

Fig. 3. Four Hellenistic bullae: a) portrait of Antiochos III; b) horse's head; c) Zeus in form of eagle abducting Ganymede; d) Phoenician goddess Tanit with inscription: 'he who controls the land' (inscription read by Joseph Naveh).

impression of the papyri against which they were pressed. Many of the stamped images are small masterpieces of the engraver's art.

The finds from the 1999 season have led us to revise our original thoughts about the nature of the Hellenistic settlement at Kedesh. The scanty literary references to the site led us to expect a small farming village and/or garrison on the site during this period. The discovery of a massive public building with an archive and with major storage facilities leads us to speculate that the site was a major administrative centre of the region during the Hellenistic and possibly the preceding Persian period. We intend to explore these hypotheses in the next two seasons of excavations.

SHARON HERBERT AND ANDREA BERLIN

#### *Khirbet el-Maqatir, 1995-1998*

The excavation of Khirbet el-Maqatir is sponsored by the Associates for Biblical Research, Frederick, MD, under the direction of Bryant G. Wood, director of the Associates for Biblical Research, in consortium with Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary, The Master's College/IBEX (Israel Bible Extension), Lancaster Bible College, Trinity College and Seminary Southwest Campus, and YWAM School for Biblical Studies. We gratefully acknowledge the additional financial support provided by Baptist International Schools, Donald and Joann Felker and David Schroeder. Staff members were: J.R. Ayers (Lancaster Bible College; square supervisor), T.A. Bolen (The Master's College/IBEX; square supervisor), P. Briggs (Trinity College and Seminary Southwest Campus; surveyor), G.A. Byers (Associates for Biblical Research; administrative director and square supervisor), G.A. Carnegey, Sr. (Austin Seminary of Biblical Languages; pottery typologist), O.E. Collins (Berkshire Institute of Christian Studies; square supervisor), S. Collins (Trinity College and Seminary Southwest Campus; square supervisor), R.K. Cook (The Master's College/IBEX; square supervisor), E.W. Fields (Ozark Christian College; square supervisor), G.E. Kellner (State University of New York at Buffalo; objects registrar), M.C. Luddeni (Associates for Biblical Research; photographer), L.P. Ritmeyer (Ritmeyer Archaeological Design; architect), W. Schlegel (The Master's College/IBEX; square supervisor), W.H. Shea (Biblical Research Institute; square supervisor), S.L. Souza (Associates for Biblical Research; objects registrar), R.D. Spender (Lancaster Bible College; square supervisor), and D.B. Weirick (Associates for Biblical Research; pottery registrar). Labour was carried out by volunteers mainly from the U.S., but also from Australia, Canada and Israel.

*The Excavations* (Fig. 1)

Khirbet el-Maqatir (grid ref. 17378 14693) is located c. 15 km. north of Jerusalem, 3 km. east of El-Bireh, 1 km. west of et-Tell and 1.5 km. south-east of Beitin. It is situated on a natural limestone hill, whose summit is at 890 m. above sea-level. Exposed bedrock is visible in many places. From Kh. el-Maqatir there is a clear view of Jerusalem, as well as of Taiyiba, 7 km. to the north, and of the Jordan Valley, 25 km. to the east. Robinson, Conder and Kitchener, as well as other early explorers who visited the site, made note of a Byzantine church on the summit and a Late Hellenistic/Early

Roman building complex, 200 m. to the south-east. A number of cisterns are associated with these remains; no natural source of water has yet been located. The Archaeological Survey of the Hill Country of Benjamin surveyed the location in 1981, recording pottery from the Middle Bronze Age, the Iron I Age, the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Sites 17-14/36/01 and 17-14/36/02). The site has suffered extensive robbing from antiquity to the present, and is in danger from clandestine digging, vandalism and impending development.

