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Archaeology in Syria

In the middle of the nineteenth century, when Europeans were beginning to take an active interest in excavating Near Eastern sites, especially ancient ruins dating to the Assyrian period, Henry Austen Layard made brief soundings at a site on the Khabur River in northeastern Syria, Tell Hajajah (Assyrian Shadikanni, called Araban in tenth-century Arabic sources). The imposing ruins of Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana) led Max von Oppenheim to excavate there in 1899, 1911–1914, and 1927–1929. Carchemish, which had been identified by the geographer George Adam Smith in 1876, was excavated by David G. Hogarth and C. Leonard Woolley in 1908–1911 and 1920. In 1902 German excavations were begun at Palmyra (continued in 1917 under Theodor Wiegand); although previous studies had been made there, this was the beginning of research on the city as a whole. In 1860 Ernest Renan made soundings at the coastal sites of Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon and on the island of Arwad for the French Mission to Phoenicia.

The impetus for these excavations was the discovery of original sources related to the Bible and biblical peoples. However, they were also driven by the recovery of the monumental architecture and large-scale reliefs decorating Assyrian and Neo-Hittite palaces. Cuneiform inscriptions written on these reliefs were deciphered by European scholars in the late nineteenth century. A lively interest in Europe for cuneiform texts had begun as early as 1625, when an Italian

traveler, Pietro della Valle, brought back the first cuneiform inscriptions. In 1897 the French Assyriologist François Thureau-Dangin published a tablet from the area of Terqa on the Euphrates River; this was the first cuneiform tablet to be published from Syria, although it was not recognized as such at the time.

Between the two wars, large first-millennium BCE sites in northern and eastern Syria continued to interest excavators. In 1928 Thureau-Dangin, Maurice Dunand, and Georges Dossin began excavations at Arslan Tash (Hadatu). Previously, a group of Neo-Assyrian sculptures dating to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III had been recovered there. Part of the provincial palace and ivories dating to the eighth century were discovered. Tell Ahmar (ancient Til Barsip, also called Kar Shalmaneser) was excavated in three campaigns (1929–1931) by the same team from the Louvre museum. They established that it had been an important city in the state of Bit Adini and that its palace had been decorated with Neo-Hittite sculpture (similar to those previously recorded at Carchemish). Rarely preserved Assyrian wall paintings dated near to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III were also recovered, as well as a hypogeum dating to the third millennium. [See Wall Paintings.] In 1988 Guy Bunnens renewed those excavations. He has excavated two large Assyrian houses containing objects (including ivories) acquired through the city's international contacts.

Before the advent of satellite photos, Antoine Poidebard in 1927 utilized air photos of sites in eastern Syria in his research (Poidebard, 1934). This early use of air photos was followed at the Mari excavations by a photo of the palace when excavation was completed. Kite photos were taken by Robert Anderson at Dipsi Faraj and later at Terqa. Kite or balloon photos are by now standard on many excavations in Syria.

Prehistoric Sites. The surge of excavations at prehistoric Syrian sites has revolutionized what is known of the period's social and economic development. Multidisciplinary approaches to excavation have revealed more about the Paleolithic lithic technology and social interaction from sites with evidence of *Homo erectus* and eventually of *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Prehistoric sites are rich in the area of el-Kowm near Palmyra, particularly at Umm el-Tlel (Jacques Cauvin) and Nadawiyah I (Sultan Muhesen and Jean Marie Le Tensorer). Discoveries that profoundly altered what was known of later prehistory came from excavations on the Middle Euphrates River, where the evidence demonstrated that the establishment of permanent settlements and the transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture and animal domestication were separate stages. Settlement in permanent villages with a high economic and cultural standard developed without similar advances in agriculture and animal domestication. The Late Natufian village at Abu Hureyra 1 (Andrew Moore) engaged in specialized hunting practices (mostly gazelles) and gathered a wide variety of plants

(more than 150 species); this specialization presupposed permanency. At Abu Hureyra 2, settled in about 9000 BCE, agriculture was practiced but wild-plant gathering continued; meat mostly came from wild gazelles. In about 8000 BCE this changed, and most of the population was engaged in cereal production and raising domesticated sheep and goats. [See Cereals; Sheep and Goats.] In the second half of the seventh millennium, new ecological zones were exploited, as in the village of Bouqras, in an arid zone along the Middle Euphrates. From there, substantial domestic architecture, in some cases decorated with painted plaster or painted reliefs, and small, but exceptionally fine, human figures and stone vessels were found.

