

TAU Archaeology

The Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures

The Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology

The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities | Tel Aviv University

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Newsletter of

The Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures

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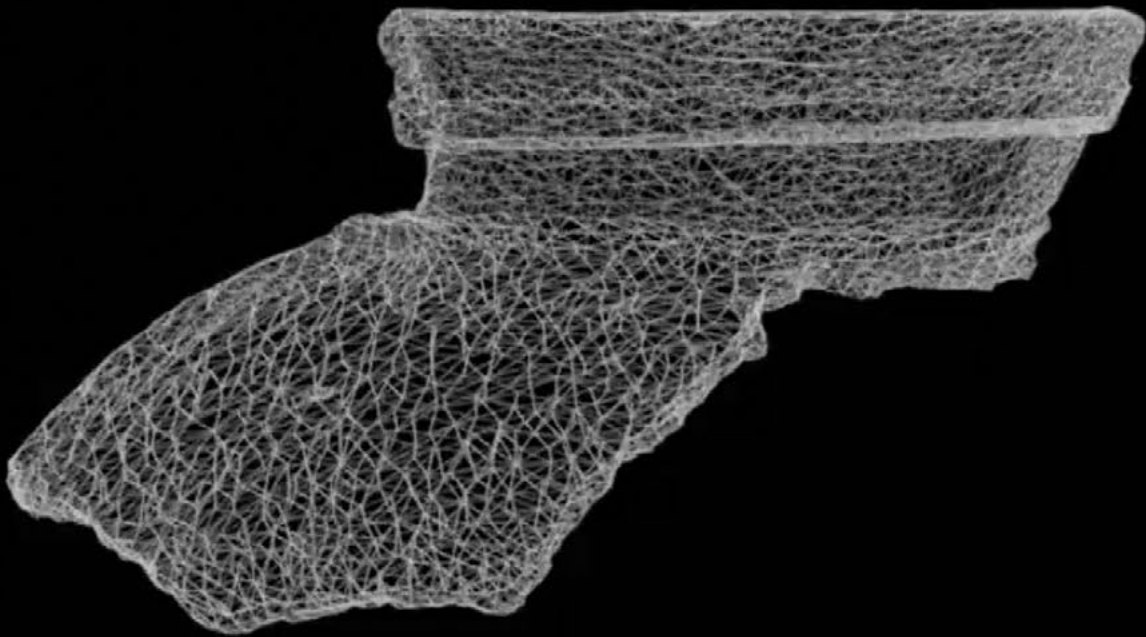
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Research



What Do You Do with a Stone Ball?

Revelations on 300,000-Year-Old Artifacts from Qesem Cave

Ella Assaf Shpayer

Twenty-two years ago, in 2000, a controlled detonation for the expansion of Highway 5 shook the eastern slopes of the Samarian Hills. The explosion brought to light an unknown ancient cave that had been inhabited by prehistoric humans about 400,000 years ago. Not long after the discovery of Qesem Cave, as it became known, Prof. Avi Gopher and Prof. Ran Barkai of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University conducted a survey of the place. Among the various surface finds of stone tools knapped by ancient humans, shaped stone balls caught their eye.

Shaped stone balls are enigmatic. We know that humans began to use them in Africa as early as 1.8 million years ago, in the earliest stages of the Lower Paleolithic period. In the Levant, they were used as early as 1.5 million years ago for over a million years! But not much is known about them—how were they made? And what was their function? Previous studies remain inconclusive.

Qesem Cave was excavated between 2000–2016 by Gopher and Barkai, and archaeological remains indicated that it was inhabited by humans for 200,000 years. The findings at the site are associated with the Acheulo-Yabrudian culture complex, which is characterized by many cultural and biological transformations and innovations: new hominin species that habitually used fire for roasting and developed new stone-tool technologies and sophisticated flint-quarrying strategies. These were all revealed during the 16 years of excavations in the cave.

Meanwhile, shaped stone balls continued to surface—32 balls have been found to date. Over time, it became clear

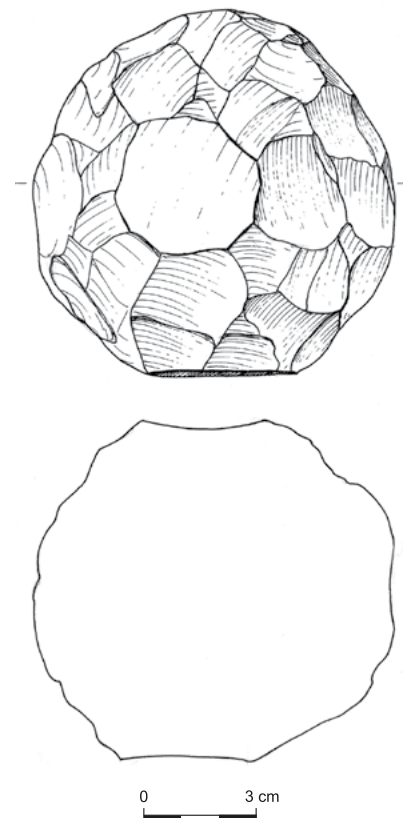
that they come in groups, mainly in the southern parts of the cave, and that they are all older than 300,000 years. All the balls, except one, were made of carbonatic rock, while hundreds of thousands of other stone tools found in the cave are made of flint. Some of them were found near the central fireplace, and one third of them appear in a specific area known as the southwestern area. In this 4 m² area, ten balls were discovered, along with 57 horse teeth—an unusual find in a cave.

We were left with many questions. What are these “old-fashioned” anachronistic balls doing in Qesem Cave, among the numerous innovations that appear in it? How were the balls shaped? Why was limestone, rather than flint, chosen as the material? Why do the balls appear mainly in the southwestern area of the cave? What did the Qesem people do with those balls?



After joining the Qesem Cave project in 2009, excavating mostly in the southwestern area of the cave, I was lucky enough to dig some of these balls myself. In 2017 I decided to form a research group focusing on these items and investigate the “shaped stone ball phenomenon.”

Collaborators from various institutions in Israel and around the world are now involved in our research project. Together with Prof. Javier Baena from Universidad Autonoma de Madrid we reconstructed the technological process related to the ball production through experimental archaeology, creating replicas of the ancient balls. In this reconstruction we received a lot of help from Rodika Penchas, who carefully drew the stone balls from Qesem Cave. It allowed us to observe technological nuances that were otherwise blurred. Shimrit Salem and Yafit Wiener



Above: a shaped stone ball made of carbonatic rock from Qesem Cave, Israel (earlier than 300ka); right: a drawing of a ball from Qesem Cave made by Rodika Penchas; left: a replica of a shaped stone ball, made by Javier Baena (UAM) and Ella Assaf Shpayer (TAU)

from the restoration laboratory cleaned several balls with acid in order to remove the hardened sediments which made the technological analysis difficult. This enabled a better identification of the outline of the balls.

We then used the replicas of the balls in a series of experiments testing their possible function. Together with Prof. Ruth Blasco and Prof. Jordi Rossell (both from the University of Tarragona), we used the balls to break limb bones of animals. We then conducted a functional analysis of the ancient stone balls and the replicas with the help of Prof. Emanuele Cristiani and Dr. Isabella Caricola (University of Rome). This analysis led to the discovery of signs of use and organic remains related to bone marrow on ten balls dating back 300,000 years. The result of this novel study showed a designated use of these items as percussion instruments used to extract bone marrow—the first evidence of its kind. Dr. Ezra Zilberman and Dr. Oded Bar from the Geological Survey of Israel examined the rock from which the balls were made, and with their help we were able

to determine that the Qesem Cave inhabitants carefully selected good quality, homogenous carbonate rock from specific locations to create the balls. Pavel Shrago and Sasha Flit photographed the balls.

Thanks to the collaboration of various researchers and with the help of the laboratories of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, we were able to move a step forward in deciphering the mystery of one of the oldest stone tools in human history. We can now say that producing these stone balls was a complex technological process, which included several steps—starting from the selection of the most suitable raw material, followed by careful shaping, and ending with their designated use as percussion tool. We are currently investigating additional questions concerning the cognitive abilities of early humans who made and used these stone balls for nearly two million years. We look forward to continuing the fruitful work with the institute's laboratories in the process!

To Life! To Life! L'Chaim!

The Discovery of Vanilla-Flavored Wine in Iron Age Jerusalem

Yuval Gadot, Yiftah Shalev and Ayala Amir

In the summer of 2019 we dug in the Giv'ati Parking Lot through a thick layer of destruction debris in the easternmost room of Building 100—a well-built administrative building at the center of Iron Age Jerusalem, which was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. Large fragments of clay vessels that began to appear under the rubble were the first indications that we were about to expose an assemblage of storage vessels, with shapes characteristic of the end of the Iron Age. When we found a handle stamped with a rosette seal, our excitement grew. We knew that we were on the brink of doing the unthinkable: revealing what the rosette storage jars—distributed as part of the royal economy—had originally held. In order to achieve this aim, we put the dig on hold and called in specialists in Organic Residue Analysis (ORA). This was the beginning of a journey that led us through many stations and a variety of laboratories, culminating, two years later, in the publication of the findings in an article in a high-ranking journal.

Although thousands of clay storage jars, complete or broken, are found in archaeological excavations, their original contents remain a matter of speculation. ORA opens the door for the archaeologist to identify long-gone materials that had been held in clay vessels. Applying ORA to archaeological research contributes to our knowledge of past trade, economy and dietary customs, as well as religious practices and popular beliefs. The Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University is a pioneer in developing ORA research in Israel: it supports two PhD students, Ayala Amir and Vanessa Linares, who specialize in Middle and Late Bronze trade relations and mortuary practices as reflected through the contents of ceramic vessels. ORA research is a group effort that begins in the field and continues in the various laboratories of the Tel Aviv University institute and its partners—in this case, the Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, and the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The first challenge that we faced was how to be sure that we were sampling all possible vessels and how to be confident that any given sherd belonged to a specific vessel—all this without our hands ever touching any of the sherds, as the human touch would contaminate the results. To put a finer point on it, what is exposed in the field is a pile of fragmentary sherds. We have no way of knowing how many vessels originally stood in the room and to which vessel each sherd belongs.

Our pottery specialist Dr. Liora Freud and our pottery restorers Yafit Wiener and Shimrit Salem have developed a protocol that promises reliable results. All sherds were collected and bagged in the field without being touched or washed. They were spread out for the first time on the tables of the Institute of Archaeology, to be examined by Freud and Amir. Their expert eyes scanned through the sherds to identify bases, rims and other features that may help to determine to which vessel they belong.

Any sherd that was selected for ORA was broken into halves and numbered. After both halves were marked with a single registration number, one piece was taken by Ayala to the ORA labs, while the other piece was sent to the Restoration Lab. In all, 12 samples were selected. The rest of the pottery was then washed and spread out on the “operating tables” of the Restoration Lab. Yafit and Shimrit then went to work and painstakingly rebuilt the vessels—letting us know whenever one of the 12 marked sherds fit into a reconstructed vessel. Out of the thousands of fragments that we had recovered in the field, 13 complete vessels emerged, most of them storage vessels. One had four handles, two of which bore a rosette stamp impression.

The process of restoring crushed vessels is magical, so we felt it would be worthwhile to document it. Sasha Flit, the Institute of Archaeology's photographer, positioned a camera on a tripod in the Restoration Lab, programming it to take a photo at set intervals for five working days. In the resulting



Digging Building 100 at Giv'ati Parking Lot (photo by the Giv'ati Parking Lot excavations team)



The complete assemblage of jars after restoration (photo by Sasha Flit)



Crushed storage jars found under the destruction debris of Building 100 (photo by Eliyahu Yanai, courtesy of the City of David archives)

video-clip one sees a pile of sherds gradually transform into a complete storage jar, with rosette-stamped handles.

While the vessels were undergoing restoration, Ayala returned from the ORA labs at the Weizmann Institute of Science and at Bar-Ilan University with sensational news: the jar with two stamp impressions had at one time contained olive oil and at another time had been used for wine (the order of use cannot be determined). Even more surprising was the discovery that the wine had been flavored with vanilla!

It was clear to us that these finds were worthy of publication in a peer-reviewed journal. With this goal in mind, the next station along the trail was the Institute of Archaeology's Computational Lab, with its then director Dr. Ortal Harush. We wanted to examine the vessels' morphological features, comparing them to storage jars found in other excavations, and to estimate their volume. Scanning the jars at the lab made these goals possible. The actual work was carried out by Yuval Kedar, an MA student at the Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, in fulfillment of the requirements of a course taught by Ortal.

The scanning of the jars also produced an image of each vessel. In order to publish the findings it was necessary to prepare a pottery plate that included drawings of all the vessels; for this purpose we transferred the images to Yulia Gottlieb, head of the Graphics Studio. Yulia added a reconstruction of the missing features, such as the two stamp impressions on the handles, and arranged the drawings in a plate, eventually to be published alongside the text. Sasha took all the vessels to his Photography Studio, where he set them up as they may have once stood in Room C of Building 100, and took group photos.

The end was now in sight: the article was published in *PLOS ONE*. Amir's presentation of her work in two high-profile conferences garnered much scholarly attention. Finally, the restored vessels were displayed in an exhibition at the City of David National Park. There they stood—testimony to a team effort that restored fragments of sherds found under stone rubble to complete vessels, thus revealing information about a long-gone trade system and about elite drinking customs, to be presented to the public at large.

Early Homo Dispersals Out-of-Africa:

Human Adaptability to Environmental Changes?

Dafna Langgut

Rapid and frequent environmental changes are facilitators of human evolution, driving habitat divergence, dietary advances and long-distance dispersals. However, only limited evidence is available to assess hominin adaptations to environmental changes during key evolutionary stages such as the Early Pleistocene, when hominin first dispersed Out-of-Africa. Though the Levantine Corridor was one of the main routes of northward migration of hominins, the environmental conditions of this gateway area have not been studied in detail.

