

## Archaeology and Politics in Palestine

By Leslie J. Hoppe

The complicated web of Middle Eastern politics entangles not only the local population of Palestine but also the many people attracted to that area for religious, historical and scholarly reasons. In a place where praying at particular shrines is considered a political act and where disputes over ownership and control of land are supercharged with religious and nationalistic overtones, archaeologists are beset with the kind of problems that challenge the skill of the most patient, tactful diplomat.

Commenting on the relationship between archaeology and politics, Rev. Philip King, past President of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), an institute dedicated to archaeological research in the Middle East, asserted: "It is an unwritten law in the Mideast that archaeology and politics should never be mixed; when they are, it is always to the detriment of archaeology."<sup>1</sup> King made this observation in referring to Nelson Glueck's work for the Office of Strategic Services, predecessor of the CIA, during World War II. Glueck, an American Jewish

archaeologist, whose achievements placed him on the cover of *Time* magazine,<sup>2</sup> compromised his evenhandedness, according to King, with the result that his Arab colleagues could no longer completely trust him.<sup>3</sup>

Another archaeologist, Meir Ben-Dov, who excavated the southern wall of the *Haram esh-Sharif* (the site of the Dome of the Rock, the el-Aksa Mosque, and ancient Israel's tem-

ples),<sup>4</sup> also noted the incompatibility of archaeology and politics. "Mixing politics and science," said Ben-Dov, "produces a wicked brew, regardless of which side is stirring the cauldron."<sup>5</sup> Working outside the southern wall of the *Haram esh-Sharif* gave Ben-Dov special insight into the problems that every archaeologist who works in the Middle East has to face to some extent.



Leslie Hoppe, the author, records data against the backdrop of the excavation site of a Roman/Byzantine-period synagogue in Nabratein, in Upper Galilee.

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# About This Issue

1987 is a time for looking back:

- 5 years to the massacre in Sabra and Shatila, and the killing of 265 Marines in Lebanon
- 20 years to the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, and the killing of 34 crewmen aboard the *U.S.S. Liberty*
- 40 years to the partition of Palestine

1987 also marks A.M.E.U.'s twentieth anniversary. Our current Board of Directors and National Council members are listed on the back page of this issue. They, together with the staff of A.M.E.U., thank all who have supported our efforts over the past years. In commemorating the above-noted tragedies, we reaffirm our intent to keep our readers informed on what arguably can be called the most critical geopolitical area in the world.

One board member who shared that goal was Elizabeth Thomas who, we regret to announce, died last November. Her profession, Egyptology, brought Elizabeth in contact with the Middle East—she was the

first to map out and document all the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens; her empathy for the Palestinians under occupation and in the refugee camps prompted her to endorse A.M.E.U.'s efforts. This issue of *The Link* on archaeology is dedicated to her memory.

Our book selection is Noam Chomsky's *Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism in the Real World*, reviewed by Sheila Ryan on page 14. These and other books on the Middle East are available at discount prices from A.M.E.U.; see page 15 for details.

Our next issue of *The Link* will examine the British experience in Palestine and compare it to that of the United States.

John F. Mahoney,  
*Executive Director*

## Workers Face Array of Difficulties

What makes archaeology in the Middle East especially vulnerable to the political fallout that affects every aspect of life in the Middle East? Since the Middle East has been a battlefield for millennia, there is no reason to expect that all the region's problems will be solved because a few archaeologists wish to go about their schol-

arly activity. Certainly years immediately before and after the 1948 war were the most difficult time for archaeologists. Hostilities made it almost impossible to carry on normal activity and sometimes endangered scholars' lives. In September 1948, for example, Ovid R. Sellers, the director of ASOR, suffered severe burns

when an airplane in which he was a passenger was shot down on a flight between Beirut and Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

The borders established following the cease-fire in 1948 eliminated the possibility of collaboration between the Americans and their Jewish colleagues, since the ASOR headquarters was located in the Jordanian sector of Jerusalem. For several years before 1948 ASOR's building in Jerusalem was Nelson Glueck's home. After 1948, he was unable to live or even visit there until the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967.

At times it is difficult for most archaeologists to maintain the appearance of neutrality amidst the political maelstrom. Some American archaeologists, for example, publicly protested an Israeli military parade held in the Arab section of Jerusalem in 1968, while others protested the Arabs' preemptive strike against Israel during the observance of Yom Kippur in 1973.<sup>7</sup> In both cases, the protesters were officially reprimanded by the ASOR leadership, which prefers to preserve neutrality in very difficult circumstances. This official action underscored ASOR's sole commitment to scholarly research as well as its concern for the safety of those engaged in this activity.

Political problems have hampered archaeological work not only in modern Israel but in other areas of the Middle East. In antiquity, the prosperity of Syria, at the crossroads of many international trade routes, nurtured the development of material cultures that make this country one of the most inviting from the archaeologist's perspective. Unfortunately the instability connected with the Arab-Israeli wars and internecine political and religious conflicts have made systematic excavation in Syria very difficult. Despite these problems some of the most spectacular discoveries have been made in Syria, including Ugarit, Ebla and Palmyra.

In 1977 Syria and the United States signed a two-year cultural agreement for joint scholarly research; this did not include an American archaeological research center in Syria. The state of the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Syria makes it

unlikely that such a center will be established in the foreseeable future.

The history of archaeology in Palestine also gives some insight into why political issues affect archaeological work. Toward the end of the Ottoman rule (1517–1917) and at the beginning of the British Mandate period (1918–1948), there were a number of foreign archaeological institutes in Palestine. The *École Biblique et Archéologique Française*, founded in 1892, was responsible for a number of Middle East projects, the most famous being the excavation of Khirbet Qumran under the direction of Père Roland de Vaux, O.P. This joint project of the *École*, the Jordan Department of Antiquities and the Palestine Archaeological Museum lasted from 1949 to 1956.

Another archaeological institute, the American Schools of Oriental Research, which has sponsored excavation projects since 1900, achieved its greatest prominence because of the work of William Foxwell Albright after whom its Jerusalem center is named. After the 1967 war, the leadership of ASOR established another center, the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR), in Amman to coordinate projects it sponsors in Jordan. Another school, established by the Germans in 1902, has been directed by such notables as Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth. The British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, in operation since 1919, considers Kathleen Kenyon its most celebrated archaeologist. Kenyon's excavation of Jericho during the 1950's was a model of methodological precision and innovation.

Though these foreign archaeological institutes continue to function, Israeli excavation teams have now taken responsibility for a number of sites such as Hazor and Masada, which were excavated under the direction of Yigal Yadin, the Israeli archaeologist-general-politician. In addition, Israeli universities have well-staffed, professionally equipped archaeological schools. Each year these universities graduate a number of archaeologists, trained on the doctoral level, with extensive field and laboratory experience. The number of

professional Israeli archaeologists now exceeds two hundred.

Projects within the borders of the State of Israel must be licensed by the Israeli Department of Antiquities. While foreign archaeologists still receive licenses in Israel, one wonders how much longer foreigners can compete with Israelis for the ever fewer available excavation permits.

Foreign archaeological institutes make an important contribution by facilitating collaboration between the Israeli and foreign archaeologists. Other Middle East countries such as Jordan welcome foreign archaeologists, but eventually these countries too will become "self-sufficient" when it comes to professionally trained archaeologists.

