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HAMOUKAR EARLY CITY IN NORTHEASTERN SYRIA

McGUIRE GIBSON, *Professor of Archaeology*

INTRODUCTION

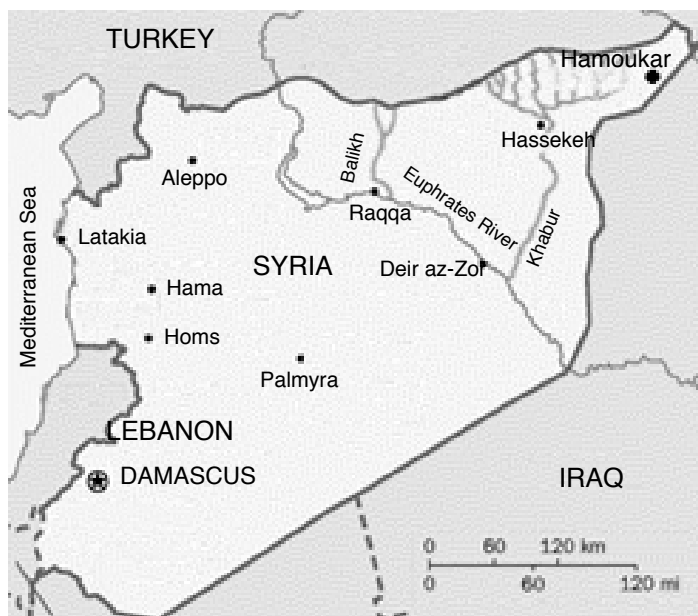
A man was mowing the lawn the other day in Damascus. You don't think of lawn mowing there, especially if your experience of the country has been in the summer, fall, or winter when everything is dry and brown. But right now, in early spring (April 2000), there is green in much of the country. For a while it seemed that this would be the third year of drought in Syria, but there has been rain off and on, especially over the last two weeks. The pattern is not uniform. As you go along the roads, you notice that the fields on one side are much greener, with wheat and barley at four to six inches in height. On the other side, the fields are spotty, reaching only two inches of height at most, and then again will come a green area.

I was in Syria in late March in order to begin the process of building a mudbrick house on the site of Hamoukar, a new focus of research for the Oriental Institute. I arrived with a plan that had been drawn up by John Sanders from ideas I had sketched out. My ideas came partly from an old plan that was created for Nippur by Carl Haines but had not been carried out. I also had in mind the Nippur house that was built by Jim Knudstad, with some changes that would reflect the different environmental conditions in northeastern Syria. John was thinking, also, of Assyrian palace plans, and the house we have decided to build has something of Sargon and Ashurbanipal in it, and they were people who knew about rain and cold, as well as the heat of summer.

When you work in the Syrian Jezira, the upper Khabur river basin, you are very soon made aware of the critical role of rain. The history of occupation in this area, as shown best by the research of the Oriental Institute's Tony Wilkinson, is an episodic one. Centuries of settlement based on rain-fed agriculture have been followed by centuries of abandonment, with the area given over to nomadic pastoralism. The Khabur River, with its several branches, is not a major water course, and during most of the year is represented by dry wadis. But most of the important sites lie alongside those branches, which could supply water enough to support large towns.

To the north, within easy visual distance, is the southwestern-most ridge of the Taurus/Zagros Mountains. On clear days you can see more distant and higher ridges in Turkey and Iraq, with snow covering them for much of the year. Rain and snow, falling in those mountains, feed the Euphrates and its tributaries the Balikh and Khabur, as well as the Tigris and its tributaries. The snow, melting in the spring, is the source for the irrigation in Syria and Iraq, but since there is still very little flow irrigation in the Khabur basin, the mountain runoff has not been as immediately important there. The rain in Turkey does recharge the groundwater of northern Syria. With economic development in both countries, however, the groundwater level is dropping very fast. Syrian villages, which used to draw water from wells dug down 20 m, now must drill artesian wells reaching as deep as 200 m. Irrigation for cotton, a major cash crop in the area, is lowering the level even of artesian water.

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From the Director's Study

McGuire Gibson's article in this issue introduces *News & Notes* readers to an Oriental Institute site that you should be hearing about regularly during the coming years. And pending official publication, this report, and its successors, will be a primary source of information about what promises to be a revealing window on the spread of early urban civilization in the ancient Near East. But there is a plus here. In the guise of a "Letter from ..." or "You are there ..." report, the article is an excellent introduction to how archaeology is done on the ground ("or in the dirt"). After the lesson on "How you evaluate the environment," it gives insider details on the actual process and negotiations of lining up a site; how a first season might progress; how, having decided that the site is a promising one, the excavator goes about setting up a "permanent" expedition house — a construction process involving materials and methods that would not have seemed alien to the ancient inhabitants whose history and culture we are trying to unravel. Stay tuned to *News & Notes* for further developments.



SYRIAN-AMERICAN EXPEDITION TO TELL HAMOUKAR

When we began the first season of excavation at Hamoukar (September – November 1999), we wondered how the site got its water. This tell, which is a very big one by Syrian standards, does not sit on a branch of the Khabur, but between two rather modest wadis. Located about five miles from the Iraqi border, just west of a major border crossing point called Yarubiyah, ancient Hamoukar lay on a major traffic artery from Nineveh to Aleppo. That position must have had a great deal to do with its size and function at various times in the past.

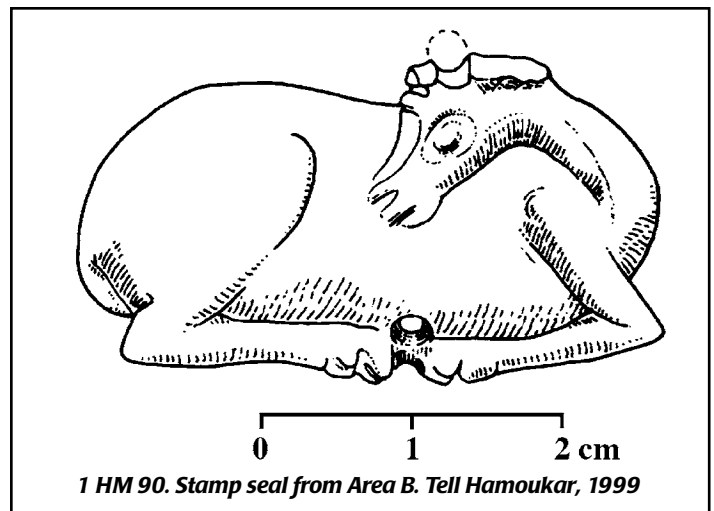
The site was noticed by a number of archaeologists in the 1920s and 1930s, and some proposed that it might be Washshukanni, the still-unlocated capital of the Mitanni empire (c. 1500 BC). If the people who proposed that identification had examined the pot sherds on the surface of the tell, they would not have made it. There is no evidence of an occupation of Hamoukar at the time of the Mitanni.

Over the years, several excavators have been interested in Hamoukar because it does have plenty of evidence for the Uruk period (c. 3200 BC), the time when the first cities were developed in southern Iraq and colonies were established in Syria. Remains of the Uruk period have been excavated at Tell Brak, to the south of Hamoukar, and at a number of other sites in Syria, especially along the Euphrates.

I first stepped onto Hamoukar in April 1999. I had rented a car in Damascus to go to the eastern part of Syria to look at possible sites to dig. After stopping at Raqqa, on the Euphrates, and being shown a number of very interesting sites, I went on to Deir az-Zor. There, I was shown a couple of sites, but nothing as interesting as those I had already seen. I then drove on to Hassekeh, the provincial capital for the Upper Khabur area. The local director of the Antiquities Service, Abdul Messieh Bagdo, joined me, and we examined another five or six sites, all of which were possible candidates for excavation. I asked him if we could also go to Hamoukar, although I had been told that the site was not going to be given to anyone at this time. I was being shown sites that were in danger because of development projects or illegal digging, and these would have priority.

It was clear, even from a distance, that Hamoukar was a large site, several times larger than anything I had yet seen on the trip. We drove onto the tell and walked up to the top, which has a small modern cemetery. Looking around, I could see that a large part of the southern and eastern slopes were occupied by modern mudbrick houses. But even before I had a chance to look at the pottery on the surface of the mound, rain began to pour down. We ducked under the porch of a nearby house and waited for a bit, but it soon became obvious that this was going to be a serious rain. I thought we should get the car off the tell fast, before we became stuck.

After I got back to Chicago, I wrote a letter to Prof. Dr. Sultan Muhesen, Director General of Antiquities and Museums, with a list of the sites, in order of preference. At the end of the letter, I added a line to point out that Hamoukar was the most endangered mound I had seen, due to the large settlement already covering a large part of it, with a paved road and shops. Whichever site we were given, we would be forming a joint Syrian-American expedition, with personnel and other resources. Assuming that we would be given the first or second choice on my list, I began planning for work on a relatively modest scale. I was greatly surprised when I received Dr. Muhesen's letter informing me that we were being given permission for Hamoukar. I then had to rethink my entire approach to the work.

