

News & Notes

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The Oriental Institute

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BRAIDWOODS FIX AGE AND CULTURAL LEVEL OF PREHISTORIC SITE IN TURKEY

Öğretmen Lisesi, Ergani
Diyarbakir, Turkey
October 31, 1979

Greetings:

My last letter was written just as we arrived here in field camp; now the season is more than half gone. We (=the Istanbul-Chicago Universities' Joint Prehistoric Project, with Karlsruhe University's Institute for Architectural History now joining that "joint") did not plan much actual digging this season. In each of our previous seasons, we've yielded to the temptation to dig almost to the time of leaving. Hence the detailed processing of our artifactual yields for publication has been short changed. Now we're paying the penalty by having to work mainly in our field laboratory. Anyway, the rains have started early this year and would have prevented much digging even had we planned it.

The co-director, our old friend Professor Halet Çambel of Istanbul University, has eight of her graduate students plus her assistant, Dr. Mehmet Özdoğan (never a better field superintendent!); Professor Wulf Schirmer of Karlsruhe has his assistant, Werner Schnuchel, and two graduate students. Besides Linda and me, there are two American graduate students

and, again, Barbara Lawrence Schevill of Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology on the animal bones. Bob Stewart, of Sam Houston State, our tame botanist, couldn't come this season, but we've evidence to take back to him. We've also been blessed with two volunteers: Betty Tieken, of the Oriental Institute's visiting committee, who undertook the stone bracelet category, and Vivian Broman Morales, an old Jarmo field-hand, took over the clay objects. We have indeed accomplished a considerable amount of laboratory house-keeping and processing of materials for publication.

The season's modest amount of digging on our early village site, Çayönü, has mainly concerned the circumstances surrounding the end of the major prehistoric phase. As last season closed, we'd secured evidence for at least seven different architectural plan types, not necessarily in sequential order. One of these types — that of a plan form which must reflect some specialized function; not a simple house type plan — began early and persisted almost to the end of the main phase as we now know it. There is now, also, a comfortably conformable cluster of eight radiocarbon age determinations from the Groningen University counter within the span 6850 to 7350 B.C. (Libby half-life; uncalibrated). There are, of course, several earlier and several later determinations, either from



Aerial view of the archeological expedition at Çayönü, Turkey, where scholars have found 9,000-year-old evidence of village life. The excavation at lower left is where three small copper oxide "pins" were unearthed. This is probably the earliest known instance of man fashioning tools from metal. The site at upper right yielded three upright stones called megaliths, about three feet high, on a paved floor. It is speculated that the megaliths may have been the furnishings of a building of some specialized function. Credit line: Courtesy of the Joint Istanbul and Chicago Universities' Prehistoric Project (October 1964) made available by Ronnie Burbank, photographic archives, The Oriental Institute Museum.

questionable find spots or from tricky samples from main phase levels, but we do not believe any of the later ones fairly fix the last years of our major Çayönü phase. Indeed, what we hope to establish this year is just what was going on as the phase ended.

A fortnight's more of digging may well provide some, at least, of the evidence we need. What is now clear, however, is that the people of Çayönü, already living on the site over 9,000 years ago, were not only well over the threshold of an effective village-farming community way of life but were also at a cultural level which included a degree of architectural plan conception and evident monumentality not yet seen so early elsewhere. Our Karlsruhe architectural friends have joined the team in response to the challenge of learning more about this achievement.

The Karlsruhe Institute also has interest in recording good examples of traditional (last century "modern") village architecture. In making some clearances in the village across the stream from Çayönü, the Karlsruhe boys encountered some new rock-cut tombs, even some with a set of rather rococo Hellenistic-Roman reliefs and inscriptions. For a prehistoric project, such a find is a bit of an embarrassment: in my last proposal for support from the National Science Foundation, I did not seek aid for reclaiming sculptured reliefs of overfed late lamented Romans. Fortunately, the Karlsruhe and Istanbul budgets covered this effort.