Starting in the 1960s, interest was renewed in excavating Halaf sites, especially in the heartland of the Halaf culture along the Upper Khabur, the Balikh, and the Middle Euphrates Rivers. At Tell Sabi Abyad, in the Balikh, excavations directed by Peter M. M. G. Akkermans have shown that the earliest phases of the Halaf culture developed gradually out of the preceding local Neolithic culture (and not, as previously thought, imported from northern Iraq). During the Ubaid period the intensification of international contacts included North Syria, but thus far few sites from this period have been excavated. An exception is Tell 'Abr (Hamid Hammade); at Tell Bisnada, east of Latakia, Ubaid material has been found in limited soundings. [See Syria, *article on Prehistoric Syria.*]

Coastal and Central Syria. In 1928 a local farmer discovered a tomb in the area of Minet el-Beida that attracted the attention of the French archaeologist Claude F.-A. Schaeffer. In the following year he began excavations at this ancient port and at the nearby site of Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit. Almost immediately the excavations at Ugarit produced a number of texts, the most startling of which are alphabetic cuneiform texts from the fourteenth–thirteenth centuries BCE. Other texts written in Akkadian, Hittite, and Hurrian attest to the international contacts of this coastal city. The Ugaritic texts are also important because of their relevance to studies in Hebrew Bible. [See Ugarit Inscriptions.] A large royal palace with its offices and workshops was excavated in addition to the temples of Baal and Dagan. Work continued at the site, with an interruption during the World War II, under Schaeffer's direction until the mid-1970s; the present French director is Marguerite Yon.

Of major importance for the history of Ugarit and coastal Syria are the recent Syrian-French excavations carried out under Adnan Bounni, Elizabeth Lagarce, and Jacques Lagarce at the site of Ras Ibn Hani, located a short distance from Ugarit, and situated directly on the coast. There, two thirteenth-century BCE residential palaces served as administrative centers; as a result of their ongoing research, a variety of Ugaritic texts—including letters and ritual and administrative texts—have been found. Tell Sukas, the ancient city called Shuksu in the Ugarit texts, had previously been

excavated along the coast by P. J. Riis. Excavations at Tell al-Kazel (probably ancient Simira), initiated by Bounni and continuing under Leila Badre, have shed light on one of the most important Late Bronze sites on the coast (probably a New Kingdom Egyptian administrative center and then a major city of the kingdom of Ammurru). [See Amorites.] Important late third-millennium remains, also exhibiting Egyptian connections, are now being uncovered at Tell Sianu, in central Syria, by Bounni and Michel al-Maqdissi.

Bounni, the director of excavations in the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, is noted as an excavator for his historic work at Palmyra (begun in 1957) in the Valley of the Tombs, the Temple of Nabu, the main street, the agora, the theater, the nymphaea A and B, and the Street of Ba'al Shamin (Bounni, 1982). In addition he has excavated a large number of sites from the third millennium BCE to the Roman period. His colleague, Nassib Saliby, an authority on Palmyrene architecture and prominent Islamic architectural monuments, is excavating at the Damascus citadel and carrying out a number of salvage projects in the city.

Inner Syria has had a long history of archaeological work, starting with the activities of Maurice Pézard at Tell Nebi Mend in 1921. Recent excavations (Peter Parr) have found a Middle Bronze Age city wall and monumental Late Bronze Age buildings. Four seasons of excavations were conducted by Robert du Mesnil du Buisson at Mishrifeh/Qatna from 1926 to 1929. Qatna's MB and LB texts of temple inventories give a king list for the city during a portion of the fifteenth century BCE, before its destruction. He also worked at several sites north of Hama, including Tell Suran, Tell As, and Khan Sheikhun, which gave the first indication of the importance of this area for the third millennium. Excavations at Tell Qarqur are being conducted by the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) under the direction of Rudolph H. Dornemann. The Hama excavations (1932–1939), directed by Harald Ingholt and Riis, established a stratified sequence of pottery that is linked to the sequence in the 'Amuq region, thus giving a firm ceramic chronology for this area.

