

David Schloen

David Schloen continued his work with the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, Israel, for several weeks in June and July 1995. He is currently Associate Director of this long-term excavation project, which is directed by Lawrence Stager of Harvard University. The Ashkelon expedition has been in the field every summer since 1985, uncovering remains from diverse periods, from the beginning of the Canaanite era about 2000 B.C. to the Crusader period in the twelfth century A.D. Since 1994 the focus of Schloen's work at Ashkelon has been the analysis and publication of the large amount of material recovered from the late Philistine period at the end of the seventh century B.C., when the city was destroyed by the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar. This material will be published in a forthcoming volume of the final report of the excavations at Ashkelon. Upon returning from Ashkelon, Schloen spent the month of August 1995 preparing for fieldwork at Yaqush, an exceptionally long-lived Early Bronze Age village site (ca. 3300–2300 B.C.) in the northern Jordan Valley that was excavated on behalf of the Oriental Institute in 1989 and 1991 by Douglas Esse, Schloen's predecessor as professor of Syro-Palestinian archaeology. In late August Schloen went back to Is-

rael with several University of Chicago archaeology students and conducted a four-week excavation at Yaqush (see separate report), enlarging the exposure earlier achieved by Esse and also processing and organizing the previously excavated material. Schloen plans to conduct further excavations at this important site and has started to work on the publication of the finds. From October 1995 until May 1996 Schloen's major research project has been a book, tentatively entitled "The House of the Father in Canaan and Israel," which is a revised and expanded version of his Harvard doctoral dissertation (defended with distinction in May 1995). The central concern of this book is the phenomenon of the ancient patriarchal household, which was both a basic socio-economic fact and a fundamental symbol of religious and political community in the ancient Near East, and in Bronze Age Canaan and Iron Age Israel in particular. Schloen is attempting to explicate the complex relationship between the "house of the father" as a fact and as a symbol, tracing the development and mutual interaction of these two aspects during the period when the Bronze Age social order was breaking down and new social forms and corresponding symbolizations of reality emerged in the course of the first millennium B.C. The book therefore deals with the archaeological evidence of domestic architecture, town planning, and economic life, relating this to the picture of the ancient Syro-Palestinian social world that could be constructed from both administrative and religious texts, including the Hebrew Bible. In addition to this project, Schloen has been occupied with preparing and teaching courses and participating in various workshops and committees. In June 1996 he returned to Ashkelon for another seven-week field season, resuming his study of the late Philistine finds.
