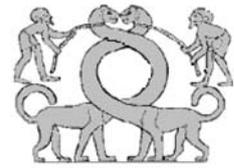




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Damqātum

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**Department of History
Faculty of Philosophy
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Argentina**

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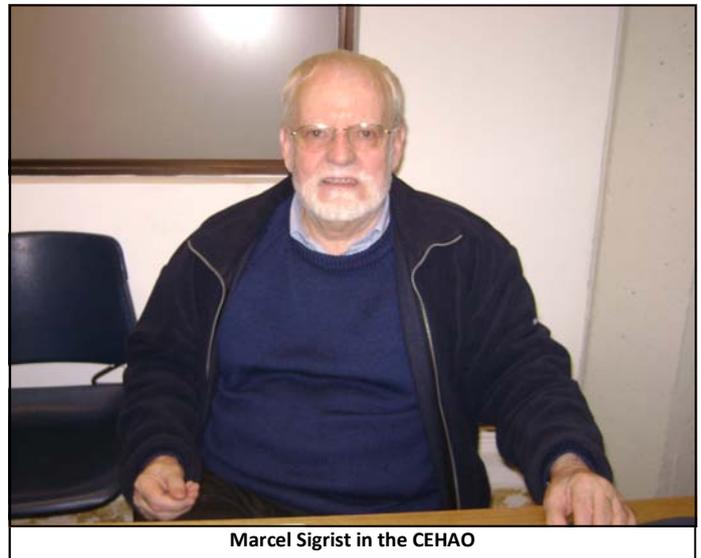
Top Article:

From Biblical Studies to Assyriology:

Interview with Marcel Sigrist

By Francisco Céntola and Virginia Laporta

Dr. Marcel Sigrist (*École
Biblique et Archéologique
Française de Jérusalem*), one
of the most important
scholars in Assyriology and
Invited Professor last semester
in the Centro de Estudios de
Historia del Antiguo Oriente,
gave us a very interesting
interview, in which he talks
about his scholarly career and
discusses the latest
developments in the
Assyriology and Biblical
Studies.



Marcel Sigrist in the CEHAO

*How did you get involved in
Assyriology? Which were your
first steps in the field?*

I had finished my philosophical
and theological studies in
Paris, and I was sent to
Jerusalem to the École
Biblique to specialize in
Biblical Studies. While I was in
Jerusalem, the management
of the École asked me if
perhaps I would consider to
stay in the École, and to
specialize in Assyriology. And
so it was very simple, I said
“Yes, as long as my superiors
agree with this change”, not
going to Helsinki but staying in
Jerusalem. “If they agree, it is
ok with me”. And so, I was
informed, “We accept that

you stay in Jerusalem, and
now, look for your studies in
Assyriology”. So the first year,
when I was told this, I went to
the Hebrew University for an
introduction to Assyriology
with Professor Kutcher. And
during this year, I got the
administrative forms to be
able to continue my studies in
the United States. I had the
choice between Chicago and
Yale, and professor Tadmor
said “I suggest you go to Yale”,
and that is why I ended up in
Yale.

Many people, when they start
Assyriology, have a great
problem with the signs. And to
recognize the signs, to learn
the signs, you have people

who have a lot of little
flashcards with the signs. I
must say I had really very few
problems to memorize the
signs, and even to recognize
the various shapes. Nothing is
printed, but it is handwritten,
it changes from one tablet to
the other. The way to learn
the signs was to put the signs
as they are classified on one
sheet of paper, and then to
draw the sign and write the
basic phonetic. So when you
do this, and then you take a
book -*The Letters of Mari*,
which are very easy to read-
you compare all the time the
transliteration of the tablet
with your chart. And when

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(from page 1)

you have seen twenty times the same sign in a day, you know it. So there are easy ways to learn the signs.

Now you are giving a course of Akkadian in the CEHAO. Why is it important to learn Akkadian for students pursuing studies on the Ancient Near East?