The site that has most revolutionized what is known of the importance of northern Syria from the middle of the third to the middle of the second millennium (2400–1600 BCE) is the ancient city of Ebla, modern Tell Mardikh. Excavations began there under Paolo Matthiae in 1964; he specifically set out to test the hypothesis that third-millennium Syria had been a major urban civilization, parallel to contemporary civilizations in Egypt and Mesopotamia. It was only after ten years of excavation that the Ebla archive was discovered, confirming the city's ancient name. [See Ebla Texts.] Matthiae is almost single-handedly responsible for third-millennium urban Syria taking its place in the scholarly literature. The archive came from a palace complex that in addition yielded the remains of wood inlays, parts of ala-

baster and diorite vessels from pharaonic Egypt, gold and lapis objects, and a large amount of unworked lapis. The military campaigns of Sargon and his grandson Naram-Sin destroyed the city. It revived at the beginning of the second millennium BCE, when a large palace and several temples were constructed. The excavation of the royal tombs of the period from 1800 to 1650 BCE exhibit the city's immense wealth and the international contacts of its rulers in both Anatolia and Egypt. The excavations at Ebla transformed what was known of the importance of cities in Syria during the third millennium, highlighting their central role in the era's internationalism, which previously had been understood to have only begun in the Late Bronze Age (Matthiae, 1980).

Matthiae began excavating near Ebla, at the first-millennium site BCE of Tell Afis (ancient Apesh?); that work is now being directed by a member of the Ebla excavation team, Stefanie Mazzoni, who has published ceramics and jar sealings from Ebla (Mazzoni, 1985, 1992). Excavation at Tell Afis has uncovered an uninterrupted sequence of strata bridging the crucial period between the end of the Late Bronze and the beginning of the Iron Age. Recently, substantial Chalcolithic remains were also uncovered.

North of Aleppo, excavations at the site of 'Ain Dara', directed most recently by Ali Abou Assaf and Wahid Khayyata, have identified the city potentially as ancient Kinalua, often mentioned in Neo-Assyrian annals; the excavations have found a *hīlani*-type palace and a large temple decorated with Neo-Hittite-style orthostats; two stone thresholds were decorated with three large footprints pointing toward the temple interior.

Salvage Projects. With Syrian independence in 1946 and the establishment of the Syrian Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, the new administration of the cultural inheritance of the country concentrated on decentralizing Syria's museums by building a major museum in Aleppo to supplement the collections in Damascus. Smaller museums were established in Palmyra, Hama, Tartus, Homs, Latakia, ar-Raqqa, and Idlib; most recently a major new museum was constructed in Deir ez-Zor. The department's policy from the beginning has been to encourage foreign excavation—by European, American, and Japanese teams.

A phenomenon that has characterized Syrian archaeology of the last few decades is the prevalence of salvage operations. Starting in the 1960s the construction of large dams on the Euphrates and Khabur Rivers necessitated the rescue of ancient sites. The most important of these is the Tabqa dam, which formed a lake covering an area of 80 × 8 km (50 × 5 mi.) Answering a call issued by the Syrian government through UNESCO, an international team of archaeologists worked between 1967 and 1974 to excavate sites ranging in date from the ninth millennium BCE to the fifteenth century CE (Freedman, 1979). A sense of the opening

