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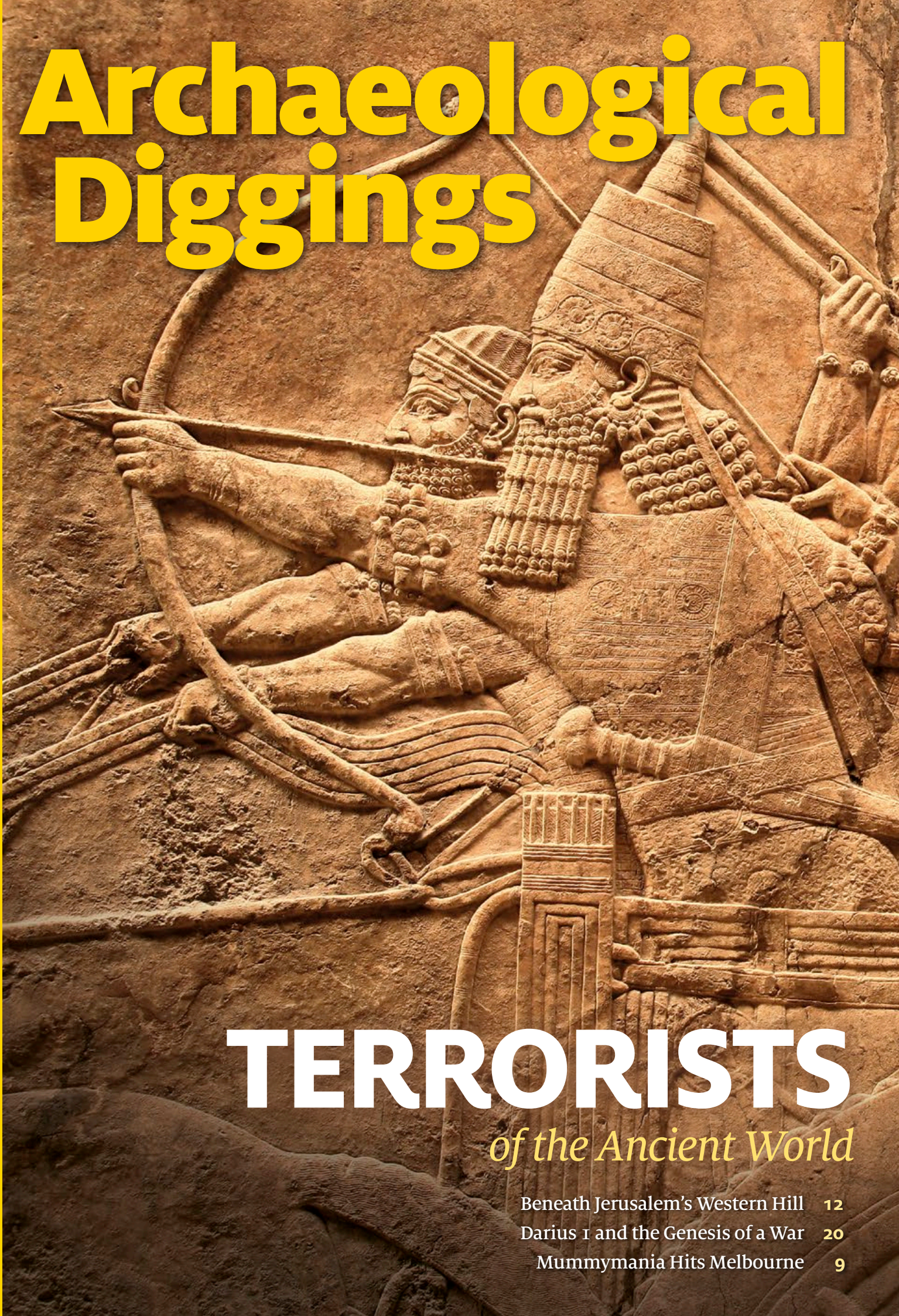

TERRORISTS
of the Ancient World

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Darius I and the Genesis of a War 20
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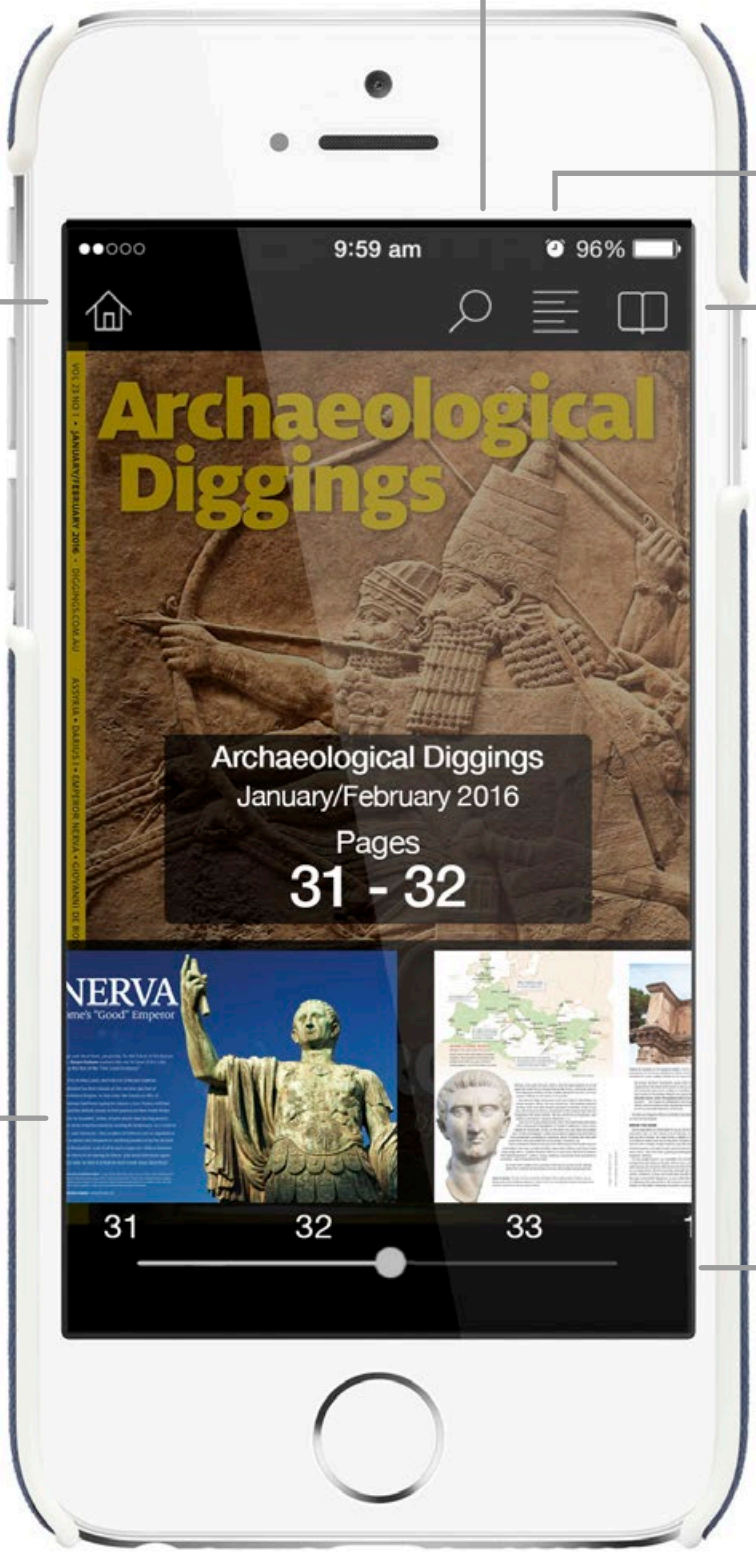

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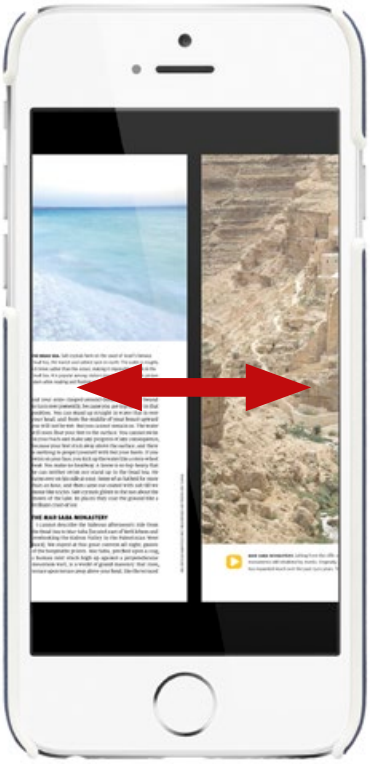

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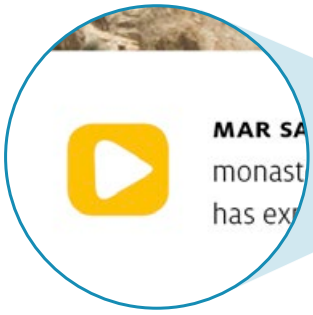

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ON THE COVER: Detail of a relief in the British Museum from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Iraq. The king, Ashurbanipal, is depicted in his chariot shooting arrows at a succession of lions while his attendants ward off a lion who is attacking from the rear.

Photo: Dreamstime.com

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EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER
Kalvin Dever

EDITOR
Gary Webster
editor@diggings.com.au

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Lee Dunstan, Melody Tan

ADMIN ASSISTANT/SUBSCRIPTIONS
Naomi Hurst

COPY EDITOR
Kerri Hillsdon

TOURS COORDINATOR
Linda Thomas
LindaThomas@adventistmedia.org.au

DIGITAL LAYOUT
Refresh Design Studio

PRINTER
Signs Publishing Company,
Warburton, VIC, Australia

AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTION
Gordon & Gotch Australia
Customer Service 1300 650 666

ADVERTISING
Info@diggings.com.au

SUBSCRIPTIONS
For subscriptions, gift memberships or change of address, write to:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGGINGS
Subscriptions, Locked Bag 1115,
Wahroonga NSW 2076, AUSTRALIA

email: subs@diggings.com.au
call: 1800 240 543
fax: 1300 135 411 (Aus only)

If you are outside of Australia please call +61 2 9847 2222 Fax: +61 2 5619 2033 or visit us online at www.diggings.com.au

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ISIS and the TERRORISTS of the ANCIENT WORLD

I write this in the wake of the barbaric attacks by ISIS in Paris that left 130 dead and more than 360 wounded. Just two weeks before, ISIS killed 224 people when they downed a Russian passenger jet in Egypt. This year especially, ISIS has killed and maimed people with reckless abandon throughout the Middle East and Europe. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, the number of people killed globally in terrorist attacks jumped 80 percent last year to the highest level ever recorded. A staggering 32,658 people were killed by terrorists in 2014, up from 18,111 the previous year. Nigeria-based Boko Haram and the Islamic State group were responsible for more than half of the deaths, according to the study. Unquestionably, terrorism is on the ascendency.

However history reveals that no society which gives itself up to such brutality can expect not to disintegrate. The noted English historian, Sir Arnold J Toynbee, analysed the histories of 21 civilizations, including ancient Rome, Babylon, the Greeks and the Aztecs. In his epic *A Study of History,* he describes six characteristics of civilizations on the brink of collapse—the first of which he terms a "schism of the soul," in which a society commits a type of cultural suicide, where something down deep inside of the corporate psyche of society snaps, and by which a civilization thereby self-destructs by destroying its own soul. Ancient Assyria's lust for violence and blood is perhaps the best example. Our cover story, "Terrorists of the Ancient World" (page 34), not only reveals that terrorism is nothing new, but is an ominous warning for our civilization.

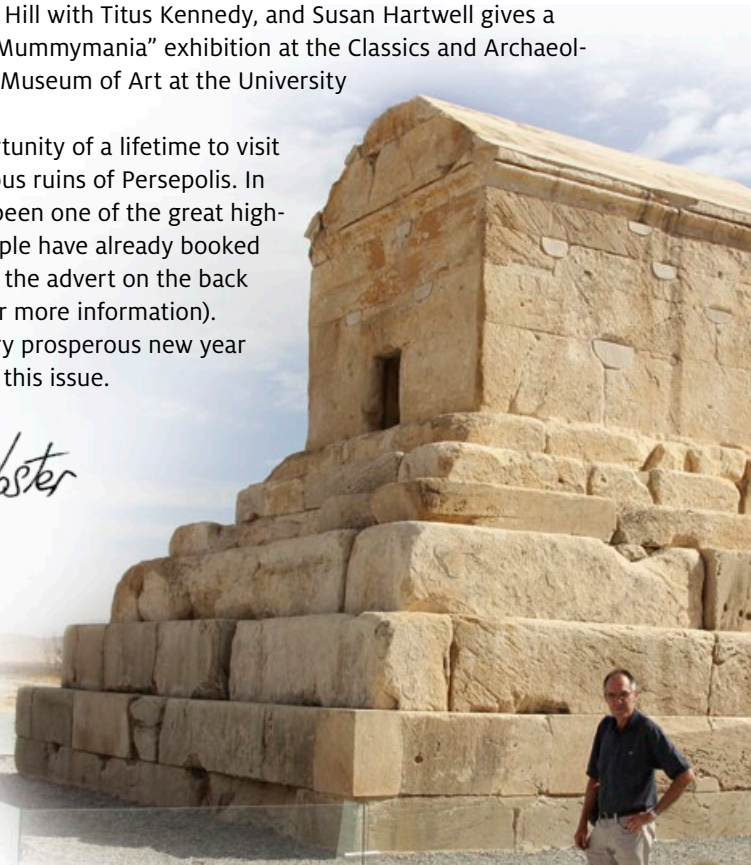
Which brings us to this, the first issue of 2016, which is packed full with interesting reading. Rick Stone's stimulating article on page 20 brings enlightenment on the first of the Greco-Persian wars. Daryn Graham introduces us to one of Rome's wisest and most loved Emperors—Nerva, under whom Rome experienced its happiest time. We take a journey in time via the excavations of Jerusalem's Western Hill with Titus Kennedy, and Susan Hartwell gives a sneak preview of the "Mummymania" exhibition at the Classics and Archaeology Gallery, Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne.

Don't miss the opportunity of a lifetime to visit Iran and see the fabulous ruins of Persepolis. In recent years, Iran has been one of the great highlights of our tours. People have already booked for our 2016 tours (see the advert on the back page and contact us for more information).

We wish you all a very prosperous new year and a happy read from this issue.

Gary Webster

Gary Webster
Editor



DANNY HERMAN
Israeli archaeologist and tour guide with a passion for sharing the history of his country with visitors.

MACCABEES TOMB FOUND?

The Jewish rebellion against the Seleucid Greeks was led by a Hasmonean family from a town called Modi'in, which was located halfway between Jerusalem and Jaffa. After expelling the Greeks and establishing a monarchy (also known as the Maccabean Dynasty), the Book of Maccabees describes the construction of a family mausoleum near the city:

> *"Simon had the body of his brother Jonathan brought to Modein, to be buried in the town of their ancestors. . . . Over the tomb of his father and his brothers Simon built a high monument . . . . He constructed seven pyramids side by side for his father, his mother, and his four brothers. For the pyramids he created a setting of tall columns on which there were carvings. Some of these carvings were of suits of armour and some were of ships" (*I Maccabees *12:25–29).*

In the nineteenth century, the French scholar Victor Guerin, who surveyed the Holy Land intensively, suggested that a hill named Sheikh Garabawi, which sat opposite the Arab village Al Midya, could well be the location of the Maccabean mausoleum. He conducted some excavations at the site and found the base of a long structure of some 23 metres (75 feet) by seven metres (23 feet). Although he didn't find any pyramids or reliefs, he was convinced this was the site, even to the point of trying to persuade the French embassy to purchase the plot from the Turks. His biggest critic was another French scholar, Clermont-Ganneau, who concluded the site could be at most a memorial building of the Maccabees, but one from Byzantine Christian times.

Recently Amit Re'em resumed an IAA expedition at the site, hoping to complete the exposure of the complex and learn more of its history. He recently invited me—we're neighbours, and both live near the site, in modern Modi'in—to view the results of his dig.

I had hoped to see new finds relating to the Maccabean mausoleum, but what was presented was only related to Christian Byzantine times, most of which is already known, deriving from Guerin's excavations.

It is still possible that Maccabean mausoleum remains are buried deeper beneath the Byzantine layers, but to date none has been uncovered.

PHOTOS: DANNY HERMAN

INSET: A re-exposed colourful cross symbol decorating a mosaic floor at the site of Sheikh Garabawi.

ABOVE: Amit Re'em, head of the expedition to the Sheikh Garabawi site, presents the results of his renewed excavations, which reveal a possible link to the tombs of the Maccabees.

CRUSADER NEIGHBOURHOOD RE-EXPOSED IN CAESAREA

The port of Caesarea Maritima was a Roman-style city founded by Herod the Great in the first century BC. It became a major commercial and cultural centre over the following centuries, and continued to be so until the time of the Crusaders. However, after their expulsion, Caesarea was abandoned and gradually the sand and debris reclaimed its streets. Then in the 1950s, archaeologist Abraham Negev began excavating the city, although many of his finds were never opened to the public.

In the past few months, an expedition from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) has been busy re-exposing one of Negev's digs. It is a Crusader era neighbourhood located just behind the so-called Sacred Hill of the city. The Sacred Hill first housed a temple to Augustus in the Roman period. Then in the Byzantine period, it was replaced by a church, which was later cleared for a mosque, which in Crusader times was cleared for a cathedral!

The neighbourhood relates to the time of the cathedral, and seems to illustrate civilian daily life behind the Sacred Hill. Perhaps it served pilgrims and/or local clergy worshipping in the cathedral. Its subterranean vaults had already been reconstructed by Negev, and currently the expedition is focusing on exposing various houses and clarifying their stratigraphy.

PICTURED: A re-exposed and reconstructed Byzantine era vaulted street, left, uncovered in the recent excavations behind the "sacred hill" in Caesarea.

PHOTOS: DANNY HERMAN

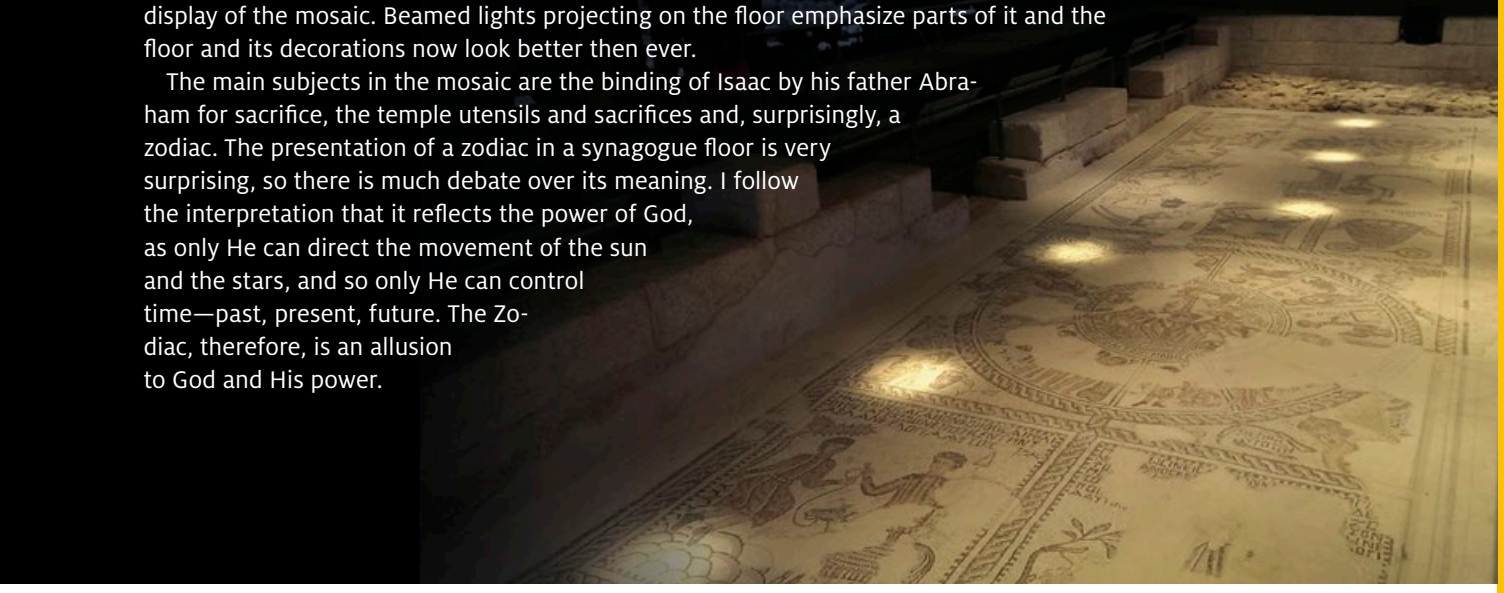
SEPPHORIS SYNAGOGUE

Sepphoris was an administrative centre in the Lower Galilee in Roman and Byzantine times. Although not mentioned in the biblical New Testament, Sepphoris is the nearest town to the small village of Nazareth, hometown of Jesus. So it is quite likely that Jesus visited Sepphoris when growing up, and maybe even joining his father on market days.

The first excavations at Sepphoris were carried out in 1931 by American archaeologist Leroy Waterman, but today most of the remains at the site are a result of a large-scale excavation project that began in the 1980s.

One of the most famous finds at Sepphoris was the accidental discovery of a large mosaic floor of an ancient Jewish synagogue. Recently, the Israeli Nature Parks Authority completed a project of upgrading the display of the mosaic. Beamed lights projecting on the floor emphasize parts of it and the floor and its decorations now look better then ever.

The main subjects in the mosaic are the binding of Isaac by his father Abraham for sacrifice, the temple utensils and sacrifices and, surprisingly, a zodiac. The presentation of a zodiac in a synagogue floor is very surprising, so there is much debate over its meaning. I follow the interpretation that it reflects the power of God, as only He can direct the movement of the sun and the stars, and so only He can control time—past, present, future. The Zodiac, therefore, is an allusion to God and His power.



HAS THE JERUSALEM ACRA BEEN FOUND?

The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) recently announced a discovery that supposedly solves a long-time riddle—the location of the Hellenistic period Acra of Jerusalem. The "Acra" (short for Greek, *Acropolis*, the citadel of a city) is documented in the book of Maccabees as being near the temple in the City of David. The city of David was built with strong walls and towers, which made it a fortress—an Acra—for them.

> *"And they placed there a sinful nation, wicked men, and they fortified themselves therein: and they stored up armour, and victuals, and gathered together the spoils of Jerusalem; And laid them up there: and they became a great snare. And this was a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil devil in Israel.* (I Maccabees *1:35–38)*

In Josephus' writings, the Acra is said to be built ". . . in the lower part of the city, for the place was high, and overlooked the temple; on which account he fortified it with high walls and towers, and put into it a garrison of Macedonians" (*Ant.* 12:252).

The Seleucid Greeks used the Acra until 141 BC, when Simon Maccabeus finally conquered it. He didn't demolish it; rather, he used it for a few more years.

The recent excavation conducted just outside the Ottoman Old City walls uncovered a more ancient wall, the base of a tower of impressive proportions, some 20 metres (65 feet) long and four metres (13 feet) wide. The wall's outer base was apparently formed as a slippery slope, which when coated made it difficult for an attacker to scale.

The small finds in the fill of the structure included Hellenistic era imported wine jars (amphorae), lead slingshots, bronze arrowheads and round ballista balls. Coins found among the ruins ranged from the time of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), to the reign of Antiochus VII (Sidates), who died in 129 BC

Before this discovery, various suggestions were made as to the likely location of the Acra, but none of this specific site. Although this location is lower than the Temple (contra Josephus' description above), it is nevertheless located in the heart of Jerusalem of the second century BC I trust further research in the area will provide confirmation of the true identity of this massive Hellenistic building.

