

MVSE ANNUAL of the
MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA



NUMBER THREE: 1969



Tel Anafa, the low mound at right, looking east toward Mt. Hermon. A fish pond is in the foreground.

Tel Anafa—A Problem-Oriented Excavation

Classical archaeology has from its inception been what is now termed “historic sites” archaeology—that is, the investigation of sites known from literature, whether it be from Homer, Pausanias or a host of other Classical authors. Biblical archaeology, by its very name, falls in this category, and so does much of Near Eastern archaeology, where the ancient names of many sites can be conjectured with a high degree of probability from extant literature. Whenever there is an ancient literature, this situation prevails; conversely, without writing, sites are pre-historic. But there is a vast time difference for the beginning of writing, and so of history, in various parts of the world, and even where written records exist, many sites find no mention in extant literature. It is always possible that through excavation a site may yield some written record bearing its name, but almost every site gives some evidence of its history even before digging starts.

Surface reconnaissance is a century-old method for determining the periods during which any ancient place has been inhabited. Potsherds, coins and other artifacts picked up in an area once inhabited give a good idea of its entire history. Percolation to the surface of material from considerable depths occurs in

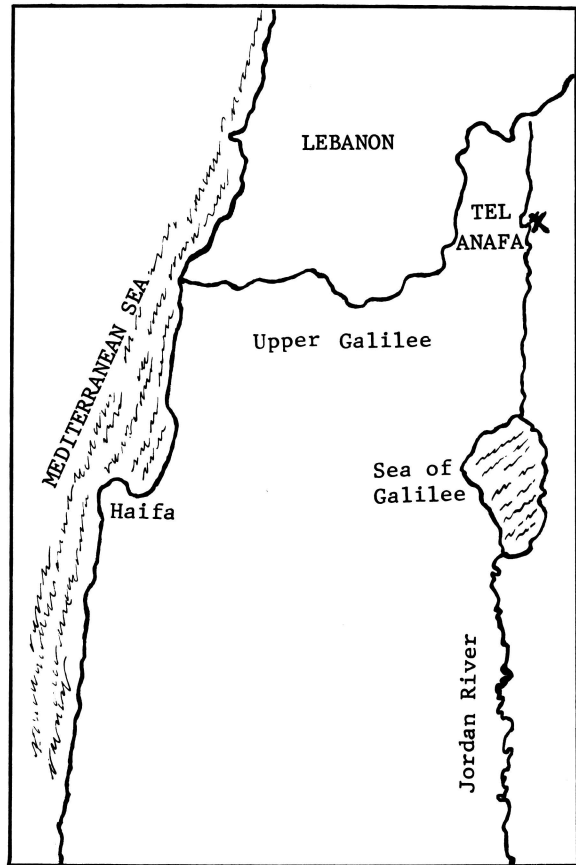
a variety of ways—erosion, digging of pits or foundations, ploughing, etc.—and it has been demonstrated repeatedly that in most cases material from all periods of a site’s occupation is brought to the surface. To this method of reconnaissance has now been added a host of new and highly refined methods—aerial photography, resistivity, proton magnetometry, to name just a few. Thus, with such possibilities of foreseeing what a site may yield even before a pickaxe breaks the surface, the scope for problem-oriented archaeology becomes ever greater. One can now, with a good prospect of success, choose a site or sites which will yield the answer to a variety of problems; but while one problem is being solved many more are raised. New methods for answering questions have only increased the problems for which one may hope to find the solution. The chances of archaeologists working themselves out of a job become ever more remote.

One such problem was involved in the first season of excavation at a site in Upper Galilee, which was conducted by the Museum of Art and Archaeology of the University of Missouri. Tel Anafa was chosen for the light it may shed on relations in ancient

times between Greece and Palestine. From 330 B.C. onward the literary record is clear: it tells of the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great and its incorporation into his empire. In the subsequent division of that empire, Palestine was a border state between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms, at times belonging partly to one or the other. Both kingdoms were Greek in origin and, despite strong Orientalizing tendencies as time went on, they retained close ties with the Hellenistic world. Before Alexander the record is less clear, though we know that Post-Exilic Palestine (after the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.) was definitely aware of Greece and vice versa; Dor, a city on the Palestinian coast, even appears in the Athenian tribute list of 454 B.C.

