 10:18), and the prophet Amos famously denounced the Israelite nobility who "lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches" (Amos 6:4).

The Jerusalem ivories were recovered from a large palatial residence, initially built in the eighth century BCE, which belonged to a member of the city's elite. Analysis of the ivories revealed they were made from elephant tusk. They were probably crafted by Assyrian artisans and then brought to Judah, possibly as a gift from an Assyrian king.

The plaques are decorated with incised rosettes that frame a stylized tree in the center. Others are adorned with lotus flowers and geometric patterns, all of which were popular symbols within Mesopotamia and are found among the ivories discovered in Samaria and Assyria.

GAVIN HELLIER / JON ARNOLD IMAGES LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

WHERE IS IT?

1. Petra, Jordan
2. Timna, Israel
3. Aswan, Egypt
4. Cappadocia, Turkey
5. Chaco Canyon, United States

ANSWER ON P. 28

Back to Aleppo

THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023
The Israel Museum
Jerusalem, Israel
www.imj.org.il

THE GREAT ALEPPO SYNAGOGUE was one of the most important synagogues in the world and home to the oldest complete Hebrew Bible in existence. The synagogue burned down in 1947, but a virtual reality (VR) experience is bringing this lost wonder back to life.

Titled *Back to Aleppo*, the newest VR exhibit at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem brings visitors into the heart of this ancient synagogue as it appeared in November 1947. It is crafted around a collection of photographs commissioned only days before the 1947 fire by Sarah Shammah, a Syrian Jewish woman from Aleppo. Exhibit creators used these unique images, which capture every corner of the building, to create a 3D virtual reconstruction of the synagogue. Wearing headsets, visitors can choose to either take a guided tour of the whole building or explore it alongside Shammah as they listen to her harrowing story.

The Aleppo Codex

COURTESY OF BEN ZVI INSTITUTE

Built originally between the fifth and seventh centuries CE, the synagogue functioned as the center of Jewish life in Aleppo, one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world. It also housed the famous Aleppo Codex, written in Tiberias around 930 CE* and considered the most authoritative copy of the Hebrew Bible. Following the United Nations' declaration of the partition of Palestine in 1947, riots broke out in Aleppo against the Jewish community, and the Great Synagogue was torched. Although rebuilt by the early 1990s, the synagogue was irreparably destroyed in 2016, during the Syrian civil war. The incredibly realistic VR simulation saves the historical treasure for posterity, albeit only in digital form.

* Yosef Ofer, "The Mystery of the Missing Pages of the Aleppo Codex," **BAR**, July/August 2015.

Virtual reconstruction of the synagogue courtyard

COURTESY OF THE VR PROJECT 'PLACE'

SHAI HALEVI, ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

Ishmael Papyrus

Rare Old Hebrew Papyrus?

ACCORDING TO THE Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), an incredibly rare papyrus with Old Hebrew text dating to the time of the First Temple has been recovered. The IAA claims the papyrus, which contains just four lines of text, is one of only three papyrus documents to date to this period and, therefore, offers a unique glimpse into the world of Jerusalem during the time of the biblical kings. However, the papyrus is an unprovenanced object that may have originated on the antiquities market, which has caused some scholars to be more cautious when judging its date and authenticity.

The papyrus fragment, though damaged, includes several Hebrew words that reveal it is part of a letter with instructions to a recipient: "To Ishmael, send …" The letter was likely a request to Ishmael, possibly an administrative official in the Kingdom of Judah, to send commodities to the writer of the text. Initial paleographic and radiocarbon analyses date the papyrus from the late seventh to sixth centuries BCE.

The story of how the Ishmael Papyrus, as it is being called, came to be known to the IAA is no less intriguing than the artifact itself. According to the IAA, an American tourist visiting Jerusalem in 1965 came into possession of the small papyrus fragment, which she acquired from Joseph Saad, Curator of the Palestine Archaeological Museum (now the Rockefeller Museum), and Khalil Iskander Kando, a well-known antiquities dealer from Bethlehem who sold thousands of such fragments. Upon returning home to Montana, the woman hung the prized fragment on a wall in her house.

Some 50 years later, Shmuel Ahituv, a professor of biblical and Near Eastern studies at Ben Gurion University, came across an early photograph of the fragment. Realizing what he had uncovered, Ahituv contacted the IAA. Together, Ahituv and Eitan Klein, Deputy Director of the IAA's Antiquities Theft Prevention Unit, traced the fragment to the home of the Montana woman's son, whom they invited to Israel to tour the IAA's Dead Sea Scrolls lab. After the visit, the son was convinced that the lab had the best conditions to conserve and research the rare document, and he generously donated it to the IAA.

To learn more about the problems associated with objects that lack a secure archaeological context, visit **www.biblicalarchaeology.org/unprovenanced**.

Good as Gold

WHILE CONDUCTING A SALVAGE excavation at the Banias Nature Reserve, the Israel Antiquities Authority discovered a coin hoard dating to the final years of Byzantine control in the southern Levant. The hoard consists of 44 gold coins minted under the Byzantine emperors Phocas (r. 602–610 CE) and Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE). Although an incredible discovery on their own, the coins also help illuminate the transition from Christian to Islamic rule at Banias (biblical Caesarea Philippi).

Concealed beneath the base of a stone wall, the coin hoard was likely hidden for safekeeping before its owner fled the city in the face of the advancing Arab forces who conquered the region in 635 CE. The sheer quantity and quality of the gold, weighing about 6 ounces, also sheds light on the economy of the city in the final years of Byzantine control.

DAFNA GAZIT, COURTESY OF THE ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

The coin hoard discovered at Banias.

Why All Tubs Are Not Bathtubs

LAURA B. MAZOW

WHEN I BEGAN STUDYING a tub-shaped basin discovered years ago in the "elite zone" of the ancient Philistine city of Ekron (modern Tel Miqne), I assumed it was what it looked like—a bathtub. But the more I studied this artifact, the less I was convinced it was actually a bathtub. This put me on a quest. Several years and projects later, I may have some answers regarding the exact function of this and similar tubs.

Bathtubs, or bath-shaped vessels—typically made of ceramic, stone, or metal—are known from many sites across the ancient Near East. The earliest examples, dating to the 18th century BCE, come from the palace of King Zimri-Lim at the site of Mari in eastern Syria. Although basins of all shapes and sizes have been called "bathtubs" in the archaeological literature, I have identified three major types. The first is elliptical to hourglass-shaped, with four handles or lugs—two on either of the long sides. This type is also known on Cyprus, where the earliest examples date to the 13th century BCE.

The second type is rectangular or triangular, with one short straight wall opposite a rounded wall. The long walls are parallel or bulge outward in the middle, or sometimes angle inward. This type originated in Mesopotamia, where a similar vessel appears at the end of the second millennium. Most of the ones found in Israel and Jordan are of this type (see example below) and date from the eighth through sixth centuries BCE, when the region was under heavy Assyrian influence.

The third type appears at Hellenistic and Roman period sites. It has a raised seat at one end and a sunken depression at the other, with no visible handles. It is sometimes constructed as a fixed installation rather than a discrete, moveable object.

Interestingly, what we do not see in the southern Levant is local development from one form to another. Instead—assuming these three types reflect similar activities—bath-shaped vessels were introduced into the region multiple times, each time from a different place.[1]

When I first studied the basin from Ekron, I looked for similar vessels at other sites and noted that the Cypriot examples often came from industrial contexts. Their excavators typically suggested these were secondary contexts, meaning the vessels were first used elsewhere, where they would presumably have had an original function as bathing tubs. Although a few were found in "bathrooms," these rooms were identified as bathrooms solely due to the presence of a tub. To escape such circular reasoning, I enlarged my study to include other artifacts found in these rooms, and I noticed that the tubs were often associated with textile tools. At the Cypriot site of Maa-Palaeokastro (about 6 mi northwest of Paphos), where more than a dozen tubs were found, there was such a large amount of textile equipment that the excavators suggested the textile workers took baths at the end of their shifts!

Instead of trying to fit the data into the traditional interpretation, I asked myself: How might a large basin function in the ancient textile industry? And there it was. Sumerian writings (c. 2100 BCE) and Mycenaean texts (c. 1450 BCE) mention fullers—professionals involved in wool fulling. Fulling uses hot water, a detergent, and agitation to shrink and matt the woven, woolen fibers of textiles. In the Roman period, when fulling is well documented through texts and archaeology, fulling was done in large basins, where the fuller gripped the tub's high sides and trampled the textile underfoot. Although there has always been

PHOTO BY S. GRIEVE, WITH PERMISSION FROM THE ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

An Iron Age tub from Tel Jezreel.

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variation in detergents and agitation techniques, the overall process did not change much until the mechanized fulling mills of the Industrial Revolution.

Fulling creates a stronger weave that is more resistant to wind and water, giving a textile added value. Accordingly, ancient texts mention fullers enjoying high status and serving as craftsmen or specialists attached to elite households. The activities of a fuller and the resources required are similar to those needed to clean clothes, and thus fullers may have also acted as launderers. In the Bible, references to both fulling (Isaiah 7:3; 36:2; 2 Kings 18:17) and washing clothes (Exodus 19:10; Leviticus 13) use the same verb, *kabas*, which means "to tread" or "trample" underfoot, a common action in both activities.

Could then some tubs be the archaeological footprint of fulling? I think the evidence clearly points in that direction. The site of Maa-Palaeokastro with its multiple tubs strongly resembles the architecture of Roman period fulleries. Organic residue analysis on several eighth- and seventh-century BCE tubs from sites in Israel, Jordan, and Turkey identified a compound similar to date palm oil, which is traditionally used as a soap for washing textiles. A graffito of a date palm and a weaving loom on a tub from Khirbet al-Mudayna in Jordan points to a relationship among these three elements. Finally, ethnographic observations of Levantine village life in the early 20th century showed that a large basin was a main feature in courtyards and kitchens and that its primary use was for laundry, fulling, and tanning.

As such, rather than seeing all tubs as bathtubs, we should take a broader perspective and recognize that at least some of these artifacts were likely better suited to craft production than personal hygiene.

[1] For a full discussion of these arguments, see Laura Mazow et al., "Extraction and Analysis of Total Lipids in Late Iron Age Bath-shaped Basins from the Levant as a Means of Assessing Vessel Function," *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 22 (2018), pp. 193–201.

Tears From A Volcano

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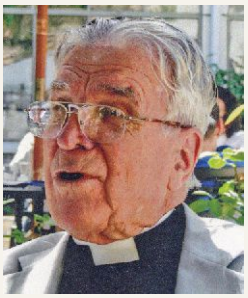
Father Bill Broughton (1929–2022)



ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2022, biblical archaeology lost one of its greatest fans: the Reverend Canon Dr. William Broughton, affectionately known as "Father Bill." He was 93.

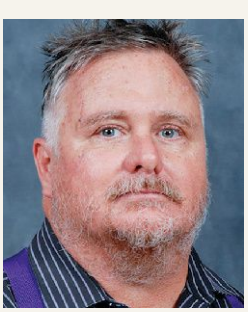
Bill grew up in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where as a child he dreamed of a life at sea. That dream came to pass when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy at age 17. After four years of service, Bill decided to enter the ministry and attended college and then seminary to be ordained in the Episcopal Church in 1959.

In 1964, while serving with the Archbishop in Jerusalem, Bill participated in a new excavation project at Gezer directed by archaeologist G. Ernest Wright. At Gezer, where Bill's team helped uncover the famous tenth-century "Solomonic" gate, he became fond of saying, "You can't appreciate the Bible without getting your hands dirty."

Bill's gregarious spirit endeared him to many. Among his closest friends was the late Larry Stager of Harvard University. Bill was a regular at the site of Ashkelon, where Stager excavated. He was also a frequent guest at the W.F. Albright Institute in Jerusalem. Bill regularly attended Thanksgiving meals there, led carol singing at the Christmas luncheons, and even joined the Albright fellows on a tour of Lebanon and Syria in 2001.

As a minister, Bill never tired in his quest for peace between Israelis and Palestinians or to promote ecumenism among Israel's religious communities. Until his death, reconciliation was in his bones.—**ROBERT A. MULLINS**

Michael Homan (1966–2022)



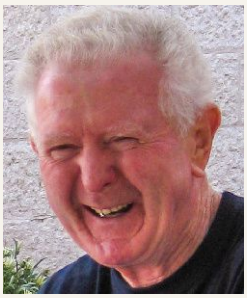
MICHAEL HOMAN, Professor and head of the Department of Theology at Xavier University of Louisiana, passed away on September 17, 2022. He was 56 years old.

With interests ranging from the Bible and archaeology to punk rock, Homan was beloved by many for his colorful personality. Originally from Omaha, Nebraska, he earned his Ph.D. in ancient Near Eastern history from the University of California, San Diego, in 2000. Homan joined the theology faculty at Xavier that same year and taught courses on the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East, as well a popular course on New Orleans cemeteries. When he wasn't teaching, Homan was deeply involved in his New Orleans community, playing guitar in the punk band Half Pagan and participating in the Seeds of Decline sub-krewe of the Krewe du Vieux during Mardi Gras.

Homan participated in numerous archaeological projects, including excavations and surveys at Wadi Faynan in southern Jordan, the Tel Zeitah excavation in southern Israel, and the Marj Rabba Project in the lower Galilee.

Throughout his career, Homan also worked to make biblical scholarship accessible to the interested public. He co-authored, with Jeffrey Geoghegan, *The Bible for Dummies* (2002) and wrote a number of popular articles and reviews for **BAR** and its longtime sister publication *Bible Review*.*

Burton MacDonald (1939–2022)



"PEACE." That was the trademark sign off and genuine wish of Canadian archaeologist Burton MacDonald, who passed away on October 20, 2022, at the age of 83. He was a giant in the field of Near Eastern archaeology and contributed significantly to our understanding of the ancient sites and peoples east of the Jordan River.

MacDonald enjoyed a 62-year relationship with St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where he received his bachelor's degree in 1960, returning to teach there in 1966 and staying on for more than 40 years. He earned a master's degree in religious education from St. Paul's Seminary (University of Ottawa) and a Ph.D. in Near Eastern languages and literature from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

MacDonald was best known for his archaeological research in Jordan, where he spent 40 years carrying out five major survey projects that contributed significantly to our knowledge of the country's vast rural hinterlands. He published 12 volumes and more than a hundred articles, including several popular works on Jordan's biblical past, especially *"East of the Jordan": Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures* (2005) and *Pilgrimage in Early Christian Jordan* (2011).

With deep appreciation, sincere admiration, and warm affection, we wish for Burton, his wife, Rosemarie, and their family "Peace."—**DOUGLAS CLARK, LARRY HERR, AND LARRY GERATY**

* See Michael Homan, "Did the Ancient Israelites Drink Beer?" **BAR**, September/October 2010; "Jesus the Teetotaler," *Bible Review*, April 2002; "The Divine Warrior in His Tent," *Bible Review*, December 2000.

For extended tributes, visit **biblicalarchaeology.org/milestones**.

BROUGHTON: COURTESY THE BROUGHTON FAMILY AND JOE DITLER. HOMAN: COURTESY XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA. MACDONALD: PHOTO BY BARBARA A. PORTER, COURTESY AMERICAN CENTER OF RESEARCH

An early morning at Shikhin in Galilee.

COURTESY JAMES STRANGE, THE SHIKHIN EXCAVATION PROJECT

Archaeology
Off the Beaten Path

NATHAN STEINMEYER

THWACK, THWACK, THWACK—the sound of pickaxes and trowels rings out through the sloping hills of Lower Galilee. Looking past the balks of excavation squares, you can practically step into the village of Shikhin that still lies beneath the soil after 1,700 years. Shikhin is not a large archaeological site or the proposed location of a biblical event. Yet, without sites like Shikhin, our picture of the past would be incomplete. Whether it opens a unique window into history or allows for a clearer view of a particular ancient practice, archaeology "off the beaten path" deserves more attention.

When thinking about Holy Land archaeology, we often think about large urban sites (tells),

Dig Sites 2023

If you would like to join an excavation in 2023, here are some opportunities. Visit **www.biblicalarchaeology.org/digs** for additional information on these and other digs, including a description of each site, goals for the coming season, important finds from past seasons, biblical connections, and application details. Some of these dates might change; please refer to our website for updated information. The right archaeological expedition for you is just a click away!

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Naama Yahalom-Mack, Nava Panitz-Cohen, Robert Mullins

Abila H
JUNE 20–JULY 29
David Villa

Azekah Q
JULY 16–AUG. 11
Oded Lipschits, Manfred Oeming, Sabine Kleinman

Caesarea Maritima N
JUNE 27–JULY 26
A. Asa Eger, Andrea De Giorgi, Beverly Goodman

El-Araj D
JULY 21–AUG. 19; OCT. 19–NOV. 3
Mordechai Aviam, Steven Notley

Hazor C
JULY 9–AUG. 18
Igor Kreimerman

Hazor Lower City C
JUNE 18–JULY 28
Shlomit Bechar

Hippos G
JULY 2–27
Arleta Kowalewska, Michael Eisenberg

Khirbat al-Mukhayyat T
MAY 17–JUNE 24
Debra Foran, Gregory Braun, Andrew Danielson

Khirbet Safra U
JUNE 4–30
Paul Gregor

Legio M
JUNE 24–JULY 21
Matthew J. Adams, Yotam Tepper

Majduliyya E
JULY 2–27
Mechael Osband

Ophel (Jerusalem) P
JULY 2–AUG. 4
Uzi Leibner, Orit Peleg-Barkat

Shikhin K
JUNE 5–30
James Riley Strange, Mordechai Aviam, Tom McCollough

Tel Burna R
JUNE 18–JULY 14
Itzick Shai, Steven Ortiz

Tel Hadid O
JUNE 25–JULY 20
Ido Koch, Jim Parker

Tel Kabri I
JUNE 25–JULY 20
Eric H. Cline, Assaf Yasur-Landau

Tel Lachish (HUJI) S
JULY 2–20
Yosef Garfinkel, HooGoo Kang

Tel Lachish (OAW) S
JULY 9–AUG. 4
Felix Höflmayer, Katharina Streit

Tel Qedesh B
JULY 2–21
Uri Davidovich, Ido Wachtel

Tel Shimron L
JUNE 17–JULY 29
Daniel M. Master, Mario Martin

Tell Keisan J
JULY 23–AUG. 21
David Schloen, Gunnar Lehmann, Bernd Schipper

Winter 2024 Digs

Tiberias F
FEBRUARY 2024
Katia Cytryn-Silverman, Katja Soennecken

Timna V
JANUARY 2024
Erez Ben-Yosef

such as Hazor and Shimron, or sites with clear biblical connections, such as Jerusalem's Ophel (all accepting volunteers this year!). While all these sites are important, there is a whole host of smaller or lesser-known sites that are just as fascinating. So, why is it important to study sites off the beaten path, and what draws some archaeologists to excavate them year after year?