Most impediments that foreign archaeologists encounter in the Middle East are due to the political problems endemic to the region.

No matter how carefully foreigners avoid politics, it intrudes—even in the process of interpreting the artifacts and structures that have been excavated. For example, it may be unclear whether a particular structure is a cistern or a *mikvah* (a Jewish ritual bath). Reluctance to identify it as a *mikvah* on methodological grounds may be interpreted as unwillingness to acknowledge Jewish presence at a particular site in antiquity. Identifying sites beyond and within the borders of the modern State of Israel as having been occupied by the ancient Israelites would automatically support current territorial claims.

Foreigners excavating under license from the states in the Middle East will find it difficult if not impossible to be free of such political complications, since archaeologists presumably provide the ammunition for political cannons. Under ideal conditions, scholars should be able to pursue their projects free of political considerations. In the Middle East the situation is far from ideal. As long as national states in the Middle East license archaeological projects, they will want to control excavation of what they consider to be treasures of their national heritage.

A third cause of problems facing archaeology in the Middle East is the

nature of the discipline itself. Archaeology is the one science that systematically destroys its own evidence as its work progresses. As excavation proceeds from the modern surface to virgin soil or bedrock, archaeologists must dig through one level of occupation to get at what is beneath. Very few archaeological sites in Palestine reflect a single occupational layer. One of these, Khirbet al-Mafjar (Hisham's Palace), is located near Jericho.<sup>8</sup> Probably built by the Umayyad caliph al Walid ibn Yazid in the middle of the 8th century A.D., it was abandoned shortly after completion following severe earthquake damage. In contrast to Hisham's Palace, the vast majority of archaeological sites in Syria, Jordan and Israel were occupied over a number of different eras from pre-historic times to the present. The availability of water and the requirements for defense in antiquity limited the sites available for human occupation in the region. In addition, the occupation of sites over many different historical periods did not result in accumulative construction as occurred, for example, in the Forum built in Rome where initial construction was simply augmented over the centuries. In ancient Palestine, successive occupations were built one on top of another. A site, then, may have been initially constructed in the early Bronze Age. After some time, occupation may have ended because of war, fire, earthquake, plague or any other of a number of reasons. The site could have remained unoccupied for centuries before people returned and rebuilt on the ruins of the earlier occupation. This was the case at Ai (et-Tell), located near the West Bank village of Deir Dibwan. This Early Bronze Age site was unoccupied in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages only to be reoccupied in the Iron Age.<sup>9</sup>

Sometimes the sequence can get very complicated. For example, Megiddo, inhabited from the 4th millennium B.C. until the 7th century B.C., shows more than twenty separate occupational layers.<sup>10</sup> To get at the earliest layer required destruction of all later ones.

# Separating Archaeology and the Bible

Until recently most archaeologists were biblical scholars and the focus of their interest was on the occupational levels that coincided with the biblical period. Often this meant that evidence from later occupations was ignored or discarded. For example, in the late thirties Nelson Glueck surveyed vast areas on both sides of the Jordan River looking for ancient remains. Commenting on the state of archaeology in Jordan at the 1986 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Moawiyah Ibrahim of Jordan's Yarmouk University asserted that 50 percent of sites surveyed by Glueck were not even mentioned in his report since they were from the Islamic period.

An even greater problem develops when surveys such as Glueck's are completed and actual excavation begins. In the rush to get to the occupational layers of the biblical period, artifacts and structures from later periods, especially those of the Islamic period, may be given scant attention. If the excavation of these artifacts and structures are not carefully recorded, the evidence of occupation beyond the biblical period might be irretrievably lost. It is not standard procedure for a team of biblical archaeologists working on a particular site to have a specialist on the Islamic period, though the presence of such a person especially at the initial stages of excavations seems warranted.

The principal motivation for this unfortunate pattern was usually not political. For the most part, field archaeologists working in the Levant were full-time professors of biblical studies who pursued their archaeological interests as a part-time avocation. The goal of their excavation projects was also quite limited: the reconstruction of the occupational history of a particular site during the

biblical period. Often an unstated but very real objective was to undergird the historicity of biblical narratives.

Unfortunately the nature of excavation makes it difficult, if not impossible, to recover data to which these "biblical" archaeologists failed to give their full attention unless those data were carefully excavated and recorded. While the results of many projects aided in the reconstruction of the history of the biblical period, ignoring data from later periods left lacunae that could be exploited for ideological purposes.

Fortunately this situation is changing for the better. There are calls for a new professionalism in archaeology in the Middle East. This is one result of scholarly communication between the New World and Middle East archaeologists. The former show a greater concern for the broader cultural and anthropological issues than have archaeologists who have worked only in Palestine. New World archaeologists usually find themselves excavating sites inhabited by people who have left no written records. The only "text" these excavators have are ethnographic studies of living primitive societies that can be of some help in the interpretation of the material remains of long extinct groups.

The objectives of New World archaeology are much more comprehensive than that of biblical archaeology. Basically these objectives revolve around the clarification of the cultural process—why cultures are diverse and how they change. The ultimate aim of New World archaeology is the fuller appreciation of human nature, thought and action. The broader, more humanistic goals of New World archaeology stand in contrast to the narrow concerns of some exponents of biblical archae-

ology to reconstruct the history of the biblical period.

As long as archaeologists sought to verify the historical narratives of the Bible, archaeology in Palestine remained an adjunct of biblical studies. Its main value was to aid the interpretation of the Scriptures. It is no wonder then that evidence from later periods was considered irrelevant. Even in the excavation of the occupational layers from the biblical period, archaeologists have ignored the kind of data that did not correspond to their narrowly defined goals. For example, what value is there in hydrological and geological analysis of water and soil of Jericho if one is simply looking for evidence of a destruction level in the stratum of the Late Bronze Age in order to verify the narrative of Joshua 6? But without such analyses how can one understand the way the ancients used their environment for agricultural purposes? In the past, biblical archaeologists considered such issues peripheral. That this is no longer the case is due primarily to the sophistication and professionalism of archaeology in the Middle East which is one result of increased communication with New World archaeologists.

The foremost proponent of this new professionalism in biblical archaeology is William Dever, professor of archaeology at the University of Arizona and the Vice President for Archaeological Policy of the American Schools of Oriental Research.<sup>11</sup> Dever has suggested that the term "biblical archaeology" be abandoned in favor of "Syro-Palestinian archaeology." While some of Dever's colleagues consider this substitution merely semantic, Dever believes the change actually reflects what ought to be happening in the archaeological projects undertaken in the Middle East.<sup>12</sup>

Freed from the domination of biblical studies, archaeology will attain its own identity and goals as a scientific discipline in its own right rather than as an adjunct to biblical studies. Dever maintains that the term "biblical archaeology" sows the seeds of confusion by intimating that there is a brand of archaeology which con-

firms the Bible and enhances the value of the Bible. The term "Syro-Palestinian archaeology" carries no such theological freight.