So much for the written record. What of the material evidence for Graeco-Palestinian relations? Here we are much less well off than one might suppose. As long as thirty-five years ago, J. H. Iliffe, then Director of Antiquities in the British Mandate Government of Palestine, decried the lack of attention to Palestinian sites of the Classical period and the consequent lack of well documented Greek material. When, some twenty years later, Christoph Clairmont compiled a corpus of Greek pottery from the Near East, the situation was little improved. My recent research in the archaeology of Post-Exilic Palestine, a period for which Greek imports offer the best chance of establishing a reliable chronology (as Iliffe long ago pointed out), showed that there had been relatively slight progress and that Iliffe's plea for the excavation of sites known to contain Greek material is still valid. It is this problem, which beckons strongly and most significantly to Classical archaeologists, to which surface indications at Tel Anafa offered some solution.

The medium-sized mound, formed by habitation debris accumulated over thousands of years, that is now named Tel Anafa ("Mound of the Heron") is located in the north of present-day Israel, about one and a half miles from the old Syrian border to the east and about five miles from that to the north. The Hula Lake, now drained, once lay just south of it; the headwaters of the Jordan River to the north make this a lush area such as is not typical of the Palestinian scene. The mound rises some thirty-



Sketch map showing the location of Tel Anafa.

two feet above the plain; it is about 520 feet long and 350 feet wide. The surface is covered with dark gray-brown basaltic stones, large and small, such as abound to the east on the slopes rising to the Golan heights, a region also rich in dolmens and other megalithic monuments. Everywhere alignments of stones on the surface are evidence of walls or foundations.

Surface collecting on and about Tel Anafa had been supervised by Moshe Kagan, the well known artist of Kibbutz Shamir, on whose land the mound stands. Highly interesting and varied artifacts are preserved in the small museum of the kibbutz. It was here, at the suggestion of Anita Engle Berkoff, that we first learned the potential of Tel Anafa. In the fall

of 1963 a preliminary survey was made. The museum collections already included rich finds from a series of military slit trenches dug at the eastern edge of the top of the mound, as well as others from a drainage ditch cut at its eastern base; this penetrated the Hellenistic settlement. Fish ponds scooped out west of the mound, which apparently served as the Hellenistic acropolis, everywhere revealed walls of this settlement. Much Greek pottery—Mycenaean, Classical and Hellenistic, came from all these operations; even a fragment of a Mycenaean figurine was found. Architectural stucco mouldings, completely Hellenic in character, came from the area of one of the slit trenches. Numerous coins, Ptolemaic and Seleucid, especially from the cities of Tyre and Sidon, showed active relations with the Phoenician coast and the Greek world.

Such was the promise of Tel Anafa when we undertook our first excavations, an eight-week campaign beginning late in April, 1968. Before excavation began the mound was surveyed and laid out in four quadrants, each divided by markers into ten-meter squares. The normal trench excavated was 4×4 m., with a one-meter baulk left on two sides.

We thought to explore the lower Hellenistic city, where some walls showed at the northwest corner of the tell, but ground water from adjacent fish ponds quickly put a stop to that. Perhaps later it may be possible to dig here. On the mound itself four areas were chosen: one in the northwest quadrant to test for possible fortifications, two on the east side including the area of the slit trench from which stucco mouldings had come, and a fourth on the south side, the beginning of a step trench to test the stratification of the mound.

The northern trench, dug for only the last three weeks, unluckily revealed an Arab cemetery. Eight graves were excavated, most of them stone-lined and covered with slabs laid across their width. The burials could not be dated since the only artifacts were small beads.