COURTESY MECHAEL OSBAND, MAJDULIYYA EXCAVATION

Abbie Rosenbaum Braha restoring Roman mosaics at Majduliyya.

Although ancient cities have a lot to offer archaeologically and historically, they are only part of the Holy Land's long past. Village, farming, and industrial sites offer a different part of that history, a window into the lives and livelihoods of rural communities. According to Mechael Osband, director of the Majduliyya excavation in the Golan, excavating these small villages allows us to see the "differences in lifestyle and socio-economic relationships in contrast to the larger sites." James Strange, director of the Shikhin excavation, concurs, "At city sites we tend to get remains of public buildings, streets, and villas of the elite, whereas at villages we tend to get houses, industry, and synagogues of a different social stratum (although a few sites get all of these). We learn immensely from both."

Lesser-known sites such as Tel Tsaf in the Jordan Valley reveal another aspect of the region's history.

Although not a small site, Tsaf is primarily a prehistoric settlement from the Chalcolithic (c. 4500–3300 BCE), a period archaeologists have generally overlooked to focus on Canaanite city-states, Iron Age kingdoms, or Herodian palaces. Yet it is the cultures, peoples, and innovations of these prehistoric periods that provide a look into the development of the region and set the scene for all that would come later. Indeed, it is impossible to gain a full picture of the past without investigating such lesser-known sites.

In terms of methods and tools, there is little that separates the excavation of an ancient city from

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A few of our 2022 BAS Dig Scholarship winners share what made their dig experiences so special. See more stories in the new eBook, *A Digger's Life: A Guide to the Archaeology Dig Experience*, at **biblicalarchaeology.org/dig-guide**.

"The dig at El-Araj was full of hard work, good camaraderie, and the joy of finding things that had been lost for centuries. But it also gave me a new way to envision history, an experiential perspective that will deepen and enrich what I'm able to pass on to my parishioners. It's one thing to talk in the abstract about life in the ancient world; it's quite another to hold pieces of that world in your hands."

—Matthew Burden

"My dig experience at Hippos-Sussita provided me with so much insight into the discipline of archaeology. I gained a much deeper appreciation for material culture and the incredible amount of work that goes into uncovering and preserving archaeological remains."

—Kaitlyn Hawn

"My time at Azekah was a life-changing and career-defining experience. I was able to meet people from all over the world, forge new personal and professional relationships, and honestly, gain arm muscles I thought I'd never have."

—Caitlin Hubler

COURTESY CAITLIN HUBLER

Caitlin Hubler, a doctoral student in Hebrew Bible at Emory University, excavating at Tel Azekah.

COURTESY JAMES STRANGE, THE SHIKHIN EXCAVATION PROJECT

Above: Baylor West, Logan Osborn, Will Lachocki, and Jill Marshall posing for a photo in their square at Shikhin.

Left: Susan Rytz presenting a small blade from Majduliyya.

a small village or a famous biblical site from an obscure prehistoric settlement. However, the excavation of sites off the beaten path allows for something seldom seen at well-excavated ones: clarity and focus. Whether it is their many archaeological layers or the years of previous excavation, large, well-excavated sites tend to be "muddy." This, in turn, causes the archaeological team to excavate strata and features that were not important to their original plans or to carefully pick through intrusions made by later settlements or even previous excavations.

As put by Danny Rosenberg, co-director of the Tel Tsaf excavation, "Sites 'off the beaten path' usually allow one to focus more on specific questions without the 'danger' of contamination and complex post-depositional issues." It is the very nature of these off-the-beaten-path sites that makes them so advantageous. With fewer settlement layers and less modern activity, they allow archaeologists more freedom in choosing their excavation areas and a quicker path to answering research questions related to specific periods.

While excavating a small village or prehistoric town might not sound as glamorous as digging up a Byzantine church or Roman legionary camp, the results obtained are just as important. What's more, once on site, the thrill of excavation is every bit as intoxicating. So whether you are choosing your next dig or perusing archaeological news, maybe you should try looking off the beaten path, too.

COURTESY MECHAEL OSBAND, MAJDULIYYA EXCAVATION

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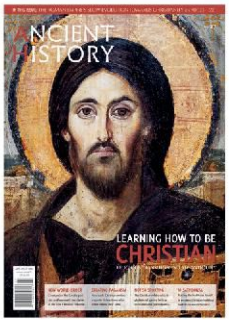

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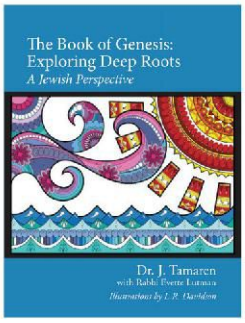

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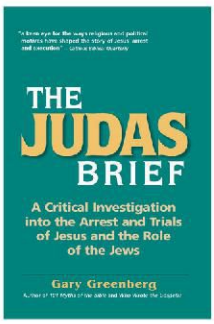

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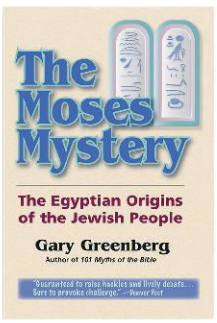
The Moses Mystery

The Egyptian Origins of the Jewish People



By Gary Greenberg

What do history and archaeology *really* say about the origins of ancient Israel? Based on extensive research into biblical and Egyptian history, archaeology, literature, and mythology, Greenberg argues that the first Israelites were Egyptians, followers of the monotheistic teachings of Pharaoh Akhenaten.

"Mr. Greenberg seems to delight in a game of scholarly 'gotcha.'"

The N.Y. Times

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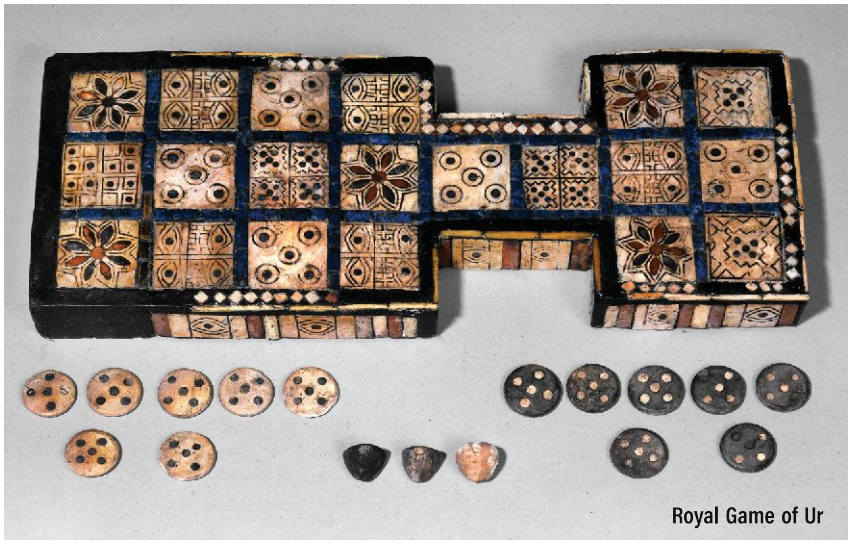
Board Games



Royal Game of Ur

ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY

PLAYING BOARD GAMES has been a popular pastime for millennia. One of the oldest board games in the world—the Royal Game of Ur—was first played in ancient Mesopotamia more than 4,500 years ago. Examples of other ancient board games have been found across the world—Wari in West Africa, Sugoroku in Japan and China, and Pachisi in India, to name a few. Board games were shared and enjoyed across regions and cultures. Backgammon, for example, was played in Mesopotamia, Persia, and the Byzantine Empire.

In the biblical world, board games were part of routine domestic life, but were also used in religious rituals and divination. At Tell es-Safi (biblical Gath), four fragmentary playing boards for the game known as "30 Houses"—as well as numerous game pieces—were found within ordinary houses.* The games, which date to the Early Bronze Age III (2900–2500 BCE), included boards made of soft chalk and small gaming pieces of worked stone and bone. The pieces show signs of regular use, indicating they were most likely enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age or social status.

In our modern world, board games are still played for fun with family and friends, but they have also taken on a more competitive aspect. Professional chess competitions have been held since 1841, and more recent strategy board games, such as the Settlers of Catan series, now have championship tournaments as well. Not surprisingly, board games surged in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, when they became an affordable source of fun and entertainment for people who were stuck at home during shutdowns.

* Shira Albaz et al., Archaeological Views: "Board Games in Biblical Gath," **BAR**, September/October 2017.

RICHMATTS / ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

ARCHAEOLOGY ARGOT

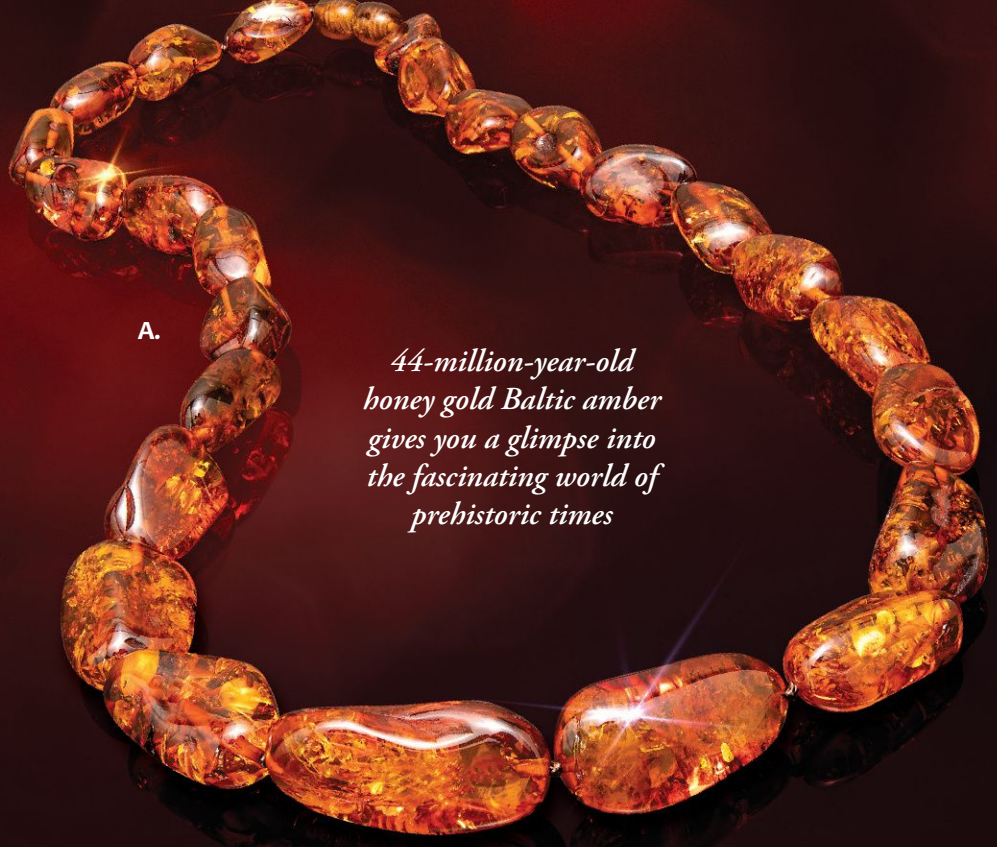
Ashlar

The term *ashlar* denotes both a certain kind of building stone and the masonry that makes use of such stones. There are several types of ashlar masonry, depending on the finish of the exposed face, the arrangement of individual stones, and the size of blocks. In general, ashlars are finely dressed stones cut precisely into a rectangular shape. In the ancient world, such blocks were often incredibly large and heavy.

Ashlar blocks were typically laid in horizontal courses, or layers. Because of their straight and smooth edges, the stones fit together tightly, leaving only thin joints between them and resulting in well-built and imposing structures. Building with ashlars was labor intensive and expensive and thus reserved for only the finest construction projects designed for gods and the wealthy, such as temples, palaces, and tombs.

The oldest known examples come from Egypt, though most ancient and pre-modern civilizations used this type of stone masonry, including the Minoans on Crete, the Mycenaeans of mainland Greece, and the Incas of South America. Pictured here is the Western Wall in Jerusalem—a section of the perimeter wall built around the Temple Mount under Herod the Great (first century BCE).

Despite its exotic sound, *ashlar* is an English word, derived from the Old French *aissele* "traverse beam," which originated from the Latin *axis*, meaning "axle" or "plank."



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Crusader Battle at Yibna

NINE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, on May 29, 1123 CE, Crusader troops crushed the attacking Egyptian army of the Fatimid caliph at Yibna (biblical Yavne), off the coast of the Mediterranean Sea between Ascalon (Ashkelon) and Jaffa (Tel Aviv). The Crusaders were led by the Flemish lord Eustace Granier, who was the constable and bailiff of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Muslim challengers were led by the Fatimid vizier Al-Mamun al-Batahi.

The short and decisive battle took place 24 years after the first establishment of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, which was an ephemeral state founded by European Christian conquerors of the Holy Land following the First Crusade. At the time, King Baldwin II of Jerusalem was in captivity in northern Syria. This encouraged the Cairo-based Fatimids to attack and try to recapture the coastal stronghold of Jaffa, the center of one of the Crusader seigneuries that made up the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Crusaders' victory eliminated the Fatimid threat for the next 30 years.

Ultimately Jaffa was conquered by the Mamluk sultan Baibars in 1268, and the whole Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem came to an end 23 years later.

The stylized depiction of a Crusader battle, at left, comes from a 13th-century French manuscript of William of Tyre's *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, which chronicles exploits of the French warriors in the Levant between 1095 and 1184.

WHERE IS IT?

(SEE QUIZ ON P. 13)

Answer: 4 Cappadocia, Turkey

KLAUS BOSSEMEYER / IMAGE PROFESSIONALS GMBH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Cave dwellings and churches—carved into unique rock formations—dot the landscape of Cappadocia, Turkey. The photo on p. 13 shows the "Nunnery," a complex of monastic dwellings and chapels connected by tunnels, in the Goreme Open Air Museum. Some of the best cave churches in all of Cappadocia can be found in Goreme, including the Dark (Karanlik) Church with its beautiful frescoes (right). Most of the cave complexes in Goreme date to the 10th–12th centuries.

Cappadocia also boasts elaborate underground cities. The largest settlement, Derinkuyu, could accommodate 20,000 people. The Phrygians originally carved caves and tunnels in the region during the eighth–seventh centuries BCE. However, the underground cities reached their zenith under Byzantine rule, especially from the eighth to 12th centuries CE, when the network was expanded. From that time until the 20th century, Christians would periodically live and hide in these cities to escape persecution. In 1923, though, the caves were abandoned when the Christian inhabitants, Cappadocian Greeks, were banished from the region.

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For the Freedom of Zion

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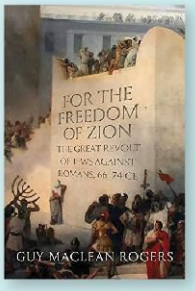

For the Freedom of Zion
The Great Revolt of Jews Against Romans, 66–74 CE
By Guy MacLean Rogers

(New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2021), xxii + 721 pp., 23 b/w photos and drawings, 5 maps; $37.50 (hardcover), $28.49 (eBook)

IN 66 CE, fighting between the Jewish populace and their Roman overlords broke out in Judea. It eventually led to all-out war, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Three years later, the last rebel stronghold at Masada was captured. These events proved to be game changing for the ensuing history of Judaism and Christianity as well as the Roman Empire.

Thanks to Flavius Josephus, the first-century Jewish writer who played an active role in the First Jewish Revolt against Rome and was witness to some of its major events, scholars have a treasure trove of information to sift through. One could say that without Josephus's *Jewish War* (and his *Life* and *Antiquities*) we would know next to nothing about the war's ins and outs. But to many scholars, Josephus is an obstacle that has to be overcome in the quest to untangle the "real" causes of the revolt and to unfold its events.

Josephus's work is considered suspect by many, partly because he tries to cast the blame for the revolt's outbreak on a few unsavory characters while exculpating his own class, the aristocracy. Josephus also wrote a different kind of history than we are used to. His work is at home in the Greco-Roman world; in typical fashion, it blends drama with history, is imbued with his moral and theological values (*and* judgments!), and is shaped by his apologetic tendencies. Consequently, scholars have invested enormous effort into interrogating Josephus's work and its reliability.

With his book *For the Freedom of Zion*, Guy MacLean Rogers enters this conversation by acknowledging these limitations, except that he sees this as an opportunity, not an encumbrance. Whether we like it or not, the war that we can know about in detail is Josephus's war, which is both a blessing and a challenge. While it is commonplace to resort to archaeology to test Josephus's reliability, Rogers recognizes the limits of these endeavors. Although archaeological evidence for siege warfare confirms that particular battles did indeed take place, this has little to no bearing in evaluating Josephus's credibility. Furthermore, archaeological remains are not a substitute for the rich narrative that the historian presents. Therefore, argues Rogers, we must take seriously Josephus's unique,

albeit complicated, perspective about the war's various events.