Akkadian belongs to the general area of the great civilizations of the Ancient Near East, and therefore, it has to be studied. If you study Romance languages, you have to know Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. When you compare, in other fields, you see that you must know these languages. And for the Ancient Near East, you would have Egyptian. Very often we cannot learn Egyptian and Akkadian, but it would be good to have basics in one of the two, if you specialize in the other. So you start with Egyptian and Akkadian, and then come Aramaic, Hebrew, Ugaritic, Eblaite and all these more little languages, which are much easier to learn once you have studied the big ones. And then also, if we speak about the Ancient Near East, it would be important to learn Arabic, although it comes much later historically. But as it is the mother of all the Semitic languages, the most developed, the largest vocabulary, it is also necessary to study it, to know it at least passively.

And, what is the importance of the Greek language, which is not so connected with our field?

Greek has little to do with the Ancient Near East, except that Herodotus and others wrote in Greek. And that also the knowledge from Babylon passed over through the Greek language. So if you are in later periods you should also know Greek, because simply the transition was mainly through Greek. But just to emphasize a little more Akkadian, writing in Akkadian has lasted more than two thousand years, indicating the importance of this culture. Some people are completely focused on the West Semitic, which is Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic. So you can be focused on these but you can never forget that the main influence comes nevertheless from Akkadian. And that is why, wherever you stand, you need to have this. And furthermore, the most extended and complete dictionaries, are the Akkadian dictionaries.

Part of your research work is related to the translation of an impressive number of tablets from Ancient Mesopotamia, currently in different museum collections. Which is the goal behind this huge effort?

When I started, forty years ago, we had very little material available; there were much less Assyriologists in the world. I realized two things. That we needed tools; in other words, everybody was preparing for himself the tools for his little corner of research. And I realized that we needed really to do

something that will last, so that the next generation will not have to do it again. I started to publish year names, so that we do not have to collect them again. I did the same for Sumerian words, and I put together indexes from a number of publications, so that if the word had been written somewhere you may be able to find where it was. It was not great, it was not even a publication, just photocopies, but it was useful. I did the same for personal names in Old Babylonian, and Ur III. When you read a tablet, you have sometimes two or three choices, and you have to find out which is the most obvious, and this you find out by looking in indexes. I wanted to write a book on Drehem, the site where the taxes in cattle were paid to the empire of Ur III. And in order to be sure that I was exhaustive, I classified all the tablets, more than 30.000 at the time, to put them in chronological order. And this gave rise to a large database, which is taken over now by other people, for all the published Ur III tablets. So we have in my little corner of research all the tablets on a database and you can sort them in every possible way.

My idea was to create tools, so that the next generation can build on our back, and not start again. I often use the joke: when you have one watch you have the exact time; when you have two, you are never sure because there is always a discrepancy between them. And when you have one big tablet you can write a novel on it. When you have two parallel tablets, you see that it is just a little more complicated. So, in order to be exhaustive, to come as close as possible to the reality, I tried to catalogue first all the tablets in the museums and also to publish a maximum of Ur III tablets. So that now, instead of having two tablets, we have sixty tablets on a given area. When you have sixty tablets you are safer in your conclusions, you are sure in your analysis. So my huge effort was really on two levels: first, to create tools, so that you have not to start again (the month's names, the year names, the measurements and all this things). And the second is to make available all what is in our museums. Sometimes people tell me: what will we do after, there is nothing left? There is just to exploit all what I have published, thousands and thousands. We have to exploit now this information. It is not so complicated to do what I did, although you have to do it correctly. But later you have to put this together, to analyse it, and that is huge work, because it is a large quantity of material to bring together. And so what I have done for Ur III is done actually in other domains, like in Neo-Babylonian. Once somebody has started this, everybody recognises that is exactly what is needed. And so it was needed for Ur III, it is needed for other periods, and so we have also in Old Babylonian people who started to do the same.

The main current project of the École Biblique is a new version of the Bible of Jerusalem. Can you tell us about this project and its aims?

