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Chapter One

Ancient Legal Papyri Bring Lost World to Life
Everyone has heard of the ancient Jewish religious scrolls discovered at Qumran by the Dead Sea in the middle of the 20th century. But who is aware that nearly 100 legal papyri have been found in the same region, or that they allow unparalleled access to the ancient social world of Judea and Nabatea in the period 100 BCE to 200 CE?

Then, as now, you went to a lawyer (‘scribe’ to use their term) when you had a big problem or a big opportunity in your life. Legal papyri concern issues that mattered. And then, as now, it was in the parties’ interest to make sure that they stated they facts accurately; with these documents there are no issues of literary genre or religious belief to obscure our interpretation of the data. Yet the scholarship these papyri has attracted so far focuses almost entirely on their legal dimensions.

In the early 1950s members of the Ta’amireh bedouin tribe began turning up at the Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem to sell legal papyri, some of them in Nabatean Aramaic. This prompted expeditions to find the source or sources of these documents.
There was early success by a team at Wadi Murabba‘at in 1952. But in March 1961 a member of a team led by Yigael Yadin exploring a cave high in a cliff face in Wadi Hever hit the jackpot. A stone rocking under his foot disclosed the cunningly concealed hiding place in which a Jewish woman Babatha, daughter of Shim‘on, had hidden some of her personal possessions and a leather sachel containing her archive of 35 legal papyri. She had been hiding in the cave with other Jewish fugitives from the Romans at the end of the Bar Kokha revolt from 132-135 CE.

The Romans, who had built a camp on the plateau directly above the cave, must have captured Babatha and her companions and either killed or enslaved them. Other objects were found in the cave, including a cache of beautiful bronze vessels and letters from Bar Kokhba himself, for which reason it is called ‘the Cave of the Letters.

These 35 papyri tell us so much about Babatha and her family by birth and marriage that we now know more about her than any other Jewish woman from antiquity. The Greek papyri from the archive were published in 1989 and those written in Jewish or Nabatean Aramaic in 2002.

The oldest four of the papyri (P. Yadin 1 from 94 CE and P. Yadin 2, 3, and 4 from 99 CE) are written in Nabatean Aramaic, the first by one scribe and the other three by his brother. It has long been recognised that P. Yadin 2 and 3 relate to the sale of a date-palm orchard in the Nabatean town of Maoza, on the southern shore of the Dead Sea in 99 CE by its owner, the Nabatean woman 'Abi-'adan. She first sold the orchard to one Archelaus, a Nabatean strategos, virtually a provincial governor, and then, just one month later she sold an enlarged version to Babatha’s father, Shim‘on. Bringing P.
Yadin 1 and 4 into the picture allows the intriguing story of the purchase to be told.

Shim'on must have given the orchard to Babatha later (perhaps on the occasion of her marriage) because she registered it among her property in the Roman census in 127 CE of what had then become (since 106 CE) the province of Arabia. Her registration document (P. Yadin 16) is very well preserved.

These documents proffer pervasive evidence for the importance of date cultivation in the local economy. Extensive irrigation systems, well within the capacities of Nabatean hydraulic engineering, were required to be installed and maintained to keep the thirsty date-palms watered. Dates kept well, had a high food value (then as now being used by nomads moving across the desert) and attracted a good price. There was also date cultivation at En-Gedi, on the western side of the Dead Sea, again, in irrigated fields. Many other papyri from the region are agricultural in nature, especially in recording sales or leases of farm-land.

Yet date cultivation was clearly a precarious business. Large fortunes could be won by engaging in it, but so too could they be lost. Nabatean men seem regularly to have borrowed from their wives to finance their involvement in this form of agriculture. Such loans were secured against the husbands’ property and the deeds gave wives ample power to foreclose if necessary. After her second husband died owing her a large sum of money, Babatha seized dates from orchards of his and was then sued by the children of his first marriage to stop her. Her wedding contract with her second husband, which he himself drafted, is P. Yadin 10.

