

OI NEWSLETTER - SECOND MONDAY - NOVEMBER 1999

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UNITS

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FRONT OFFICE / Joan Curry

The annual Holiday Party that will be in Mr. Gragg's office is scheduled for Friday, December 10, 1999. 3 P.M. until it is over. If the time conflicts with a class, come either before or after class. It will be catered with the exception of deserts. Bring your favorite Christmas/Holiday specialty such as cookies, candies, cakes, etc.

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

The latter half of October was spent moving the Lab's equipment from Room 232 to its new home in Room 202, and moving all of the Institute's file servers (WWW, email, File Server #1, etc.) into their new home in the former 2nd floor fainting room. We're all back up and running, with only minor glitches still to work out.

Prof. Golb and I will not switch our offices until nearer or at the end of the quarter.

Earlier in October we were up to our ears in eight new computer systems to set up for various faculty and staff, and transferring their data files and programs from the old to the new. And Y2K upgrades continued throughout October as we near the day.

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MUSEUM / Karen Wilson

Over the past month, planning the reinstallation of the remaining museum galleries has begun. The next gallery to open, in late spring or early summer of 2000, will be the Persian Gallery. Following the Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur traveling exhibition (October 21, 2000-January 21, 2001), we hope to have a Megiddo exhibition ready to open, followed by the other galleries as funding permits. Because Aslihan is not teaching this quarter, the two of us have been working regularly on drawing up tentative object lists (and, soon, will be pulling objects) for consideration for exhibits on Alishar, the Amuq, and Urartu. I am drawing up prospective object lists for the Persian Gallery and am auditing David Schloen's course on the archaeology of Palestine and Syria in preparation for working on Megiddo. Within the next few weeks, I will be inviting any of you who are interested to a meeting (the first in what I hope will be a series of many) to discuss plans for the Persian Gallery and solicit your input. Meanwhile, museum staff continue to work with the Egyptological faculty to solicit their input on and modifications to the Egyptian Gallery.

Ray notes that, aside from Aslihan and my interests in terms of exhibition, the Amuq material is getting quite a bit of attention these days, especially from Jan Verstraete of the University of Cincinnati, who is working on Aegean imports in the Phase N material from Chatal Huyuk and Judaidah. Also, Maria Giuseppina Trentin has been here for two weeks working her way through the Amuq Phases A

through E material. She is a colleague of Peter Ackermans of the University of Leiden and is responsible for the Uruk period material from his North Syrian survey.

Those in Registration are expecting Desmond Bright of Macquarie University on November 8, who will be working on Egyptian stelae, and Richard Lesure of UCLA on November 18, who will be reviewing Jarmo figurines. Meanwhile, they continue unpacking the Megiddo collections and inventorying the cuneiform tablet and tablet cast collections.

On November 22, Jessica Peterson will be joining the museum staff as assistant preparator. Jessica is currently working at the Newberry Library and has had extensive exhibition preparation experience at The School of the Art Institute, where she received a BFA in 1998.

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

During October Mark Garrison visited the OI and met with Tom Urban to discuss final details of how to handle author corrections to the manuscript for Seals and Sealings from Persepolis (OIP 117). It was decided to illustrate the iconographical index, re-organize the informational headings for the sealings, standardize the size of all illustrations to 2:1, and to alter the style by which seals are referenced in the manuscript. We now expect the proofs to be returned in November or December.

For the Wente festschrift (SAOC 58), we are waiting for proofs to be returned from five authors (of the forty-two), after which pagination will be set, an index created, and the volume will finally be sent to the printer.

The annual report was printed; this year it was decided to enlarge the size of the illustrations and that appears to have been a good decision.

The printing of CAD 14/R and reprinting of CAD 15/S are near and we've been busy working out the details of getting them printed.

The work study students (Simrit Dhesi and Blane Conklin) have been busy reading the Wente festschrift (SAOC 58) and reading and

checking the bibliographies for Carol Meyer's Bir Umm Fawakhir Report (OIC 28), the Darnells' Theban Desert Road Inscriptions (OIC 29), and Teeter's Scarabs and such from Medinet Habu (OIP 118).

