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The Institute of Archaeology: 1978–1979

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THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY: 1978–1979

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The academic year of 1978–1979 marked the tenth anniversary of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. The following report summarizes the institute's regular activities as well as the special events commemorating its anniversary.

Founded in 1969 by the late Prof. Yohanan Aharoni, who served as its director until shortly before his death, the institute acts as the research arm of the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and is manned by the academic staff of the department, researchers, laboratory workers, technicians, administrative and service personnel. Students of various academic levels participate in its activities, often producing their first independent research works under its auspices.

Archaeological excavations: As the basis of all archaeological research, excavating has been the main concern of the institute ever since its establishment. This year we sponsored four large-scale expeditions for projects scheduled to extend over a number of seasons, as well as several smaller expeditions.

The Apehek-Antipatris expedition, headed by Prof. M. Kochavi (with the cooperation of Dr. Pirhiya Beck) conducted its eighth consecutive season (co-sponsors: the Municipality of Petah Tiqva, Allegheny College of Pennsylvania, Cornell University of New York and Rice University of Texas). In order to free resources for the Negev salvage excavations, the Apehek season was limited to one month, but the large number of participants – some 120 students and 30 staff – compensated somewhat for the short season. In Canaanite Apehek the excavators discovered remains of the palace belonging to the end of the Middle Bronze Age, while in Roman Antipatris they uncovered the gateway leading from the main road to the central plaza of the city.

The Tel Michal expedition, for which Dr. Z. Herzog serves as field archaeologist (other staff include: S. Moshkovitz, Prof. Ora Negbi and Prof. A.F. Rainey), conducted its third consecutive season. (Participating institutions are the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Minnesota, Brigham Young University of Utah and Macquarie University of Australia). During the two-month season the excavators reached Middle and Late Bronze Age strata where they found – as might be expected at a coastal site such as Tel Michal – many imported artifacts. Excavation and restoration of the Hellenistic wine press was also completed.

This year the institute channelled most of its resources into the rescue operation of the ancient Negev sites endangered by military redeployment in the region. As principal sponsor of the salvage excavation of two of the major tells of Beer-sheba Valley – Tel 'Ira and Tel Masos – the institute set out to dig these sites with a full complement of its staff and students during the 'tween-semester vacation in February. Dr. A. Kempinski, who was co-director of the 1972–1975 excavations at Tel Masos, was in charge of the renewed excavations (co-sponsors: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the Department of Antiquities and Museums). The expedition continued the work of its predecessors in exposing the large village of the Settlement period and the Judean fort dating to the end of the Monarchal period.

At the same time, the first excavations ever to be conducted at Tel 'Ira began under Dr. I. Beit Arie, together with Dr. Pirhiya Beck, Prof. M. Kochavi and Prof. Ora Negbi (co-sponsors of the first season were Bar-Ilan University and the Department of Antiquities and Museums). The second season at Tel 'Ira was sponsored by the Aphek-Antipatris expedition (with the participation of Dr. Beit Arie), which devoted the first month of its scheduled season to the salvage dig there (co-sponsor: Bar-Ilan University). The city gate belonging to the end of the Judean Monarchy was uncovered, as well as several strata of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. Among the finds were Hebrew and Aramaic ostraca.

The Ophir expedition to Sinai, directed by Dr. Beit Arie, continued to survey and excavate some Early Bronze Age II sites in the Sinai and Negev, adding greatly to our knowledge of this culture and its links with contemporary sites in Canaan. At Tel Dalit, where a small fortified town of the Early Bronze Age is emerging, the second season of excavations (co-sponsored by Baylor University of Texas) was conducted this summer under Dr. R. Gophna as field director. In the continuing excavations at 'En Besor (co-sponsored by the Department of Antiquities and Museums), Dr. Gophna succeeded in clarifying the nature of the earliest Bronze Age strata. Dr. Gophna also dug (with E. Ayalon) at Kh. Zureiqia, a small fortified settlement of the MB IIA, near Tel Poleg. Next to the Scottish Church in Jerusalem, G. Barkai exposed some unique remains of the Judean Monarchy, Babylonian and Persian periods. Among the finds was a coin of the 7th century B.C.E., the earliest to have been found so far in the country.

Surveys: In a joint venture with the Society for Archaeological Survey of Israel which goes back to 1973, the institute continued its Sharon Survey, enlarging its scope wherever necessary. Field work on the Kfar Saba and Herzliya regional maps, initiated by the Aphek-Antipatris and Tel Michal expeditions, representing sites in the Upper and Lower Yarkon basin, has been concluded. Approximately 400 sq. kms. were covered and important data for the formulation of preliminary conclusions regarding the settlement pattern and historical geography of this zone has been collected. Dr. Beit Arie and Dr. Gophna headed the survey teams.

Dr. Beit Arie also conducted a detailed and systematic survey of the Beer-sheva Valley within the framework of the Negev salvage project. One of the many new sites discovered is rich in cultic artifacts from the end of the Judean Monarchy.

The Lachish expedition (on publication interim this year) began a systematic survey of the area around the tell and in the Judean Shephelah. Directed by Y. Dagan (a student and staff member of the expedition), the survey team discovered several previously unknown sites, including a series of unfortified Early Bronze Age settlements and some Late Bronze Age sites. D. Eitam and A. Zertal, advanced students, are preparing their Master's theses from data collected in surveys conducted jointly with the institute. Eitam has surveyed, investigated and drawn plans of dozens of Israelite settlements on the western slopes of the hill country of Ephraim, while Zertal has carried out a detailed survey of the territory of Manasseh that arouses important historical-geographical questions connected with the history of this tribe and the Third District of the Solomonic kingdom.