In his approach to Josephus, Rogers departs from previous scholarship in a fundamental way. Instead of limiting his focus to the causes of the revolt—a major scholarly preoccupation—he takes a deep dive into every aspect of Josephus's narrative. Although Rogers reads Josephus critically, he is more receptive to his viewpoint than most scholars today. For example, on the much-disputed historicity of the mass suicide at Masada, Rogers puts the burden of proof on modern scholars to refute Josephus's testimony. He argues that Josephus's story would be moot if it were completely fabricated, and it would have been called into question by many leading Romans with whom Josephus says he shared his text. Rogers also emphasizes that Josephus indirectly offers a less-than-flattering portrayal of the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus, which shows that his work cannot be dismissed as a mere tool of imperial propaganda.

Concerning the causes of the revolt, Rogers forgoes systemic explanations. There were always religious, political, and cultural tensions in Roman Judea, and war could have broken out at various other points before 66 CE, but it did not. Like many other conflicts, what precipitated the First Revolt was a series of individual (sometimes rash) actions and decisions, insignificant in and of themselves, but which, in combination, created a deadly chain reaction that ultimately ignited the sparks of war. The revolt, in other words, was neither predictable nor inevitable.

Significantly, Rogers shifts the spotlight onto Rome's responsibility for the revolt's outbreak and its devastating outcome. Following the great fire in Rome in 64 CE, Nero was cash-strapped, and Judea and other provinces were tasked to foot the bill. Some of the provocative actions undertaken by the procurators, which helped fan the flames of war, can be linked directly to Rome's financial needs. Vespasian, moreover, may have started out as a general fighting Nero's war, but ultimately was (together with his son Titus) the one responsible for seeing it through to the bitter end. The victory over the Jews served to legitimize the establishment of the Flavian dynasty and deflected attention away from the casualties and immense destruction that Rome's civil war had wrought—the very war that catapulted Vespasian to power. Rogers argues that Vespasian may also have had a stake in destroying the Jerusalem Temple, to eliminate a competitive sacrificial cult that might threaten Rome's hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean.

This, then, explains why the First Jewish Revolt was neither a small nor an insignificant war, contrary to some recent claims. Rogers's shifting of the focus away from the revolt's causes to the reasons the Romans invested so much effort and resources into quelling it offers a refreshing and compelling take on a pivotal historical event many of us thought we knew well.

The Demon Humbaba

"Humbaba's cry is the roar of a deluge, his maw is fire, his breath is death!" The Mesopotamian monster Humbaba is depicted here as if made from the coils of sheep intestines. The clay mask, excavated in the city of Sippar (modern Tell Abu Habba in Iraq) and dating to the Old Babylonian period (c. 1900–1600 BCE), serves as an artistic example of a possible divination result. Three inches tall, the mask contains five lines of text, including an omen and the name of the diviner who crafted the mask, on its back.

Humbaba is the legendary guardian of the Cedar Forest in ancient Lebanon. According to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Humbaba was slain by Gilgamesh and Enkidu who then cut off the monster's head. Amulets and plaques of Humbaba's head, typically depicted as a hideous creature, were common in the ancient Near East, and a clear parallel to Humbaba's head exists in the Greek myth of Perseus and Medusa.

The Humababa mask is housed in the British Museum in London, England.

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Jesus in the Synagogue

JORDAN J. RYAN

ALL FOUR OF THE CANONICAL GOSPELS situate Jesus's ministry within synagogues. According to Mark 1:39, Jesus "went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons." Matthew 4:23 and Luke 4:14–15 similarly set Jesus's Galilean teaching activity within synagogues, and Luke 4:43–44 places Jesus's proclamation of the Kingdom of God within the synagogues of Judea. Finally, in John 18:20, Jesus states that he has "always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together."

The synagogue was intrinsic rather than incidental to Jesus's life and career: He taught in synagogues, customarily attended synagogue gatherings (Luke 4:16), performed exorcisms and healings in synagogues (Mark 1:21–28; 3:1–6; Luke 13:10–17), and discussed and debated the interpretation and practice of Jewish law in synagogues (Mark 3:1–6; Luke 13:14–17; John 6:30–59). The study of ancient synagogues can help us to better contextualize and interpret the Gospels and their depiction of Jesus's activities. In turn, this can greatly aid us in reconstructing a Jesus who was fully at home in first-century Jewish Galilee.

Our understanding of synagogues during the early Roman period (63 BCE–135 CE) in the southern Levant has grown exponentially in recent years.[1] Since the well-publicized discovery of the spectacular synagogue uncovered at Magdala in 2009,* the remains of buildings plausibly identified as ancient synagogues from the early Roman period have been excavated

* See Marcela Zapata-Meza and Rosaura Sanz-Rincón, "Excavating Mary Magdalene's Hometown," **BAR**, May/June 2017.

HIP / ART RESOURCE, NY

TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE. This scene depicts Jesus in Nazareth's synagogue, wherein he reads from the Book of Isaiah (Luke 4). According to Luke's Gospel, some in Nazareth accepted Jesus's teachings, but others rejected them and drove him out of town. This 14th-century fresco comes from the Visoki Decani Monastery in Kosovo.

at Tel Rekhesh, Khirbet Majduliyya, and Beth Shemesh.* Fragmentary remains of Jewish public buildings dated to the early Roman period have been uncovered at Shikhin and Khirbet Wadi Hamam, and in both cases, the excavators have identified the buildings as synagogues. The discovery of a *second* synagogue at Magdala was also announced in December 2021.**

These six new finds can be tentatively added to the list of previously discovered synagogues dated prior to 135 CE—bringing the total to 16. These earlier discoveries include the remains of structures at Capernaum, Gamla, Herodium, Jericho, Jerusalem (in the form of an inscription), Khirbet Cana, Magdala, Masada, Modi'in (Umm el-Umdan), and Qiryat Sefer (Khirbet Badd Isa). Although the identification of the structures at Capernaum and Jericho is in question, the growing pool of archaeological evidence is exciting and gives us some solid information upon which to build.

Synagogue buildings in the early Roman period featured a main assembly hall, which was quadrilateral in shape. Stepped benches typically

* See Boaz Gross, "The Other Side of Beth Shemesh: Salvage Archaeology Exposes Deep History of Famed Biblical Site," *Bible History Daily* (blog), May 28, 2021.

** See Nathan Steinmeyer, "Archaeologists Discover New First-Century Synagogue in Magdala, Israel," *Bible History Daily* (blog), December 15, 2021.

TODD BOLEN / BIBLEPLACES.COM

GOLAN GEM. Situated on a hill in the Golan Heights with a view of the Sea of Galilee, Gamla was a strategic city that played a major role in the Great Jewish Revolt of the first century CE. For a large Jewish settlement, one would expect a large synagogue, and Gamla does not disappoint. Its synagogue could have held more than 400 people. It had stepped benches lining its main assembly hall and carved basalt columns that once supported a clerestory ceiling.

lined the walls, meaning that the attendees sat facing the center of the room, and people seated along opposite walls would have faced one another. The seating arrangement was thus designed to facilitate discussion, particularly among people seated along different and especially opposite walls. This architecture is reminiscent of other public buildings of the Greco-Roman world, including certain forms of the *bouleuterion* and the *ekklesiasterion*.

Synagogue assembly rooms also typically featured columns, usually in the central floor area, which supported a clerestory ceiling. The columns would have obscured the view of the central floor from the benches, which indicates that synagogues were likely designed with hearing rather than seeing in mind.[2] In short, the architectural evidence reveals that synagogues of the early Roman period were places of community assembly, made for listening and discussing.

The synagogue at Qiryat Sefer in the West Bank was located in the center of a small agricultural village with an estimated population of just over 100.[3] This shows that very small villages could have a synagogue building, and its location in the middle of the village underscores its importance as a public place. Similarly, the synagogue at Tel Rekhesh in Galilee was located in a small, rural farmstead.

By contrast, the synagogue at Gamla, a large town in the Golan, represents the sort of synagogue that might be typical of a larger settlement. It is very well constructed—with carved basalt ashlars and columns—and estimated to have seated more than 400 people. Furthermore, archaeological evidence for a synagogue in Jerusalem was discovered in the form of a Greek inscription found in the Ophel, popularly known as the Theodotus Inscription. The inscription, which

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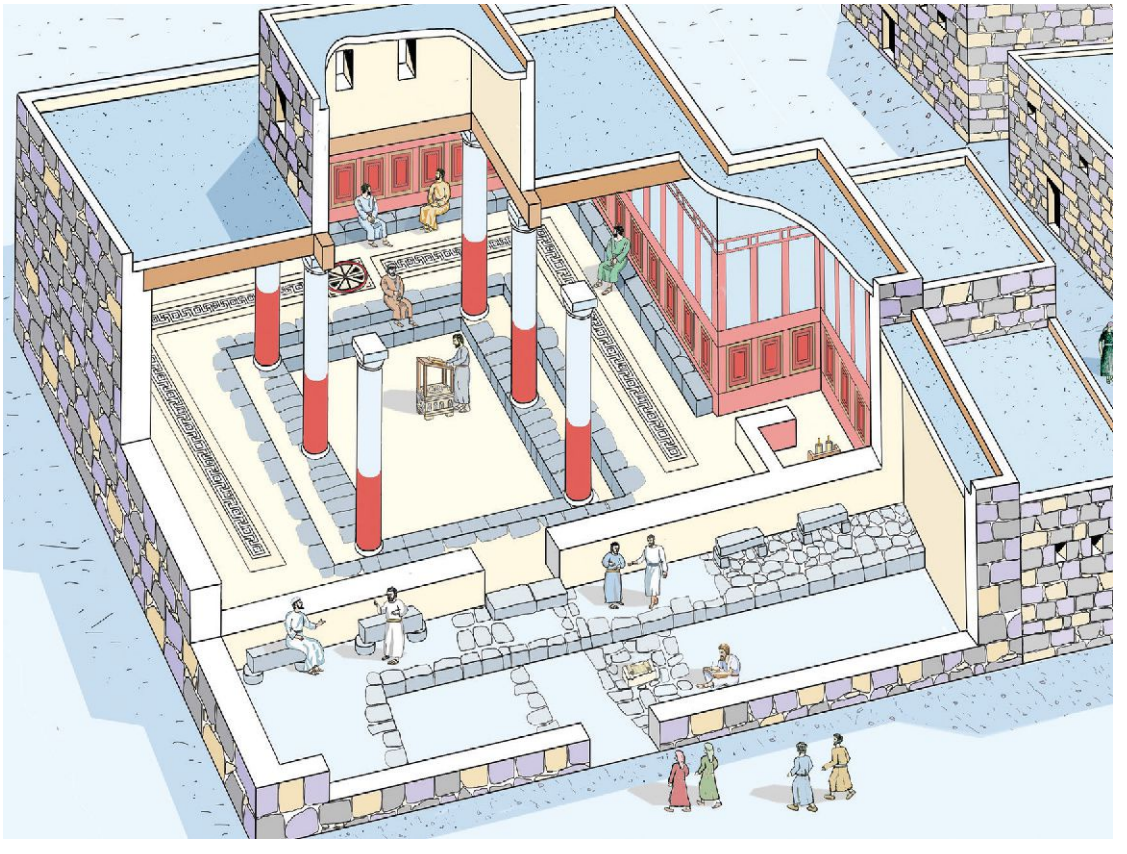

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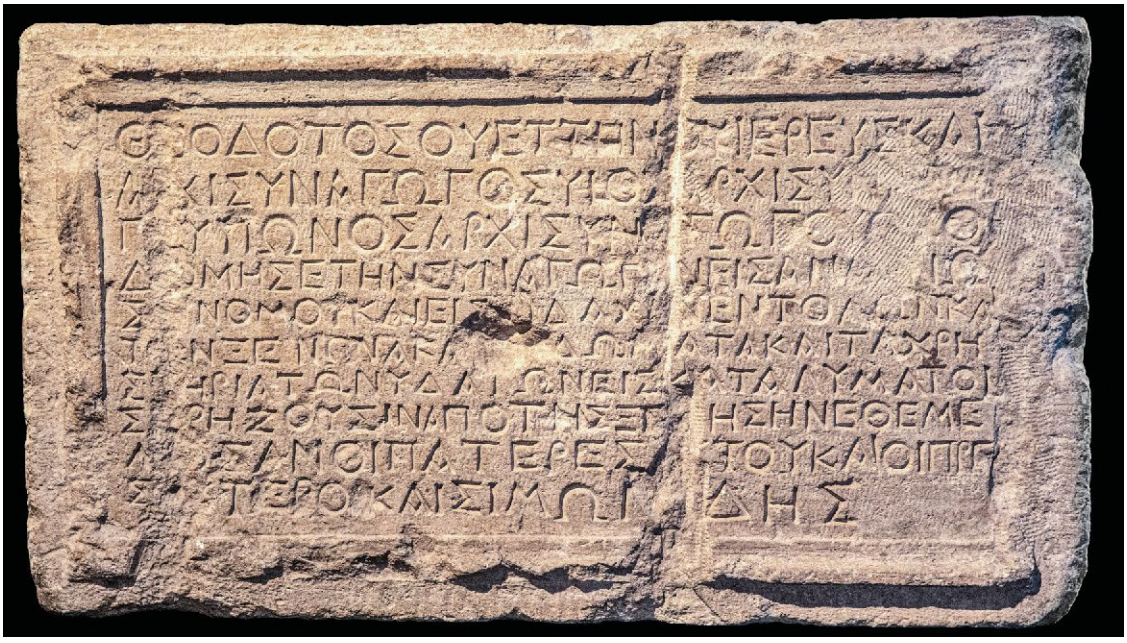
MAGNIFICENT MAGDALA. Archaeologists have uncovered two synagogues at Magdala, located on the Sea of Galilee. The first (top photo) was a particularly beautiful place to assemble—with colorful frescoed walls, painted columns, and mosaic floors (the latter visible at bottom of the photo). The synagogue's main assembly room had three rows of benches and a mysterious stone in its center. The reconstruction (bottom image) shows how the synagogue may have looked during Jesus's day.



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SOJOURNERS WELCOME. Although no architectural remains of a first-century synagogue in Jerusalem have been uncovered, evidence of one exists in the form of the so-called Theodotus Inscription. It describes the synagogue's foundation by Theodotus, a priest and synagogue head; its purpose, "for reading of the law and teaching of the commandments"; and its accommodations for Jewish pilgrims who came to Jerusalem from abroad.

originally belonged to an ancient synagogue in Jerusalem, describes the synagogue's main features, including accommodations and water facilities for pilgrims. Thus, synagogues existed in the smallest to the very largest of Jewish towns and communities.

The decoration of the first synagogue found at Magdala indicates that these buildings could be colorful, vibrant places. It featured multicolored wall frescoes and red painted columns. Its mosaic floor shows us that the practice of paving synagogue floors with mosaics has roots that extend back to at least the early Roman period.

The discovery of a second synagogue at Magdala provides an archaeological parallel to ancient sources that mention or imply the existence of multiple synagogues in a single municipality and may even help us to better understand Jewish assemblies in urban contexts.[4] The seating capacity of the first Magdala synagogue was likely no more than 200, which is just a fraction of the adult population of an urban settlement like Magdala. The existence of multiple synagogue buildings may help to partially explain such a large difference between settlement size and synagogue seating capacity. It is also possible that one or both synagogues belonged to a particular group or association (see below).

The most obvious function of synagogues is exactly what the archaeological evidence has shown: Synagogues were places of assembly and discussion for communities. As premier gathering places, synagogues that belonged to the municipality were political institutions, much like town halls, as much as they were religious institutions (see in the Mishnah, e.g., *Nedarim* 5:5). These are what some scholars call "public synagogues."[5] A clear example of a public synagogue in the New Testament would be the synagogue at Nazareth mentioned in Luke 4:16–30 (cf. Mark 6:1–6).

However, synagogues could also belong to a specific group, such as the Synagogue of the Freedmen in Acts 6:9. Such synagogues, which are similar to clubs, are called "association synagogues." They would have been gathering places for the group to which they belonged rather than for the general population and would not have had the "town hall" function of public synagogues.

The synagogues depicted in the Gospels are clearly public institutions rather than sectarian associations. When Jesus says, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together" (John 18:20), the logic of the claim to have spoken openly to the world requires an understanding that the referenced synagogues were public assembly places. Moreover, the description of Capernaum's synagogue

Magdala Stones

JORDAN J. RYAN

In 2009, archaeologists discovered a richly decorated rectangular stone in the first Magdala synagogue, often called the "Magdala Stone." Some scholars have argued that this stone may have been a table from which Torah scrolls were read aloud (as illustrated, for example, in the reconstruction on p. 37). However, this hypothesis is somewhat speculative, and a growing number of scholars, myself included, are not convinced.

It is possible that the stone did not have a practical purpose. It may simply have been decorative or symbolic. Some scholars suggest that the shape of the stone, resembling an altar with four "horns" on its top face, combined with the stone's carved artwork, including the columns and colonnades, the menorah, and the rosette "wheels," may represent Temple imagery. If that is the case, perhaps the stone's primary function could have been to symbolically represent the Temple. However, other scholars note that the columns and rosettes are common in Jewish art of this period, and that the menorah can be used in non-Temple contexts in Jewish artwork from this era. It seems that we cannot yet draw firm conclusions about the Magdala Stone's function.

Magdala Stone

COURTESY OF THE ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

There were, however, two other limestone blocks found in the first synagogue at Magdala, both with grooves on either end, which may have been used as reading surfaces for scrolls. One was found in secondary usage in the main hall and the second in an ancillary room with benches. The grooves on the blocks might have held wooden dowels—used as rollers—on either end of the scroll and allowed the reader to easily scroll through the text while sitting at the stone. However, this is only a theory, and there are other possible interpretations of these carved stones, including that they could have served as bases for chairs or tables.

Limestone block with grooves

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SEASIDE SYNAGOGUE. Capernaum's striking synagogue, made of white limestone, dates to the fourth century CE. Its main room has stone benches along its two long walls, and its side room served as an all-purpose community center: school, court, dining room, and even hostel. The white synagogue sits overtop basalt walls and a platform that might belong to a first-century synagogue. The earlier synagogue possibly appears in the New Testament as a public synagogue where Jesus preached, worked miracles, and debated the assembled Jewish community (John 6:22–59), though some scholars question this identification.

in Luke 7:5 implies that it was owned by the town. Municipal ownership of public synagogues is also attested in the Mishnah (*Nedarim* 5:5).