up of a new archaeological frontier resulted from the expanded information about this region. Revolutionary discoveries were made for the fourth millennium, especially at Tell Kannas (André Finet) and Habuba Kabira (Ernst Heinrich and Eva Strommenger), where a large, important settlement, including niched temples whose architectural plan resembles contemporary Uruk period temples in southern Mesopotamia, were excavated; in addition, the ceramic and glyptic material is very close to the south. At Jebel 'Aruda (H. J. Franken and Sander E. van der Leeuw), similar Uruk IV remains were found. The significance of salt sources near these sites and the connection of the salt-refinement process with beveled-rim bowls was shown in part from the American excavations farther downstream at Qraya. New French excavations at Tell Mashnaqa and Ramadi, near Mari, are extending what is known of the Uruk connection. The revelation of a strong Uruk presence ("colonies") in the Euphrates bend region of Syria has entirely changed the view of fourth-millennium Uruk culture. In addition, it has confirmed the strength of the regional Syrian material culture that reasserted itself immediately after the cessation of the Uruk incursion. Sites with later occupation included Tell Hadidi, with a very well-documented ceramic sequence from the beginning of the third to the middle of the second millennia BCE. Tell Selenkahiyeh, a large third-millennium site, yielded twelve important private houses in the heart of the city that give a picture of its economic organization. At Tell Halawa, Winfried Orthmann uncovered important third-millennium strata, including a temple. Major second-millennium BCE levels were discovered at Meskene where an archive of approximately fifteen hundred cuneiform texts has identified the city as Emar. The excavator, Jean-Claude Margueron, uncovered a number of structures from the fourteenth- and thirteenth-centuries BCE, when this region was under Hittite domination. The structures included two long-room type temples and a governor's palace of the *hīlani* type, characteristic of the first millennium BCE. Similar temples were also excavated at Tell Mumbaqaq and Tell Fray.

Appeals by the Syrian government through UNESCO were also connected with the construction of a dam along the Euphrates near the Syro-Turkish border (the Tishrin dam) and two near Hassekeh, one south of the city and one to the west. South of Hassekeh, excavations concentrated on small sites along the course of the Khabur River. The excavation of one of them, Tell 'Atij, by Michel Fortin (1986–1988, 1992–1993), has illuminated the specialized economic importance of this area in the early third millennium. He was the first to uncover a series of granaries that could store large amounts for later shipment to other areas (e.g., to Tell Brak or areas to the south). Subsequent excavations at nearby Ziyada and Tell Raqa'i revealed similar facilities. [See Food Storage.] The excavations at Tell Tuneinir under Michael Fuller found an early church and an

Ayyubid bath. [See Baths.] A deep sounding confirmed the site's third-millennium occupation. Northwest of Hassekeh, Tell Kashkashuk III (Antoine Soleiman) had important remains from the mid-third millennium, including what probably is a temple and a tomb with the skeleton of a young woman with more than six thousand beads of various materials, including gold, lapis, and rock crystal. He is also excavating a Neo-Assyrian site (Tell Boueid) with a large administrative building and a number of jar burials. In the Tishrin dam area, the Late Bronze strata of el-Qitar (Thomas L. McClellan) reveal a city organized around upper and lower sections. The city was probably destroyed by a campaign of Thutmosis III. This area was important in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period as is being shown by the excavations at Tell Halula (M. Molist) and Ja'det al-Maghara (Danielle Stordeur).

Eastern Syria. The landscape of eastern Syria is dominated by numerous mounds along the Middle Euphrates River, with its main tributaries the Khabur and the Balikh. In the period between the two world wars, partly as a consequence of the discoveries at Ugarit, European archaeologists took a greater interest in excavations in Syria. In 1933 André Parrot began excavating at Tell Hariri, which William Foxwell Albright had proposed identifying with the ancient city of Mari, attested in the Sumerian king lists. The early years of excavation at Mari uncovered the Zimrilim palace, excellently preserved with a vast number of cuneiform texts relating to palace activities, including a diplomatic archive. The archaeological remains both for the third and early part of the second millennium BCE, until the destruction of the city in about 1760 BCE by Hammurabi of Babylon, attest to the importance of this urban center and to Mari's border position between the cities of southern Mesopotamia and the urban centers and fertile countryside of northern and western Syria. There too a large palace dating to the third millennium has been partly excavated along with a major temple dedicated to Ishtar.