Processing finds from excavations and surveys: In addition to material from the above excavations and surveys, the institute is currently processing (drawing, photographing, restoring, etc.) material from the following projects: Tel Arad (Israelite period), Tel Beer-sheba, Kuntillet 'Ajrud, 'Izbet Šarṭah, Serābîṭ el-Khâdim, Tel Šaf and a survey of Eastern Anatolia .

Under the new laboratory coordinator, Dr. A. Kempinski, the institute's laboratories have made important analyses in the fields of metallurgy and other non-organic materials, palaeobotany (including dendro-archaeology and palynology), archaeo-zoology and physical anthropology. Preliminary steps have been taken to establish collaboration in geological and related sciences with the University of Minnesota, the University of Pennsylvania and Baylor University. As a result of the good reputation earned by the laboratories and the wide range of services available, they are called upon to cooperate with many of the archaeological expeditions currently digging in Israel. The laboratory scientists try to build environmental models for various periods and sites; several studies of this type have been made recently, based mainly on archaeo-zoology. All this has been accomplished in spite of being accomodated in the basement of Gilman Building under difficult working conditions and lacking suitable equipment.

The archaeological library — one of two in the Greater Tel Aviv area — suffers from the same accomodation problems. The library has today some 10,000 volumes, including about 3000 scientific journals; in spite of the overcrowding, the institute could not function without it.

Publications: Most of the institute's efforts in the publication field were devoted this year to the archaeological quarterly *Tel Aviv*, now entering its sixth year and continuing to grow in prestige both here and abroad. Although originally established to provide a forum for scholars of the institute, it also publishes articles by outside contributors. In the reprint series, volumes 3 and 4 appeared this year; Vol. 3, written by Prof. D. Ussishkin is *Excavations at Tel Lachish 1973–1977: Preliminary Report*, while Vol. 4, *Excavations at Tel Michal 1977*, was jointly authored by the expedition staff.

The catalogue of the 10th anniversary exhibition: "Israel in its Land: from Settlement to Monarchy" was printed with the assistance of Museum Ha'aretz and the Friends of the Archaeological Institute. The English-Hebrew catalogue is not only a complete guide to the exhibiton but contains also a large amount of hitherto unpublished material.

External relations: The Society of the Friends of the Archaeological Institute (with both English and Hebrew-speaking circles) was founded this year. Its members follow the institute's activities and assist it to the best of their ability. The Negev salvage excavations were conducted with both the financial support and the physical participation of its members. The special course in archaeology continued this year under the coordination of G. Barkai; this year's theme was "the Negev". The institute also co-operates with the Israel Exploration Society and the cultural department of the Municipality of Tel Aviv in sponsoring a series of popular lectures in the municipal library "Beit Ariela".

Anniversary events: To commemorate its tenth anniversary, the institute held an exhibition based on finds from its excavations in Museum Ha'aretz with the theme: "Israel in its Land: from Settlement to Monarchy". A map showing all the institute's excavations and a short history of the institute opened the exhibition. The settlement period was represented by Tel Masos and 'Izbet Šarṭah. Tools and even remnants of fruits from various excavations illustrated agriculture – the main occupation of the early Israelites. Inscriptions, drawings and organic remains from Kuntilet 'Ajrud occupied a large part of the exhibition and attracted many visitors. Cult was represented by artifacts from Arad, Lachish, Beer-sheba and Aphek, Israelite city planning was illustrated by plans of Beer-sheba Stratum II and Lachish III. Photographs and drawings of Sennacherib's reliefs of the siege of Lachish, reproduced from the originals in British Museum by A. Hay and Judith Dekel, created a background for remains of the destroyed city. Photographs and plans of the gates of Beer-sheba II and Lachish III showed the function of the city gate. Trade, economic life and the royal administration were reflected by the Arad ostraca, the Lachish seals, and weights from Arad, Lachish and Malḥata. The store-houses of Beer-sheba II and Lachish III–II displayed opposite each other illustrated the contrast in their layout, contents and ceramic assemblages in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C.E. Israelite literacy was exemplified by the alphabetic exercise on the ostrakon from 'Izbet Šarṭah and the alphabetic lines from 'Ajrud.

On March 14–15 the institute hosted the sixth Archaeological Congress in Israel sponsored by the Israel Exploration Society and the Department of Antiquities and Museums. The theme this year was the Israelite period. For the occasion of the institute's tenth anniversary the congress was held outside of Jerusalem for the first time. Some 40 lectures were presented, including those of eight guests from abroad. The young guard was well represented, including five graduates of the Tel Aviv Department of Archaeology. The first morning was devoted to a symposium on the settlement period. Another session dealt with historical-geographic problems and ancient agricultural installations. A special session on ancient inscriptions was dedicated to the memory of the late Prof. Yohanan Aharoni on the third anniversary of his passing away. Chaired by Prof. A. Biran, papers were read by Prof. B. Mazar, Prof. N. Avigad, Prof. Y. Naveh (all of Jerusalem) and Prof. P.M. Cross of Harvard. One evening of the congress was dedicated to the opening of the exhibition at Museum Ha'aretz and the second to a reception given by the Friends of the Institute.

The University of Pennsylvania, our partners in the Tel Michal Expedition, devoted an entire issue of its museum quarterly *Expedition* (Vol. 20, No. 4, summer 1978) to the institute. This 62-page issue opened with a brief sketch of the institute's activities and chronological tables of the archaeological periods in the Land of Israel. The issue contained ten illustrated articles written by institute staff members describing some of our most recent researches: 'En Besor, Sheikh Muhsen, Canaanite Aphek, Lachish, Tel Masos, Israelite city planning, Tel Michal, Kuntilet 'Ajrud, the human settlement pattern in Israel and the provinces of Malatya and Sivas.