TOP: A team member stands in the massive ruins uncovered by an IAA expedition next to the Old City of Jerusalem, which is attributed to the long-lost Seleucid Acra.

RIGHT: Lead sling stone and bronze arrowhead stamped with the symbol of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, evidence of attacks on the citadel.

PHOTO: ASSAF PERET / CLARA AMIT—IAA

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MUMMIFIED CHILD: Egypt, Graeco-Roman period, c. 332 BC–AD 395, on loan courtesy of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, Melbourne. IA1 2400.

"Mummymania," Melbourne!

Report by **Suzette Hartwell**

MANY OF US MAY VIEW MUMMIES AS A stark reminder of our humanity, our frailty and ourselves. However, a richly decorated coffin and the best preservation processes belie the fact we all have a limited time on earth. Mummies are the earthly remains of an entrenched religious belief of the ancient Egyptians; the closure of life, a resurrection into a new realm and immortality, which was believed possible by a strict procedure of recited protective spells, funerary and religious customs and mummification.

For the scientific community, however, mummies offer an unprecedented opportunity to learn about ancient disease, death, medicine, diet, reconstructions of facial likenesses and the possibility of exploring familial relationships. There are a host of associated multi-disciplinary ventures that are mostly non-invasive and more research is being added to this discipline all the time.

The Hollywood film industry conveys mummies as a horror genre, reborn in such classics as the 1932 movie *The Mummy,* starring Boris Karloff, and the Lon Chaney mummy movies: *The Mummy's Tomb* (1942); *The Mummy's Ghost* (1944); and *The Mummy's Curse* (1944), among many others. These early Hollywood movies inspired a plethora of similarly themed movies to the present, along with games and comics.

Now a unique exhibit at the Ian Potter Centre in Melbourne is offering a free insight into the world of the mummy and the afterlife accoutrements as produced by the ancients themselves. It includes Hollywood's spin to turn this aspect of humanity into a horror genre and in addition, how science is learning from mummies for the purpose of understanding ancient and modern diseases and medicine. Titled "Mummymania," it is a fascinating exhibit, encompassing real mummies; Egyptian pottery dating from the predynastic period of Egypt through to artefacts hailing from the Late Period (c. 525–332 BC); a wall of framed mummy posters from early Hollywood and features; CT scans and scientific analysis of mummies themselves. The concept of society's viewpoint and value of the mummy is also explored over time—thankfully gone are the days of a public unwrapping of a mummy originally as entertainment to now where non-invasive techniques can "virtually" do the same thing, taking science and the interested public on a visual journey at a molecular level.

Ever mindful of cultural considerations, there is signage at the entrance informing visitors of the presence of deceased human remains, which are respectfully low-lit and within the setting of an Egyptian funerary and scientific medical environment. A backdrop facsimile of the "Book of the Dead" enhances the funerary setting, reminiscent of many a tomb wall that had this important guide included for the deceased's safe journey into the afterlife. All of

LIMESTONE STELA WITH RELIEF OF FEMALE FIGURE, late Roman period (c. fourth century AD), discovered in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, part of the University of Melbourne Art Collection, purchased 1976.

MUMMY MASK. An early first century AD painted plaster mummy mask of a woman, a gift to the University of Melbourne Art Collection in 2009. Collection by David and Marion Adams, 2009.

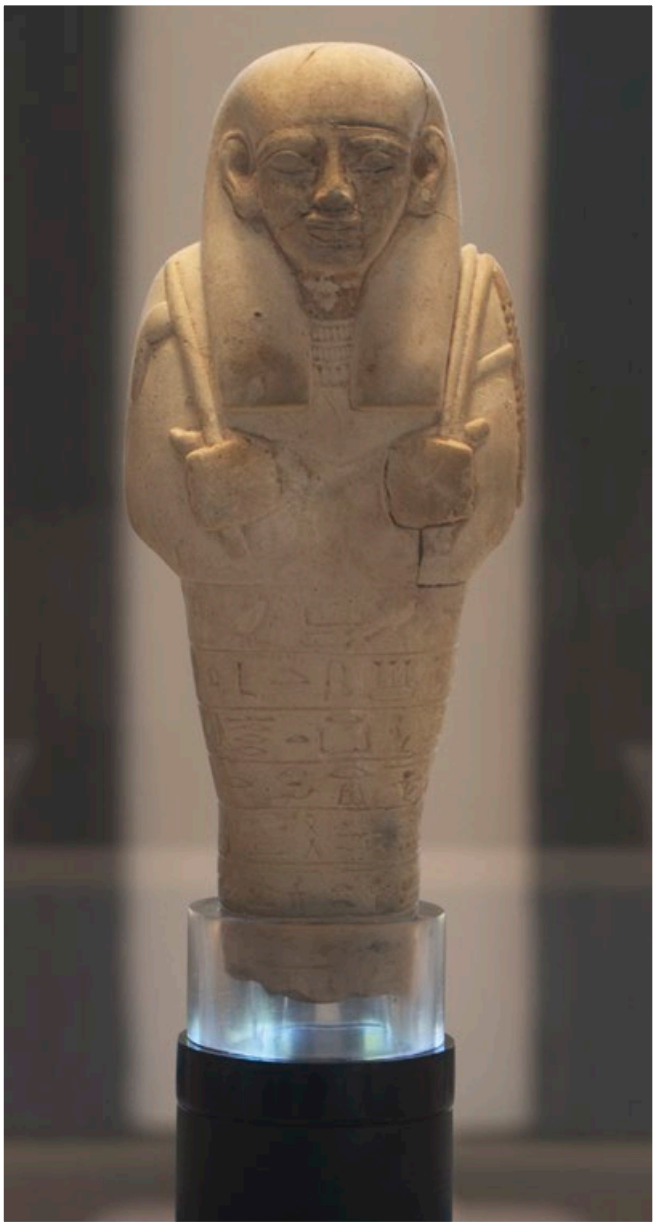
the artefacts and mummies on display have been loaned from resources available in Australia, a testament to the surviving material culture from ancient Egypt that can be learned from.

Some of many highlights include the painted wooden sarcophagus of Tamenkhamun of the Third Intermediate period, 22nd–25th Dynasty (c. 945–656 BC) on loan from Museum Victoria. It retains almost all of the original bright colours and fine details with the red face indicating a male who was believed to have been an official at the temple of Amen at Thebes. To give a better appreciation of the detail of his sarcophagus, the lower portion has been turned upside down and separated from the upper. The anthropoid, or human-shaped, sarcophagus has been painted with a nemes head cloth and wide-collar necklace, and is entirely covered with funerary detail, including the underneath painted footboard.

A golden painted mask over a wrapped mummified child with several intact painted cartonnage panels dates from the Graeco-Roman period (c. 332 BC–AD 395), demonstating how this precious this little one was when laid to rest all those millennia ago. The protective gods of internal organs, namely the four Sons of Horus, are painted on cartonnage on the chest. They also relate to the cardinal points of the compass: Hapy, portrayed with a hippo head, protected the lungs and was linked to the north; Imsety, as human headed, connected to the south and protected the liver; Qebehsenuef, in hawk form, related to the west and protected the intestines; and Duamutef, the east, protected the stomach. The mummy is on loan courtesy of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, Melbourne.

Select CT scans from an investigation of 14 Graeco-Roman child mummies, the largest undertaken to date, forms part of this exhibit, adding scientific qualification to the analysis of the ancient practice of mummification and disease. The purpose of these CT scans was to learn of possible cause of death and if any injuries were present, the age, sex and any genetic defects, if mummification packing was used, the type of mummification, and if any inclusions such as amulets or jewellery were present. In the case of the mummified child, a bracelet was visible on the wrist, most likely formed from ceramic. The study was restricted from taking samples, so it is presumed that most of the mummies studied died from disease. For the child mummy, the very rare incident of skeletal damage was the only indicator of cause of death.

Featured are over a dozen wooden Shabti figures dating to the New Kingdom c.1550–1070 BC, including a finely incised



ABOVE: The mummy case of Tamenkhamun, who appears to have been the official in charge of the temple of Amen, presumably at Thebes during the 22nd–25th Dynasty, c 945–656 BC.

RIGHT: Limestone shabti figurine inscribed with hieroglyphs, possibly from Memphis, c. 712–525 BC.

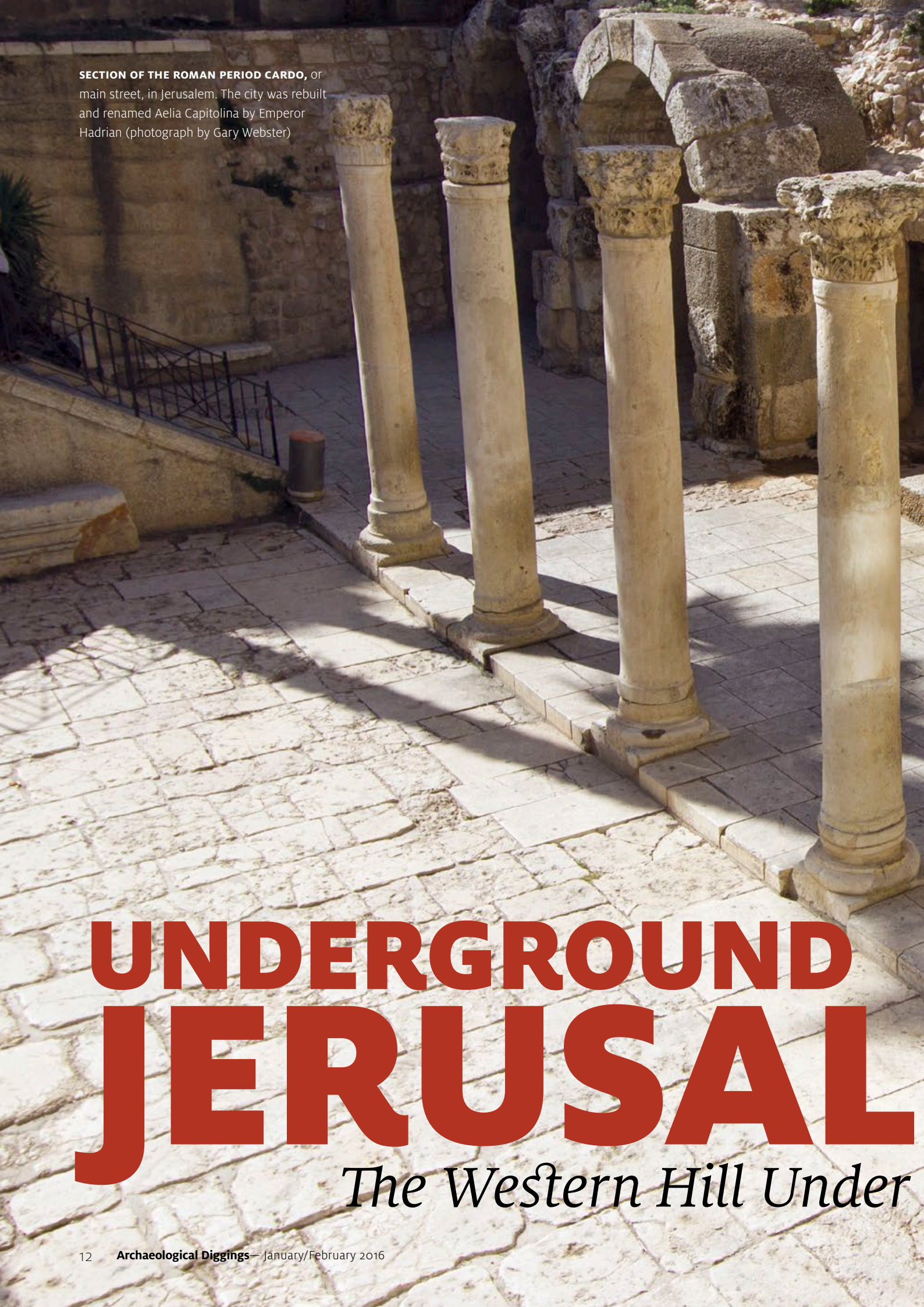
limestone Shabti from Kushite–Saite period (25th–26th Dynasty). In a rare display, two of the Shabtis retain part of their linen mummy wrapping, symbolic of the way their owner is also likely to have been prepared for the afterlife.

Fragments of linen textiles believed to date from the Pharaonic period (c. 3100–332 BC), demonstrate the superb weaving skills of the artisans from this ancient civilisation. The delicate intricacies of colour, looping, fringes and plain open-weave fabrics can be marvelled at, giving a deeper appreciation of the painstaking work involved to create an entire garment.

The exhibit caters to a wide audience with its genres of mummification and funerary practice, early Hollywood mummy horror to the enlightened analysis of scientific research and its contribution to medicine, Egyptology and archaeology. Mummymania is educational, fun and free and is on display at the Classics and Archaeology Gallery, Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne until April 17, 2016. ◆

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Caroline Tully, researcher and curatorial assistant, for information and images of this exhibition; to Dr Andrew Jamieson, curator, Dr Janet Davey for permission to use CT images and discussion on the research of the Graeco-Roman child mummies; Viki Petherbridge, photographer, and to Dr Chris Davey from the Australian Institute of Archaeology for information on the Graeco-Roman child mummy. All images used with permission of Ian Potter Centre, Melbourne, with sincere thanks.



SECTION OF THE ROMAN PERIOD CARDO, or main street, in Jerusalem. The city was rebuilt and renamed Aelia Capitolina by Emperor Hadrian (photograph by Gary Webster)

UNDERGROUND JERUSAL

The Western Hill Under

EM

Excavation

Jerusalem is an inexhaustible mine of archaeological wealth. Now **Titus Kennedy** reveals some of the recovered treasure.

OVER THE PAST TWO CENTURIES, A HUGE amount of archaeological work has been done in Jerusalem, revealing a city constantly connected with major historical events. Today, several archaeological projects, in addition to temporary salvage excavations, are uncovering more and more of the ancient history of Jerusalem. Among others, areas of excavation include the City of David, remains adjacent to the Temple Mount, the Jewish Quarter and Mount Zion. The sites reveal people in residence well before 2000 BC, and that the city underwent expansion to its north and west, especially during the Kingdom of Judah and then the Roman period.

In a section of today's Jewish Quarter, also referred to by the ancient designation "Herodian Quarter," the Burnt House was excavated in the 1970s. This house, which dates to the first century prior to the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem, is a wonderfully preserved example of a house belonging to a wealthy Judean who, as evidenced by the presence of ritual baths and ritual stone vessels, may have been part of the priestly class. Slightly to the northwest, in the present day Armenian Quarter, is the "House of Caiaphas" on Mount Zion, another first century palatial residence appearing to belong to a priestly family, although its identification with the biblical Caiaphas is only tentative. Slightly to the south and just outside the present Old City walls, more recent excavations have uncovered a third mansion appearing to belong to yet another wealthy resident of the priestly class of the first century. It is becoming obvious that this neighbourhood of northwest Jerusalem, in the upper city, was the area in which lived the elite—those connected with Rome and the leaders of the religious establishment. Being near Herod's palace (which became the Praetorium), easy access to the Temple, and the higher elevation all made it prime real estate within the city.

The archaeological site containing this third mansion, located on the beginning of the slope of the Western Hill in what was the southwest region of ancient Jerusalem, is today outside of the walls near Zion Gate. Excavations at this site, just south of Zion Gate and north of Dung Gate, have uncovered archaeological material spanning much of the occupational history of Jerusalem.

The area, now vacant, has yielded archaeological remains from the Ottoman period (1517–1917) all the way back to the Iron Age II (1000–587 BC), in the eighth century BC and the time of the Kingdom of Judah, and possibly even earlier to the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 BC), when Jerusalem was a city-state in Canaan, as evidenced by a few of the Amarna Letters written by the king of Jerusalem to the pharaoh. Archaeological work has exposed Ottoman, Medieval Islamic, Byzantine and Roman period structures, in addition to various pottery and artefacts from several periods. Hellenistic (probably Seleucid and Hasmonean) and Iron Age II (Kingdom of Judah) material was also uncovered, but no architecture from these earlier periods has yet been discovered on the site. It is likely that any building masonry was recycled in later periods, although foundations of buildings from these early periods may be discovered at lower layers.

PANORAMA OF JERUSALEM. Jewish, Christians and Muslims all view Jerusalem as sacred, the city could be considered the most holy city in the world.

A STAMPED JAR HANDLE WITH THE SEAL OF HEZEKIAH. During the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah (727–698 BC), storage jars, apparently containing products for tax payments, were stamped with his royal seal to indicate that the contents were state property.

Artefacts include coins dating to the fourth century AD, when Jerusalem was part of the Persian province of Yehud; fragments of calcite vessels, likely imported from Egypt and perhaps dating to the Late Bronze Age, Hellenistic or Roman period; lead sling projectiles; a variety of oil lamps; nails; limestone ritual vessels; murex shells; stamped jar handles; and moulded glass from the Iron Age or Late Bronze Age. The sling projectiles are similar to sling stones but oval-shaped and pointed instead of round, typically date to Hellenistic or Roman times, although it is possible that they were used prior to the Hellenistic period. These sling bullets often contain inscriptions taunting the enemy or depictions of lightning bolts. They flew faster and penetrated armour better than the earlier round, stone sling balls (see 1 Samuel 17:40).

Many oil lamps and fragments of oil lamps from the Roman period, the Byzantine period and the early Islamic period have been found in excavations on Mount Zion. While most of the lamps are broken, a few examples have been discovered intact or in a condition that allowed restoration. The lamps were typically made out of clay, although a few notable examples of stone oil lamps from the Roman period have been discovered. Oil burning lamps were the sources of light after sunset and inside buildings with limited natural light (see Matthew 5:15) in biblical times. Iron nails of the type used in construction and crucifixion in antiquity (Acts 2:23) are also quite common finds. Stone jars, bowls and cups made of soft limestone local to the region are often found in sites of the first century, wherever the purity rituals of the Mosaic Law were practiced. These were usually used for ritual washing purposes and suggest that a family belonging to the religious elite may have lived in this first century mansion, since according to the Judean custom of purification, stone vessels did not become impure as did ceramic vessels (John 2:6).

Some of the stone bowls and jars found in excavations are quite basic, while others are intricately carved and likely belonged to a wealthy family. One of the stone vessels is of particular note. It is an almost intact cup containing a

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MODEL OF FIRST CENTURY AD JERUSALEM. A 50:1 scale reconstruction of Jerusalem in the year AD 66, on the eve of the Jewish Revolt against Rome, which lead to the destruction of the Temple and the city in the year AD 70. This was Jerusalem at its greatest extent.

ten-line inscription in what has been described as both Cryptic Hebrew and the standard Aramaic script of the first century. While the inscription hasn't been completely deciphered, it appears to relate to the going up of priests to the Temple, and it contains the name of God, *YHWH*. The murex shells, from a type of Mediterranean sea snail, are waste in the production of Tyrian purple dye, extracted from a gland in the snail. This dye was used in garments for royalty, the wealthy and the priesthood (see Mark 15:17; Luke 16:19; Exodus 28:6).

From the Iron Age, stamped jar handles dating to the period of Hezekiah around 700 BC, inscribed with *LMLK*, meaning "belonging to the king," have been discovered on Mount Zion. These jar handles were stamped with the seal of King Hezekiah of Judah (reigned ca. 716–687 BC), which was a winged scarab, and the stamps seem to have indicated that the contents were taxes in the form of goods paid to the royal house in storage jars. Artefacts such as the calcite vessel fragments and the moulded glass, which date earlier than Hezekiah, complicate a full understanding of the site. Since these artefacts were found "out of context" rather than on a floor or living surface with accompanying pottery, we can only hypothesize the date of manufacture based on the shape and materials. It does, however, suggest that the Western Hill area of Jerusalem could have been occupied earlier than the eighth century BC.

Coins in Jerusalem, which serve as important chronological and historical markers, span the fourth century BC to the present. Specific coins relating to biblical history include a Persian period Yehud coin (fourth century BC) from just after the time of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (when Judah was a Persian province); several coins of Herod the Great (ca. 37–4 BC), who ruled when Jesus was born; Herod Antipas (ca. 4 BC–AD 39), who was in power in Galilee during most of the time of Jesus and at the beginning of the Christian church; Pontius Pilate (ca. AD 26–36), who was the Roman prefect that presided over the trial of Jesus; Herod Agrippa I (ca. AD 41–44), who arrested some of the apostles and died a painful death soon after delivering an infamous speech; and coins of the first Judean Revolt against Rome; which culminated in the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Nehemiah 12:22-30; Matthew 2:1; Luke 3:1; Matthew 27:2; Acts 12:1–23; Luke 19:41–44). These historical figures and events are also known through both archaeology and various historical sources, such as the writings of Josephus, Philo and Tacitus.

Structures on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, often reused or partially rebuilt, have been uncovered from the Ottoman, Islamic, Byzantine and Roman periods, while partial foundations or building stones from earlier periods may have been repurposed in later architecture. Among the latest significant structures is a large, two-tiered cistern. A cistern is an underground chamber for water storage, and these structures were essential in Jerusalem due to the limited supply of spring water and lack of a river. This cistern, rising high above the level of many earlier structures, was constructed in the Medieval period, remodelled and reused

PHOTO: GARY WEBSTER

REMAINS OF A "PRIESTLY MANSION" FROM FIRST CENTURY JERUSALEM. Revealled was this floor decorated with intricate geometric mosaics, and large, stone water pots were discovered within the house.

for centuries after. As is often the case in archaeological sites, the cistern cut through remains and deposits from earlier periods, including Islamic, Byzantine and Roman.

The evidence from the excavation strongly suggests that the area was constantly used throughout much of the history of Jerusalem, and that deposits of earlier material often accompany later architecture in reuse for foundation construction. This illustrates an important lesson for archaeology that the date of the materials in redeposited layers is often different than that of the architecture around it.

Another prominent architectural feature in this area from Medieval times is a tower, which was built after the city had been taken back from the Crusaders. Historical and archaeological sources from approximately the time of the Crusades suggest that some type of dry moat was situated in front of the city wall of Jerusalem. Medieval sources do not specify a moat running around the entirety of the walls of Jerusalem, and no clear archaeological evidence has been discovered to indicate the existence of this moat around southern Jerusalem in the area of Mount Zion, but there was a defensive structure of this type in front of the north and west walls of the city. However, various pits and pockets of ash with burned grains and animal bones, including pig bones, indicate that the Crusaders camped on Mount Zion during their siege of Jerusalem.

According to pottery and artefact finds, these finds could be related to the 1099 siege of Jerusalem by the Crusaders. During the First Crusade, the Crusaders camped outside the city walls and constructed wooden siege towers, which were burned in the attack on the city. The ash, bones, and grains could have been trash from their camp, and part of the burning could have been due to the defenders launching fire upon the besiegers to halt their attack.

From earlier periods, the various Byzantine architecture is the most prominent. Remains of at least one massive Byzantine (fourth to sixth century) building, which could have been part of a church or another public structure, spans much of the site and partially reused the stone foundations from the Roman period (first century BC to fourth century AD). Sections of white mosaic floors, some with coloured geometric or floral designs, were found in building remains of the Byzantine period. A partially preserved archway, which appears to be part of another massive Byzantine building but which may actually date back to Roman times, was also exposed. The exact nature of the building containing the archway is unknown—it could have been the private residence or a public building.