Synagogues in the Gospels are generally depicted as gathering places belonging to local communities where Jesus could interact with the assembled people. By taking part in synagogue gatherings, Jesus was engaging with the common Judaism practiced in the early Roman period. By participating in synagogues, Jesus was involved in normal, public Jewish life. The public reading of the Torah and other Jewish scripture in synagogues is widely attested by the Jewish historian Josephus, Jewish philosopher Philo, the New Testament, and early rabbinic literature.[6] Likewise, the Theodotus Inscription, discovered in Jerusalem, states that the synagogue to which it was attached was built "for reading of the law and teaching of the commandments." Fragments of both the books of Deuteronomy and Ezekiel were discovered in a side room in the Masada synagogue, perhaps providing an archaeological parallel to the literary evidence.

As the local town hall and place of Jewish law, public synagogues also served other civic functions, especially that of a court of law and justice. The Gospels and Acts mention this on a number of occasions (Mark 13:9; Matthew 23:34; Luke 12:11–12; Acts 22:19). Likewise, the Old Greek version of the apocryphal Book of Susanna locates Susanna's trial in a synagogue (28), and the apocryphal Book of Sirach describes a woman charged with adultery being brought before the local assembly for punishment (23:24). Similar hints at the judicial function of synagogues appear in the Mishnah as well (*Makkot* 3:12; *Shevu'ot* 4:10).

Given that synagogues were designed for listening and discussion, the descriptions that appear in the New Testament (e.g., Mark 6:2; Luke 4:22–30; Acts 6:8–12) and in Philo's writings (e.g., *Hypothetica* 7.13; *On the Life of Moses* 2.215) related to the reading, interpretation, and discussion of Torah within the synagogue make good sense. Because some synagogues were local public assemblies akin to town halls, the deliberations and decisions on issues that took

place in synagogue settings could impact the town as a whole. Thus, these discussions could have high stakes.

The Gospels depict Jesus not only teaching and proclaiming his message in synagogues, but also debating and discussing with the gathered public. It was important to be persuasive in synagogue gatherings. Thus, Ben Sira in the Book of Sirach presents the local assembly as a setting in which one can attain honor through public recognition (38:33; 44:15) or be put to shame (41:18; 42:11). The synagogue assembly wielded real power on the local stage. Susanna's trial is decided by the opinion of the townspeople (Susanna 41). Likewise, Josephus recounts that the assembled people of Tiberias were able to disagree with their leadership and to make decisions in their synagogue for their city's course of action in the Jewish revolt (*Life* 276–303).

In the Gospels, when Jesus and the synagogue assemblies are engaged in discussion and debate, they are doing something normative that synagogues were designed to facilitate. This is, for example, how we should understand the depiction of the lengthy back-and-forth discussion between Jesus and the synagogue assembly at Capernaum in the Bread of Life Discourse (John 6:25–59). The debate between Jesus and a synagogue official in Luke 13:10–17 over the legality of healing on the Sabbath is an example of a synagogue dispute. The story ends with Jesus successfully answering the official's challenge with a compelling reply, such that his opponents are put to shame and the crowd rejoices at his deeds, indicating that the public was persuaded by Jesus's response. In this case, we see the assembly deciding in favor of the legality of Jesus's act of Sabbath healing against the opinion of a local elite.

Who would have attended synagogues in early Roman Galilee?

No clear archaeological or literary evidence exists for the separation of seating by gender in synagogues of this period. In fact, Luke 13:11 depicts Jesus encountering a woman with a bent back in a synagogue, which implies that they both belonged in the same space. Both common people and elites appear in accounts of public synagogue gatherings. For example, Josephus describes several meetings at the synagogue in Tiberias that included a local magistrate, the local council, and the "leading men" of the city (*Life* 276–303).

The synagogues that we might classify as "association synagogues" belonged primarily to particular groups and their members. As mentioned above, the Synagogue of the Freedmen in Acts 6:9 is a good example of an association synagogue. Similarly, Philo discusses synagogues that specifically belong to Essenes, an ancient Jewish sect (*Every Good Man Is Free* 81). By contrast, public synagogues belonged to the local community. That means that they did not belong to one particular sect, but could be attended by the general public as well as by members of different groups.

The narratives involving Jesus's interactions with Pharisees within synagogues (Mark 3:1–6; John 12:42) can be contextualized in light of this. The synagogues in these narratives probably do not belong to the Pharisees. It is more likely that the Pharisees are a faction within the assembly who were attempting to exert their influence over the public synagogue, much like a political party. We can thus read episodes such as the dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees over healing a man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1–6) in terms of competition between parties attempting to exert influence on the town through the court of public opinion, which was very much part of public synagogue discourse.

The synagogues of Galilee made perfect sense as a venue for Jesus to teach and to proclaim his message, where his words could be discussed and debated, and accepted or rejected by the assembly. Sometimes Jesus's teachings were accepted, as in Luke 13:10–17. Other times, the message was rejected. Perhaps such corporate rejection lies behind the woes that Jesus pronounces on the Galilean villages of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Luke 10:13–16; Matthew 11:20–24).

The recent archaeological discoveries and scholarship on synagogues have helped to recover a vital piece of early Jewish life and culture. So too was it a vital piece of Jesus's life and times. ◙

[1] For a full discussion and citations, see Jordan J. Ryan, *The Role of the Synagogue in the Aims of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).

[2] As shown by James F. Strange, "Archaeology and Ancient Synagogues up to about 200 C.E." in Birger Olsson and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins Until 200 C.E.: Papers Presented at an International Conference at Lund University, October 14–17, 2001*, CBNTS 39 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiskell, 2003), pp. 37–62.

[3] Population estimates here and following come from Chad S. Spigel, *Ancient Synagogue Seating Capacities: Methodology, Analysis and Limits* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), pp. 82, 293–295.

[4] Acts 9:1–20; 13:5; 24:12; Josephus, *Contra Apion* 2.10. In later rabbinic literature, see *y. Ta'anit* 4, 8, 69a; *b. Gittin* 58a; *b. Berakhot* 8a; *y. Kil'aim* 9, 4, 32b.

[5] Credit is due particularly to Anders Runesson for detailing and popularizing the distinction between "public" and "association" synagogues.

[6] Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.175; *Jewish Antiquities* 16.43; *Jewish War* 2.292; Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 156; *Hypothetica* 7.12; *Every Good Man Is Free* 81–82; Luke 4:16–20; Acts 13:15; 15:21; *t. Megillah* 2:18; *t. Sukkah* 4:6; *m. Megillah* 3:1–4:9.

Jeremiah's Jo

urney to Egypt

JAMES K. HOFFMEIER

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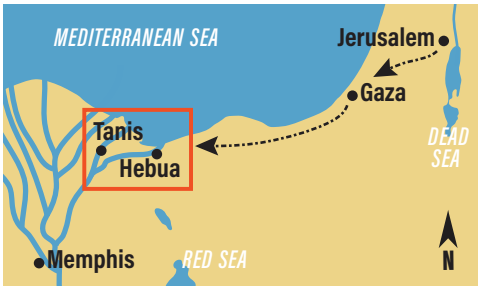
IN THE WAKE of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the prophet Jeremiah, who had long counseled his fellow Judeans to yield to Babylon's might, made the surprising decision to leave Judah with a departing caravan headed for Egypt, never to return to his homeland (Jeremiah 43). We know little about Jeremiah's reasons for leaving, and the Bible provides only a faint glimpse of his final years spent preaching to Judean exiles in Egypt. But thanks to new archaeological and geological evidence from Egypt's eastern Nile Delta, we are now able to identify the precise route that Jeremiah and his fellow Judean travelers took to reach Egypt.[1]

Here's what we know of Jeremiah's journey from the Bible. Even though Jeremiah witnessed the invasions of Judah, culminating with the tragic happenings of 586 BC, he was personally able to avoid deportation to Babylon. As reported in Jeremiah 40, the prophet was apprehended in Jerusalem along with other prisoners designated for exile. Apparently aware of Jeremiah's messages encouraging Judah to submit to Babylonian rule (Jeremiah 27), King Nebuchadnezzar considered the Hebrew prophet to be worthy

EGYPTIAN REFUGE. Following the Babylonian conquest of Judah in the early sixth century BC, many Judeans fled to Egypt. The prophet Jeremiah scolded his compatriots for seeking comfortable lives in foreign cities, including the Egyptian administrative and religious center of Memphis (Jeremiah 44:1). Despite denouncing the idolatry adopted by some of the exiled Judeans and announcing Egypt's imminent destruction by the Babylonians, Jeremiah himself ultimately settled in the land of the pharaohs. Nestled among the groves of the modern village of Mit Rahina, about 15 miles south of Cairo, are the scattered ruins of ancient Memphis, including the pillared hall of the Temple of Ptah, the Egyptian creator god.

JEREMIAH'S ROUTE. Traveling from Mizpah (north of Jerusalem) to Egypt, Jeremiah went through Gaza and then west along the coastal road, which, at the time, passed just north of a lake called Shihor. The Bible says his journey took him through Migdol and Tahpanhes, but he would also have visited the prominent sites of Ghaba and Hebua (ancient Tjaru) that lay on the road connecting Egypt with Judah. The detail captures the Mediterranean shoreline and the Pelusiac branch of the Nile as they likely appeared in the time of Jeremiah.



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of special treatment (Jeremiah 39:11–12). Jeremiah was given the option to either stay in Judah or relocate to Babylon where he was promised a comfortable life (Jeremiah 40:4). The prophet opted to remain in Mizpah (possibly Tell en-Nasbeh), just north of Jerusalem, where Gedeliah, the Babylonian-appointed governor of Judea, had established his administration.

A short time later, a group of assassins, who opposed Babylonian hegemony and Gedeliah's compliance, ruthlessly murdered the governor, some of his supporters, and the Babylonian garrison at Mizpah (Jeremiah 41:1–3). Fearing reprisals, a group of Judeans, including former soldiers and officers, resolved to flee to Egypt for refuge (Jeremiah 41:17–18). Although Jeremiah

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Jeremiah's Life and Times

JAMES K. HOFFMEIER

Jeremiah was of the priestly class. His father, Hilkiah the priest, lived in the village of Anathoth, a few miles north of Jerusalem, just into the territory of Benjamin (Jeremiah 1:1). According to the introduction to his eponymous biblical book, Jeremiah became a prophet in the 13th year of King Josiah, that is, around 626 BC. In that same year, the Chaldeans took control of the city of Babylon, and so began the rise of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, which in 40 years would swallow up Judah.

When Yahweh calls on him to become a prophet, Jeremiah protests that he is just a *na'ar* (a child, youth, or boy). Since that life stage spanned from 12 to 20 years of age or only slightly more, Jeremiah must have been in his early to mid-teens. Had he been closer to 20, he likely would have been married already, which he wasn't, because later in the book, God tells the young prophet not to marry (Jeremiah 16:1–2). If Jeremiah was about 15 in 626 BC, then he was born around 642, during the reign of the ephemeral King Amon, who was assassinated (2 Kings 21:19–26), or at the latest in the opening year of Josiah's kingship. When Jerusalem fell in 586 BC, Jeremiah was in his mid-50s. By ancient Near Eastern standards, he was of old age when he embarked on his journey to Egypt.

In this oil painting by Rembrandt (1606–1669), Jeremiah reclines against a column, with a Bible and a bowl filled with jewelry (possibly the "gift" from the Babylonian commander Nebuzaradan mentioned in Jeremiah 40:5) as he laments the destruction of Jerusalem that eventually drove him to exile.

initially counseled against going to Egypt (Jeremiah 42:16), the prophet, along with his trusted scribe Baruch, ultimately decided to join the caravan (Jeremiah 43:6).

Interestingly, Jeremiah notes several places that they visited upon entering Egypt from the east, including the east Delta town of Tahpanhes (43:7) and the frontier fort of Migdol (44:1). But where were these places, and can we still identify them—or the road that Jeremiah traveled—today? Remarkably, using a combination of textual, archaeological, and geological data, we can!

Throughout antiquity, travel between Judah and Egypt required traversing the deserts of northern Sinai. The main route, which the Egyptians knew as the "Way of Horus" and the biblical writers as the "Way of the Land of the Philistines" (Exodus 13:17), closely followed the Mediterranean coastline. Throughout the Late Bronze Age (c. 1550–1200 BC), this route was guarded by a series of Egyptian garrison forts, from Gaza in the east to Tjaru (also known as Sile) in the northeastern Delta, a distance of about 140 miles.

Archaeological excavations and surveys have revealed much about the forts that protected this route. In the 1980s, Egyptian archaeologists uncovered a massive mudbrick fort at the site of Hebua, situated just 3 miles east of the Suez Canal.[2] Structures from as early as the Hyksos period (c. 17th century BC) were uncovered,

TRIUMPHANT PHARAOH. Riding in his chariot, Seti I (1294–1279 BC) is shown returning from a military campaign in Canaan surrounded by Asiatic captives. This relief from the northern wall of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak depicts the "double" eastern frontier fortress of Tjaru, with its two forts (highlighted) separated by a crocodile-infested branch of the Nile. Located at the western end of the ancient coastal road between Egypt and Gaza, Tjaru was a large town and strategic fortress—the staging point for Egyptian military campaigns into Canaan—and a key point for monitoring traffic into and out of Egypt, even down to Jeremiah's time.

along with fortifications from the 18th Dynasty (c. 1525–1300 BC) and the Ramesside era (13th century BC). Interestingly, less than a mile south of Hebua, across a low-lying sandy plain, is another ancient fort, termed Hebua II by the excavators.

Early indications were that Hebua might be the fortress of Tjaru, but how does one prove such an identification? On the northern exterior wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, Seti I's war reliefs are carved in remarkable detail. Seti I (1294–1279 BC) is depicted returning from a campaign in southern Canaan, passing by a series of 11 forts spread across north Sinai. Tjaru is shown at the western end of the route, but it is depicted as a pair of forts, separated from each other by a crocodile-infested body of water.

Trying to interpret Seti I's depiction of the paired forts, I obtained permission to use

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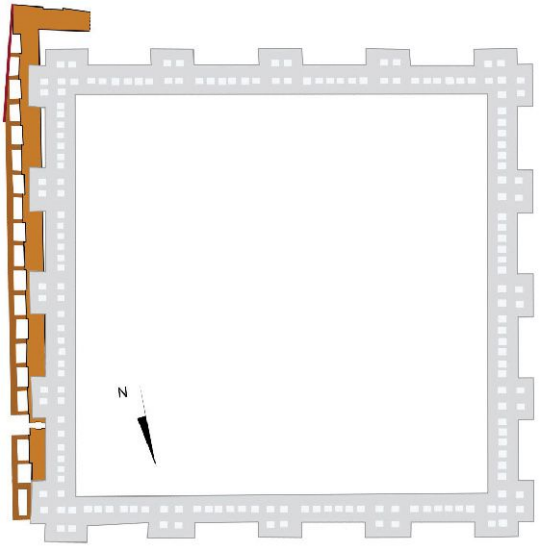

FRONTIER FORTRESS. Qedua (possibly biblical Migdol) sat on the north shore of Shihor near the Mediterranean coastal ridge. A key control point for access to Egypt from the Levant, the border fortress was crucial for Egypt's security during the time of Jeremiah. The initial structure (in orange) dates to the end of the seventh century BC. It was later rebuilt but eventually destroyed by fire in the second half of the sixth century, probably as a result of the Persian invasion of 525 BC. The photo looks south at the west enclosure wall of the later phase during the 2007 excavations.

geological coring to study the soils in the flat area between Hebua I and Hebua II. Several inches below the surface, dark, shell-filled soil and clay deposits appeared. Analysis of the samples indicated they were Nilotic in nature, demonstrating that a small distributary channel of the Nile had once flowed between the two sites, just as the Karnak relief showed! Then, a few years later, an inscribed statue dedicated to the god "Horus, Lord of Tjaru" was discovered at Hebua, confirming the site was indeed the frontier fortress of Tjaru.

In 1975, archaeologist Manfred Bietak published a study that attempted to reconstruct the landscape of Egypt's northeastern Delta as it would have been known in the second millennium BC. His reconstruction shows the Pelusiac Nile flowing east into a lagoon. Based on Egyptian texts, Bietak identified the lagoon as Shihor, the Egyptian term for "Lake of Horus." Shihor was also known to the biblical writers. Joshua 13:3 locates it "before" or "in front of" Egypt, and Jeremiah likewise references this body of water, rhetorically asking: "And now what do you gain by going to Egypt to drink the waters of the Shihor?" (Jeremiah 2:18).[3]

Thanks to recent geological investigations and satellite imagery analysis in the northeastern Nile Delta, we can now identify ancient Shihor as a substantial body of water, about 25 square

miles in size and separated from the Mediterranean Sea by a narrow coastal ridge. Until about 1000 BC, this coastal ridge was largely covered by the Mediterranean, which meant Shihor was a lagoon open to the sea. Thus, throughout the second millennium, the ancient road from Egypt to Gaza had to go around the southern end of Shihor before turning east toward Canaan.

During the 12th century, however, toward the end of the Ramesside era, various Nile distributaries began to desiccate due to lower Nile discharges caused by reduced rainfall in central Africa. Among the casualties was the great Ramesside royal city of Pi-Ramesses. When the Pelusiac branch silted up and its waters diverted away from the great metropolis, it led to the city's eventual abandonment. The northern extension of this distributary used to be one of the sources for Shihor. Lower Nile levels resulted in the decline of Shihor, which gradually became an enclosed lake in the following centuries as the Mediterranean coastal ridge was exposed, allowing travelers to journey across an area that was previously covered with water.

Indeed, the toponyms associated with Jeremiah's entry into Egypt, along with recent archaeological discoveries, make it clear that the route to Egypt had changed by the sixth century. One no longer needed to circle around the southern end of Shihor as in the time of the New Kingdom pharaohs; rather, one could travel across the old coastal ridge, as the lagoon's opening was by then dry land.