This situation hinders our ability to address questions that are currently under debate, such as: 1) Is climate variability/instability the prime motivator underlying human dispersals? 2) What were the climate conditions in the currently hyper-arid regions separating East Africa and the Levantine Mediterranean during the Early Pleistocene? (for most of the Pleistocene, these desert areas were terrestrial barriers to human spreading) 3) What was the Early/Mid-Pleistocene vegetation cover in the northern sections of the Levantine Corridor (in other words, the extent of forests vs. grasslands)? and 4) What was the degree of human adaptability to ecological variations? To investigate these questions, I have designed a new project based on palynological analysis, aiming to reconstruct the past vegetation and environmental conditions at the “gateway area.” Fossil pollen grains are currently being investigated at the Institute’s Laboratory of Archaeobotany and Ancient Environments, which I head, from four South Levantine Pleistocene paleo-waterbodies: Zihor, Hayoun, ‘Ubeidiya and Gesher Benot Ya’aqov. Sediment samples from these ancient lakes were collected over the past couple of years by the team members of the lab. The fossil pollen grains are extracted based on a chemical process that was developed explicitly for these very old sediments. Each paleo-water



Inbar Fridman collecting samples at ancient Lake Zihor (photo by Dafna Langgut)



Volunteer students from our department helping to collect the sediment samples from ‘Ubeidiya (photo by Omri Barzilai)



Map of the Southern Levant presenting the stepping stones which are being investigated in the framework of the project (base map: Google Earth; drawing by Nurit Rozenfeld)



Dafna Langgut developing a physical-chemical pollen extraction procedure for the old sediments of the ancient lakes (photo by Sasha Flit)

body is being investigated by an MA or PhD student from the lab, and this is the focus of their thesis/dissertation. The project is performed in close collaboration with the relevant archaeologists and geologists for each site.

Lake Zihor

The Paleolake Zihor, dating back ca. 1.6 million years, is situated in the extremely arid part of the Negev Desert, encompassing Lower Paleolithic human artifacts ascribed to the Early Acheulian culture ('Ubeidiya-type techno-complex). These stone tools are at the southernmost location in the Levant where Early Pleistocene hominid presence has been detected. As such, Lake Zihor may represent an important milestone in the Out-of-Africa gateway for human dispersal.

The ancient lake, currently situated in a military zone, was discovered three decades ago by Dr. Hanan Ginat during a geological survey. Ginat, Inbar Fridman and I participated in several field sampling operations over the past few years. These early Pleistocene sediments are the focus of Inbar's MA thesis. The project is funded by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF), the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the Irene Levi-Sala CARE Archaeological Foundation.

'Ubeidiya

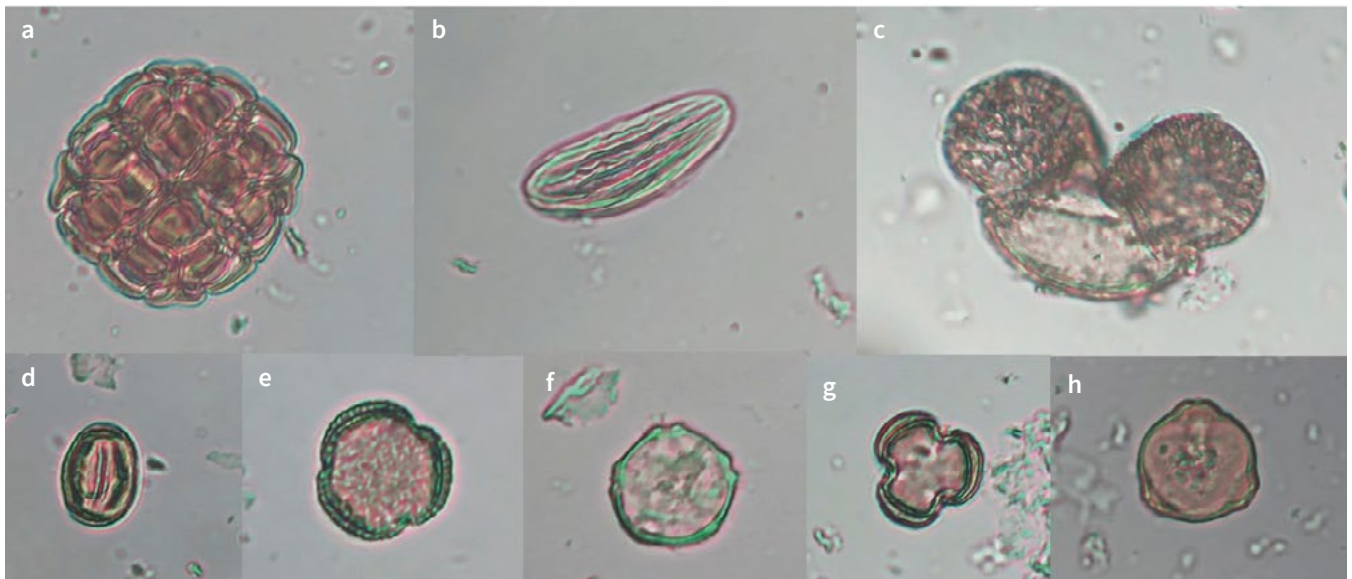
'Ubeidiya, located in the central Jordan Valley, is a key site for the study of Early Pleistocene hominin lifeways,

with a possibility to establish environmental datasets in direct association with stratified archaeological and fossil assemblages. The terrestrial layers of 'Ubeidiya yielded rich lithic assemblages of the Early Acheulian type and an abundance of faunal remains, but so far only a few plant remains have been recovered. The findings indicate that the site preserves traces of one of the earliest migrations of hominins Out-of-Africa.

A renewed excavation directed by archaeologists Dr. Miriam Belmeker and Dr. Omri Barzilai took place in October 2021 and November 2022, aiming to establish a more accurate chronological framework for the site (current estimates are between 1.6–1.2 million years ago) and to enhance our knowledge of the site's environmental background. Pollen samples were collected intensively by the members of the lab. PhD student Minji Jin recently began to learn how to extract and identify pollen, and she is planning to analyze 'Ubeidiya's pollen samples as part of her dissertation. The project is funded by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF), the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the Irene Levi-Sala CARE Archaeological Foundation.

Lake Hayoun

The site, located in the harsh environment of the southern Negev Desert, was recently excavated by Dr. Omri Barzilai. Geologist Dr. Yoav Avni identified that some of the sediments were embedded in a waterbody. A study of the archaeological finds of *in situ* Paleolithic human stone artifacts on the shore



Pollen chart of some of the paleolake Zihor preliminary results: a) Acacia (mimosa); b) Ephedra distachya (Joint-fir); c) Pinus (pine); d) Quercus calliprinos (evergreen oak pollen type); e) Olea europaea (olive); f) Alnus (alder); g) Artemisia (sagebrush); h) Betula (birch); the bar represents 20 μm (photos by I. Fridman, taken with a light microscope)

of ancient Lake Hayoun is currently underway, as is the dating of the site. The team members of the lab helped to collect the samples required for the palynological investigation. The pollen analysis is currently being conducted by Eitan Kremer, a research assistant at the lab, together with me. Our preliminary pollen results indicate that pollen, mostly from wind-pollinated trees and shrubs, was well preserved in the lake's sediments. The presence of pollen of aquatic plants and bank vegetation (such as pondweed and bulrush, respectively) reveal the vegetal resources that were available for the local hominins during the existence of the lake. There is no doubt that the occurrence of riparian plants increases hunting, fishing, and gathering opportunities, specifically in an arid/semi-arid environment.

Gesher Benot Ya'aqov

The Acheulian site of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, situated in the northern Jordan Valley, on the margins of Paleolake Hula, is considered a key site in the study of human evolution worldwide. The site was excavated during the 1990s by Prof. Naama Goren-Inbar, and the renewed excavation project at Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, directed by Prof. Gonen Sharon, is expanding the excavated surface to new localities and exploring new questions not addressed by the previous excavation project. The Middle Pleistocene sediments of the site are known for their exceptionally well-preserved botanical remains. Hence, the sediments offer a unique opportunity to study the impact of changing paleoclimate conditions on human populations at early and crucial points in human evolution.

The palynological study aims to assess the environmental background for human activity in the central Levantine Corridor—the primary path Out-of-Africa. It is designed as the first stage of a large-scale paleoenvironment study of the early Hula Valley. Sediment samples collected in September 2022 showed that pollen was preserved in most of the samples collected for the preliminary pollen study. The pollen spectra are characterized by a good state of preservation and relatively high plant diversity. The exceptionally high frequencies of cedar pollen may suggest that during the time of occupation, temperatures were profoundly lower than today. The pollen assemblages will be investigated by PhD student Eleonora Yuzhanina.

Summary

This site-based pollen project aims to establish an original high-resolution, diachronic paleovegetation reconstruction across different niches of the Levantine Corridor in order to deepen our understanding of human origin. In addition, pollen (and algae) will be used to evaluate the possible utilization of plants by hominins near the reconstructed paleolakes' shorelines, as well as the depth and salinity of the lakes. These will help to illustrate the ecological adaptations of the hominins and their existence strategies. At a much broader level, the results of this study should contribute actual data to the ongoing discussions about the links between climate changes and hominin population dynamics during the Pleistocene.

Fieldwork



Apollonia-Arsuf: The 2022 Season

Oren Tal

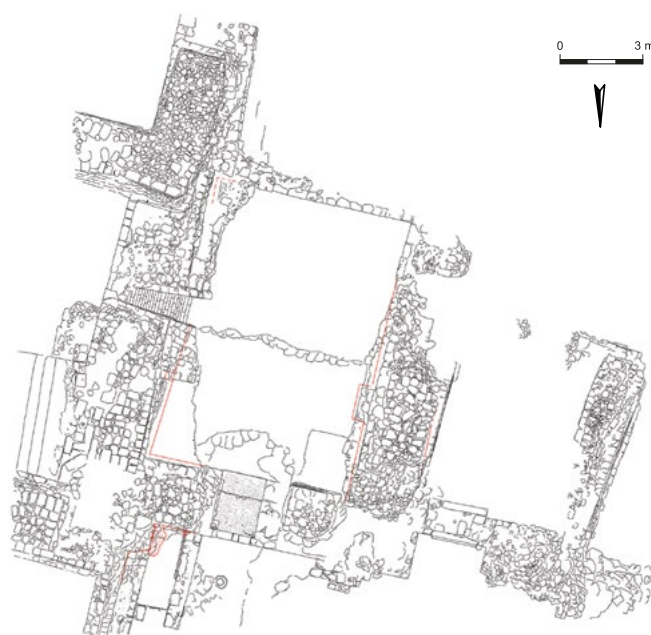
Since 1977 the town and castle of Arsuf have been the subject of extensive and ongoing excavations and research. The castle, at the northern end of the walled town, was built in 1241 CE by a member of the Ibelin family and was leased in 1261 CE to the Order of St. John (Hospitallers), which refortified both town and castle. This occupation continued until their eventual destruction, following a siege by the Mamluks in March–April 1265.

Our 30th season, which lasted from late June through mid-August 2022 and received financing by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, continued the excavations in the castle's western façade, with conservation and partial restoration of the castle in mind, as well as development of the Apollonia National Park. Our ongoing goals have remained the same since the 2009 season in the area, as we have successfully uncovered the architectural and sculptural elements buried close to the floor level and expedited the preservation of the castle's sea-facing façade.

In the current season we focused on the southern wing of the castle's western façade, where we uncovered a hall

(10.15 × 7.25 m), whose floor is yet to be reached and whose function is yet to be determined. The hall has an opening facing north (2.45 m wide), which was narrowed (to 1.55 m) when the hall was in use by the Hospitallers, and a window facing east (0.5 m wide) that let sunlight in during the morning hours. A partition wall in the south (7.25 m long and 0.9 m thick) was also built by the Hospitallers, reducing its original size to about half. It may have provided passage via an opening to the still unexcavated southernmost part. The hall's western wall is detached from its lower foundation. Thus, we could not complete the exposure of the southern hall down to its floor level and uncover the destruction layer representing the aftermath of the Mamluk siege on the site—a layer discovered in other areas of the castle. As it stands, this western wall awaits conservation and consolidation works, which will allow the reconstruction of the original roofing (vault) of the hall and will make it possible to complete the exposure of its southern part.

For more on the Apollonia-Arsuf Excavation Project, go to the project's [website](#).



Left: The western façade southern wing, looking south; right: plan of the southern hall (photo by H. Yohanan; drawing by S. Pirsky)



Volunteers working in the field in November 2022 (photo by the Giv'ati Parking Lot excavations team)



The northern group of rock-cut channels found in Area 75 (photo by the Giv'ati Parking Lot excavations team)

The Giv'ati Parking Lot Excavations: The 2022 Season

Yuval Gadot and Yiftah Shalev

The 2022 season of excavations at Giv'ati Parking Lot (Jerusalem) was mainly devoted to unraveling the riddle of a deep rock-cut ditch (ca. 5 m deep and 25 m wide) first noticed by us in 2019 (Area 70). According to our understanding, it served as a partition between the Temple Mount to the north and the City of David ridge to the south. In 2019 we exposed the southern scarp of the trench but were unable to reach its bottom. During this season we exposed the northern scarp as it rises 3 m above the rock to its south. Much to our surprise we realized that the scarp was integrated into a unique rock-cut installation. A group of four rock-cut channels were found at the bottom of the scarp; their function is still unknown. The installation fell out of use during the Iron Age; therefore, we may conclude that the trench was cut prior to this. We were also able to establish that the trench was deliberately filled during the late 2nd century BCE, probably by one of the earlier Hasmonean kings.

In addition to the trench, we excavated at the northeastern part of the parking lot (Area 75). Here we found another group of rock-cut channels leading north out of the excavation area. This group of channels operated together with those found within the ditch and probably served as the northern wing of one large installation. Further west we

unearthed a public building dating to the Early Hellenistic period, below which we began to see architecture dating to the Iron Age.

The Giv'ati Parking Lot excavations began in 2017 and are conducted in cooperation with the Israel Antiquities Authority. The excavations project is headed by Yiftah Shalev (Israel Antiquities Authority) and Yuval Gadot (Tel Aviv University), with the assistance of Efrat Bocher (field director) and Oscar Bejarano (area supervisor). In addition to paid laborers, we were assisted this year by volunteers who participated in the “Volunteers for Israel” archaeological program.

Several articles describing the results of our dig were published in 2022, including:

Avisar, R., Shalev, Y., Shochat, A., Gadot, Y. and Koch, I. 2022. Jerusalem's Ivories: A Collection of Decorated Ivory Panels from Building 100, Giv'ati Parking Lot Excavations and their Cultural Setting. *Atiqot* 106: 57–74.

Amir, A., Shalev, Y., Uziel, J., Chalaf, O., Freud, L., Neumann, R., Finkelstein, I. and Gadot, Y. 2022. Wine Enriched with Vanilla Consumed in Jerusalem on the Eve of Babylonian Destruction in 586 BCE: A Residue Analysis Perspective. *PLoS ONE*.

