



INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER

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Museum Tablets for the Web

The Horn Archaeological Museum has one of the largest collections of cuneiform tablets in the United States. Most of the Museum's nearly three thousand tablets have been published in the seven-volume Institute of Archaeology Publications Assyriological Series by Marcel Sigrist with the eighth volume forthcoming in Fall 2003.

Currently there is no method of electronically searching or comparing the data on these tablets and scholars interested in studying the tablets have to come to Andrews to do their research. In order to make the Museum tablets more accessible, the Horn Archaeological Museum has granted permission to the *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)* to make high resolution scans of the museum tablets and make them available for study on the *World Wide Web*.

The *CDLI*, under the direction of Robert Englund of UCLA and Peter Damerow of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, has been scanning cuneiform tablets from collections from all over the world since 1998. Its main goal is to make systematic digital documentation and electronic publication of 3rd millennium B.C. sources. These tablets are posted on the *CDLI* web page which consists of both the text and the image of a tablet, with document transliterations, text glossaries, translations and digitized originals as well as photo archives of early cuneiform. Currently, *CDLI* has scanned 72,000 tablets or about one million lines of the nearly 150,000 cuneiform tablets in existence. The Horn Museum tablets will be included in this cuneiform library and made available for study on the *World Wide Web*. (Robert D. Bates)



Cale Johnson (*CDLI*) explains the encoding process that will be used for the Horn Museum tablets

Johnson at Andrews

Cale Johnson, a Ph.D. candidate at UCLA, came to Andrews University to scan the Ur III tablets at the Horn Archaeological Museum for the *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*. Johnson used a standard 600 dpi computer scanner in a dark room to scan the tablets which were off-set by 10 degrees. This off-set created the shadow necessary to see the cuneiform signs imprinted on the tablets. While at Andrews, Johnson was able to scan nearly half of the 3rd millennium B.C. tablets or approximately 15 gigabytes of data.

In addition to scanning the Horn tablets, Johnson presented a lecture on October 21, 2002 for the Horn Archaeological Museum lectureship entitled, "The Invention of Writing in Mesopotamia."

Johnson suggested that the earliest forms of writing reflected the need by merchants to keep track of their commodities. Writing emerged as a bookkeeping enterprise. In ancient Sumer, symbols were used to verify how many sheep or goats were bought and sold. In addition, writing developed as a means of encoding natural language.

Though some scholars believe that writing developed simultaneously in different regions of the Ancient Near East, Johnson suggested that writing began in Mesopotamia and spread outward toward other urban centers.

Johnson believes that trade became the primary vehicle for the spread of writing. In the 4th-3rd millennium B.C., Babylon developed a proto-cuneiform and Elam developed a proto-Elamite. Gradually, the idea of writing moved up river to major urban centers through traders to Palestine and Egypt

Examples of the earliest forms of writing are found throughout Mesopotamia. Small, 1-2 cm fired clay objects called tokens were found in clay balls. Some clay balls with tokens inside

had the shape of the token impressed on the outside as well. P. Amiet proposed that these objects that date between 8000-3200 B.C. when found with clay balls, were actually used to calculate how many sheep, grain and other commodities were sent by a merchant. The tokens impressed on the outside indicated what tokens were on the inside. Eventually, the balls were flattened into written tablets surrounded by clay envelopes that had the same writing on the outside like the tablets in the Horn Museum. Essentially, these clay tablets were used as receipts.

D. Schmandt-Besserat claimed that these early tokens were the precursor to written symbols; simple signs with circles and wedges representing numbers and complex tokens with lines representing logograms or words. She claimed the complex lines stood for the commodities that they later represented.

Johnson believes that this theory is probably not true. Though Besserat identified over 50 complex token signs that were assigned to specific commodities, she failed to consider archaeological context in which the tokens were found. All early examples of clay balls only have simple numeric tokens not complex ones.

In addition, the complex and simple token signs impressed on the outside of balls and later tablets represent multiple systems for calculating commodities. Many commodities had their own accounting system and some accounting systems were more ambiguous.

Johnson suggests that the complex tokens signs on the tablets were used to distinguish between ambiguous numerical systems. They were not the first logographic writing. The complex tokens that were impressed on the outside of clay balls to identify various commodities developed after writing had already begun to encode a natural language not as a precursor to that language. The earliest form of writing helped to keep track of numbers and later specific items. (Robert D. Bates)



Dr. Bryant Wood

Wood Lecture

On Sept. 23, Bryant Wood, of the Associates for Biblical Research, presented a lecture entitled "More New Evidence for Israel in Egypt," following up an earlier lecture on this subject a few years ago. Since there was a tendency for royal public inscriptions to be propagandistic, bolstering the image of the Pharaoh, one would not expect the admission of negative events such as escaping Hebrew slaves according to Dr. Wood. Even at biblical Raamses (Qantir/Tell el-Dab'a, excavated by Austrian archaeologist Manfred Bietak), not a single historical document has been found from the Middle Bronze - Iron Ages. Hence, evidence about the Israelites in Egypt must be circumstantial and indirect.

Some indirect evidence might include the fact that although there was only one Asiatic campaign during the Middle Kingdom (12 Dynasty, ca. 1991-1786 B.C.), nevertheless large numbers of slaves with Asiatic names appear in the records during the reign of Sesostris II (ca. 1897-1878 B.C.), at which time, according to the long chronology for the sojourn in Egypt, the Israelites were already living there. Dr. Wood suggests that these slaves might have been taken from the Israelite population. Prior to this time, the nomarchs (local governors) were a major political force, but under

Sesostris III (ca. 1878-1843 B.C.), their dominance was broken and all the power and wealth came to the Pharaoh. This might be associated with Joseph's buying all the land during the seven years of famine (Gen 47:20-26).