In the eastern area two trenches were laid out (one 5×5 m. to include the military slit trench) and ultimately joined into a single area 10 m. long and 4-5 m. wide. Stone foundations partly above ground were found on three sides of the southern

trench. As we dug down, multitudinous fragments of painted stucco appeared; and these continued in profusion through the meter of depth which we were able to dig during the eight weeks—a very painstaking, slow process. Except for walls at the surface and just below, there were no architectural remains *in situ* in the southern trench, but among the stucco fragments were some fine ashlar blocks having one face covered with painted stucco. In the northern of these two trenches much less stucco was found and digging went considerably faster. The removal of a high foundation at the south side revealed a lower wall in almost the same position, and another at right angles, its base about two meters from the surface. In the latter, and in the fill east of it, were more ashlar blocks, some covered with painted stucco. It seems clear that these blocks are from the same building as the stucco fragments, but all were re-used and nowhere have we found ashlar blocks in their original positions; either their foundations are still deeper or the debris may have drifted downhill.

With the latter possibility in mind we opened another trench five meters to the west. The same profusion of stones on the surface was sorted out and an L-shaped foundation emerged. As we dug deeper, an earlier phase of these foundations appeared, with an addition extending northwest. Most interesting was the discovery of a mud-brick wall parallel to the southern arm of the L. Although it was extremely difficult to separate the wall itself from the collapsed bricks, its east face was ultimately defined. This wall is the earliest in the area; in fact, the parallel stone foundation rested on the collapsed bricks. Thus there are four architectural phases in the two meters of depth dug in this area, which was singularly prolific in artifacts of all kinds, many exceptionally well preserved owing to the soft fill provided by the collapsed brick.

At the south end of the tell we laid out a step trench which should ultimately extend down the entire slope. The first trench was opened on flat ground at the top of the mound; a second to the south is already about half a meter lower. In both areas we dug to a depth of two meters or a little more, and eventually the baulk between the two was removed, so that in all an area 9×4 m. was excavated. Wall foundations were visible on the surface



Trench in the eastern area with wall showing re-use of ashlar blocks.



Walls of four architectural phases, in smaller trench of eastern area (seen from northeast). The earliest is a mud-brick wall at western side.



Above: step trench at south of mound, seen from the south. *Left:* detail of same trench showing early oven.



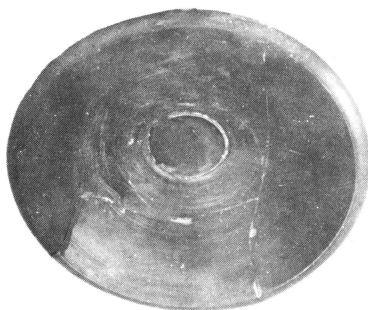
Fine tableware dating from the second century B.C.



Pottery mortar, 2nd c. B.C.



Three unguentaria, the middle one with painted diamond design, all of the 2nd c. B.C.



Above: black-glazed plate, 2nd c. B.C.

Left: small jug with horizontal ribbing, 2nd c. B.C.

and digging revealed a maze of four or five architectural phases; to the two latest belonged circular brick ovens, their exteriors covered with mud in which large potsherds had been set. The earlier oven (and probably the later as well) was certainly in a courtyard, against a house wall. The court was paved with stones which continued through a wide entrance into the street bordering the house on the south.

Although we dug to a depth of 2.50 m. in the south end of the step trench, we were still in debris of the Hellenistic period, as in all other areas, and only at the deepest point found one lamp fragment and some sherds of the late Persian period immediately preceding. The building remains on the surface are also Hellenistic, and the coins and stamped amphora handles, in particular, make it clear that the occupation of the site ended in the first quarter of the first century B.C. People may have roamed over the mound at times, but there is no sign of later settlement on it. The unusual depth of the Hellenistic layers may be due to the use of mud brick in building.

Even preliminary study of the material shows that it should now be possible to clarify the development of Hellenistic pottery through several centuries. Most important in this respect is the large amount of fine table ware, some of it black-glazed pottery of well known Greek types, but the largest part consisting of the so-called "Pergamene" red wares. Characteristic of this are finely levigated-buff clay and a glossy red-brown surface. At Tel Anafa it occurs on the surface and through almost two meters of depth, diminishing in the lower half-meter. It first appears at least as early as the mid-second century B.C. Hemispherical bowls are among the earliest shapes, but carinated bowls and various plates soon appear. Furthermore, the large quantity of this pottery found at the site may indicate that it was manufactured locally, or not far away.