Azekah: The 2022 Excavation Season

Oded Lipschits, Manfred Oeming, Sabine Kleiman, Ilana Schiffner and Maddison Quail-Gates

From July 17 to August 12, 2022, the Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition team returned to Tel Azekah for their 10th season of excavation under the direction of Prof. Oded Lipschits (Tel Aviv University), Prof. Manfred Oeming (Heidelberg University) and Dr. Sabine Kleiman (field director, University of Tübingen). The project was further supported by ceramic expert and registrar Dr. Liora Freud, with the assistance of Daria Leiben-Graiver, Maddison Quail-Gates, Danny Nam and Itay Sharir of the excavation administration team.

Our 2022 team was joined by an additional 35 students from Tel Aviv University's BA program, 10 students from the International MA Program, 55 students from our partner institutions in Germany (University of Tübingen and Heidelberg University), the Czech Republic (Charles University) and the USA (Notre Dame University), as well as 30 local and foreign volunteers.

During this season, six areas were excavated. In the north, the Area N1 team worked tirelessly to expose a well-preserved Iron Age industrial olive-oil complex and to explore a previously

unexcavated structure on the edge of the slope. At one place the team, led by Dr. Josef Briffa and Christoph Wind with the assistance of Noga Rapaport, Arion Ligthart and Jonathan Steilman, reached the Late Bronze Age destruction layer, which yielded several exceptional finds.

To the east, supervisor Nitsan Shalom and assistant Hannah Ripps returned to Area E3 to complete the excavation of the Late Bronze Age temple and to reveal the foundations of the structure. With this goal completed during the season, the team moved to investigate beneath the temple and uncovered a rare and significant destruction layer dating to the Middle Bronze Age.

On the southern slope, excavations focused on two areas. In Area S1, supervisor Alexandra Wrathall and assistants Daniel Nam, Abigail Klein and Dante Nacach explored two thousand years of history from the Early Bronze Age until the Iron Age, meticulously excavating destruction layers and monumental architecture. Area S3, which sits at the connection between the slope and acropolis, was excavated under the supervision of Helena Roth, assisted



The 2022 Lautenschläger Tel Azekah expedition team (photo by Sasha Flit)



A student holding a unique Iron Age oil lamp from Area N1 (photo by Arion Ligthart, Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition)

by Itay Sharir and Avinoam Lehavi. This grand section exposed industrial remains from the Early Bronze Age, elements of the Middle Bronze Age fortification wall and a possible Iron Age citadel.

To the west, the Area W1 team focused on dismantling elements of the monumental Middle Bronze Age fortification wall that dominates the area. Led by supervisor Maddison Quail-Gates and assistant Bouddicca Bell, the team successfully removed one section of these massive walls and shed new light on how these fortifications were constructed and permanently altered the site's shape.

More than a century after Bliss and Macalister's initial excavations, the team returned to the acropolis of Azekah to

open an entirely new area. Under the supervision of Dr. Assaf Kleiman and assistants John Will Rice and Grady Gillet, the Area A1 team exposed a Hellenistic citadel possibly sitting upon an earlier Iron Age citadel mentioned by the Assyrian King Sennacherib.

This season was also full of fantastic finds, including a late 8th-century BCE *lmlk* stamp impression, a cylinder seal, Iron Age horse-and-rider figurines, rare Persian oil lamps and beautifully decorated imported pottery from Cyprus and Greece.

Join the Azekah team when it returns to this astonishing site for its 11th season! For more information and to register, visit Azekah.org.

The Summer We Had at Tel Hadid: The 2022 Season

Ido Koch

The fourth season of excavations at Tel Hadid took place in the summer of 2022, and for the first time since 2019 the Tel Aviv University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary staff members met again. Our staff included 13 PhD, MA and BA students joined by 35 team members from Israel, the USA, Australia, Germany, the UK, Brazil, Switzerland, Italy and Greece. During the four weeks of excavations (June 19–July 8), the team brought to light valuable finds in five areas, four of which have been under investigation since 2019 (and two of which have been completed).

The 2022 excavation season in Area AAU was led by Alexandra Wrathall and Gary Miers, with the assistance of Netanel Rinon and Rotem Tzadok. The goal was to completely reveal the curved bedrock and extract the fill deposited there by the community of deportees during the Iron III. The material excavated from Area AAU has already been studied by MA students (residue analysis, glyptics and conchology) and a PhD candidate (ceramic typology and context), and is being prepared for publication.

Located on the northeastern slope of the site is Area BB, excavated under the supervision of Noa Ranzer with the assistance of Yuval Amir, Mor Goldenberg and Sagi Freiman. Area BB was the subject of a survey in 2018, leading to shovel tests in 2020 that revealed a large wall. This led to our decision to open a full-scale excavation. A similar wall was recovered to the west in 2022, and both were dated to the Roman period. The lower wall is parallel to another wall, and on the bedrock between them we found a complete storage jar, identified as typical of the coastal ware of the 7th century BCE. Further excavation in 2023 will assess the remains of the Iron Age activity in this area, as well as the extent of the Roman-period walls.

Eastwards, below the western slope of the mound, excavations in Area CC were completed. The team, led by Ruthy Lewis with the assistance of Heidi Maynard and Renate Fahrni, completely exposed a huge Byzantine-era winery, alongside additional rock-cut installations dating as early as the Iron

Age. Now the team is planning the conservation of the winery and its opening to the public—the first contribution of the project to the visiting experience at the site.

High above Area CC is Area T, located on the northwestern slope of the mound. The team managed to excavate the fills of the podium (Area T1) supporting the superstructure we associate with the Hasmonean-period activity at the site, and brought a better understanding of the constructions process. Furthermore, the dedicated team, led by Ammit Etya and Savannah Fredrichson, assisted by Renate Fahrni, pushed further east and unearthed an additional series of walls (Area T2), whose nature and possible relationship to the fortress and podium are yet to be determined. East of the podium, on the original mound where the ruins of al-Haditha dominate the landscape, a new area was opened. The area was chosen according to aerial photos from the early 20th century, showing that it was originally an open



The Tel Hadid 2022 team, Week 4 (photo by Heidi Maynard)

courtyard, thus not requiring an excavation through the ruins. A survey was conducted, and three probes were excavated. The material included finds ranging from the Iron Age to the Ottoman period, among them three sherds of Ottoman red pipes. One of the probes contained architectural remains.

We are very excited to return to the site in 2023 and see what awaits us under the surface. For more information and to register, head to [Hadidexpedition.org](https://www.hadidexpedition.org).

The End of an Era (or less dramatically—Area B): The 2022 Season at Masada

Guy D. Stiebel and Boaz Gross

In February 2022, the Masada team returned to the mountain for a small and targeted season in Area B, one of the main areas opened by the Neustadter Masada Expedition in 2017. In the area, the heart of the northern part of the site between the Byzantine church and the western casement wall, several main features dating from the 1st century BCE to the 7th century CE were uncovered.

In the very first seasons, we found a pair of water cisterns, dated to the Herodian period. Their layout and the type of plaster used allowed us to date the construction of this water-collection complex to the Early Roman period. Surprisingly, at least one of the cisterns was not the first installation cut into the rock in this area—an underground chamber predated it, in the stratigraphical sense, at least. This cave was the main focus of the 2022 season.

One of the cisterns was decommissioned and filled already during the time of the Great Revolt (67–74 CE). The second cistern, however, was reused in the Byzantine period by the monastic community that lived on Masada at the time, and it was probably in use in the following period as well.

In the cave itself we held high hopes: while pre-Roman period finds were uncovered by previous expeditions, no architectural element or installation could be dated to the Hasmonean period (150–40 BCE), despite the historical sources placing a garrison on the mountain at the time. The cave's stratigraphic analysis, which showed that it predated the cisterns, led us to hope that we would finally find just that. In archaeology, however, such hopes are rarely fulfilled, and indeed, we found no material culture linking the cave to pre-Roman period activity. We did, however, uncover later finds.

While the cistern adjacent to the cave was clearly filled up during the Great Revolt, the cave itself remained open and in use through the Byzantine period. This is hardly a surprise, as many other elements at the site were in use as well. While we did not expect the soil fills and deposits inside the cave to shed light on an unknown occupational period at Masada, we found numerous pottery sherds dating to the Early Islamic period, alongside shattered remains of the marble church screen that were discarded, quite unceremonially.



Aerial view of Area B at the end of the 2022 season; the two cisterns (top right) and the underground chamber (left) (photo by the Neustadter Masada Expedition)



The dedicated team in the 2022 season (photo by Sasha Flit)

These finds reaffirm evidence from Area C where remains of lime production in the Early Islamic period indicates that building or repairs took place, suggesting a more permanent settlement or presence.

So, just like King Saul, who went out in search of asses and found monarchy, we set out to find the Hasmoneans and instead—perhaps unintentionally—added a whole new chapter to the history of this important historic site.

With the completion of the excavation of Area B, the last of the original main areas of the expedition, we will now devote 2023 to analyzing and processing our finds, and eventually bringing them to light in a publication.

We wish to thank Angela Hodson (Area B supervisor), Yotam Roten (assistant supervisor), Riki Zalut-Hartuv and Nurit Rozenfeld, as well as the capable group of volunteers, all TAU students. Without them this small, but very successful, season could not have taken place.

Megiddo: The 2022 Season

Israel Finkelstein and Matthew J. Adams



Left: aerial view of Area S (Area AA of the University of Chicago dig), showing Middle Bronze early fortifications; right: Area X in the western sector of Megiddo, featuring post-732 BCE layers (photos courtesy of the Megiddo Expedition)

In the 2022 season, the Megiddo team concentrated on three periods and themes. Middle Bronze layers were exposed in two areas—in the southeastern and northern sectors of the mound. Among them are layers that belong to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, and hence, have the potential to shed light on the much discussed subject of re-urbanization of Canaan in the early second millennium BCE.

We have now achieved the goal set when the renewed excavations commenced in the early 1990s—to reinvestigate the entire settlement sequence of the site. We unearthed a settlement accumulation of approximately 5 m, featuring 12 architectural phases—all radiocarbon dated. With this, Megiddo has now become a type-site for the Middle Bronze Age, similar to its role for the Early Bronze, Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Special attention was given to the investigation of the earliest fortifications—their nature and date. In addition, a “new” gate was uncovered in the northern sector—the earliest in a series of nine Bronze and Iron Age gates now known at the site.

In the 2022 season we continued our investigation of the Iron Age gates, which we started in 2018. We have now firmly established that—as suggested by several scholars in the

past—a four-chambered gate existed here, set between the six-chambered and two-chambered gates. It dates to the Iron IIB in the 8th century BCE.

To date, archaeology has been unable to provide well-dated evidence for the material culture and settlement history of northern Israel in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, that is, after the Assyrian takeover. At Megiddo, remains representing this era were uncovered and removed during previous excavations, thus preventing modern investigation of the relevant layers. In the past, we failed to locate an area where these layers survived. As of 2016 this has changed. We are now in control over a detailed stratigraphy of several post-732 BCE layers in two areas, located in the center and the western sectors of the mound. In one of them, we unearthed an assemblage of local pottery with East Greek imports and Egyptian vessels. Megiddo is therefore destined to serve as the chrono-stratigraphic anchor for the study of the northern part of the country between the late 8th century and the Persian period.

The 2022 season emphasized the uniqueness of Megiddo as the only site in the Ancient World where the entire sequence of the Bronze and Iron Ages has been excavated and radiocarbon dated.

Tel Moza: The 2022 Season

Shua Kisilevitz and Oded Lipschits

In September 2022, the third season of the Tel Moza Expedition Project was carried out by students and faculty from Tel Aviv University, Charles University (Prague), Osnabrück University (Germany) and the University of Malta, as well as volunteers. The project, directed by Shua Kisilevitz and Oded Lipschits, is supported by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Grant No. AZ 24/F/20) and the Israel Science Foundation (Grant No. 252/20).

The excavations, which focused on Area B, continued to uncover remains of an economic site established in the Iron IB when a field of silos and other installations were formed. It became the location of a cultic precinct in the Iron IIA when what appears to be a small and modest temple was built in the center of this area. This temple was replaced in the Late Iron IIA by a large temple (*in antis*) constructed above it and prevailing as the most dominant feature in the area.

Preparation for the season included the removal of much of the modern soil and stone dumps that had been deposited south of the large temple since excavations began in 1993. This revealed the original terrain sloping to the southwest and highlights the location of the large temple along a middle terrace, towering above the lower terrace to its southwest.

This season we continued to expose architectural features of the Early Iron IIA temple and the Late Iron IIA temple overlying it. A floor abutting the southern temenos wall of the small temple was exposed, yielding *in situ* vessels and a stone mortar. The previously excavated field of silos from the Iron IB–Early Iron IIA was found to extend throughout most of the area and over time had been damaged by the successive construction of temples.

South of the large temple, a large structure attributed to the Persian period was mostly removed, and remains of a terracing system that supported a large structure from the Persian–Hellenistic period were partially excavated.

Further west, the excavation revealed several parallel terrace walls, which bisected the large temple and extended below its foundation levels with only late (Byzantine to 20th century CE) material found to their south. These walls reflect centuries of robbing, erosion, and construction of retaining walls that encroached progressively into the temple outline.



The 2022 Tel Moza Expedition team members (photo by David R. Moulis)



*Exposing the *in situ* mortar and vessels on the southern edge of the Early Iron IIA temple (photo by David R. Moulis)*

The results of this season revealed stratigraphic connections between the various elements in the area and yielded dateable material, including numerous carbonized olive pits and OSL samples from the silos. The data provided will hone our understanding of the development of the cultic precinct throughout the periods and allow for a more complete reconstruction of the sequence.

An Anatomy of Destruction: The Qadas 2022 Season

Raphael Greenberg and Gideon Sulimani

The second season of the Qadas Field Project, supported by the Gerda Henkel Foundation and conducted under the auspices of the Tel Qedesh Excavation Project (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and the TAU Institute of Archaeology, took place in July 2022. Participants included staff members Ramez Eid (The Open University) and Liara Kolska Horwitz (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Inbar Meyerson, Kim Kertesz and Tamar Leitner, students from Durham University led by Noam Leshem, and volunteers.