Dever defines Syro-Palestinian archaeology as that branch of general archaeology which deals with the geographical, cultural and chronological entity which embraced the distinctive land bridge between Egypt and Mesopotamia with a succession of cultures from the middle of the fourth millennium B.C. to the Byzantine period (4th-7th centuries A.D.). According to this definition Syro-Palestinian archaeology extends far beyond the time period of the Bible. The name itself is derived from the ancient name for what is now Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel. In most periods of antiquity, Palestine was merely a subprovince of Syria and should not be discussed independently of it.

For Dever, then, Syro-Palestinian archaeology is a secular, academic discipline whose assumptions, methods and goals are determined by archaeology itself rather than by the concerns of biblical scholarship or religious belief. Dever admits that there may be some who are not interested in the entire broad sweep of the discipline as he defines it. Those interested in the periods which produced the Bible ought to use the term "archaeology of the biblical period" which Dever considers a legitimate specialization within the general field of Syro-Palestinian archaeology.

While Dever's suggestion has a lot to commend it, one wonders why "Syro-Palestinian archaeology" is not concerned with the occupation of the region later than the Byzantine period (4th to 7th centuries A.D.). Dever thought that he freed archaeology in Palestine from the agenda of the biblical scholar, yet he simply tacked on that of the early Church historian. What branch of general archaeology, for instance, is responsible for the Early Arab period (640-1099), the Crusader period (1099-1291), the Mameluke period (1250-1517) and the Ottoman period (1517-1918) in Palestine? What are Syro-Palestinian archaeologists to do with data from these periods? To make the outer limit

of Syro-Palestinian archaeology the Byzantine period seems somewhat arbitrary and can leave the impression that nothing of any value is worth noting about later periods.

It is just such impressions that can be subtly exploited for political reasons. For Syro-Palestine archaeology to become the truly scientific, humanistic and academic discipline that Dever wishes it to be, it must necessarily broaden its scope to include later periods. Syro-Palestinian

archaeologists ought to consider it their responsibility to identify and preserve the archaeological record of the region down to the modern period. Stopping with the Byzantine era is unscientific and imprudent. In spite of this limitation, Denver's attempt to free archaeology in Palestine from biblical studies can help broaden its scope and free it from potential misuse by those who translate the findings of excavation into grist for their political mills.

## West Bank Occupation Hinders Projects

A fourth complication for archaeologists working in Palestine results from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank after the 1967 war. Since 1967, excavating in the West Bank served to mark an archaeologist a *persona non grata* throughout the Arab world. Indeed, archaeologists who excavate anywhere within Israel as well as the occupied territories may not be able to get a license to excavate in Arab countries—and vice versa. This is a fact of life that archaeologists must learn to live with. In addition, UNESCO's guidelines do not permit archaeologists to initiate projects in occupied territories such as the West Bank.

About 7.5 miles south of Jerusalem is a site whose Arabic name is *Jebel Fureidis*.<sup>13</sup> This name probably preserves the name "Herodis" which Josephus gave to a fortress Herod built just south of Jerusalem. Known today as the Herodium, the site was excavated from 1962 to 1967 by Rev. Virgilio Corbo, O.F.M., on behalf of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, a graduate school of biblical studies located in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Before 1967 both the school and the Herodium were in territory controlled by Jordan. After 1967 when the West Bank was occupied by Israel, it be-

came impossible for Fr. Corbo to continue any work at the Herodium. This would have jeopardized other projects that the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum was engaged in on the other side of the Jordan River. From 1967-70 the Herodium project passed to the hands of an Israeli archaeologist, Gideon Foerster, whose principal achievement was the restoration and reconstruction of the site under the auspices of the Israeli National Parks Authority. Foerster's work made the site accessible to visitors. From 1972 until the present excavation at the Herodium has continued under the direction of another Israeli archaeologist, Ehud Netzer, of the Hebrew University.

Fr. Corbo was able to continue his work in other places in Israel—most notably in Capernaum. Since the Herodium was in the occupied territory, it would have been very imprudent for Corbo to attempt to carry on there. Because few of these restrictions are made formal in any way, archaeologists have to take the most prudent course so as to avoid offending the sensibilities of parties involved in the political struggles surrounding the West Bank.

With the establishment of Israeli settlements throughout the West

Bank come the archaeological salvage operations that are sometimes necessary when new construction is under way. As foundations are dug for new buildings, antiquities occasionally are exposed. When this occurs, archaeologists perform a "salvage operation" in order to excavate quickly and preserve some sort of archaeological record before modern buildings cover the ancient site. Obviously salvage work does not always produce the best results because of pressures caused by a lack of time and money.

Under the best of circumstances, sites for excavation ought to be chosen after a general survey of a wider area to determine the best candidates for a full-scale excavation project with a complete professional staff and the kind of financial support that such projects require. Salvage operations are not the best way to do archaeology but are the kind of compromise that comes under the pressure of modern construction. One such project in the West Bank was conducted under the auspices of ASOR by Albert E. Glock in Jenin (the biblical En Gannim).<sup>14</sup> Archaeological students

from Bir Zeit University assisted in these excavations.<sup>15</sup>

Still another problem is that Jordanian archaeologists, after 1967, were cut off from the archaeological library that supported their research. This library, located in East Jerusalem, was annexed by the Israelis and became inaccessible to Jordanians. The unavailability of such resources certainly hampered the publication of archaeological work in Jordan. In any archaeological project the actual excavation is just one part of the total endeavor. Excavation uncovers the raw data: the artifacts, structures, and other material remains of an ancient culture. After the field work, very important work continues in the laboratory and library: artifacts uncovered in the course of excavation have to be analyzed and classified in order to develop a chronology of the site's occupation, to illuminate its cultural dynamics, and to correlate this data with data from other excavated sites whose reports have been published. Hence the importance of a good archaeological library.

religious message to the Muslims, the Jews and Christians.<sup>16</sup> Al-Malik erected the spectacularly splendid Dome of the Rock in order to provide the desert Arabs with a reason for pride since they tended to equate splendor with power. By building a Muslim shrine about the site of the Temple, the caliph underscored his belief that Judaism had been superseded by Islam. The interior decoration of the Dome of the Rock spoke as clearly to Christians. The elaborate mosaics decorating the building's interior represent the crown jewels of the Byzantine emperors which the caliph considered to be booty belonging to the Arabs. In addition, a part of the founding inscription of the building is a summons for Christians to abandon belief in the Trinity which Muslims regard as incompatible with their conception of divine unity.

During the Crusaders' control of Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock and the el-Aksa Mosque were converted to serve as Christian churches. Once Crusader dominion came to an end, these two buildings reverted to Muslim shrines. This brief excursus on the Muslim buildings within the *Haram esh-Sharif* partially explains the underlying difficulties facing any archaeologist who wishes to excavate in the area.

Equally difficult is the ability to excavate in the areas surrounding the enclosure, i.e., outside its walls. After 1967, the Israelis bulldozed a very large plaza in the front of the western wall. Until then the *Haram* was located in a densely populated area. It would have been difficult to excavate in that area without disrupting the residential population; there were, however, no buildings along the southern wall of the enclosure. In spite of this, the *waqf* (the Muslim religious trust which controls the area) did not grant permission for any excavation to take place. Presumably religious reasons dictated their refusals.