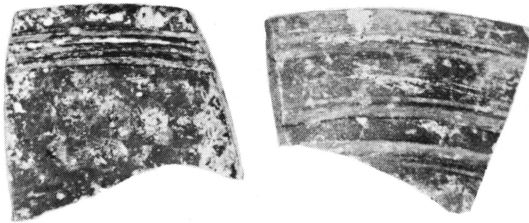
The many fragments of Greek relief bowls, probably East Greek, and the glazed "fish plates" are certainly imports, indicative of extensive trade with the Aegean world. This is demonstrated further by stamped handles of Rhodian wine jars; the trade route is shown by the predominance of coins of Tyre and Sidon.

The kitchen wares already fall into a sequential pattern. Horizontally ribbed pots occur toward the end of the occupation (late second-early first century B.C.), but ribbing occurs earlier on amphoras, small jugs and juglets, which must have been made throughout the second century B.C. Unglazed amphoriskoi and spindle unguentaria, found in large numbers, are also of second-century date. A painted diamond is preserved on one unguentarium and others bear traces of designs different from the horizontal stripes which heretofore were the only painted patterns known on this shape. From early Hellenistic fill come biconical forms for which we do not yet know good parallels: a deep cooking pot and a one-handled jug. Numerous pottery mortars also appeared in this early fill. A few tall unglazed beakers of extremely thin fabric are probably imports.

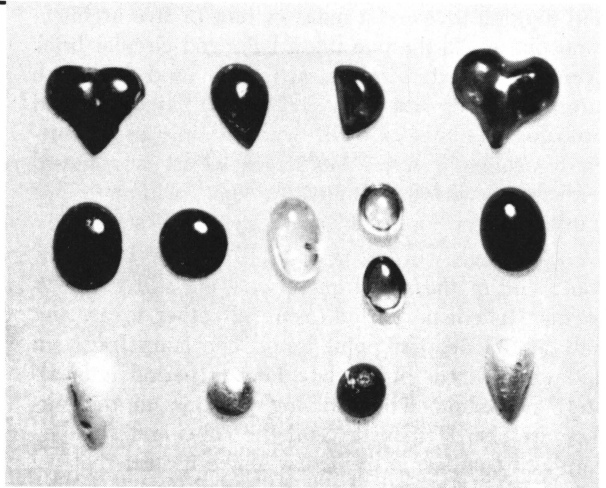
Unusually large numbers of glass vessel fragments occurred in the upper layers. All are moulded and are from conical or hemispherical bowls, the latter ribbed and the former decorated with engraved horizontal grooves inside and/or out. The quantity of fragments and their uniformity suggest a local production.

A group of fourteen gems found together include four of glass; of the ten semiprecious stones seven are garnets and three amethysts. Preliminary analysis of the garnets indicates that they came from the Red Sea region. The stones, intended as inlays, are beautifully cut in heart, tear-drop, crescent, oval and round shapes, all with flat or slightly concave backs. They are but one of many indications of the wealth of the site; a crescent-shaped gold pendant is another. The main lamp type is a long-nozzled shape with *erotes* holding a mask above the central opening. A variety of metal objects found included a number in iron—knives, a spearhead, an axe-adze, a ladle, a key, arrowheads and rings; a large number of bronze pins, several bent cosmetic spatulae, vessel fragments; several pieces of lead and one inscribed lead weight.

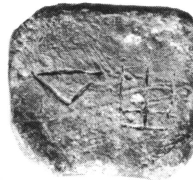
Nothing shows the richness of the Hellenistic town so well as the remains of the elaborate building on the east side of the tell, mentioned above. Fragments of mosaic flooring, with unusually small white stone tesserae, are abundant; one shows a border with tes-