We continued the process of clearing vegetation and rainwash over extensive areas of the village, as well as around the secondary spring and reservoir of al-Majnouna, with the

finds within state-regulated archives, can subvert the authority of its own gaze. To this end we avoided, as far as was feasible, vertical excavation—instead focusing on the surface of the remains shrouded by the rampant vegetation (the current surface as well as the post-destruction surface ca. 1966), probing a collapsed defensive trench from 1948, and examining the surfaces above and beneath a fallen roof (in effect, the excavation of two contemporary surfaces, the roof-top and floor of a destroyed house). By limiting ourselves to these activities that merely, and temporarily, reverse the natural processes that have complemented the human acts of destruction, we would like to encourage a discussion of the role archaeologists should have in retrieving village remains. By applying our

labor to the ruins of the village as they appear now, rather than to the recovery of ground-plans beneath the rubble, we acknowledge our complicity in the acts of destruction and attempted erasure and make a first step toward reparation.

Similarly, we have collected only the finds strewn across the cleared surface or in the crust of rain-washed soil that covers the pre-1966 surface. These include household artifacts, objects associated with the temporary occupation of the village by Arab Liberation Army troops, and objects left at the site by later visitors. Following initial conservation and recording, we have begun to engage in a dialogue with descendant Lebanese

communities, Palestinian colleagues, archaeologists, historians, artists and others on the way these finds should be presented and where they should be kept (noting that they do not fall under the rubric of antiquities according to Israeli law).

A third season of fieldwork is scheduled for the summer of 2023.



Aerial photo of Qadas village taken in September 1948, shortly before its capture by Israeli forces (courtesy of the IDF Archives)

aim of restoring the abandoned and razed village remains to view and recording 1948 and post-1948 interventions. In particular, we wished to examine if and how archaeological methods, which are often characterized as controlled or documented destruction, can be used for the purpose of studying destruction, and if and how archaeological documentation, which normally inscribes structures and



Left: the archaeological survey in Tel Shaddud, July 2022; right: the Tel Shaddud team, July 2022 (courtesy of Omer Sergi, Karen Covello-Paran and the Tel Shaddud Regional Project)

The Tel Shaddud Regional Project: The 2022 Survey Season

Omer Sergi and Karen Covello-Paran

The Tel Shaddud Regional Project is a joint project of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Antiquities Authority, together with partners Ruhr Universität Bochum and Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena. The project focuses on the excavation of Tel Shaddud, while collaborating with the nearby Tel Shimron Expedition in order to explore the relationship between these two sites in their regional context.

Tel Shaddud is located on the northern margins of the Jezreel Valley, some 10 km northeast of Tel Megiddo. The site includes a small mound approximately 2 hectares and a sprawling unwallled settlement at the foot of the tell, stretching around it and encompassing the nearby spring of 'En Shaddud. In addition, a salvage excavation conducted at the foot of the tell revealed a relatively large cemetery, which was in use almost continuously from the MB I to the Late Iron IIA. A noteworthy find from the cemetery was an Egyptian-style anthropoid coffin dated to the LB III, suggesting that during the Late Bronze Age Tel Shaddud was related in some way to Egyptian authorities in Canaan.

The first season of the Tel Shaddud Regional Project, carried out in July 2022, was dedicated to surveying the

mound and its immediate surroundings. Pottery was collected from the surface, enabling the identification of the main periods of human activity, and the mapping of the site helped us to plan the next excavation season. Students and scholars from Germany, Israel and the United States participated in the survey.

The results of the survey were not surprising, at least from the chronological point of view. The periods represented at the bottom of the mound—the Early Bronze I, the Middle Bronze Age, the Late Bronze Age, the Iron Age and the Hellenistic to Roman periods—were also reflected in pottery sherds retrieved from the various sections on the mound and its slopes. It seems, however, that the late Iron Age settlement is better represented on the lower terraces of the mound than on its summit. In addition, we identified a large rectangular structure on the summit and what seems to be the main route of access. Both areas look promising for future excavations. Yet the big picture of Tel Shaddud, a fortified site that shifted from Egypt to early monarchic Israel, is still waiting to be revealed in the coming seasons of our project.



The massive base of the tower fortification (upper left) uncovered at Tantur, supporting a modern stone hut (upper right) and a terrace (photo by Omer Ze'evi-Berger)



Deir Tantur 2022 excavation team (photo by Efrat Bocher)

Deir Tantur: The 2022 Season of Excavations

Nitsan Ben-Melech, Josef Mario Briffa, Oded Lipschits and Yuval Gadot

Between July 4 and 14, 2022, excavations were conducted within the compound of Tantur, south of Jerusalem on the road to Bethlehem. The excavations, a joint field project by the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University (directed by Oded Lipschits and Yuval Gadot) and the University of Notre Dame (directed by Avraham Winitzer), aimed at locating early remains within the campus and laid the groundwork for educational programs for University of Notre Dame students, including excavations, classes and excursions to antiquity sites. Eleven University of Notre Dame graduate students excavated in two locations within the Tantur compound, under the direction of Nitsan Ben-Melech (Tel Aviv University) and Josef Mario Briffa (Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem), with the assistance of Efrat Bocher and Elana Gerber (Tel Aviv University). The project is supported by the Schlindwein Family Foundation.

The highlight of the season was the exposure of a large stone-built tower, located to the east of the Tantur compound. The initial clearing of the topsoil and outgrown vegetation uncovered a massive wall oriented south-north and constructed of large stone blocks, right below a modern stone hut that reused the wall's foundation. The ancient wall, ca. 13 m in length, is exposed for two or three courses, with thick lime-mortar between the

courses—a building technique typical of forts and towers dating from the Byzantine and Crusader periods.

At its southern end of the wall is an entrance to a blocked room, which appears to be part of the larger structure. For safety reasons, this space could not be explored this season, and the blockage was left in place. In the north the wall reached the border of a mosaic. Upon cleaning, several colored tesserae appeared, suggesting a pattern similar to one known from a 5th-century church in central Israel, which may hint at the date and possible use of the site.

Excavations near the exposed base of the tower uncovered more large stone blocks, which came up to the wall. These blocks could be a collapse of the upper parts of the wall or, more likely, a wider foundation to support the weight of the structure, as suggested by the massive stone slab with lime-mortar *in situ*, at the bottom of one of the squares.

The massive wall, its adjacent features and the material finds we retrieved indicate a large and unique tower-like structure with fine finishing details. It is hoped that further exploration of the site, as well as a thorough inspection of some material finds, will make it possible to date the tower-like structure, but it is already clear that this is a valuable landmark in the compound surrounding Tantur.

The Central Timna Valley Project: The 2022 Season

Erez Ben-Yosef and Eshchar Gichon

The Timna Valley, situated on the western side of the Arabah Valley approximately 25 km north of Eilat, is a hyper-arid valley shaped like a semi-crater averaging 25 mm of rainfall annually. Its natural copper ores were heavily exploited throughout the ages, from the Neolithic to the Islamic period, and were the focus of Beno Rothenberg's archaeological Arabah Expedition from 1959 to 1984. In the last season of the ongoing Central Timna Valley Project (CTV), we embarked on a survey to corroborate and update the coordinates of the many archaeological sites discovered by Rothenberg and his successors as preparation for the GIS-based database that is currently in progress. Timna's GIS (Geographic Information System) will present the valley's various sites on interactive maps and models, classifying them according to their type, chronology and other parameters. Since this field survey was carried out under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the season lasted only seven days and the team was relatively small, comprising our dedicated volunteers and the CTV Project staff.

Throughout the survey week, the team split into three groups. They were charged with finding all known sites with the older coordinates and upon discovery, updating their GPS points, taking photographs and videos of the remains, as well as describing any changes that occurred since their last recorded visit.

The first group, led by Erez Ben-Yosef and Eshchar Gichon, concentrated on Rothenberg's "Model Area," located in the northwestern part of the valley and characterized by many small deep *wadis*, mining galleries (tunnels) and open pit (placer) mines. The second group, led by Yoav Vaknin, surveyed the vast area of the northern valley, filled with wide *wadis*, placer mines and several tumuli along the northern hills of Nahal Timna. The third group, led by Mark Cavanagh and Omri Yagel, investigated the sites of western Mount Timna and the adjacent *wadi* below. There, smelting centers abundant with slag scatters were found in several places, alongside tumuli, cultic sites and cemeteries.



Documenting ancient copper mines in the sandstones of Timna Valley (photo courtesy of the Central Timna Valley Project)



Exploring the granite landscape of Mount Timna (photo courtesy of the Central Timna Valley Project)

After several days in the northern part of the valley, the entire CTV expedition embarked on a survey of the south, which had remained unexplored by any recent expedition or scholar since Rothenberg due to the modern mining activity in the southeastern part of the valley. In addition to corroborating the status and the coordinates of the Rothenberg's sites, the team discovered several tumuli and small stone formations.

By the end of the season, most of the sites had been found and their coordinates verified or updated. The team also took drone photos which will help in mapping the sites, identifying patterns and understanding landscape-archaeological questions. Finally, the surprising discovery of various new sites in the valley suggests that the valley still holds archaeological treasures to be found in the future.

Spotlight

Post-Doctoral Fellows
Grants

Photo: Sasha Flit



Post-Doctoral Fellows

The Institute of Archaeology congratulates Bar Kribus, who won a Dan David Fellowship at the Faculty of Humanities of Tel Aviv University and will spend two years collaborating with the Institute of Archaeology

Bar Kribus

Bar Kribus recently began a Dan David fellowship at the Faculty of Humanities at Tel Aviv University (2022–2024). During his fellowship, Bar will conduct a comparative study of the prayer houses and religious sites of the Abrahamic religions of the northern Ethiopian Highlands.

Bar is an archaeologist specializing in Late Antique and Medieval Ethiopian archaeology and the history and material culture of the Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews). He was an area manager at the Naples University l’Orientale excavations in Seglamen, Ethiopia, directed by Prof. Rodolfo Fattovich (2010–2013), and served as the ceramics specialist for the Hebrew University excavations in Tiberias, directed by Dr. Katia Cytryn-Silverman (2011–2016) and for the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology excavations in Jerusalem, directed by Prof. Dieter Vieweger (2014). His MA thesis, under the guidance of Prof. Joseph Patrich and Prof. Steven Kaplan, deals with the impact of pre-Christian cult and culture on Christianity in the Kingdom of Aksum (Late Antique Ethiopia). His PhD dissertation, also under the guidance of Kaplan and Patrich, deals with the monastic movement of the Beta Israel, with an emphasis on Beta Israel monastic material culture, dwelling places and



practices. A central component of this research is an archaeological survey of Beta Israel monastic sites in Ethiopia. In the course of this survey, Beta Israel holy sites and monastic dwelling places were documented and examined in detail for the first time. Bar was awarded a PhD in archaeology by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2020.

From 2015, Bar was an associate of the ERC Project “Jews and Christians in the East: Strategies of Interaction between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean” (JewsEast), and from 2018, he was a full member of the project. In 2020–2022, he was a postdoctoral fellow of the Minerva Stiftung at the Center for Religious Studies of the Ruhr University Bochum. His postdoctoral research at Bochum dealt with Beta Israel political autonomy in the Simien Mountains of northern Ethiopia and its wars with the Christian Solomonic kingdom (15th–17th centuries), with a focus on the material culture and geographical aspects of these wars.



Surveying the Sabra synagogue at Simien Menata, the most important religious center of the Beta Israel in recent generations (photo by Bar Kribus)

The Institute of Archaeology congratulates Akiva Sanders, who won a Dan David Fellowship at the Faculty of Humanities of Tel Aviv University and will spend two years collaborating with the Institute of Archaeology

Akiva Sanders

Akiva Sanders is a Dan David Fellow at the Faculty of Humanities, studying the Early Bronze Age in the Altınova Plain in the Upper Euphrates region of eastern Turkey. Three large villages, Norşuntepe, Tepecik, and Korucutepe populated this plain in the Early Bronze III. From 2400 to 2000 BCE, a large complex of storage rooms was built and expanded, generation by generation, at Norşuntepe, a millennium after the Arslantepe Palace in the nearby Malatya Plain had been burnt to the ground. Large-scale central institutions, a hallmark of Mesopotamian life, seem to have been completely abandoned by the inhabitants of the Upper Euphrates region during the intervening eight centuries.

Akiva's research investigates the process of re-centralization that took place in the late third millennium BCE: Why, after so many generations of comparative household autonomy, was centralized settlement economic life re-introduced at Norşuntepe? What were the local social and economic realities that occasioned this large-scale resource sharing, and what household-based templates of resource sharing and symbols of collective action did this institution build on? How did the construction and expansion of the storage institution re-order daily life at Norşuntepe and its neighboring settlements?

Since 2014, Akiva has also been developing new methodologies for analyzing ancient fingerprints on ceramics. Using measurements of ridge breadth within the impressions has the potential to shed light upon the roles of men, women and children in ceramic production at different times and places. This type of evidence works in concert with his theoretical concern for changes in the daily lives of common people at moments of social transformation. Over the past few years, he has collaborated with statisticians to create a new Bayesian approach for the analysis of fingerprint assemblages as a whole, a methodology that will soon be published.



A fingerprint left by the manufacturer of a goblet from Hama, Syria (photo by Akiva Sanders)

In another forthcoming publication, this new methodology is used to analyze fingerprint assemblages at Tell Leilan in northern Mesopotamia, Hama in western Syria and Tell eš-Şafi in the Southern Levant in the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age. These periods correspond to drastic social changes at each of these three sites, including a great increase in the scale of social coordination, the construction of new hierarchical institutions, and the creation of wider networks of exchange for finished products. The results indicate that at all three sites, the corresponding increase in

production scale was accompanied by new strategies of apprenticeship, use of child labor, or delineation of gender roles. However, the application of these various strategies differed from site to site, indicating a fluid and innovative environment of adaptation to these pivotal moments.



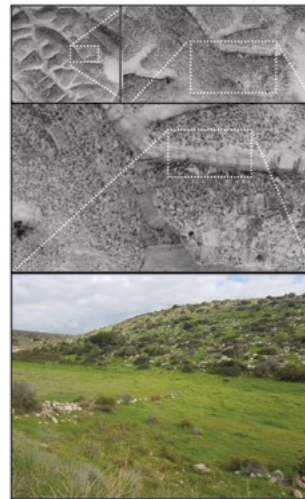
Azriel Yechezkel

Azriel Yechezkel is a post-doctoral fellow at the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University (2023–2024) and will collaborate with Prof. Yuval Gadot and Prof. Bethany Walker (Bonn University) in their joint DFG-funded project: “Reading” Ancient Landscapes: Peasant Decision-Making and Terraced Agriculture in Central Palestine over *la Longue Durée*.