The École Biblique, in 1950, presented a new Bible called *The Bible in its Traditions*, which wanted to introduce the knowledge we have reached on the Bible research at that

time. It was the time after the war, people were eager to read not only the text but also to be helped by scientific footnotes in their understanding. This Bible was published in almost every language because of its footnotes, and it had three editions. And now we realized that it is time, not just to make a fourth edition, but really to take it all over again in a broader way. And so we call this *The Bible of Jerusalem in its Traditions*, which means that the text you translate from Hebrew or from Greek it is not just the text you find in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, or in the Kurt Aland (the Greek New Testament), because the sources are more complex. Nobody can claim to have the absolute text revelation. Of course some of these texts are canonical, they are used in the Church, and the Church says that these texts are revealed. But nevertheless, when you look around, you immediately see that for the Hebrew version of the Bible, you have different texts. You have the text of Flavius Josephus, of the Septuagint, the Samaritan text, the ones of Philo of Alexandria. So you have a number of texts which have their differences. And sometimes it is important to mention these differences in the sources. So we start here, from the published edition of Stuttgart or Kurt Aland, but we take the streams that created

this tradition. So you look also at what is before. And I think it is very important because you find quite different things and a lot of problems. You have three versions -I think it is for Jeremiah-, you have a short version, a middle version and a long version of Jeremiah. So we have adopted the long one and we are safe, we have everything, but who says which was the best one? And so we have, at least, to compare synoptically, all three versions and when you see divergences to quote all three versions. What I said for Jeremiah is true for the Gospels, because the Synoptics tell more or less the same story but nevertheless have a lot of variants. We want to take in account all the sources, and not only one. And from our sources also, we cannot just say, especially for the New Testament, "we take the clean text". Because at the same time you have a Coptic text, you have the Syriac text -the Peshitta-, you have the Armenian text, and the Latin text of Jerome. So you see, you can no longer say Kurt Aland. Kurt Aland is a scientific book -which we are not rejecting, far from it. But you have to take in account that all these are liturgical texts, and I insist on this, they are texts once utilized by the Christian communities speaking these languages. It is not

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CEHAO's participation at the II National Workshop of Ancient History / II International Workshop of Ancient History, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, May 27th- 29th 2009

Roxana Flammini: "Considerations on the conformation of the Nilotic-Levantine world-System in the first half of the 2nd. millennium B.C.: heterarchies and hierarchies"

While studying the formation of the Levantine-Nilotic world-system during the first half of the 2nd. millennium B.C., Roxana Flammini analyzed the interaction between Egypt (as a central region), Kerma and Byblos (its peripheries). Thus, considering as the starting point that the exchange of luxury goods among these areas was carried on without any kind of dominance of the peripheries by a center, Flammini showed that it is possible to appreciate different levels of interaction and to evaluate the impact that these interactions produced locally. Taking into the material and written evidence, as well as an appropriate definition of the concepts involved, Flammini's proposal considered the partners involved in this interaction as *hierarchically articulated societies*, and their relations as an example of a *heterarchic mode of interacting*.

Virginia Laporta: "An approximation to Hatshepsut and the *damnatio memoriae*"

In connection with the thematic proposal of analyzing ideology and power relations in Egypt, Virginia Laporta addressed a lecture on the reign of Hatshepsut and her posthumous *damnatio memoriae*. Laporta referred to one of the most controversial reigns of the New Kingdom, such as the transformation of Queen Hatshepsut into "king" of Egypt together with Tutmosis III. This exceptional situation entailed various consequences, of which the best known is the *damnatio memoriae*. On this subject Laporta indicated that the cartouche containing her coronation name (Maat-ka-Ra) as well as any trace linking her with the god Amon-Ra, were erased. The object of the lecture was to analyze the causes that motivated these episodes from a new reading on the evidence at hand.

Romina Della Casa: "The frontier space in the Hittite documents: An approximation to the 'Instructions from Arnuwanda I for the Commander of the Border Guards'"

With the aim of analyzing the discursive practices and representations of ancient Near Eastern societies, Romina Della Casa addressed the interpretation of spatial symbols in the document entitled "Instructions from Arnuwanda I for the Commander of the Border Guards" (CTH 261). After taking into consideration traditional studies on this particular document -which deal essentially with the political practices and strategies put into action by the Hittite king in order to protect the Hittite State against the advances of the *kaška* people in the northern border- Della Casa proposed that the document should be analyzed in accordance to the symbolic issues of the *threshold area*. This is a perspective that offers a fresh approximation on the limits of the sacred space to our knowledge on a period of intense warfare, hostile coalitions and questionable loyalties.