Tom Urban attended the Electronic Publishing conference and learned that is not really clear how to use the internet for publishing studies related to the ancient Near East; he has several suggestions.

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

Users will have noticed that the renovations have not yet begun. As of the second week in November, Facilities does not yet have a signed contract for the work. Nevertheless, we believe we will be able to complete all of the work (with the exception of the hanging of the new fixtures) by the beginning of the Winter quarter. The plan is that we will remain open during the quarter, closing for the dirty work only during the interim. It is clear that there will be considerable noise and dust during the project, both within the confines of the library and in the space adjacent to the classrooms where the new electrical panels will be installed. This may seem an annoyance in the reading room, but it is certainly better than closing for five weeks. I will let everyone know the "firm" schedule as soon as I have it in hand. In the meantime there continues to be some disruption of the usual shelving of books in preparation for the project. If you are unable to locate a book, let me know.

With the help of John Sanders we now have a new Research Archives server up and running in the server room. We are testing the new library catalogue program and expect to have some form of it up and accessible shortly. It will be globally accessible over the Web using whatever browser you prefer and will no longer be limited either to Mac users, or to the local network. I think you'll find that the interface is much improved. We are working diligently to improve the content.

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BIR UMM FAWAKHIR / Carol Meyer

The Bir Umm Fawakhir Project has an updated Web page, or will have very soon, at <http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/FAW/Fawakhir.html>. Check it out!

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ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION CONFERENCE / David Schloen

Summary of the conference sponsored by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, October 8 & 9, 1999

Organizing committee: Gene Gragg, Charles Jones, John Sanders, David Schloen, Matthew Stolper

The organizing committee was pleased by the enthusiastic response to our announcement of a conference on "Electronic Publication of Ancient Near Eastern Texts." Nearly 30 colleagues from out of town attended the two-day meeting, including several from Europe and Israel. They were joined by roughly the same number from the University of Chicago and neighboring institutions. During some sessions the number in attendance reached 70, and it never fell below 40. More important than numbers, however, is the high level of discussion and debate that was achieved during the conference, as all who participated will attest. This is due to the energy and acumen both of those who made formal presentations and those who spoke up during the discussion sessions. We are grateful to all of the participants for the time and effort they invested in coming to Chicago and in contributing to the success of this conference. (Those who were not able to attend can obtain further information or request to be included in our mailing list by contacting David Schloen at [d-schloen@uchicago.edu](mailto:d-schloen@uchicago.edu).)

A major goal of our conference was to assess the prospects for establishing a formal international standards organization charged with setting technical standards for the interchange of Near Eastern data in digital form. Both the conference and the establishment of such an organization are timely in light of the recent development of Internet-oriented data standards and software that now provide a common ground for cooperation among diverse philological and archaeological projects, which have heretofore adopted quite idiosyncratic approaches. This common ground, not just for academic

research but in all areas of information exchange, is created by the Extensible Markup Language (XML) and a growing array of software tools that make use of XML to disseminate information on the Internet.

As we noted in our original announcement of the conference, XML is a nonproprietary "open" or public standardized data format which provides a simple and extremely flexible "tag"-based syntax for representing complex information as a stream of ASCII or Unicode text and delivering it over the World Wide Web (for more details see <http://www.oasis-open.org/cover>). Furthermore, it is based on a proven approach because it is a subset of the ISO-ratified Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML), which has been used for electronic publication worldwide for more than a decade. XML therefore makes possible powerful and efficient forms of electronic publication via the Internet, including academic publication of philological and archaeological data. But XML itself is merely a starting point, for its very simplicity and flexibility, which ensure its widespread adoption, require the development of specific XML tagging schemes or "markup languages" appropriate to each domain of research. Such a tagging scheme expresses the abstract logical structure of a particular kind of data in a rigorous and consistent fashion. Thus, for example, chemists have already created a "Chemical Markup Language" using XML to express the structure of molecules and chemical reactions, so that the data they work with can be easily shared and searched on the Web. Likewise, NASA has created an "Astronomical Instrument Markup Language," biologists have created a "Biological Markup Language," and so on. Once such tagging schemes exist, various kinds of software can then be developed to present different views of logically structured data for different purposes, or to create new sets of data structured in a particular way, with the assurance that these data structures can be created and viewed on any computer anywhere without special conversions or translations.