The new program of research at Mari, under Margueron's direction, has concentrated on enlarging the area where excavations and soundings have been conducted, in order to study the urban plan. In addition, he has initiated a regional study to understand better the reasons for the placement of the city on this part of the river, as well as its geographic and ecological relationship with the surrounding countryside. This research has concluded that when the city was founded in the early part of the third millennium, a series of canals and an artificial lake were constructed in order to utilize the Euphrates River basin for agriculture. The most important of these canals (120 km long) connected Mari directly with the Khabur River. The width of this canal (11 m) allowed river craft to shorten the trip south and avoid the turbulent intersection of the Khabur with the Euphrates. The city therefore controlled both river traffic and probably also the overland caravan route. This new pro-

gram of archaeological research, combined with new initiatives connected with the publication of the Mari texts (Jean-Marie Durand), is of profound importance for understanding all of Syria in the Mari period.

The narrowness of the Euphrates River valley in southeastern Syria permits the existence of only one major city at any given time. After the destruction of Mari, Terqa (about 60 km, or 37 mi., north of Mari, near the juncture of the Khabur and the Euphrates) became the major urban center. Excavations at Terqa, conducted by Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati between 1976 and 1984, uncovered an administrative building from the Khana period (1760–1600 BCE), a complex of artifacts identified as the "office" of a scribe. From this same period a temple of Ninkarrak contained a hoard of 6,637 beads, including seven contemporary scarabs. In the burnt house of Puzurum, the excavators found a storage room with a number of sealed contracts; in this same house a pantry contained a jar with cloves inside. Before Roman times, cloves had to come from the Melakas (Moluccas, Spice Islands) in Indonesia. In the excavations of Olivier Rouault and Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault, tablets dating to the Late Khana period and down into the Mitanni period have been discovered. [See Mitanni.]

Along the Khabur River south of Hassekeh, the site of Sheikh Hamad (ancient Dur Katlimmu) has been excavated since 1978 by Hartmut Kuhne, in collaboration with the Assyriologist Wolfgang Röllig. A Middle Assyrian palace on the highest part of the mound contained five hundred and fifty tablets dating to the reigns of Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I. In the Lower City, a building with a *lilani*-type reception area contained an archive of thirty-five tablets written in three languages: Assyrian, Babylonian, and Aramaic. Also in the Lower City (building G), cuneiform tablets dating to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar yielded the first evidence of a Neo-Babylonian presence in Syria. Kuhne's extensive excavations have provided the most complete understanding of the importance of the Assyrian period in eastern Syria. At the site of Tell Hajajah (ancient Shadikanni), excavations were begun by As'ad Mahmoud in 1982, who rediscovered Layard's excavation trenches and uncovered part of the ninth-century BCE governor's palace decorated with relief orthostats and glazed bricks.

To the north, in the Khabur triangle, pioneering excavations were carried out by M. E. L. Mallowan. The site of Chaghar Bazar (1934–1937) was significant in the Halaf period, as was all of the Wadi Dar'a region. The excavations discovered an archive of cuneiform documents from the early second millennium BCE onward. The stratified sequence of pottery from the third and the second millennia BCE, especially the sequence of painted Khabur ware, became the basis on which many of the other sites in the area were later dated. During this same period, Mallowan began excavations at one of the largest sites in eastern Syria, Tell Brak (Mallowan, 1947). Brak was an extensive city as early

as the Uruk period; its Eye Temple was built on a southern model with a high terrace and a tripartite plan with an elaborately decorated podium. The “palace” of Naram-Sin can more likely be identified as a royal storehouse that sustained his subsequent military activities in western Syria. Malloy’s example of the rapid publication of his primary excavation data (in *Iraq*) was followed by the present excavators of Brak, David and Joan Oates, who resumed excavations there in 1976. From the Akkadian period they have excavated a large ceremonial complex containing a temple (area SS); in this complex a beautiful statue of a reclining human-headed bull in one of the ritual objects found. Impressive architectural remains from the Mitanni period include a palace and a temple. The Brak excavations are one of the primary benchmarks of archaeology in Syria, with comprehensive stratigraphic and architectural interpretations and an equally secure analysis of the ceramic sequences.