Aphrodite in Palestine: Luxury without borders



Moshe Fischer visited the Universidad Católica Argentina.

Professor of Classic Archaeology at Tel Aviv University. Director of the Yavneh- Yam Excavation since 1992. Invited Professor at the Johns Hopkins University.

Lecture focused on presenting several aspects of the interactions known as “Hellenization” and “Romanization”.

The lecture of Professor Moshe Fischer, organized by the Centro de Estudios de Historia del Antiguo Oriente, took place on May 15th in our university. The lecture focused on presenting several aspects of the interactions commonly termed “Hellenization” and “Romanization” as reflected by archaeological, epigraphic and artistic material which has been revealed by the archaeological research carried out in Israel during the last decades.

Fischer focused on some of the main highlights of Greeks and Roman presence in Ancient Israel. He also made an overview of some of the main remains of architecture, and architectural and sculptural decoration of the areas were presented. It included Iraq el-Amir, Har Gerizim, Jerusalem from the Hellenistic period, a selection of aspects of Herodian architecture and decoration; Cesarea, Ashkelon and Scythopolis (Beth Shean) as part of the Roman consensus and *modus vivendi*; architecture and decoration of the transition to the Late Roman as reflected by civic and religious monuments such as the basilica of Ashkelon and the temple at Qedesh, Upper Galilee, which presented as case studies.

(from page 3)

academic, it is liturgical. The Latin Church utilized Saint Jerome for 1,700 years. The Greeks utilized the Greek version from the beginning. Things immediately get complex. Then you come to the text you want to translate, which is the text you have to present. And all this is distributed to persons around the world who are specialized and who say they want to take the book of Ruth, or the book of Isaiah.

Later, what they have worked on comes to us, in the École Biblique. There is a committee who reviews all this and makes a lot of observations to say "here, this word, we do not agree with the translation" or, "here, we suggest something else", or "here, it should be interpreted grammatically differently". There is a real work of the review committee of what is done. So, it cannot be done in this way for the whole Bible. But we want that the person who is in charge of a book understands to what we are driving to, the exigency that we have for the text, for the translation. And then comes the second part, the traditions of interpretation of the text. And this will be divided in three sections. There is first what is concerning text criticism; the other will be history, geography, the setting of the text; and the last part will be the history of interpretation. Rabbinical interpretation, fathers of the Church, Middle Age, Reformation, and modern times. So our footnotes will be absolutely relevant to a given point -not to have a footnote which mixes liturgy, theology and fathers of the Church. So that will be a very comprehensive new presentation. This can be done on the computer, because you have infinite space on the computer. Later, when it will be published, there will be selections. It means that the publisher can say "I am just interested in your text and in the patristic interpretation, or in the liturgical interpretation". And with the computer it is easy, you take out the fields you want and you bring your Bible according to what you want. This the new project which mobilizes really the École Biblique.

You were the Director and Vice-director of

the École many times. Which is the balance you can make of the relationship among the École and other research centers located at Jerusalem, Israel and the rest of the world?

I was Director six years -two terms, I was probably four times Vice-director, so it was a long time that I was at the helm of the École. But director or not, we are all professors there. And it is absolutely normal that, despite political and religious differences, you meet with people who have the same concern in research. And so I must say on my part, that I had never any problem to teach in the Israeli universities. I will teach in the fall in the Hebrew University, I was in Bar-Ilan and I made research with professors of Tel Aviv, so I have been all my time there in relation with Israelis in my field. And the same is also true for Palestinian institutions, when they need me to teach something I am always willing. I taught Ancient Mesopotamian History in Birzeit University. For me there has never been any problem because we are not coming for politics or for something else, we come together for what is the center of our life: our research. Once this said, this is personal, I must add that some people do not feel exactly like me. Some people are shunting in some way, people from some of the other institutions in Jerusalem. But I would say, too bad for them, because they do not know what they are missing. In other words, personally I have been very active simply as professor and when I was in charge of the École to maintain a maximum of relations, first in Jerusalem and the West Bank, but also outside in the world. Without glorifying me, I have been in the Max Planck Institute, I will be next year at the British Museum and the Yale University and I have worked in many universities to copy tablets. For me there has never been the smallest doubt that we should be absolutely opened to anything that can help us in our research.