Excavations at Tell el-Qedua, an Egyptian military site strategically located on the northeastern side of Shihor, uncovered a large fortified compound, which some have identified with the fort of Migdol mentioned by Jeremiah (44:1; 46:14).[4] These references demonstrate that Migdol (meaning "tower" or "fort") was now Egypt's northern border fortress. Its mention by Jeremiah suggests that the Judean caravan entered Egypt at this location. Another toponym mentioned by Jeremiah is Tahpanhes (Jeremiah 43:7–8; 44:1). It is located at Tell Deffeneh, 12 miles farther west into the Delta. There, Pharaoh Psammetichus I (664–610 BC) established a vital military and administrative center.[5]

On the route between Migdol and Tahpanhes are two other sites not mentioned by Jeremiah, Tell el-Ghaba and Hebua, the latter already

DRILLING FOR HISTORY. Ancient lagoons located in the eastern Nile Delta left imprints visible on satellite images and in sediment analyses. In this image, geologists and local technicians take sediment cores from the dry bed of the Ballah Lakes, a body of water that some associate with Yam Suf (Sea of Reeds) of the Exodus tradition (e.g., Exodus 13:18). Soil analyses near the site of Tell el-Qedua (possibly ancient Migdol) helped identify an important lagoon known in Egyptian and biblical texts as Shihor, which Jeremiah would have passed during his journey.

STEPHEN O. MOSHIER AND BAHAA GAYED

PHOTO BY JAMES K. HOFFMEIER

STELA OF KING APRIES. In 2011, archaeologists discovered this inscribed stone at Tell Deffeneh (ancient Tahpanhes). Set up in 582 BC—four years after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem—the stela attests to Egyptian military activity in the northeastern Nile Delta aimed at eliminating the Babylonian threat. Another recently uncovered and remarkably similar stela of King Apries explicitly mentions the Egyptian army passing by the fort of Tjaru (Hebua), confirming the northern coastal road's routine use in the time of Jeremiah.

discussed above. Tell el-Ghaba (3 mi west of Migdol), constructed in the very area where the earlier lagoon opened to the sea, was established sometime in the seventh century BC, after the land had dried out. At Hebua, archaeologists also identified a flourishing settlement and fort from the time of the 26th (or Saite) Dynasty (664–525 BC).

Most remarkably, in 2011, a stela of the Saite pharaoh Apries (vocalized as Hophra in the Bible; see Jeremiah 44:30) was uncovered at Tell Defenneh, dating to the king's seventh year, 582 BC.[6] It reports that Egyptian forces marched on the "eastern road" across Sinai to confront the forces of Nebuchadnezzar, who may have intended to advance on Egypt after putting down a rebellion in Judah (Jeremiah 52:30). In May 2021, a farmer working adjacent to Tell Defenneh discovered another Apries stela.* Though not yet published, this inscription allegedly details the same military foray across Sinai, only this time Apries's army is said to have passed by the fort of Tjaru.

The stela's reference to Tjaru suggests that the Egyptian campaign journeyed eastward along the new route that followed the narrow Mediterranean coastal ridge, beginning at Tahpenhes, going past Tjaru, Tell el-Ghaba, and Migdol, with the waters of Shihor to their south. In other words, Apries's army used the same route that Jeremiah and his associates used, though going the opposite direction.

We are never told why Jeremiah decided to go to Egypt, though we do learn that once there, he prophesied to the substantial and growing Diaspora population concerning God's impending judgment against Egypt (Jeremiah 43:8–13), which may have come in 568 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar invaded. Otherwise, little else can be said about the balance of Jeremiah's life. One might imagine that since Jeremiah was with Baruch, who had recorded the prophet's words on a papyrus scroll when they were together in Jerusalem years before (Jeremiah 36), he may have further expanded and edited the biblical book that takes his name, in the land where papyrus was plentiful.

[1] The ideas presented here are treated in greater detail in James K. Hoffmeier, "The Hebrew Exodus from and Jeremiah's Eisodus into Egypt in the Light of Recent Archaeological and Geological Developments," *Tyndale Bulletin* 72 (2021), pp. 73–95.

[2] Mohamed Abd el-Maksoud, "Tjarou: Porte de l'Oriente," in D. Valbelle and C. Bonnet, eds., *Le Sinaï durant l'antiquité et le Moyen Âge: 4000 ans d'histoire pour un désert; Actes du colloque "Sinaï" qui s'est tenu à l'UNESCO du 19 au 21 septembre 1997* (Paris: Errance, 1998), pp. 61–65.

[3] Some Bible translations render Shihor as "the Nile" (e.g., NRSV, ESV, NET), and Jeremiah's parallel between Shihor and the Euphrates later in the verse might incline one to think a river is intended. However, in Papyrus Anastasi III (dated to c. 1200 BC), Shihor is referenced together with another border lake, Pa-Tjufy. The Egyptian word *Tjufy* is a cognate with Hebrew *suf* ("reeds" or "rushes") and has been associated with Yam Suf ("Sea of Reeds") of the Exodus tradition.

[4] Eliezer D. Oren, "Migdol: A New Fortress on the Edge of the Eastern Nile Delta," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 256 (1984), pp. 7–44.

[5] François Leclère, "Tell Dafana: Identity, Explorations and Monuments," in F. Leclère and A.J. Spencer, eds., *Tell Dafana Reconsidered: The Archaeology of an Egyptian Frontier Town* (London: The British Museum, 2014), pp. 1–40.

[6] Mohamed Abd el-Maksoud and Dominique Valbelle, "Une stèle de l'an 7 d'Apries découverte sur le site de Tell Défenneh," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 64 (2013), pp. 1–13.

* Nathan Steinmeyer, "New Stele of Biblical Pharaoh Found," *Bible History Daily* (blog), July 1, 2021.

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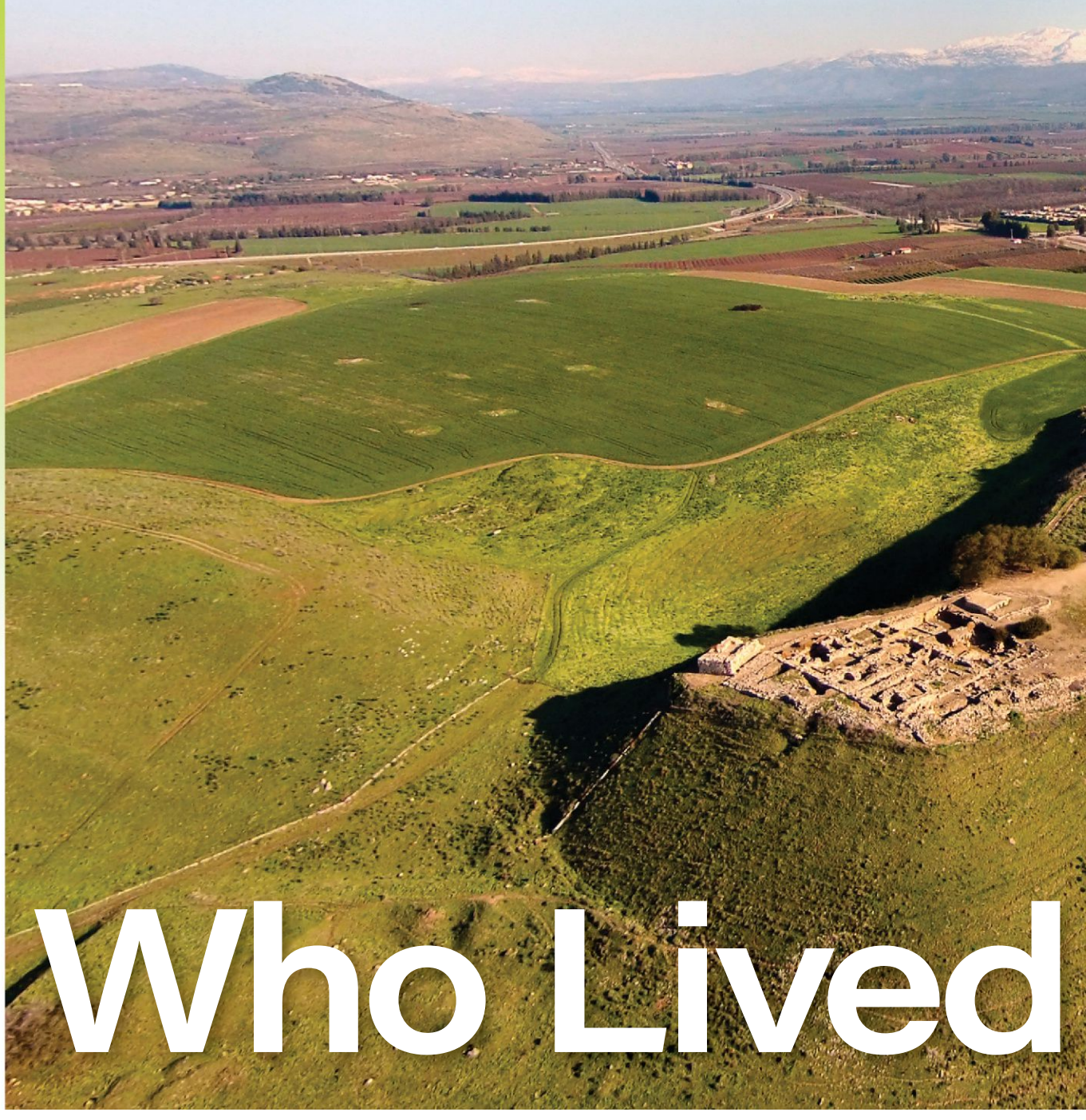


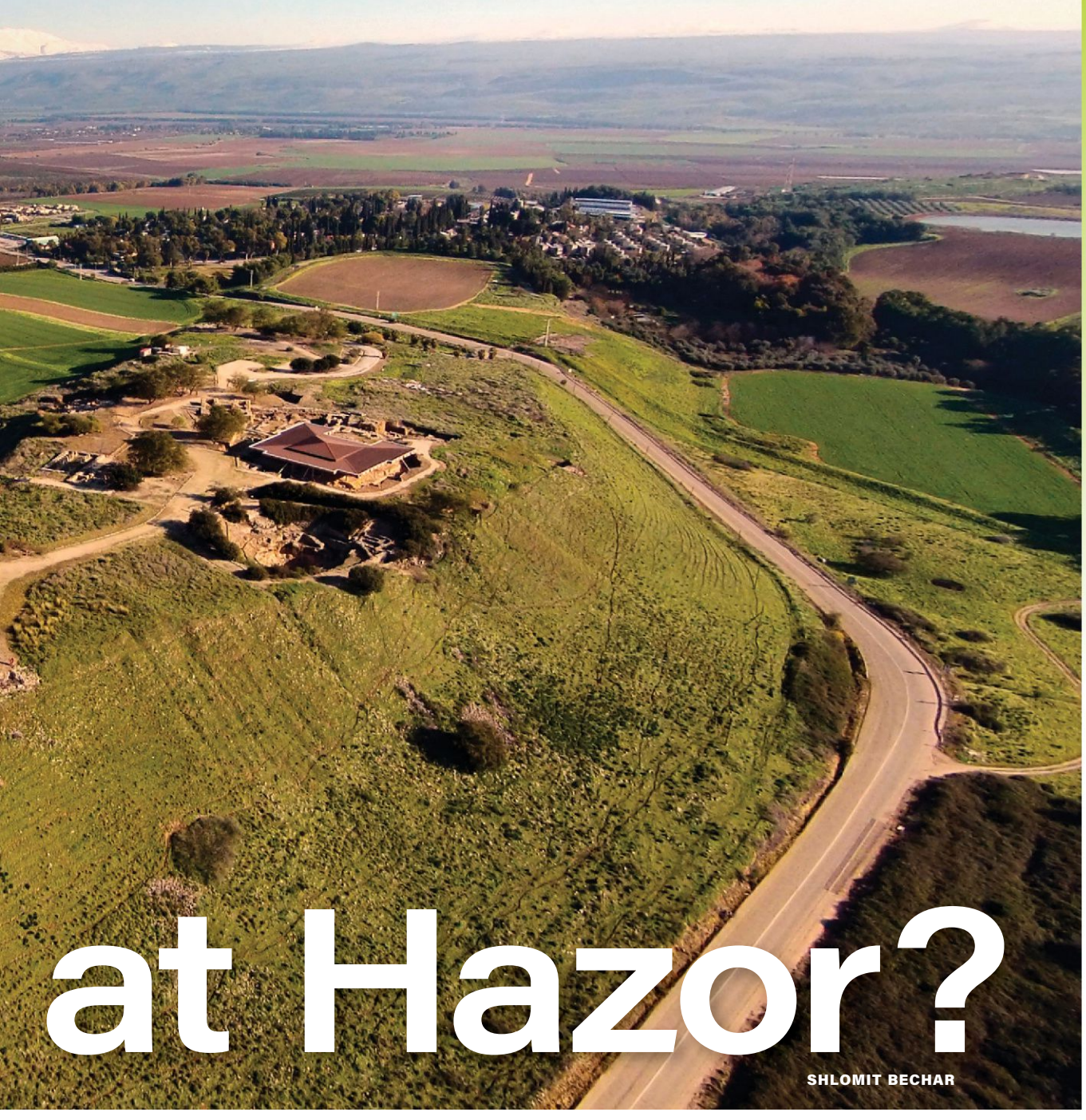
Who Lived

TEL HAZOR, located about 10 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, was the largest Canaanite city in the southern Levant in the second millennium BCE. The city, remembered in the Book of Joshua as "the head of all those kingdoms" (11:10), comprised an acropolis as well as a lower city, together spanning an area of more than 200 acres.

The site was first excavated in the 1950s and 60s by Yigael Yadin, one of the founding fathers of Israeli archaeology. His excavations focused on both the acropolis and the lower city; in the latter he found temples, workshops, and dwellings. The late Sharon Zuckerman also conducted small-scale excavations in the lower city between 2008 and 2010, locating houses, shops, and a courtyard. Now, more than a decade later, our team from the University of Haifa is returning to Hazor's lower city to see what else we can learn.

There are many questions regarding Hazor's lower city, and one of the most intriguing involves its inhabitants. Who lived there? Were they "common" people or elites? Was urban life available to all or only those who could afford it, relegating the less wealthy to rural settlements in the hinterland?

Before discussing the inhabitants of the lower city, a few points should be made. First, it is important to note that despite many years of excavation, no houses or private architecture



at Hazor?

SHLOMIT BECHAR

BILL SCHLEGEL / BIBLEPLACES.COM

have yet been uncovered on Hazor's acropolis. That area was reserved for royal buildings such as palaces and temples, with most evidence for domestic architecture found in the lower city.

Second, even in the lower city, complete houses have been found dating only to the Middle Bronze Age (which, at Hazor, dates to c. 1750–1550 BCE). No complete houses have been found from the Late Bronze Age (c. 1550–1200 BCE). However, portions of houses, workshops, shops, and some buildings identified as priests' residences—all dating to the Late Bronze Age—have been excavated.

Who lived in these houses? There are several possibilities:

CANAANITE POWERHOUSE. During the Bronze Age, Hazor was a powerful Canaanite city—remembered as "the head of all those kingdoms" in Joshua 11:10. Some 10 miles north of the Sea of Galilee and 30 miles southwest of Mt. Hermon, Hazor sat on major trade routes connecting Mesopotamia and Egypt. With an upper city (center) and expansive lower city (see left), Hazor spans more than 200 acres, making it the largest archaeological site in Israel. On the upper city, archaeologists have found temples, palaces, and public buildings—but no houses. They have, however, found some dwellings in the lower city.

(1) The inhabitants of the lower city were commoners—average people. In his publications, Yadin does not discuss the identity of the inhabitants of the lower city. In my opinion,

COURTESY SHARON ZUCKERMAN

CITY LIVING. In the center of Hazor's lower city, archaeologists found the remains of Canaanite houses dating to the Middle Bronze Age. Above are several excavated rooms organized around a courtyard (upper part) and a street (lower part). Discovered scales and weights indicate at least one of the rooms was used as a shop.

though, he hints that they were commoners. When discussing the fortification of the lower city, for example, he states that the people of the lower city were governed by a strong ruler who organized them into building stupendous fortifications.[1] This statement suggests he believed the people who lived in the lower city were the ones who built the fortifications. Zuckerman and other scholars have also generally identified the lower city with Hazor's non-elite population.[2]

(2) The inhabitants of the lower city were elites. Indeed, from Middle Bronze Age texts, we learn about a few of the elites who lived at Hazor. One document found at Hazor records a trial against a woman named Sumulailum who was sued over property she owned in and around the city, which included a house and a garden.[3] In addition, a letter from the archive found at Mari in eastern Syria references "two messengers from Babylon" who "resided at Hazor" and a "man from Hazor" who was their escort.[4] From this, we can infer that people of high status lived at Hazor, including messengers and envoys from Babylon.

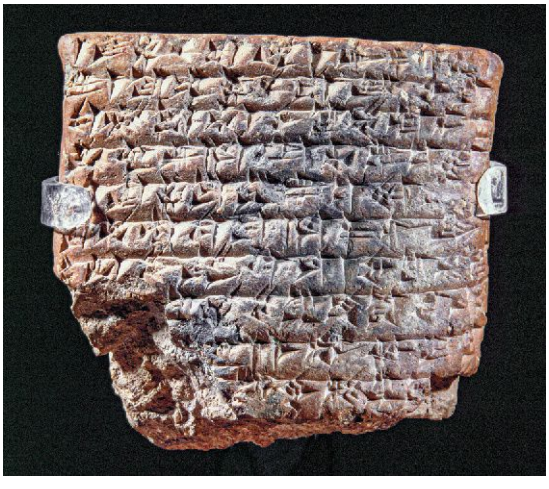
(3) Both elites and commoners lived in the lower city. It is impossible to say whether only the elites of the Canaanite population were the inhabitants of the lower city. The lives of commoners may not have been recorded in texts; nevertheless, they may have still lived in Hazor's lower city. We have not yet discovered an archive at Hazor.* Once uncovered, such texts would inevitably shed light on the city's inhabitants.