The unanimous consensus of the conference participants is that XML should be used as the basis for future electronic publication of Near Eastern data. The establishment of a formal working group for Near Eastern text markup was also endorsed unanimously, as a vehicle for the collaborative development and dissemination of suitable XML tagging schemes and associated software. Stephen Tinney of the University of Pennsylvania ([stinney@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:stinney@sas.upenn.edu)), the editor of the Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary, who has substantial

experience in electronic text processing and in the use of SGML and XML, in particular, was elected to be the chair of the text markup group. The name and scope of the new standards organization remain to be decided, however. A number of conference participants emphasized the importance of including Near Eastern languages and texts of all periods within the scope of the text markup group, rather than arbitrarily limiting it to ancient Near Eastern texts, because the same issues arise in dealing with non-European scripts and languages regardless of their date. Similarly, several people expressed what seemed to be a generally held desire to find ways to include electronically published archaeological data within our standards-setting effort. This would ensure maximum interoperability of textual and archaeological datasets, so that it would be easy to obtain information about the spatial provenience and the material-cultural context of excavated or monumentally inscribed texts, and conversely so that it would be easy to obtain philological information about texts viewed as artifacts from an archaeological perspective.

In the opinion of the conference organizing committee, therefore, a suitable name for the new standards organization would be "Organization for Markup of Near Eastern Information" (OMNEI). This name emphasizes the central role of XML markup as well as the organization's potentially wide scope in terms of Near Eastern information of all kinds, including both primary data (philological, archaeological, and geographical) and relevant secondary literature. Even restricting the scope to "Near Eastern" information is rather arbitrary from a technical standpoint, but this mirrors the scope of the existing academic infrastructure of Near and Middle Eastern departments, institutes, and centers to which members of this organization would belong. OMNEI would serve as an umbrella organization for various standards-setting efforts necessary for the interchange of Near Eastern information, beginning with a Working Group for Text Markup chaired by Stephen Tinney. Eventually there could be a parallel Working Group for Archaeological Markup whose efforts would be integrated with those of the Text Markup group. Note that OMNEI's mission is not just to devise XML tagging schemes but also to facilitate the development of well-documented Web browser-based software that could be widely shared among Near Eastern projects, and to coordinate training and professional development for researchers who want to learn how to use these tagging schemes and software. Thus at some point it might also be desirable to create a formal Task Force for Training and Professional Development within the OMNEI organization.

In the aftermath of the conference, discussion is underway concerning these details, including the name and the precise scope and mode of operation of our new international organization, as well as a schedule of future meetings. Decisions will be announced in the near future, but it is clear already that there is a widespread desire to make this organization as broadly based as possible so that it can facilitate the cooperative development of effective and widely accepted technical standards. Judging by the success of the recent conference, it seems likely that many leading Near and Middle Eastern departments and institutes worldwide can be enlisted in support of this venture. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago will continue to do everything possible to sponsor this effort and to support it with its reputation and resources, in collaboration with the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and Committee on the Ancient Mediterranean World.

The conference was tape-recorded, and audio cassettes will be archived at the University of Chicago's Language Laboratories and Archives. For further information contact Chuck Jones (ce-jones@uchicago.edu).

PDF versions of the conference program and abstracts, a list of attendees, and this summary will eventually be found on the Web at [http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/INFO/XML\\_Conference\\_1999.html](http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/INFO/XML_Conference_1999.html).

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EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / W. Raymond Johnson

Chicago House reopened for the 1999/2000 season on October 15, thanks once more to the good graces of Egyptologist Tina Di Cerbo who came two weeks early to open up and clean. Most of the professional staff arrived on the 14th and 15th, while the rest will be trickling in over the next couple of months.

We found the gardens unusually lush, our guard dog Nikon looking fit and trim, and Luxor absolutely awash with tourists. The high season is clearly already here, and we are told that the hotels are fully booked for the winter months. Security is also excellent, even better than last year. The heat was intense when we arrived, but the temperatures are gradually going down, and it's very comfortable



now. The house is in good shape, except for the plumbing in Debbie's upstairs room, which must be completely replaced and is being worked on now.

