

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

to me the changes in the classical city in the early Islamic period; and Sussita in the Golan, where Michael Eisenberg discussed the history of this city, which at the time of my visit was completely covered with spring flowers (fig. 1). Then there was the trip to Akko, with standing Crusader and later buildings explained by Edna and Eliezer Stern. The list goes on (fig. 2) and the frustration is that, in this densely packed ancient land, there are always more sites to see and people ready to explain the past than one has time to experience.

This brings me to the second, even more pleasant aspect of my research in Israel. When I was finally able to visit Ramla (fig. 3), the early Islamic capital of the Jund Filastin (after trying to study the city for many years), I was guided by Ofer Sion, who was engaged in some salvage excavations in the modern town. As we sat in his temporary camp, I met Ron Toueg and Moti Haiman, both experienced archaeologists dealing with Islamic remains. Indeed, meeting young archaeologists who are either specializing in or seriously pursuing evidence for the Islamic periods is a wonderful revelation. One might even suggest that fieldwork in Islamic archaeology may be advancing faster here than anywhere else in the Middle East. The irony is not lost on some archaeologists, like Rafi Greenberg, who excavates at Beit Yerak (Khirbat Karak, first excavated by the Oriental Institute) and who is active in co-operation with Palestinian archaeologists and, in his words, multi-vocular interpretations of archaeological sites.

One of the more pleasurable aspects of my time in Jerusalem has been the continuing interaction with my students, both past and present. I was able to visit Tracy Hoffman at her excavations in Ashkelon. We put together a provisional type series of Islamic ceramics, from the earliest through Fatimid, which will make her famous when she refines and publishes it. I also visited Katherine Strange Burke, who with her husband Aaron is excavating Tell Jaffa; she has an amazing range of Mamluk through Ottoman materials which have at least as great potential. During my time at the Institute in Jerusalem, she and Edna Stern organized an Islamic ceramic workshop which brought together at least thirty interested scholars to observe (and handle) ceramics from a dozen sites. The co-operation and excitement led to calls for more such meetings.

While she is engaged in her dissertation research in Cairo, Tanya Treptow made the trip to Jerusalem (by bus across the Sinai, which proves that adventure is not gone for students). We toured the Old City, but the Rockefeller Museum really seemed to be the highlight. She appreciated the Khirbet Mafjar collection of stuccoes and the library, where I often work. It is very reminiscent of the Oriental Institute Research Archives. Rockefeller was a generous man but he seems to have used the same architect: even the window hardware is identical to that in Chicago. Slightly earlier, Asa Eger came to Jerusalem from Istanbul, where he holds a postdoctoral position at Koç University. He accompanied us on several site tours and even visited the site of Khirbet Mafjar near Jericho, his curiosity aroused by my constant references to its marvels during his studies.

I will save my further activities for the next *Annual Report*, as they will fall into the next “year,” and close only remembering the early expeditions that Breasted sent out to the Near East stayed for many more months and must have also been ready to return to Chicago.

---

### Karen L. Wilson

During the past year, **Karen L. Wilson** continued to work on the final publication of the Oriental Institute excavations in the late 1950s and early 1960s at the sites of Nippur and Abu Salabikh in

Iraq. This work, sponsored by a grant awarded to McGuire Gibson by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a joint project undertaken with Robert Biggs, Jean Evans, McGuire Gibson (University of Chicago), and Richard Zettler (University of Pennsylvania). The project so far has included the preparation of a digital catalog of finds plus the scanning of all negatives and drawings as well as most of the field records generated by work on the sites. A draft of a final publication covering the results of the excavation of the Inanna Temple at Nippur is planned to be completed by the end of 2010.

Karen also continued to serve as Kish Project Coordinator at the Field Museum, preparing the final publication of the results of the Joint Field Museum and Oxford University Expedition to Kish in 1923–1933. She organized a symposium in early November concerning ongoing research as part of the Kish project, which featured papers not only by American scholars but also by participants from England, Germany, and Japan. At the Field Museum Karen also curated a temporary exhibition, *Masterpieces of Ancient Jewelry*, that ran from February through July. In addition to pieces from the Levant, Iran, and the Islamic world, the exhibition included items from the Field Museum's Egyptian collection as well as two display cases featuring material from ancient Kish.

Karen's book, *Bismaya: Recovering the Lost City of Adab*, is currently in press at the Oriental Institute Publications Office.

---