The most logical possibility is that the residents of the city were a combination of common people and elites.

In his study of Canaanite households, David Schloen of the University of Chicago discussed the textual and archaeological evidence for the people who lived in Ugarit, a city on the northern coast of Syria.[5] The city was composed of various craftspeople, cult personnel, and many of the king's servants. Some of these people owned land outside of the city, and their kin and attached personnel worked these lands. In other words, people on a spectrum of social statuses lived in Ugarit.

Archaeologist Gloria London has shown, using ethnographic studies and historic census data, the majority of the pre-industrial population in the Middle East, as well as in North America and Europe, lived in rural, non-urban settlements. Though based mainly on data from pre-industrial times, London's study focuses on parallels with Bronze and Iron Age settlement in the southern Levant.[6] In some cases, only 10

* Shlomit Bechar, "How to Find the Hazor Archives (I Think)," **BAR**, March/April 2017.



ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY

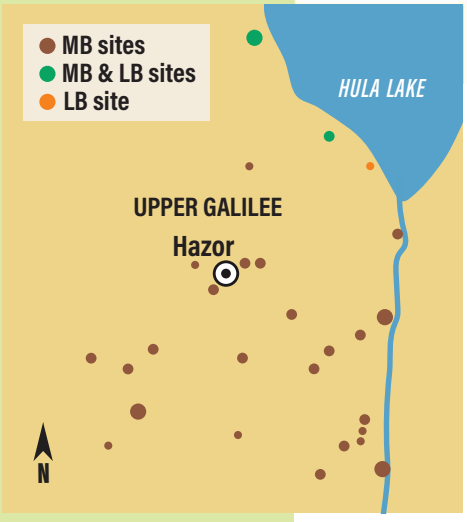
LAW OF THE LAND. This cuneiform tablet details a lawsuit against Sumulailum, a woman who owned a house and garden in Hazor and a garden in Gilead. The king of Hazor judged the case and ruled in favor of Sumulailum. The text sheds light on the Canaanite elites who lived at Hazor during the Middle Bronze Age.

Hazor's Hinterland

SHLOMIT BECHAR

Surveys and small excavations conducted near Hazor give a picture of its hinterland. They indicate that, while there was a rural presence in the area during the Middle Bronze Age, the settlement distribution completely changed in the Late Bronze Age. The areas surveyed include Hazor's immediate vicinity and the Upper Galilee in general. All reflect a similar picture: In the Middle Bronze Age, several installations and villages are present in Hazor's surroundings, but in the Late Bronze Age, only one site was identified in close proximity to Hazor (see orange dot on map).[1] Only a few rural sites around Hazor have been excavated, in small excavations conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority. These include installations, quarries, and a small village, all dated to the Middle Bronze Age.

Therefore, even if people lived outside of Hazor, we still don't know exactly where they lived. We might have some clues regarding their place of residence in the Middle Bronze Age—namely, in the rural settlements that have been surveyed and excavated—but we have no evidence for it during the Late Bronze Age. One possibility is that the rural population of the hinterland converged into the lower city of Hazor during this time. This might have occurred for a number of reasons, such as seeking protection or economic opportunities available in the city or other social reasons.



BASED ON STEPANSKY, *THE PERIPHERY OF HAZOR DURING THE BRONZE AGE, THE IRON AGE AND THE PERSIAN PERIOD* (1999)

[1] Yossef Stepansky, *The Periphery of Hazor During the Bronze Age, the Iron Age and the Persian Period: A Regional - Archaeological Study*, M.A. Thesis (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1999 [Hebrew]); Ido Wachtel, *The Upper Galilee During the Bronze and Iron Ages: Patterns of Settlement, Economy and Society*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2018 [Hebrew]).

percent of the population lived in cities. In addition, most of the population (65–90 percent) in pre-industrial times were agricultural workers. However, London shows that in the Bronze and Iron Ages, large cities housed mainly the rulers, their extended families and servants, and military personnel. By contrast, people from all sectors of society resided in smaller towns and villages, evident by the full scope of the types of dwellings, from single-room houses to large manors.

Canaanite farmers and herders most probably did not dwell in cities, but rather in rural settlements. Yet some of the urban inhabitants might have owned agricultural lands, even if they did not farm the land themselves.

But what about Hazor? Several towns and villages have been identified in its vicinity in the Middle Bronze Age, but not so in the Late Bronze Age (see sidebar, above).

Based on the current data, it is impossible to ascertain the social status of the inhabitants of the city, especially during the Late Bronze Age when we lack sufficient textual sources. Nonetheless, it seems safe to say that any reference to them as "common people" could be misleading, based on the textual evidence presented above that confirms at least some of the city's Middle Bronze Age population should be considered elite.

In the summer of 2023, excavations in the lower city of Hazor will be renewed. One of our aims is to identify the people who resided in the lower city. We will examine different methods of pottery production, as well as changes in food consumption and cooking habits, which all hint to changes in the population. By excavating and comparing different contexts and finds, we hope to learn more about the people themselves. This might reveal a change in the population of Hazor from mainly elites to mainly commoners—or even an influx of foreigners—in the Late Bronze Age.

Anyone who would like to learn more about the people who lived at Hazor is welcome to join us.

[1] Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 135.

[2] Sharon Zuckerman, "Area S: Renewed Excavations in the Lower City of Hazor," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 76.2 (2013), pp. 94–97.

[3] Wayne Horowitz and Takayoshi Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient Times* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2006), pp. 69–72.

[4] Abraham Malamat, "Hazor 'The Head of All Those Kingdoms,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79.1 (1960), pp. 12–19; Yadin, *Hazor*, p. 16.

[5] J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001).

[6] Gloria London, "Tells: City Center or Home?" *Eretz Israel* 23 (1992), pp. 71–79.

See www.biblicalarchaeology/hazor-lower for more details on joining the expedition.

Set in Sto

Another Look at the Mesha Stele

MATTHIEU RICHELLE AND **ANDREW BURLINGAME**

IN 1994, ANDRÉ LEMAIRE proposed for the first time to read "House of David" (*btdwd*) in line 31 of the Mesha Stele.* But it is only in the last few years that scholars have been in a position to seriously debate this fascinating proposal. This has become possible thanks to new images of both the remnants of the stone itself and the squeeze that was made just prior to the stela's fragmentation** in the late 19th century.[1]

In the Winter 2022 issue of **BAR**, André Lemaire and Jean-Philippe Delorme used this new imagery to defend the reading *btdwd*.† Fortunately, you don't need to be an epigrapher to follow the discussion, for the disputed signs simply consist of an X, a triangle, and a dot! Indeed, the letters that are debated are those in brackets in the expression *b[td]wd*, that is, a *taw* and a *dalet* (in their **BAR** article, Lemaire and Delorme also discuss the final *dalet*, but most scholars, including us, agree with this reading). In the script of the Mesha Stele, the letters *taw* and *dalet* are normally written, respectively, as an X and a triangle, while word dividers are dot-shaped. Let us briefly review the evidence put forward for these three signs (for supporting photographic evidence, see Images A–D on p. 57).

* André Lemaire, "'House of David' Restored in Moabite Inscription," **BAR**, May/June 1994.

** Siegfried H. Horn, "Why the Moabite Stone Was Blown to Pieces," **BAR**, May/June 1986.

† André Lemaire and Jean-Philippe Delorme, "Mesha's Stele and the House of David," **BAR**, Winter 2022.

The X (*Taw*)

Lemaire and Delorme argue that traces of a *taw* can be seen in line 31 of the stone. Our own conclusion, after careful examination of the stela (including a recent visit made to the Louvre after reading Lemaire and Delorme's article), is that there are striations and small depressions, but no traces of actual strokes made by a craftsman's tool (which should originally have been of approximately the same width and depth as the undisputed strokes of the inscription). Lemaire and Delorme draw an X (in red) on an RTI image (Image A), but neither of the two segments forming the X is a stroke. The segment leaning upwards and to the right, for example, actually consists of minor depressions that do not form a continuous line, are of varying depth, and do not have the same width as the stela's inscribed letters. Indeed, as was noted by Nathaniel Greene and Heather Parker, the latter a member of the team who took the RTI images of the stela, the Mesha inscription "challenges current RTI capabilities, as it is heavily abraded in many areas."[2]

Lemaire and Delorme also suggest identifying traces of three ends of the X on the squeeze (Image C) but the noted dark marks are too tiny to be convincing. Moreover, they do not necessarily belong to a letter, since we find similar marks in other places on the squeeze where no letter was engraved. The two lower traces are surrounded by other dark marks (see arrows 1 to 4 in Image D), and we find no justification for distinguishing these two elements from the other marks that surround them. In other words, if they are traces of a letter, then the other dark traces should also be interpreted as traces of letters, which would not produce any possible reading. In addition, the top-right extremity of the X as drawn by Lemaire and Delorme on the squeeze is positioned higher than they place it on the stone.[3]

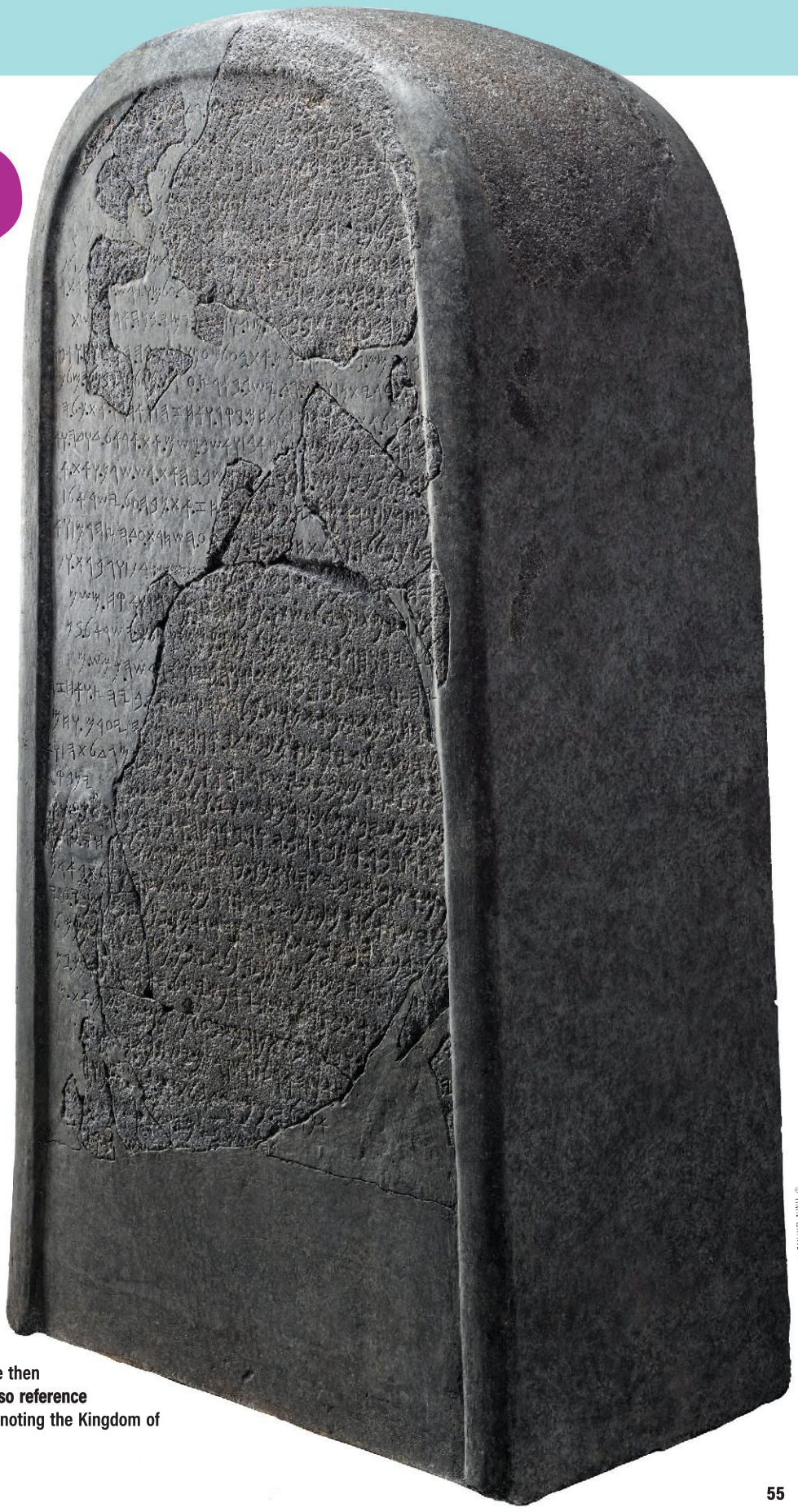
The Triangle (*Dalet*)

Lemaire and Delorme see traces of the disputed *dalet* on the squeeze: the left angle of the triangle and its lower side (see Image C). However, two observations prevent us from drawing the same conclusion. First, the orientation of the triangle (characterized by the angles the sides make with the horizontal) is not exactly the same as that of the

ne?

undisputed *dalet* situated slightly to the left. This is not a decisive factor, though, since slight variations in letter stance occur regularly enough in individual inscriptions. Second, and more important, the dark line that would be the lower side of the triangle is prolonged to the right by similar dark traces extending until the area where Lemaire and Delorme see the bottom of the *taw* (see arrow 5 in Image D). While they prefer to treat only the left half of that long series of dark traces as the lower side of the *dalet*, we don't think this is warranted. A direct examination of the squeeze itself shows that the entire series of dark marks, including the place where Lemaire and Delorme see the lower side of the triangle, corresponds to a long wrinkle along the surface of the squeeze, which does not match with any letter form (see image on p. 56). There are many such creases on the squeeze.

We should keep in mind that the squeeze is now quite deteriorated, having suffered from tears

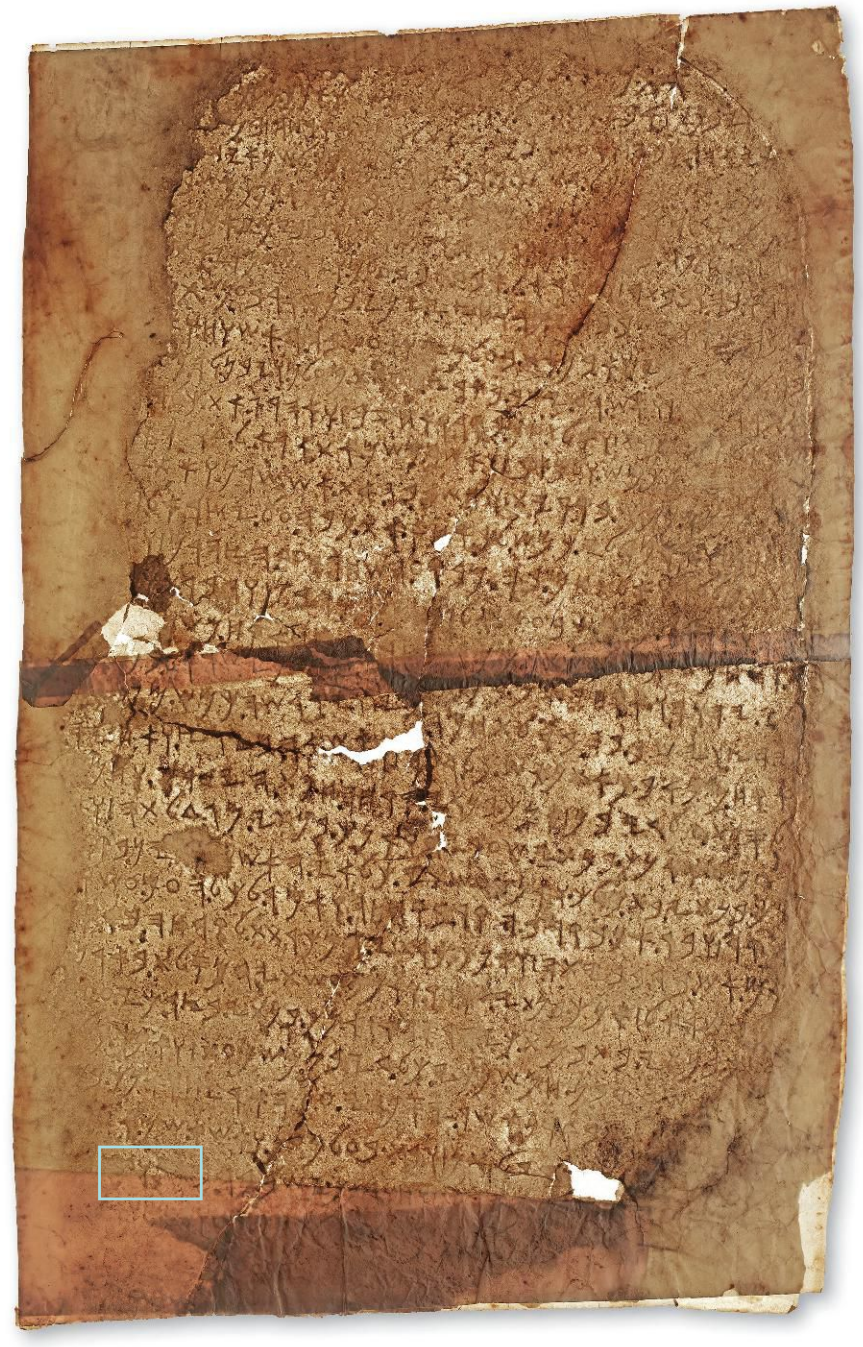


MESHA STELE. King Mesha of Moab chronicled his victories over the Kingdom of Israel on this ninth-century BCE stela, which he then set up in his capital, Dibon. The stone might also reference the "House of David" in its 31st line, thereby denoting the Kingdom of Judah, but this reading is contested.

and creases that were created when it was prematurely removed from the original stone more than 150 years ago. Such wear reduces the clarity of the new backlit images of the squeeze—because creases and other kinds of deteriorations leave dark traces that sometimes look like those left by actual letters. In short, while the existence of a *dalet* cannot be ruled out, the squeeze cannot be said to confirm this reading.