Following initial test probes that took place in 1995 (21-27 September), three

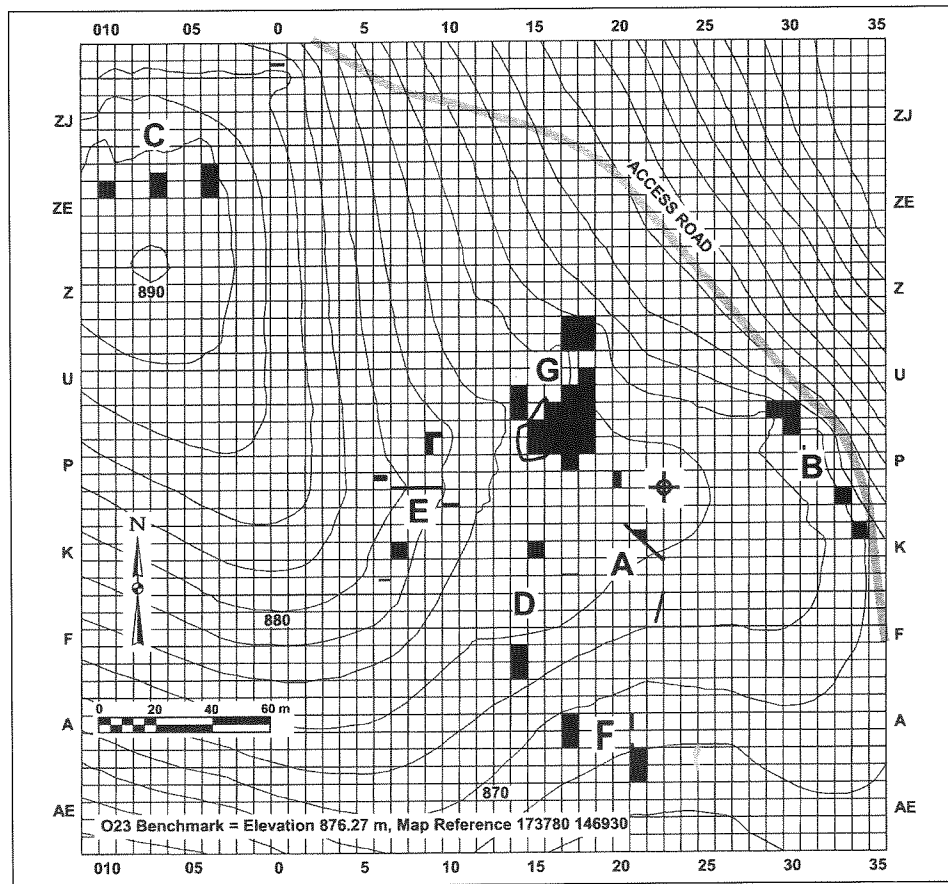


Fig. 1. Kh. el-Maqatir, 1995-1998: contour map showing excavation areas.

seasons of excavations were carried out in subsequent years (17–27 June and 16–27 September 1996, 16–26 June and 15–25 September 1997, and 13–23 June and 14–24 September 1998). Excavated pottery suggests occupation in the Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, Late Bronze I, Iron I, Late Hellenistic/Early Roman and Byzantine periods. Architecture has been found from three periods so far: the Late Bronze I Age, when a fortress was located on the south-eastern slope; the Late Hellenistic/Early Roman (Hasmonaeen) period, when a second fortress was constructed on the south-east slope; and the Byzantine period, when a monastery complex was situated on the summit. Evidence suggests that the first fortress was built on exposed bedrock. The present-day accumulation of soil is the result of the back-up of erosional material against surviving wall stubs. No foundation trenches have been observed. Fill stones