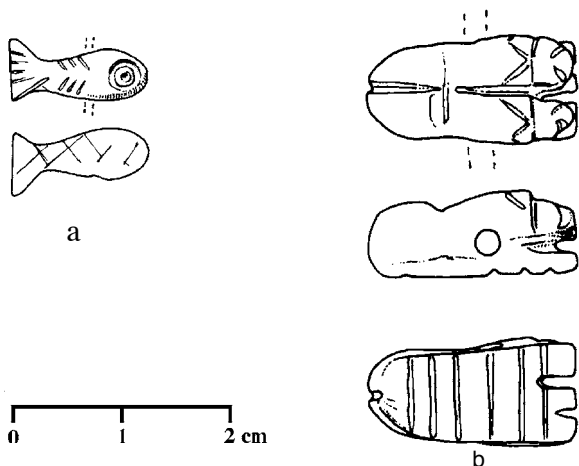


1 HM 90. Stamp seal from Area B. Tell Hamoukar, 1999

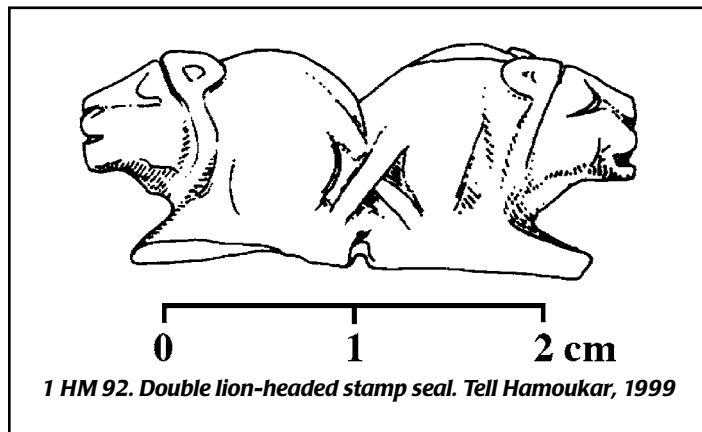
I arrived in Syria in late August and flew up to Qamishli on a Syrian Airways Tupolev jet in an hour and twenty minutes. The same trip by road would have taken at least ten hours. From Qamishli, I went by taxi to Hassekeh where I was met by my co-director, Muhammad Maktash (Director of the Raqqa Museum). After consulting with the local Antiquities officials, who had already been looking into possible housing for the expedition, Muhammad and I hired another taxi to take us to Hamoukar for a couple of days. There was no place large enough for the expedition in Hamoukar village, but there appeared to be one or two houses in Yarubiyah, eight kilometers to the east. This town, most often referred to by local people by its old name, Tell Kochek, is the border outpost mentioned earlier. We found a brand new house, not quite finished, and rented it. Although a bit small, it would do. I flew back to Damascus to meet the rest of the staff while Muhammad returned to Raqqa to buy equipment to furnish the house.

Clemens Reichel and Jason Ur flew in a few days earlier than the rest, so I took them on a day trip to Beirut, where they had never been. It is easy to go to Beirut (Americans can get visas at the border or the airport), and the road trip takes only three hours, even with a customs check. To watch a city remake itself after fifteen years of war is fascinating. Blasted buildings stand next to brand new ones, and the entire downtown is a large open space, where hundreds of destroyed buildings have been removed and used to create two new peninsulas in the Mediterranean. Archaeological sites, dug after the clearance, are open for now, but some are already under new high rises. People are busily chatting on cell phones, using ATM machines, spending hours in Internet cafes, and dressing in the latest European styles. Even after a long civil war, Beirut is still on to the latest craze.

Two days later, I sent Clemens and Jason in a rented minibus with lots of baggage and equipment for the long ride to Yarubiyah. A couple of days later, the rest of the crew flew with me to Qamishli to find a house full of furniture and even a cook in place. Muhammad Maktash had done a great job in getting us established.



(a) Fish-shaped (1 HM 61) and (b) double lion-shaped (1 HM 32) stamp seals. Tell Hamoukar, 1999



1 HM 92. Double lion-headed stamp seal. Tell Hamoukar, 1999

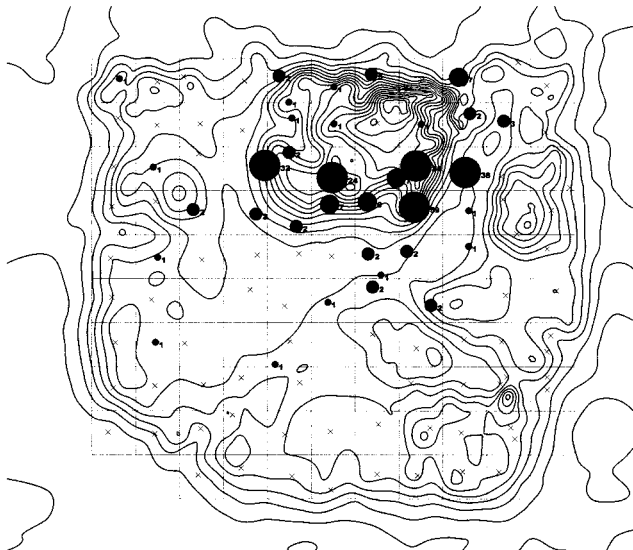
I assumed that this first season would be pretty uneventful, a lot of preliminary steps and a shaking-out operation. We needed to get used to the area, to the local digging conditions, to the local workmen, and to one another. Some of the staff had not been on a dig with me. An exception was John Sanders, whom I pried away from his computers at the Oriental Institute to use his skills as an archaeological architect. John and I have worked together since 1972. Peggy Sanders, a superb artist, was able to join us for the end of the season to draw objects. I also induced Judith Franke to leave her position as Director of the Dickson Mounds Museum to come dig, once more, in the Near East. She and I had last worked together at Nippur in 1973. Tony Wilkinson came to join us for a few days, taking a break from another fieldwork commitment in Syria. Clemens and Jason both had previous field experience in Syria and Turkey, but Brigitte Watkins and Carrie Hritz were going to be in Syria for the first time.

CONTOUR MAP AND SURFACE SURVEY

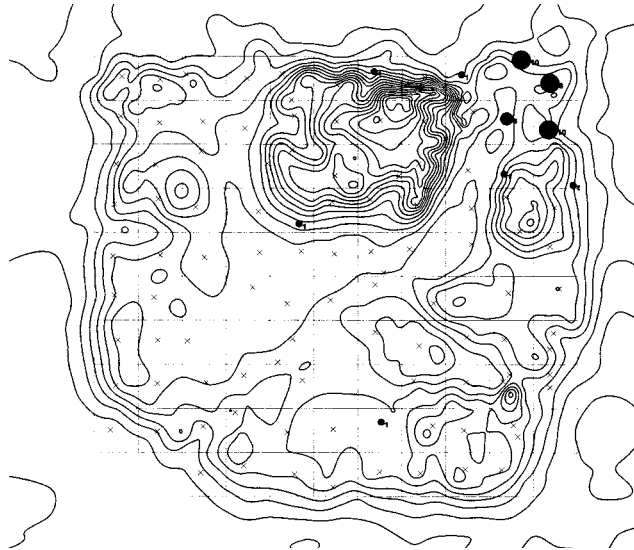
We began work by doing a contour map of the site. John Sanders and Carrie Hritz did this in about ten very full days. This map was the basis for the work done by Jason Ur, who was in charge of the surface collection. The picking up and recording of sherds on the surface can give a very good preliminary idea of the size and shape of settlement at a site through time. Unless digging proves otherwise, the Uruk settlement is not as big as other scholars have thought, being only about 13 hectares (c. 32 acres). The site was at its biggest in the third millennium, reaching 102 hectares, or more than 250 acres. It was then abandoned, with people dispersing to form small villages around the site. During the Neo-Assyrian period, c. 800 BC, there was a small village on the mound, and another in the Seleucid period, c. 200 BC. Finally, during the early Islamic period (c. 700 AD), the last ancient occupants built on the top of the mound.

The surface sherds indicated some particularly interesting places for digging; for instance, there is certainly an area of pottery production on the eastern edge of the site, with stacks of bowls fused by over-firing. But probably the most important result of the surface collection was the confirmation of a very large, low settlement to the south of the main tell. Tony

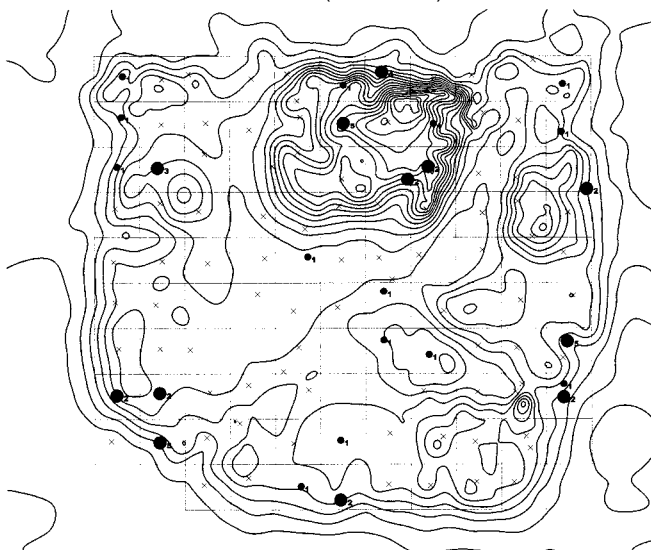
Late Chalcolithic / Uruk (4000–3000 BC)



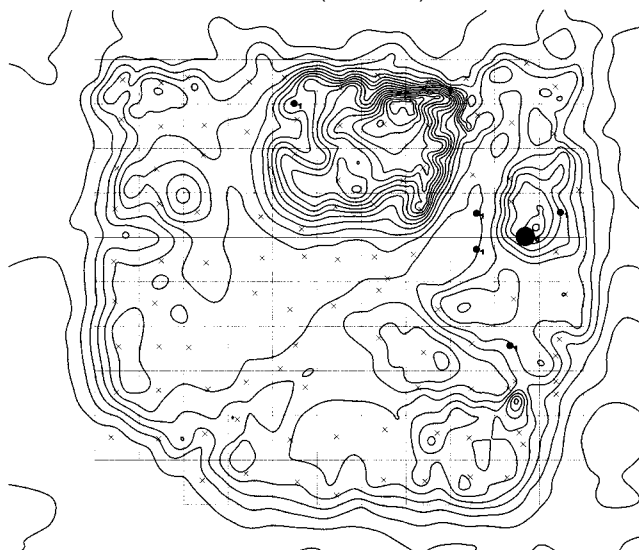
Iron Age / Assyrian (c. 800 BC)