The excavations at Tell Barri (ancient Kakhat), begun in 1980 under the direction of Paolo Emilio Pecorella, have uncovered thirteen periods dating from the Halaf to the thirteenth century CE, with few gaps (Pecorella and Anastasio, 1996). During the Mari and Mitanni eras, Kakhat was the major center for the worship of the storm god, Teššup. Assyrian inscriptions indicate that Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 BCE) constructed a palace at Kakhat. The long and very carefully documented Tell Barri ceramic chronology is now a basic tool for ceramic chronology in the Upper Khabur region. Just to the north of Tell Barri, at Tell Hamidiya, Markus Waefer began excavations in 1984 and has explored a palace built on three levels of such massive dimensions that it appears to occupy the whole of the acropolis, making it one of the most imposing buildings of the ancient Near East. This trilevel palace had supporting walls preserved up to 16 m high and 12 m wide and contained a large number of ivories dating to the reign of Shalmaneser III. [See Palace.]

The excavations of Shamshi-Adad’s city of Shubat-Enlil at Tell Leilan were begun by Harvey Weiss in 1978; on the acropolis they have uncovered a long-room temple whose north and south facades were decorated with elaborate mudbrick relief columns. Soundings in the Lower City found many public buildings dating to the period of Shamshi-Adad and his successors that attest to the vastness of his administrative complex there. Two large buildings, identified as palaces, contained important tablets of the royal archive. During the third-millennium occupation (2600–2200 BCE) the city was called Shekhna; it had a city wall built in two phases around both the acropolis and the Lower City (Akkermans and Weiss, 1987; Akkermans et al., 1991; Parayre and Weiss, 1991). The excavations at Mohammad Diyab (ancient Azamhul), begun in 1987 (by Durand and Dominique Charpin) have recovered second-millennium BCE houses and tombs.

Urkeš/Tell Mozan, a large third-millennium site in the

Wadi Dara region has been excavated since 1984 by Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati (1984). They have uncovered a mid-third millennium temple (BA). The storehouse (AK) is characterized by a symmetrical plan that includes two small vaults; on a floor in front of one of these vaults more than six hundred Early Akkadian seal impressions were excavated along with cuneiform tablets containing some Hurrian names and words. The inscribed seal impressions have led to the identification of the site with the Hurrian city of Urkeš. In the Khabur area 144 Early Dynastic III tablets have been excavated at Tell Beydar, under the direction of Marc Lebeau (1991).

The Tell Chuera excavations of Anton Moortgat and Ursula Moortgat-Correns that began in 1958 are being continued by Orthmann. These excavations have revealed a large third-millennium urban center located between the Balikh and the Upper Khabur Rivers. A number of temples have been found, including what must have been a large temple placed on top of a significant stone platform (steinbau III) opposite a monumental entrance to the city. Two statues sculpted in the Early Dynastic II style are the northernmost examples of this type of sculpture. A late third-millennium palace (F) and a large Middle Assyrian building have also been excavated. The site is identified as Ḫarbe in the Middle Assyrian period.

In the north Balikh area, the site of Tell Hammam et-Turkman (ancient Zalpa?) was an important regional center with evidence of palaces from both the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. The excavators, Maurits N. van Loon and Diederik J. W. Meijer, have recovered a number of cuneiform tablets and cylinder seals; the seal impressions attest to a high level of administrative organization, including a scribal school. Van Loon has made substantial contributions to Syrian archaeology through his work at Tell Mureybet, Selenkiye, and Hammam et-Turkman, in addition to training a whole generation of American and European archaeologists.

Tell Bi’a (ancient Tuttul), near the confluence of the Balikh and the Euphrates, has been excavated by Strommenger since 1980; she has uncovered a burnt palace from 2500 BCE containing many wood features, including pilasters. In a palace dated just prior to the reign of Shamshi-Adad I, one level contained a common grave with the remains of eighty skeletons showing evidence of violent death, probably during a battle.