In the past, anyone who wished to excavate in the area had to take the prohibitions of the *waqf* into account. Beginning in 1867, the Palestine Exploration Fund<sup>17</sup> financed the work

## Excavating in Jerusalem

The one site in Palestine with the greatest potential for arousing political problems is the *Haram esh-Sharif* and surrounding area. Sacred to Jews as the location of their Temple and the site of the binding of Isaac, the same area is sacred to Muslims because of their identification of Jerusalem as the "furthermost mosque" visited by Mohammed during his night journey from Arabia. From this site in Jerusalem, Mohammed ascended into heaven to visit with Moses, Elijah and Jesus. Though the Quran does not specifically identify the "furthermost mosque" as located in Jerusalem, the

Umayyads wished to establish Jerusalem as a Muslim religious center since their political center was in Syria and Palestine—not Arabia. According to current Arab tradition, the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik built the magnificent Dome of the Rock within the *Haram* in A.D. 691 to commemorate Mohammed's ascension into heaven. The el-Aksa Mosque was built nearby in A.D. 715 to support the identification of Jerusalem as the site of the "furthermost mosque" (el-aksa means "the furthest").

The erection of these buildings, according to Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, has a subtle but real political and



**Bulldozing operation at the southern wall of the *Haram esh-Sharif***

of two British engineers, Charles Warren and Charles W. Wilson, who began excavation in the area of the southern and eastern walls of the *Haram*. They could not excavate openly so they built a series of shafts and tunnels which permitted them to approach the walls from below. Because the excavation could not proceed very systematically, its contribution to clarifying the archaeological questions surrounding the Second Temple was quite limited and some of the conclusions Wilson and Warren reached had to be refined in the light of later work.<sup>18</sup> Warren, for example, suggested that "Robinson's arch" (rem-

nants of an arch which springs from the western wall of the enclosure) was the first of a series of arches forming a bridge over the Tyropoeon Valley which served to connect the Temple with the Upper City to the west. This theory which had been generally accepted was disproved after more recent excavation showed that Robinson's arch was part of a monumental stairway leading from a street in the Tyropoeon Valley to a gate in the western wall.<sup>19</sup>

Warren himself would have come to the same conclusion had he been free to excavate in the area. It is a truism in archaeological work that "the

answer lies below." There is really no substitute for field work. Excavation provides the data of any archaeological project. While it is certainly possible to misinterpret the data, trying to develop hypotheses in the absence of data is sheer folly.

The value of Warren's work was that it provided the only archaeological information available about the Herodian structures in the Temple for about one hundred years, due to the opposition of the *waqf* to excavation in the area of the *Haram*. When the state of Israel assumed control of the *Haram* and the area surrounding it in 1967, the work begun by Warren and Wilson some one hundred years earlier could be continued.

The years between 1867 and 1967 did witness some archaeological work in the area just south of the *Haram*. King Hussein of Jordan wished to build a girls' school in the area. In the process of building the school, a wall incorporating immense re-used Herodian stones was found. In 1961 the Jordanian Department of Antiquities began excavating this area, with Kathleen Kenyon of the British School of Archaeology serving as an advisor<sup>20</sup> and Père de Vaux of the *École Biblique* as director of the excavations. These proceeded for three seasons, but the *waqf* withdrew its permission after 1963. De Vaux died in 1971 before publishing the final results of his excavations, but Kenyon agreed with his preliminary reports that identified the structures uncovered as dating from the Byzantine period. Both Kenyon and de Vaux surmised that the structures they uncovered were part of two hospices built by the Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-565) for pilgrims and the indigent sick.<sup>21</sup> Since Hussein was not particularly concerned about preserving Byzantine structures, he allowed the school to be built and this, of course, made further excavation impossible.

When the Israelis began excavation in the same area in 1967, the girls' school was to be relocated and the building torn down. But before the Israelis could begin their excavations, they faced opposition not only from the *waqf* but also from Jewish religious authorities who were now able to



Located within the Old City of Jerusalem are several of the world's major religious shrines: in the foreground, Judaism's Wailing Wall; next above, the *Haram esh-Sharif*; and, at skyline, the Mosque of Omar, or the Dome of the Rock.

assert their own claims to control activities in the area. The Muslims considered any excavation as a departure from long-standing tradition. After all, only one very limited excavation was permitted and that to facilitate the building of a school in the area. Secondly, the Muslim authorities feared that the results of excavations might be used by Jews who wished to claim ownership of the site by reason of prior occupation. Some Muslims thought that the excavations were a cover for a Jewish plot to

weaken the foundations of the el-Aksa Mosque leading to its eventual destruction. Finally, as conservative religious leaders, the members of the *waqf* regarded the subjecting of a sacred shrine to scientific scrutiny as fundamentally inappropriate.

Ironically the Jewish religious authorities had similar objections. According to the two chief rabbis of Israel, there is no point in excavating in the area of the Temple because scholarly conclusions about that area are irrelevant. One of the rabbis also

feared that the archaeologists might prove that the venerated Wailing Wall was not in fact the western wall of the Temple and thus undermine Jewish claims on the area. The rabbis suggested that excavation be postponed until the Messiah comes!<sup>22</sup>

Ironically, one of the first conclusions made by the Israeli excavators was that the building identified by Kenyon and de Vaux as a Byzantine-era hospice was in fact a palace from the Umayyad period. Both the coins and the pottery associated with the



building made it clear that the structure was from the Muslim period. When the building was completely excavated, its architectural plan was similar to that of palaces found elsewhere in Syria, Transjordan and Palestine during the early days of the Muslim era.<sup>23</sup>

At first, some of the Israeli archaeologists found it difficult to accept the evidence. After all, it was assumed that the only important structures built in Jerusalem during the Muslim period were the Dome of the Rock and the el-Aksa Mosque, and these appear to have been designed by Byzantine architects. Despite what scholars assumed, there was, in fact, a very large building erected by Arabs close to the beginning of Umayyad rule in Jerusalem. Toward the middle of the 8th century, the Umayyad Empire suffered an economic decline and in A.D. 747 a severe earthquake devastated Jerusalem, damaging the palace south of the *Haram*. Finally in A.D. 750 the

Umayyad dynasty fell to the Abbassids from Baghdad. The palace built in the shadow of the Dome of the Rock and the el-Aksa Mosque was abandoned because the center of Arab power moved from Syria-Palestine to Iraq. This testimony to the splendor of Arab rule in Jerusalem remained buried under the debris of thirteen centuries only to be uncovered by the members of an Israeli archaeological expedition that certainly did not expect to find what they did.

The care with which the Israelis not only excavated but also preserved these remains from the Arab period led the Muslim authorities to look upon the project with a bit more sympathy. After all, the excavations illuminated what was a largely unknown period of Jerusalem's history. In fact, when Ben-Dov, the field director of the Israeli excavations, wrote about the project at the southern wall, he devoted approximately 25 percent of his book to finds from the Muslim

era.<sup>24</sup> That the excavator devoted so much attention to these finds is commendable but not an act of virtue. Although the Israelis were primarily interested in occupational layers associated with the First and Second Temple periods, they could not ignore the finds from the Muslim era and still present themselves as archaeologists.