Azriel earned his PhD from the Institute of Archaeology and the Department of Geography of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, after completing his MA degree with honors from the Department of Geography. His interests include landscape archeology, mapping and surveying methods of subterranean structures, and geoarchaeology. So far, he has published several refereed articles and two popular books.

Azriel’s PhD dissertation focused on spring tunnels. These are ancient artificial cavities designed to extract water from underground aquifers to the surface, an essential and vital component for human settlement in the mountainous regions of Israel. Following his recently compiled national database of spring tunnels (n=216), Azriel defined their “known-today” chronological boundaries, addressed issues of their dispersion, technology and culture. He has demonstrated that the largest number of spring tunnels in the Middle East (about 70) are found in the Jerusalem Hills region.

This technology likely originated in Iron II Jerusalem, from where



Terraces and dams designing a small tributary, located close to Beit Loya in a way that it can be used for food production (top photo: courtesy of The Aerial Photos Archive Digitizing Project, The Center for Computational Geography, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; bottom photo: Omer Ze’evi-Berger)

it spread. Azriel also led the new survey of the underground shaft tunnel of the Biar aqueduct to Jerusalem, during which more than 1300 m of the tunnel was mapped, unique water regulating architecture was documented and the tunnel was dated, using ^{14}C , to the 1st century CE.

The research program for the project takes the form of archaeological investigations of single sites and their terraced hinterlands, “read” against a highly complex historical record rich in details, for the later medieval periods, on land use, value and exchange. At the center of the proposed research are two sites located in the “Shephelah.” The main purpose of this project is to reconstruct the decision-making process and mechanisms of intensification and abatement of agricultural fields in general, and of terraces in particular.

In order to evaluate the land-use during antiquity, the following research methods will be applied: macrobotanical analysis, phytolith analysis, pollen analysis and zooarchaeological analysis. Azriel will contribute mainly in the geological/geomorphological analysis of terraces and sites vicinity catchment, i.e., surveying and mapping land uses, rock formation, soil formation, soil erosion and investigating sediment transport by surface and subsurface runoff. This way, a range of human and natural factors can be modelled to better understand how they relate to one another in creating and sustaining “terrace societies.”

The Southern Arabah Copper Industry in the Early Bronze Age (Fourth–Third Millennia BCE)

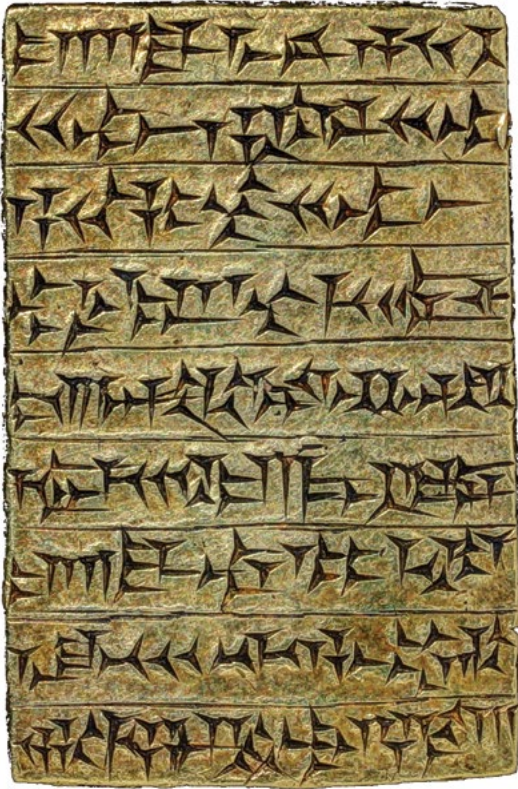
Erez Ben-Yosef (Tel Aviv University)

ISF Grant

The southern Arabah has long been recognized as one of the most important regions in the world to the study of ancient copper-extraction technologies. The limited modern mining activities and the desert environment preserved dozens of mining and smelting sites that represent more than 6,000 years of metallurgical history. The aim of the current research is to deepen our understanding of the copper industry during one of the least explored periods in the history of the region—the Early Bronze Age. Technological aspects of copper production will be studied, including the invention/adoption of wind-powered furnaces and developments in the use of ore and flux. In addition, various aspects of the people reflected by the technology will be investigated. These include subsistence practices and economy (and the place of copper production within it), social organization, mobility (seasonality), adaptation to changing environmental conditions and response to social processes in “core” regions, such as the rise of the Old Kingdom in Egypt and the emergence of the first urban society in the Southern Levant. The research, which is supported by ISF Grant No. 408/22 (2022–2026), is based on new archaeological surveys and excavations, in Timna Valley and the open areas between the valley and the nearby oases, where smelting took place on small hills using the natural northern draft. The field work will be complemented by various laboratory analyses, and the results will be interpreted in light of the growing comparative datasets—of copper production in other periods and in other regions. Unpublished materials from previous work by the late Beno Rothenberg in the southern Arabah will also be analyzed and published as part of this research.



Exploring Early Bronze Age sites in the Arabah, between Timna and Yotvata (photo courtesy of the Timna Valley Expedition)



Example of Unicode cuneiform: left) the obverse of a gold tablet of the Neo-Assyrian King Assurnasirpal, 9th century BCE; right) the Unicode version generated from the transliteration of this inscription (©Yale Babylonian collection [YBC 2398; YPM BC 16991], with permission of Klaus Wagensonner)

Reading Akkadian Cuneiform by Digital Analysis

Yoram Cohen (Tel Aviv University), Enrique Jiménez (University of Munich), Hadar Elor (Tel Aviv University) and Shai Gordin (Ariel University)

TAU-LMU Grant

Cuneiform, the world's oldest writing system, was invented in ancient Mesopotamia around 3200 BCE and was in use for over three thousand years throughout the Ancient Near East. The known corpus of cuneiform documents is large and diverse, comprising an estimated 500,000 clay tablets inscribed in various languages and genres. Dating these texts and parsing their contents currently requires painstaking work by experts, a process that is neither scalable nor amenable to digital analysis. In this project, we aim to build a digital cuneiform writing pipeline, using machine learning and particularly recent developments in neural networks. By using a transformer-based pipeline to segment tablets into lines and by analyzing the textual content of such lines with generative models, we will build a taxonomy of writing styles that may be used to date tablets. We will implement models for analyzing lines within tablets. This includes both Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) and "analysis by synthesis" applied to the visual characteristics of different writing styles.

“Reading” Ancient Landscapes: Peasant Decision-Making and Terraced Agriculture in Central Palestine over la Longue Durée

Bethany Walker (Bonn University) and Yuval Gadot (Tel Aviv University)

DFG Grant

Recent studies of agricultural terraces suggest that the construction (and maintenance) of terraces is a choice made by peasants and landowners, based on a range of considerations. However, the decision-making process and the mechanisms of intensification and abatement of agricultural fields in general, and terraces in particular, have not been systematically addressed to date. As a result, with few exceptions, we know little about the organization of labor behind their construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, the legal regulations and traditional practices concerning their maintenance, their relationship to changes in land tenure and the social value attached to them in a historical perspective.

To address these lacunae, the present project focuses on the social backdrop of peasant decision-making in a deep-time perspective in historical Palestine by adopting a “bottom-up” approach, examining this process in rural societies in their immediate context, and evaluating the processes of intensification and abatement of local fields. We proceed on the assumption that agricultural terraces, when dated with confidence, can serve as windows on the social, economic and political systems of the past. The methods required to reconstruct the decision-making process—and to distinguish local practices from state-imposed policies—necessitate a tightly integrated multi-disciplinary approach. We will investigate the rationale for terrace-building and use at different scales of analysis by combining the methods appropriate to field archaeology, geology, botany, food systems studies, history and historiography and ethnography.



Dating terraces close to Ein Karim, Jerusalem; our project aims at reconstructing the ancient farmers' considerations guiding their choices on what to cultivate, where and how (photo by Omer Ze'evi-Berger)

Al-Haditha: A Historical–Archaeological Study of a Depopulated Arab Village

Ido Koch and Yoav Alon (Tel Aviv University)

ISF Grant

This interdisciplinary project, launched in 2022, aims to study the depopulated village of al-Haditha, on the mound now known as Tel Hadid, through a combination of a detailed archaeological analysis of material remains and a thorough historical inquiry. Our aim is to trace the village's origins during Ottoman and British Mandate times and reconstruct its physical layout and social fabric. Its investigation may shed light on broader themes of village life in the region of Lydda and, by extension, other parts of Palestine in the Ottoman and British Mandate periods.

The project aims to offer a new methodology for the study of ruined villages. Thus, the study underscores the promise of historical–archaeological investigations of Israel's recent past to illuminate unknown aspects of recent material culture (such as production, agriculture and trade) and to assess the points of accord or tension between artifacts, on the one hand, and textual and oral evidence, on the other. It will also shed light on the under-studied rural communities that left little conventional record of their experiences. The study is conducted by historian Yoav Alon and archaeologist Ido Koch, with a team composed of a historical geographer, a native Arabic-speaking ethnographer, field archaeologists and specialists in various archaeological and micro-archaeological remains—all studying one village from multi-faceted perspectives.



Al-Haditha, 1940, looking northwest (Israel Antiquities Authority Archive)



Dafna Langgut collecting sediment samples for pollen investigation at 'Ubeidiya (October 2022)

The Pollen Evidence of Early-Pleistocene Milestones in the Out-of-Africa Corridor: A Paleoenvironmental Study of South Levantine Paleo-waterbodies

Dafna Langgut (Tel Aviv University)

ISF Grant

Although climate instability and environmental variability are a catalyst for human evolution, only limited evidence is available to assess hominin adaptations to environmental changes during key evolutionary stages such as the Early Pleistocene, when hominin first dispersed Out-of-Africa. In this proposed study, sediment samples that were recovered from two Early-Pleistocene Levantine paleo-waterbodies, Zihor and 'Ubeidiya, will be used to reconstruct the paleoenvironment based on the identification of fossil pollen grains. Both paleo-waterbodies encompass Lower Paleolithic human artifacts ascribed to the Early-Acheulian culture ('Ubeidiya-type techno-complex). Although the Levantine Corridor was one of the main routes of northward migration of hominins, the vegetation and climate conditions of this gateway area have not been studied in detail. The pollen datasets that will be produced through this project, together with an integration of other relevant environmental proxies, will serve as a model of cross-disciplinary research to clarify the environmental context of Lower Paleolithic sites.

Between Egypt, Canaan and Israel: Continuity and Discontinuity in the Rural Hinterland of the Jezreel Valley from the LB II to the Iron IIA in Light of Archaeology and Biblical Studies

Omer Sergi (Tel Aviv University), Hannes Bezzel (Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena), Joachim Krause (Ruhr Universität Bochum) and Karen Covello-Paran (Israel Antiquities Authority)

DFG Grant

The DFG grant is meant to support an initiation of a collaborative German-Israeli research project. Our research project, in collaboration with partners in the University of Jena and the University of Bochum, aims to reveal patterns of continuity and discontinuity in the rural hinterlands of the Jezreel Valley under changing political rules (Egypt, the Canaanite urban culture and early monarchic Israel). It focuses on the excavations of Tel Shaddud in the Jezreel Valley, the first season of which was carried out with the generous support of the DFG. It was dedicated to archaeological field survey, conducted by German and Israeli students and scholars. The results of the survey and the constant interaction with our German partners led to the preparation of a comprehensive research project.



Tel Shaddud Archaeological Survey, July 2022 (photo by Karen Covello-Paran, The Tel Shaddud Regional Project)



*Aerial view of Tell Izṭabba (East),
looking southeast
(photo by H. Yohanan)*

The German–Israeli Tell Izṭabba Excavation Project

Oren Tal (Tel Aviv University) and Achim Lichtenberger (University of Münster)

DFG Grant

The joint German–Israeli archaeological project focuses on the Hellenistic settlement on Tell Izṭabba (Beth-Shean National Park), which was founded by the Seleucids in the first half of the 2nd century BCE and destroyed at the end of this century by the Judean Hasmonean dynasty. Tell Izṭabba offers a unique opportunity for an archaeological investigation of the Hellenistic period in the Southern Levant, a period little understood in this region of the world. Our knowledge of the urban fabrics and material culture of Seleucid foundations is limited, due to urban growth and building programs during subsequent periods, but the Seleucid origin of cities like Beth-Shean is crucial to an understanding of the political, cultural and economic developments of the region.

The project aims at a new and comprehensive archaeological investigation of the site of Tell Izṭabba. Archaeological excavations combined with archaeometric methods will provide new insights into the nature of the Seleucid settlement, through an analysis of the urban fabric and material culture. Furthermore, we want to understand the sustainability and economic background of the Seleucid town. An analysis of the Seleucid occupational remains will clarify the settlement history and determine why the site was never properly resettled in either Hasmonean or Roman times after its Hasmonean destruction. The project (DFG Grant No. 495961685) is a continuation of our German–Israeli Foundation (GIF) funded project that included magnetic prospections and two campaigns of excavations in 2019 and 2020. The new project intends to continue the work in selected areas, in order to focus on public buildings and urban infrastructure and to answer broader research questions regarding the civic organization and socio-economic sustainability of the settlement and its hinterland.

Publications



FIGURE 13.14

a slight ridge at its base and a flattened rim, sharply-sloped almost unnoticeable shoulder, and loop handles extending from it. A slight ridge marks the transition from shoulder to body and are ribbed. Identical parallels, made of the same ware as the southern coast bag-shaped jar found in 6th- to 7th-century CE contexts at Horvat Zikhriin (Tassi 2003: 68; Fig. 41: 13) an overseas locations, such as Corinth (e.g., Warner Stone and Sanders 2005: 263, 271, 278; S. 23, R. 21, 13, 20).

Type 3

Alongside Type 1, the present storage jar—the so-called Gaza amphora or Late Roman (LRA 4)—is the most frequent in Byzantine- and beginning of Early Islamic period contexts (Fig. 13.16). There were the standard commercial containers for wines (and probably also for oil) along the southern Palestinian coast and the northwestern Nile valley since they are represented here by two of their latest variants. The first variant, with a vertical line of the shoulder and a pointed ribbed base (Figs. 13.11, 7, 13.12: 9–10, 13.13: 8, 13.25: 3, 13.28: 1), is dated to the 5th and 6th centuries CE (Maggetti, Piri 2005: 106–106, Forns B1). The second and most common variant has a vertical line of the shoulder and a pointed ribbed base (Figs. 13.11, 7, 13.12: 9–10, 13.22, 13.23: 1–4). It is dated to between the late 6th/7th to the 8th century CE (Piri 2005: 106–107, Forns B2 and B1).