The Dot (Word Divider)

Finally, what about the dot after *btdwd*? There is a reason why most scholars have ignored it: It does not really look like the other word dividers found on the stela. As a rule, the latter appear as deep circular holes with neat, clear sides (see the undisputed word divider shown by arrow 1 in Image B). This is not the case here (see arrow 2 in Image B). The depression here is similar to others found in the lower part of the stone, which are typically abrasions, marks, and dents caused by deterioration or damage to the surface. A direct examination of the stone shows that this depression extends upwards and to the left (see the dotted arrows in Image B), so its shape is actually far from being circular. Finally, the slightly dark spot found in this



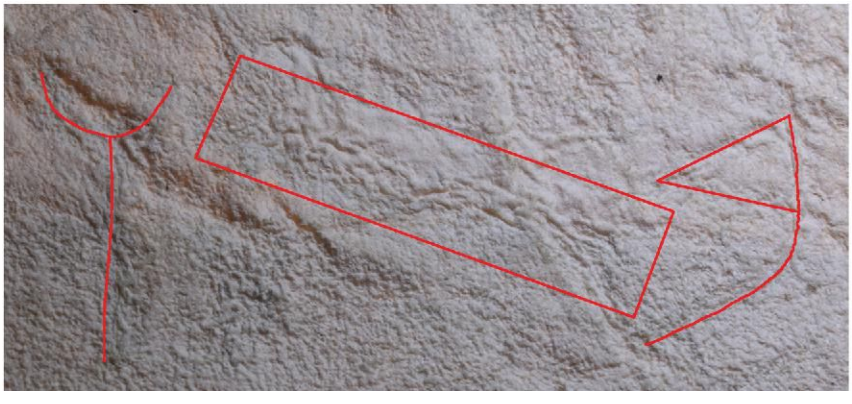


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PHOTO ANDREW BURLINGAME, COURTESY LOUVRE

TIGHT SQUEEZE. After it came to the attention of European scholars in 1868, the Mesha Stele was broken into pieces. Prior to this, though, Yaqub Karavaca made a squeeze (paper-mache impression) of it. The squeeze, albeit imperfect and weathered, provides a unique testimony to the original inscription—portions of which are more discernible thanks to a backlit photo of the squeeze from 2018 (above). The *btdwd* section of the squeeze has been boxed above. At right, the letters *bet* and *waw* (*b--w* of *btdwd*) have been traced over a detail of a high-resolution photo of the squeeze from 2019; the contested *taw* and *dalet* have been omitted. The image shows the various wrinkles and creases that appear on the squeeze's surface, including the long crease (see the red rectangle) where Lemaire and Delorme see the lower side of a *dalet*.

Deconstructing "David's House"

The Mesha Stele might contain a reference to *btdwd*, "House of David" (*bt* meaning "house of" and *dwd* meaning "David") in its 31st line. Scholars André Lemaire and Jean-Philippe Delorme contend this reading has been confirmed, but authors Matthieu Richelle and Andrew Burlingame think the evidence is inconclusive. The images of the stone and squeeze below show the *btdwd* section of the stela and the opposing interpretations of the photographic evidence.

RTI Photo of Stela

A An RTI photo of the stela with the letters *bt_wd* (the initial *dalet* is lost) and dot-shaped word dividers highlighted in red, as reconstructed by Lemaire and Delorme in the Winter 2022 issue of BAR.

B The same photo that Richelle and Burlingame use to show the difference between the undisputed (arrow 1) and disputed (arrow 2) word dividers; the dotted arrows show that the second word divider isn't circular but extends upwards and to the left.

Backlit Photo of Squeeze

C A backlit photo of the squeeze with the letters *btdwd* and dot-shaped word dividers highlighted in red, as reconstructed by Lemaire and Delorme. (Solid lines represent a clear reading, while the dashed lines refer to reconstructed parts of letters for which no clear traces appear.)

D The same photo that Richelle and Burlingame use to show the other dark marks around the alleged *taw* (arrows 1–4), the line of dark marks that extends past the lower side of the alleged *dalet* (5), and the different appearance of the disputed (6) and undisputed (7) word dividers.

IMAGES A AND C: COPYRIGHT WEST SEMITIC RESEARCH / A. LEMAIRE–J.-P. DELORME; IMAGES B AND D: COPYRIGHT WEST SEMITIC RESEARCH / M. RICHELLE–A. BURLINGAME

area on the squeeze (marked by a red dot in Image C, see also arrow 6 in Image D) is much less dark than the spot left by the undisputed word divider (see arrow 7 in Image D).

* * *

In conclusion, we find no solid evidence for the X (*taw*), triangle (*dalet*), or dot (word divider). Accordingly, while the reading *btdwd* is not impossible, it remains purely hypothetical. We may well be wrong, of course, but while we are sorry not to agree with Lemaire and Delorme's fascinating proposal, we prefer to err on the side of caution. With no word divider clearly present after the second *dalet*, it is impossible to say where the word stopped. As such, this section of line 31 could contain any number of possible letter combinations or conjectured reconstructions based on the sequence *b[??]wd[...]*. One of these possibilities, of course, is still to reconstruct *b[td]wd*, but that would rest on contextual and historical grounds rather than epigraphical considerations, and that is a subject for another debate. In the end, however, it is fascinating to see how this inscription, found more than a century and a half ago, still puzzles epigraphers and historians.

[1] For recent scholarly analyses of the stela based on new photographic evidence, see Heather Parker, *The Levant Comes of Age: The Ninth Century BCE Through Script Traditions*, 2 vols., Ph.D. Dissertation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2013), p. 171; Michael Langlois, "The Kings, the City and the House of David on the Mesha Stele in Light of New Imaging Techniques," *Semitica* 61 (2019), pp. 23–47; Matthieu Richelle, "A Re-Examination of the Reading BT DWD ('House of David') on the Mesha Stele," in Shmuel Ahituv, Hannah Cotton, and Matthew Morgenstern, eds., *Ada Yardeni Volume*, Eretz-Israel 34 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2021), pp. 152*–159*.

[2] Nathaniel Greene and Heather Parker, "Field of View: Northwest Semitic Palaeography and Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI)," in J.M. Hutton and A.D. Rubin, eds., *Epigraphy, Philology, and the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL, 2015), p. 226.

[3] On the squeeze, Lemaire and Delorme draw (in red) the top-right extremity of the X clearly above the "nose" of the letter *bet* to its right (the nose is the left-hand angle of the triangle that is the head of *bet*). And yet in their drawing of *taw* on the stone, the *taw* does not extend above that "nose."

The Horns of Moses

LEE M. JEFFERSON

WHENEVER VISITORS ARRIVE at the Church of St. Peter-in-Chains in Rome, they are struck with the grandeur of Michelangelo's sculpture of Moses but ultimately are vexed by his appearance. Why does Moses have horns on his head? In our contemporary context, horned figures often represent devils and demons. Most docents or tour guides would immediately launch into an explanation involving a mistranslation in the Bible. But the history of a horned Moses is actually much more complicated and contextual.

It begins with the Bible. In the Book of Exodus, Moses receives the law after seeing God's glory. The God of Israel states that Moses could not see his face and live. Rather Moses is told to stand in the cleft of a rock. As God passes by, Moses sees his back, not his face. When Moses descends from Sinai with the two tablets of the law, he is visibly changed. The key phrase is that "Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God" (Exodus 34:29, ESV).

In the late fourth century, the Christian monk Jerome translated the Old

Michelangelo's *Moses*, Church of St. Peter-in-Chains, Rome, 1513–1515.

Testament from Hebrew and the New Testament from Greek into Latin. His translation became known as the Vulgate. In the original Hebrew, the word employed to connote this change in Moses's appearance is *qeren*. In other books of the Hebrew Bible, such as Habakkuk 3:4, *qeren* indicates "rays," such as "rays of light." Jerome translates the phrase as *cornuta esset facies*, literally "(his) face was horned."

It is debatable whether Jerome had any malicious intent in using the word *cornuta* ("horned"), but it seems unlikely. He probably used the best Latin word at his disposal to insinuate that Moses had been visibly altered by his communion with God. The Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew text from the third century BCE, does not use a similar word, instead using *dedoxastai* to imply that Moses's face was "glorified."

Words matter. Jerome's translation became the most popular version of the Bible in the Christian West. The word choice in Exodus moved from the metaphorical to the literal in the medieval period. However, even then, some theologians interpreted the horns of Moses in Exodus as horns of light, likely closer to Jerome's intended meaning.

But with the appearance of a Moses with horns on his head in Christian art, a shift began toward a derogative, anti-Jewish interpretation of Moses's horns. This shift is evident by examining the context of medieval Europe, especially the friction between Christians and Jews. One only need look at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 that ordered all Jews to be identified by a different style of dress in public and to not venture out during Holy Week. Christian anti-Judaism weaponized Jerome's translation to justify hatred toward Jews.

In other ancient religions, horns were seen as a source of power and not viewed negatively.[1] Mesopotamian deities were often depicted with horned headdresses. Figures, such as Alexander the Great, are seen on coins with a horned ram's helmet, and esteemed Norse figures also appeared with horns.

Even in Christian contexts, horns were not always negative. The horns of a bishop's mitre could recall the horns of Moses; as Pope Innocent III noted, they represent the Old and the New Testaments. Thus, the horns of Moses could be viewed not as horns of derision but as marks of respect or proximity to the holy.

Moses was featured heavily in early Christian art from the third century onward, occasionally receiving the law but, more often than not, performing miracles. Even though the Vulgate was completed in the fourth century, there were several hundred years wherein Moses appeared hornless. He was depicted *ad nauseum* in catacomb art and relief sculpture striking water from the rock or crossing the Red Sea, usually holding his miracle-working staff. Early Christian authors, such as Origen in *Against Celsus*, referred to Moses as the most important miracle worker of the Old Testament.

Early Christian texts and art sought to connect Jesus to Moses through the medium of miracles and proximity to God. Jesus was often depicted performing similar miracles as Moses, occasionally juxtaposed with an image of Moses, such as in a mid-fourth century scene from the Catacomb of Domitilla in Rome. Jesus was also depicted as performing miracles with a staff—just like Moses—even though there is no mention of his use of a staff in the New Testament.

Iconographically, Jesus was bequeathed the staff of Moses, connecting them as the preeminent miracle workers of the Bible and showing Jesus as a "New Moses."* For early Christians, just as Moses reflected the glory of the Lord by the giving of the "old" law and covenant, Jesus reflected the glory of God with the "new" law and covenant. Painting or sculpting horns on Moses's head would have

* Lee M. Jefferson, "Jesus the Magician," **BAR**, Fall 2020.

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Moses (left) in the presence of God in the burning bush, from the Huntingfield Psalter, 1210–1220.

sent a different theological message and separated him from Jesus, which would not have been profitable to the nascent Christian religion.

In medieval interpretations, however, Moses and the old law began to be distanced from Jesus and his new law. The horns became readily visible in appearances of Moses, beginning in medieval England. The earliest representation comes from the 11th-century illuminated manuscript known as the Aelfric Paraphrase of the Pentateuch and Joshua, now in the British Museum. Occasionally the horns appeared as small nodules, such as on a statue at Dijon, France, but they could also be rather large and demon-like in stained-glass windows and illuminated manuscripts, such as the Huntingfield Psalter.

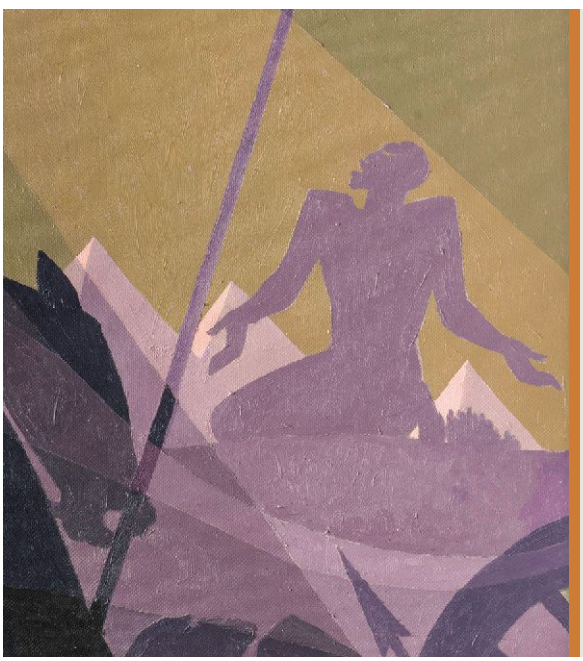
Jesus's closeness to Moses was deemphasized with the appearance of the horns, as they served to segregate Jews in a Christian era when Jews were often labeled as Christ-killers or desecrators of the sacrament. Not coincidentally, other pejorative images of Jews appear in medieval Christian art, including the representation of blind "Synagoga" (a figural personification of the Jewish synagogue) on the Strasbourg Cathedral in France.

Although Moses had previously been an honorable figure in early Christian texts and art, after the 13th century he was associated with blind Synagoga and increasingly derogative images of Jews who followed the "old" law. Images of Jews wearing horned headdresses, or devil's horns, appeared more readily in post-Reformation art, even on the cover of Martin Luther's infamous tract *On the Jews and Their Lies*. Jews were seen as united with the devil in opposition to Christ, resurrecting a quite literal reading of John 8:44 accusing Abraham's children as being from "your father the devil." The idea developed that if Moses, the most important Jew of the Old Testament, had horns, then all Jews must have horns, reflecting a demonic heritage. Even up to the contemporary era, Jews have reported anti-Semitic accusations that all Jews are born with horns. Art and Jerome's translation have thus been successively manipulated and motivated by anti-Jewish attitudes.

The horns of Moses in Jerome's Vulgate did not initially represent derision or dishonor; rather they reflected the presence of God. And for centuries after Jerome's translation, Moses was depicted along with Jesus, performing miracles, also reflecting proximity to the divine. But the horns took a literal turn once they became visible in art. They came to be understood as indicators of devilry and rejection of Christianity. However, this understanding was not entirely uniform.

Michelangelo's *Moses*, perhaps the most famous statue of Moses with horns, was created in the 16th century for the tomb of Pope Julius II, who likely did not see Moses's status as ignoble. And more modern artists, such as Marc Chagall, depicted Moses with two ray-like beams on the top of his head rather than physical horns. Artistic representations such as these remind contemporary readers that Moses's horns are not monolithic in interpretation, and they may not even be horns at all.

[1] Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1970).



CLIP ART

Do you recognize this biblical scene?

1. ***Let My People Go***
   Aaron Douglas
2. ***Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem***
   Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn
3. ***Saul Frightened by the Shadow of Samuel***
   François Gérard
4. ***Christ at the Mount of Olives***
   El Greco
5. ***The Burning Bush***
   James Lesesne Wells

ANSWER ON P. 68

OSAMA SHUKIR MUHAMMED AMIN, CC BY-SA 4.0, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The base of Shalmaneser III's throne from Nimrud, c. 845 BCE, detail from the central register.

Covenants in Context

JEAN-GEORGES HEINTZ

THE THEME OF COVENANT is central to the Hebrew Bible. It provides the background to many of its most memorable stories where Yahweh establishes alliances with figures such as Noah (Genesis 9), Abraham (Genesis 12; 15; 17), Moses (Exodus 19; 24), Aaron (Exodus 29; Numbers 18:19), and David (2 Samuel 7).

Yet modern biblical scholarship has marginalized the covenantal aspects of the Hebrew Bible in favor of the many individuals and events associated with such arrangements, which are generally reduced to their legal aspects and interpreted as obligations subsumed under the law (Hebrew: *torah*). The word *torah* even serves to designate the first major division of the Hebrew Bible. Reading the Bible in its wider Near Eastern context, however, rehabilitates the covenant as a crucial factor in diplomacy as well as political and private alliances.[1]

Archaeological discoveries in the Levant and Mesopotamia have brought to light numerous figural depictions of covenant-making. These depictions are often "mirror representations," in which the featured figures are arranged symmetrically around a vertical axis that serves to illustrate the intermediary space of the alliance. Such imagery first appears in several richly decorated cylinder seals from the Old Babylonian period (beginning in the 18th century BCE). The same arrangement can be found on a 14th-century BCE stela from Ugarit, which attests the iconography's presence in the Canaanite sphere.

In Assyria, a frieze on a small alabaster vase from the Jazirah region of northern Syria reproduces, in simplified form, the larger, monumental version we find reflected on the base of King Shalmaneser III's throne at Nimrud (see above). The vase probably served in a ritual of covenant-making that included the rite of anointing, as referenced in Hosea 12:1 and attested already in the third millennium BCE from a tablet found at Ebla. This cuneiform treaty tablet bears a simple title, "tablet of the oil offering," which illustrates the importance of this rite in covenant-making.

In Jerusalem, a clay seal impression (bulla) was excavated in 2018 at the Western Wall Plaza. Dating from the seventh century BCE, it depicts two standing persons, facing each other in a mirror-like manner, clad in striped knee-length garments, and jointly holding a crescent. The bulla's Old Hebrew inscription reads *lsr ʿr*, "belonging to the governor

HOW MANY?

How many covenants did Yahweh establish with his people in the Hebrew Bible?

ANSWER ON P. 67

CLARA AMIT, COURTESY OF THE ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

Bulla found at the Western Wall Plaza in Jerusalem, seventh century BCE.

of the city." This find shows that the long-standing ancient Near Eastern iconographic theme of alliance was present in ancient Judah's capital as well.[2] The "governor" was the city's highest official, who ruled over Jerusalem on behalf of the king. The scene probably depicts a loyalty oath.