The project at the southern wall was not able to escape political entanglements. In 1968, UNESCO passed a resolution calling for an end to archaeological excavations in Jerusalem. The project did not meet UNESCO's guidelines for excavation in occupied territories. Of course, the Israelis did not consider the Old City of Jerusalem to be part of the occupied territories since Arab Jerusalem was annexed by the Israeli State shortly after the 1967 war.

Charges were made that the excavations at the southern wall involved the destruction of Islamic cultural property and the undermining of the foun-

**Once the Moroccan Quarter in Jerusalem, consisting of about 135 families and 800 residents, the area, now called the Wailing Wall Plaza, was bulldozed clear within a week after the June War. At left is the Dome of the Rock.**



dations of the el-Aksa Mosque. In addition, it was asserted that the Israeli archaeologists were not employing recognized methods of excavation and therefore the results of their project would be tainted and unacceptable to the scholarly world. In 1974, Raymond Lemaire, an architect and officer of the International Council of Monuments and Sites, was sent by UNESCO to investigate these charges. His report exonerated the Israeli archaeologists.<sup>25</sup> Despite this, UNESCO condemned Israel in a resolution which withheld UNESCO funds from Israel. Finally Israel was expelled from this organization for political reasons, though ostensibly because of the excavations at the southern wall.<sup>26</sup>

Political posturing over the southern wall excavations muted the kind of scientific criticism that is a normal part of scholarly interchange. Scholarly criticism of the project, the archaeological method it employed and the conclusions drawn from excavation may have been muted to ward off political exploitation. Archaeologists do generally differ among themselves regarding methodology, with differences especially pronounced between American and British archaeologists and their Israeli counterparts. British and Americans, following the lead of Kathleen Kenyon, are very careful to dig under strict controls which emphasize stratigraphy (excavation by strata or occupational layers with special attention to the contents of each stratum) and ceramic typology (analysis of the pottery found in each stratum to facilitate dating). Coupled with this controlled excavation is careful recording of all data which is then published, thus allowing the project to be "reconstructed" and evaluated by those who did not participate in the excavation itself.

Such methodology, while painfully meticulous and slow, creates genuine scholarly interchange and independent analysis of results. Israeli archaeologists, while not ignoring stratigraphy and ceramic typology, are much more oriented toward structures. They prefer to excavate large sites with monumental architecture.<sup>27</sup> This characteristic was most

evident in the southern wall project.

One reason for the differences in approach is the political situation between 1948 and 1967. Kenyon developed her technique in the course of her excavations at Jericho in the fifties. Israeli archaeologists were prevented from visiting Jericho and studying Kenyon's techniques and their results firsthand because Jericho was in territory controlled by Jordan. Once this political situation changed following the 1967 war, the Israelis learned what the stratigraphic method can accomplish and have been employing it to a greater extent since the 70's.

The area excavated at the southern wall included much more than the Umayyad palace. In his book, *In the Shadow of the Temple*, Ben-Dov describes twenty-five strata and twelve different historical periods which begin with the 9th century B.C. and extend to the Ottoman period (1517-1917). This enormous project was completed in twelve years of continuous excavation while most digs are in the field for just a matter of weeks in the summer. Shorter periods for actual excavation allow for careful supervision, scientific analysis and prompt reporting. Despite his year-round schedule, Ben-Dov had use of a bulldozer which, by his own admission, is "the last thing an archaeologist would normally expect to find at a dig . . ." <sup>28</sup> It was impossible for all the soil to be sifted and so it is certain that quite a lot of evidence simply went undetected.

Another problem with Ben-Dov's approach was that he excavated the entire area at the southern wall. Nor-

mal procedure is to leave portions of a site unexcavated so that future generations will be able to employ more sophisticated methods to recheck earlier work. Admitting that he used "unconventional methods,"<sup>29</sup> Ben-Dov perhaps simply did not want to take the chance that his project would be interrupted by political events and that another hundred years would pass before excavations could be resumed. A more serene political environment would have allowed the southern wall project to proceed in a more normal fashion and under stricter controls.<sup>30</sup>

The southern wall project, however, illustrates the unexpected good that can come when excavation is allowed to proceed. In this case, an important gap in Jerusalem's history was filled in. The Umayyad period of Arab rule in Jerusalem was responsible for the only palace built in the Temple area since the time of Solomon. Indeed the most impressive find in the entire project was this palace. Before Ben-Dov's excavation at the southern wall, it was generally assumed that the Arabs built little beside the Dome of the Rock and the el-Aksa Mosque. That estimate has to be radically revised. Still, the pressures felt by the Israeli archaeologists moved them to be less than scrupulous in their methodology and overly hasty with their excavation. Coupled with these problems are plans to develop the excavations at the southern wall into an archaeological garden, now in the process of development. The remains of the Umayyad palace will be one of the highlights of that park.

## Excavating in Syria

The southern wall excavation in Jerusalem is not the only one which was beset by politically inspired con-

trovercy in recent years. In 1964 Paolo Matthiae, an archaeologist and art historian, began excavating a tell (an

artificial mound created by long periods of successive occupation during antiquity) near Aleppo in north-west Syria. The project was sponsored by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Syria and licensed by the Syrian Government. The site Matthiae chose to excavate was Tell Mardikh. The site, relatively large (about 138 acres), indicated that Tell Mardikh was an important site in ancient times.

The 1969 digging season at Tell Mardikh yielded an inscribed statue. Since the inscription was in cuneiform (a wedge-shaped script developed in ancient Mesopotamia), Matthiae invited Giovanni Pettinato, an epigrapher (an expert in deciphering ancient scripts) to examine the statue. On the basis of his translation of the inscription, Pettinato suggested that Tell Mardikh was ancient Ebla, a city known from Bronze Age sources but whose location had been in doubt. Though scholars were skeptical at first, analysis of additional texts discovered at Tell Mardikh over the years has confirmed Pettinato's initial identification.

In 1974 Matthiae once again called for Pettinato's help since forty inscribed clay tablets were found and from that time the professor from the University of Rome became formally associated with the project at Tell Mardikh. The next year the excavators came upon the royal archives of ancient Ebla and many hundreds of inscribed clay tablets. Eventually more than seventeen thousand tablets came to light. Both Matthiae and Pettinato knew that they had made an extraordinary find—the kind that archaeologists dream about.

Unfortunately the analysis of these tablets set the stage for a dramatic falling out between Matthiae and Pettinato. The disagreement between the two centered at first on the dates set for the tablets. On the basis of his stratigraphy and ceramic typology, Matthiae dated the tablets to 2400–2200 B.C., while Pettinato dated them to 2580–2450 B.C. on the basis of epigraphy. The latter dates implied that Matthiae's stratigraphy was incorrect and that he may have overlooked an entire stratum in the course of his excavations. Since neither the

archaeologist nor the epigrapher was willing to retreat from his position, relations between the two deteriorated as each considered the other a threat to his scholarly reputation.

The problems between Matthiae and Pettinato were compounded by the inevitable media-hype which follows the kind of important discovery such as the royal archives of Ebla with its thousands of tablets. There was the distinct possibility that scholars would have to rewrite the history of the ancient Near East during the Bronze Age.