Many of the most impressive architectural remains on Mount Zion date to the Roman period. While a very small amount of pottery and a few artefacts, such as Tenth Legion-stamped tiles, date to the Late Roman period after the city was destroyed (and eventually rebuilt by Emperor Hadrian as Aelia Capitolina), it appears that nothing substantial was built on Mount Zion during the second and third centuries. Prior to this, however, a residential complex or mansion, certainly owned by one of the Judean elite and probably a family of the priestly class, was occupied until

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1ST CENTURY AD MANSION. Remains of part of the Mount Zion building that was occupied until the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Seen is the arched doorway and intact wall. Inside, a preserved bathtub and ritual bath carved into the bedrock was discovered.

the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. During excavation of this building, basement rooms, a large cistern, a ritual bath and ovens were discovered. One of the basement rooms, almost perfectly preserved, had an arched doorway, much of the ceiling still intact, and a complete plastered bathtub. The room next to this had a ritual bath carved into the bedrock that would have been used after normal washing for the Jewish purification ritual.

The same type of architecture was found in earlier excavations in Jerusalem, slightly to the north in the Burnt House of the Herodian Quarter. These bathtubs and ritual baths were in the context of a mansion of the elite during the first century AD. It is likely that the parts of buildings uncovered from the Roman period are remnants of a residence that members of the priestly class lived in, such as high priests Caiaphas and Annas, mentioned in the Gospels and the writings of Josephus. The large cistern, which seemed to be part of this residence, not only demonstrates that there were many sources of stored water in ancient Jerusalem, but also confirms the account of Josephus just prior to the Roman destruction. Josephus says that when the Romans were besieging

ANCIENT GREEK LEAD SLING BULLETS WITH ENGRAVINGS, FROM THE FOURTH CENTURY BC. Sling "bullets" like these, dating to Hellenistic or Roman times, and also with inscriptions on them taunting the enemy, were discovered on the slopes of the Western Hill of Jerusalem. One side depicts a winged thunderbolt and the other the Greek inscription for "Take that!" in relief.

PHOTO: TITUS KENNEDY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE ON MT ZION IN JERUSALEM. Ancient materials from at least as far back as the eighth century BC have been uncovered on the Western Hill, including sections of this first century AD mansion.

the city, the people hid underground (Josephus, *Wars*). Inside this cistern were found many cooking pots of the first century AD. Additionally, charcoal and bones were uncovered, suggesting that people were sheltering and even cooking in the cistern before the city was overrun by the Romans.

Sections of other rooms or structures from the Roman period have also been excavated, including what was likely the upper floor of a building, a doorway, and various carved stones. Found within the rubble were many finely crafted stucco fragments that were used to decorate walls and ceilings, and pieces of wall fresco painted in red and blue. The stucco and fresco remnants date to the first century, and would have been on the walls and ceilings of the buildings. This type of décor, which was affordable only for the wealthy, further demonstrates that powerful and influential families lived in this neighbourhood during the first century. Thus, whoever owned this mansion was probably both wealthy and connected to Rome—perhaps one of the Herodians or Sadducees (see Matthew 22:15–23).

The priests, and particularly high priests of this time, were often part of the sect of the Sadducees, and also connected with the Herodian rulers and Rome (see Acts 5:17). The presence of high quality stone vessels used in ritual purification practices, ritual baths within the house, and Murex for purple dye suggests that this neighbourhood was occupied by people who were wealthy, politically connected to Rome, and also observed the Mosaic Law. While we don't know the identity of the occupants of this particular house, priests such as Annas or Caiaphas would certainly fit the profile (see John 18:12, 13).

The earlier remains from the Iron Age are much more limited—generally only broken pottery and a few artefacts from Iron Age II (1000–587 BC) have been found on Mount Zion. In addition to the Hezekiah stamped jar handles, artefacts from the time of the Kingdom of Judah include a broken horse and rider figurine. Many figurines of this type have been discovered previously throughout Judah.

The idolatry of the Kingdom of Judah at the beginning, and after, the reign of Hezekiah, was typical and problematic according to the biblical books of Kings, Chronicles and Jeremiah. However, these figurines may not have been religious in nature, and there is no consensus as to if they were toys, decorations or, indeed, idols. Although it appears that the city of Jerusalem extended up the Western Hill during the time of King Hezekiah and later, as also evidenced by the Broad Wall to the east, most of the building materials were probably repurposed multiple times in later centuries.

As one can see from the archaeological remains on the Western Hill of Jerusalem, the city has been occupied for millennia, and buildings were built over buildings, which were built over buildings. Fortunately, pieces of the past were preserved, left behind in the soil so that the history of Jerusalem and its people can be deciphered and better understood. Future excavations will certainly reveal and illuminate more of the history of the Bible and of the amazing city of Jerusalem. ◆

Darius I and the Genesis of a War

Richard Stone looks at the personalities and politics behind a clash of ancient cultures.

WHENEVER THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ancient Greeks and Persians comes under discussion, almost invariably it is the Persians who are thought of as the aggressor—the villain of the piece who get their comeuppance at the hand of a nobler foe—the triumph of a small nation winning an unlikely victory against overwhelming odds. Most of us are Eurocentric in outlook, siding with the fledging European nation that provided us our first democracy. In addition, our view of history is often coloured by the attitudes, biases and prejudices of our sources. So is our view of the Persian Empire unreasonably influenced by viewpoints antagonistic to their rule?

DARIUS THE GREAT

Darius I reigned over the Persian Empire at its zenith, from 522–486 BC as part of the Achaemenid Dynasty, founded by Cyrus II a few years before Darius's ascension. His was a reign that showed its ability to build a great, civilized society, both materially and administratively, which exhibited benevolence toward the peoples under its dominion. It should be observed, therefore, that however much the Greek historian Herodotus provides invaluable information about those times, he was disparaging of not only Darius's accomplishments but also his vision of society. As a consequence, Herodotus betrays his prejudices and those of his countrymen toward the leader of the greatest empire the earth had ever known.

Perhaps it was that Herodotus saw the defeat of the Persians at Marathon as justification for his views. After all, the Athenians accomplished an astounding victory: Greek determination, tactics and technology won over Persian arrogance, presumption and ill-preparedness. And that victory has coloured the view of Darius the Great since that time.

Were the Greco-Persian wars inevitable? Perhaps. The encroachment of the Persian Empire upon Greek territories preordained an eventual clash of cultures–and heightened the potential for a clash of arms. Darius's kingdom, at its height, extended in the northwest from Constantinople to the Aral Sea, and then across to the Indus River in the East. In the South, it bordered the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, extending down the coast of the Mediterranean through Lebanon and Israel to the Nile, encompassing Lower Egypt and across into Libya.

The fact remains, however, that the Greco-Persian wars began primarily from causes innocent enough in themselves, stemming from cultural differences that caused inevitable misunderstandings. At the outset it was the Athenians who initiated the political outreach toward the Persians; however, in the end they created a problem that would resonate through the following years: an act that represented staggering diplomatic ineptitude.

The Athenian outreach to the Persians stemmed from their insecurities regarding Spartan intentions. The Spartans had already once invaded Athens and although they had been repelled, the Athenians felt far from secure. Both city-states co-existed in an attitude of mutual distrust and hostility. Even if another military campaign against Athens was unlikely, they had reason to fear Spartan

PERSIAN SOLDIERS. This decorative frieze of polychrome glazed brick shows the Persian army carrying spears, bows and quivers; they are the royal guards of Darius I (522–486 BC). The frieze is from the Palace of Darius the Great in Susa, Iran, now in the Louvre Museum, Paris.

ENTRANCE TO THE ODEON OF AGRIPPA IN THE ATHENS AGORA. The Athens Democratic Assembly met here. They not only unilaterally dissolved the pact made by their ambassadors with Persia in 508 BC, but also failed to inform the Persians of their decision.

attempts to destabilise the democratic reforms developing within Athenian territories. A prime concern was that the Spartans would throw their support behind a faction within Athens that championed oligarchy rather than civil democracy. It was because of this insecurity that Athens made a ham-fisted attempt to secure support from its powerful neighbour across the Aegean. It was a pact, they believed, which would stay Sparta's hand.

Cultural fallout: an agreement goes off the rails

Persia had already had experience with Sparta, even if they were not well-informed about the city-state of Athens. When the Persians annexed the Ionian territories under Cyrus, the Spartans viewed this as a threat. And they were right to do so, for in 514 BC, Persian forces had conquered Thrace and Macedonia, bringing them uncomfortably close to the major Greek territories. The Spartans therefore conveyed a message warning against any Persian designs on the Greek homelands.

The Persian experience of Athens was soon coming. In 508 BC emissaries from Athens travelled to Sardis, the Persian headquarters in Anatolia. There they met Darius's representative and the local governor. They carried a more conciliatory message. What they sought was an alliance where the might of Persia would serve to protect them from Spartan machinations. There was almost a comic element to the encounter: so inconsequential were the Athenians to the Persian mind that the Persian governor had never heard of them!

> *When they [Athenian diplomats] got there [Sardis] and delivered their message, Artaphernes the son of Hystaspes, the governor, asked in reply who these Athenians were that sought an alliance with Persia, and in what part of the world they lived. (Herodotus,* Histories *5.73)*

Nevertheless, Persia entered into a treaty with Athens. Yet despite this moment of realpolitik, the Athenians committed the blunder of assuming that their agreement with Persia would see them as equal partners with the great empire. At the end of the negotiations, protocol dictated the Athenians offer tokens of earth and water to their hosts. Unwittingly, when they offered these symbols they were in effect offering fealty and acknowledging the superiority of their Persian partner. Even when they realised their error, the Athenian diplomats were unwilling to backtrack: the agreement was too important for their political, if not physical, survival as a city-state.

This, however, wasn't the case when the ambassadors returned home. The Athenian Assembly was outraged that their diplomats had, in effect, acknowledged their submission to Persia. Yet the Assembly then compounded their ambassadors' error, unilaterally dissolving the pact without bothering to inform Persia. It was a serious underestimation of the significance Darius placed upon symbolic acts in their service of a cohesive empire.

The compounding of errors

The actual outbreak of hostilities between Athens and Persia stemmed from a civil revolt on the west coast of Anatolia in 499 BC. The Greek city-states on Ionia had been under Persian control since 546 BC, now, after half a

PHOTOS: GARY WEBSTER

PERSEPOLIS. Darius I constructed a magnificent complex at Persopolis, which was intended to be both a showpiece and a political hub. It was a geographic centre-point to unite his empire.

century, the Ionian city-states rebelled against the Greek tyrants installed by their Persian overlords. A leader of the revolt travelled to the Greek mainland to secure military aid for their struggle. While Sparta turned down the request for logistical reasons, the Athenians voted to grant aid: Athens joined with the city-state of Eretria in sending a military force to Ionia.

The campaign took the Athenian forces to Sardis, the city where the pact between Athens and Persia had been sealed almost a decade earlier (and which as far as the Persians were concerned, was still in effect). The rebels, encouraged by the support they received, put the city to the torch, including a revered religious sanctuary. However, in the face of renewed onslaughts from the Persian forces, the Athenians and Eretrians retreated to their respective home territories. The remaining Ionian force crumbled and five years on the revolt was effectively quelled.

An "enlightened" response

In the wake of the revolt and the restitution of Persian control, one might expect the Persians would have tightened their grip, installing even more repressive measures. Rather, Darius showed not only his beneficence but also his astuteness and pragmatism: he reorganized the governance of the territory, installing democratic governments to replace the tyrannical rule that led to the revolt. It was almost as if Darius was making a tacit admission that there had been grounds for the uprising—and so provided a conciliatory solution. Herodotus' observation that Darius was best suited to be a tradesman or shopkeeper appears wide of the mark, an attempt to denigrate Darius.

DARIUS AS MAN AND RULER

The fact is, Darius had already exhibited the hallmarks of a great leader. By delegating authority, allowing relative autonomy, as well as ensuring these satrapies exhibited a uniform mode of governance, he demonstrated a grasp of political and administrative realities. He was building an infrastructure able to sustain a large and diverse population.

More than any previous ruler, Darius understood the importance of communication in holding together a vast empire. He built roads and opened sea lanes to facilitate trade, the functioning of his bureaucracy and deployment of his armies; he worked on the construction of a canal between the Red Sea and Nile River; he conducted building work at Susa, his administrative capital; and at Persepolis constructed a magnificent complex intended as both showpiece and political hub—a geographic centre-point to unite the empire. In addition, an important Royal Road from Susa to Sardis is first mentioned during Darius's reign.

Darius issued his proclamations in three languages—Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian—to facilitate communication. At Persepolis, a place resplendent with stone reliefs of tribunes offering homage, actual tribunes from throughout the empire attended the Persian New Year's celebrations. These ambassadors, from more than twenty different ethnic groups, appeared resplendent in their traditional dress and offered token tributes to their king. And they did so without coercion. There they witnessed the splendour and might of the Persian court: it was a coming together, an opportunity to pay homage and join the festive celebration. And a chance, upon

ECBATANA EXCAVATIONS, IRAN. It was in this city that officials of Darius I found a scroll containing a decree of King Cyrus concerning the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, as mentioned in the biblical book of Ezra (6:1–3, 12).

returning to their home territories, to regale audiences with stories of the grandeur of it all and the magnanimity they had experienced.

Darius commissioned monumental stone reliefs at strategic sites, which advertised his accomplishments. At Bisitun, east of Kermanshah, on the Great Khorasan Road, a stone relief was carved to commemorate the victory that saw his ascension to the throne. Inscriptions also were engraved proclaiming how Darius defeated his enemies and seized the crown.

He was the first ruler in history to mint coinage that depicted his own image. It was a brilliant stroke; not only did it make commerce easier, as well as the payment of tribute, it also served as a means of effective propaganda. Even in a far-flung territory, a gold or silver coin of the realm served as a reminder of fealty to King Darius. His image was struck as a warrior with a drawn bow and quiver or spear emphasising both their submission to a powerful leader and the wealth his rule had brought. Darius was no shopkeeper.

Darius's treatment of the Jews

Further evidence of Darius's astuteness and modus operandi was his approach towards the Jewish Babylonian captives: it is illustrative of his insights into the need to mete governance with benevolence. He continued the policies of Cyrus, whose strategy was to allow conquered peoples to practice their native religions without hindrance. In 522 BC, however, the usurper Smerdis, during his brief reign, enacted a decree prohibiting the restoration of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple. Upon Smerdis's assassination, the Jews resumed their building efforts, only to have their "presumption" reported to Darius. Darius had the veracity of Cyrus's edict checked and again ratified the decree by issuing one of his own. And in an act that can be seen as conciliatory, he instructed the Syrian satrap to this time assist the Jew's rebuilding effort. The details of the episode are found in the Biblical book of Ezra:

> *Then King Darius made a decree, and they searched the archives where the documents were stored in Babylon. But it was in Ecbatana, the capital in the province of Media, that a scroll was found on which this was written: "A record. In the first year of his reign, King Cyrus issued a decree: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices are offered and burnt offerings are brought; . . . May the God who has established his name there overthrow any king or people that shall put forth a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, make a decree; let it be done with all diligence." (Ezra 6.1–3, 12, NRSV)*

A treachery remembered

However, if Darius's democratic reforms in Ionia were enlightened, his reaction to the Athenian support of the insurrection was a different matter. His sense of justice was outraged by what he deemed Athenian betrayal. The Athenians had provided tokens of their fealty just a few years earlier, now they had reneged. He found that unconscionable. One of Herodotus's sources, the historian records, tells that while Darius was prepared to let the fate of the Ionians come in due course, upon hearing of

PHOTO: GARY WEBSTER

THE FIRST MARATHON. Luc-Olivier Merceon's (1846-1920) depiction of Pheidippides delivering the message of victory over the Persians to the Athenian assembly after the battle of Marathon. While Pheidippedes' run is actually a second century AD myth, his two-day run of some 225–246 km from Marathon to Sparta to ask the Spartans to join the Athenian defence at Marathon is not, and was more epic than that of the Athenian army's 35 km feat in returning to Athens to face the Persian invasion from the sea.

the Athenian involvement, Darius "took [his bow], set an arrow on the string, shot it up into the air and cried: 'Grant, O God, that I may punish the Athenians.' Then he commanded one of his servants to repeat to him the words, 'Master, remember the Athenians", three times, whenever he sat down to dinner' " (Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.105).

Nor had Darius any intention of forgetting the Athenians—the words that reminded of their treachery continued to be whispered into his ear. If that weren't enough, a Greek by the name of Hippias, a tyrant of Athens before the democratic reforms, fled to the Persian court in Sardis when expelled and encouraged an attack on his erstwhile home.

The first invasion

In due course, Darius responded to these influences, and in 492 BC despatched an invasion force to mainland Greece. However, wild storms destroyed much of the fleet and the surviving vessels turned back. The following year, Darius sent emissaries to various Greek city-states to demand their subservience by a demonstration of allegiance—with the ceremonial show involving earth and water. A large number refused, with some Greek cities even summarily executing the Persian diplomats. Such provocations demanded a strong response: Darius decided to deal with each in turn—once he'd settled the Athenian issue. What the situation did spark, however, was an unlikely agreement between Athens and Sparta to come to the other's aid in the event of a Persian attack.

The second invasion

Darius made good on his quest. He demanded trireme war ships, as well as transports for his cavalry, from towns along the Asian coast. In 490 BC, an armada of some 600 ships carried approximately 20,000 troops and cavalry to the island of Euboea where they attacked first the city of Karystos then Eretria. Their overwhelming superiority saw them victorious; they took captives and set the cities to the torch. Following the victory, the fleet sailed to Attica, making landfall adjacent to a plain near an insignificant village called Marathon. This landing-place was on the advice of the Greek traitor Hippias, using his local knowledge to brief the Persian commander, Datis. The site was well chosen. The adjacent battleground suited cavalry, while a lake nearby supplied drinking water. The next day, the Athenians began arriving, preparing to join battle.

The Athenians had dispatched their best runner, Pheidippides, to carry the call to arms to Sparta. His epic run was one of some 240 km over several days, to request the Spartans join the Athenian forces at Marathon. The Spartans pledged their support but could not despatch a force until concluding their sacred Karneia festival. By the time they arrived, the battle had been fought and won.

The odds against them

The only ally to fight for the Athenians was a small contingent from the city-state of Plataea, north of Athens. As the Persians joined the field of battle, it was clear they outnumbered the Athenian militia by more than two to

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA, PHEIDIPPEDES

TOMB OF DARIUS I AT NAQSH-E RUSTAM, IRAN. Darius had inherited a loosely organized kingdom but when he died at about sixty-four years old he left behind an empire that was well-organized and strong however he never succeeded in his dream of subjugating the Greeks.

one. It would almost have been better for the Greek forces had the invading Persian force been an unknown quantity; however, they knew more about the Persian strength than the Persians knew of the Athenian vulnerabilities.

The outlandish uniform of the Persian force added to the psychological impact. Soldiers were covered head to foot, cloaked in a hood and clad in tunics and patterned trousers. The Athenian *hoplites* (heavy infantry), on the other hand, were covered in armour which was comprised of bronze, covering chest and abdomen, bronze greaves protected their legs from knee to ankle, and a bronze helmet that extended to protect the face. The Greeks, however, were soon to prove that they were the better equipped.

Indecision on the battlefield

Despite the disparity in the size of the forces, the Greeks felt the pressure to take the initiative. If word of the situation got back to the city it was possible that the Athenian Assembly would submit rather than fight. Worse, those Athenians who supported the drive for an oligarchy could strike a deal with the Persians, sounding the death knell of the democratic movement. And on the battlefield at Marathon, it too was a close thing. According to Herodotus, in the face of the apparently overwhelming force, of the 10 generals five were prepared to fight while five voted in favour of retreat. After an impassioned plea by one, Miltiades, in favour of joining battle, the casting vote was left to Callimachus, the War Archon. He voted with Miltiades: it was his vote that changed the course of history.

The "Miltiades advantage"

As it happened, Miltiades had fought under Darius at Scythia, so he was familiar with Persian tactics. He knew that the Persians preferred long-range attacks, filling the air with arrows upon an advancing enemy and launching cavalry to make flanking attacks upon the reeling foe. He also knew his force was better armoured and better armed.

The opposing forces formed into battle lines on September 11. Facing the Persians, Miltiades had had to weaken his line to match the breadth of the Persian line; otherwise the Persians could outflank him. As a consequence, the Greeks were unable to adopt the traditional Greek phalanx. The hoplites customarily went into battle in close ranks eight deep. Incongruously, Miltiades thinned his centre further, perhaps to half its normal depth, facing a Persian centre force at least 10 ranks deep. Miltiades weighted the ends of his line, anticipating an attack on his flanks by cavalry. It is also where *peltasts* (light infantry) were stationed, guarding the hoplites' flanks, and harassing the enemy with slings and spears. It was a bold gamble; a break at the centre could have spelt doom, yet it almost seemed as if Miltiades anticipated that if his central force crumpled it would be an opportunity for his flanks to fold in and encircle the Persians: surprise and initiative would supplant strength.

On the field, the forces stood 1500 metres (one mile) apart: their lines of battle each 1500 metres long. The Greeks attacked. Normally Greek hoplites would advance at a fast walk set to rhythmic music timing their advance: this may have been the way this attack began. However,

PHOTO: GARY WEBSTER

upon closing to 400 metres (450 yards) and in range of Persian arrows the hoplites broke into a run. Without the support of either cavalry or archers it was an act that the Persians saw as foolhardy. However, the Greek general knew that Athenian strength showed itself in close-quarter combat—and it was where the Persians were most vulnerable.

The hoplites carried into battle a *hoplon*—a 75-centimetre-(30 inch) diameter wood or leather shield covered in a thin sheet of bronze—a short iron sword and, most importantly, a 2.4 metre (8 ft) spear tipped with a four-bladed spike of bronze or iron. The Greek shield was virtually impervious to arrows, as was their breastplate, and their longer spears could engage the enemy before the Persians could respond. The Persian infantry, in addition to their light shields and armour, possessed only a dagger, a light curved sword, and a short spear. In the battle, the Greeks were forcing upon them, their weaponry and armour were out-matched. The heavier swords of the Greeks, in the hands of the disciplined, tightly packed phalanx, were hard to resist and shredded the Persian wicker shields. It was nevertheless a hard task. With the Persian force 400 metres away, the Greek soldiers were laden with armour and weaponry weighing upward of 50 kg (110 lb) and the necessity of wearing their heavy helmets was so onerous, they donned them only at the last.

An Athenian victory

Even though the Greeks struck with the benefit of swiftness and surprise, their weakened centre faltered. But then the strength of their flanks, which had overwhelmed the forces that directly faced them, folded in on the enemy centre in a classic pincer. Now it was the Persians' turn to waver and they withdrew in disorder. The Greeks pursued them to the water's edge, seizing seven of the anchored triremes. Reports tell of almost 6400 Persian troops falling in the course of the battle, while the Greeks suffered less than 200 dead. Although Herodotus may have massaged both numbers for propaganda purposes, it was by any measure a surprising and spectacular victory.

No-one has satisfactorily explained the absence of any mention of the Persian cavalry during the battle. Perhaps, despite its appearance, the terrain proved unsuitable, with knots of trees or bushland preventing a sweeping charge. Or perhaps the ground was too soggy for mounted troops, as we do know the last of the battle was fought on the marshy coastal fringe. Or the Persians may have strategically limited their force in order to tempt the Athenians into attacking before their Spartan allies arrived. The fact that the Persians were able to retreat with the Greeks at their heels for the loss of only seven triremes indicates perhaps that there may even have been problems with the cavalry's transportation and they were not yet at the scene.

Athens under a renewed threat

But the threat wasn't over. The Persian fleet still carried almost three quarters of their original force and it was now headed toward Athens itself. There was no time to rest on their laurels: the Athenian forces headed back to Athens, 35 km (21 miles) distant, to man its fortifications. And here the Persians blundered: instead of sailing straight to Athens, they stopped at Aegilia to pick up their Eretrian prisoners. The pause enabled the Greek force from Marathon time to reach the city.