Another aspect of the social and economic unit that was Maoza in 99 CE illuminated by these four papyri is the good relationship existing between Shim'on and his Nabatean neighbours. He is indeed the only Jew mentioned among a large crowd of Nabateans...
who were parties to the deeds, relatives of those parties, witnesses and scribes. Yet we see him not only entering into a transaction with a Nabatean woman, without requiring any Jewish witnesses, but also securing help in his acquisition from a Nabatean strategos no less. Archaeological evidence suggests that people living in this region at the end of first century CE wore the same clothes and were buried in the same way. There was a shared culture even if Jewish and Nabatean Aramaic were somewhat different, with the latter having a heavy infusion of Arabic words.

When relations between various ethnic and religious groups in this region are so fraught today, it is salutary to consider another historical setting, such as Maoza in 99 CE, when relationships across the two main ethnic groups were demonstrably positive.

*Philip Esler is the Portland Chair of New Testament Studies, University of Gloucestershire. This piece appeared originally at the OUPBlog of the Oxford University Press and is reproduced with permission.*
Chapter Two

Were the Ancient Egyptians Polite? Exploring Politeness in Late Egyptian
Were the ancient Egyptians polite? Before we understand politeness in an ancient culture, we must first understand ‘politeness’ in the modern world. This is by no means easy; politeness is fluid, changing from person to person, culture to culture. Fundamentally politeness is a key means to maintain interpersonal relationships, through behaviour and speech.

Behaviour is deeply embedded within individual cultural psyches, reinforced by the social groups. As children we are taught to say please and thank you, or to refer to our
elders with special terminology to infer respect. In British society, certain behaviour is encouraged and considered polite - eating with a knife and fork, keeping your elbows off the table - standard parental ways to help children understand what is expected of them socially.

Polite behaviour has always been an area of fascination. The word ‘politeness’ originates in the Latin word *politus* meaning ‘to be polished’, but its connotations originated in the French court of the 17th Century AD, where *poli* described a high status, aesthetically pleasing person with polished manners. The term ‘politeness’ in English reflects behaviour expected within the Judeo-Christian world, rather than universally. In Chinese, the closest comparative word would be *limao*, a code of conduct that stipulates how one should conduct themselves in public.
The study of politeness phenomena still remains a difficult pursuit in any language outside of one’s own. These difficulties become more acute for the remote past. How then to assess polite behaviour in ancient Egypt? If the idea is that ‘politeness’ revolves around maintaining relationships with others, we can analyse ancient Egyptian texts that showcase an interpersonal dynamic. Of course, we are limited to, and by, ancient texts. Still, written culture in ancient Egypt developed around 3000 BCE and presents a wealth of data.

Ancient Egyptian language has no word for ‘politeness’; instead there are words such as aHa-Hmsj, meaning ‘to behave properly’. This is not uncommon; in Igbo, spoken in Nigeria, politeness is conveyed by expressions meaning good behaviour. It is not a surprise that the Ancient Egyptian word oHo-Hmsj appears a limited number of times, and only in didactic texts, designed to teach maxims and express an idealised, polished, version of society.

For example, in the Middle Kingdom text (c. 2055 BCE –1650 BCE), the Instructions of Ptahhotep, remaining silent and retaining self-control is a positive virtue when interacting face-to-face with people of varying social status.

*If you come up against an aggressive adversary (in court), One who has influence and is more excellent than you, Lower your arms and bend your back, For if you stand up to him, he will not give in to you. You should disparage his belligerent speech*
By not opposing him in his vehemence. 
The result will be that he will be called 
boorish, 
And your control of temper will have equalled 
his babble.

If you come up against an aggressive 
adversary, 
Your equal, one who is of your own social 
standing, 
You will prove yourself more upright than he 
by remaining silent, 
While he speaks vengefully. 
The deliberation by the judges will be somber, 
But your name will be vindicated in the 
decision of the magistrates.

If you come up against an aggressive 
adversary, 
A man of low standing, one who is not your 
equal, 
Do not assail him in accordance with his lowly estate. 
Leave him be, and he will confound himself. 
Do not answer him in order to vent your frustration.