We have also made two fascinating Sunday excursions. The first was to see several of the excavations in the Euphrates flood plain salvage area west of here where the pools behind new dams will engulf a number of ancient mounds. In the distance (although we couldn't reach it) we saw the mound which Lee Marfoe plans to excavate for the Oriental Institute next year.

Even more exciting, from a prehistoric point of view, was a visit to Mardin, an old town on a high cliff (the very last front of the Anatolian plateau), looking south over the vast Mesopotamian plain. Indeed, standing in Mardin, it is easy to delude oneself into thinking that if the weather were more clear, one could see all the way to Baghdad and beyond to the Persian Gulf.

Our own interest in the region depends on the fact that the head of the plain - which does indeed lie in southernmost Turkey - has never received adequate archeological attention. Being only a few miles north of the Syrian frontier, the area is politically sensitive. All but direct passage through it by foreigners has been discouraged and our Turkish colleagues have had much to do elsewhere. To us, however, already since the earliest 1960s (when we began to sense that our earlier conception of food-production's original restriction to the "hilly flanks" of the Zagros-Tauros mountains was too restrictive), we've been particularly interested in this Turkish stretch of piedmont overlooked by Mardin.

Several weeks ago, three of our students made a Sunday excursion by bus down the 90 miles to Mardin and brought back very interesting news. They had met the director of the Mardin museum, Abdulhalik Ekmen, a highly enterprising graduate of Istanbul University, who has been doing archeological survey and site preservation since his arrival in Mardin some years ago. The students' glowing reports led to our own visit to Mardin and Abdulhalik Bey's museum last Sunday. The region, his evidence shows clearly, is indeed rich in late paleolithic and early village horizon materials as well as in the subsequent ranges of protohistoric and historic times. In my opinion, the Mardin region is an incipient archeological bonanza, full of information on many periods and on the east-west and north-south cultural interchanges of South-western Asia generally.

So much for almost the close of another field season (my 18th since beginning in Iraq in 1930). Linda and I hope to be home early in December, making a short loop through Europe enroute to visit colleagues.

Best of cheer,



Bob Braidwood

Next Members' Lecture. . . .

The Art of Egypt by David P. Silverman, University of Pennsylvania. Wednesday, January 16, 8:00 P.M. at the Oriental Institute.

1980 ARCHEOLOGICAL TOUR PROGRAM

EGYPT, March 6-23, 1980

Led by Bruce B. Williams, James Henry Breasted Research Associate, The Oriental Institute, who has led several of our previous Institute tours.

SYRIA, May 7-18, 1980

Led by John Carswell, The Oriental Institute Museum curator, who has worked in the Near East for over twenty-five years.

CHINA, October 2-25, 1980

Features twenty nights in China with archeological itinerary.

For further information, please call or write membership Secretary, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637 (312) 753-2389.

OFF THE PRESS IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



The Temple of Khonsu as it appears in portfolio of the Epigraphic Survey. Courtesy of Shirley Fisher, Oriental Institute Publications.

THE TEMPLE OF KHONSU I: Scenes of King Herihor in the Court, with translations of Texts (Oriental Institute Publications, Vol. 100), by The Epigraphic Survey. Pp. xxvii + 55; 110 black and white plates. \$90.00 (20% discount to Oriental Institute members).

In the introduction, Edward F. Wente, professor of Egyptology, comments that no single volume authored by the Epigraphic Survey reflects more closely the collective contribution of the many who over the years have served as members of the staff at Chicago House (Egypt) than does the present publication of the scenes in the court of the Temple of Khonsu. Each field director of the Epigraphic Survey since its inception has played a role in the preparation of this volume, and the list of participating Egyptologists and artists is considerably longer than that in any previous publication of the expedition.

Epigraphic work at the Temple of Khonsu was started as early as 1935. After a hiatus caused by the Second World War, recording continued until 1948, when the expedition's activity

was centered on completing prior commitments, principally that for Medinet Habu. In 1966, under the field directorship of Professor Charles Francis Nims, members of the staff of Chicago House again took up the task of completing the documentation of the court and first hypostyle hall of the Temple of Khonsu.