The Greek forces' return to Athens was a feat in itself, commemorated today by the race we call the "marathon," although it probably owes its origin to the apocryphal story of a run by Pheidippides' to warn Athens after the Persian defeat at Marathon. Over time it has become confused with his run to summon the Spartan force to Marathon. For their part, the Plataeans had proved themselves noble allies. But more importantly, the Athenians had defeated the Persian forces without the aid of the militaristic Spartan city-state. Athens was beginning its ascendancy.

The Persian fleet arrived off Athens' harbour and belatedly realized they were too late; Athens was already strongly defended. In the end, all they could do was return to Asia, bloodied and bowed. Intriguingly, Hippias the traitor didn't make it back to Sardis; he died on the journey home, at Lemnos, from unspecified causes. Perhaps he feared the wrath of the king he had disappointed and ended his own life; or perhaps a disgruntled Persian soldier had taken it upon himself to act upon his frustrations and his sense of loss.

Disappointing conclusion

Darius was enraged by this defeat, not only because it represented a new strategic threat to the west of his kingdom, but because of the humiliation handed out to his great empire—and thus to his prestige. The edges of his Empire which brushed against Europe were proving vulnerable. And there was still the matter of the Athenians' betrayal, their lack of honour, and their disregard of the protocols that had served the Empire well.

Darius almost immediately decided upon another punitive strike, working toward its eventuality over the next three years. It was a measure of his outrage that he planned to lead the venture himself, replacing Datis, his general. But Darius was 60 years old; his health was failing. Then, as it happened, a revolt in Egypt derailed his plans and he had to redirect his attention from Athens. He died shortly thereafter, his dream of subjugating the Greeks unrequited.

Darius was buried at Naqsh-e Rustam, in a rock-cut sepulchre north of Persepolis, which one can visit today, upon which an inscription reads:

> *"By the favour of Ahuramazda I am the sort of man who is the friend of right . . . . It is not my desire that a weak man should have wrong done to him by the strong . . . . I am not the friend of a deceitful man. I am not quick-tempered: those things which happen in my anger I firmly hold in control by my reason . . ."*

And if the events that precipitated the strike against Athens reveal anything, they show that despite the military failure that overshadowed the latter years of Darius, he was nevertheless a man of honour. In the end, perhaps he deserves greater recognition for not only his governance and accomplishments, but also for the man he proved himself to be. ◆

NERVA

Rome's "Good" Emperor

His reign was short lived, yet pivotal, for the future of the Roman empire. **Daryn Graham** explores the rise to fame of the ruler hailed as the first of the "Five Good Emperors."

IN 1776 IN ENGLAND, HISTORIAN EDWARD GIBBON published his first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* At that time, the American War of Independence had been raging for almost a year, France still had a king and the British colony at Port Jackson in New South Wales was yet to be founded. Today, despite much time having passed, Gibbon's work remains essential reading for historians. As a work of history—and literature—this product of Gibbon's pen is regarded as almost as grand and eloquent as anything produced by the ancient Romans themselves. And of all Rome's emperors, Gibbon believed Emperor Nerva to be among its finest. And most historians agree with this view. So why is it that we don't know more about him?

BRONZE SCULPTURE OF EMPEROR NERVA. In 1932, Benito Mussolini, Italy's Fascist dictator, built a large four-lane avenue with wide sidewalks known today as the "Via dei Fori Imperiali" (Road of the Imperial Forums). Along it Mussolini installed bronze statues of the emperors whose forums he destroyed in the creation of the road. The statues of Julius Caesar, Augustus, Trajan and Nerva still decorate this grand boulevard.

PHOTO: SCALIGER—DREAMSTIME.COM

ROME UNDER NERVA

Already in his sixties when he came to power, Nerva was most likely a reluctant emperor. His accession to the throne was greeted with relief by many of Rome's leading figures, tired of Domitian's tyranny.

(Modern borders shown)

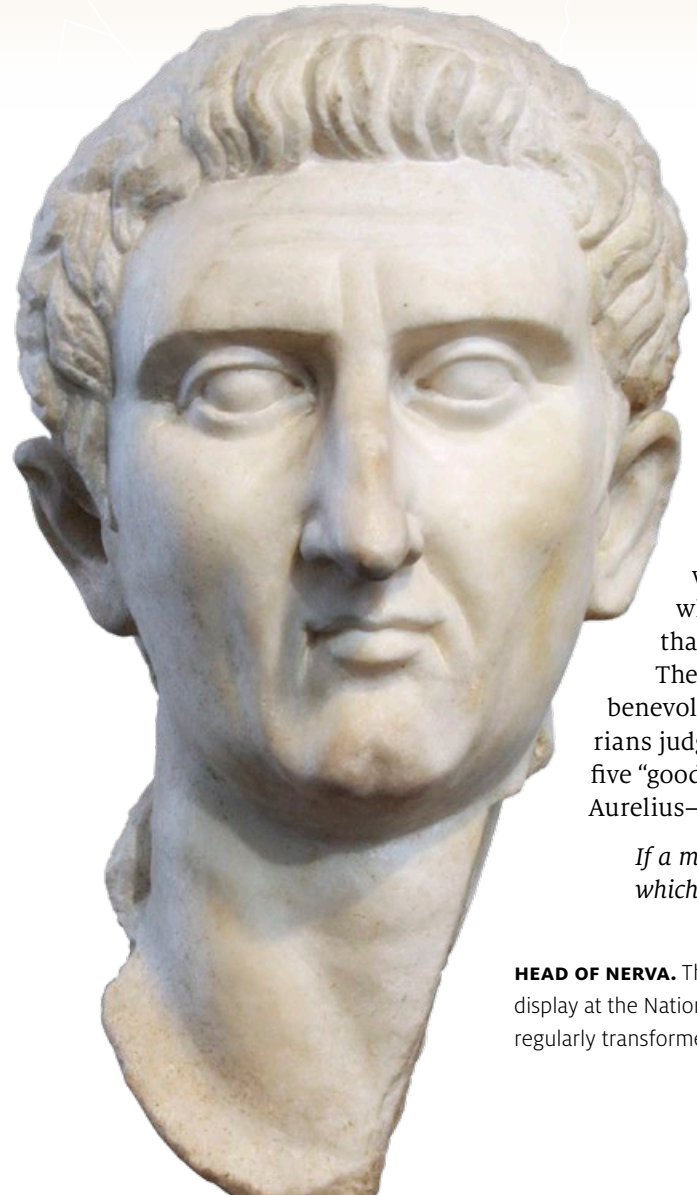
Mature, wise and virtuous, Nerva, who became emperor in AD 96 upon the death of his immediate predecessor, Domitian, placed the long-term welfare of the empire ahead of his own. For this reason, Gibbon is not alone in his praise.

But Nerva's high reputation was not Gibbon's invention. In those ancient times, he was loved too. The Roman senator Tacitus, who was also Rome's greatest historian, wrote in AD 105, that thanks to Nerva, the people of the empire experienced happiness like never before, "for we can think as we please, and speak as we think" (Tacitus, *Histories*, I. 1).

And nor is Tacitus alone in this view. The equestrian Suetonius, who composed biographies of Rome's emperors from Julius Caesar to Domitian, wrote in the early AD 120s that the empire was "richer and happier" under the emperors beginning with Nerva, who possessed, according to Suetonius, more "wisdom and restraint" than those who preceded him (Suetonius, *Domitian*, 23).

These comments made by Romans who themselves lived under Nerva's benevolent rule had a profound effect upon how Gibbon and other historians judge Nerva. Gibbon believed Nerva to have been the first of Rome's five "good emperors"—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius—describing them this way:

> *If a man were called to fix a period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous,*



HEAD OF NERVA. This first century AD marble of Emperor Nerva discovered in Tivoli is now on display at the National Roman Museum. Heads of the cruel and despotic emperor Domitian were regularly transformed into portraits of Nerva.

PHOTO: LIVIOANDRONICO2013—WIKIPEDIA

TEMPLE OF MINERVA IN THE FORUM OF NERVA. Domitian built this temple dedicated to Minerva in his forum, but after Domitian was assassinated, the forum was rededicated to Nerva. The temple remained well preserved over the centuries until Pope Paul V, in 1606, had it demolished to supply building materials for the Acqua Paola on the Janiculum Hill, Rome. These ruins are all that remains of the temple.

> *he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus [successor to Marcus Aurelius]. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance and virtue and wisdom . . . [its emperors] delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws.*

So who was Emperor Nerva? And why is he remembered so well by historians?

NERVA THE GOOD

Nerva was born on November 8, AD 35, while Tiberius was still ruler, in the Italian city of Narnia, in Umbria just north of Rome. He came from a family of senators and lawyers with close ties to the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Nerva's own mother, Sergia Plautilla, was the daughter of Octavius Laenas, a former consul, and her brother had married a great-granddaughter of the emperor Tiberius.

As you might expect, as a member of a wealthy, well-connected and famous family, Nerva had a privileged upbringing and the good education that went with it. And as a young adult, he rose quickly through the political ranks. However, it was not until later in life when he became consul with Vespasian, in AD 71, that Nerva began to influence Roman politics. He became a most trusted friend of the Julio-Claudian dynasty's successors (the Flavians) and in AD 90; Emperor Domitian, Vespasian's youngest son and the last of the Flavians, again made him consul.

However, in AD 96, Domitian was assassinated and the Flavian dynasty came to an abrupt end. But as things turned out, that would become Nerva's opportunity to become emperor. After Domitian was killed, his murderers and those who had conspired against him made approaches to a number of Senators with an offer to make one of them emperor. But each one dismissed the overture as something of a joke. They came to Nerva, and exasperated at having no willing body to rule, begged Nerva to believe them. On September 18, AD 96, Nerva was acclaimed as emperor in Rome.

Immediately, relief swept through Rome, as people dared hope for a brighter future after the cruel and despotic rule of Domitian. Nerva would not disappoint. Immediately, Nerva had all of Domitian's silver and gold statues melted down and his triumphal arches demolished; he publicly repealed the extravagant public spending and lavish personal excesses of his predecessors.

In what was a short reign, Nerva showed himself to be fair, including to the marginalised among his subjects. Jews were treated more respectfully than under previous emperors, even permitting people to become Jews, which was a major turn-around since the sacking of Jerusalem just 26 years earlier. But, while Nerva kept the taxes on Jews, he also came down hard on tax collectors who abused their collection.

PHOTO: EUGENESERGEEV—DREAMSTIME.COM

EMPEROR NERVA STILL HONOURED. In 2002, Gloucester Civic Trust in England erected a bronze statue of Emperor Nerva, who is acknowledged as the founder of the city in around AD 97. Although Nerva was in his sixties (old by Roman standards) when he became emperor, this statue flatteringly depicts him as a much younger man.

Christians, too, were treated well by Nerva. According to the fourth-century Christian historian Eusebius, he had all Christians who had been exiled or imprisoned by Domitian pardoned and released. Among their number was the eminent disciple of Jesus, the apostle John. John had been imprisoned by Domitian on the island-gaol of Patmos, which lies just of the Aegean coast of Turkey. It was there that John penned his biblical Revelation, the last book of the Christian Bible. According to Eusebius, upon his release, John settled in the bustling Roman city of Ephesus, on the west coast of present-day Turkey (see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* 3. 20).

Nerva also extended kindness to Rome's senators, even swearing an oath before the Senate House that he would never put a senator to death. It was an oath he kept, even when he uncovered a conspiracy by a number of senators against himself.

Nerva's maintenance of the administration of the empire was lauded amongst his contemporaries. But his benevolent style of rule was aimed as much at the welfare of the state as his own. According to Cassius Dio, Nerva, near the end of his life, remarked, "I have done nothing of any sort that would make it impossible for me to lay down the imperial power and return to private life in safety" (*Cassius Dio,* 68. 3. 1).

Self-preservation or otherwise, Nerva's concern for the state of the empire was genuine. For example, when the state treasury ran a little short, he sold off his own assets to top it up. He also reduced the tribute owed to Rome by its provinces, which had reached exorbitant levels under Domitian. He also devoted himself to overhauling the public postal service, taking the pressure off the provinces by funding its upkeep himself and from the treasury in Rome.

However, despite Nerva's capabilities, and as a wise and kind ruler, his advanced years were a cause of concern in Rome. The Romans had seen how the death of an emperor could cause civil upheaval across the breadth of the empire, and they were nervous that something similar might happen upon Nerva's death. Learning of their unease, Nerva adopted Marcus Ulpius Traianus—known simply as "Trajan"—to be publicly pronounced as his heir and successor. The occasion for the announcement was when news came from Germany that Nerva's armies had won a great military victory there, in AD 97. Nerva proceeded to the Capitoline hill in the centre of Rome and after making the victory announcement, added, "May good fortune attend the Senate and people of Rome and myself, I hereby adopt Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus" (*Cassius Dio,* 63. 3. 4).

It was a momentous announcement, and caused the Roman audience to erupt in celebration. But the choice was not without critics. Nerva had, after all, other relatives

PHOTO: ALAMY.COM

THE MAUSOLEUM OF AUGUSTUS WHERE NERVA WAS INTERRED. Soon after his death, Nerva was deified by Trajan and the Senate. As as a further sign of respect, his ashes were placed in the Mausoleum of Augustus, alongside those of the Julio-Claudian emperors.

living, and Trajan was not even a native of Rome. In fact, he wasn't even born in Italy. Although a Roman citizen, he was from Spain. However, Trajan was a brilliant military general and an admired among the legions. He was governor of Upper Germany and head of the province's vast army.

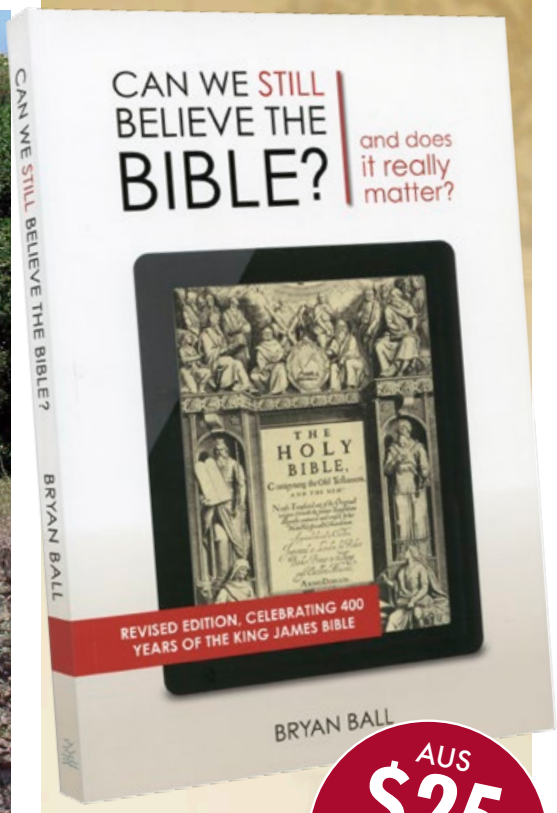
But if the choice of Trajan was not strictly dynastic, it was nevertheless sensible, as it ensured the stability and civil harmony of the entire empire. When Nerva died from old age less than one year later, the wisdom and foresight of Nerva's choice of successor became apparent: there would be no civil war and the empire flourished as never before.

Nerva's days as Emperor numbered just one year, four months and nine days, but in that short time he demonstrated statesmanship and wisdom far exceeding all predecessors. By adopting Trajan, Nerva may have offended his own relatives—Trajan may even have pressured him into it—but he showed that he put the interests of the empire ahead of his own and avoided a war of succession. In fact, Rome would not be engulfed by another civil war for almost a century.

After his death, Nerva's body was interred in the mausoleum of Augustus in a state funeral led by the Roman Senate. He was deified by the new emperor, Trajan, and the Senate, a few days later. Such was the high regard that Romans had for Nerva.

Nerva's popularity among historians is neither nominal nor sentimental, his reputation as a wise ruler is not hagiographic. Nerva had worked hard to unite Romans right around the empire. As for Nerva's successor Trajan, he learned from Nerva's example, and attempted to maintain Nerva's fairness at court and in the streets. But it was tempered with his military exploits, which will be explored in the next issue. ◆

PHOTO: RYARWOOD—WIKIPEDIA



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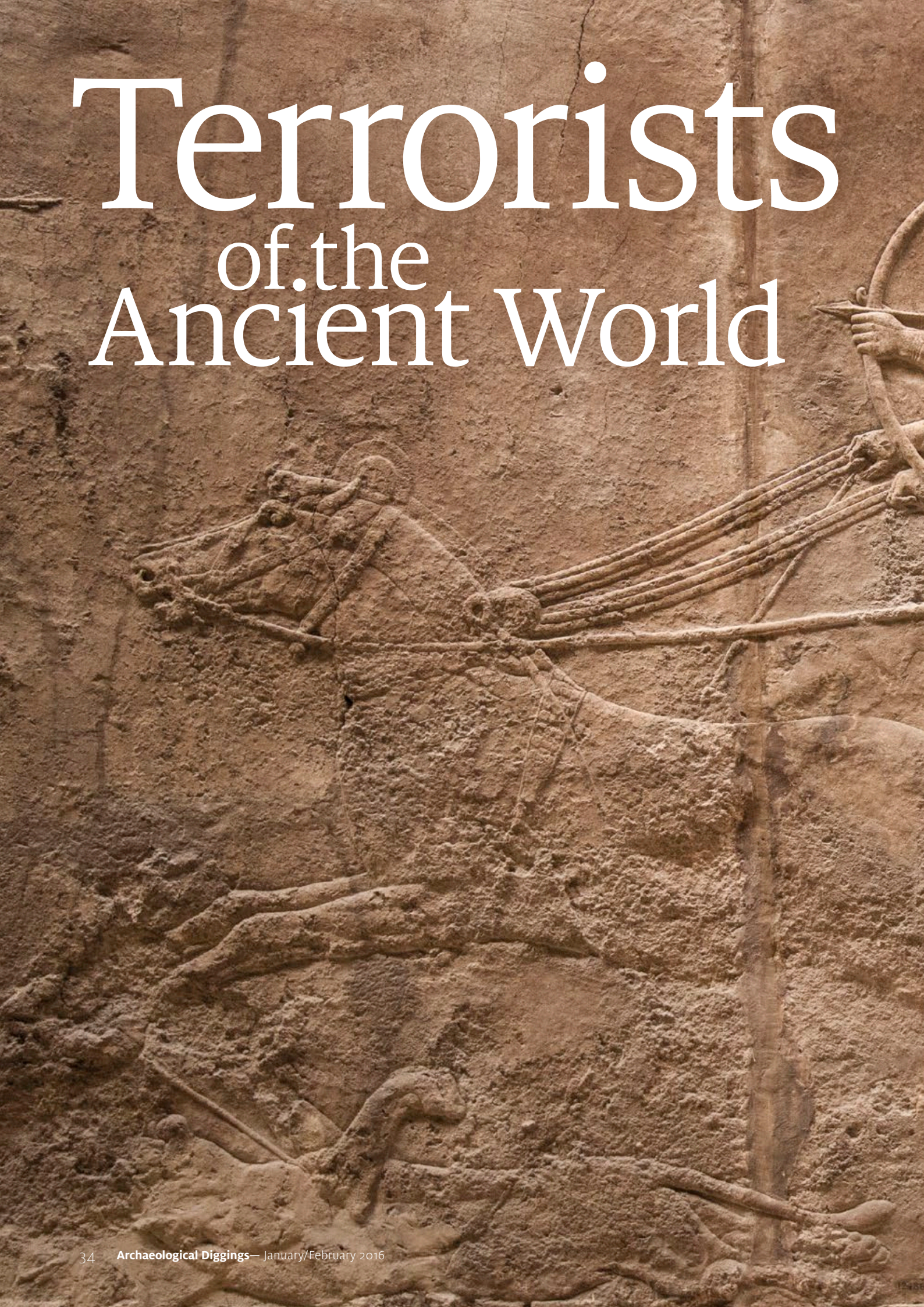


WHAT DO ISIS—OR IS AND DAISH, AS THEY are variously referred to—and the ancient Assyrians have in common? And what warnings do they herald for our contemporary world? (Please note, what follows contains some confronting ancient texts and inscriptions from the world of the ancient Assyrians.)

The ancient Assyrian homeland in Mesopotamia extended northwest from the mouth of the Little Zab river, a tributary of the Tigris, for only about 130 kilometres (80 miles) along the Tigris itself. The country was not large, hemmed in between the desert beyond the river to the west and mountains on its east, rising just beyond a narrow strip of arable land between them and the river that was much less fertile than in southern Mesopotamia. Naturally, then, Assyria's most notable cities— Asshur; Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta; Calah; Nineveh and Dur-Sharrukin—were all located along the Tigris.

The scarcity of farming land possibly helped give rise to the national character of the Assyrians, who were daring adventurers, brave warriors, talented organizers and an enterprising commercial people. While not a scientific or literary people when compared to their southern Babylonian kinsmen, they were artistically talented, as revealed by their masterly sculptures in stone.

Like the Babylonians and Aramaeans, the Assyrians were a Semitic people, speaking a language closely related to that of the Babylonians. They used a modified Babylonian cuneiform script.

Being Semites, the Assyrian religion had many gods in common with other Semitic nations, especially the Babylonians. They too worshiped the great Babylonian deities such as Shamash, the sun god; Sin, the moon god; Ea, the god of waters; and Ishtar, goddess of fertility. However, their principal god was Ashur, who was not part of the Babylonian pantheon. He was depicted as a winged sun that protected and guided the king, who was his principal servant. Ashur was also symbolized by a tree that represented fertility. But above all, Ashur was a god of war, and as such, war was intrinsic to the Assyrian national religion. Every Assyrian military campaign was thought to be undertaken in response to the direct orders of Ashur. Thus participation in warfare was considered an act of worship of a kind. Such facts help us understand why the Assyrians were a formidable fighting machine and why the cult of Ashur vanished when the Assyrian Empire was destroyed.

ASSYRIAN CRUELTY AND RUTHLESSNESS

The Assyrian Empire was the greatest of the Mesopotamian empires. The king, who represented the state, was naturally the pinnacle of the hierarchy, with all public acts recorded as his achievements. His two primary tasks as an Assyrian king were to wage war and erect public buildings. Both were seen as religious duties to the Assyrian gods.

Historians have divided the Assyrian Empire into three periods: the Old Kingdom, the Middle Empire, and the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Most of what follows will concern itself with the greatest period of the Assyrian Empire—that of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (933–612 BC)—the era

PREVIOUS PAGE: Detail of a relief from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Iraq, in the British Museum. The king, Ashurbanipal, is depicted in his chariot shooting arrows at a succession of lions while his attendants ward off a lion who is attacking from the rear.

PHOTO PREVIOUS PAGE: GARY WEBSTER MAP: SHANE WINFIELD

RELIEF OF ASSYRIAN CAMPAIGN. Relief from the Royal Palace of Sennacherib (704–681 BC) of Assyrian warriors throwing the heads of their enemies into a pile. The British Museum in London has displayed a series of these detailed carved stone panels that graphically depicts the Assyrian king's military campaigns, offering insight into the ruthlessness of the Assyrian empire.

that primarily gave the Assyrian Empire its reputation for extreme ruthlessness and cruelty. Assyrian history continues past that point, and there are still Assyrians in Iran, Iraq and other countries today. Paradoxically, they are among the most friendly and hospitable people one can meet.

Assyrian national history, as preserved for us in its cuneiform inscriptions and images on walls and floors of palaces and temples, and on clay and alabaster tablets, prisms and cylinders, consists mainly of military campaigns and battles. It is perhaps the most gory and bloodthirsty of history known. And from its beginning, Assyria was a strong military power bent on conquest. Any country or people group that opposed their rule was punished with the destruction of their cities and the devastation of their fields and orchards. They were to be feared, with good cause. Adad Nirari I (1307–1275 BC), during the period of the Middle Empire, commenced what would become standard Assyrian policy for the rest of its history: the deportation of large portions of the population of conquered nations and their replacement with Assyrians.

