

## Ninow On Moab

Friedbert Ninow, Professor of OT and Archaeology at Friedensau Adventist University in Friedensau, Germany and Director of the Khirbat Mamariyah Project in Jordan, presented an illustrated lecture for the Horn Museum Lecture Series on Nov. 17, 2003 entitled *At the Fringes of the Moabite Plateau: New Discoveries in Ancient Moab*.

In 1983-84 Udo Worschech conducted the Northwest Arq El-Kerak Survey, following it up with an excavation of the large Iron Age site of Balua'. Drs. Worschech and Ninow worked together at the site from 1987-2000. The main feature at Balua' is a fortress (*Qasr*) inhabited in Iron Age II. It contained a number of rooms, one of which had an oven (*tabun*) with ancient flour beside it, on the ground. Other finds at site include an inscription [*b*]t*mlk* reading either the "house" or "daughter of the king." This find, along with the size of the site, suggest that Balua' was a residential city of

the king of Moab, perhaps Ar (Num 21:15). Two standing stones (*maṣṣēbôt*) were found, erected outside of a house, and a goddess was found in a room behind it. Female figurines holding round discs were found beneath a floor of another room. On the other side of the Wadi from Balua', a tomb was discovered which had ceramics from the Early Bronze Age through Iron Age I, including Iron Age I painted wares, beads and a male figurine, perhaps depicting the Moabite god *Kemoš*. The site of Balua' was abandoned sometime during Iron Age II.

Dr. Ninow has since done a survey of the Wadi al-Balua', which leads northward as a tributary to the Wadi Mujib (biblical Arnon). While surveying the wadi, he discovered part of a road, possibly an extension of the one mentioned by Mesha' on the Moabite Stone (line 26), as well as a Nabataean fort. At the end of the wadi where it enters into the Mujib, he found a large Iron Age fortress with casemate walls and a round tower on top, overlooking the descent to the water. This site (Khirbat Mamariyah) is located in the



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middle of the wadi, leading Dr. Ninow to suggest an association with "the town in the middle of the valley" mentioned in Josh 13:9. Excavation began in 2001. The site is very similar to the sites of Khirbat al-Mudayna N and S in that all three sites have casemate walls with pillared-room houses around the periphery of the settlements and almost identical ceramics from the late Iron Age I (1100-1000 B.C.). (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)