This volume has been published as a portfolio and contains 110 looseleaf plates and the accompanying book of translations. The portfolio format is now being used for the publications of the work of the Oriental Institute's epigraphers and has the advantage of allowing the reader to compare the text translations with the plates without having to flip pages back and forth.

QUSEIR AL-QADIM 1978 PRELIMINARY REPORT by Donald S. Whitcomb and Janet H. Johnson. Report on the first season of excavations at this small port on the Red Sea in Egypt. Archeological evidence from the Roman period (1st-2nd centuries) and Mamluk period (13th-14th centuries) documents the trade between Egypt and the Indian Ocean. Pp. x + 352, including 57 figures and 89 plates. \$15.00.

Authors state in their historical sketch that it was felt this site offered an excellent opportunity to investigate aspects of the mercantile and social history of Egypt since the study of a region dominated by such a port should provide evidence both of foreign contacts and of the maintenance of the port and its interaction with the Nile Valley. The importance of Quseir al-Qadim stemmed not only from the value of investigation of the specific historic periods present, but from the fact

that this ancient port offered an opportunity to explore new questions of cultural interaction—patterns of contact between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea dealing with the long-range trade, and patterns of local adaptation and land utilization.

Clarification of the economic and political patterns and constraints on these relatively well-documented periods will ultimately provide hypotheses for reconstruction of earlier periods.

MEMBERS' COURSES , WINTER 1980

A Survey of Egyptain Monuments

Charles F. Nims, Professor Emeritus of Egyptology and Former Director of the Oriental Institute Epigraphic Survey, Luxor, Egypt.

In this series of slides lectures, Prof. Nims will illustrate and describe the major monuments of Pharaonic Egypt and their function in Ancient Egyptian society. With over twenty seasons of work in Egypt as epigrapher and photographer, Prof. Nims is an acknowledged expert in this area, and is the author of the book Thebes of the Pharaohs.

Saturdays, 10:00 AM - Noon, Jan. 19-Feb. 23 (six weeks) \$50.00 for members; \$65.00 for non-members (including a membership). Lectures will be held at the Oriental Institute.

In Search of History: The Bible, Archeology & Modern Scholarship

Carol Redmount Bryant, doctoral candidate in Syro-Palestinian Archeology.

The history of Syria-Palestine in Old Testament times has been reconstructed in diverse ways by different scholars. This series of lectures will examine some of the sources behind these reconstructions and the major scholarly controversies of current historical interpretation. Each lecture will be organized around a single Biblical theme; topics will range from the Patriarchs to the Exile. An optional reading list will be provided.

Saturdays, 10:00 AM-Noon, January 19-March 1 (seven weeks). \$50.00 for members; \$65.00 for non-members (including a membership). Lectures will be held at the Oriental Institute.

NOTE: DUE TO FIXED COSTS A MINIMUM OF TEN PEOPLE MUST REGISTER FOR EACH COURSE, OR THE COURSE WILL HAVE TO BE CANCELLED. PLEASE REGISTER BEFORE JANUARY 17, 1980. THANK YOU.

Registration Form

Please complete this form and return before Jan. 17, 1980 to:

Oriental Institute Membership Office
1155 East 58th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

- I would like to register for the members' course A Survey of Egyptian Monuments. Enclosed is my check payable to the Oriental Institute in the amount of \$50.00.
- I would like to register for the members' course In Search of History. Enclosed is my check payable to the Oriental Institute in the amount of \$50.00.
- ___ I am a member.
- ___ I am not a member, but am enclosing a separate check for membership (\$15.00).

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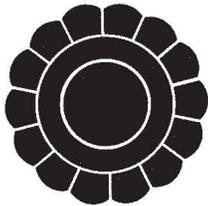
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The University of Chicago

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Seasons Greetings