

Fellows' Reports

Tell en-Nasbeh: The Ceramic Dating of Strata 1 to 5

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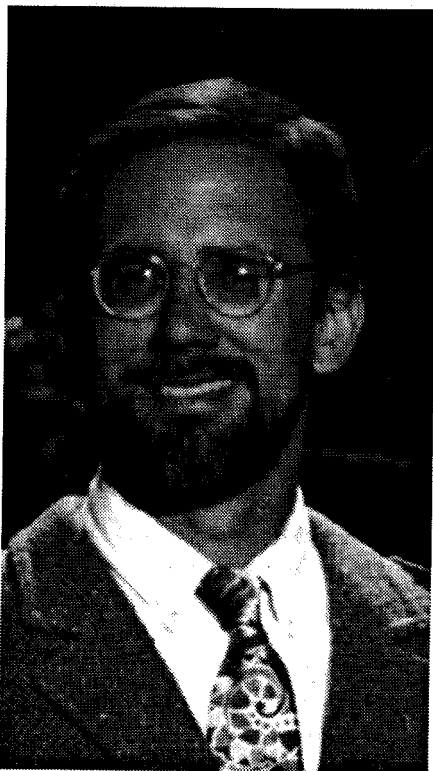
My project has its roots in my previous time at the Albright in 1991-1992 when, as the Samuel H. Kress Fellow, I completed the bulk of the text for my Ph.D. dissertation, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-evaluation of the Architecture and Stratigraphy of the Early Bronze Age, Iron Age and Later Periods." The wide exposure of the site achieved by

Gleason, continued from page 10

with important figures in Israeli archaeology were quite special. I joined other fellows in attending another important forum for meeting with Israeli colleagues, the seminar series at the Institute for Advanced Studies, which focussed this year on the topic of "Acculturation in the Graeco-Roman Period."

Finally, I found the staff of the Albright to be gracious, hard working and generous with their assistance, particularly during the stressful period of the "closure." We all enjoyed being part of the great tradition of Omar's cooking, and—no less—Walid's interpretations and new introductions. The fellows all appreciate how a served meal allows for unbroken dinner table discussions; however, during the "closure", Nawal awed us with her wonderful pastries and delicious meals (prepared after a full day of work at Schmidt's College and her cleaning chores at the Albright) and we became closer as a group by pitching in to help. Nadia, Edna, Muneira, and Said also contributed greatly to the comfort of my stay, helping me to locate necessary equipment and facilities. Final thanks go to Albright Director, Sy Gitin, as well as the Annual Professor, Oded Borowski, to whom I am thankful for good advice on many matters of conducting archaeological research in Israel, as well as for offering explanations, translations, and context as many dramatic events unfolded during this difficult and dramatic year in the history of Israel. For me personally, it has been a productive and memorable sabbatical year, and a pleasant prelude to my new academic position at Cornell. ♀

W. F. Badé between 1926 and 1935 makes Tell en-Nasbeh one of the most important sites in Palestine for understanding ancient settlement planning. Due to the immense amount of material excavated at Tell en-Nasbeh, the dating of the revised stratigraphy I worked out then was based on correlations with the known history of Biblical Mizpah of Benjamin, the town with which Tell en-Nasbeh is identified. This historical model suggested that there should be a settlement on the site from



Jeffrey Zorn at the Albright.

Iron I through the end of Iron II, that a major fortification system attributable to King Asa of Judah in the early ninth century should be found, that there should be a visible change in the site's plan coinciding with the settlement's new role as a Babylonian administrative center after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, and that the site should still be occupied at least until the middle of the Persian Period.

The opportunity to test this historical model against the site's ceramic evidence came when I was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship at the Albright for the 1995-1996 academic year. Tell en-Nasbeh was excavated ac-

ording to the Reisner-Fisher method, i.e. before the introduction of more sophisticated field and recording methodologies. All debris coming from the level of the top course of the walls of a room down to the floor of the room (and down to the base of the walls if no floor could be discerned) was assigned the same provenance number. Thus the great mass of pottery recorded from the site was not valuable for dating purposes. Prior to taking up residence at the Albright I was able to determine the types of deposits that would be most useful for my attempts to date the site's revised stratigraphy, and was then able to isolate the most likely loci from among those types. These deposits include sealed cisterns, *in situ* deposits seen in photos or implied by whole vessels, dismantled walls, bedrock installations cut by walls of later strata, other relatively homogenous deposits from unsealed cisterns and from rooms in an area of clear super-imposed stratigraphy in the southwest corner of the site.