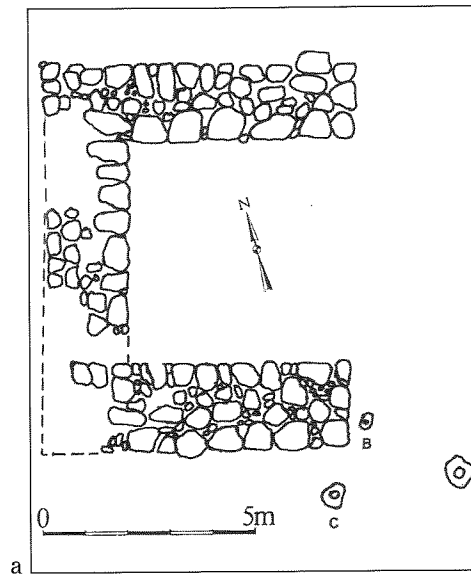
from the walls of the fortresses, left behind when the larger stones were robbed out, blanket the site today.

#### *The Late Bronze I Age*

Remnants of a small fortress, provisionally dated to the Late Bronze I Age pending a detailed study of the pottery, have been found in Areas A, D, E and G (Fig. 1). In Area A, Square L21, a 2.5 m. wide wall was excavated, oriented north-east to south-west. It was constructed of inner and outer rows of laid fieldstones and a solid stone core (Fig. 2). The western half of an entrance gate and associated hardware have been brought to light on the north side of the fortress in Squares Q16–17, R16–17 and S16–17 (Fig. 3). The eastern half was totally robbed out, except for the socket stone found in Square Q17 (Fig. 3, C). Several dozen sling stones were recovered in the vicinity of the gate. A terrace wall on



Fig. 2. Kh. el-Maqatir, 1995–1998: 2.5 m. wide fortification wall in Square L21, provisionally dated to LB I. A second wall (2.5 m. wide) was built on top of earlier wall in Hasmonaeen period.



the west side has been traced for 30 m. from Square I6 to Square O9 (Fig. 4). It is preserved to a height of 1 m. in places. Following its abandonment, the fortress was left exposed to the ravages of the elements and cultivation by local *felahin*, which eliminated the interior surfaces. The only *in situ* cultural remains to have been found so far are from a disturbed flagstone surface just inside the gate (Square Q17), and consist of an assemblage of LB I pottery and two sling stones (Fig. 5).

*The Late Hellenistic/Early Roman Period*  
A large building complex (c. 3 dunam) on the eastern side of the site (Area B) belongs to the Late Hellenistic/Early Roman phase. Fortification walls have been found to the