This policy killed the nationalistic spirit and sentiments and destroyed old loyalties of any people groups so treated. It helped prevent further uprisings. While it uprooted people from their own homes and land, they, as labour and persons with knowledge and ability, were extremely valuable to the Assyrians and, it seems, deportees were treated well enough en-route, as attested in a letter from an Assyrian official to his king Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC), which reads:

> *As for the Aramaeans about whom the king my lord has written to me: "Prepare them for their journey!" I shall give them their food supplies, clothes, a waterskin, a pair of shoes and oil. I do not have my donkeys yet, but once they are available, I will dispatch my convoy. ("Mass deportation: the Assyrian resettlement policy," by Karen Radner)*

And upon their arrival, it seems the Assyrians continued to support them, as seen in another letter by the same author:

> *As for the Aramaeans about whom the king my lord has said: "They are to have wives!" We found numerous suitable women but their fathers refuse to give them in marriage, claiming: "We will not consent unless they can pay the bride price." Let them be paid so that the Aramaeans can get married. (ibid)*

While deportees were carefully selected for their abilities and sent to areas where their talents could be best used, it seems that families were not separated. Rather they were absorbed into the growing empire and accepted as Assyrians.

Under Ashur-Dan (933–910 BC), Assyria conquered northern Mesopotamia. From then on, its armies marched almost every year, ever expanding the Assyrian empire, the booty of their conquests financing their ever-greater exploits and dominion. It was from this time on that the Assyrians began to practice ever increasing cruelty and ruthlessness toward resisting foes.

Assyrian inscriptions and pictorial reliefs testify to the Assyrian treatment of those they conquered, their armies

PHOTO: GARY WEBSTER

and rulers. For example, Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC) calls himself "the trampler of all enemies . . . . who defeated all his enemies [and] hung the corpses of his enemies on posts" (Albert Kirk Grayson, "Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, Part 2," *from Tiglath-pileser I to Ashur-nasir-apli II,* p. 165).

Accounts like this not only described what actually happened but were no doubt also designed to threaten others who might think of resisting. The following description of another conquest reveals why they could well be called the terrorists of the ancient world:

> *"In strife and conflict I besieged [and] conquered the city. I felled 3000 of their fighting men with the sword . . . . I captured many troops alive: I cut off some of their arms [and] hands; I cut off others their noses, ears [and] extremities. I gouged out the eyes of many troops. I made one pile of the living [and] one of heads. I hung their heads on trees around the city." (Grayson, p. 126)*

Such Assyrian records, which were only discovered in the past 150 years, also testify to the historical accuracy of ancient Jewish biblical records, as in the writings of the prophet Nahum, who, writing about the inhabitants of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, in 640 BC, records, "Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims! . . . who has not felt your endless cruelty?" (Nahum 3:1, 19).

THE ASSYRIANS AND ANCIENT ISRAEL

It was in this time of barbaric cruelty that the Assyrians first went into battle against Israel. In light of the historicity of such cruelty, one begins to understand the actions taken by some of Israel's kings and prophets. The first of the Assyrian kings to come in contact with the Israelites was Shalmaneser III (859–824 BC). During his reign, Shalmaneser campaigned in practically every country surrounding his homeland. He records that he fought an alliance of Syrian kings in 853 BC at the battle of Qarqar, in which King Ahab of Israel committed a force of 2000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers to the Syrian coalition.

Twelve years later, on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, he recorded that King Jehu of Israel gave him tribute. In one of the panels of the Obelisk, Jehu is seen kneeling before Shalmaneser III.

For the next 80 years, several weak rulers led Assyria and the empire lost much of its hold on subjugated nations. However, during this time Adadnirari III (811–783 BC) conquered Damascus from the Syrian king, Hazael, who is mentioned numerous times in biblical records (see 1 Kings 19:15; 2 Kings 10:32). At the same time Adad-nirari III conquered Damascus. He mentions on the Tel El Rimah stele that he received tribute from King Joash of Israel, whose capital was at Samaria. The inscription reads:

The Reign of Neo-Assyria

ASSYRIAN KING — BABYLONIAN KING

912 BC *First king of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*

876 BC *Celebrations for the completion of Kalhu*

853 BC *Battle of Qarqar*

825 BC *Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III erected*

900 BC — 800 BC

Ashur-dn II (935–912 BC)	*Adad-nirari II (912–891 BC)*	*Tukulti-ninurta II (891–884 BC)*	*Ashurnasirpal II (884–859 BC)*	*Shalmaneser III (859–824 BC)*	*Shamshi Adad V (824–811 BC)*	*Adad-ninrari III (811–783 BC)*	*Shalmaneser IV (783–773 BC)*	*Ashur-Dan (772–755 B*

SUBMITTING TO THE KING: Section of the black limestone obelisk depicting King Jehu of Israel submitting to the Assyrian king. The obelisk (opposite page) was erected as a public monument in 825 BC to glorify the achievements of King Shalmaneser III. It lists his 31 years of military campaigns and the tribute he exacted from those he conquered.

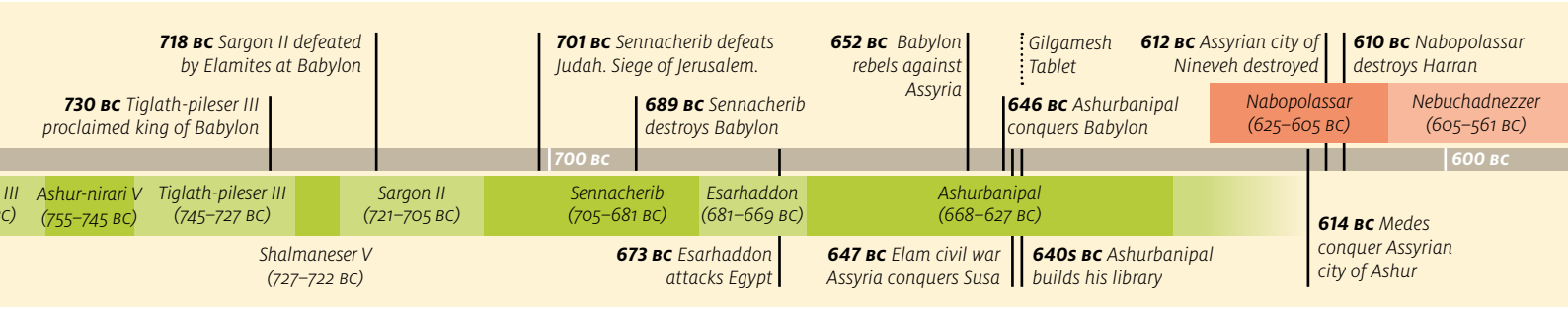
> *Adad-nirari . . . king of Assyria . . . . I gathered my chariots and army and gave them orders to march to the land of Hatti. In just one year, I subdued the entire county of the Amurru as well as Hatti. I imposed upon them tax and tribute forever. I received the tribute of 2000 talents of silver, 1000 talents of copper, 2000 talents of iron and 3000 garments with multi-coloured trim from Mari of the land of Damascus. I also received the tribute of Joash, the Samarian, as well as the rulers of Tyre and of Sidon. (Tell el Rimah stele)*

Biblical chronology places the story of Jonah the prophet between (793–753 BC). Given the accounts by the Assyrians of their ruthless cruelty, one can understand Jonah's reluctance and refusal to go there (see Jonah 1–4). It was an exceedingly dangerous assignment. But he eventually went, proclaiming to them a warning of coming destruction on account of their evil ways. But as the story goes, led by its king, the entire city repented, and so was spared. It is possible that this story occurred during the reign of Adadnirari III, for there is evidence of a monotheistic revolution in which the god Nabu appears to have been proclaimed the sole, or at least the principal, god, occurring in Assyria during his reign.

Under Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BC), or Pul as he was also known, the Assyrians made an impressive comeback, re-establishing their power over neighbouring nations. He became one of the greatest monarchs and empire builders of Assyria. The Bible records that King Menahem of Israel (of the 10 northern tribes of the Israelites, with its capital at Samaria) paid him tribute:

> *"And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand." (see 2 Kings 15:19)*

PHOTOS: GARY WEBSTER



WORSHIPPING WAR. Wall relief with images of Ashurnasirpal II worshipping Ashur the god of war, symbolised by a winged sun disc. The relief, dated at 865–850 BC, originally was in the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud (biblical Calah). Today it is housed in the British Museum. War was an act of worship for the Assyrians, which is one reason why they were a formidable fighting machine.

Menahem's tribute is also mentioned by the Assyrians on the Iran Stele found in Tiglath-pileser's palace at Calah, which reads:

> *"I received tribute from . . . Rezon of Damascus, Menahem of Samaria, Hiram of Tyre, . . . gold, silver, . . ." (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, *283, Ed. James B. Pritchard)*

During the reign of King Pekah of Israel, Tiglath-pileser received a request from King Ahaz of Judah (the two southern tribes of the Israelites, with its capital in Jerusalem) to aid him against an alliance between Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus. With the request came a large tribute:

> *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. (see 2 Kings 16:7, 8)*

And a clay building inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III records the actual payment of this tribute by Ahaz, as follows:

> *From these I received tribute . . . Ahaz, the king of Judah . . . including gold, silver, iron, fine cloth and many garments made from wool that was dyed in purple . . . as well as all kinds of lavish gifts from many nations and from the kings that rule over them.*

Tiglath-pileser also took the practice of deportation to a whole new level of wholesale transplantations of subjugated nations to other countries. On reception of the tribute from Judah, Tiglath-pileser captured and destroyed Damascus, killed Rezin its king, invaded Israel, and deported many of the Israelite captives. This deportation is mentioned in the Bible:

> *In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria. (2 Kings 15:29)*

And the following record left by Tiglath-pileser is a direct confirmation of the above account of this deportation:

> *The land Bit-Humri [House of Omri, which is Israel], all of whose cities I had utterly devastated in my former campaigns, whose [people] and livestock I had carried off and whose [capital] city Samaria alone had been spared: [now] they overthrew Peqah, their king. (*Tiglath-pileser III, *pp 44, 17, 18)*
>
> *The land Bit-Humri [Israel]: I brought to Assyria . . ., its auxiliary army, . . . and an assembly of its people. [They (or: I) killed] their king Peqah and I placed Hoshea [as king] over them. (*ibid, *pp 42, 15b–17a)*

Tiglath-pileser allowed a small group to remain as a small

ASSYRIAN SIEGE MACHINE. A wall relief from the northwest palace in Nimrud, now in the British Museum, of an Assyrian siege machine with its battering ram pounding the wall of a city under attack. The Assyrians were masters of siege warfare. Cities that resisted were usually treated with extreme cruelty.

vassal state with Samaria as capital. Ahaz king of Judah voluntarily submitted to the Assyrians and Judah became an Assyrian vassal state.

Tiglath-pileser's successor, Shalmaneser V (727–722 BC) ruled only briefly. During his reign, he fought a coalition of western kings, including Israel, who had ceased to pay tribute. He besieged the Israelite city of Samaria for three years and captured it, probably before his death, leaving the task of deporting the Israelites and resettling their territory with other people groups to his successor, Sargon II, who himself claimed to have conquered Samaria.

Sargon II (722–705 BC) was a strong king who spent much of his reign on military campaigns. He built a new capital at Dur-Sharrukin, today known as Khorsabad, a few kilometres north of Nineveh.

Sargon II's successor, his son Sennacherib (705–681 BC), made technical improvements to his war machinery and rebuilt Nineveh, making it the most glorious city of its time. During his reign, he campaigned in Palestine to put down a rebellion by Hezekiah, King of Judah. This campaign is described in great detail in the Bible, which specifically mentions his capture of the fortified cities of Judah, including his attack of Lachish; the payment of tribute by Hezekiah to Sennacherib; the construction of a water tunnel by Hezekiah; his inability to take the city of Jerusalem; his assassination by two of his sons upon his return to Nineveh; and his replacement by Esarhaddon on the Assyrian throne (2 Kings 18:13, 14, 17; 19:32, 35–37; 20:20).

The biblical account has now been confirmed by archaeology in great detail: the Lachish wall reliefs from Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh portray the battle of Lachish, as do the excavations of the city of Lachish; Hezekiah's water tunnel in Jerusalem, which begins at the Gihon Spring and ends at the Pool of Siloam, has been discovered; an inscription on the flank of an Assyrian human-headed winged bull informs us that Hezekiah paid taxes to Sennacherib; the Taylor Prism of Sennacherib informs us of the 46 cities of Judah that he captured—but interestingly when it comes to the city of Jerusalem, Hezekiah simply says that he "shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage." We also know that on his return to Nineveh, Sennacherib was assassinated and that Esarhaddon did take his place on the throne. Such discoveries confirm the Bible a legitimate and accurate historical source and one not be dismissed.

According to Austen Henry Layard, the excavator of Nineveh, the wall reliefs in Sennacherib's palace would stretch more than three kilometres (2 miles) if lined in a row. Included among these reliefs are those depicting the barbaric flaying (skinning alive) and impaling of Israelite captives of Lachish.

But Sennacherib's wall reliefs and inscriptions also demonstrate that he surpassed his predecessors in the grisly detail of his descriptions, an indication no doubt that he literally took Assyrian ruthless cruelty to a new level, if that were possible:

> *"I cut their throats like lambs. I cut off their precious lives [as one cuts] a string. Like the many waters of*

PHOTOS: GARY WEBSTER

a storm, I made [the contents of] their gullets and entrails run down upon the wide earth. My prancing steeds harnessed for my riding, plunged into the streams of their blood as [into] a river. The wheels of my war chariot, which brings low the wicked and the evil, were bespattered with blood and filth. With the bodies of their warriors I filled the plain, like grass. [Their] testicles I cut off, and tore out their privates like the seeds of cucumbers." (Daniel David Luckenbill, Ancient Assyrian Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. 1, *sections 584, 585)*

With the discovery of such gruesome details, one can clearly understand why Hezekiah, on receiving a letter from Sennacherib at Lachish, as the story is told, took it into the temple, lay it out before God and prayed for help (2 Kings 19:14–19).

While Esarhaddon (681–669 BC), his son and successor, conducted a successful military campaign against Egypt, which thus pushed the boundaries of the Assyrian Empire to its furthest extent, nothing changed with respect to Assyrian ruthlessness. In fact, he seems to have been even more macabre in his treatment of his enemies than his father and grandfather:

"Like a fish I caught him up out of the sea and cut off his head," he said of the king of Sidon; "I hung the heads of Sandurri [king of the cities of Kundi and Sizu] and Abdi-milkutti [king of Sidon] on the shoulders of their nobles and with singing and music; I paraded through the public square of Nineveh." (Lukenbill, Vol. 2, sections 511, 528)

The biblical prophet Nahum, writing around 640 BC, could not have been more accurate in calling Nineveh "the city of blood" (Nahum 3:1).

Finally under his son, Ashurbanipal (669–627 BC), Assyria reached the zenith of its glory and extent but at the same time the greatest depths of its depraved cruelty. Boasted Ashurbanipal:

"Their dismembered bodies I fed to the dogs, swine, wolves and eagles, to the birds of heaven and the fish in the deep . . . . What was left of the feast of the dogs and swine, of their members which blocked the streets and filled the squares, I ordered them to remove from Babylon, Kutha and Sippar, and to cast upon heaps." (Lukenbill, Vol. 2, section 800)

But no civilization given to such brutality can expect not to disintegrate. The noted English historian, Sir Arnold J Toynbee, analysed the histories of 21 civilizations, including ancient Rome, Babylon, the Greeks and the Aztecs. In his epic, *A Study of History,* he describes six characteristics of civilizations on the brink of collapse—the first of which he terms a "schism of the soul," in which a society commits a type of cultural suicide, where something down deep inside of the corporate psyche of society snaps, and by which a civilization thereby self-destructs by destroying its own soul. An example of this is what took place in the amphitheatres of ancient Rome, where for entertainment citizens spent their leisure hours watching humans slaughtered, slashed, gutted and gored. The lust for violence and blood of the Assyrian terrorists of the ancient world is perhaps an even greater example.

Accordingly, the ancient biblical prophets made pointed predictions against Assyria, especially concerning Nineveh, its capital. While it was still at its peak, they predicted with astounding accuracy that drunkenness, flood and fire would be part of its destruction, that it would be laid waste and become a desolation (see Nahum 1:8, 10; 3:7, 13, 15; Zephaniah 2:13).

According to the ancient historian, Diodorus, during the siege of Nineveh, the nearby river flooded and destroyed a section of the wall, through which the Babylonians and Medes gained access to the city. Temples were sacked and the palace was burned. Evidence of such a burning can still be seen on the blackened wall reliefs in the British Museum that were taken from the palace of Nineveh.

Little wonder, then, that at the destruction of Assyria and its mighty capital Nineveh, the nations rejoiced, as expressed by Nahum: "Everyone who hears the news about you claps his hands at your fall" (Nahum 3:19).

WARNINGS FROM TERRORISTS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

There are ominous warnings for today to be found in the ancient Assyrian empire's barbarism. First, Assyria's ruthless cruelty was primarily a result of its religious belief that war was an act of worship. It would not be an overstatement to characterise Assyria's relentless cruelty as religious terrorism akin to that being played out in Syria, Iraq and other countries by ISIS today. It should warn us of the danger of religious movements who seek to unite the state with religion. Such a combination, throughout history, inevitably led to intolerance and eventual persecution.

As serious and as real as this threat is, there is an even more prescient warning against a contemporary and more sinister threat to be had—our contemporary global lust for the violence and mayhem on the Hollywood silver screen, where we see humans butchered, blown up and vicariously killed. We might well learn from the history of ancient Assyria and its modern counterparts in light of Toynbee's first characteristic of a civilization in disintegration—cultural suicide through a "schism of the soul." ◆

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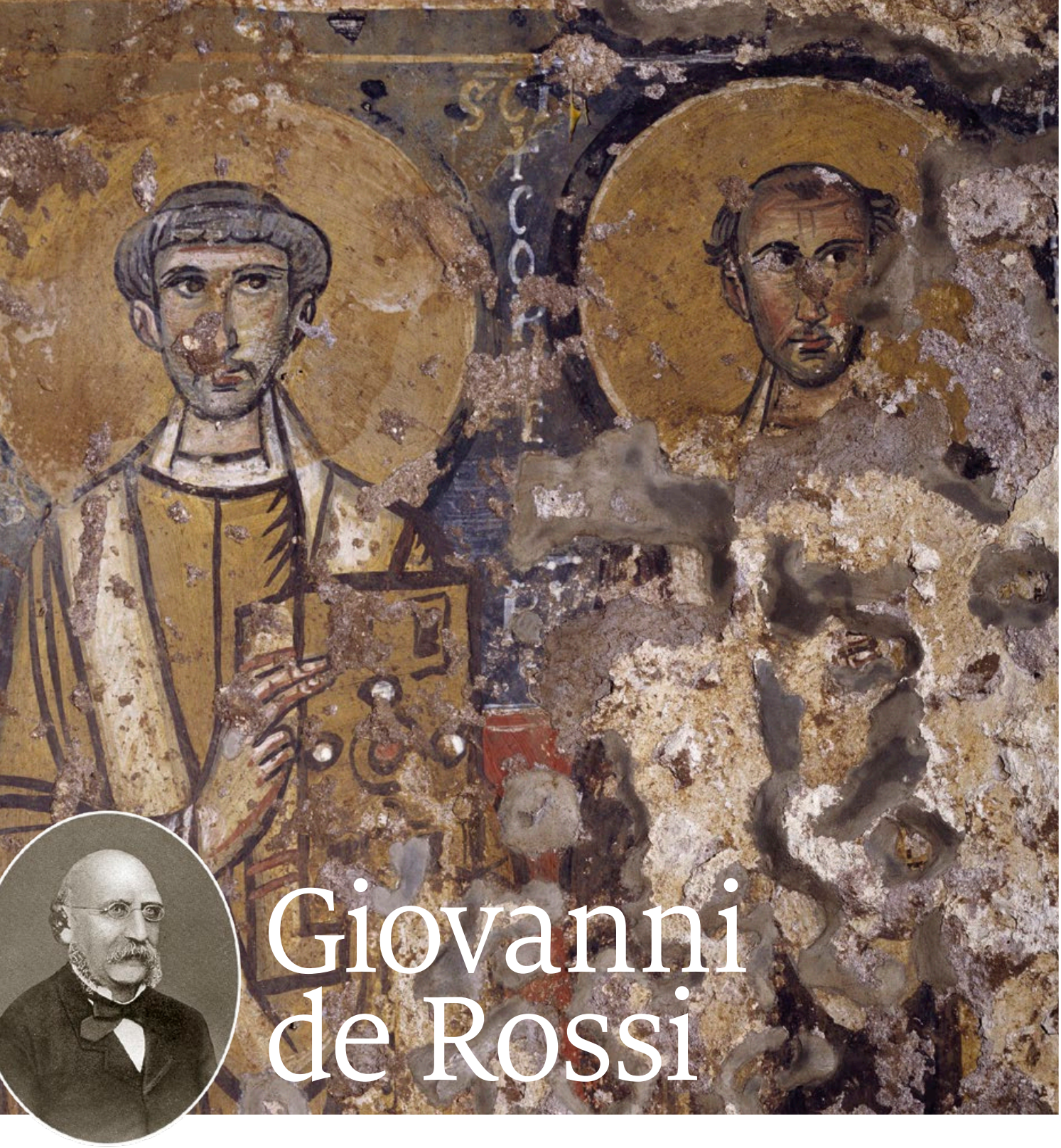


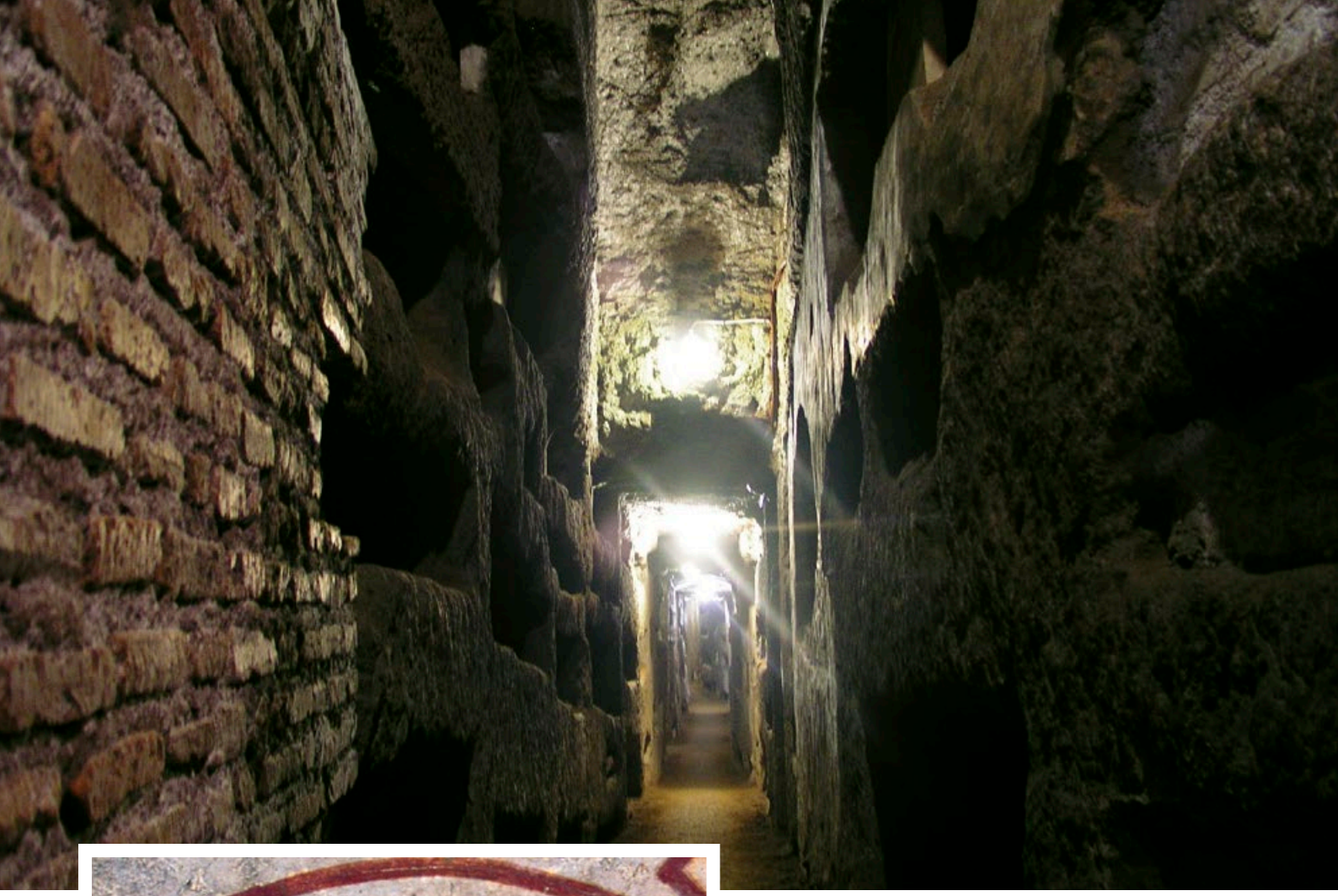
Giovanni de Rossi

AS A NINETEENTH CENTURY ARCHAEOLOGIST, THE ITALIAN Giovanni Battista de Rossi was a trail-blazer. Born in Rome on February 23, 1822, to Commendatore Camillo Luigi de Rossi and Marianna Marchesa Bruti, Giovanni de Rossi, together with his younger brother, was raised as a devout Roman Catholic. But although surrounded by the contemporary religious trappings of Catholic Rome, the young Giovanni's interest was in its more ancient, early Christian past. In fact, such was his passion for the field as a youth, that his father gave Giovanni the book *La Roma Sotteranea* by Italian archaeologist Antonio Bosia, a catalogue of the catacombs known at that time, as a present for his eleventh birthday.