Type 4 (Fig. 13.11: 8, 13.13: 1–3, 13.17: 4, 13.18: 3, 13.25: 5, 6, 13.27: 1, 13.28: 2)

This is one of the many types of imported amphorae found in the 6th century CE period, representing the most common group among the imported amphorae. It is a ware (in occasion, fired in a yellowish hue) which contained a white or light-colored including mix. It is fired at a high temperature. This amphora—the so-called Gaza amphora (LRA 4)—is characterized by a vertical neck with a thickened rim and from which emerge two long, oval-sectioned ridged handles. It was produced

Fig. 13.16. Area O. Gaza amphora; Late Roman Amphora 4



FIGURE 13.15

AREA DD2

Some of the most important remains excavated in Area DD2 (in Locs 918, 920 and 927) of the plan) are apparently four isolated Early (to Middle?) Roman-period Type 2 storage jars had been revised for infant burials (Fig. 13.16; Chapter IX, Section 1.1.1). Two of them have a detached base/lower section, while the third jar has a detached upper shoulder/neck and a missing lower section, which was either intentionally detached or became lost during depositional processes.

Another feature excavated in Area DD2 is a refuse pit (Locs 997, Locus 998) that contained a small number of Byzantine-period pottery sherds. These included a coarseware (Fig. 13.17: 1–4), a cooking pot (Fig. 13.17: 2), a Type 1A and Type 6 storage jar and an amphora (Fig. 13.17: 3–4), and a



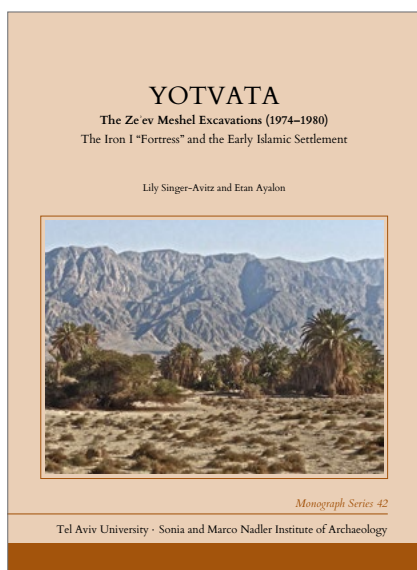
FIG. 13.13. AREA CC. REFUSE DUMP. STORAGE JARS AND AMPHORAE (CONT.)

No.	Type	Locus	Number
1	Amphora	30922	30730
2	Amphora	30966	30730
3	Amphora	30961	30726
4	Amphora	625	30629
6	Amphora	625	3044
7	Amphora	625	824
8	Amphora	30966	30727
9	Amphora	30937	30741
10	Amphora	30960	30727
11	Amphora	30960	30721

FIG. 13.14. AREA CC. REFUSE DUMP. IMPORIED BURNERS, STOPPERS AND LATER PERSES

No.	Type	Number
1	Incense burner	30629
2	Incense burner	30629
3	Stopper	30629
4	Stopper	30629
5	Pipe section	30629
6	Pipe section	30629
7	Pipe section	30629
8	Pipe section	30629
9	Skyphos	825
10	Storage jar	825
11	Storage jar	825
12	Cooking pot	677
13	Bowl	30661
14	Storage jar	608
15	Storage jar	603, 625
16	Storage jar	6270
17	Storage jar	30630
18	Storage jar	6170
19	Storage jar	6004, 621

Monograph Series



Yotvata

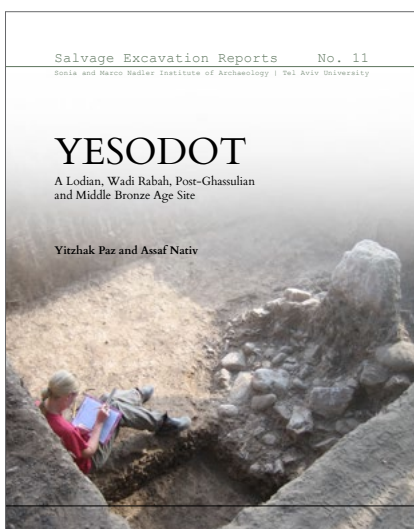
The Ze'ev Meshel Excavations (1974–1980)
The Iron I “Fortress” and the Early Islamic Settlement

Monograph Series No. 42

Lily Singer-Avitz and Etan Ayalon

This book presents the final report of the excavations at Yotvata, in the southern Arabah Valley, conducted by the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University in 1974–1980 under the direction of Dr. Ze'ev Meshel. The report covers two central sites: a fortified Iron I site and an Early Islamic settlement. The Iron I remains consist of an irregular casemate wall, surrounding a courtyard, built atop a steep hill. It is argued that this site was established in order to protect the oasis—the main source of water and wood supply for the copper mines in Timna—and to overlook the nearby crossroads extending along the Arabah Valley. Excavation of the Early Islamic settlement, northeast of the oasis, revealed a large courtyard building, a nearby bathhouse and other structures. The settlement's proximity to a sophisticated irrigation system and the finds uncovered here suggest that it served as the center of an agricultural estate owned by an elite Muslim family. The excavations at the Yotvata oasis have made a major contribution to the study of Early Islamic settlement history and material culture in the greater Arabah region.

Salvage Excavation Reports



Yesodot

A Lodian, Wadi Rabah, Post-Ghassulian
and Middle Bronze Age Site

Salvage Excavation Reports No. 11

Yitzhak Paz and Assaf Nativ

This report presents the results of a salvage excavation conducted in the summer of 2006 at the site of Yesodot (Khirbet Umm el-Kalkha), prior to the broadening of Highway 3 between Ashqelon in the southwest and the Latrun interchange in the northeast. The excavation was conducted by the Israeli Institute of Archaeology under the academic auspices of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. Archaeological remains assigned to four distinct chrono-cultural entities were uncovered: Lodian, Wadi Rabah, post-Ghassulian and the Middle Bronze Age.

Proceedings of the In Centro Conferences

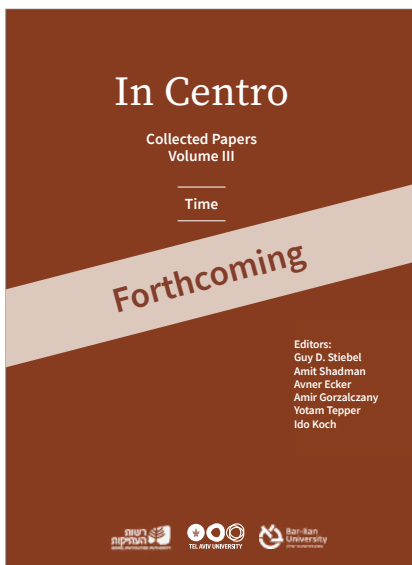


In Centro Collected Papers Volume II

Memory

Editors: Guy D. Stiebel, Doron Ben-Ami, Amir Gorzalczany, Yotam Tepper and Ido Koch

The second annual In Centro conference was held by the Central Region of Israel Antiquities Authority, the Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University on May 29, 2019 at Tel Aviv University. It was devoted to the theme of “Memory” and presented diverse approaches to manifestations of memory in culture and material culture alike. This proceedings volume contained nine papers, six in English and three in Hebrew, focusing, among other issues, upon the mechanisms of collective and individual memory and discussing examples for the shaping of memory alongside the topography of memory.

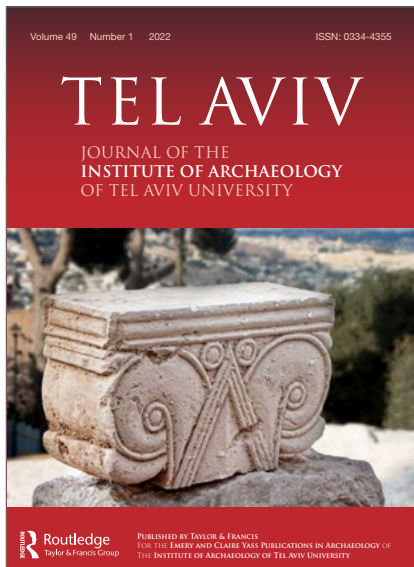


In Centro Collected Papers Volume III

Time

Editors: Guy D. Stiebel, Amit Shadman, Avner Ecker, Amir Gorzalczany, Yotam Tepper and Ido Koch

The third annual In Centro conference was held by the Central Region of Israel Antiquities Authority, the Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Institute of Archaeology of Bar-Ilan University, on June 9, 2022 at Bar-Ilan University. This year the conference was devoted to the theme of “Time.” In the course of five sessions, scores of papers were presented, including dating methodologies and test-cases, a session devoted to ancient perceptions of time and two sessions that presented recently excavated sites. The bilingual proceedings volume (Hebrew and English) will contain 13 papers.



Tel Aviv:

Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University

Volume 49, No. 1, 2022

In Memoriam: Professor Moshe Fischer (1945–2021)

Oren Tal and Itamar Taxel

In Memoriam: Professor Ram Gophna (1928–2021)

Yitzhak Paz

A Luxurious Royal Estate from the First Temple Period in Armon ha-Natziv, Jerusalem

Ya'akov Billig, Liora Freud and Efrat Bocher

History, Economy and Administration in Late Iron Age Judah in Light of the Excavations at Mordot Arnona, Jerusalem

Neria Sapir, Nathan Ben-Ari, Liora Freud and Oded Lipschits

A Bulla of 'Ādōnīyāhû, the One Who Is Over the House, from beneath Robinson's Arch in Jerusalem

David S. Vanderhoof, Madadh Richey and Eli Shukron

The History of Iron Age Jerusalem: A Ceramic Approach

Salome Dan-Goor

IVL Impressions and Their Implications for the Production of Ceramic Building Materials in Aelia Capitolina

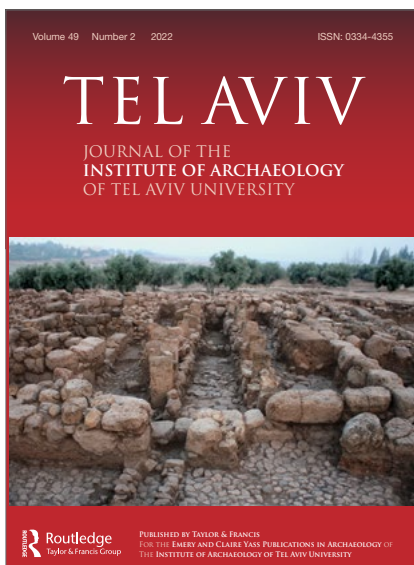
Anat Cohen-Weinberger, Tehillah Lieberman and Nahshon Szanton

Was the City-Wall of 'Aroer in the Negev of Judah Built in the Early Roman Period?

David Ussishkin

Storage Vessels as Indicators of Crisis Management

Shlomit Bechar, Assaf Yasur-Landau and Nimrod Marom



Tel Aviv:

Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University

Volume 49, No. 2, 2022

Jerusalem's Growth in Light of the Renewed Excavations in the Ophel

Ariel Winderbaum

The Iron Age Complex in the Ophel, Jerusalem: A Critical Analysis

Israel Finkelstein

The Late Iron IIA Cylindrical Holemouth Jars and Their Role in the Royal Economy of Early Monarchic Israel

Madeleine Butcher, Karen Covello-Paran, Paula Waiman-Barak, Oded Lipschits, Hannes Bezzel and Omer Sergi

Plant Remains from Rothenberg's Excavations in Timna: Smelters' Food and Cultic Offerings at the Turn of the First Millennium BCE

Michal David, Mordechai Kislev, Yoel Melamed, Erez Ben-Yosef and Ehud Weiss

Papyrus Amherst 63: Shifting between the Heavenly and Earthly Spheres

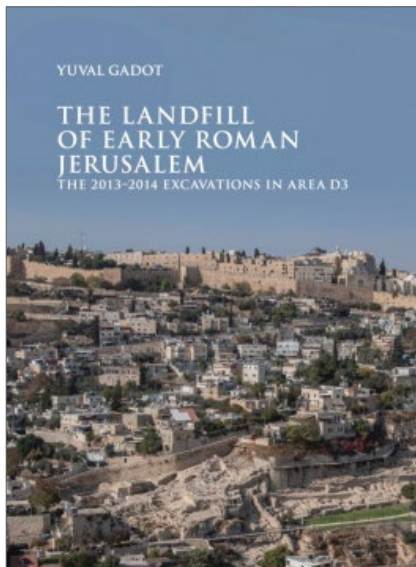
Nadav Na'aman

Archaeometallurgical Analysis of Lead Weights and Sling Bullets from Seleucid Tell Iẓṭabba: More on Lead Origin in Seleucid Palestine

Sabine Klein, Moritz Jansen, Achim Lichtenberger and Oren Tal

Tel Aviv is available online

Other Publications by Faculty Members



The Landfill of Early Roman Jerusalem The 2013–2014 Excavations in Area D3

Eisenbrauns

Yuval Gadot

This is the story of the landfill that operated in Jerusalem in the 1st century CE and served as its garbage dump during the ca. 50-year period that followed the crucifixion of Jesus through to the period that led to the great revolt of the Jews just prior to the city's destruction.

The book presents an extensive investigation of hundreds of thousands of items that were systematically excavated from the thick layers of landfill. It brings together experts who conducted in-depth studies of every sort of material discarded as refuse—ceramic, metal, glass, bone, wood, and more. This research presents an amazing and tantalizing picture of daily life in ancient Jerusalem, and how life was shaped and regulated by strict behavioral rules (*halakha*). The book also explores why garbage was collected in Jerusalem in so strict a manner and why the landfill operated for only about 50 years. Half a century of garbage from Jerusalem of the Early Roman period provides an abundance of new data and new insights into the ideological choices and new religious concepts emerging and developing among those living in Jerusalem at this critical moment. It is an eye-opener for archaeologists, historians, anthropologists and theologians, as well as for the general reader.

The book was published in 2022 by Eisenbrauns, an imprint of Penn State University Press, in collaboration with Ancient Jerusalem Publications, Jerusalem, and Israel Antiquities Authority Publications, Jerusalem.