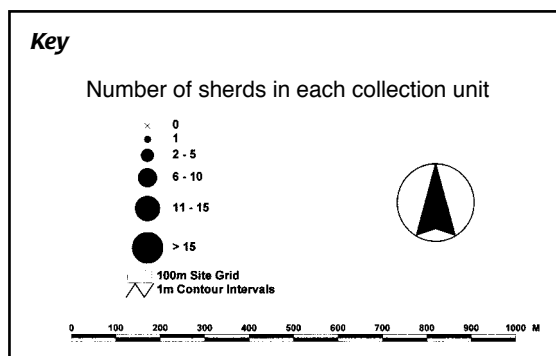
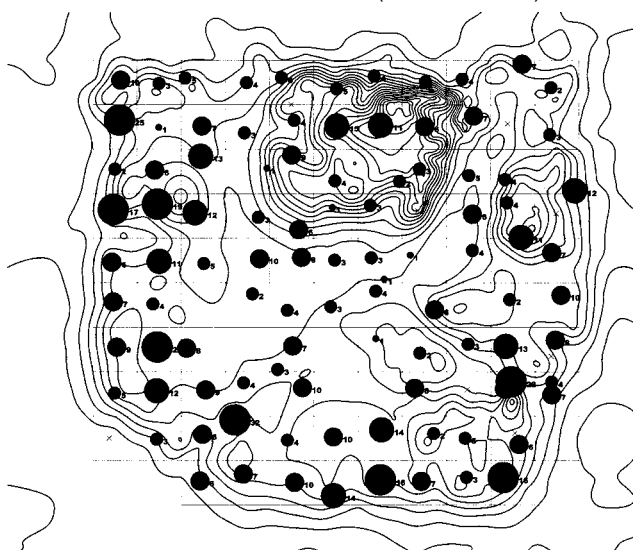
Ninevite 5 (c. 2700 BC)



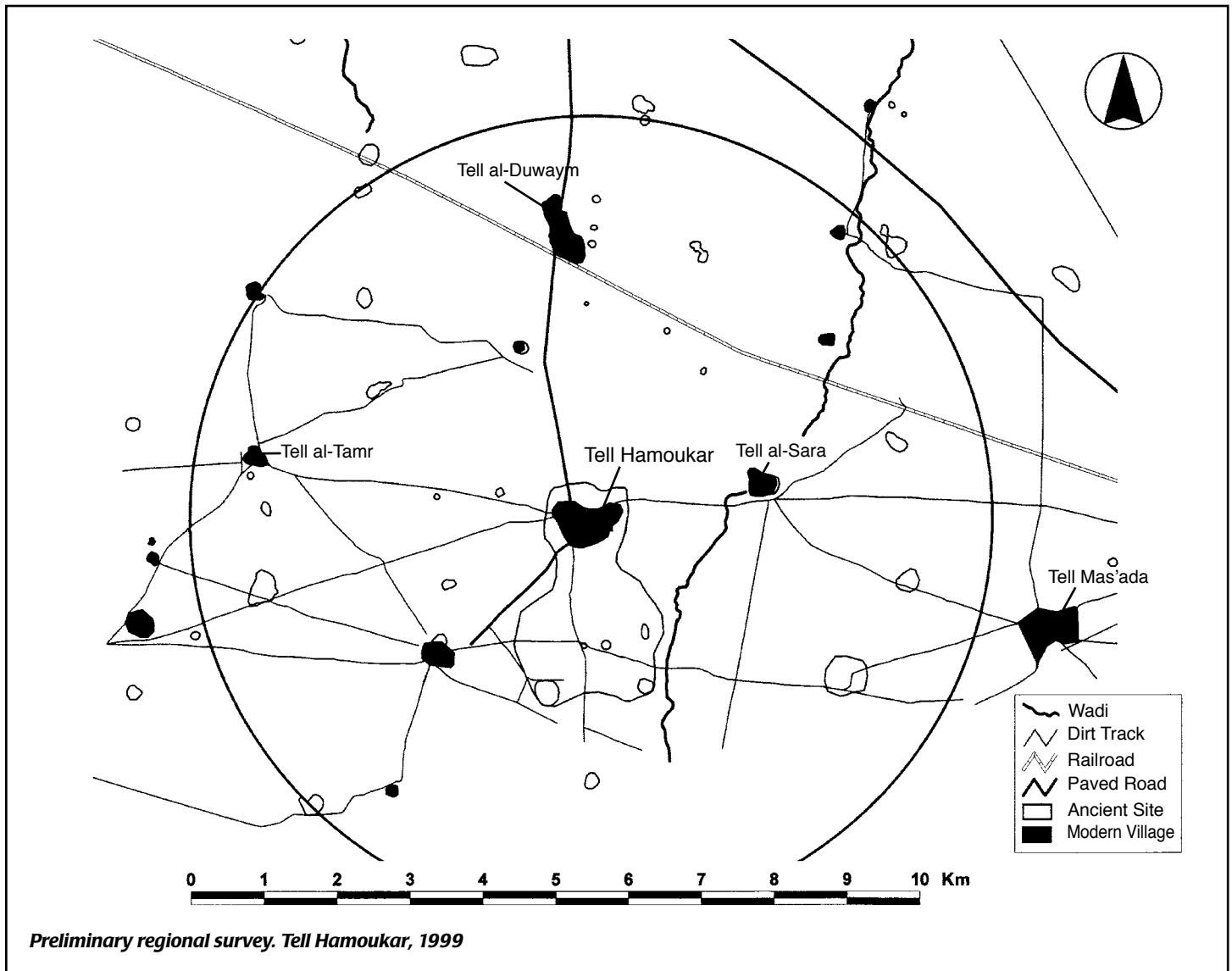
Seleucid (c. 200 BC)



Mid-late Third Millennium (2500–2000 BC)



Settlement changes indicated by surface collection of pottery. Tell Hamoukar, 1999



Wilkinson had spotted, on an aerial photograph, some light areas among the fields in that direction and suggested we investigate them. Jason's search among the fields showed that these lighter areas were, in fact, cultural remains, datable by sherds to the early fourth millennium. If the entire area is one site, it is a very large one, more than 250 hectares (500 acres, plus). That size would make it a major city and we cannot believe that a city existed at this early period. I assume that what we have here is a relatively small village or a set of villages that shifted position over several hundred years. We will not know for certain until we put in some pits next season.

GEOMORPHOLOGICAL TRENCHES

The satellite photographs also led to another operation. More than 100 m out from the mound, on the northern and eastern sides (see map on page 7), there is visible on the photographs a dark, curving line that one would be tempted to identify as a city wall. When you are on the site, however, you can see nothing that rises as a city wall would. In fact, there is the opposite effect

— a long, curving, dip in the middle of the fields. We hired a backhoe to cut a series of trenches (Area D) from the edge of the mound out across that dip. Tony Wilkinson came to the site for two days to examine, sample, and record the vertical faces of the trenches. His preliminary conclusions are that we may have a city wall and a moat right up against the tell. In the area beyond, there are some bits of evidence of pottery firing but no houses. And the dip reflects an ancient ditch or wadi that carried water during the third millennium BC. Right after Tony left, we paid the operator of the machine to fill in the holes so that the farmers could continue to work their fields.

EXCAVATIONS

Our excavations in the first season were restricted to three trenches, A, B, and C. Area A was a step trench, 60 m long by 3 m wide, run from south to north down the face of the mound. Area B was located farther to the south, in a place where surface sherds were mainly Uruk in type. Area C was in the middle of a group of thirteen abandoned houses at the northeastern corner of



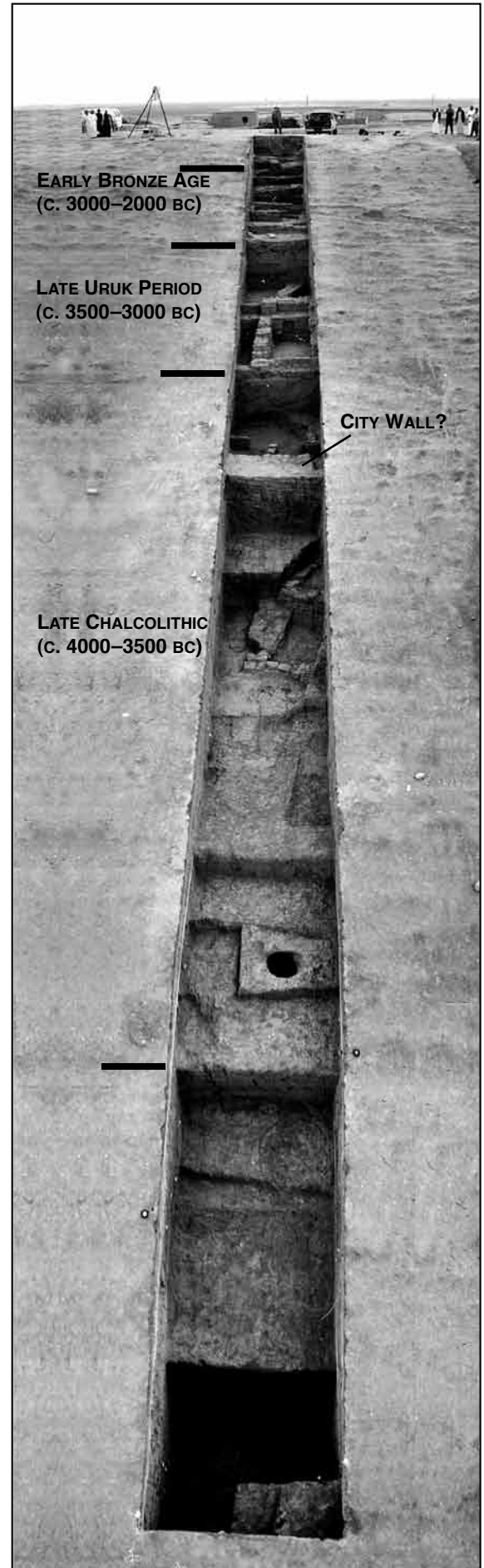
Area A step trench. Above: view from top. Right: view from below. Hamoukar, 1999