We immediately reopened the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu and found everything dry (thanks to the newly sealed roof) and untouched. Conservator Lotfi Hassan did a condition study of the monument, inside and out, and on the Ramesses III wells. The southern well has been shored up by the SCA with thick timbers, pending dismantling of the roof blocks and repair of the two disintegrating blocks on the east wall, which will get underway later this season. We have signed on a local SCA conservator to work with Lotfi this season, Mr. Adel; later this month conservator Veronica Paglione will join the MH conservation team to speed up the cleaning and consolidation process. Stone cutter Dany Roy will continue to seal the roof over the bark sanctuary and will begin preparations for laying stone floors in the central chamber and king's chamber of the small temple sanctuary. The sandstone blocks ordered for that work are ready and will be delivered shortly.

When Holscher excavated the central room, he found that the floor blocks had been removed in antiquity. In the fill he found the sad remains of what had been a 3-meter high granodiorite dyad of Thutmosis III and Amun which had stood in the center of the room. The Amun had been severely hacked during the Amarna period, and at some point in time, perhaps the Ptolemaic period, the decision was made to remove the dyad. Since it was too big to fit through the door (in fact the chamber seems originally to have been built around it) it was broken into pieces and buried. Holscher uncovered three major pieces in his clearance; an upper section was removed to the area outside the temple to the north. The large lower section was still too large to remove, so it was left buried, in situ. Parts of the statue were totally missing: the heads of Thutmosis III and Amun, a large section from the legs/knees of both figures to the bottom of the statue base, and most of the front section of the base.

In preparation for the eventual floor-laying in this chamber, we have located and uncovered the large lower section of the dyad. Since statuary in its original location is a rarity in Egyptian monuments, we have decided to recover the pieces and restore the group. This week we started to raise it with the kind assistance of the SCA west bank engineers. We will put it to the side for future restoration in its original location when we re-lay the floor. At the same time we have

started going through the debris of Holscher's backfilling in this chamber, and are recovering sherds (primarily Coptic) and additional small sculpture fragments (some undoubtedly from the dyad) for future analysis. Since the restored floor will effectively seal off the debris, the time to recover this material is now.

On October 23 John and Debbie Darnell's 'Desert Road Project' material (being stored in the small temple for convenience) was moved to their newly completed magazine. Debbie will be leaving the ES on November 15 to devote full time to their remarkable project and is now training Drs. Briant and Karin Bohleke in the mysteries of the CH library management. Like Debbie before him, Briant will work half-time as Librarian and half-time as epigrapher, and his wife Karin will cover the library when Briant is in the field. Many of you will recall that Briant took his undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago, and left us for graduate studies at Yale where he received his doctorate in Egyptology. It is now our good fortune that he has returned to the fold. His credentials as a philologist are sterling, and his eighteen years of Yale University Library experience will greatly benefit the Oriental Institute's field library in Luxor.

It is a busy time in Luxor for Egyptological activity, and we have already been deluged with colleagues and guests. Nick Reeves, Geoffrey Martin, and Peter Lacovara have resumed work in the Valley of the Kings and will continue into December. The Poles at Deir el-Bahri under Professor Andrej Niwinski have been doing some extremely interesting work in the cliffs over Hatshepsut's mortuary temple. The UCLA mission under Daniel Polz is working at Dira Abu el-Naga, the French at Karnak, and the Documentation Center at the Ramesseum and Ramesses II's tomb in the Valley of the Kings. A Belgian mission headed by Professor Roland Tefnin has been recording the tomb chapel of Sennefer (TT96), long closed, quite dirty, but very preserved. Before our season, Lotfi Hassan did some preliminary cleaning for them that showed the Karnak Garden of Amun scene is intact beneath the grime, as well as a sensational granary scene. All of these missions and other friends attended our annual masquerade Halloween party on October 31, always the perfect occasion to get together and celebrate the resumption of our fieldwork.