Recently you have been honored with a Festschrift volume. What balance do you make of your career at this point of your life?

When I look back I think I had no idea, when I started, what I would be doing. And it is the circumstances which brought me, progressively, to be in publishing tablets, because I had long summers where I could do what I wanted. And rather than to sit on the beach I would go to museums and work in the museums. On the other side I continued to prepare my tools, as I told you before. And I had also a number of other activities, I guide a group of people in Israel every Saturday to show them the country, I give spiritual lectures in the École Biblique. So I have the impression to have had a great life. At the end, I worked very hard but I was never prevented to do what I wanted to do, and I can thank God that it succeeded. Because you may do a lot of things and at the end nothing comes out of it. And I must say things succeeded, to have all these publications, which I think are for the future of our field. At a personal level, I must say I am very happy, and I am also happy to have received the *Festschrift*, because it is a little crowning of all the work of my life in this field.

Which would be your advice to students that want to follow your steps in Ancient Near Eastern studies in Argentina and Latin America?

First, you must find the best places to study. And you have not to be ashamed because you do not have it here, that is the situation. So, with the help of your university to find money, you have to find the best places today in the world. And eventually even to make post-doctoral studies in other places, so that you vary a little your information, that you are not just bound to one. The second is to find libraries. Work to find libraries when you are abroad. You will hear that some professor is old, and perhaps the university could at that moment approach the man and say "we would like to have your library, we are even ready to give some money, but we do not have much, just help us to build up one library in South America". And then, the third thing is to come back home ■

The World of Ancient Egyptian Demons from an Anthropological Perspective



Rita Lucarelli in the
Universidad Católica
Argentina

Egyptologist. Member of a project about *The Book of the Dead* in the University of Bonn. Adjunct Professor at the University of Verona.

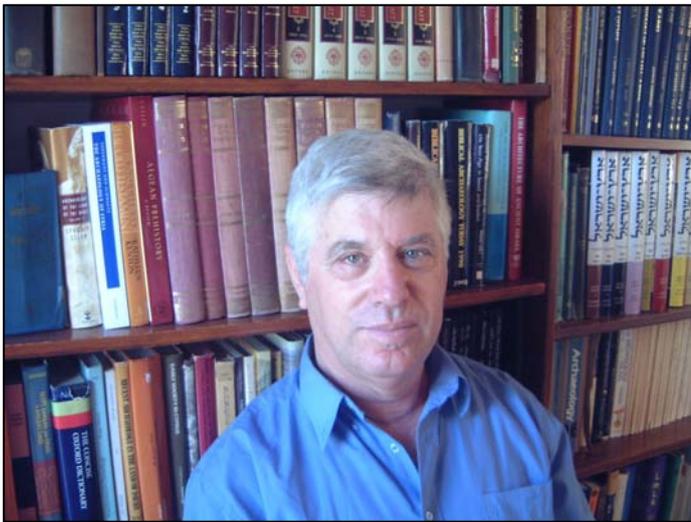
“Magical texts show how ambiguous the role of both gods and demons can be as source of pain as well as of reward for humankind”.

Dr. Lucarelli's lecture was organized by the Centro de Estudios de Historia del Antiguo Oriente, the History Students' Centre of the Universidad Católica Argentina and the Instituto de Historia Antigua Oriental of the Universidad de Buenos Aires. It took place in our university on March 16th.

