

Gil J. Stein

From July 28 to August 18, 2005, at the Şanlıurfa Museum, in southeast Turkey, **Gil J. Stein** worked with Oriental Institute Museum Preparator Erik Lindahl to design and assemble a new permanent exhibit of artifacts recovered from his excavations at Hacinebi, Turkey.

Located at a strategic ford on the Euphrates River, Hacinebi was a local Anatolian town where merchants from the Uruk culture of southern Mesopotamia established a trading colony in about 3700 B.C. — the Late Chalcolithic period. This commercial expansion of Uruk Mesopotamia at Hacinebi and other sites in Turkey, Syria, and Iran formed the world's earliest known colonial network. Stein's excavations at Hacinebi during six field seasons from 1992 to 1997 revealed the traces of both the trading colony and its Anatolian host community, thereby allowing him to investigate relations between the two groups, and the actual workings of this colonial system. After spending the following five summer seasons analyzing and recording the excavated materials in Şanlıurfa, he was finally ready to prepare a museum exhibit.

The Şanlıurfa Museum Director, Mr. Eyüp Bucak, invited Stein and Lindahl to install this exhibit and generously made display cases available to us in the museum's pre- and proto-historic gallery. They worked in tandem with University of Chicago (and Oriental Institute) alumnus Guillermo Algaze, who was preparing a museum exhibit of finds from his excavations at the Bronze Age urban center of Titriş.

The main focus of the Hacinebi exhibit was to display and explain the direct archaeological evidence for the presence of an ancient Mesopotamian trading colony at this local Anatolian set-

tlement — Uruk cylinder seal impressions, tablets, bullae with tokens, baked clay wall cones, and Mesopotamian ceramics. At the same time they sought to show how the co-existing Uruk and local Anatolian cultures at the site each maintained their own culturally distinctive styles of pottery, sealing technology, and daily practices. As a result, most of the 100 artifacts selected for the exhibit dated to the late Chalcolithic period, while some additional material presented the evidence for the Achaemenid and Hellenistic occupations of the site in the fifth to third centuries B.C.

In preparation for their trip to Şanlıurfa, Stein had written a series of text panels that Erik then had mounted on plexiglass and coated with a special ultraviolet resistant veneer to protect the text from fading and yellowing. The text panels give bilingual Turkish-English descriptions of Hacinebi and its artifactual remains.

When they arrived in Şanlıurfa, they were pleasantly surprised to find that the museum had thoroughly organized its storerooms and developed a computerized inventory that allowed Algaze and Stein to locate literally every single artifact they had selected for the exhibit in the course of one (long) day's work.

Turkish conservators Ilkay and Moharrem Oral did the necessary last-minute repairs and cleaning of the artifacts that needed the attention. They designed the layout of the exhibit and constructed a mock-up in the laboratory/prep room located in the museum basement. Once they had learned the Turkish words for “flux,” “solder,” and “propane torch,” they were able to quickly locate the equipment they needed in Şanlıurfa's labyrinthine bazaar. Erik gained the respect of the Şanlıurfa Museum staff by constructing beautiful wire mounts for the ceramics and other artifacts. He made short work of wrapping all the case buildups and the inside of the display case in newly purchased cloth. Finally, Erik designed the mountings for the text panels. To fabricate them, they negotiated the use of a nearby workshop that makes and sells acrylic advertising signs. At first the owner was reluctant to let Erik use his machinery, but once the two of them



Gil Stein and Guillermo Algaze discussing the design of their museum exhibits with Şanlıurfa Museum Director Mr. Eyüp Bucak



Conservators Ilkay and Moharrem Oral doing final restorations on the ceramics

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH



Oriental Institute Gallery Preparator Erik Lindahl fabricating mountings for the Hacinebi exhibit text panels using the equipment in the Güney Reklam acrylic sign workshop in Şanlıurfa

had compared work-related injuries to their hands and arms, the owner was satisfied with Lindahl's professional credentials and allowed him to go ahead. The results were beautifully mounted text panels that greatly enhanced the exhibit.

It was wonderful to see the artifacts from the excavation finally on display for colleagues and the general public. The people of Şanlıurfa province justly take pride in the long history of civilizations in their region. It was a privilege to add this own small contribution to documenting that record. The process involved in this one small exhibit case gave Stein a much deeper appreciation

for the Herculean efforts of Erik and his colleagues on the Oriental Institute's museum staff in designing and carrying out the reinstallation of the eight galleries here at home in Hyde Park.

In addition to the installation of the Hacinebi exhibit, Stein presented two papers during the 2005/2006 academic year. He was invited to present the Munro Lecture on April 18, 2006, at the University of Edinburgh on the topic "Social identity, Daily Practice and Material Culture in an Ancient Colonial Encounter: Mesopotamians at Hacinebi Turkey, 3700 BC." He was also asked to present the paper "Horizon Styles, Ideal Types, and Cultural Identities: Modeling Regional Variation in the Ubaid World" as the keynote address at the International Workshop on the Ubaid Period, University of Durham, Durham (UK) on April 20, 2006. This paper is now being revised for publication in the conference proceedings volume.



The Hacinebi exhibit case as installed. Note the Local Late Chalcolithic "eye idols" in the center of the front row. "Eye idols" are characteristic of the local late Chalcolithic culture of the fourth millennium at sites in North Syria such as Tell Brak (where they were first discovered) and Hamoukar, and in south-east turkey at sites such as Hassek and Hacinebi

Finally, Stein has been continuing with the ongoing analysis of the stratigraphy and artifacts from the Hacinebi excavations. Working with research assistant Belinda Monahan, they have been refining the ceramic typology from Hacinebi so that the ceramic data can be integrated with the analysis of site stratigraphy. They have recorded roughly 250,000 Late Chalcolithic sherds from the site. They expect to complete the ceramic typology and conduct a full diachronic analysis of this material over the course of the coming 2006/2007 academic year. Once completed, the synthesis of the ceramic and stratigraphic sequences will form the backbone of their analysis of all artifactual materials from the site, as they move toward the preparation of their final report for publication.