The dating of Stratum 1 is difficult as it consists of isolated features just below topsoil apparently of the Hellenistic to Roman periods, though with some remains into the Ottoman Period. The most significant result achieved to date has been the identification of half a dozen deposits of different types with ceramics which conclusively demonstrate the existence of a Babylonian to Persian Period phase at Tell en-Nasbeh, known as Stratum 2 in the revised site stratigraphy. Materials from sealed cisterns demonstrate a late seventh to early sixth century date for the end of Stratum 3. The dating of Stratum 4 (and thus the dating of the beginning phase of Stratum 3) is problematic as relatively little ceramic material was recorded from the scores of rock-cut installations assigned to this phase. However, the several dozen Philistine sherds of local manufacture, the collar rim pithoi and the Iron I cooking pots found in fills, clearly indicate that Tell en Nasbeh was settled in the Iron I Period, which is the assumed date for Stratum 4. It was also possible to isolate deposits of Early Bronze Ib to date Stratum 5.

Not only was I able to bring the above
continued on page 12

Zorn, *continued from page 11* research to a successful conclusion, but I was also able to complete final, or near final, drafts of the following articles: my portion of "The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Seasons of Excavations at Tel Dor (1994-1995) - Preliminary Report for 1994-1995," "An Inner and Outer Gate Complex at Tell en-Nasbeh," "This Old Site: Issues in the Reappraisal of Early Excavations, Additional Data Concerning Wedge- and Circle-impressed Poffery," "The Date of a Bronze Vase from Tell en Nasbeh," and "An Unrecognized Mesopotamian Jar Burial from Hazor."

Upon returning to the US, my plans are to complete the illustrations for the articles mentioned above. My next year will be devoted to the completion of the stratigraphic report for my area at Tel Dor. The following two years will be spent integrating the results achieved in my time at the Albright with the portions of my dissertation research bearing on the Babylonian-Persian Period Stratum 2. This material will then be combined with the scanty material remains known from the Babylonian phase in the rest of ancient Israel and textual sources bearing on this period. The resulting monograph will be a ground breaking new synthesis of what has been until now an almost unknown phase in the material cultural history of the region.

The other Albright Fellows formed an especially congenial and social community this year. Dinners, field trips, tea times and other outings were always a delightful mix of scholarly discussion and lively chitchat. Special thanks go to Annual Professor Oded Borowski for organizing not only a fine series of field trips, climaxed by our visit to Jordan and our sister institute ACOR, but also for his culinary abilities as manifested in our extraordinary monthly barbecues. A personal highlight was the chance to excavate at Masada with the Hebrew University to assist Albright NEH Fellow Kathryn Gleason examine evidence for the gardens of King Herod.

As an independent scholar working in the "real world" a period of time for pure research is akin to a well-earned sabbatical. None of the many rich results that I have accomplished this year would have been possible without the financial support of NEH or the wonderful library re-

Samuel H. Kress Fellow's Report

The Military Interaction of Egypt with the Southern Levant During the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age Transition

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The privilege of holding the appointment as the Samuel H. Kress Fellow at the Albright Institute made possible the completion of a significant portion of dissertation research and writing. My topic, which I plan to submit in 1996 to the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona, deals with the military interaction of Egypt with the southern Levant during the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age transition. Military activity continues to be a major focus in recent scholarly models of the cultural development of societies in the fields of anthropology, sociology and archaeology. This is particularly true for transition periods where widescale discontinuities are apparent in the archaeological record. These discontinuities or destructions are often attributed to the military activity of various ethnic groups. However, little research has gone into the military tactics and policies of these groups. My interest is to focus on Egyptian military activity. What was the military policy of Egypt? Did they completely destroy cities or were only parts of them destroyed? What was the extent, nature, and focus of destruction? What were the effects of Egyptian military activity on specific sites and local cultures? These questions are addressed in a synthetic

sources available at the Albright. The Institute's close proximity to the Rockefeller was a special boon, making my inspection of the Nasbeh material held there very convenient. The Albright staff was supportive, as always. Special commendation must go to Nawal Ibtisam Rshaid who cheerfully and almost effortlessly not only handled most of the cleaning but all of the cooking during much of the spring closure. I look forward to the opportunity of returning to the Albright at some future date to continue my research on Tell en-Nasbeh. ♀

way that encompasses textual, iconographic, and archaeological data in an attempt to synthesize all the evidence available for this period. The expected result is a paradigm of Egyptian military policy as it may appear in the textual and iconographic data and that may be inferred from the archaeological correlates of destruction at various sites.

Egyptian presence and military activity in the southern Levant is established in a brief analysis of architectural ("governors'" residencies, forts, temples, naval bases) and material culture elements (weapons, ivory, doorjambs and lintels, stelae, statues and plaques, pottery and alabaster, anthropoid coffins, scarabs and cylinder seals, and ostraca), including an overview of how this data has been interpreted through several different models (imperialism, peer-polity interaction/elite emulation). This work is preliminary to the main goal of the dissertation, the investigation of textual, iconographic, and archaeological correlates for Egyptian military activity and tactics. A chapter in

continued on page 21



Michael and Giselle Hasel at the Albright