Archaeologically, earlier settlements at el-Dab'a, such as the Royal Settlement of Amenemhat (I), justified of Rowaty (*Rw3ty*) (12th Dynasty) and Avaris (2nd Intermediate Period), indicate a Canaanite presence based on the material culture. Dr. Wood associates a monumental tomb (F/I-p/19-no.1, Stratum d/2 of the late 12th Dynasty) with that of Joseph. While this tomb, which has a chapel and burial chamber, had no associated body, it being removed through a robber pit (Joseph's remains were taken back to Canaan, cf.

Josh 24:32), it did contain an almost twice life-size seated statue of an Asiatic dignitary with a red-painted mushroom-type hairstyle, holding a throw stick at his right shoulder. No parallels to this type of statue exist in Egypt, but a similar figure was found at Ebla, which dates to the same time period. The tomb is possibly associated with a large house, the layout of which resembles structures in the Levant. This house according to Dr. Wood, might have been the house of Joseph, the surrounding structures being smaller and unsophisticated by comparison.

Although this initial Canaanite settlement at Tell el-Dab'a (stratum d/2) is interpreted by Bietak as inhabited by the Hyksos, Dr. Wood suggests that they were Israelites and that the more affluent peo-

ple of the following stratum (d/1), as reflected in their palace complex, imported ceramics and Canaanite store jars should be connected with the Hyksos.

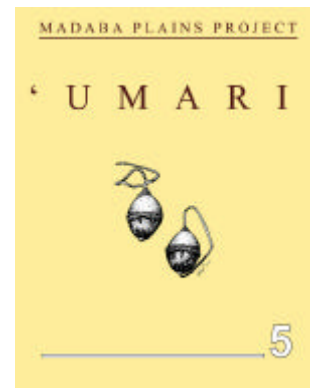
Although the confrontation between Moses and the Pharaoh in Exod 2-12 took place in the Delta in close proximity to the Nile River, the royal residence is usually thought to have been at Memphis. Recently, however, a large temple complex consisting of a large platform and rooms, the remains of which contained fragments of Minoan frescoes and imported Cypriot pottery, was found at Tell el-Dab'a (Area H/I) along the Pelusiac branch of the Nile River, dating to the early part of the 18th Dynasty (ca. 1576-1295 B.C.). (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)



Madaba Plains Project — 'Umayri 5: The 1994 Season at Tall al-'Umayri and Subsequent Studies. Edited by Larry G. Herr, Douglas Clark, Lawrence T. Geraty, Randall W. Younker, Øystein S. LaBianca.

The volume is dedicated to Prince Raad Zeid Hussein. It includes contributions by David R. Berge, Joan W. Chase, Douglas R. Clark, Buguslav Dabrowski, Angela von den Driesch, Elzbieta Dubis, Jürg Egger, Larry G. Herr, Chang-Ho Ji, John I. Lawlor, Nadja Poellath, Joris Peters, Elizabeth E. Pratt, and Lloyd A. Willis.

The field reports examine the The Ammonite Administrative Complex (North) (Ch. 3), Western Defense System (Ch. 4), and the Southwest Acropolis (Ch. 5). These include stratigraphic information, section drawings and pottery plates. Detailed photographs and line drawings make the identification of the excavation phases clear. The pottery discussion compares the 'Umayri ceramics with other similar forms from MB II to Late Iron II/Persian found elsewhere in the Levant. Burial practices are discussed including the Dolman, Middle Bronze Age IIC Tomb as well as the wider detailed examination of the human bones. The variety of objects found at 'Umayri shows the diversity of human activity throughout the periods represented. These objects are presented in the preliminary report, along with other articles on the metal objects, the inscribed seals and seal impressions. Other studies include an examination of subsistence at the tall during the Bronze Age and tribes and sedentarization of the region. Also included are 138 figures, 76 tables, 2 maps, 46 pottery plates, 425 seal illustrations and index.



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RANDOM SURVEY

Nubian Pharaohs

A team of French and Swiss archaeologists working in Northern Sudan discovered a pit full of large monumental and finely carved statues bearing the names of several Nubian Pharaohs belonging to the 25th dynasty (ca. 728-664 B.C.). The Nubian pharaoh's united Nubia and Egypt during the Third Intermediate Period and ruled a kingdom from modern day Sudan to the Mediterranean Sea. The highly-polished black granite statues, which were smashed into pieces, may have been destroyed by later Pharaohs or other invaders.

Masada as U.N. Heritage Site

Masada and the ancient Mediterranean port of Akko were recently put on the World Heritage list of the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*. The Heritage list contains over 730 sites in 125 countries and recognizes places as the world's unique cultural and natural treasures. Other *UNESCO* sites include the Great wall of China and the Pyramids of Egypt.

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Nimrud Database

Since the excavations at Nimrud ended in the 1960's most of the excavated material has been dispersed to various museums throughout the world. This has made it difficult to analyze the site as a whole. Dr. J. Curtis is collating all the data that has been gleaned from all of the Nimrud excavations on to a CD which will be made available at a nominal cost. It is hoped this database will continue to expand as more scholars participate.

Genuine or Forgeries?

The James Ossuary inscription generated much enthusiasm last November and may be one of the most important New Testament archaeological discoveries. Likewise, the Joash inscription has created similar enthusiasm. However, some scholars are skeptical of the authenticity of these inscriptions. Their materials and paleography seem consistent with their respective periods, but their provenance remains uncertain. This uncertainty has sparked a healthy debate on how to deal with objects from private collections.

Dead Sea Scrolls in Michigan

The some of the Dead Sea Scrolls will be displayed at the Van Andel Museum Center in Grand Rapids, MI from Feb. 16-Jun. 1, 2003.

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