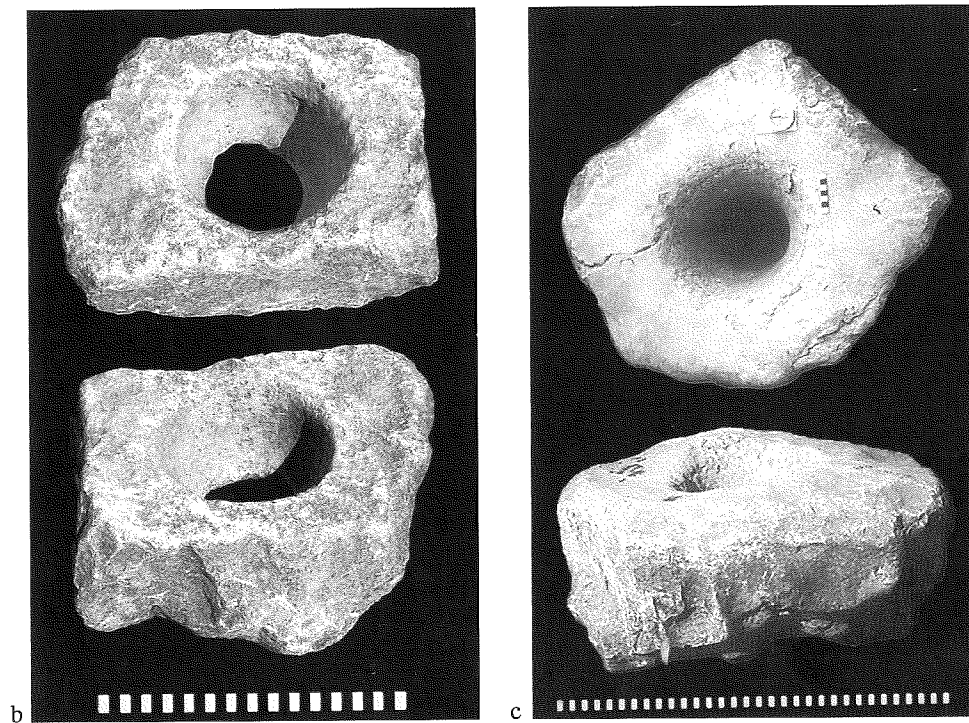


Fig. 3. Kh. el-Maqatir, 1995-1998. a) West half of entry gate, provisionally dated to LB I; b) upper socket stone (shown at B); c) lower socket stone (shown at C). The east half was totally robbed out, except for lower socket stone.

west, north and south, all constructed of outer courses of laid stones with a rubble core. A 2.5 m. wide wall was built on top of

the LB I wall in Square L21 (Fig. 2, above). A similar wall, oriented north-west to south-east, was found in Squares D-E14



Fig. 4. Kh. el-Maqatir, 1995-1998: northern section of terrace wall on the west, provisionally dated to LB I.



Fig. 5. Kh. el-Maqatir, 1995-1998: assemblage of LB I pottery from disturbed flagstone surface on south side of gate.



(Fig. 6). On the north there is a fortification wall, which can be traced from Squares W-X18, where it is 4.0 m. wide (Fig. 7), to Square S29, a distance of c. 80 m. In Squares S29 and S30 there is a northern projection (3.5 m. in width; 4.5 m. in length), apparently the pier of a gate, with a clear approach road leading to it. No additional gate architecture has survived. At the western end of the north wall, in Square X17, the wall turns to the south and continues for c. 40 m. to Square Q15. As it proceeds south, it increases in width from 3.0 m. in Square X17 to 5.0 m. in Squares Q-R15. A coin of Alexander Jannaeus from the north wall in Square W18 and coins of John Hyrcanus I and Alexander Jannaeus from the west wall in Square S16 suggest a date for the construction of the Hasmonaeen fortress in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. In Square R17, there are two square stone

industrial installations of unknown function. To the south, in Squares Q17 and P17, there are fragments of small walls and beaten-earth surfaces, apparently associated with the industrial installations.

#### *The Byzantine Period*

Architecture from the Byzantine period was encountered in Areas C and G. In Area C, Squares ZF04, ZF07 and ZF010 were opened along the southern perimeter wall of the monastery complex. The wall (0.85-0.90 m. in width) is made of semi-hewn stones. Approximately 4-5 m. north of the southern perimeter wall is the southern wall of the church building itself, between Squares ZG07 and ZG04, still unexcavated. The church is oriented east-west, with the apse facing east. In Area G, Square S18, there is a plaster-lined storage silo (3 m. in diameter; 2 m. in depth). The lower portion

103-76

134-104



Fig. 6. Kh. el-Maqatir, 1995-1998, Squares D-E14: fortification wall provisionally dated to Hasmonaeen period.



Fig. 7. Kh. el-Maqtir, 1995–1998: western end of northern defence wall, from Hasmonaean period.

was cut into bedrock, while the upper portion was stone-built.

#### *Preliminary Conclusions*

Khirbet el-Maqtir was a strategically important site in the Late Bronze I Age and the Hasmonaean period, most likely to provide early warning for Jerusalem in the event of incursions from the north. The LB I fortress meets the Biblical requirements to be tentatively identified as the fortress 'Ai, referred to in Josh. 7–8. These requirements can be summarised as follows:

#### *Topographical considerations*

- A hill to the north, suitable for a military camp (Jebel Abu Ammar, grid ref. 1738 1484, 1.5 km. north; Josh. 8:11);
- A shallow valley to the north, in clear view (Wadi el-Gayeh; Josh. 8:11–14);
- An ambush site to the west (Wadi Sheban, 1 km. west; Josh. 8:9);
- East of Bethel (= El Bireh, see D.