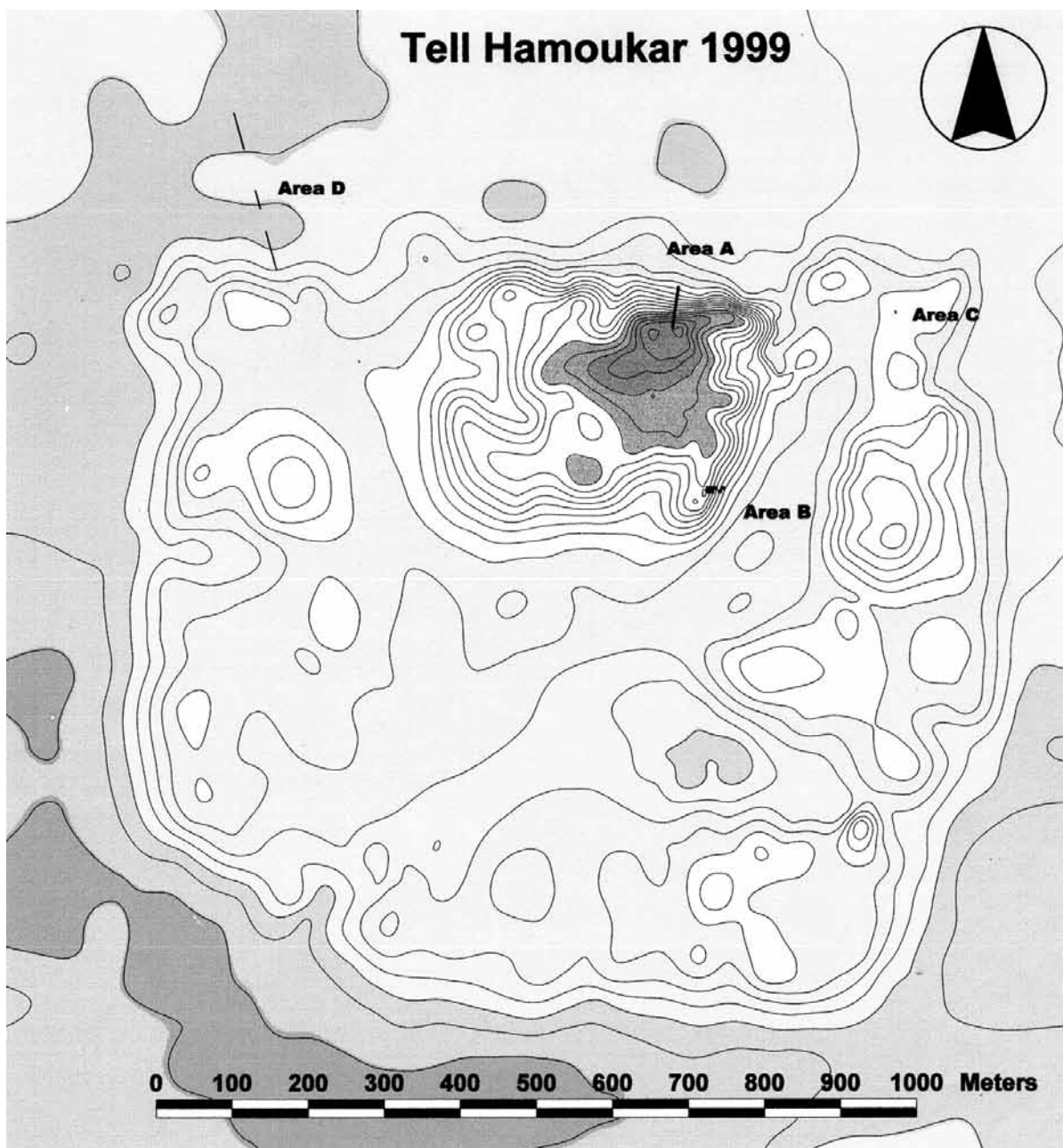
the site. (Those abandoned houses represent a story of straying sheep, murder, revenge, law suits, monetary judgments, governor's decrees, and demolition ... but that's a long story for another time.)

Area A. The step trench, supervised by Clemens Reichel and Brigitte Watkins, was located on the steep northern slope of the mound in an area that appeared unusually smooth and clean. We didn't realize it at the time, but we were cutting through the village's "ski slope," a place where the kids slide down the muddy surface in winter, riding big pieces of cardboard, metal sheets, large metal serving trays, and anything else that will serve. Judging by the same kind of bare strips running down other tells, this sport is pretty widespread in the region.

The reason for doing a step trench is that you can get a very good idea of all of the occupations in a tell without having to make a very deep, vertical shaft through it. The problem with a vertical shaft is that it gets smaller and smaller as you go down because you have to keep leaving the edges undug in order to make a stairway to get in and out. Thus, a pit that starts out at the top as 10×10 m will be only 3×3 m when you get 7 m down. On a tell like Hamoukar, 18 m high, such a pit would give you less than half the history of the site. A step trench, cutting down in progressive stages along the edge of the mound, can give you a much more representative sample of the occupations. Usually there is a meter or so of disturbed soil washed down from above, with a mixed group of sherds, but the greatest part of each step will be undisturbed deposit.

In our step trench, the bottom of each step was about 4 to 5 m below the next one above. We did not reach the bottom of the slope, although we were fairly close to the track that runs along the edge of the mound. We will probably have to put in one or two more steps to reach virgin soil. The deepest level we have reached has evidence of an occupation dating to the early fourth millennium. These layers are cut by a huge trench, perhaps a moat of a later time, but our exposure is too narrow to tell for sure. Up the slope in the next step we encountered some house walls, all of mudbrick, running up to the bottom of a huge mudbrick wall measuring at least 4 m in width and 4 m in height. It would be tempting to call this a city wall, but we need to expand the





Contour map showing location of areas excavated. Tell Hamoukar, 1999

exposure to make certain. The pottery associated with this wall, termed local Late Chalcolithic in Syria, is datable to some time in the mid-fourth millennium BC. Above the level of the big wall we exposed three building levels that could be dated to the late Uruk period, some time around 3200 BC. The pottery here is mainly Uruk in type, with beveled rim bowls and other items that are native to southern Iraq. Certainly, at this time there was a southern Mesopotamian presence at Hamoukar.

Above the late Uruk houses we found several layers of mud-brick buildings datable by the pottery to the third millennium BC. The successive buildings have pavements of baked bricks and the latest one also has thick plasters of clay finished off with a lime plaster. This series of buildings looks to me to be more than just private houses.

In the earliest levels, as in the Uruk and third millennium layers, we found ancient wells, completely filled in.

Directly on top of the uppermost third millennium building was constructed a building of the early Islamic period (c. 700 AD). The next period of occupation is the present-day village, and its cemetery, the nearest grave of which lies no more than 10 m from the north end of the step trench.

Area C. Among the abandoned houses at the northeastern corner of the site, we sank a 2 × 2 m pit designed to assess the occupational history of this low part of the mound. Carrie Hritz was in charge of this operation. Just below the surface, she encountered a mudbrick wall that could be dated to about the eighth century, as was already indicated by surface sherds. About a meter lower, the southeast corner of the pit almost exactly coincided with the corner of a mudbrick building that had a



Niched facade. Area C. Tell Hamoukar, 1999

buttress which was decorated by two small niches. To the north, the buttress ended in a doorway, leading toward the east. The door jamb, the buttress, the corner, and the southern wall were all coated with a white lime plaster. The niched buttress indicates that this building was not a private house but was most probably a temple. Sherds gave a date in the late third millennium, the equivalent of the Akkadian period, when the kings of Akkad in southern Mesopotamia expanded their empire into this region. I should add that the pottery is not southern Mesopotamian, but local, with types well known from other sites such as Tell Brak which was certainly occupied by the Akkadians. With its potential for elucidating a critical period of Mesopotamian history, it is obvious that this area is a prime candidate for an expanded exposure next season.

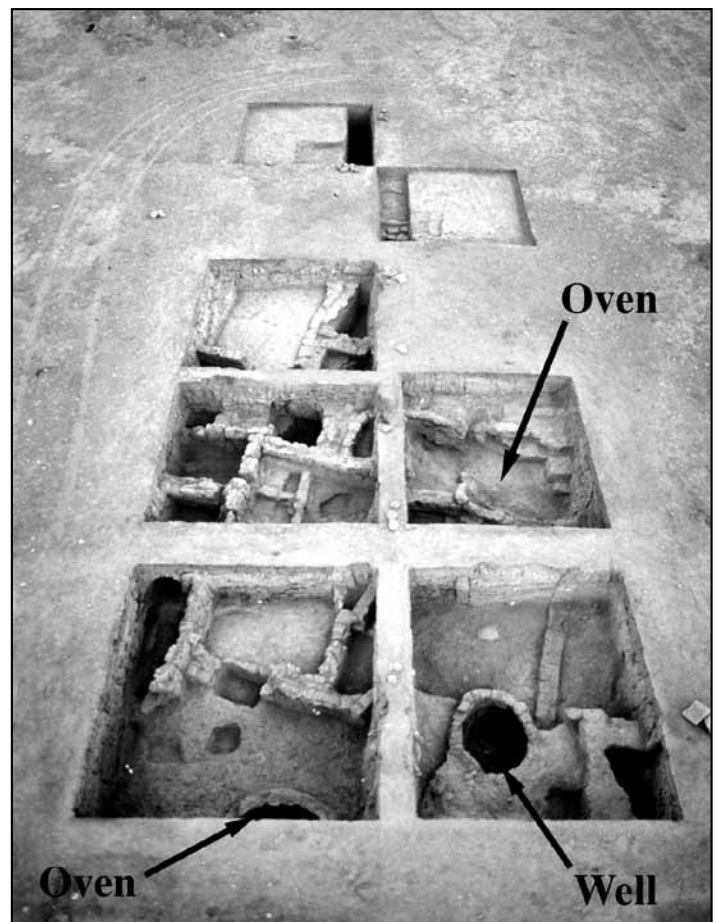
Area B. We chose as an area for broader expansion a place where Uruk sherds were abundant on the surface. Judith Franke and Abdul Salama supervised this operation, opening a series of 5 m squares running from east to west. The easternmost square turned out to be a puzzle, with masses of red clay and very few objects, even sherds. We finally concluded that we were in a solid mudbrick platform or wall that we cannot date securely as yet.