The interest of the media in the United States resulted from parallels and connections that supposedly existed between the Bible and the texts from Ebla. These connections were touted by the prominent and respected American biblical scholar, David Noel Freedman of the University of Michigan. Freedman visited the two Italians and was so impressed with the information about Ebla that he arranged an American lecture tour for the two Italians. The highlight of this tour was Pettinato's address to the membership of the Society of Biblical Literature, assembled for their annual meeting at St. Louis in the fall of 1976. In that address Pettinato announced to his fellow scholars that he found the name of the five cities of the Plain [Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeb-oiim and Bela; see Gen. 14] on a single tablet from Ebla in the very same order as they are found in the Bible.

That was all that a conservative scholar such as Freedman needed to reassert his convictions about the historicity of the traditions in the Book of Genesis. Literary studies of the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 12–50) have suggested that these traditions reveal nothing about any presumed patriarchal era since they were the creations of later periods.<sup>31</sup> Freedman, characterizing these views as examples of skepticism and sophistry that were convincingly undercut by evidence from the Ebla texts, believed that Pettinato had provided the kind of indisputable scientific data that demonstrate his own historical value of biblical stories.

Freedman was joined in his campaign by the prolific Jesuit expert on

ancient Semitic languages, Mitchell Dahood. Like Freedman, Dahood was convinced that the texts from Ebla demonstrated that Genesis contains truly historical traditions which date from a period long before ancient Israel achieved its national identity. Dahood remarked that it was ironic that archaeologists were uncovering and deciphering the Ebla texts about the same time literary analysis of Genesis was questioning the historicity of the patriarchal narratives. Dahood also believed that the study of the Ebla texts would help clarify puzzling passages in the Hebrew Bible. His lectures and publications were replete with references to how Ebla has improved scholars' ability to understand biblical Hebrew.<sup>32</sup>

Of all his suggestions, Pettinato's most controversial, politically charged contention was that a god named Ya or Yaw was part of the pantheon in Ebla.<sup>33</sup> Even though Dahood quickly lent support to Pettinato's reading of the texts in question, not all semiticists agreed. There is no direct evidence of the presence of Ya(w) among the gods of Ebla, since this name does not appear on any list of the divinities associated with Ebla, though such lists have been found and deciphered. Pettinato's evidence is indirect at best.

Among the various economic documents Pettinato translated were names with a theophorous element,<sup>34</sup> which he read as Ya. Such names from Ebla included Mi-ka-ya (Who is like Ya? Compare the biblical Michael which means "Who is like God?"); Ishma-ya (Ya will hear; compare the biblical Ishmael "God will hear") and Enna-ya (Have pity, O Ya).

Some of Pettinato's colleagues believed that his readings were a bit premature because not enough is known about how Ebla's scribes modified the cuneiform system of the Sumerians to fit their own "Eblaite" language. It may be that the symbol which Pettinato read as "Ya" may actually represent an entirely different word since cuneiform symbols can have multiple meanings. Determination of the exact meaning of an individual symbol is dependent upon the context in which the symbol is found and local variations of the

cuneiform system.

Pettinato's observations about the Ya-names went a bit further than simply positing their existence. He claimed that tablets from the reign of Ebrum, one of Ebla's kings, show a substitution of Ya-names for Il-names. "Il" is another theophorous element.<sup>35</sup> In other words, before Ebrum was king a popular name would have been Mi-ka-il [Who is like Il?]. With Ebrum's accession to the throne, the Mi-ka-ya became more fashionable. This led Pettinato to speak of a "religious revolution" supposedly occurring during the reign of Ebrum when Il was supplanted by Ya. This suggestion received scholarly demurs except from Dahood who remained convinced of Pettinato's readings until the Jesuit's untimely death in 1982.

It was not long before Pettinato's assertions were reported through accounts on the wire services and in popular magazines such as *Newsweek* (November 15, 1976), *National Geographic* (December, 1978, pp. 730-759) and the *Biblical Archaeology Review* which published a whole spate of articles on Ebla. These journalistic accounts fueled popular imagination among conservative and fundamentalist Christians who saw the Ebla texts as supporting the historicity of the Bible. These people were ready to identify Pettinato's Ya(w) with Yahweh of ancient Israel and Ebrum with Eber, one of Abraham's ancestors according to Gen. 11:14.

To his credit Pettinato did not make these connections, but he would have been incredibly naive not to think that someone would make them. Besides the connections with Gen. 14 and with the name Yahweh, Pettinato or his supporters have indicated that the tablets contain creation and flood stories similar to those in Genesis. Names of localities such as Hazor, Megiddo, Gaza, Joppa and Jerusalem occur in the Ebla texts. Personal names such as Abram, Esau, Israel, Saul and David supposedly appear there as well. The texts also describe how Ebla had judges, prophets and anointed kings just like ancient Israel. This is quite a potpourri of biblical connections. When pressed for the

hard evidence for these assertions, however, Pettinato has retreated for the most part.

If this controversy developed about a site almost anywhere else in the world, it would be considered just another esoteric joust that academicians love so much. Because Tell Mardikh is located in the Middle East, this seemingly esoteric topic has engendered a lot of political fallout. The Syrian authorities in whose country Tell Mardikh is located were becoming disturbed by all these supposed connections between Ebla and the Bible. They wondered why there was such a rush to connect Ebla as a third millennium site with the late second and first millennium phenomenon we call ancient Israel. After all Ebla and Israel were separated by more than one thousand years in antiquity.

This great discovery relating to what the Syrians regarded as their own cultural heritage was being valued not on its own merits but in terms of what it supposedly reveals about ancient Israel. Secondly, since ancient religious traditions have been used to support the territorial claims of modern political states in the Middle East, it was quite understandable that the Syrians were afraid that a few Ebla tablets would be thrown onto the negotiating table. In any case, the Syrian

Government requested and received a declaration by Pettinato that repudiated what the latter called "the pretended links" of Ebla with the Bible. This action led to accusations that the Syrians were trying to influence the study of Ebla in order to play down connections with the Bible.<sup>36</sup>

Actually, Pettinato's own premature reading of some tablets, together with their naive acceptance by some scholars, were chiefly responsible for all the controversy. Again what would have been considered ivory tower controversies elsewhere came to have all sorts of political implications because Tell Mardikh was located in the Middle East. The Ebla controversy was the result of a scholarly conflict between Matthiae and Pettinato, a belief in the historical reliability of biblical narratives on the part of some American scholars, and the pride of the Syrians in their cultural heritage. This itself was a potent recipe for conflict, but added to this was the fear that the findings of archaeologists would be used to make political claims in the midst of the Middle Eastern conflict. Ebla, as a case in point, shows how contemporary political controversies, fears and claims can affect a scholarly enterprise such as archaeology.

## The Future Of Archaeology in the Middle East

There has been a remarkable growth in archaeological activity in the Middle East by native and foreign archaeologists during the last twenty years despite the complications caused by the political problems of the region. All the governments in the area want to preserve their cultural heritage, which is threatened by the industrial, agricultural and urban

development in those countries. In order to preserve their legacy, governments need to take practical steps to ensure that the political problems of the area do not prevent archaeologists from helping them with this task. National departments of antiquities should continue to cooperate with the archaeological institutes working in the region to provide scholars with in-

formation centers, places for academic interchange, research facilities with adequate libraries and other resources which are necessary for archaeologists to carry on their work. For their part, archaeologists must remain sensitive to the political problems of the area. It is especially important for foreigners to remain as neutral as possible in the political arena.