Livingston, in *PEQ* 126 [1994], pp. 154–159; Josh. 7:2);

- In the vicinity of Bethel (= El Bireh; Josh. 12:9);
- Near Beth Aven (= Beitin in our reconstruction; Josh. 7:2).

#### *Archaeological evidence*

- Occupation at the end of the fifteenth century B.C.E. (1 Kings 6:1, Judg. 11:26 and 1 Chron. 6:33–37 place the Exodus in the mid-fifteenth century B.C.E. Allowing forty years for the period in the wilderness brings the time of the attack on 'Ai to the late-fifteenth century B.C.E.);
- Fortified (Josh. 7:5; 10:2);
- Gate located on the north side (Josh. 8:11);
- Smaller than Gibeon (Josh. 7:3; 10:2).

In addition, the only known local tradition for the location of 'Ai places it at Kh. el-

Maqatir (see below). Prior to the excavations at Kh. el-Maqatir, there were no known fortified Hasmonaean sites in the central hill country north of Jerusalem. The discovery of a Hasmonaean fortress in this area thus fills in a blank on the map of fortified sites that provided protection for Jerusalem during that period. No evidence has yet been found to determine whether the church commemorated a Biblical event. However, E. Robinson (*Biblical Researches in Palestine*, London, 1845, p. 448) reported a local tradition that it was built on the site of 'Ai. The name of the modern town 2 km. to the east-south-east — Deir Dibwan — may derive from the monastery at Kh. el-Maqatir.

BRYANT G. WOOD

#### OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR MOSHE DOTHAN, well known for years as one of Israel's foremost archaeologists, died on 9 September 1999 after a long illness, shortly before his eightieth birthday.

Moshe Dothan was born in Krakow, Poland, and immigrated to Israel, then Palestine, in 1939. He served in the British army during World War II, and later in the Haganah and the Israel Defence Forces until the end of the War of Independence. In the late 1940s he studied archaeology and historical geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He wrote a Ph.D. dissertation on the transition from the Chalcolithic period to the Early Bronze Age, at the time a pioneering study of a little known period.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Moshe Dothan was one of a small group of archaeologists who worked at the Israel Department of Antiquities. He carried out numerous salvage digs, often under harsh

conditions, some of which later developed into major excavations of great importance. These include the Chalcolithic site of Horvat Beter, near Beersheba; the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze site at Mezer, east of Hadera; the open-air Middle Bronze Age cult site at Nahariya; Tel Afula; and Tel Mor, north of ancient Ashdod. He also conducted an exploratory dig at Tel Kadash Barnea, and participated in the excavations of Hazor, where he was in charge of unearthing the Lower City gate.

During the 1960s, Moshe Dothan served as Director of Excavations and Surveys, and as Deputy Director of the Israel Department of Antiquities. During this period he excavated several superimposed synagogue buildings of the Roman-Byzantine period at Hammat Tiberias. It was there, in a mosaic pavement, that a zodiac showing the god Helios riding in his chariot was discovered. Between 1962 and 1972, he carried out extensive excavations at Tel Ashdod, one of the most notable excavations of that decade. Here he broke new ground in the study of Philistine culture. Ashdod was the first of the central Philistine towns to be studied, revealing the sequence of strata extending from the earliest Philistine settlement at Ashdod until the Assyrian conquest of the town in the eighth century B.C.E. The culture of the Philistines remained a major research interest of Moshe and Trude Dothan for many years to come. While Trude Dothan began the excavation of another central Philistine city — Ekron, Moshe continued to search for other Sea Peoples in his excavations of 'Akko. Their contributions to this field have been summed up in a joint publication (*People of the Sea. The Search for the Philistines*, New York, 1992); this was the last of Moshe Dothan's written works.

In 1972, Moshe Dothan was appointed Professor of Archaeology at the University