Farther upslope, we exposed a group of houses with unimpressive mudbrick walls. But the objects and sherds from these houses were extraordinarily numerous. Ash was everywhere, making it difficult to distinguish undisturbed layers of ashy debris on beaten earth floors from ashes in intrusive pits. There were clearly huge, ragged pits as well as narrow, neater pits cutting down into the buildings from levels that have eroded away. These pits had in them Uruk sherds as well as locally made items. The ashy debris from the houses themselves had no Uruk material at all. The Uruk pits must relate to a level that is eroded away or exists at the very top of the slope, which we have not yet excavated. Within the houses, that can be dated to the mid-fourth millennium by the local Late Chalcolithic pottery, we

have determined the source of the ashes. In one room, there are the remains of four, and possibly five, successively used ovens. These ovens are built of mudbricks, which have become partially fired through use. The shape of the ovens is something like an igloo, ovoid in plan and with a domed mudbrick roof. The ovens were used for a variety of cooking activities, probably for bread baking and beer making, as well as for the cooking of meats. In the debris within and around the ovens, we have recovered many animal bones as well as an abundance of charred grains, including wheat, barley, and oats. Dr. Amr al-Azm, a professor at the University of Damascus and a member of our team, is studying the plant remains and will be able to give us more detailed information on them in the near future.

Besides ovens, we also discovered two ancient wells in Area B. Like the ancient wells exposed in the step trench, the two wells here answer the question of how the ancient inhabitants got their water. Like the modern villagers, the ancient people dug down to the water table wherever they needed water. The modern villagers report that, until the water level began to drop over the last few years, the water in their wells was “sweet.”

continued on page 18



Excavations in Area B. Tell Hamoukar, 1999

JUNE 2000

14 Wednesday



Karagöz
6:30 PM, Oriental Institute
See page 16 for more information

17 Saturday



**History of Ancient Egypt, Part VII:
Egypt Under Foreign Rule**
Frank Yurco
Continues through 5 August
10:00 AM–12:00 NOON, Oriental Institute
See page 13 for more information

18 Sunday



Ancient Treasures of the Deep
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

24 Saturday

History of Egypt, Part VII (cont.)
See 17 June

25 Sunday



Mysteries of the Holy Land
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

JULY 2000

1 Saturday

History of Egypt, Part VII (cont.)
See 17 June

2 Sunday



Mummies Made in Egypt
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

8 Saturday

History of Egypt, Part VII (cont.)
See 17 June

9 Sunday



This Old Pyramid
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

12 Wednesday



The World of the Pharaohs
12:00 NOON, Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery
See page 15 for more information

15 Saturday

History of Egypt, Part VII (cont.)
See 17 June

16 Sunday



Obelisk
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

19 Wednesday



**Pharaohs of the Sun: Life and Times
in Egypt during the Amarna Age**
Emily Teeter
Continues through 9 August
7:00–9:00 PM, Oriental Institute
Special class session Friday 18 August
12:00 NOON, Art Institute
See page 14 for more information

19 Wednesday



**Mummies and Magic in Ancient
Egypt**
12:00 NOON, Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery
See page 15 for more information

22 Saturday



Akhnaten: The Music of the Opera
Paul Frandsen
9:30 AM–12:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 12 for more information

22 Saturday

History of Egypt, Part VII (cont.)
See 17 June

23 Sunday



Saving the Sphinx
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

24 Monday



Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist
Continues through 28 July
9:00 AM–1:00 PM, Hyde Park Art Center
See page 16 for more information

24 Monday



Ancient Egypt in Chicago
Continues through 28 July
9:00 AM–4:15 PM, Oriental Institute
See page 13 for more information

25 Tuesday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 24 July

25 Tuesday

Ancient Egypt in Chicago (cont.)
See 24 July

26 Wednesday



Women in Ancient Egypt
12:00 NOON, Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery
See page 15 for more information

26 Wednesday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 24 July

26 Wednesday

Ancient Egypt in Chicago (cont.)
See 24 July

26 Wednesday

Pharaohs of the Sun (cont.)
See 19 July

27 Thursday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 24 July

27 Thursday

Ancient Egypt in Chicago (cont.)
See 24 July

28 Friday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (ends)
See 24 July

28 Friday

Ancient Egypt in Chicago (ends)
See 24 July

29 Saturday

History of Egypt, Part VII (cont.)
See 17 June

30 Sunday



Egypt: Habit of Civilization
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

30 Sunday



Akhnaten
3:00 PM, Athenaeum Theater
See page 15 for more information

31 Monday



Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist
Continues through 4 August
9:00 AM–1:00 PM, Hyde Park Art Center
See page 16 for more information

11 Friday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (ends)
See 7 August

13 Sunday



Cleopatra: Destiny's Queen
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

18 Friday

Pharaohs of the Sun (ends)
See 19 July

20 Sunday



Forgotten Mummies
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

27 Sunday



Pyramids and Great Cities of the Pharaohs
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

1 Tuesday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 31 July

2 Wednesday



Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses
12:00 NOON, Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery
See page 15 for more information

2 Wednesday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 31 July

2 Wednesday

Pharaohs of the Sun (cont.)
See 19 July

3 Thursday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 31 July

4 Friday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (ends)
See 31 July

5 Saturday

History of Egypt, Part VII (ends)
See 17 June

6 Sunday



Pyramid
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

7 Monday



Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist
Continues through 11 August
9:00 AM–1:00 PM, Lill Street Studios
See page 16 for more information

8 Tuesday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 7 August

9 Wednesday



Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs
12:00 NOON, Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery
See page 15 for more information

9 Wednesday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 7 August

9 Wednesday

Pharaohs of the Sun (cont.)
See 19 July

10 Thursday

Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist (cont.)
See 7 August

SEPTEMBER 2000

3 Sunday



Alexander the Great: Son of God
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

10 Sunday



Alexander the Great: Lord of Asia
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

17 Sunday



Alexander the Great: Across the Hindu Kush
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

24 Sunday



Alexander the Great: To the Ends of the Earth
1:30 PM, Breasted Hall
See page 11 for more information

OCTOBER 2000

21 Saturday



Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur
Oriental Institute
Continues through 21 January 2001.
See page 11 for more information

All programs subject to change

KEY TO SYMBOLS



ADULT EDUCATION COURSES



CORRESPONDENCE / INTERNET COURSES



DINNERS/LUNCHEONS



FAMILY / CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS



MEMBERS LECTURES



SPECIAL EVENTS



FILMS



TRAVEL PROGRAMS

SUNDAY FILMS

Summer Sundays at the Movies — It's Cool Inside!

Join us in air-conditioned Breasted Hall for the best in documentary films on ancient Near Eastern history, art, and archaeology. Film screenings begin at 1:30 PM, last from approximately 30 to 50 minutes except where noted, and are followed by guided tours of the Oriental Institute Museum galleries. Admission for films and tours is free.

18 June *Ancient Treasures of the Deep* — From the PBS *Nova* series. This exciting documentary takes you to the coast of Turkey to view the underwater excavation of a Bronze Age shipwreck dating to the fourteenth century BC.

25 June *Mysteries of the Holy Land* — From the award-winning *Archaeology* series produced by the Archaeological Institute of America.

Documentaries

Beginning on 2 July and continuing through 27 August, the Sunday film program features documentaries on ancient Egypt. These films are being shown in conjunction with the city of Chicago's Summer 2000 celebration, *Egypt in Chicago*.

2 July *Mummies Made in Egypt* — A film for the entire family, this animated and live-action movie stars LeVar Burton of "Star Trek: The Next Generation."

9 July *This Old Pyramid* — Egyptologist Mark Lehner and professional stonemason Roger Hopkins suggest how the pyramids were built by actually building one in the shadow of the Great Pyramid at Giza. From the PBS *Nova* series.

16 July *Obelisk* — Lehner and Hopkins join forces once again to reconstruct an ancient Egyptian obelisk.

23 July *Saving the Sphinx* — A Learning Channel production, this film shows how pollution, wind erosion, tourist traffic, and misguided restoration attempts have threatened the very existence of the Sphinx, and how artists, engineers, and scientists have joined forces to save the world's oldest colossal statue.

30 July *Egypt: Habit of Civilization* — From the PBS *Legacy: Origins of Civilizations* series. Host Michael Wood seeks reminders of the ancient past in the present. *Archaeology* magazine called this series "entertaining and highly educational."

6 August *Pyramid* — Bring the whole family to see this animated and live-action film on ancient Egypt that captivates both children and adults. Recommended for ages 7 and up.

13 August *Cleopatra: Destiny's Queen* — This film from the Arts & Entertainment *Biography* series combines new research and exclusive interviews to present a biographical portrait of Cleopatra that strives to separate myth from fact.

20 August *Forgotten Mummies* — From the award-winning *Archaeology* series produced by the Archaeological Institute of America, this film highlights ways that scientists study aspects of Egyptian daily life, work, diet, and disease, using an exceptional source of evidence — ancient mummies.

27 August *Pyramids and Great Cities of the Pharaohs* — The land of the pharaohs rises from the sand in this extraordinary film by Egyptologists, historians, and artists who worked together to produce video images of temples, tombs, and pyramids in all their original splendor. (70 minutes)

In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great

Each Sunday in September features an episode from the acclaimed PBS series *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great*, which retraces the 20,000-mile trek of Alexander as he conquered the world from Greece to India. By age 30, Alexander had carved out an empire whose impact on culture can still be felt 2,000 years after his untimely death.

3 September *Episode I: Son of God*

10 September *Episode II: Lord of Asia*

17 September *Episode III: Across the Hindu Kush*

24 September *Episode IV: To the Ends of the Earth*

TREASURES FROM THE ROYAL TOMBS OF UR

21 OCTOBER 2000 – 21 JANUARY 2001

Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur, a traveling exhibition from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, will be on view at the Oriental Institute from Saturday 21 October 2000 to Sunday 21 January 2001.

Watch your mailboxes for more information.