Giovanni loved the book, which inspired him to study deeper into Rome's ancient past, and by the age of 14, he was copying Greek manuscripts in the Vatican Library. A keen, dedicated and intelligent student through his

FINDING THE CATACOMBS. Frescoes of the saints in the Crypt of Lucina, Catacomb of Callixtus, Rome. In 1849 Giovanni de Rossi (inset) rediscovered the second century lost catacombs of Callixtus, making him an instant celebrity.

PHOTO: DE AGOSTINI—GETTY IMAGES



CATACOMB OF DOMITILLA. While collating inscriptions, de Rossi searched all of the known catacombs for their Christian inscriptions. Inspired by what he found, he began a search for further, then unknown, catacombs

THE GOOD SHEPHERD, one of the many third century AD Christian images of Christ in the catacomb of Callixtus. Shepherds were common as garden figures in pagan villas, representing a romantic ideal of good husbandry, but they could equally well be adapted to Christian symbolism.

formative education, he continued the trend when, in 1838, at the age of just 16, he entered university to study philosophy. And to that, he added jurisprudence, in which he attained his Doctorate a few years later.

But while in pursuit of these academic goals, Giovanni never forgot his enchantment with Rome's Christian history. Such was his interest, that by 1842, he was making plans to catalogue every early Christian inscription in Rome—above and below ground—an undertaking that would occupy him for 15 years to its completion. The outcome of this work was his monumental tome, *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae,* in which de Rossi catalogued 1126 inscriptions spanning the years AD 71 to AD 589.

In the process of collating the inscriptions, De Rossi inevitably explored the known catacombs for inscriptions. Inspired by what he found, he began a search for further then unknown catacombs.

PHOTO: DNALOR 01—WIKIMEDIA COMMONS | JIM FOREST

THE CRYPT OF THE POPES, also known as "The Little Vatican," in the catacomb of Callixtus. In 1848, Giovanni de Rossi rediscovered the Catacomb of Callixtus, which included this small burial chapel containing nine popes. The Catacomb of Callixtus, which held the remains of 14 popes, was built along the Appian Way, probably by Pope Callixtus in the early third century. As Christianity became prominent, catacomb remains were moved to churches and catacombs fell into disuse.

Indeed, it would be this endeavour—the discovery and exploration of the vast network of catacombs beneath bustling Rome—that brought de Rossi his fame.

It began with his exploration of the Praetextus catacomb in 1848, and soon thereafter, he stuck gold. It was well-known by Vatican historians that there existed an unknown catacomb that contained the remains of a number of the early popes. In fact, several ancient Christian writers mentioned it, but nobody knew exactly where it was located, except that it was near the Appian Way. De Rossi set out to find it, and, while exploring a winery in the vicinity of the Appian Way, he discovered a partial gravestone bearing an inscription that read, "... *NELIUS MARTYR*." De Rossi recognised this as belonging to one Pope Cornelius, who reigned 251–253 and who had died a martyr. But that was just the beginning. De Rossi systematically searched the area for clues to the whereabouts of the lost papal catacomb—the catacomb de San Castillo—which, with diligence and time, he eventually found. Inside it, deep beneath the ground in a small chapel, were the remains of the 14 popes. And once the news of the discovery became public, de Rossi became a celebrity.

De Rossi had been formally employed by the Vatican Library in order to perform his explorations, but in reality, the Library gave him very few tasks. Rather, it made sure that he had ample time and opportunity to uncover Rome's Christian past, and all to the Library's delight and prestige.

De Rossi applied the most rigorous secular archaeological methods to his work, and as such was among the first to do so. And although a devoted Roman Catholic, he empathised with the other Christian denominations, who also drew inspiration from the early Christians, their writings and the Bible; an attitude that earned him the nickname "Ally of the Protestants." But the Catholic Church, despite the antagonism of the times, took this with good grace, and successive Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII respected de Rossi for both who he was and for his archaeology.

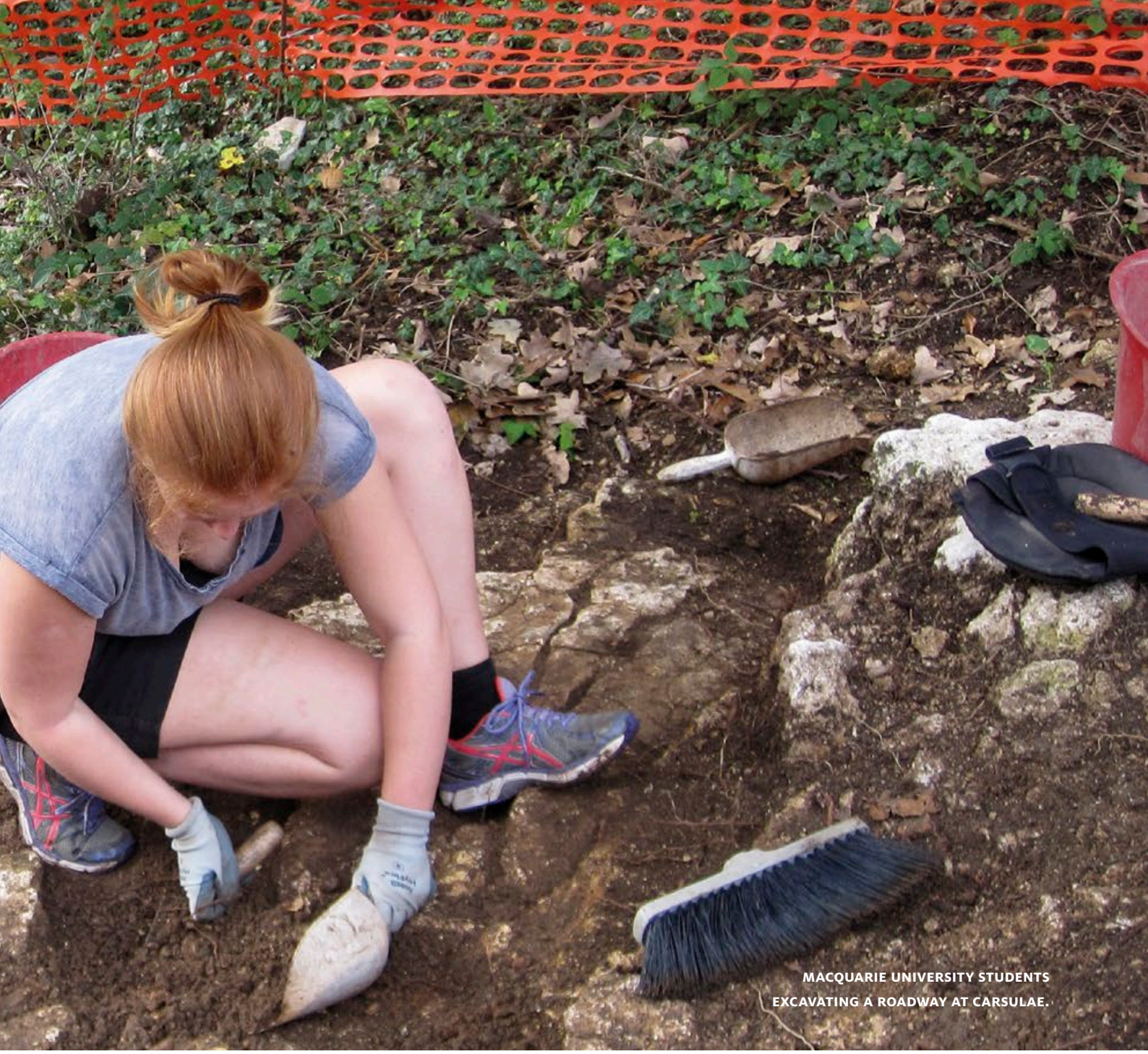
De Rossi died in the summer of 1894 aged just 72. He passed away peacefully in an apartment at the papal Castel Gandolfo palace, provided for him by Pope Leo XIII. He was buried in the Agro Verano Cemetery in Rome. A lover of early Christianity and a patriot, De Rossi is fondly remembered by Catholic and Protestant archaeologists alike, as a pioneer who, in discovering and cataloguing Rome's Christian inscriptions and catacombs, first brought to the public's attention that history we so readily associate with Rome today. ◆

PHOTO: DEA—G. DAGLI ORTI—GETTY IMAGES

Aussies Abroad: Uncovering Buried Treasure

Regular DIGGINGS contributor, **Daryn Graham,** talks with Dr Jaye McKenzie-Clark about her involvement in an amazing discovery in central Italy.

PHOTO: DR JAYE MCKENZIE-CLARK

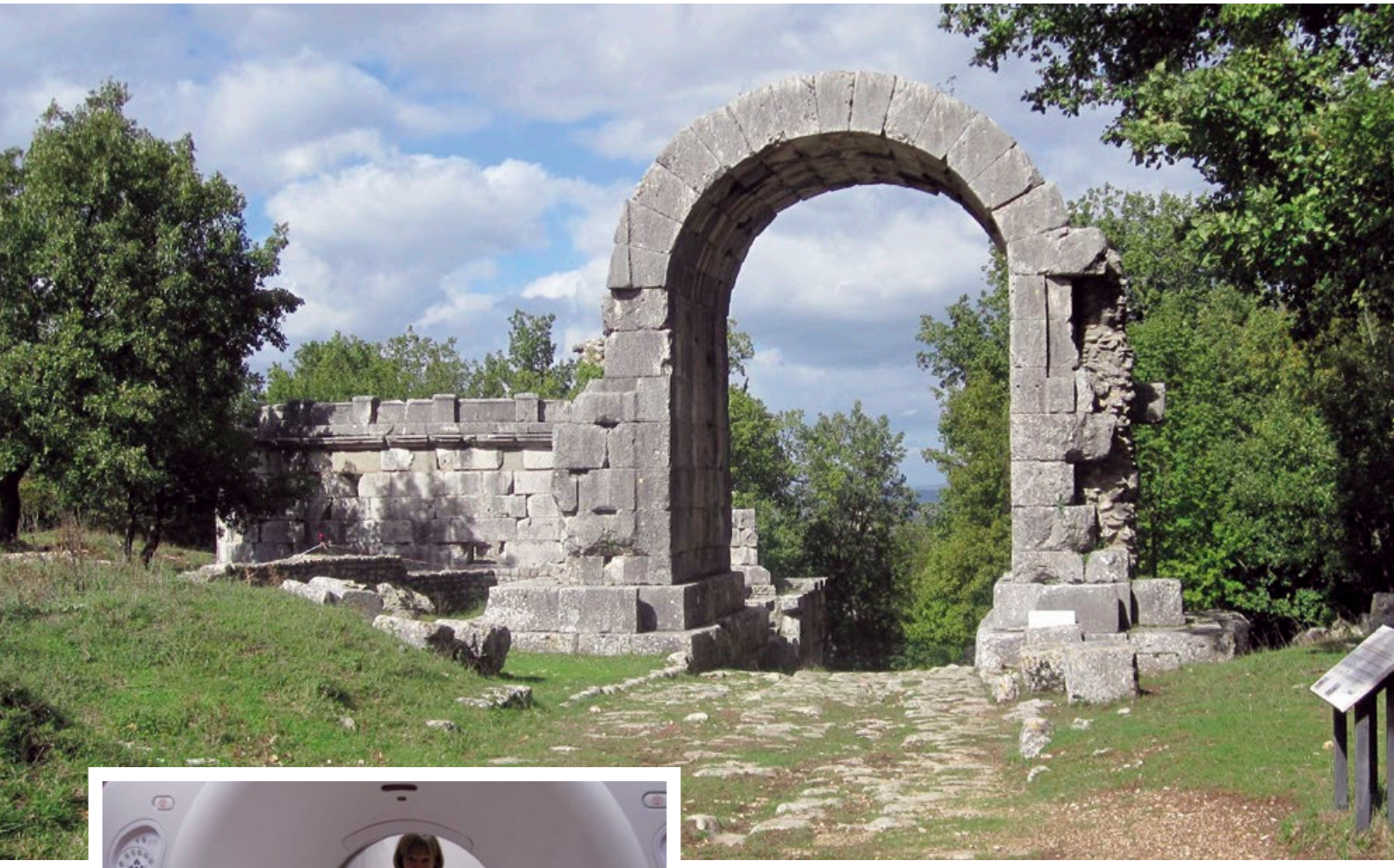


MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS EXCAVATING A ROADWAY AT CARSULAE.

AUSTRALIAN ARCHAEOLOGIST DR JAYE McKenzie-Clark is breaking new ground in archaeological practice in Australia, overseas and in Italy specifically. An archaeology lecturer and researcher at Macquarie University (MU) in Sydney, Dr McKenzie-Clark is the current director of the Australian Carsulae Archaeological Project at the site of what was once the town of Carsulae, about an hour-and-a-half drive north of Rome in Italy.

Situated in the southern Umbrian region in the picturesque Apennine hills, the ancient Roman town of Carsulae was a fabulously wealthy and lively centre of trans-Italian trade. It is believed Carsulae was founded around 300 BC and due to its position on the newly constructed Flaminia highway (c. 220–219 BC), in less than a century was the booming hub of the local economy. The Via Flaminia was Rome's main thoroughfare to the north, across the Apennines and onto the Adriatic Sea ports at Pisaurum and Ariminum on Italy's northeast coastline, which in turn linked to countries and Roman provinces around the Adriatic basin.

During the time of Augustus, Carsulae received an architectural face-lift commensurate with its wealth. The construction of a new amphitheatre and parts of a new forum, as well as a number of other public buildings, were all begun under Augustus. Over the course of the next two centuries, a vast bath complex was also built, as were several more theatres and temples. Not surprisingly, the beauty of Carsulae's location and the beautiful buildings at Carsulae itself attracted thousands of Roman holiday-makers seeking rest and leisure time away from hectic, bustling Rome.



THE VIA FLAMINIA AT CARSULAE, where Australian archaeologist Dr Jaye McKenzie-Clark is the director of the Australian Carsulae Archaeological Project.

POTTERY BEING SCANNED BY DUAL ENERGY COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (DECT). Using DECT, Dr McKenzie-Clark has proved Pompeii's economy was largely based throughout the broader Vesuvian region.

Carsulae's demise is often compared to that of its better-known leisure land contemporary, Pompeii. Both were destroyed by a natural disaster after experiencing a decline over several decades. For Pompeii, an earthquake in AD 62 damaged that town so much so that it hadn't fully recovered even by the time of the AD 79 eruption of nearby Mount Vesuvius. At Carsulae, however, the story was slightly different.

In the early third-century AD, a new road was built alongside the town, bypassing it, which meant that most of the trade and human traffic that once made Carsulae's economy thrive was absent. But the end of Carsulae's habitation came several decades later when, in the mid-third century AD, a huge earthquake demolished the town. The evidence suggests it was so violent that the inhabitants fled immediately, and never returned.

It is this evidence that is being unearthed by McKenzie-Clark and her team. For example, she has unearthed a potter's kiln obviously abandoned in mid-production, the batch of ceramics still inside!

Dr McKenzie-Clark has studied ceramics recovered from both Pompeii and Carsulae, and from them has deduced that Carsulae was likely the wealthier of the two cities by far. She has discovered the presence of some 50 different ceramic-manufacturing stamps on pottery in Pompeii, while at Carsulae more than 390 have been identified, suggesting a greater need and a greater market. These ceramic manufacturers were based right around northern and central Italy, an indication of Carsulae's wealth and prestige. At Pompeii, however, McKenzie-Clark discovered that the materials used to produce ceramics there were originally sourced from volcanic matter. In other words, they were most likely made locally, near Pompeii itself.

Then assisted by Professor John Magnussen from Macquarie University Hospital, McKenzie-Clark began seeking non-destructive methods of analysis of the potting

PHOTO: DR JAYE MCKENZIE-CLARK

PART OF THE SEMICIRCULAR THEATRE AT CARSULAE, UMBRIA, ITALY. During the reign of the Emperor Augustus, the city was apparently given an impressive architectural face-lift.

PHOTO: ADONOVANO—WIKIPEDIA

material used. They decided on Dual energy computed tomography (DECT). Traditionally ceramics analysis involved taking samples of the pottery, thus damaging them, and then testing that broken-off sample. However, the use of DECT might make that obsolete.

Simply put, the DECT method involves the placement of a pottery shard on a high-powered 126-gigabyte data CT scanner bed, then passing them through the scanner, which then unlocks the secrets of the pottery's make-up and area of origin. In this way, archaeologists like McKenzie-Clark are quickly and easily able to test the provenance of all materials in any ancient pottery without any need to break off a test piece of what be a rare and valuable artefact.

Using this new method, Dr McKenzie-Clark has made an archaeological breakthrough; Pompeii's economy was based throughout the Vesuvian region. Merchants from Pompeii clearly traded with nearby markets where their ceramics were manufactured, and in turn, sold them on to be taken back to their hometown of Pompeii. In other words, Pompeii's economy was mainly locally based.

But what of the material sourced for Carsulae's pottery? What can it tell us about the origin of the ceramics found at Carsulae? Alas, there are some things that even the latest technology cannot reveal. Unfortunately, the ceramics found at Carsulae are too dense to analyse their provenance, unlike those found at Pompeii. However, that has not stopped McKenzie-Clark's efforts, nor inhibited her view that basic old-fashioned "detective" work still has its place. By tracing precisely the places where each of the stamps on Carsulae's ceramics originated, McKenzie-Clark has been able to determine that the pottery discovered at Carsulae during her excavations were sourced from all over northern and central Italy. Pottery from kilns across a wide area, through trade, found their way to Carsulae, perhaps bound for Rome itself or its Adriatic ports and even further afield.

Excavation at Carsulae has a chequered history. In the sixteenth century, Duke Federico Cesi excavated and looted the site seeking treasures to decorate his nearby palace. Then, in the seventeenth century, Pope Pius VI took over for a while. It wasn't until 1951 that serious archaeological work and methodology was introduced to the site. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, excavation on a limited scale continued. But prolonged systematic fieldwork began only recently when Professor Jane Whitehead of Valdosta State University in Georgia, USA, began excavation of Carsulae's bath complex and southern wall.

It was in 2011, however, that Macquarie University archaeologists began to survey the site, seeing potential in leading their own fieldwork project there. It was then that Dr McKenzie-Clark began her work under Valdosta State University. So impressed was she with the site's

A WEALTHY DISCOVERY. Students and staff at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, have analysed its excavated artefacts and confirmed that Carsulae was an extremely wealthy and important city in Roman times, with far-reaching trading connections.

potential, she returned the following year as head of her own privately funded archaeological team. Her Macquarie University peers joined her in 2014; at last a fully funded and resourced MU project.

The excavation benefitted hugely from the formal backing of the university, with supervising staff and 10 students working there for almost a month in July 2014. Their discoveries then underwent analysis by staff, assisted by students.

Given that most of the town is still lies buried, McKenzie-Clark's findings will very likely give stimulus to future excavation. Dr McKenzie-Clark says she would welcome any expression of interest in a future excavation of the site, offering her supervision to students undertaking related studies. "Australian archaeologists and excavation volunteers are well-received and have a glowing reputation for honesty and hard work overseas," she says, extending the invitation to the general public. In fact, in 2016, she will lead holiday tours to Carsulae, lecturing on Italy's Roman past, and of course giving plenty of opportunities to take in and enjoy a region rich in history, culture and scenery.

In fact, McKenzie-Clark's work is an example of a growing trend in archaeology globally, in which artefact-rich but economically challenged countries like Italy and Greece are struggling to fund and maintain their archaeological heritage. As a result of efforts by people such Dr McKenzie-Clark and the entities that employ and fund them, those countries can count on willing international help to keep their archaeological projects afloat.

And in participating in an overseas dig such as Carsulae, you can help build our world's cultural heritage. ◆

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS AND INTERESTING FACTS

7 EGYPTIAN OB
from around

ST PETER'S SQUARE, VATICAN CITY

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE, NEW YORK, USA

While the word *obeliskos* is Greek, we most often associate the obelisk with Egyptian architecture, dspite the Assyrians, Romans, Ethiopians and even pre-Colombians building obelisk-shaped structures. The Egyptian obelisks were highly prized and have been shipped at great expense and engineering all over the world. **Kerri Hillsdon** reports.

1 ST PETER'S SQUARE VATICAN CITY

The most famous obelisk outside of Egypt is the 25.5m- (84 ft) high Vatican Obelisk. Its origins are unknown because of its lack of reliefs, but Gaius Caligula had it moved to Rome in AD 37 into his circus. The Vatican Basilica was later built on top of the circus, meaning this obelisk has barely moved in 2000 years.