Defining demons in ancient Egypt is a difficult task because they are never clearly distinguished from the gods and other categories of supernatural beings. Magical texts show how ambiguous the role of both gods and demons can be as source of pain as well as of reward for humankind. In this lecture Lucarelli discussed how and in what measure modern studies of cultural anthropology may provide a significant help to face such an issue, by comparing the ancient Egyptian sources on demons with the experience of contemporary societies in which mythical beliefs in supernatural and usually evil beings have survived until today, and where demons, similar to ancient Egypt, stand on the boundary between good and evil and are empowered to mediate between gods and men.

Profiles

Professor Amihai Mazar: Israeli archaeologist; Ph.D. Hebrew University; Postdoctoral studies (Research Fellow), Institute of Archaeology, University of London; Professor of the Archaeology of Israel, Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Eleazar Sukenik Chair in the Archaeology of Israel; Former member, Council of the Israel Antiquities Authority; Former Editor of *Qadmoniot*, a publication of the Israel Exploration Society.



Research interests: The archaeology of Israel and its neighbors in the Bronze and Iron Ages; The relationship between archaeology and biblical history; Ancient Near Eastern art and architecture; Historical geography of the biblical period.

Main past projects: Excavations at Tel Qasile (1971-1990); Timnah (Tel Batash) (1977-1989); Tel Beth Shean (Beth Shean Valley Archaeological Project) (1989-1996).

Ongoing projects: Excavations at Tel Rehov (from 1997).

Last 3 publications:

A. Mazar. 2006. *Excavations at Tel Beth Shean between 1989 and 1996, Volume I: From the Late Bronze Age IIB to the Medieval Period*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

N. Panitz-Cohen and A. Mazar (eds.). 2006. *Timnah (Tel Batash) III: The Finds from the Second Millennium BCE*, Jerusalem (*Qedem*, 45).

A. Mazar and R. Mullins (eds). 2007. *Excavations at Tel Beth Shean 1989-1996, Volume II: The Middle and Late Bronze Age Strata in Area R*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Links in Internet:

<http://archaeology.huji.ac.il/depart/biblical/amihaim/amihaim.asp> (CV)

<http://www.rehov.org/project/publications.htm> (Publications)

Congratulations: Prof. Amihai Mazar has just been awarded the prestigious "Israel Prize" in Archaeology (2009). The Israel Prize is an award handed out by the State of Israel. It is presented annually, on Israeli Independence Day, in a state ceremony in Jerusalem, in the presence of the President, the Prime Minister, the Knesset (Israel's legislature) chairperson, and the Supreme Court president.

Graciela Gestoso Singer

The Digital Karnak Project Website

The colossal site of Karnak is one of the largest temple complexes in the world, with an incredibly rich architectural, ritual, religious, economic, social and political history. Through at least three thousand years of development, from local shrine in a regional town to national center of power, the temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak has known dramatic modifications tied in with political shifts, religious reform and ritual changes. The Amun-Ra precinct, which includes an astonishing number of individual temples, shrines and processional ways, stands as a micro-cosmos of ancient Egypt. As a legacy of a culture where every aspect of life was permeated with religion, the study of this temple complex touches upon every factor of human existence in ancient Egypt.

The Digital Karnak Project aims to make the site of Karnak more accessible to students and instructors in the English-speaking world. The website features a geographically-referenced "time-map" highlighting the areas of the temple under construction during the reign of each Egyptian king, thematic videos of a 3D Virtual Reality model of the temple along with corresponding instructional texts, individual descriptions of each temple building recreated on the Virtual Reality model and a fully interactive Google Earth version of the model.



The Digital Karnak Project was designed and built at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) under the direction of Dr. Diane Favro, Director of the Experiential Technologies Center (ETC) and Dr. Willeke Wendrich, of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and

Cultures is director of the UCLA Digital Humanities Incubator Group (UDHIG) and Editor-in-chief of the online UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology (UEE).



The Digital Karnak Project invites you to experience Karnak; to learn about an ancient site that still resonates today because of its monumental pylons, towering columns, stunning reliefs and architectural marvels, and to discover its rich religious, political and architectural history.

For further information: <http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/>

Graciela Gestoso Singer