OPERA PERFORMANCE: SEE PAGE 15

MEMBERS SYMPOSIUM

Akhnaten: The Music of the Opera**Co-sponsored with the Chicago Opera Theater****Paul Frandsen****Saturday 22 July****9:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Breasted Hall**

Paul Frandsen is the world's expert on Philip Glass' third opera, *Akhnaten*. Professor Frandsen will take the audience through *Akhnaten* with the intention of providing comprehensive information on the way in which Glass and his librettists used themes from ancient Egypt, especially during the Amarna period. *Akhnaten* implies an approach to a more conventional musical language and is thus a further step away from earlier minimalism. In his earlier works, Glass had developed principles of composition in which systematic repeats play a dominating part, both as the melodic technique he terms the "additive process" or in the rhythmic principle of cyclic structure. The music of *Akhnaten* is in many respects simpler. The increasing appreciation by Glass of the techniques of conventional opera is very apparent. Melody plays a much greater part than in his previous works. Rhythm and harmony also play an independent part, while at the same time being used to demonstrate dramatic points and situations. Professor Frandsen will also discuss the opera in a wider perspective – as a musical drama with an historical subject and within the framework of operas having Egyptian or Egyptianized plots.

Fee: \$10 for Oriental Institute members; \$12 for non-members. To register call the Development Office at (773) 702-9513.

After attending the lecture, don't miss seeing the opera *Akhnaten* with the Oriental Institute on Sunday 30 July. See page 15 for more information.

EDUCATION OFFICE REGISTRATION FORM

	Members	Non-members	Total
____ History of Ancient Egypt, Part VII	____ \$135	____ \$155	____
____ Ancient Egypt in Chicago: A week-long seminar	____ \$495	____ \$545	____
____ <i>Akhnaten</i> : Opera Performance	____ \$24	____ \$28	____

____ I am interested in round-trip bus transportation

(Bus will be hired if there is sufficient interest; there will be a separate fee for bus transport)

____ Pharaohs of the Sun: Life and Times in Egypt during the Amarna Age, **Wednesday evening sessions** at the Oriental Institute.

This fee covers all five sessions, but does not include the admission fee of \$15 for an optional visit to the *Pharaohs of the Sun* exhibition prior to the final course session on 18 August at the Art Institute. If you wish to view *Pharaohs of the Sun* at either 10:30 or 11:00 AM on 18 August, please call the Art Institute at (312) 443-3680.

	Members	Non-members	Student with ID	Total
Entire course	____ \$65	____ \$80	____ \$30	____
Individual sessions	____ \$15	____ \$18	____ \$8	____

Please select the session(s) you wish to attend

____ 19 July

____ 26 July

____ 2 August

____ 9 August

____ Friday 18 August at the Art Institute

To register for the entire course, or any of the individual sessions, on **Friday mornings at the Art Institute**, please call (312) 443-3680.

TOTAL _____

____ I would like to become a member of the Oriental Institute. Enclosed is \$50 for an annual membership, \$40 for seniors, UC/UCH Faculty and Staff, and National Associates (persons living more than 100 miles from Chicago within the USA). Memberships may be in two names at the same address. **Please send a separate check for membership donation.**

I prefer to pay by ____ Check ____ Money order ____ MasterCard ____ Visa

Account number: _____ Expiration date: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Daytime phone: _____

Send to: The Oriental Institute Education Office, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637

Call the Museum Education Office at (773) 702-9507 for the adult education registration and refund policy.

HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT, PART VII: EGYPT UNDER FOREIGN RULE

Frank Yurco

Saturdays

17 June–5 August

10:00 AM–12:00 NOON

Oriental Institute

The seventh installment in an eight-part series on the history of ancient Egypt, this course focuses on Egypt's domination by foreign rulers, including the Persians, Alexander the Great, and the Romans. Class sessions cover Egypt's conversion, under Roman influence, from polytheism to Christianity, and the rise of monasticism. The course ends with an introduction to the Arab occupation of Egypt.

Instructor Frank Yurco is an Egyptologist who has taught numerous courses on topics of ancient Near Eastern history, culture, and language, both at the Oriental Institute and The Field Museum. This course meets at the Oriental Institute on Saturday mornings from 10:00 AM to 12:00 NOON beginning 17 June and continuing through 5 August 2000.

Required texts

Egypt After the Pharaohs. Alan K. Bowman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule. Naphtali Lewis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume 3: *The Late Period*. Miriam Lichtheim. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

See page 12 to register.

ANCIENT EGYPT IN CHICAGO: A WEEK-LONG SUMMER SEMINAR

Co-sponsored by the Oriental Institute and the Graham School of General Studies

Monday 24 July through Friday 28 July

9:00 AM–4:15 PM

Oriental Institute, Art Institute, and Field Museum, with optional events

Explore the mysteries of ancient Egypt during a week-long seminar with Oriental Institute Egyptologists. World-renowned for its faculty, research, excavations, and museum collections, the Institute is your headquarters for investigating a civilization that has captivated human interest for thousands of years. Gain insights into ancient Egyptian history, art, religion, and funerary beliefs and practices through lectures and conversations with faculty and staff engaged on the frontiers of current scholarship. Make discoveries about the ancient world through study sessions with the rare collection of art and artifacts on exhibit in the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery. Insiders' views of such Oriental Institute research projects as the Demotic Dictionary and the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor, Egypt, are a special seminar feature.

This unique, week-long learning experience takes place during the city of Chicago's Summer 2000 celebration, *Egypt in Chicago*, which involves a number of major cultural institutions. Seminar participants will visit the exhibition, *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*, at the Art Institute of Chicago with Emily Teeter, Oriental Institute Museum Associate Curator and Art Institute consultant for this traveling exhibition organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. An expert-led tour of The Field Museum's permanent exhibition, *Inside Ancient Egypt*, is another scheduled highlight. Optional events include an opportunity to attend a Chicago Opera Theater performance, on 27 July, of *Akhmaten* by celebrated American composer Philip Glass as well as *Egypt in Chicago*, a post-seminar bus tour on 29 July of Chicago buildings influenced by Egyptian designs.

Seminar Instructors

W. Raymond Johnson, Research Associate and Field Director of the Epigraphic Survey, Oriental Institute; **John Larson**, Oriental Institute Museum Archivist; **Robert K. Ritner**, Associate Professor of Egyptology, Oriental Institute; and **Emily Teeter**, Associate Curator, Oriental Institute Museum. Additional Oriental Institute faculty and staff members will appear as guest lecturers.

Tuition and Refund Policy

Tuition: \$495 for Oriental Institute members, \$545 for non-members. Tuition includes five full days of seminar sessions; materials; an opening reception and closing banquet; and transportation and admission to the *Pharaohs of the Sun* and *Inside Ancient Egypt* exhibitions. For out-of-town registrants, information regarding accommodations is available. Registration deadline for the seminar is Friday 14 July. See page 12 to register.

A full refund, minus a \$50 cancellation fee, will be granted to registrants who notify us of their cancellation one week (five business days) prior to the registration deadline.

PHARAOHS OF THE SUN: LIFE AND TIMES IN EGYPT DURING THE AMARNA AGE

Emily Teeter

Wednesdays

19 July–9 August

7:00–9:00 PM

Oriental Institute

and Friday 18 August, 12:00 NOON, Art Institute

This five-session course, which explores the history, theology, and art of the Amarna Period in Egypt (ca. 1390–1293 BC), is presented in conjunction with the major exhibition, *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*, on view at the Art Institute of Chicago from 17 July to 24 September 2000.

Instructor Emily Teeter holds a Ph.D. in Egyptology from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago. She is Associate Curator of the Oriental Institute Museum and Consultant for the Art Institute installation of the *Pharaohs of the Sun* exhibition.

The first four sessions of this course are offered in two different locations, the Oriental Institute (Wednesdays, 19 July to 9 August 2000 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM) and the Art Institute (Fridays, 21 July to 11 August from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM). The fifth and final course session for participants at either location will take place at the Art Institute on Friday 18 August at 12:00 NOON. Participants can sign up for the entire five-session course or for individual sessions.

Sessions

The Prelude: Egypt in the Eighteenth Dynasty

Wednesday 19 July, Oriental Institute

Friday 21 July, Art Institute

This session explores kingship and the gods; the role of the temples; the reign of Amenhotep III; and art in the time of Amenhotep III.

The Amarna Period: Reign of Akhenaton

Wednesday 26 July, Oriental Institute

Friday 28 July, Art Institute

This session examines the reign of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton; the religious “heresy”; the royal family; the status of the queen; foreign relations; the death of the king; royal burials at Akhetaten; Tomb 55; Nefertiti; and Tutankhamun and his successors.

Amarna Theology: Polytheism, Monotheism, and Henotheism

Wednesday 2 August, Oriental Institute

Friday 4 August, Art Institute

How “monotheistic” was the Amarna period? This session focuses on the nature of Amarna religion and the Aton; the cult of the king and queen; the ritual role of the princesses; deification of the royal family; Amarna theology and funerary beliefs; and the impact of the Amarna age on later Egyptian religion and kingship.

Art and Architecture of the Amarna Period

Wednesday 9 August, Oriental Institute

Friday 11 August, Art Institute

Exploring the transition to the Amarna style, this session covers architecture; the city of Akhetaten; the transition to post-Amarna artistic style; and the legacy of Amarna.

Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamun

Friday 18 August, Art Institute

A discussion session with the instructor follows an optional visit to the *Pharaohs of the Sun* exhibition.

See page 12 to register.

OPERA PERFORMANCE

Akhnaten

By Philip Glass

Sunday 30 July

3:00 PM

The Athenaeum Theater

2936 West Southport, Chicago

Join the Oriental Institute for an extraordinary opera experience — the Midwest premiere of *Akhnaten* by the renowned American composer Philip Glass. Set to an hypnotic and transcendent score that interweaves orchestra, solo, and ensemble voices, the opera also features vocal text drawn directly from original sources — the monuments, letters, and inscriptions of Akhenaton's time. Co-produced by Chicago Opera Theater and the Boston Lyric Opera, *Akhnaten* is directed by the award-winning Mary Zimmerman. Beatrice Jona Affron, a frequent Glass collaborator, conducts, and Derek Lee Ragin stars in the title role.

Akhnaten will be in Chicago for a limited engagement of only five performances. This special Oriental Institute program guarantees you seats for a musical event that is sure to be sold out. Optional round-trip bus transportation from the Oriental Institute to the Athenaeum theater will be available by reservation.