Conclusions. In the early decades of the twentieth century, some exploration of major sites, such as Mari and Ugarit, came about through accidental discoveries. Many tells, however, were selected for excavation as a result of a well-planned research strategy: Ebla, where the research strategy posited a major third-millennium urban area in this part of inner Syria; Tell Hamidiya, where research revolves around the hypothesis that this site is the Mitanni capital of Taidu; the Khabur region, based on the reasoning that major third-

and second-millennium cities should exist there; and the el-Kowm region, east of Palmyra, in the Syrian steppe, where large-scale regional research deriving from specific research interests and research strategy has been undertaken. Salvage operations initiated by dam construction have given impetus to excavations in geographic areas that might otherwise have been overlooked. Research on these sites, especially for the sites connected with the Tabqa dam, often was connected at a second stage with a specific research strategy. In Syria more than seventy Syrian and foreign excavations are being conducted, researching the prehistoric through the Islamic period, from coastal Syria through the Khabur region; nine large survey projects are also being conducted (al-Maqdissi, 1993). For much of this intensive period of the excavation of archaeological sites in Syria during the last thirty years, Najah al-Attar has been the minister of culture. She has been responsible and directly involved in all phases of promoting the cause of archaeology within Syria itself and in bringing the results of this endeavor to the wider international audience. International exhibits of objects excavated in Syria have been bringing Syrian history and culture to a much wider public. Syria has been an area where the recovery of ancient culture through excavations by an international collaboration have resulted in a significantly changed historical picture.

[See also the biographies of Albright, Dunand, Layard, Mallowan, Moortgat, Parrot, Poidebard, Renan, Schaeffer, Smith, Thureau-Dangin, and Woolley. In addition, many of the sites mentioned are the subject of independent entries.]

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- MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI

Archaeology in Israel

Interest in local antiquities was first aroused among the Jewish settlers in the land of Israel, even among members of the Orthodox community, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A. M. Lunz, a prominent scholar in the nineteenth century, studied the country's historical geography. In 1914, the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society (later known as the Israel Exploration Society) was founded in Jerusalem. [See Israel Exploration Society.] It concerned itself with Jewish antiquities, first excavating at Hammath Tiberias (Nahum Slouschz, 1921-1922). The society has, ever since, been central to all archaeological activity in Israel and its journal the focal publication of the status of research on the country's antiquities.

One of the pioneers in archaeological research by Palestinian Jews was Eleazar L. Sukenik, the first professor of archaeology at the fledgling Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where in 1926 he founded the Department of Archaeology and the Museum for Jewish Antiquities. [See the biography of Sukenik.] His first important excavation was the synagogue at Beth Alpha (1929). His subsequent excavations included the Jewish burial caves in the vicinity of Jerusalem and, beginning in 1927, several seasons at Tel Gerisa, a multistrata mound of the Bronze and Iron Ages. Sukenik also participated in the expedition to Samaria led by John W. Crowfoot, where he and his assistant, Nahman Avigad, were exposed to British excavation methods. [See the biographies of Crowfoot and Avigad.] Another inspiring scholar in that period was Benjamin Mazar (Maisler). Trained as a historian and an Assyriologist, he was influenced by William Foxwell Albright to practice interdisciplinary research that would include history, philology, Bible, historical geography, and archaeology. [See the biographies of Mazar and Albright.] Following his excavation of the Jewish necropolis at Beth-She'arim, Mazar joined the faculty of the Hebrew University, where he trained a group of Israeli scholars who were to become prominent in the disciplines of ancient history and archaeology.

Other Jewish archaeologists worked for the Department of Antiquities organized by the British during their mandate in Palestine (1917-1948) or in the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society. Moshe Stekelis laid the foundations for research at the country's prehistoric sites; Emmanuel Ben-Dor

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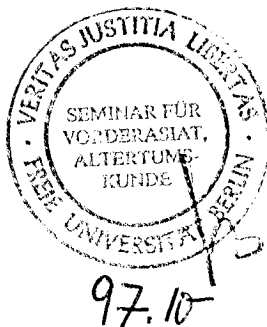
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