This scene represents the crystallization of a particular vision of the world, one conveyed by both texts and images. Such iconographic and textual evidence leads me to suggest that the Hebrew term for covenant, *berit*, does not mean "binding" or "obligation," as it is traditionally interpreted, but rather "alliance," probably derived from the Babylonian preposition *biritu*, "between," which describes the space in-between two parties who are in an alliance. This latter term better captures the idea of intermediary space, with all the elements of an agreement or pact, implying both sincerity and ethical obligations. Such expressions of sincerity are well attested in early Mesopotamian treaties, with the stereotypical Old Babylonian formula *ina libbim gamrim* "in the fullness of heart," which also appears in the *Shema Israel* in Deuteronomy 6:4–9: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart."

In the ancient Near East, the theme of alliance is historically rooted in Syrian and Mesopotamian covenantal traditions that date well before the Mosaic law and the "Book of the Covenant" (Exodus 24:7). If we understand the Hebrew word *berit* as "alliance," rather than "obligation," it shifts our focus from legal commitments to the space in-between and the relationship between two parties.

[1] Adapted by Daniel Bodi, Professor of History of Religions of Antiquity at Sorbonne University, Paris, from two studies of Jean-Georges Heintz: "Nouvelles recherches sur l'Alliance dans le monde de la Bible," *Hokhma* 116 (2019), pp. 133–146, and "Nouvelles recherches sur l'Alliance dans le monde de la Bible: Entre Dieu et nous, l'espace de l'Alliance," *L'Almanach Protestant* (Strasbourg: UEPAL, 2021), pp. 72–77, which, in turn, are popular versions of studies published in Jean-Georges Heintz, *Prophétisme et Alliance: Des Archives royales de Mari à la Bible hébraïque* (Fribourg and Göttingen: Academic Press and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), pp. 265–349.

[2] Tallay Ornan, Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, and Benjamin Sass, "A 'Governor of the City' Seal Impression from the Western Wall Plaza Excavations in Jerusalem," in Hillel Geva, ed., *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeological Discoveries, 1998–2018* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2019), pp. 67–72.

WHENCE-A-WORD?

"Fleshpots of Egypt"

COMPLAINING ABOUT THE HARSHNESS OF LIFE during their desert wanderings en route to the Promised Land, the Israelites hankered for the comforts they knew as slaves in Egypt: "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread" (Exodus 16:3). Certainly exaggerated, the biblical term "fleshpots" refers explicitly to large metal cauldrons used for cooking meat; implicitly, it refers to physical comfort that was provided to the Israelites in the land of their bondage. Rather than being grateful for their miraculous escape from Egyptian slavery, the people remembered fondly this one aspect of their former life.

The expression "fleshpots of Egypt" is thus used of good things no longer at our command. Sighing over the fleshpots of Egypt specifically describes a situation when someone is delivered from ignoble circumstances but later looks back at their prior condition with rose-tinted glasses.

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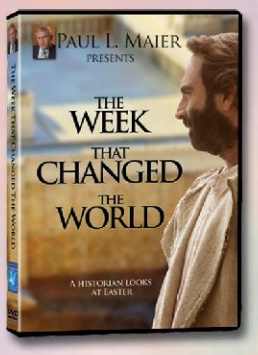

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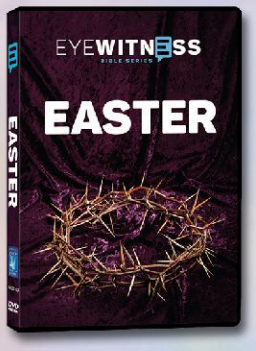

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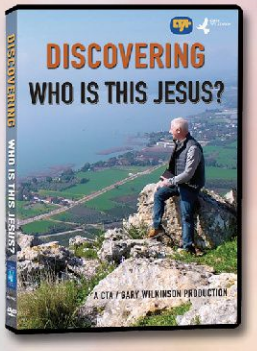

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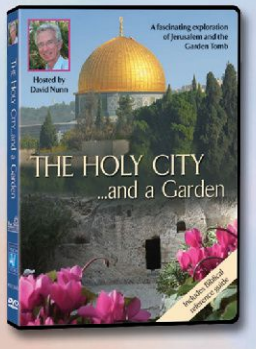

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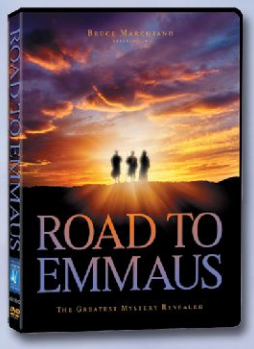

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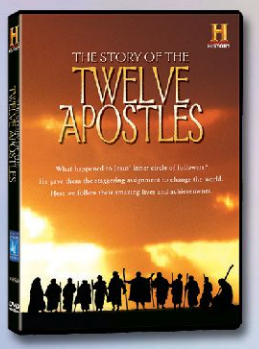

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GLENN J. CORBETT

Paul, Prostitutes, and the Cult of Aphrodite in Corinth

BARBETTE STANLEY SPAETH

IN 1 CORINTHIANS 6, Paul addresses sexual misconduct among the members of the early Christian community, singling out those who frequented prostitutes (*pornai*). He states that the body of a Christian should not be joined with that of a prostitute (*porne*), explaining that the Christian body is a temple of the Holy Spirit bought for a price, that is, Jesus's suffering and death, implicitly contrasting the Christian body with that of a prostitute, bought for a paltry sum. This striking juxtaposition of prostitute, temple, and payment for the body has led some to think that Paul had in mind sacred prostitution, the performance of sex acts for payment connected with the worship of a divinity, as practiced in Roman Corinth.

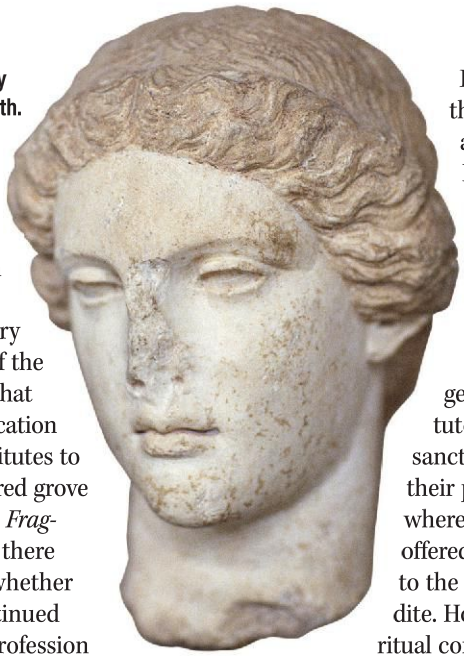
But what is the evidence for this?

The main source is a passage about Corinth by the Greek geographer Strabo from the first century BCE/CE: "The sanctuary of Aphrodite was so rich that it had more than one thousand female sacred servants (*hierodoulai*), courtesans (*hetairai*) whom both men and women used to dedicate to the goddess" (*Geography* 8.6.20). These "sacred servants" and "courtesans" have been interpreted as female slaves belonging to the goddess Aphrodite (or Venus, her Roman counterpart), who performed ritual sex acts for payment to the cult. Later, Strabo notes that "the top of Acrocorinth has a small temple of Aphrodite" (8.6.21). Since this is the only Corinthian sanctuary of the goddess that the geographer mentions, it is often assumed that the practice occurred here.

There are many problems with this view. First, the context of the first passage indicates that Strabo is talking about Greek Corinth in the seventh century BCE, not the Roman city of his own time. Second, at no point does he refer to ritual sex acts or to payment for them received by the sanctuary. He rather confusingly calls the women involved both *hierodoulai* and *hetairai*. *Hierodoulai* refers to women who served the goddess in a variety of ways, including as high-status religious officials. *Hetairai* literally means "female companions," that is, the courtesans who entertained at elite banquets, not common prostitutes, *pornai*, the term that Paul uses. Finally, although Strabo says these women were *hetairai* when they were dedicated, he does not say they continued in this profession once they became attached to the sanctuary. All these issues cast doubt on the idea that either he or Paul was referring to sacred prostitution as practiced in Corinth, at least in their own time.

Perhaps, however, they had in mind such a practice from the earlier Greek

CORINTH. View (above) of Acrocorinth with the ruins of the Temple of Apollo from Corinth in the foreground.



Female head, possibly Aphrodite, from Corinth.

city, before its destruction by the Romans in 146 BCE. The main evidence cited for this is a fragmentary banqueting song of the fifth century BCE that mentions the dedication of a group of prostitutes to Aphrodite at a sacred grove in Corinth (Pindar, *Fragments* 122). Again, there is no mention of whether these women continued to practice their profession after their dedication to the goddess or of payment for ritual sex they performed to benefit the cult. Although a few later authors refer to prostitutes at Corinth honoring Aphrodite at her temple, there is no mention of these women being dedicated to or owned by the cult.

Let us approach the problem from a different angle. If sacred prostitution occurred in ancient Corinth, then where would it have taken place? Some have suggested that prostitutes owned by the sanctuary practiced their profession elsewhere in the city and offered their proceeds to the cult of Aphrodite. However, absent the ritual context that a sanctuary would provide, such payment is hard to distinguish from a gift given by any tradesman in honor of a divinity. Also, if cultic officials administered such a practice, presumably it would have required extensive record keeping, for which we have no evidence from either literature or inscriptions. A site for sacred prostitution must therefore be sought in a sanctuary of Aphrodite/Venus in Corinth.

Our best source for locating such a sanctuary is the Greek traveler Pausanias's description of Corinth in the second century CE. Let us begin with his brief discussion of the famous temple on Acrocorinth: "For those who have gone up onto Acrocorinth is a temple of Aphrodite. The statues are the armed goddess herself, Helios, and Eros holding a bow" (*Description of Greece* 2.5.1). On the summit of this mountain today are remains that may belong to this temple: the foundation of the southeast corner of a small building of the seventh century BCE and scattered blocks from a somewhat larger structure of the fifth century BCE. From the Roman period come Corinthian coins depicting a mountain-top temple containing the statue of a half-naked goddess contemplating herself in a shield, identified as the "Armed Aphrodite" mentioned by Pausanias.

There are three problems in associating this building with sacred prostitution. First, to reach the summit requires a long, steep climb, which is hardly conducive for frequent visitors to the site. Second, given the tight space at the summit, it is difficult to imagine many prostitutes performing their duties there. Finally, the goddess worshiped in this temple has close associations with the Roman imperial line. The Roman emperors proudly traced their lineage back to Iulus, the grandson of the goddess Venus, whom they heavily featured in imperial propaganda. Julius Caesar himself had a signet ring with the image of the armed goddess that was passed on to his successors. It seems unlikely that the authorities of Roman Corinth would allow sacred prostitution on this highly significant site, given these imperial associations and the bad reputation assigned to prostitutes in Roman society.

The same objection may be applied to another Aphrodite/Venus temple in Corinth, this one in the center of the Roman city. Pausanias tells us that on the west side of the Forum among a number of other buildings and statues stood an image of Aphrodite (2.2.8). This statue has been associated with the remains of a small building, dated to the early first century CE and

HOW MANY? (SEE QUIZ ON P. 61)

Answer: Five

In the Hebrew Bible, Israel's God Yahweh gives five successive covenants to his people. He does so through the agency of some of the Bible's most prominent figures: Noah (Genesis 6:18; 9:9–17), Abraham (Genesis 12; 15; 17), Moses (Exodus 19; 24), Aaron (Exodus 29; Numbers 18:19), and David (2 Samuel 7). Called by the Hebrew term *berit*, Yahweh's covenants established a relationship between God and his people, and they separated and distinguished Israel from the rest of the nations (see "Covenants in Context," p. 61). In each case, the first prerequisite of such a special and intimate relationship—both for Yahweh and the people—was love (Hebrew: *khesed*), hence the marriage vocabulary in the biblical depictions of that relationship.

Much of the Hebrew Bible, however, is devoted to telling the story of how the people broke each of the five covenants. Therefore, God promised a new, permanent covenant (Jeremiah 31:31–40) that he would write directly on the hearts of his people. While for Jeremiah this was tied to the pledge of restoration after the Babylonian Exile, the New Testament authors interpret this promise as fulfilled through Jesus (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:7–13).

dedicated "to Venus," as recorded by an inscription belonging to the building. This temple featured an unusual semicircular niche for the cult statue, probably copied from the plan of the Temple of Venus Genetrix (the Ancestress), erected in Caesar's Forum in Rome.

A third possibility is a temple of Aphrodite/Venus at the eastern edge of the city near the Kraneion Gate. Although yet to be found, it is mentioned by Pausanias: "In front of the city is a grove of cypresses called Kraneion. Here are a sacred precinct of Bellerophon, a temple of Aphrodite Melainis, and the tomb of Lais" (2.2.4). Lais was a famous Corinthian *hetaira* of the fifth century BCE, and the grove recalls the dedication site of the prostitutes mentioned in the banqueting song discussed earlier. The peripheral location of this temple might also support a connection with ritual prostitution. However, other associations point in a different direction. The area is a cemetery. It is planted with funereal cypresses and contains at least two graves: one belonging to Lais and the other to the Corinthian hero Bellerophon, whose shrine would have contained his burial place. Finally, the aspect of Aphrodite/Venus worshiped here (Melainis, meaning "the Dark" or "the Black") indicates a funerary rather than sexual aspect of the goddess.

Literary sources mention two other temples of the goddess in the Corinthian port cities of Kenchreai and Lechaion (Pausanias 2.2.3; Plutarch, *Banquet of the Seven Wise Men* 146d). The location would certainly have been more convenient for visitors to the city. However, these temples also have not been found, and we have nothing indicating sacred prostitution took place at them.

Thus, we are left with no real evidence for sacred prostitution in ancient Corinth. We are better off imagining that Paul was simply directing his flock not to consort with common prostitutes, who would no doubt have been numerous in this city, strategically located to connect the eastern and western portions of the Empire.

CLIP ART (SEE QUIZ ON P. 60)

Answer: 1

Let My People Go, painted on masonite—a type of hardboard—by the American artist Aaron Douglas (1899–1979), was originally created as one of eight illustrations for James Weldon Johnson's 1926 book *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*. Douglas subsequently enlarged and revised these illustrations into separate paintings, including *Let My People Go*.

The painting depicts a submissive Moses, kneeling in response to God's command to lead his people out of Egypt (Exodus 3). It is filled with symbolism: The rays of light depict God's command, the three pyramids of Giza (behind Moses) represent the masses of enslaved Israelites, and stylized waves evoke the parting of the Red Sea. Pharaoh's army, brandishing spears and riding in chariots, can be seen on the left.

Douglas was a leading artist of the Harlem Renaissance—a cultural and artistic movement among the African American community centered in New York's Harlem district in the 1920s and 30s—and is known as the "father of African American art." *Let My People Go* is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

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Shlomit Bechar (p. 50) is a research fellow at the Haifa Center for Mediterranean History at the University of Haifa and Director of the Hazor Lower City excavations. She specializes in the transition from the Middle to Late Bronze Ages in northern Israel.

Andrew Burlingame (p. 54), a specialist in Northwest Semitic languages, is Assistant Professor of Hebrew at Wheaton College, Illinois.

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Larry Geraty (p. 20) is President Emeritus of La Sierra University and Associate Director of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology. He co-directed excavations at Tall al-Umayri.

Jean-Georges Heintz (p. 61) is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at the Faculty of Protestant Theology, University of Strasbourg, and of Semitic Epigraphy at École du Louvre, Paris.

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James K. Hoffmeier (p. 42) is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern History and Archaeology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He uses history and archaeology to understand ancient Israel's connection to the land of Egypt.

Lee M. Jefferson (p. 58) is the Nelson D. and Mary McDowell Rodes Associate Professor of Religion at Centre College. His area of interest is the development of the Christian tradition and art and imagery of Late Antiquity.

Laura B. Mazow (p. 16) is Associate Professor in anthropology at East Carolina University. Her research focuses on ancient technologies, particularly textile production.

Dennis Mizzi (p. 30) is a senior lecturer in Hebrew and ancient Judaism at the University of Malta. He specializes in Qumran studies, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and early Judaism.

Robert A. Mullins (p. 20) is Professor of Hebrew Bible and Archaeology at Azusa Pacific University. He co-directs excavations at Tel Abel Beth Maacah.

Matthieu Richelle (p. 54) is Professor of Old Testament at the Université Catholique de Louvain, in Belgium. He has authored several books, including *Temples of the Bible* (2022) and *The Bible and Archaeology* (2018).

Jordan J. Ryan (p. 34) is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, Illinois. He digs at Magdala and Tel Shimron, and he has written *The Role of the Synagogue in the Aims of Jesus* (2017) and *From the Passion to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (2021).

Barbette Stanley Spaeth (p. 65) is Professor of Classical Studies at the College of William & Mary and co-founder of the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions. Her research focuses on Roman religion.

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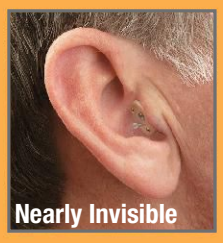

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"Well, that should bring down the house!"

GREG STEPHENS
OOLTEWAH, TENNESSEE

Thank you to all those who submitted caption entries for our Fall 2022 cartoon (left), based on Joshua 6:8: "As Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them." We are pleased to congratulate Greg Stephens of Ooltewah, Tennessee, who wrote the winning caption, and our runners-up:

RUNNERS-UP

"Transferred from Company B, huh?"

RONALD L. SAWYER
FULTON, NEW YORK

"Hey! Shofar, so good! But we saints aren't marching in just yet!"

MARK KIRBY
COVINGTON, LOUISIANA

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"I *do not* want to meet the ram that horn came from!"

MARTIN BOWERS
LEXINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Shofar off-key, the walls couldn't stand any longer!

JOCELYN REDMOND
COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO

For additional caption entries, as well as past cartoons and captions, please visit **biblicalarchaeology.org/captioncontest**.

Write a caption for the cartoon (right) based on 1 Kings 18:38: "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust and even licked up the water that was in the trench." Submit it via our website at **biblicalarchaeology.org/captioncontest**.

Please include your name and address. The deadline for entries is May 15, 2023. The author of the winning caption will receive a BAS All-Access membership and three gift subscriptions to give **BAR** to friends. Runners-up will receive an All-Access membership and two gift subscriptions for friends.

ERIC CARLSON

1 Kings 18:38

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