Fee: \$24 for Oriental Institute members, \$28 for non-members. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. There will be an additional fee for bus transportation. Call the Museum Education Office at (773) 702-9507 for additional information.

See page 12 to register.

Before seeing the opera, let Paul Frandsen introduce you to the themes and history behind Akhnaten. For more information, see page 12.

GALLERY TOURS

Noontime in Another Time

At 12:00 NOON on selected Wednesdays during July and August, visit the Oriental Institute for special tours of the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery. Join these free, half-hour explorations of gallery themes or topics, then gather for coffee and conversation with your museum guide. Lunch is not provided, but you are welcome to bring your own. Pre-registration required; call the Museum Education Office at (773) 702-9507.

The World of the Pharaohs

Wednesday 12 July

Travel through 3,000 years of ancient Egyptian civilization on this excursion that includes materials from temples and tombs, and a colossal statue of King Tut.

Mummies and Magic in Ancient Egypt

Wednesday 19 July

Don't miss this introduction to our fascinating exhibit on ancient Egyptian mummies and the amulets, spells, and writings that Egyptians believed would ensure a safe journey to the afterlife.

Women in Ancient Egypt

Wednesday 26 July

Encounter wives, mothers, priestesses, and queens on this gallery tour that explores women's roles in ancient Egypt. See exhibits featuring the clothing, cosmetics, jewelry, furnishings, and decorative arts that were found at ancient sites ranging from temples and tombs to royal palaces.

Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses

Wednesday 2 August

Depicted in a vast array of human, bird, animal, and even insect forms, the gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt played crucial roles in the lives of all the people. Discover Egypt's deities as ancient artists and sculptors portrayed them, and see animals that were elaborately mummified and entombed as sacred offerings to the gods.

Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs

Wednesday 9 August

Explore the origins and mysteries of this beautiful ancient script. See how the ancient Egyptians made hieroglyphs an integral part of their art and architecture, and learn how to decipher some inscriptions on view in the Egyptian Gallery.

Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theater**Wednesday 14 June****6:30 PM, Oriental Institute**

Shadow puppet performances will delight the whole family during this special program that highlights one of the oldest folk traditions of the Islamic world. Presented by Mustafa Mutlu, a master puppeteer from Turkey, *Karagöz* Shadow Theater takes its name from *Karagöz*, the central character of all Turkish shadow plays. See how good always triumphs over evil in this delightful form of storytelling that was once the favorite entertainment in the palaces of the Ottoman sultans and is still presented in Turkey today. After the play, see how shadow puppets are made and find out how to create your own version at home. Admission is free and pre-registration is not required. Recommended for children ages 5 and up, accompanied by an adult.

SUMMER CAMPS FOR KIDS**Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist****Oriental Institute/Hyde Park Art Center****Monday through Friday, 24–28 July;
Repeated 31 July–4 August****9:00 AM–1:00 PM****Hyde Park Art Center****5307 South Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago**

Spend a week exploring the spectacular arts of ancient Egypt at this Oriental Institute/Hyde Park Art Center Summer Camp for Kids. Participants work with a variety of materials to create pottery, jewelry, and paintings like those found in the palaces and tombs of the pharaohs. Enjoy clay activities, metalworking, papermaking, and more! Included is a special visit to the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery at the Oriental Institute. For children ages 8–12. Pre-registration is required.

Fee: \$155 for Oriental Institute and Hyde Park Art Center members; \$175 for non-members. Fee includes all materials and supplies, as well as round-trip bus transportation for the visit to the Oriental Institute.

To register call the Hyde Park Art Center at (773) 324-5520.

**Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist
repeated on the Northside****Monday through Friday, 7–11 August****9:00 AM–1:00 PM****Lill Street Studios****1021 West Lill Street, Chicago**

Fee: \$165, includes all materials and supplies, as well as round-trip bus transportation for the field trip from Lill Street Studios to the Oriental Institute.

To register call Lill Street Studios at (773) 477-6185.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**WANT TO BE IN THE
"THICKET" OF THINGS?**

Ram in thicket, Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur

Courtesy The University of Pennsylvania Museum

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BUSH!**

Become a volunteer at the
Oriental Institute.

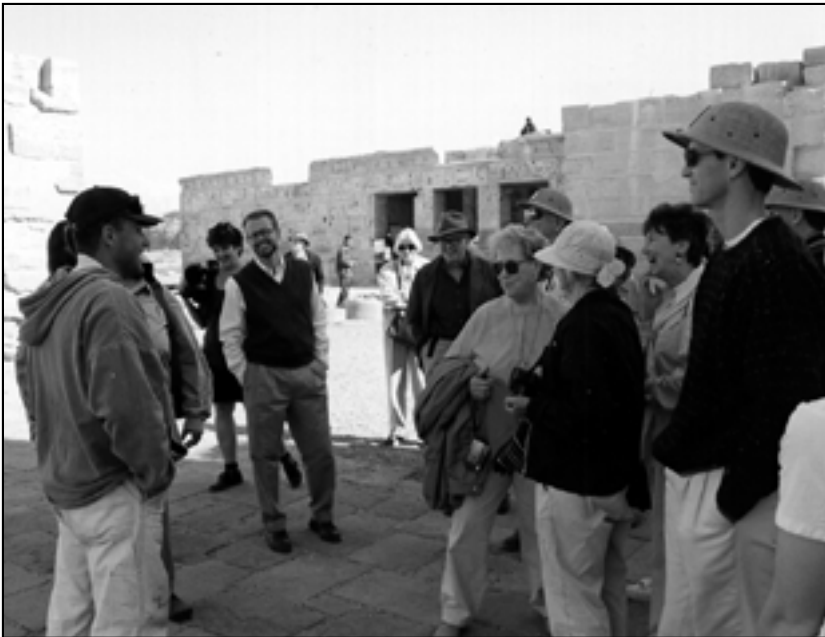
For more information on openings
call Terry Friedman or Cathy Dueñas
in the Docent Office
(773) 702-1845 or (773) 702-9507

CORRECTION

In the Spring 2000 issue of *News & Notes* Mr. Ernest A. Grunsfeld III was inadvertently left out of the James Henry Breasted Society Patron roll of members. The Oriental Institute regrets the error.

EGYPT REVEALED TOUR REVIEW

Oriental Institute Museum Archivist **John A. Larson** and Associate Professor of Egyptology **Robert K. Ritner** were joined by fifty-eight adventurous Oriental Institute members and friends for a tour of Egypt this past February. The Oriental Institute worked with Seven Wonders Travel in Chicago and with Quest Travel in Egypt to coordinate *Egypt Revealed*, 18 February to 4 March. Tour participants visited sites in Cairo, Luxor, Alexandria, and Aswan as well as enjoying a Nile cruise. While on tour, participants visited Oriental Institute Assistant Professor and Director of the Giza Mapping Project **Mark Lehner** and toured his site at Giza. Participants also visited Chicago House and met with Epigraphic Survey Field Director **W. Raymond Johnson** and his team at work in Medinet Habu. Highlights of the tour also included lectures by Zahi Hawass, Director of the Giza Plateau, and Kent Weeks, Director of the Theban Mapping Project, along with a special visit to the Valley of the Golden Mummies at Bahareya Oasis.

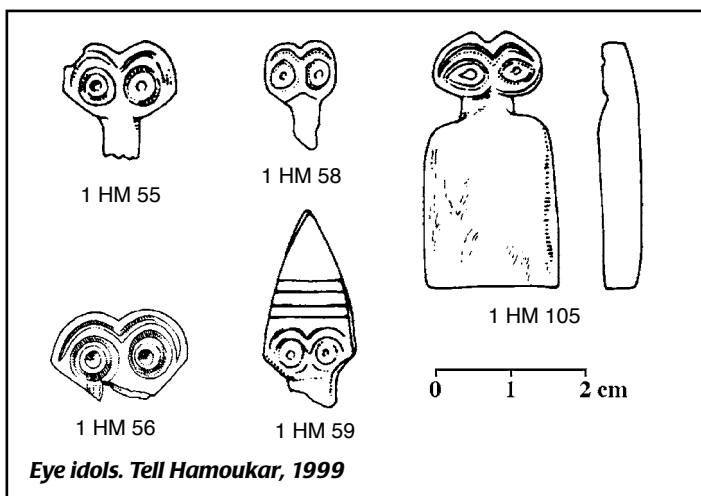


Top left: Stonecutter Dany Roy (left) and Epigraphic Survey Field Director Ray Johnson (center) lead the Institute tour participants through Medinet Habu. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky

Top right: Assistant to the Field Director Jill Carlotta Maher describes the mission of the Epigraphic Survey in the library of Chicago House. Photograph by Yarko Kobylecky

Right: John Larson's group outside the Mosque of Muhammed Ali in Islamic Cairo





continued from page 8

The pottery found in the Area B houses is dominated by large cooking pots, called casseroles by archaeologists working in this part of Syria. But there are also a variety of smaller vessels and even very fine wares, usually in the same shapes as the larger vessels. The ability of the local potters was extraordinary; some of the fine wares are as thin as the shell of an ostrich egg.

In the houses, we found fragments of bone figurines that have been termed "eye idols," because of their huge eyes (and absence of other features of the head). The most complete example was recovered from a baby grave. Figurines of this type, which may in fact have been representatives of people, not deities, were discovered at Tell Brak in the 1930s and have been used as a marker for the mid-fourth millennium.