2 CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE NEW YORK, USA

Attributed to Thutmose III, this red granite, 21m- (69 ft) high monument was originally from Heliopolis but moved to Alexandria by Cleopatra. Then in 1879, after 14 months of engineering, from cutting holes in the ship to pulling it along custom-built rolling tracks, it was moved to New York, where to much fanfare, was finally erected behind the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

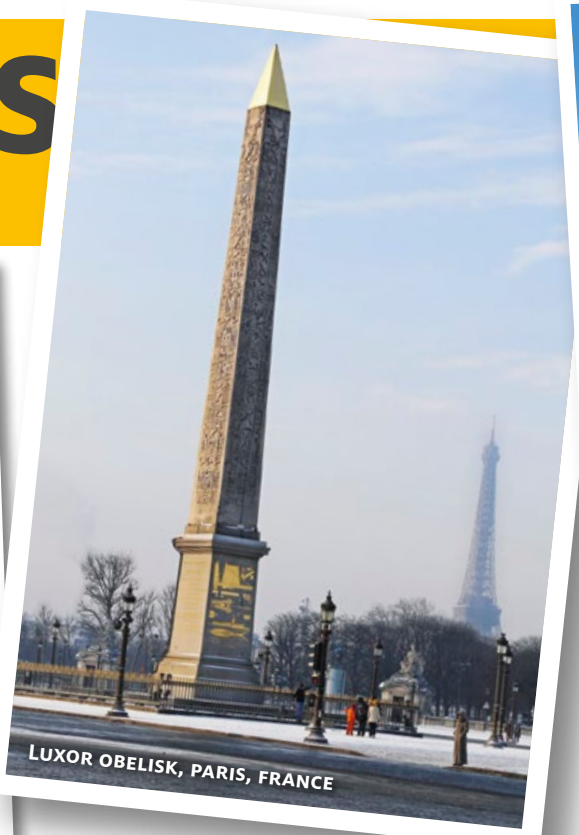
3 CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE LONDON, ENGLAND

The twin of the New York obelisk, it was gifted to the United Kingdom in 1819, but it wasn't moved to London until 1877 because of high transport costs. On a custom-built barge, it was nearly lost at sea because of a storm, but miraculously stayed afloat and after a year of transport, was unveiled in the Victoria Embankment in 1878.

PHOTOS: DREAMSTIME

ELISKS the World

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE, LONDON, ENGLAND


LUXOR OBELISK, PARIS, FRANCE

OBELISK OF THEODOSIUS, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

FLAMINIO OBELISK, ROME, ITALY

4 LUXOR OBELISK
PARIS, FRANCE

Now located on the Place de la Concorde, this obelisk once stood in front of the Luxor Temple, where its twin still remains. It was gifted to King Louis-Phillipe in 1833, is 23 m (75 ft) high and weighs 250 tonnes. It's so big, it took four months merely to ship it from Alexandria to France on a custom-built barge, and months either side for lowering and re-erecting it.

5 OBELISK OF THEODOSIUS
ISTANBUL, TURKEY

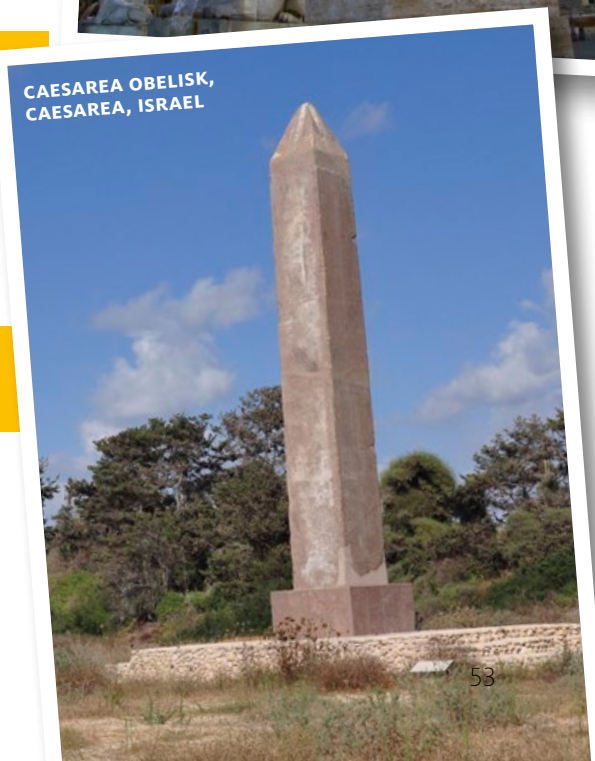
Attributed to Thutmose III, it was transported and re-erected in the Hippodrome of Constantinople by the emperor Theodosius in the 4th century AD, where it still remains today. Made from red granite, it was originally 30 m (98 ft) tall but was damaged during transport and now is 18 m (59 ft). The pedestal base contains carvings of Theodosius undertaking royal duties.

6 FLAMINIO OBELISK
ROME, ITALY

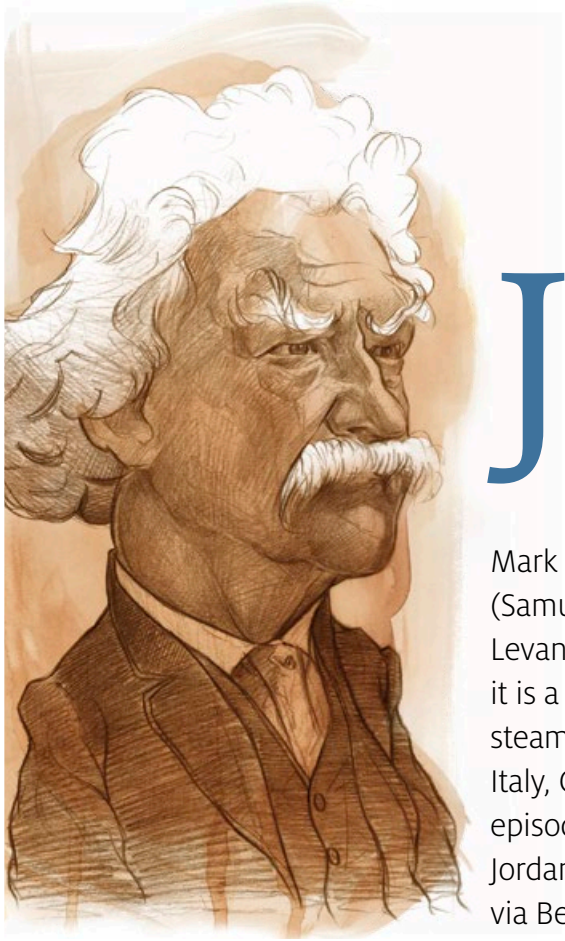
Built during the reign of Rameses II, this obelisk was originally from Heliopolis and one of 13 brought to Rome by the early emperors. It stood at the Circus Maximus for centuries until toppled in the fifth century AD, buried for 1000 years and rediscovered in the fifteenth century, broken in three pieces. It was re-erected in 1589 at the Piazza del Popolo.

7 CAESAREA OBELISK
CAESAREA, ISRAEL

It was brought to Judea in the second century AD and erected at the Hippodrome at Caesarea Maritima. The obelisk was rediscovered in 1980 in the ruins of the Hippodrome, broken into three pieces. Igt was re-erected in 2001 after years of restoration by the Israel Antiquities Authority. It now stands proudly in open parkland near the ancient Hippodrome.


CAESAREA OBELISK, CAESAREA, ISRAEL

PHOTOS: CARL RASMUSSEN—HOLYLANDPHOTOS.ORG | 123RF.COM | VLADIMIR MUCIBABIC—DOLLARPHOTOCLUB.COM



To the Jordan
Part 9

Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* chronicles the author's (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) "Grand Tour" to Europe and the Levant. Originally written as a series of newspaper dispatches, it is a humorous and satirical account. Travelling aboard the steamer USS *Quaker City*, the travellers—or pilgrims—visit France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, the Holy Land and, finally, Egypt. In this episode, the ninth of our series, the tourists flee Jerusalem for the Jordan River valley—Jericho, the river, the Dead Sea—returning via Bethlehem.

A DIVERSION MUST BE TRIED—THE JORDAN, Jericho and the Dead Sea were suggested—and the remainder of Jerusalem must be left unvisited, for a little while. The Jordan journey being approved, our dragoman was notified. At nine in the morning the caravan was before the hotel door and we were at breakfast.

We stopped at the village of Bethany, an hour out from Jerusalem. They showed us the tomb of Lazarus. I had rather live in it than in any house in the town. And they showed us also a large "Fountain of Lazarus," and in the centre of the village the ancient dwelling of Lazarus. Lazarus appears to have been a man of property. The legends of the Sunday Schools do him great injustice; they give one the impression that he was poor. It is because they get him confused with that Lazarus who had no merit but his virtue, and virtue never has been as respectable as money. The house of Lazarus is a three-storey edifice, of stone masonry, but the accumulated rubbish of ages has buried all of it but the upper story. We took candles and descended to the dismal cell-like chambers where Jesus sat at meat with Martha and Mary, and conversed with them about their brother.

We had had a glimpse, from a mountain top, of the Dead Sea, lying like a blue shield in the plain of the Jordan, and now we were marching down a close, flaming, rugged, desolate defile, where no living creature could enjoy life, except, perhaps, a salamander. It was such a dreary, repulsive, horrible solitude! It was the "wilderness" where John preached, with camel's hair about his loins—raiment enough—but he never could have got his locusts and wild honey here.

TO JERICHO AND THE JORDAN

Ancient Jericho is not very picturesque as a ruin. When Joshua marched around it seven times, some 3000 years ago, and blew it down with his trumpet, he did the work so well and so completely that he hardly left enough of the city to cast a shadow. The curse pronounced against the rebuilding of it, has never been removed. One King, holding the curse in light estimation, made the attempt, but was stricken sorely for his presumption. Its site will always remain unoccupied; and yet it is one of the very best locations for a town we have seen in all Palestine.

At two in the morning they routed us out of bed—another piece of unwarranted cruelty—another stupid effort of our dragoman to get ahead of a rival. It was not two hours to the Jordan. We reached the famous river before four o'clock, and the night was so black that we could have ridden into it without seeing it. Some of us were in an unhappy frame of mind. We waited and waited for daylight . . . for a first glimpse of the sacred river.

With the first suspicion of dawn, every pilgrim took off his clothes and waded into the dark torrent, singing:

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wistful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

But they did not sing long. The water was so fearfully cold that they were obliged to stop singing and scamper out again. They had promised themselves all along that they would cross the Jordan where the Israelites crossed it when they entered Canaan from their long pilgrimage in the desert. Each had promised himself that he would be the first to cross. They were at the goal of their hopes at

THE RUINS OF JERICHO. The first major excavation of the site of Jericho was carried out by a German team between 1907 and 1909, 40 years after Mark Twin visited. Little wonder then he commented it was not a very picturesque ruin, as most of it was still buried.

last, but the current was too swift, the water was too cold!

The main object compassed, the drooping, miserable party sat down to wait for the sun again, for all wanted to see the water as well as feel it. But it was too cold a pastime. Some cans were filled from the holy river, some canes cut from its banks, and then we mounted and rode reluctantly away to keep from freezing to death. So we saw the Jordan very dimly. The thickets of bushes that bordered its banks threw their shadows across its shallow, turbulent waters ("stormy," the hymn makes them, which is rather a complimentary stretch of fancy), and we could not judge of the width of the stream by the eye.

THE DEAD SEA EXPERIENCE

Daylight came, soon after we got under way, and in the course of an hour or two we reached the Dead Sea. Nothing grows in the flat, burning desert around it but weeds and the Dead Sea apple the poets say is beautiful to the eye, but crumbles to ashes and dust when you break it. Such as we found were not handsome, but they were bitter to the taste. They yielded no dust. It was because they were not ripe, perhaps.

The desert and the barren hills gleam painfully in the sun, around the Dead Sea, and there is no pleasant thing or living creature upon it or about its borders to cheer the eye. It is a scorching, arid, repulsive solitude. A silence broods over the scene that is depressing to the spirits. It makes one think of funerals and death.

The Dead Sea is small. Its waters are very clear, and it has a pebbly bottom and is shallow for some distance out from the shores. It yields quantities of asphaltum; fragments of it lie all about its banks; this stuff gives the place something of an unpleasant smell.

All our reading had taught us to expect that the first

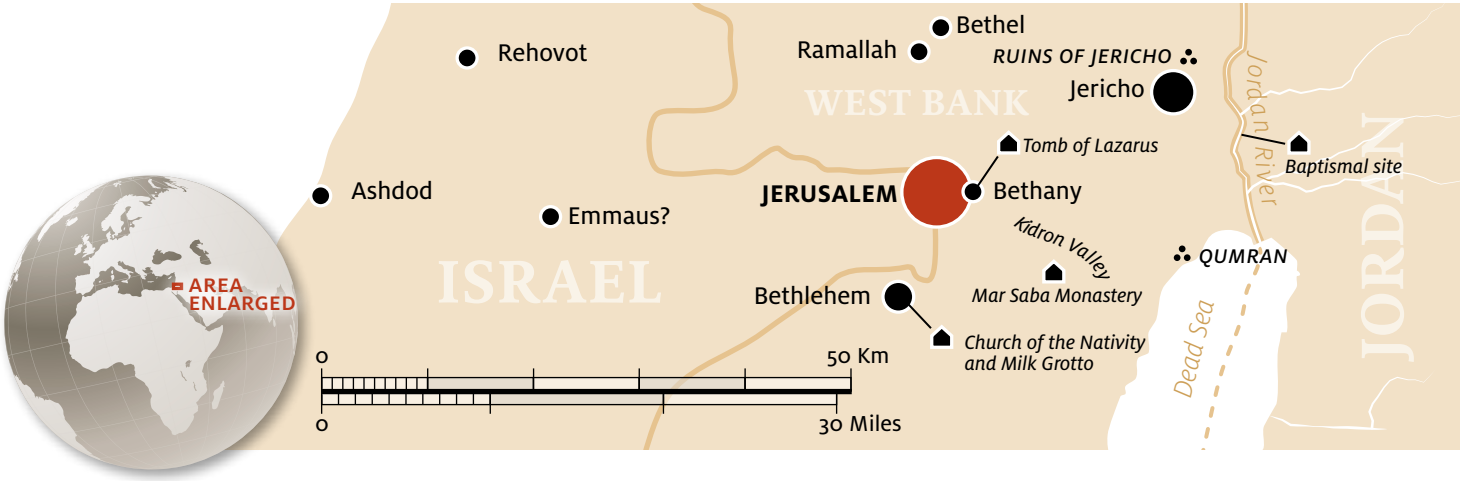


PHOTO: ROBERT HOETINK—DOLLARPHOTOCLUB.COM

THE DEAD SEA. Salt crystals form on the coast of Israel's famous Dead Sea, the lowest and saltiest spot on earth. The water is roughly 8.6 times saltier than the ocean, making it impossible to sink in the Dead Sea. It is popular among visitors (inset), who have their picture taken while reading and floating on the surface of the water.

plunge into the Dead Sea would be attended with distressing results—our bodies would feel as if they were suddenly pierced by millions of red-hot needles; the dreadful smarting would continue for hours; we might even look to be blistered from head to foot, and suffer miserably for many days. We were disappointed. Our eight sprang in at the same time that another party of pilgrims did, and nobody screamed once. None of them ever did complain of anything more than a slight pricking sensation in places where their skin was abraded, and then only for a short time.

It was a funny bath. We could not sink. One could stretch himself at full length on his back, with his arms on his breast, and all of his body above a line drawn from the corner of his jaw past the middle of his side, the middle of his leg and through his ankle bone, would remain out of water. He could lift his head clear out, if he chose. No position can be retained long; you lose your balance and whirl over, first on your back and then on your face, and so on. You can lie comfortably, on your back, with your head out, and your legs out from your knees down, by steadying yourself with your hands.

You can sit, with your knees drawn up to your chin and your arms clasped around them, but you are bound to turn over presently, because you are top-heavy in that position. You can stand up straight in water that is over your head, and from the middle of your breast upward you will not be wet. But you cannot remain so. The water will soon float your feet to the surface. You cannot swim on your back and make any progress of any consequence, because your feet stick away above the surface, and there is nothing to propel yourself with but your heels. If you swim on your face, you kick up the water like a stern-wheel boat. You make no headway. A horse is so top-heavy that he can neither swim nor stand up in the Dead Sea. He turns over on his side at once. Some of us bathed for more than an hour, and then came out coated with salt till we shone like icicles. Salt crystals glitter in the sun about the shores of the lake. In places they coat the ground like a brilliant crust of ice.

THE MAR SABA MONASTERY

I cannot describe the hideous afternoon's ride from the Dead Sea to Mar Saba [located east of Bethlehem and overlooking the Kidron Valley in the Palestinian West Bank]. We stayed at this great convent all night, guests of the hospitable priests. Mar Saba, perched upon a crag, a human nest stuck high up against a perpendicular mountain wall, is a world of grand masonry that rises, terrace upon terrace away above your head, like the terraced

PHOTO: ZAID SAADALLAH—DREAMSTIME.COM | DOLLARPHOTOCLUB.COM

Video

Tap here to travel the road to the monastery. *Active internet connection required*

MAR SABA MONASTERY. Jutting from the cliffs of the Kidron Valley, the Mar Saba monastery is believed to be one of the oldest monasteries still inhabited by monks. Originally a place of seclusion for a few monks in caves, led by Sabas, the monastery has expanded much over the past 1500 years.

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY. The original basilica was completed in 339, commissioned by Emperor Constantine and his mother, Helena. Today it is still a major Christian holy site, as it marks the traditional place of Christ's birth. It is also one of the oldest surviving Christian churches. Twain found it quite ironic that the members of the Greek and Latin churches who share the site cannot do so harmoniously.

and retreating colonnades one sees in fanciful pictures of Belshazzar's Feast and the palaces of the ancient Pharaohs. No other human dwelling is near. It was founded many ages ago by a holy recluse who lived at first in a cave in the rock—a cave which is enclosed in the convent walls, now, and was reverently shown to us by the priests.

This recluse, by his rigorous torturing of his flesh, his diet of bread and water, his utter withdrawal from all society and from the vanities of the world, and his constant prayer and saintly contemplation of a skull, inspired an emulation that brought about him many disciples.

The precipice on the opposite side of the canyon is well perforated with the small holes they dug in the rock to live in. The present occupants of Mar Saba, about 70 in number, are all hermits. They wear a coarse robe, an ugly, brimless stove-pipe of a hat, and go without shoes. They eat nothing whatever but bread and salt; they drink nothing but water. As long as they live they can never go outside the walls, or look upon a woman—for no woman is permitted to enter Mar Saba, upon any pretext whatsoever.

Some of those men have been shut up there for 30 years. In all that dreary time they have not heard the laughter of a child or the blessed voice of a woman; they have seen no human tears, no human smiles; they have known no human joys, no wholesome human sorrows. In their hearts are no memories of the past, in their brains no dreams of the future. All that is lovable, beautiful, worthy, they have put far away from them; against all things that are pleasant to look upon, and all sounds that are music to the ear, they have barred their massive doors and reared their relentless walls of stone forever.

These [Catholic] hermits are dead men, in several respects, but not in all; They knew we were foreigners and Protestants, and not likely to feel admiration or much friendliness toward them. But their large charity was above considering such things. They simply saw in us men who were hungry, and thirsty, and tired, and that was sufficient. They opened their doors and gave us welcome. They asked no questions, and they made no self-righteous display of their hospitality. They fished for no compliments. They moved quietly about, setting the table for us, making the beds, and bringing water to wash in, and paid no heed when we said it was wrong for them to do that when we had men whose business it was to perform such offices. We fared most comfortably, and sat late at dinner. We walked all over the building with the hermits afterward, and then sat on the lofty battlements and smoked while we enjoyed the cool air, the wild scenery and the sunset. It was a royal rest we had.

When we got up to breakfast in the morning, we were new men. So, rested and refreshed, we fell into line and filed away over the barren mountains of Judea, and along rocky ridges and through sterile gorges, where eternal silence and solitude reigned. At nine or ten in the morning we reached the Plain of the Shepherds, and stood in a walled garden of olives where the shepherds were watching their flocks by night, 18 centuries ago, when the multitude of angels brought them the tidings that the Saviour was born. A quarter of a mile away was Bethlehem of Judea, and the pilgrims took some of the stone wall and hurried on.

PHOTO: DREAMSTIME.COM

GROTTOS OF BETHLEHEM. Twain visited several of the grottos in Bethlehem. A silver star in the Grotto of the Nativity marks the traditional site on which Jesus was born. Then just a few minutes' walk from the Church of the Nativity, below a Franciscan chapel, is the Milk Grotto. Tradition has it that Mary and baby Jesus took refuge in this white walled cave to avoid Herod's slaughter of children, before fleeing Egypt.

BETHLEHEM AND CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

The Plain of the Shepherds is a desert, paved with loose stones, void of vegetation, glaring in the fierce sun. Only the music of the angels it knew once could charm its shrubs and flowers to life again and restore its vanished beauty. No less potent enchantment could avail to work this miracle.

In the huge Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem, built 1500 years ago by the inveterate St Helena, they took us below ground, and into a grotto cut in the living rock. This was the "manger" where Christ was born. A silver star set in the floor bears a Latin inscription to that effect. It is polished with the kisses of many generations of worshiping pilgrims.

The grotto was tricked out in the usual tasteless style observable in all the holy places of Palestine. As in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, envy and uncharitableness were apparent here. The priests and the members of the Greek and Latin churches cannot come by the same corridor to kneel in the sacred birthplace of the Redeemer, but are compelled to approach and retire by different avenues, lest they quarrel and fight on this holiest ground on earth.

You cannot think in this place any more than you can in any other in Palestine that would be likely to inspire reflection. Beggars, cripples and monks compass you about, and make you think only of bucksheesh when you would rather think of something more in keeping with the character of the spot.

I was glad to get away, and glad when we had walked through the grottoes where Eusebius wrote, and Jerome fasted, and Joseph prepared for the flight into Egypt, and the dozen other distinguished grottoes, and knew we were done. The Church of the Nativity is almost as well packed with exceeding holy places as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself. They even have in it a grotto wherein 20,000 children were slaughtered by Herod when he was seeking the life of the infant Saviour.

We went to the Milk Grotto, of course—a cavern where Mary hid herself for a while before the flight into Egypt. Its walls were black before she entered, but in suckling the Child, a drop of her milk fell upon the floor and instantly changed the darkness of the walls to its own snowy hue.

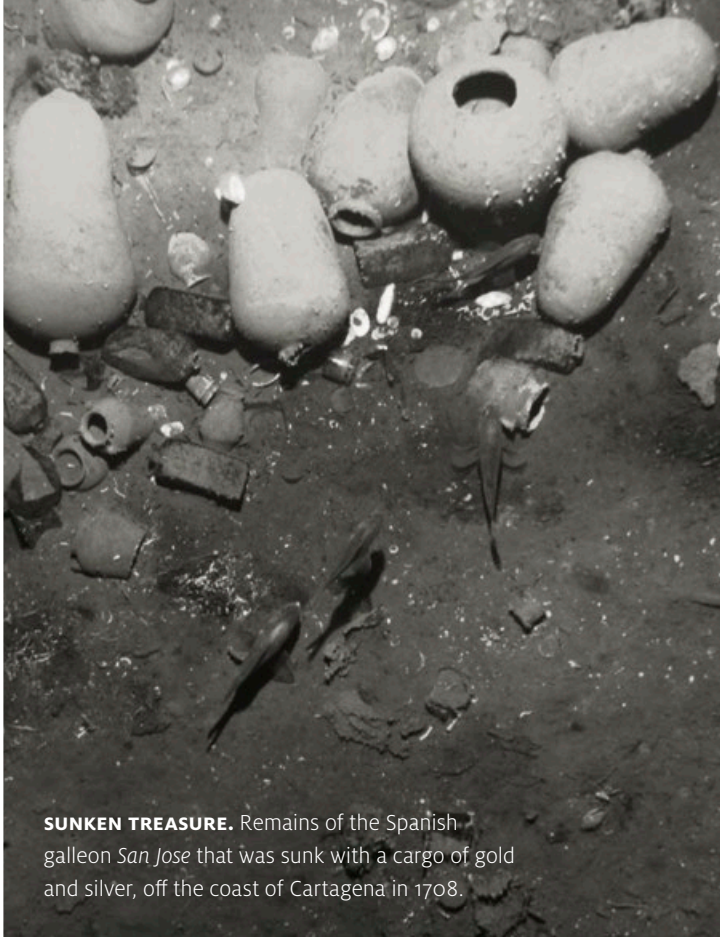
We got away from Bethlehem and its troops of beggars and relic-peddlers in the afternoon, and after spending some little time at Rachel's tomb, hurried to Jerusalem as fast as possible. I never was so glad to get home again before. I never have enjoyed rest as I have enjoyed it during these last few hours.