W. F. Albright once predicted that Syria could become one of the most significant areas of archaeological research in the world if the political situation permitted scholars to carry on their field work there.<sup>37</sup> Even in countries like Israel and Jordan, where archaeological excavations have been proceeding at a somewhat quicker pace, there is still quite a lot to be done. There is enough archaeological work in the Middle East to engage several future generations.

The future of archaeological research in the entire Middle East region similarly depends upon the climate which the governments allow to flourish. As long as there is no overall settlement of political issues in the region, scholars will have to deal with the inevitable difficulties that are a consequence of political problems. Sometimes these problems will be of only minor significance such as the travel problems that come from the fact that Arab countries with the exception of Egypt do not recognize the existence of the State of Israel. Other times the political problems will be so great that an excavation project will not be able to go ahead and that certain archaeologists will not be welcome because of past associations.

The unsettled political situation in the Middle East has caused enormous suffering on the people caught in the middle of this conflict. Of course, the people who suffer the most are those made homeless and stateless by these conflicts. In comparison with their problems, what scholars and archaeologists have to face is insignificant. On the other hand, political turmoil potentially disrupts the quest for knowledge of the past and the light it may bring to bear on today's disagreements. The richness of the Middle East's cultural heritage is beyond calculation. It is a shame that

politics has the potential of hindering people who wish to do nothing more than help us all know and appreciate that heritage.

## Notes

1. Philip J. King, *American Archaeology in the Mideast* (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1983), p. 103, no. 19.
2. December 13, 1963.
3. Glueck was convinced that the Germans also used archaeologists as agents. See Floyd S. Fierman, "An Archaeologist's Secret Life in the Service of the OSS," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12/5 (Sept/Oct, 1986), p. 22. For more information on Glueck's activities as an agent for the OSS, see Floyd S. Fierman, "Nelson Glueck and the OSS during World War II," *Journal of Reform Judaism* (Summer 1985).
4. "The Noble Sanctuary," an Arabic name describing the site of the Dome of the Rock which, according to Muslim tradition, marks the spot of Abraham's sacrifice of Ishmael and the el-Aksa Mosque which the same tradition identifies as the site of Mohammed's night journey. This area is also sacred in Jewish tradition as the site of ancient Israel's temples. The Jews call the *Haram* "the Temple Mount."
5. Meir Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 16.
6. King, pp. 111-112.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
8. For a bibliography on the site see Eleanor K. Vogel, *Bibliography of Holy Land Sites* (Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College, 1982), pt. 1, p. 52, and pt. 2, p. 58.
9. Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, 4th ed. (N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1979), pp. 314-315. Kenyon provides a bibliography of the excavation reports.
10. For a bibliography on the excavations at Megiddo see Vogel, pt. 1, pp. 59-60, pt. 2, pp. 58-59.
11. For a more complete presentation of Dever's proposals see his "Archaeological Method in Israel: A Continuing Revolution," *Biblical Archaeologist* 43 (1980), pp. 41-48; "Archaeology," in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Supplementary Volume, pp. 44-52; "The Impact of the 'New Archaeology' on Syro-Palestinian Archaeology," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 242 (1981), pp. 15-30.
12. For the views of a number of archaeologists on this question see the issues of the following journals, each of which devoted an entire number to this question: *Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (Spring 1982), pp. 73-108; 45 (Fall 1982), pp. 201-228 and *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 242 (Spring 1981), pp. 1-30.
13. See Gideon Foerster, "Herodium" in the *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Michael Avi-Yonah, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 502-510.
14. For bibliography on this site see Vogel, pt. 2, p. 41.
15. King, p. 186.
16. See his *The Holy Land: An Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 78.
17. This fund was established under British auspices to finance scientific exploration of Palestine and especially Jerusalem. British

military intelligence used these scholarly endeavors as a cloak to gain information about Palestine which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. Most of the participants in the field work supported by the fund were British military officers. See Meir Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple* (NY: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 17.

18. Warren and Wilson published the results of their work in *The Recovery of Jerusalem* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1871). Michael Avi-Yonah indicates that Warren was amazingly accurate given the conditions under which he had to work. See Avi-Yonah's "Excavations in Jerusalem—Review and Evaluation," in *Jerusalem Revealed*, Y. Yadin, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 21.

19. See Benjamin Mazar, "The Archaeological Excavation near the Temple Mount," in *Jerusalem Revealed*, pp. 25-26.

20. Kenyon describes this project in her *Digging up Jerusalem* (London: Ernest Benn, 1974), pp. 275-278.

21. See Kenyon, *Digging up Jerusalem*, p. 276. She was quite skeptical of later excavations which disputed this conclusion. See pp. 275, 277-278.

22. See Ben-Dov, pp. 20-24, for his description of encounters with both Jewish and Muslim religious authorities.

23. See Ben-Dov, pp. 273-274.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-373.

25. For additional details see Hershel Shanks, "Excavating in the Shadow of the Temple Mount," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12/6 (Nov/Dec 1986), pp. 23-24.

26. Ben-Dov, pp. 375-376.

27. For a more complete description of Israeli archaeological technique see King, pp. 134-135.

28. Ben-Dov, p. 27.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

30. Shanks, p. 24, intimates that careful stratigraphic records were not maintained. If this is the case, archaeological data have been lost and a detailed final report cannot be made available to the scholarly community. Ben-Dov's account of the dig (*In the Shadow of the Temple*) is an attempt to reach a wider audience. As such his efforts are commendable, but this book is no substitute for a final report.

31. John van Seters suggests that Gen. 12-50 were literary creations of the 6th century and, as such, they were removed by more than one thousand years from the period they purport to describe. See his "Patriarchs," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, supplementary volume, pp. 645-648. See also T. L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1974).

32. See his "Are the Ebla Tablets Relevant to Biblical Research?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 6 (1980), pp. 54-60.

33. Note the similarity of these names with the name of ancient Israel's God: Yahweh. Pettinato implied that a god similar in name to the ancient Israelite God was worshipped in Syria more than 1,000 years before the settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan.

34. Theophorous names are those in which the name of a god becomes part of an individual's personal name. Such names are quite common in the ancient Near East.

35. The ancient Hebrew equivalent is "El"—god. The Arabic "Allah" comes from the same semitic root.

36. See Hershel Shanks, "Syria Tries to Influence Ebla Scholarship," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 5/2 (March/April 1979), pp. 36-50. This

article contains an interview on the Ebla controversy granted by Pettinato to *Flash*, a Syrian periodical, published in its February 1978 issue. In that interview he tries to emphasize the value of the Ebla finds apart from the connections with the Bible. 37. King, p. 243.

## Notice

The Committee for the Preservation of the Palestinian Heritage was recently formed to collect old Palestinian clothes and jewelry for the purpose of acquainting Americans with the culture of Palestine.

To allow maximum exposure, the

Committee proposes to make the collection available to different bodies such as museums or community organizations. Any party interested in sponsoring the exhibit is urged to contact the Committee.