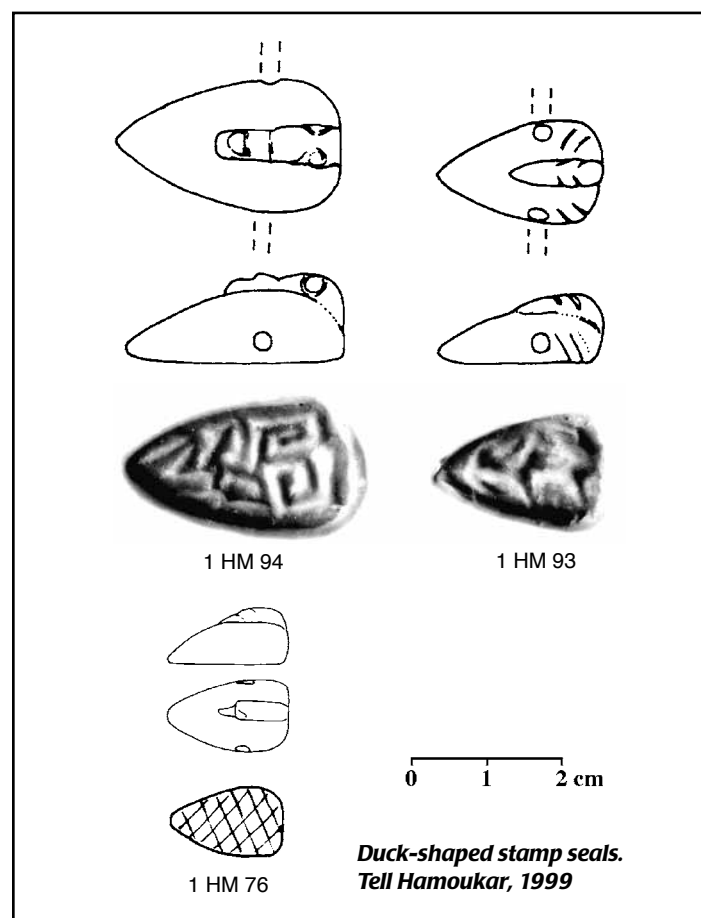
Most important as artifacts that inform us about the nature of the society that created the cooking establishment at Area B are the more than eighty stamp seals, fifteen seal impressions, and many beads found there. Most of the finds were from one pit, probably a grave. Here were found thousands of beads of bone, faience, shell, and stone, some of such a small size that I assume they were meant to be sewn onto clothing in patterns, rather than being worn as jewelry. The stamp seals are mostly of bone, carved into the shapes of animals, with incised lines or figurative scenes on the bases. One of our larger seals is in the form of a leopard, with its spots indicated by tiny dowels sunk into drilled holes. On its lower surface is a row of horned animals. There is an equally well-made seal in the form of a horned animal (with horns broken off), with horned animals in file, once again. But the larger seals are much less common than other, smaller seals in the shapes of animals. The most common shape of the smaller seals is that of a lion, but we also have a pair of lions, lion heads joined at the back, ibexes, bears, dogs, rabbits, fish, and birds. There is also a major type in the form of a rectangle with grooves on one face and incised hatchings on the stamping surface. Very similar bone artifacts found at Tell Brak in the 1930s were called amulets. At Hamoukar, we termed them stamp seals because we have found in the houses lumps of clay and bitumen with the impressions of scenes with animals, very similar to those we have on the larger stamp seals.

We have not, as yet, recovered a piece of clay with an impression made by any smaller seals with simple incision or

cross-hatching, but we still call them seals because we have one type that includes both the figurative scene and the incised hatching. This type, in the form of a duck with its head turned over its back, occurs in three sizes. The smallest one has only hatching, but the other two both have scenes of animals. If the two larger items were used as seals, the smaller one should have been as well. The difference between the stamp surfaces, with figurative scenes on the larger two and incised lines on the smallest, must lie not in a difference of function but in the users. We would propose that the larger, more elaborate seals with figurative scenes were held only by the few people who had greater authority, while the smaller incised seals were used by many more people who were sealing as members of a large group with less authority. The difference would be something like the signature of the Director of Customs, used only by him, as compared to rubber stamps that say "US Customs," which can be used by hundreds of employees of that bureau.

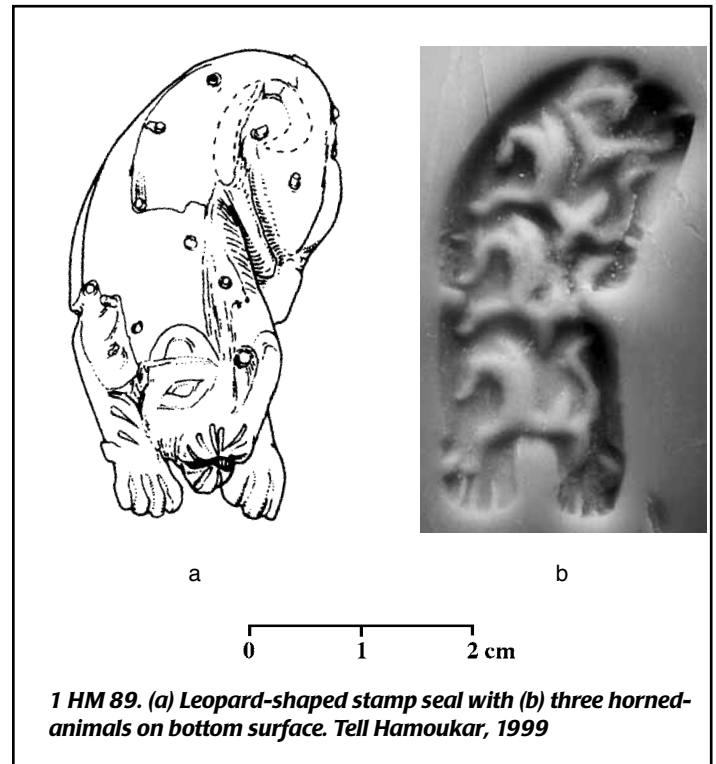
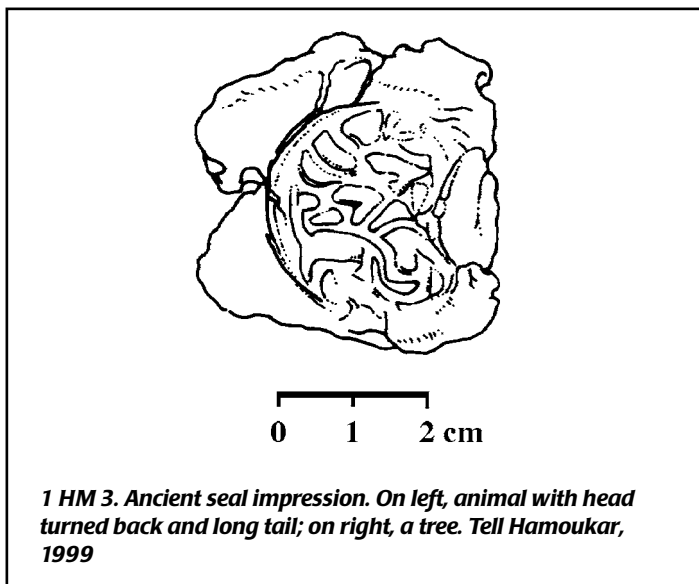
Those last lines imply a degree of complexity at ancient Hamoukar that might seem remarkable because it is so early (fourth millennium). But seals, especially when found to have been used on clay or bitumen stoppers or as door-locks, are prime evidence of some kind of system of accounting or responsibility. They need not point to a bureaucracy, but could be the marks of ownership or responsibility over specific goods or duties performed. They may in fact imply a level of complexity that we would relate to state formation.

All the evidence from Area B points to the making of food on a scale that is far more than that needed for household



consumption. It is on an institutional or industrial scale that one usually associates with a state. The possible existence of a city wall at the same time as the cooking establishment at Area B makes us think that this part of Syria had developed early kingdoms before the coming of the Uruk people. That is an important suggestion because, in general, it is normally proposed that civilization and the earliest states developed at about 3500 BC in southern Iraq, specifically in ancient Sumer. It is also usually proposed that this southern core area drew upon a less developed periphery in neighboring regions. It has been recognized for some years that Mesopotamian colonies were established in Syria, but the exact dating of the first establishments and their relationship to the local people is still being debated.

It has been suggested that after the contact with the Uruk people, local Syrian and Turkish kingdoms were stimulated into development. But now, our evidence and the evidence from a few other sites in Syria and Turkey seems to show that more complex societies were evolving not just in southern Iraq, but simultaneously in a number of areas. A few scholars, working in Turkey and Syria, are beginning to suggest that maybe civilization began not in southern Mesopotamia, but in their area. Before we start revising our textbooks, however, we should remember that there was an even earlier contact with people who had come from southern Mesopotamia. During the Ubaid period, c. 4500 BC, southern pottery and other artifacts reached as far west as the Mediterranean and at least as far south as Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. In some places, not just objects, but entire buildings were, in a sense, transplanted. At Tepe Gawra in northern Iraq there is a group of buildings that is clearly "at home" in Sumer. I would suggest that we need to reconsider our ideas about the beginnings of civilization, pushing them farther back, from the Uruk period into the Ubaid. This would mean that the development of kingdoms (early states) occurred before writing was invented and before the appearance of several other criteria that we think of as marking "civilization." Regardless of the level of development in the Ubaid period, the movement of people and objects from the south of Mesopotamia to the neighboring areas set up vital linkages between people hundreds



of miles distant from one another. It was these linkages that made possible the transmission of ideas and people that underlay the joint development of complex societies.

This set of important issues can be addressed very effectively at Tell Hamoukar. At Nippur and other major sites, where the early city levels are meters below later remains, we cannot touch upon such questions without years of preliminary digging away of the debris of later periods. Here, with the fourth millennium and Uruk levels lying right under the surface on part of the mound, and third millennium material, which may relate to the Akkadian conquest of eastern Syria, in evidence at the surface in many parts of the site, our work at Hamoukar promises to be extremely rewarding. I cannot hope that in every season we will find the wealth of objects that we recovered this year, but the site does seem to be an unusually productive one.

Maybe you will be able to visit us in future, taking tea in the shaded porches of our new dig house, for which the bricks are being made as you read this. We will be back digging at Hamoukar in the fall, and you will be hearing about our work soon after.

McGuire Gibson is Professor of Archaeology at the Oriental Institute. He currently directs the Institute's Nippur expedition and excavations in Hamoukar.

Gods, Saints, and Kings: Discovering Central Anatolian Turkey

8–22 September

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Emily Teeter and John A. Larson, eds.

Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, No. 58

Pp. xxxi + 494; frontispiece [Edward F. Wentz], 140 figures, 7 tables. 1999

\$75

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