Other visitors included several University of Chicago alums; Adel Farid and Gene Cruz-Urbe, who passed through Luxor while on a

Demotic inscription survey; Joyce Watson of the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation; and Drew Horowitz, President of the Bonneville Chicago Radio Group. It's hardly begun, but we can already tell that it's going to be a very busy season indeed. All best wishes to all of you back on the mother ship!

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HADIR QINNASRIN IN SYRIA / Don Whitcomb

During this September, there was a study season at Hadir Qinnasrin. This followed the first season of reconnaissance and sondages in the fall of 1998, as briefly recounted in *The Oriental Institute News & Notes* (no. 163, Fall 1999). This season also provided an opportunity to show the site to Fred Donner and Tony Wilkinson, a visit depicted in the most recent *News & Notes*.

This season at Hadir Qinnasrin consisted of meeting with the officials and talking with people of the town of Hadir. This led to a systematic walking tour, armed with good maps of the town, noting down its "antiquities." The obvious beginning was the cemetery, clearly part of the early Islamic town but obviously unavailable for excavation. Beyond its walls on the north was the Jurat al-Nasara, the declevity or hollow of the Christians, which is indeed a pit where early occupation could be investigated (once modern trash was removed). Of more interest was the south side of the mosque, where several open lots sported large stones from archaeological structures. With the assistance of two graduate students from the Oriental Institute, Katherine Strange and Colleen Coyle, we wandered the slightly mounded area south and east of the mosque, each day becoming more interesting and exciting as we noted open spaces and collected sherds. These walks were facilitated by our representatives from the Aleppo museum, first Ms. Fedwa Abido and later Mr. Omar Mahmud, whose presence facilitated our entering numerous private yards. We noted numbers of capitals and columns, a strong indication of the distribution of late Byzantine or early Islamic buildings.

The result of this informal research is a stronger hypothesis on the location of an ancient urban center south and east of the old mosque. More importantly, in spite of the rapid development of Hadir in the last decade, there are numerous areas available for archaeological investigation. Happily the warmth and interest of the people in Hadir



Meadville/Lombard Seminary (Woodlawn and 57th St.) on Friday, November 19 at 4:00 PM. The program will be a mixture of folk songs (Siberian, Ukrainian, Slavonic, and Russian) and religious music. Bring a blini or your babushka along and enjoy.

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ELIZABETH FRIEDMAN

I am continuing to conduct research at the Advanced Photon Source at Argonne National Laboratory where we have been using synchrotron-radiation-based x-ray fluorescence (SR-XRF) to analyze archaeological material. This is a totally non-destructive method of analysis that enables us to determine the elemental composition of materials. This technique is set apart from other analytical techniques in that it has the ability to go beyond surface analysis without blemishing or damaging the artifact. The results of this preliminary analysis of one of the 'Amuq figurines can be found in:

Friedman, E.S., A.P.J. Stampfl, Y. Sato, et al. (1999). Archaeology at the APS: Illuminating the Past. Advanced Photon Source Research 2 (1): 12-16.

This same publication includes the preliminary results of research conducted by Tony Wilkinson and myself on a sediment core from the northern 'Amuq valley. We are using changes in element concentrations over time as proxies for environmental change. SR-XRF enables us to examine dozens, if not hundreds, of samples in an expedient manner. For more details see:

Friedman, E.S., Y. Sato, A. Alatas, et al. (in press). An X-ray Fluorescence Study of Lake Sediments from Ancient Turkey Using Synchrotron Radiation. Advances in X-ray Analysis 42. Plenum Press.

We have continued studying environmental change in the 'Amuq by examining a sediment core from the former Lake of Antioch. The results of this experiment will be presented in Boston at the annual ASOR meeting, for which I have been fortunate enough to receive a Dorot Travel Grant.

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WALTER KAEGI

Walter Kaegi read a paper "Heraclius in Africa" on 6 November at the 25th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference at the University of Maryland at College Park. He received recognition for his role in co-founding that conference 25 years ago, in 1974.

He also published a review of Koliass, *Byzantinische Waffen*, in the journal *Byzantine Studies/Etudes Byzantines*, New Series, vols. 1-2 (1996/7).