The Committee is also engaged in a fund raising campaign to maintain this rare acquisition. An illustrated hard-cover book capturing much of this beautiful collection is for sale for \$30.00 and \$35.00 with sleeve. Inquiries should be addressed to: Committee for the Preservation of the Palestinian Heritage, P.O. Box 7668, McLean, VA 22106-7668.

powerful." (p.2)

In Chomsky's analysis, the official manipulation of the term "terrorism" is a part of an effective process of thought control in the United States, a process of "engineering democratic consent" to the actions of government. The first chapter of the book is devoted to an examination of the deception that the PLO and the Arabs generally reject the "peace process," when in fact the United States and Israel are the paramount rejectionists. A second chapter reviews the Middle Eastern terrorism in the American ideological system, focusing on the manner in which the Emperor's terrorist invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was rendered in the media as a legitimate counterterrorist operation.

The final section documents the construction of a U.S. demonology in which Col. Muammar Qaddafi is presented as a dreadful fomentor of terrorism on a global scale. In Chomsky's assessment Col. Qaddafi is a "retail terrorist," not a wholesaler like the United States and Israel. The Libyan leader initiated a series of killings of Libyan citizens both at home and abroad, which, Chomsky writes, are "the major acts of terrorism plausibly attributed to Libya"; through 1985 the toll was 14. This series of killings began in early 1980, "at the time when Jimmy Carter launched the terrorist war in El Salvador with José Napoleon Duarte volunteering to serve as a cover to ensure that arms would flow to the killers," whose victims numbered some 50,000.

Chomsky provides a withering scrutiny of the defective "evidence" proffered by the administration and major U.S. media to implicate Libya in various threats to neighboring states and terrorist incidents, culminating in the "disco bombing" in Berlin, which served as the Reagan Administration's pretext for the bombing of Libya in April 1986.

This is a book not only to read but also to pass along to others, to give to your local library, to ask bookstores to stock.

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*Sheila Ryan is director of the New York-based Network for Peace and Justice in the Middle East.*

# Book Views

## **Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism in the Real World**

By Noam Chomsky  
Claremont Research and Publications,  
1986, 174 pp., \$8.95.

### Reviewed by Sheila Ryan

Noam Chomsky's new book is an intellectual surgical strike: in 174 short pages he hits at the nerve center of the polemic and propaganda with which the Reagan Administration has built widespread popular support for a disastrous foreign policy. The fact that publication of this book has not transformed the terms of public discourse in the United States on the issue of terrorism buttresses Chomsky's thesis that in our society lack of restraint on freedom of expression is coupled with effective restraint on freedom of thought.

The title of the book is taken from the anecdote with which it opens:

St. Augustine tells the story of a pirate captured by Alexander the Great, who asked him "how he dares molest the sea." "How dare you molest the whole world?" the pirate replied: "Because I do it with a little ship only, I am called a thief; you, doing it with a great navy, are called an Emperor."

The pirate's answer was "elegant and excellent," St. Augustine relates. It captures with some accuracy the current relations between the United States and various minor actors on the state of international terrorism . . . (p. 1)

Chomsky recalls for his readers that when the term "terrorism" came into use in the late 18th century, it was generally attached to the violence of the state visited upon its subjects: "Whereas the term was once applied to Emperors who molest their own subjects and the world, now it is restricted to thieves who molest the

# Books To Order

## New Selections

□ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New York: Claremont Research, 1986, 174 pp., \$8.95. Professor Noam Chomsky's new book is an incisive study of the deceptions and double standards to which U.S. and Israeli officials and the media routinely resort in discussing the issue of terrorism. He skillfully examines the manipulation of the definition of terrorism to include only the acts of the weak, while serving to cover up the far greater crimes of the powerful. The book is the first critical study of new orthodoxies which employ concepts of terror to obfuscate the real role of the U.S. and Israel in the Middle East. Our price, \$5.50. See review, page 14.

□ Uri Avnery, *My Friend, The Enemy*, Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1986, 340 pp., \$12.95. A two-term member of the Israeli Knesset and Chair of the joint Jewish-Palestinian Progressive List for Peace, Avnery gives an intimate record of the numerous secret meetings which he and a small group of "Peace Now" Israeli leaders have had with PLO representatives, including Issam Sartawi and Yassir Arafat. At times the writing has the air of an international thriller, as hardline Arab and Israeli agents intrigue to destroy these moves towards peaceful coexistence. The extensively quoted discussions between Israelis and Palestinians provide useful material for those interested in the possibility of peace. Our price, \$7.95.

□ George E. Irani, *The Papacy and the Middle East: The Role of the Holy See in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1962-1984*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986, 218 pp., \$22.95. The first major study of the role of the Catholic Church towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, this book covers the 12 years from Vatican II to Pope John Paul II's pastoral letter on Lebanon in 1984. The book is the result of exhaustive research, including interviews with church and political officials and ex-

amination of previously unexplored archival resources in Rome, Jerusalem and Beirut. Well written, the book scrutinizes with scholarly dispassion three major topics: the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, the issue of Jerusalem and the Lebanese war. Our price, \$13.50.

□ Fouzi el-Asmar, *Through the Hebrew Looking Glass: Arab Stereotypes in Children's Literature*, Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1986, 272 pp., \$9.95. This book, by a highly respected Palestinian scholar, presents a disturbing examination of Israeli children's books and their negative portrayal of Arabs. The book suggests that this hostile stereotyping of Arabs conditions Israeli children to grow into adults unable to make peace with their neighbors. Our price, \$5.95.

□ Bishara Bahbah, *Israel and Latin America: The Military Connection*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986, 210 pp., \$12.95. Carefully researched, penetrating examination of Israel's military exchange with Latin America. Also details U.S.-Israeli arms cooperation as it affects Israeli weapons sales to the area. Our price, \$7.50.

□ Inea Bushnaq, *Arab Folktales*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1986, 386 pp., \$19.95. The Jerusalem-born redactor tells eloquently one hundred and thirty folk tales collected from many Middle Eastern sources. Whether the tales are from Morocco or Iraq, from the Cairene alleys or Bedouin encampments, they all provide an intimate introduction to Arab attitudes about life and living. Our price, \$10.95.

□ Elias Chacour, *Blood Brothers*, Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1984, 224 pp., \$9.95. Father Chacour, a Palestinian priest known for his social work in the Galilee, tells the story of his search for conciliation between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. Our price, \$4.95.

□ Colin Chapman, *Whose Promised Land?*, Herts, Eng: Lion Publishing, 1983, 253 pp., \$7.95. Outlines the conflicting

claims to the Holy Land from the time of the Bible on. Discusses the relevance of biblical promises to the modern age. Our price, \$4.95.

□ Paul Findley, *They Dare To Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby*, Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1985, 362 pp., \$8.95. The former eleven-term Congressman from Illinois, through documentation and case studies, shows how Americans are victimized for opposing the Israel lobby. Our price, \$5.95.

□ Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War*, Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1986, 210 pp., \$14.95. An investigative journalist explores the close relationship between prominent "televangelists" and Israeli ultra-nationalists. The author's extensive research includes notes from two tours to the Holy Land organized by Rev. Jerry Falwell. Our price, \$8.95.

□ David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, London: Futura Publications, 1978, first edition reprinted 1983, 367 pp., \$7.95. Perceptive history of Palestinian/Zionist relations from the Aliyah movements of the 1880's to Arafat's U.N. speech in 1974. Our price, \$2.75.

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