

Rainey Lecture

On Nov. 14, 2005, Anson F. Rainey, Professor Emeritus of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Semitic Linguistics at Tel Aviv University in Israel, presented a lecture entitled “From Where Did the Israelites Come?” as part of the Horn Museum lecture series.

A critical response to William Dever's analysis in *Who were the Early Israelites and Where did They come From?* this lecture presented evidence suggesting that the Israelites were not, as Dever contends, indigenous Canaanites, but a separate group of pastoralists who migrated from Transjordan. The primary lines of evidence to support this view are ceramic remains and linguistic analysis. While Dever claims that the new pottery styles of Iron Age I "Israelites" are continuous derivations of the Late Bronze Canaanite ware, Rainey attempts to show that these forms are paralleled in the ceramics of Late Bronze Age Transjordan. With the assistance of Christie Goulart-Ribiero, an archaeology student at AU, Rainey has developed a pottery typology

chart which evidences the movement of these forms from Late Bronze Age Transjordan to Iron Age I Israel.

In terms of linguistics, Rainey challenges the view that the Hebrew language was a dialect derived from the Coastal Canaanite language. Key to his argument is the syntax of narrative preterits, common in Hebrew. This sequence has been identified in Moabite (in the Mesha inscription), and in Old Aramaic, (in the Zakkur and Tel Dan inscriptions). It is, however, absent in Phoenician, the most clear example of Coastal Canaanite. This, according to Rainey, is support for placing the origins of Hebrew and Moabite in Transjordan.

In addition Dr. Rainey also gave another lecture on "The Relationship



Anson Rainey.

Between the Habiru and the Hebrews," to an archaeology class. (Darrell J. Rohl)