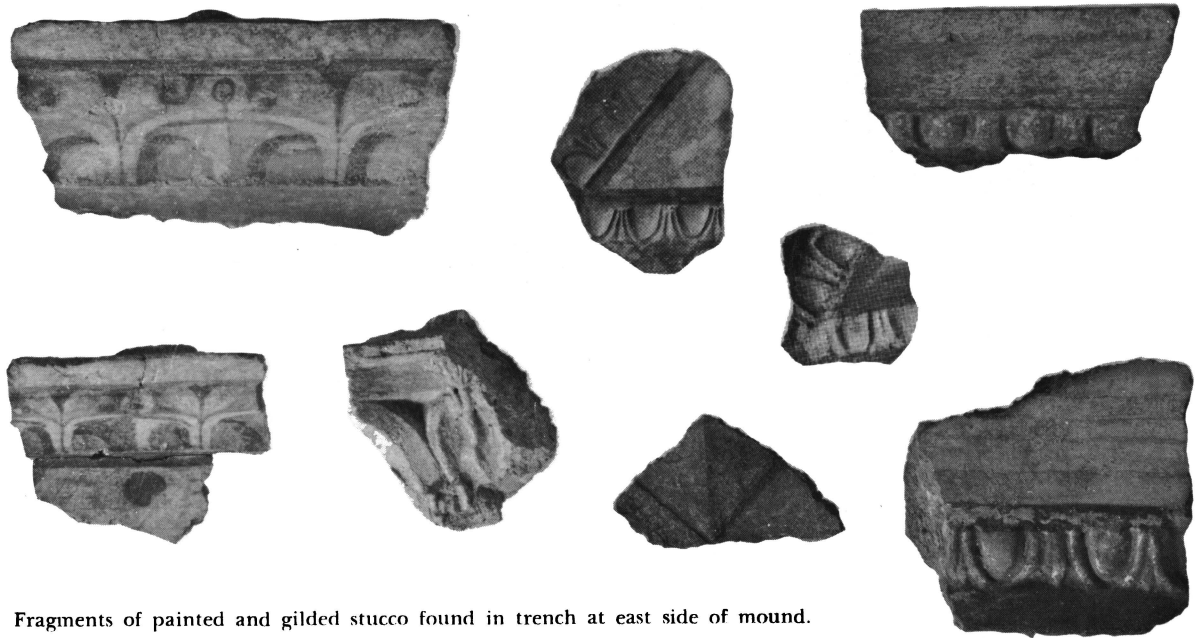
Two fragments of moulded glass bowls with cut interior grooves, Hellenistic period.



Left: gold pendant, shown about twice actual size; above: group of fourteen cut gems—garnets, amethysts and glass (bottom row).



Metal objects found at Tel Anafa: iron weapons and implements (*above*); inscribed lead weight (*above, right*); iron key and ladle (*below, right*).



Fragments of painted and gilded stucco found in trench at east side of mound.

serae of black stone and others of glass. Another piece, from the edge of the room, retains the bottom of a wall covered with black stucco. Above a dark dado must have been panels in a variety of colors—white, red, yellow—often bordered with another color. Several fragments show that parts of the walls were first decorated with a pattern of green and black diamonds; this was later covered with a thin coat of red plaster and still later renewed in the same color. Large quarter-columns, the lower third red and unfluted, the upper two thirds white and fluted, stood in the corners. Doric, Ionic and Corinthian orders are represented, of different sizes depending on their place in the room or around doors and windows. White dentils against a red ground were near the ceiling; the sima mouldings are elaborately decorated and beneath some are painted sections of wall. The mouldings bear evidence of frequent changes, one showing as many as five layers. Reinforcement of the mouldings with bundles of reeds is visible on many pieces.

Most exciting are numerous fragments of mouldings not only painted but partially covered with gold leaf; this is most usual on the egg-and-dart mouldings,

but simas and even wall sections show gilding, and gilding may have been used on the soffits of a richly decorated ceiling. We do not yet know when this building was constructed, but we do know that it must have been destroyed toward the end of the second century B.C.

Most intriguing is the existence of so pretentious a structure in what seems to be a rather small Hellenistic town. One can surmise that its situation was the source of the town's wealth, for it apparently lay astride a major trade route up the Jordan Valley through Paneas to Damascus. If we knew its name, there might be clues to this problem, as well as that of its end in the early first century B.C. Historical sources mention the campaigns of Alexander Jannaeus in this region during this time, when the Greek cities of the Seleucid kingdom were incorporated into the Hasmonaean kingdom. Only further digging can answer the numerous questions which the first campaign has propounded. We hope to be back in the field this year, with fine promise for more evidence of Graeco-Palestinian relations.

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