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ALEXANDRA O'BRIEN

Over the past few months I have completed my contribution to the next Bir Umm Fawakhir report and I have a couple of book reviews coming out, in JNES and BASP. I am now on the committee for the Africanist Studies Association Children's Book Award, which means I am looking at a range of kids' books on Africa, which is fun (and I get to keep them). I am working on completing an article and another book review, and the write-up of the paper I gave at the Demotic Conference in Copenhagen. Further to that, I will be defending my dissertation on Monday November 8th at 3pm. Though, by the time this is read this will have happened and I will be an all but ceremonied PhD. So, anyone know of any jobs for a trained Egyptologist...?

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JASON UR

I have just returned from two months in Yarubiya, a charming little town constructed entirely from cinder block and black plastic bags, on the Syrian-Iraqi border. This was the home base of the new Syrian-American Expedition to Tell Hamoukar, directed by McGuire Gibson and featuring other OI notables such as John and Peggy Sanders, Clemens Reichel, Brigitte Watkins, Carrie Hritz, and Judith Franke.

While Mac had Clemens, Judith and Carrie running trenches, my primary work was a systematic surface collection of the tell itself. I was particularly interested in doing this, given the speculation on the size and dating of Tell Hamoukar which has appeared in print over

the last 30 years. The collection of this 102 hectare monster took three weeks and would have taken longer if I hadn't been able to tap into the bottomless supply of curious children in the village to assist me; their proximity to the ground and unquestioning obedience to anything out of the mouth of an adult makes them very effective surveying tools. The preliminary in-field assessment of the site is that its maximum 102 hectare extent is reached in the later ("post Akkadian") period, which conflicts sharply with one current theory which proposes that northern Mesopotamia was abandoned at this time. The high mound is occupied in the mid to later 4th millennium, and smaller Iron Age/Neo-Assyrian, Seleucid, and Parthian settlements exist on the outer edges of the low mound, mostly obscured by the modern village.

I was also able to begin preliminary survey of the area immediately around Tell Hamoukar, which revealed that despite its enormity, Tell Hamoukar is not the largest site in the area. On his one-day visit to the site, Tony Wilkinson and I walked over the fields to the south of the site, where Tony had noticed some irregularities in a 1969 satellite image. This turned out to be an enormous early Late Chalcolithic site (ca. 4000 BC). After he left I conducted a further week of mapping and collection, with the aid of the bright red Tell Hamoukar mountain bike (christened "al-Homar al-Ahmar"); this site now stands at an unbelievable 280 hectares. Conventional understanding of ancient population density would give this site an improbable 28,000 inhabitants (and this is using the conservative 100 persons per hectare figure). Clearly this site will challenge our current models of population density and early urbanism.

With the collection of the tell itself finished, next season will feature an intensive regional site survey to place both these sites into a larger regional context. Insha'allah Mac will see fit to give me older and taller assistants.

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DONALD WHITCOMB

#### News in Islamic Archaeology

Those concerned with early Islamic urbanism are well aware of the pivotal example of Jerusalem in the Umayyad period. A new article greatly advances our understanding of the architectural phases of al-

Aqsa mosque. This is Rafi Grafman and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon's "The Two Great Syrian Umayyad Mosques: Jerusalem and Damascus," in *Muqarnas* 16 (1999), 1-15. The article greatly expands a thesis announced in *Eretz-Israel* 25 (1996), 327-35, in Hebrew with an English summary on 201\*.

The article turns accepted art historical development, the priority of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus, on its head. By careful reconstruction of the stoa of Herod, the early mosque seen by Arculf, and the mosque of Abd al-Malik, they produce a pattern of attributes which must have been imitated by Walid in Damascus. The logic is persuasive, if one accepts numerous assumptions and implications along the way. Archaeologists should take note of the systematic critique of the evidence in Robert W. Hamilton's *The Structural History of the Aqsa Mosque* (Jerusalem, 1949).

The thesis builds directly on Rosen-Ayalon's *The Early Islamic Monuments of al-Haram al-Sharif*; together these studies auger an exciting new phase in the study of early Islamic Jerusalem and the development of mosques in Syria.