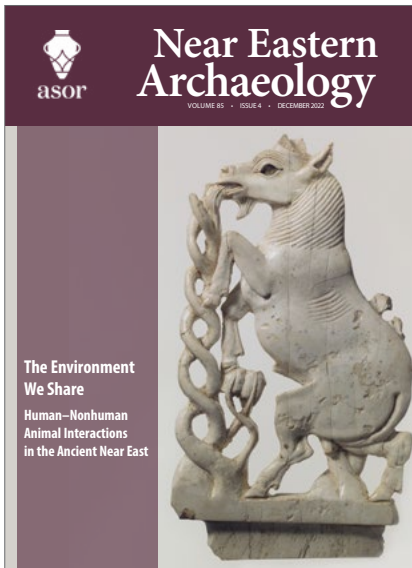
Yavne and Its Secrets Collected Papers

Tel Aviv University, Israel Antiquities Authority and Israel Land Authority

Editors: Elie Haddad, Liat Nadav-Ziv, Jon Seligman, Daniel Varga, Pablo Betzer, Amit Shadman, Oren Tal and Yotam Tepper

This bilingual volume is the proceedings of a conference that was held at the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology and the Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures of Tel Aviv University on October 19, 2022. The conference summarized the first three years of a “mega-project”—the large-scale excavation conducted in the area east of Tel Yavneh on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. This 354-page volume, published in 2022, presents a variety of studies mainly in the context of this endeavor, dealing with the settlement at the site during the biblical, classical and early medieval periods.

Other Publications by Faculty Members



The Environment We Share:

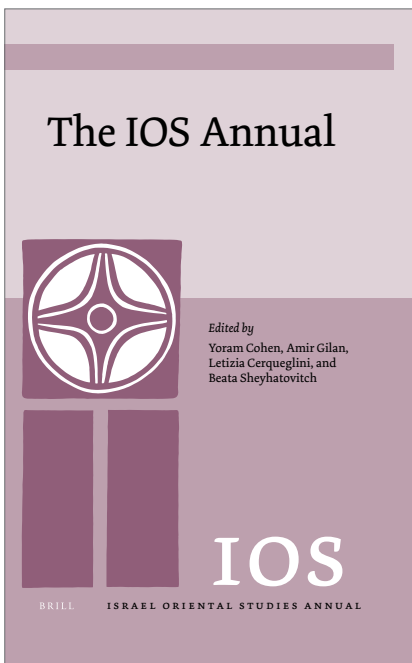
Human–Nonhuman Animal Interactions in the Ancient Near East

Near Eastern Archaeology Vol. 85, No. 4 (2022)

Guest Editors: Lidar Sapir-Hen and Romina Della Casa

As we witness the ongoing environmental crisis spurred across the world by global warming, we are constantly reminded of our world’s instability and mutability. These circumstances situate the topic of this special issue, human–animal interactions, at the very center of today’s global agenda. In order to gain a better appreciation of our world and its transformations, it is crucial that we approach the diverse nature of human–animal interactions throughout history. But how can we gain access to this type of knowledge? How can we approach the past from different perspectives and materials, so that we can have a better understanding of how human–animal interactions unfolded over time?

Questions of this kind are the inspiration behind this special issue, guest edited by Lidar Sapir-Hen and Romina Della Casa. The studies in this volume explore human–animal interactions by means of faunal remains, iconography and textual materials from the Ancient Near East. It opens a space for interdisciplinary collaboration between scholars who explore how ancient societies interacted with their environs, how they experienced and perceived other animals, and how we can grasp a better understanding of the impact of non-human animals on human societies.



The IOS Annual

The Israel Oriental Studies Annual Dedicated to the Ancient Near East, Semitics and Arabic

Brill

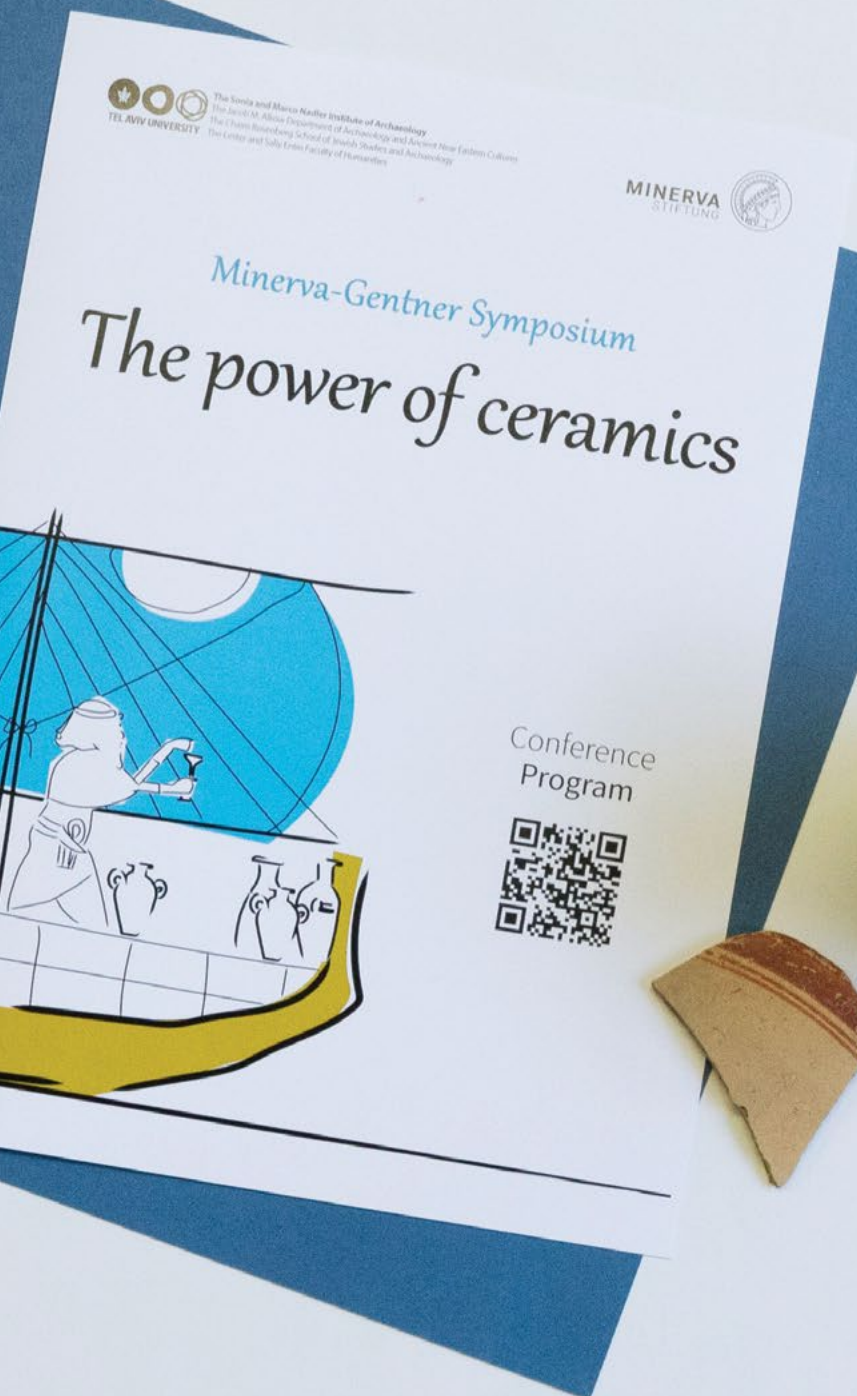
Editors: Yoram Cohen, Amir Gilan, Nathan Wasserman, Letizia Cerqueglini and Beata Sheyhatovitch

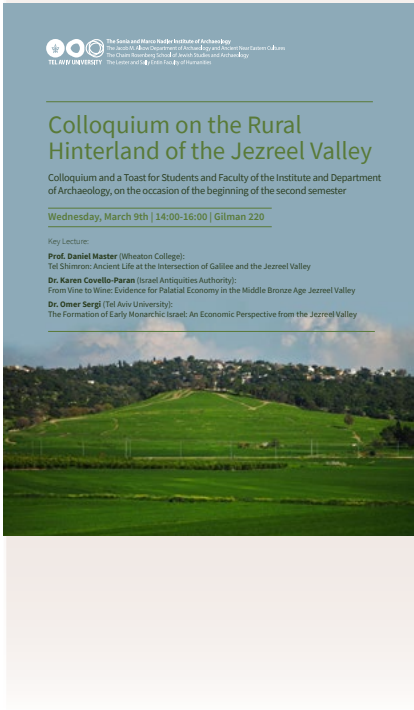
The *Israel Oriental Studies Annual* has renewed its publication, edited by Yoram Cohen and Amir Gilan of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, with the participation of other colleagues from Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The annual, devoted to the study of the Middle East in various disciplines, first appeared in 1971 and quickly earned a reputation for its contribution to scholarship, especially in the study of Ancient Near Eastern and Middle Eastern languages, philology, history and religions. *Israel Oriental Studies* has never been confined to the study of Near Eastern cultures in the narrow sense, but has encompassed the entire Mediterranean world.

Three volumes have been published since the revival of the annual and are available online and in print. Volume 21, titled “Carrying a Torch to Distant Mountains,” was published in 2022; Volume 22, titled “Telling of Olden Kings,” and Vol. 23, titled “Drought Will Drive You Even Toward Your Foe,” were published in 2023.

Events





The Rural Hinterland of the Jezreel Valley

Karen Covello-Paran and Omer Sergi | March 9, 2022

A colloquium titled “The Rural Hinterland of the Jezreel Valley,” held at the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology on March 9, 2022, consisted of three key lectures, by scholars who excavate and study social and economic aspects of the eastern Jezreel Valley (east of the Kishon River) and its rural communities. These lectures discussed the role of the rural hinterland of the Jezreel Valley in sustaining local economic systems and political rules. The opening lecture, by Prof. Daniel Master (Wheaton College, IL), presented new and fresh data from the ongoing excavations at Tel Shimron, the largest tell-site east of the Kishon River. Two additional presentations, by Dr. Karen Covello-Paran and by Dr. Omer Sergi, discussed possible archaeological evidence for the existence of a royal economic mechanism in the Middle Bronze Age and in the Late Iron IIA that was based in the rural hinterlands of the Jezreel Valley.

In Centro III: Time

Ido Koch and Guy D. Stiebel | June 9, 2022

The third annual In Centro (במרכז) conference, held by the Central Region of Israel Antiquities Authority, the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Institute of Archaeology of Bar-Ilan University, took place on June 9, 2022 at Bar-Ilan University and streamed online via Zoom. It was devoted to the theme of “Time” and presented diverse archaeological dating methods and approaches to the study of time among ancient societies, as well as recent findings across the central region of Israel. The proceedings volume of this conference is currently in production.

The fourth In Centro conference, dealing with the theme of “Faith,” will be held on June 8, 2023 at Tel Aviv University.

במרכז ווו: זמן
 מרחב מרכז, רשות המתיישבות | המכון לארכאולוגיה, אוניברסיטת תל אביב | המכון לארכאולוגיה, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

יום המיוזן 9 ביוני 2022 | אולם פלדמן, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן
לאצפייה ביום

8:30	ברכות	11:00	מאמרים מדעיים ופרוייקטים של הסטודנטים ושל על לוח לוח המסמכים ליוזמת אתר ביהר
8:40	קטורה של חירות המרחב: ימים ספורים	11:20	הקדמה: כחול שטח יוקדמו מוסמכים על קווי ספרים ומה שאר קווי ספרים
9:00	תוצאות מחקריות של זמן: שיטות	12:30	קונפ' דו-יומית: דיונים ארכאולוגיים למן העתיד
9:00	ס סם מוסם מוסם	12:30	קונפ' דו-יומית: דיונים ארכאולוגיים למן העתיד
9:20	עבודת חובבן מוסמך המרחב: ארכאולוגיה	13:00	בואו איתנו: הדורות בהיסטוריה המרחב 1
9:40	עבודת חובבן מוסמך המרחב: ארכאולוגיה	13:00	בואו איתנו: הדורות בהיסטוריה המרחב 1
10:00	עבודת חובבן מוסמך המרחב: ארכאולוגיה	13:00	בואו איתנו: הדורות בהיסטוריה המרחב 1
10:40	עבודת חובבן מוסמך המרחב: ארכאולוגיה	16:00	Caesarea Harbor: From Construction to Destruction

Ancestral Stones: Reimagining the Significance of Stone from the Paleolithic to the Present

Ran Barkai and Kathy Weedman Arthur
September 12–15, 2022

An international workshop titled “Ancestral Stones: Reimagining the Significance of Stone from the Paleolithic to the Present” was held at Tel Aviv University in September 2022, sponsored by the Israel Academy of Sciences and Tel Aviv University (Vice President for Research, School of Jewish Studies and Archaeology, and the Sonia and Marco Institute of Archaeology) and organized by Prof. Ran Barkai of Tel Aviv University and Prof. Kathy Weedman Arthur of South Florida University. Colleagues from the USA, South Africa, Australia, the UK, France, Canada and Israel participated in this innovative workshop, presenting for the first time collective approaches towards human–stone relationships.

Archaeologists have begun to consider that there are other ways of knowing the world or ontologies that impact how people perceive their relationships with non-human entities, which may be explored to explain past behavior. This group of international scholars convene to critically examine best practices for integrating living heritages and their vast array of creative perceptions of the world with interpretations of the deep past. In particular, we expand the potential perspectives of our earliest ancestors and their relationship with one of the oldest materials they transformed—stone. By including a wide range of intellectual contributions to understanding our Paleolithic heritages, we open new possibilities and engage in practicing good science. We limit our ability to produce new knowledge and constrain future solutions and understanding by restricting our theory building to Western scholarship. By validating an array of ontological perspectives, we break free of simply retesting Western theories and create paths forwarding indigenous knowledge as legitimate theories.