SWEET RELIEF!

The journey to the Dead Sea, the Jordan and Bethlehem was short, but it was an exhausting one. Such roasting heat, such oppressive solitude, and such dismal desolation cannot surely exist elsewhere on earth. And such fatigue!

We do not think, in the holy places; we think in bed, afterwards, when the glare, and the noise, and the confusion are gone, and in fancy we revisit alone, the solemn monuments of the past, and summon the phantom pageants of an age that has passed away. ◆

PHOTO: CAMPING23—DREAMSTIME.COM | DOLLARPHOTOCLUB.COM



SUNKEN TREASURE. Remains of the Spanish galleon *San Jose* that was sunk with a cargo of gold and silver, off the coast of Cartagena in 1708.

GREATEST TREASURE HAUL EVER MADE

CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

The wreck of a Spanish galleon laden with treasure has been found 300 years after it was sunk by the British, sparking speculation that it contains the most valuable haul ever found on the seabed.

The ship, the San Jose, was carrying one of the richest treasure cargos ever to have been lost at sea. The treasure was collected in the South American colonies to be shipped to Spain to help fund King Philip V's war of succession against the British. The ship was sunk in 1708 in the Caribbean Sea close to the walled port city of Cartagena, Colombia.

The Colombian president, Juan Manuel Santos, announcing the find, said a museum would be built to display the artefacts, which are thought to include gold, coins, silver, emeralds and other gems. He said the treasure was now worth at least some £662m, although others estimate it could run into billions of pounds, its value varying according to the current price of gold and silver.

A team of international experts, the Colombian navy and the country's Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, discovered the wreck in early December 2015 near the island of Baru.

Said the president, the find "constitutes one of the greatest, if not the biggest, as some say, finding and identification of underwater heritage in the history of humanity."

Sonar images have revealed bronze cannon made specifically for the ship, arms, ceramics and other artefacts, said the president. The 46m- (150 ft) long ship with a beam of 14m (45 ft) was armed with 64 guns. Some 600 people went down with the vessel after it exploded when hit by fire from a British warship. The wreck falls within the UN's definition of an underwater cultural heritage site. The *San Jose* was part of a Spanish fleet that sailed to the Americas to transport gold, silver, emeralds and other precious stones and metals to Europe. The British sought to capture them as a way to cut off Spain's war finances. Commodore Charles Wager, in command of four British ships including HMS *Expedition*, attacked the fleet off the island of Baru. His plan had been to attack the largest ship, the San Jose, and take control of the crew and cargo. However, as it was about to be captured it blew up and sank.

Wager described the close quarters broadsides, and said the San Jose exploded with such intensity that he could feel the heat from his own ship. "I believe the ship's side blew out, for she caused a sea that came in our ports," he wrote. "She immediately sank with all her riches."

Ownership of the ship's treasure has been the subject of a long-running legal dispute. In 1981 an American-based salvage company, Sea Search Armada, said it had located the area where the ship sank. The company and the government agreed to split any proceeds, but the government later said all treasure would belong to Colombia, a view that was backed by a US court in 2011. The US Supreme Court ruled that Colombia held the rights to items deemed to be "national cultural patrimony." Anything else would be halved between the salvage company and Colombia.

—Lin Jenkins, The Guardian

PHOTO: COLOMBIA MINISTRY OF CULTURE.

SHIPWRECKS GALORE

AEGEAN SEA, GREECE. In just 13 days, underwater archaeologists discovered 22 shipwrecks in the northeastern Aegean, adding 12 per cent to the total of known ancient shipwrecks in Greek territorial waters. Among the top archaeological finds of 2015, the discovery was made by a joint Greek-American archaeological expedition in the Fourni archipelago, all within an area of just 45 km² (17 square miles).

The Fourni archipelago is a small set of islands, islets and reefs that lies in the northeastern Aegean Sea, between Ikaria, Samos and Patmos. This is the middle of the ancient east-west route of a major shipping channel that was thought to have been an important maritime corridor during antiquity. This channel is also the north-south route that connected the Aegean to the Levant. Ships travelling from the Greek mainland to Asia Minor, or ships leaving the Aegean for the Levant and Egypt had to pass by Fourni. In addition, Ikaria and the west coast of Samos have no natural harbours or protected anchorages, making shipping susceptible to sudden storms from the south. The trauma of the wreck and subsequent storms have almost obliterated any remnants of the actual craft, but their cargoes do remain.

The cargoes scattered across the sea floor reveal long-distance trading between the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, Cyprus, the Levant and Egypt across hundreds of years, with at least three ships carrying amphorae not found previously on shipwrecks. Among the more unique finds were rare teardrop-shaped amphorae from Samos dated to the Archaic Period, 1.3m- (4 ft) tall fish sauce amphorae from the Black Sea region that date to the second century AD, and carrot-shaped amphorae from Sinop, thought to date to the third to seventh centuries AD. Representative samples of the amphorae are now in a wet lab in Greece for preservation and further investigation. If any amphorae turn out to be particularly rare or valuable, they may go on display after careful conservation and preparation for out-of-water conditions.

—Smithsonian/Discovery News

PHOTO: VASILIS MENTOGIANIS.

Video

Tap here to watch a short video on the ancient shipwrecks.
Active internet connection required

THE SEAL OF ELYASHIB, bizarrely found in a 2000-year old grave of a Sarmatian warrior woman.

JUDEAN SEAL IN RUSSIAN GRAVE

ROSTOV-ON-DON, RUSSIA. Excavations of a 2000-year-old grave of a Sarmatian noblewoman in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, have turned up a carnelian seal bearing ancient Hebrew letters, which dates to centuries before the tomb.

Various items uncovered date from the first century BC to the first century AD, and include wooden dishes, a cup, pieces of a bronze bucket, a ladle with the head of the Gorgon, and a gold vial with a lid and fossilized contents. Sarmatian women were known to have fought alongside men, so it is not surprising that in a corner of the tomb was an assortment of knives, more than 100 arrows, a harness and an unfinished sword with an intricate handle inlay.

But the most startling artefact was the seal, which rested on her chest, inscribed with letters that were clearly from the ancient Levant.

The ancient Hebrew writing gives the name "Elyashib"—the son of Oshiyahu, the commander of an isolated Judean fortress, Arad—a name found on ostraca (pottery sherds) and three other seals found in the ancient fortress of Arad, with one made of carnelian, like the Sarmatian discovery.

Such seals, being carved out of gems or semiprecious stones, were thus collected and traded in the ancient world. Speculation is that with remote Judean desert fortresses being situated on trade routes, one of such seals bearing Elyashib's name made its way out of Judah, eventually reaching the grave of this Sarmatian warrior woman far, far away.

The discovery was made by a Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Archaeology team, led by Roman Mimokhod.

— Julia Fridman

PHOTO: INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY OF RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

A ROYAL FIRST

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL.

A 2700-year-old royal seal bearing the mark of the biblical King Hezekiah (727–698 BC) has been unearthed in Jerusalem. The 1cm- (0.5 in) diameter seal is the first confirmed such impression belonging to an Israelite or Judean king to have been found. It would have originally sealed a document written on papyrus, which would have been rolled and tied with thin cords, the marks of which can still be seen on the back of the seal. An inscription reads, "Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah," and it also contains an impression of a sun with two wings, flanked by two ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs that symbolise life.

The bulla was discovered during an excavation of an ancient rubbish dump by a team from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, led by Dr Eilat Mazar, who described it as "a most unique item."

"It is so tiny, but we can see very easily the name of King Hezekiah and the symbols he chose to put on his impression," she said. "This was the private seal of the king that was most likely held by the king and nobody else."

King Hezekiah was one of the most important figures in the Bible (Kings, Chronicles and Isaiah) and is also known from Assyrian records, following a series of battles that included the siege of Jerusalem.

The tiny seal was found together with 33 other bullae imprinted with other seals, many bearing Hebrew names. Marks on their back suggest they had been attached to coarse fabric or thick cords, suggesting sealed sacks possibly containing foodstuffs.

According to archaeologists, the symbols on the seal impression suggest it was made late in the king's life when his symbols changed from that of a winged scarab beetle, to the winged sun. The change is thought to have reflected both the Assyrian influence in the kingdom and Hezekiah's desire to emphasise his own political sovereignty. But researchers said the addition of the symbol of life may well have occurred after Hezekiah miraculously recovered from a life-threatening illness, as depicted in the book of Kings.

PHOTO: OURIA TADMOR

ACTUAL SIZE:

BONES OF PHILIP II OF MACEDON IDENTIFIED

VERGINA, MACEDONIA

The famous "Tomb of Philip" is not after all the tomb in which the remains of the legendary King Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, were laid to rest, a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) has revealed. Rather, another adjacent tomb is—the actual tomb in which his remains were found—within the Great Tumulus hill located near the northern Greek town of Vergina in Macedonia.

Using state-of-the-art scanning and radiographic techniques and equipment, a team of researchers examined a partial skeleton that had been long disinterred from the first (known as Tomb 1) of three royal tombs of the Vergina Tumulus.

It has long been held that the second of the three tombs (Tomb 2), commonly called the "Tomb of Philip," contained the remains of King Philip II. This belief was based around a skeleton that was found in that two-chambered royal tomb in 1977, of a man 35 to 55 years old (Philip died at 46), who exhibited signs of battle wounds, and was found in a golden larnax (or chest), which bore an embossed starburst, the emblem of the Macedonian royal family. Also associated with that skeleton were an iron helmet, a ceremonial shield, an iron and gold cuirass, a gilded silver diadem, and two ivory head portraits interpreted to be those of Philip II and Alexander.

But further research suggested that the royal artefacts found in the tomb were more likely dated to about 317 BC, long after Philip's assassination in 336 BC, and a later study of the skeleton suggested that the skeletal evidence proposed to support the identification was unreliable or misinterpreted.

The skeleton found in Tomb 1, however, appears to better match the description of Phillip—tall at around 180 cms, broken leg bones with a knee joint showing the clear signs of fusion and a hole through the knee overgrowth indicative of a piercing wound. Moreover, Tomb 1 also contained the remains of an estimated 18-year-old female and an approximately 42 week-old infant of unknown gender, the combination of which supports a grim story: According to the writings of Diodorus, Olympias, the fourth wife of Philip and mother to Alexander, murdered Cleopatra and her baby soon after Philip's assassination ensuring her son Alexander's ascendance to the throne.

Therefore it is very likely that Tomb 1 contains the remains of Philip II as well as his wife Cleopatra and infant child, all in agreement with the historical evidence, with Tomb 2 containing the remains of King Arrhidaeus, one of King Philip's sons.

—Popular Archaeology

GATES OF GATH

GATH, ISRAEL. Excavations are continuing on the fortifications and gate of the ancient city of Gath by Professor Aren Maeir of Bar Ilan University. It was possibly the very gate that is mentioned in the biblical book of Samuel (verses 11–16), which describes David's escape from King Saul to Achish, king of Gath. Gath was one of the main Philistine cities of the time and heavily fortified. The excavations revealed walls of up to six metres (20 ft) wide in parts and by following the clear outline of the wall's foundations, the foundations of its gates have now been revealed.

—Dr Jill Katz, Yeshiva University.

FINDING PHILIP. Among other treasures in the royal tomb near the ancient capital of Macedonia, archeologists found this small ivory portrait believed to depict Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great.

UNKNOWN TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT

GEBELEIN, EGYPT

Known to local authorities but never the subject of formal study by archaeologists, is an ancient temple at Gebelein in Upper Egypt, currently being excavated by a team working under the auspices of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw.

Cut into rock and consisting of two rooms, its walls are covered with poorly preserved decoration and hieroglyphic inscriptions. The temple is dedicated to two gods, one is clearly Hathor, but the other not so definitively identifiable is possibly Amun-Ra. Its poorly preserved images of many deities were apparently destroyed in antiquity.

Pharaoh Akhenaten, who ruled in the fourteenth century BC, promoted the worship of one god, whose symbol was the solar disk. Depictions of other gods who did not have solar aspects were destroyed during his rule. However, the goddess Hathor was associated with the sun, so her depictions were spared.

UNCOVERING DESTRUCTION. Polish archaeologists Wojciech Ejsmond and Daniel Takacs analysing ornaments in the rock temple of Hathor.

But a puzzling aspect of the Gebelein temple is its lack of any royal name. Studies of its reliefs and inscriptions date its construction to the reign of Queen Hatshepsut, whose name the ancients attempted to erase from history in the fifteenth century BC. Her "presence" in this temple, however, is suggested by fragments of preserved hieroglyphic inscription containing feminine word endings, as well as the context in which the erased cartouche is located, indicating it contained the name of this queen.

After the death of her husband Tuthmosis II, Hatshepsut exercised power of a regent on behalf of her minor stepson and nephew, Tuthmosis III. For decades, researchers thought that the queen wanted to take over full power. Her ambitious building program and depictions of herself as a ruler on the walls of temples were intended to legitimise her reign at the expense of her stepson.

Hatshepsut was neither the first nor the last female pharaoh in Egyptian history. However, the ancients did not try to erase the other female pharaohs. Which is why historians remain puzzled by consistent attempts to remove the name of Hatshepsut in those ancient times.

—PAP

PHOTO: P. WITKOWSKI

CORRECT PRIORITIES What a wonderful issue of ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGGINGS I recently received. Such a wealth of interesting articles. I usually browse through them: they say, "Housework will still be there tomorrow," and I sit down to a feast. I have travelled in many of the places you write about, but now I have to resort to reading about them, and with your magazine, I am more than content. Many thanks for the pleasure you give me.

—Bobbie McKenzie

REMEMBER THE FALLEN How fortunate I am to have visited the Middle East on a few occasions over the past years, some by myself on business, others by group tour with university staff guides, to quite a few places now no longer stable. How about an article featuring pictures of places now no longer standing, just to remind us of places that gave pleasure to others.

—Bruce Thomson, email

USEFUL RESOURCE I love the magazine and the current layout and the artwork is great. I also subscribe to *BAR* and often hear about discoveries sooner from your magazine. I also teach Latin to children so find many useful resources through the magazine as well.

—Ruth Else

DOUBLE-TAKE I read the September–October 2015 issue and look forward for the next edition. I had it sitting upright in a magazine rack and while looking down on it from above, I immediately noticed the repeat bold "OF" in the main cover feature title. I showed the mag to my family and asked them to read aloud the title and each one failed to notice the second "of." Which proves that proof reading is best done upside down!

—George (of Gosford glyphs)

Ed. *And, oh, so obvious! Of course, it was the first thing we noticed when printed. And, true, no-one here picked it until pointed out to them.*

TWO MISTAKES I enjoyed the recent November-December issue very much. There is a lot of interesting reading there. I was especially moved by the Palmyra article ("Hero of Palmyra"). I have been twice to that wonderful site and I am devastated by the terrible destruction.

There is one point I would make about picture # 3 (page 37): it is a *theatre*, not an *amphi*-theatre. This is a misnomer that I am constantly correcting in my classes. *Amphi* is two in Greek and means two theatres face to face.

I also enjoyed the article on Domitian, though, there was rather too much reference to Suetonius, whom I suspect if he were alive today, would be writing for News of the World. Brian Jones from the University of Queensland has written a well-balanced book on Domitian, which I'm sure readers would enjoy.

—Dr Pamela Davenport, Kuraby QLD

FREE DIGGINGS CAP!
All published letters will receive a DIGGINGS cap, so please include a postal address, particularly in emailed letters.

CONTACT US Have kudos or a question? Then write and tell us: The Editor, Diggings, Locked Bag 1115, Wahroonga NSW 2076, Australia, or email editor@diggings.com.au. Include your full name and address (and email, if possible). Keep your letter brief—around 100 words or so. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

MYSTERIES UNEARTHED ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGGINGS has made a series of archaeology programs for television. The series features on New Zealand's free-to-air HopeChannel. The series, *Mysteries Unearthed,* will help viewers to understand the significance of archaeological discoveries within the Ancient Near East. Featuring DIGGINGS editor Gary Webster, viewers will see discoveries made in Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Syria, Greece and Italy and have them explained.

ANCIENT MYSTERIES SEMINARS DIGGINGS recently went to Perth and Mt Barker, WA and Hobart, Tas. But of particular note was one in which the editor presented to a group of Iranian expatriates in Sydney. In 2016, he will be presenting the *Ancient Mysteries Reveal the Future* series in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria; and internationally in Samoa and PNG. See specifics adjacent.

2016 TOURS News coming out of the Middle East has led some to reconsider travelling to this part of the world. This has caused DIGGINGS to combine its ANCIENT EMPIRES and AMAZING DISCOVERIES tours into one—DISCOVERIES IN ANCIENT EMPIRES—running from September 24 to October 27. Because of this, our ANCIENT WONDERS tour will now run September 15–25 so that it can be linked to the DISCOVERIES IN ANCIENT EMPIRES tour. Editor, Gary Webster, will be leading both tours. The "hop on hop off" itineraries have been designed to avoid the Middle East trouble spots.

Contact us (details on back page) for a brochure and terms and conditions, or go online to diggings.com.au/tours to view and download the itineraries and registration form PDFs directly.

HELP DIGGINGS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGGINGS is compiling a complete bound record of all issues of DIGGINGS from its first issue, prior to our purchase of the title. If you can help with a missing copy, we'd love to hear from you.

1994
Vol. 1 – Issue 6

1995
Vol. 2 – Issue 4
Vol. 2 – Issue 5
Vol. 2 – Issue 6

THANK YOU! We received a wonderful response to our request for back issues of DIGGINGS. Among those received was a rare copy of Issue #1, which we received from Pam Rogers of Leopold, Victoria. Interestingly, not one of you requested payment. So thank you, readers, for your generosity and goodwill.—*Eds*

EVENTS

2016 DIGGINGS SEMINARS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGGINGS editor Gary Webster's "Ancient Mysteries Reveal the Future" seminar schedule:

Ballarat, Saturday, January 30, 2pm
Miranda, Sydney, Miranda Community Centre (97 Karimbla Rd), Friday, February 19, 7pm
Port Moresby, Sunday, February 28, 7pm
Stanmore, Sydney, Friday, April 8, 7pm
Hornsby, Sydney, Saturday, April 9, 1:30pm
Cooparoo,Brisbane, East League's Club, Cooparoo, Wednesday, April 27, 7pm
Melbourne (venues, to be booked), Friday, May 20; Saturday, May 21; Sunday, May 22
Haymarket, Sydney CBD, Saturday, June 11, 2pm
Karratha, WA, Friday, August 12, 7pm
Apia, Samoa, Friday, August 19, 7pm

For more information regarding these seminars or to have one in your area, please contact DIGGINGS and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

DIGGINGS TOUR September 24—October 27

Other non-DiGGINGS-sponsored but archaeology-related events you might be interested in include:

BRISBANE, QLD **The Diggings Club** meets on the second Sunday of each month at 1 pm in the Central City Library, 266 George Street, Brisbane. For further information, phone Veronica Mason on (07) 3219 3097.

SYDNEY, NSW **Macquarie University** holds regular seminars and one-off events on ancient world studies. For more information, run an internet search of "Macquarie University ancient world history seminar."

GOLD COAST, QLD **The Pharos Club** meets in Southport on the first Saturday of each month at 1 pm. For more information, please contact Maureen Hughes on (07) 5531 1394.

ADELAIDE, SA **The Ancient Egypt Study Group** meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in Clarence Gardens, Adelaide. **The Hieroglyphs Study Group** meets on the third Tuesday of each month. For further details, please phone (08) 8276 7945.

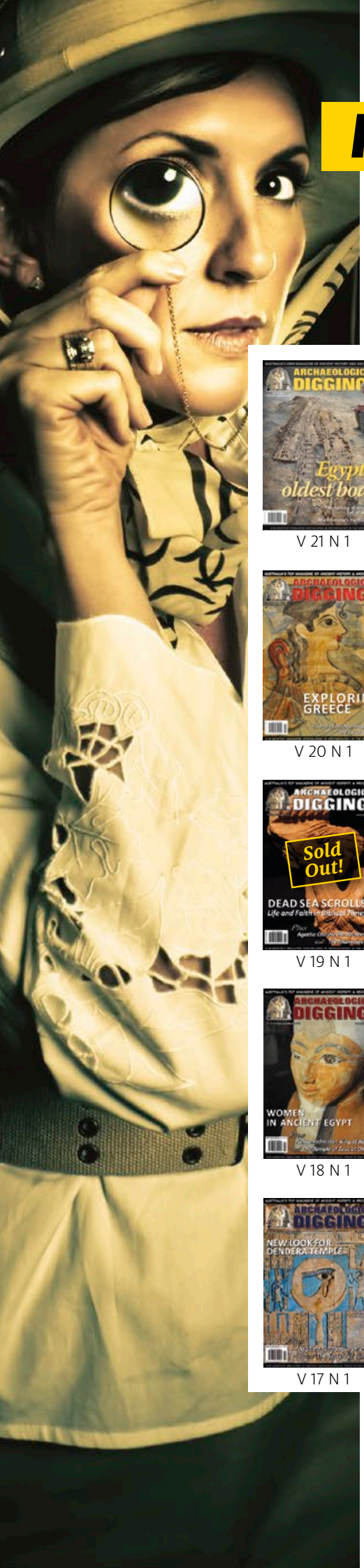
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ALPHABET DIG?

Dig into the articles in this issue to excavate names, artefacts and objects of history, then sort them into the alphabet.

(Hint, there is something from every article, with some in multiple locations, while some clues equate to just one instance in the complete magazine.)

A	Assyria	ambsacece
B		adamussc
C		laichsh
D		combatac
E		azidoc
F		eubusies
G		egerce
H		yhude
I		IXII ole
J		jpshouse
K		lithoope
L		meatmnakhun
M		popemii
N		more
O		nevar
P		ishoppers
Q		queenbeshef
R		rarefuny
S		rikodn
T		~~ariassy~~
U		testinsine
V		vacanti
W		aactors
X		tunbisi
Y		intrusivey
Z		bestrew

ANSWERS Assyria (p27), Bisitun (p37), Catacomb (p8), Damascus (p30), Eusebius (p45), Funerary (p11), Greece (p38), Hopolite (p39), Intestines (p10), Josephus (p23), Kidron (p54), Lachish (p31), Maccabees (p6), Nerva (p42), Ostraca (news), Pompeii (p14), Qebehsenuef (p10), Rome (p45), Sepphoris (p7), Tamenkhamun (p10), University (p11), Vatican (p49), Webster (pxx), Leo XIII, Yehud (p20), Z: Zodiac (p7)



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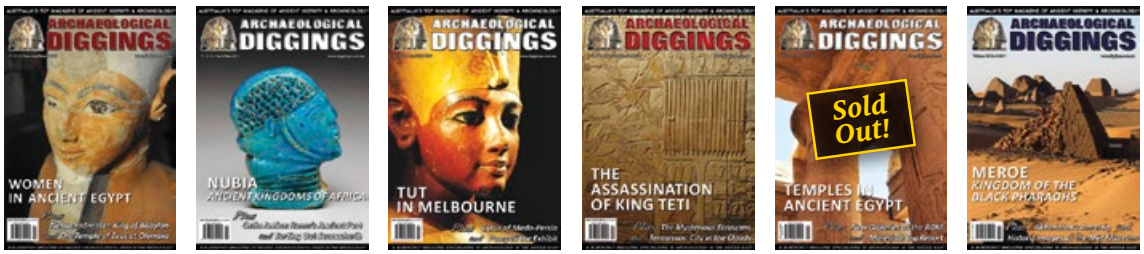

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V 17 N 1 | V 17 N 2 | V 17 N 3 | V 17 N 4 | V 17 N 5 | V 17 N 6

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