Research Workshop of the Israel Science Foundation

Ancestral Stones:
Reimagining the significance of stone from the Paleolithic to the Present

September 12–15, 2022
Room 496, Gilman Building, TAU



Organizers: Ran Barkai & Kathy Weedman Arthur

<p>September 12, Monday</p> <p>9:00 Short opening remarks</p> <p>9:10 Joshua (Shuky) Borkovsky Dream stones, landscape stones</p> <p>9:30 Stone stories: Personal insights round table (part one)</p> <p>11:30 Break</p> <p>12:00 First session Moderator: Leona Grosman Kathryn Weedman Arthur University of South Florida Ontologies and assemblages: Knappable bodies and their offspring</p> <p>Meir Finkiel and Ran Barkai Tel Aviv University Interpreting Paleolithic flint extraction and reduction sites in the Upper Galilee, Israel: Human-stone interactions in light of relevant insights from indigenous groups</p> <p>13:30 Lunch break</p> <p>15:00 Second session Moderator: Ella Asaf Shparyer Lambros Malafouris University of Oxford The unspeakable becomes spoken: On the dialogue between maker and material</p> <p>Bar Efrati Tel Aviv University Standing on the shoulders of giants: Understanding Paleolithic human-tool encounters and interactions using Ready-made concepts and techniques</p> <p>16:30 Break</p> <p>17:00 Third session Moderator: Steve Brown Miguel Astor-Agullera Arizona State University Maya lithic ontologies: Cosmological embodiment and materiality</p> <p>Marilize Lombard University of Johannesburg Bored stones, lithic rings and the concept of holes in hunter-gatherer shamanism</p> <p>18:30 Clive Freeman and Peter Markovic Assistant Director, National Heritage Department of Environment, Commonwealth Government, Australia Stories of Yarn stones, a southeast coastal Aboriginal Australian story collection part I</p>	<p>September 13, Tuesday</p> <p>9:00 First session Moderator: Marilize Lombard Stone stories: Personal insights round table (part two)</p> <p>Catherine Allen George Washington University Don't fall asleep by a Boulder: Time, communication, and consciousness in relation to Andean stone</p> <p>10:30 Break</p> <p>11:00 Second session Moderator: Rachel Horowitz Erica Hill University of Alaska Southeast Stone acting like people in the North American Arctic: Inuksuit as polysemic features</p> <p>Ella Asaf Shparyer Tel Aviv University When human-animal relations are set in stone: the case of stone balls and horses</p> <p>12:30 Lunch break</p> <p>14:00 Third session Moderator: Bar Efrati Francis B. Lamei and Maria Nieves Zedeno University of Arizona The petromorphosed landscape of the Blackfoot</p> <p>Steve Brown University of California Talking with stones: Indigenous stone artifacts, material memory, and rights-based futures</p> <p>15:3 Break</p> <p>16:00 Fourth session Moderator: Ed Swenson Oor Ganchrow Israeli Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem To computational archaeology and back: The round-trip journey of stone artifacts between a physical and a digital existence, is leveraged for the creation of new design works</p> <p>Leona Grosman and Kenn Nebenhauz The Hebrew University, Jerusalem Curiosities from a 12,000-year-old ritual context</p> <p>17:30 Break</p> <p>18:00 Clive Freeman and Peter Markovic Stories of Yarn stones, a southeast coastal Aboriginal Australian story collection part II</p>	<p>September 14, Wednesday.</p> <p>Excursion</p> <p>September 15, Thursday</p> <p>09:00 Stones and the Ontological turn: personal insights round table</p> <p>10:30 First session Moderator: Miguel Astor-Agullera Paul Stillroe Durham University Known & unknown stone: A Pagan petrological heritage</p> <p>Lia Genovesi The Hammett and Silpakorn Universities Bangkok The rock-solid powers of ancestral stone</p> <p>12:00 Lunch break</p> <p>13:30 Second session Moderator: Erica Hill Rachel Horowitz Washington State University Symbolic trash: Lithic debris, ritual, and political power among the Preclassic and Classic period Maya</p> <p>Ed Swenson University of Toronto Fluid rocks: The (de)territorializing power of sacred stones</p> <p>15:00 Clive Freeman and Peter Markovic Stories of Yarn stones, a southeast coastal Aboriginal Australian story collection part III</p> <p>15:30 Break</p> <p>16:00-17:30 Get together and a discussion</p> <p>19:00 Finger food party under the sky</p>
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Free attendance
everyone is welcomed!



News from the Trenches

October 27, 2022

The annual “News from the Trenches” conference allows scholars to share the results of their various archaeological projects from the past year. The conference exemplifies the broad range of research and scholarship within the Department and offers an unparalleled opportunity to hear the most up-to-date research of the Institute of Archaeology.

The conference, held in the Gilman Building at Tel Aviv University, was also streamed online.

The Evolution of Culture and Technology

Ran Barkai | December 8, 2022

A mini-symposium titled “The Evolution of Culture and Technology” celebrated the visit of Prof. Dietrich Stout, Department of Anthropology at Emory University, USA, to Tel Aviv University in the framework of a joint collaboration with Prof. Ran Barkai, sponsored by the two universities. Prof. Stout is one of the leading scholars worldwide in the fields of evolutionary archaeology and prehistoric technology, and his first visit to Israel offered an opportunity to expose his research agenda to Israeli scholars and students. The mini-symposium included a keynote lecture by Prof. Stout, followed by 12 short lectures by leading Israeli scholars in the fields of prehistoric archaeology, zoology, evolution, evolutionary theory and genetics. It exposed the scientific community in Israel to the state of the art in these fields of study, generating vibrant discussion and debate between colleagues, students and friends.



The Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology
The Jacob M. Alkoff Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures
The Chaim Rosenberg School of Social Studies and Archaeology
The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities

Organizer and moderator:
Ran Barkai, Tel-Aviv University

The Evolution of Culture and Technology

Mini Symposium

Thursday, December 8th 2022 | Room 496, Gilman Building, Tel-Aviv University

<p>09:00 - Opening remarks</p> <p>09:10 - Keynote lecture The Evolution of Technology Dietrich Stout Department of Anthropology, Emory University</p> <p>10:00 - Discussion</p> <p>10:30 - Break</p>	<p>11:00-12:00 Short reflections part 1</p> <p>Gene-culture coevolution in the cognitive domain Armen Lotem Tel Aviv University Shaped stone balls: one of the oldest cases of behavioral transmission? Ella Assaf Tel Aviv University Habitat as the mechanism shaping the evolution of lithic technology. Nira Alpersson-Aff Bar-Ilan University Identifying technological traits with different visibility and malleability through 3D analysis. Leore Grosman The Hebrew University Things can only get better? Variability in technological refinement at late Acheulean Jajjaliya. Tamar Rosenberg-Yefet Indian Institute of Science Education & Research, Mohali, India Evolution with non-vertical cultural transmission. Yoav Ram Tel-Aviv University</p>	<p>12:00-13:00 Short reflections part 2</p> <p>Can we correlate Paleolithic cultural entities and genetic groups? Viviane Sklar Tel-Aviv University Behavioral ecology of aurolchs hunting in the Middle Paleolithic Levant. Reuven Yeshurun University of Haifa What limited population sizes in the Middle Paleolithic, and what can we learn from these populations' grey choices Oren Kolodny The Hebrew University From tactics to strategy: The evolution of predetermined technology in the Middle Pleistocene and its reflection on cognition. Ron Shimeleitz University of Haifa News about Clovisers? A distinct aspect of cultural evolution. Gonen Sharon Tel-Hai College Identifying individual skill levels in the Lower Paleolithic: Insights from Jajjaliya bifaces Sol Sánchez-Dehesa Galán Tel Aviv University</p>	<p>13:00-13:30 Discussion</p> 
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Free attendance
Everyone is welcomed!

The Power of Ceramics: Transformations and Interactions in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages

Paula Waiman-Barak | February 21–23, 2023

The symposium is organized by Dr. Paula Waiman-Barak, Prof. Oded Lipschits (both of Tel Aviv University) and Dr. Sabine Kleiman (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen and Tel Aviv University).

The aim of this symposium was to bring together European and Israeli archaeologists and scientists under the framework of ceramic studies from the Eastern Mediterranean in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages (second and first millennia BCE). In recent years, numerous analytical studies have produced increasingly accurate information regarding pottery production, style, and movement. These efforts echo patterns of exchange rooted in chronological trajectories, which enable detailed reconstructions of ancient economies and their connections across the Mediterranean. The periods in focus are characterized by profound changes in the general social, political, and economic organization, from the downfall of the Late Bronze Age major trading centers to the slow development of new polities during the early Iron Age.

Scholars working in the field of Eastern Mediterranean ceramic studies belong to various schools of thought. This symposium gave researchers the opportunity to exchange data from well-contextualized ceramic assemblages excavated at key archaeological sites in the Aegean, Cyprus, Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt. It offered scholars of all levels—with a focus on early career researchers during their PhD or postdoctoral research—the chance to explore various methodologies and ways of investigating the studies of archaeological ceramics. Special attention was given to a discussion of methodology, particularly the strengths and weaknesses of each type of analysis and what method has the most potential. Alongside syntheses, we presented the integrated results from various archaeological projects that applied primarily ceramic petrography combined with other mineralogical or chemical analyses. There is also room for typological studies that have yet to be connected with archaeometric studies. Additional discussions were dedicated to innovative works that explore the use of 3D computerized models to standardize analyses of volume and the production methods of ceramic vessels and organic residue analyses for reconstructing the transportation of organic goods in ceramic vessels and identifying pigments for the decoration of wares.

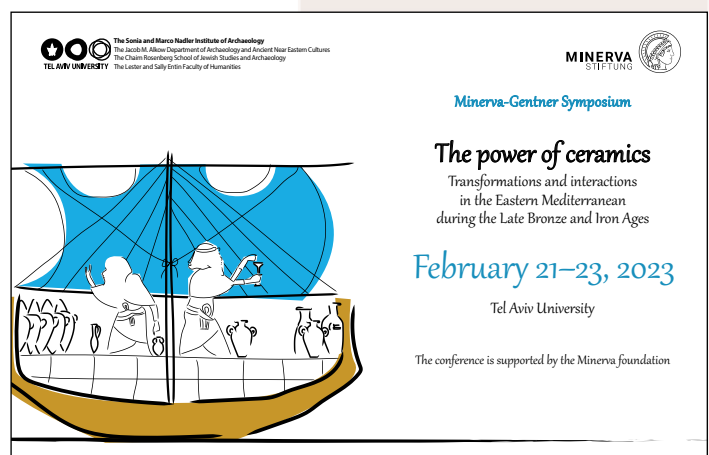




Photo: Sasha Flit

The Untold Story of the Kingdom of Judah

Oded Lipschits

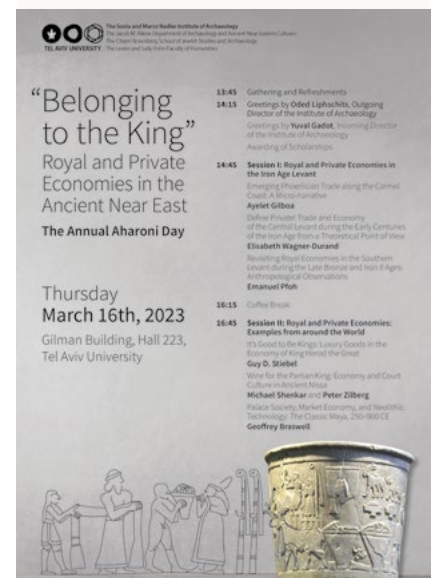
A new series of podcasts in Hebrew, titled “The Untold Story of the Kingdom of Judah,” by Prof. Oded Lipschits, is now available on the Podcast Channel of Tel Aviv University.

The podcast series seeks to tease out what the authors of the biblical history did not say in their historical description. First of all, they did not recount events of which they were not aware—especially events from the distant past. Second, they did not recount events that took place “far from the eye and far from the heart”—far from Jerusalem and the borders of Judah. Most importantly, however, is what they perhaps did not want to tell, because it was not in keeping with their belief system and ideology. This podcast series, which includes over 30 episodes, is an open invitation to delve into archaeological and historical studies, combined with a critical reading of the biblical text, in order to reveal the untold story of the Kingdom of Judah.

Available on YouTube and on Spotify

The Annual Yohanan Aharoni Day: 2023

The annual colloquium of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University (known as Aharoni Day), titled “‘Belonging to the King’: Royal and Private Economies in the Ancient Near East,” will take place on March 16, 2023. It is often assumed that Levantine polities—whether city states in the Bronze Age or territorial kingdoms in the Iron Age—were based on some sort of palatial royal economy, characterized by a redistributive apparatus. Recent studies, however, have demonstrated that this was not always the case. Nevertheless, there is still some debate regarding the role of the private sector in ancient Levantine economies and, more broadly, whether a market economy played any role in the Ancient Near East. From an archaeological point of view, the question is how we can identify different economic modes and engage with the overall discussion of ancient economies, in light of their material expressions. This question will be at the heart of the colloquium, which aims to define how royal or private sectors can be identified in the material remains and how these reflect on the economic infrastructure of the Levantine polities in the Bronze and Iron Ages.



The 2022–2023 Departmental Seminar

Coloniality and Decoloniality in Archaeological Thought, Practice and Interpretation

Raphael Greenberg

Coloniality refers to the logic, world views and matrices of power that characterized Western colonization and settler-colonialism and that endure into the global present, well beyond the temporal and administrative borders of colonial entities. Decoloniality refers to the attempt to challenge and disrupt colonial logic, racial assumptions and naturalized economic ideologies, while restoring to view alternative ways of knowing and being in the world.

The 2022–2023 departmental seminar discusses colonial structures and the possibility of decolonization in archaeological thought, practice and interpretation, with a focus on the past and present of archaeological excavation, presentation and interpretation in Israel. Guest lecturers from Israel and abroad will illustrate various dimensions of coloniality and decoloniality through discussions of basic concepts in coloniality, the history of the field (with a focus on its evolution under Ottoman, Mandatory and Israeli institutions in the early to mid-20th century), the interpretation of ancient finds through the imperial lens, and current field projects in contemporary archaeology. Recorded lectures will be posted on the seminar channel.

Available on [YouTube](#)



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Coloniality and Decoloniality in Archaeological Thought, Practice, and Interpretation

Departmental Seminar | The Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures
2022–2023 | 2nd Semester | Wednesdays 14:00–16:00 | Gilman Room 220

15.3.23	Yuval Yekutieli (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev) ANSIMH – Atlas and Sahara Jewish-Muslim Heritage – إنسجام Post-Diasporic Archaeology in Morocco
29.3.23	TBA Counter-archives as heritage justice: photography, invisible labor and peopled ruins
19.4.23	Raz Kletter (University of Helsinki) Colonialism and Orientalism in British Mandate Times and in the Present: Archaeological Expropriations and Their Aftermath
3.5.23	Yifat Thareani (Hebrew Union College, NYU) Characterizing an Imperial Agent: Material Culture, Methodology and Imagined Interpretation
17.5.23	Noa Ranzer (Tel Aviv University) Identity Trouble: What Was a Hebrew Seal Doing in an "Assyrian Soldier's" Tomb? A Test Case from Tel Rehov
31.5.23	Ashish Avikunthak/Chadha (University of Rhode Island) Bureaucratic Archaeology: State, Science, and Past in Postcolonial India
14.6.23	Nicole Khayat (NEH/PARC Fellow) Azeez Khayat and Early 20th Century Palestinian Archaeology





TAU Archaeology

The Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures

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