But didactic texts present an idealised portrayal of expected behaviour, not found in more practical communications. Good examples of this can be found in the Late Ramesside Letters, one of the largest collections of personal communications, sent between various inhabitants of the Theban west bank (modern day Luxor). The Late Ramesside Letters were written at the end of the 20th Dynasty (end of the New Kingdom), during the reign of Ramesses XI (c.1099–1069 BCE) when Thebes was facing a turbulent period of social and economic anxiety. After Ramesses XI’s death Egypt separated into two areas, Tanis in the North and Thebes in the South.
The community featured in the letters included the key administrative and scribal staff from the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, which by the 20th Dynasty had become the administrative centre for Thebes and a thriving settlement, with between 1000 and 2000 inhabitants. The majority of letters were written by or sent to the necropolis scribe Dhutmose, a key administrator from a prominent scribal family. His son Butehamun, with whom he communicated frequently, was also a necropolis scribe and his father’s deputy whilst Dhutmose accompanied his superior, General Piankh, on a military campaign south into Nubia (modern North Sudan).

The format of the Late Ramesside Letters is standardised, consisting of a formal introduction, the main body of text, optional conclusion formulae, and then the address.
The purpose of a letter is to communicate with a specific audience from a distance and they are thus more likely to reflect social norms and conventions in communication.

The Late Ramesside Letters reflect social norms based predominantly on power. A fixed linguistic etiquette is apparent when communicating with individuals who are socially superior or subordinate to the sender of the letter. When writing to one’s subordinate a more dominant format is adopted, requiring a short or no formal introduction, and then a higher frequency of imperative requests. Yet, when a subordinate individual writes to his superior, a longer formal introduction is necessary alongside more fawning language. Communication between socially equal individuals occurred and used a mixture of superior and subordinate grammatical and structural forms.

The Late Ramesside Letters also reveal that remaining silent was not a key feature in daily communications, and perhaps not reflective of normative behaviour, where the ability to speak without constraint is expressed by those who are socially superior. This is epitomised by Dhutmose, who states to his son Butehamun: ‘I will not be silent to you concerning it’ (concerning a shipment of spears).

Keeping silent in an aggressive situation only appears once in the letters, when Hennutawj discovers she has been cheated out of grain. Whether she kept silent to demonstrate normative behaviour, or because she felt threatened, is unclear. Hennutawj is one of the few women in the corpus in a position of authority, assisting her husband collect tax in the form of grain.

It is unlikely that Hennutawj was acting as a scribe (there is only one reference to a female scribe in an Old Kingdom text), yet several women mentioned in the Late Ramesside Letters and other narrative texts appear to be literate to some degree. Literacy in ancient Egypt was extremely low, only about 1% the population, yet the settlements on the Theban west bank had a literacy rate of about 40%, so it is not unlikely that women there could read and write.

The Late Ramesside Letters writers also comment on the behaviour of others. For example, Dhutmose quotes the words spoken to him by the General Piankh:

‘[... (If you had not) come] then would I argue with you; but good [...that you found] goodness in your heart and you came’.
Here Piankh is praising Dhutmose’s behaviour in travelling south to join the general on campaign. Dhutmose fulfilled the request of his superior, something considered by Piankh to be appropriate to their ongoing social interaction, demonstrating that Dhutmose understood his superior’s expectations of him.

A second example from this letter is directed towards Dhutmose’s son Butehamun:

‘It is not good what you did’.

This comment appears in reference to Butehamun’s failure to adhere to an earlier request issued by his father, which was considered inappropriate to the specific situation. Although they were family, Dhutmose still expected to be treated as the superior individual; Butehamun’s failure to complete his superior’s request act was not normative behaviour.

The father/son relationship represents a superior and subordinate relationship, but to maintain the connection of intimacy between father and son, discussion about family and health are included in the letters between them. This can be seen in the inclusion in letters between Dhutmose and his family of such phrases as ‘How are you? How are my people? Now send to me word of your condition. May your health be good.’

Dhutmose was elderly and frail by the time he accompanied the General Piankh to Nubia and would die during the campaign, along with his superior. His letters are full of information about his health, his aches and pains, which could only be cured by beer and news from home. Almost every letter he writes to his family contains requests to write to him about their health and life at home; the letters act as a physical manifestation of the close social relations. Dhutmose criticises his son when he feels he has not received enough letters, as Butehamun highlights:

‘Now, as for your saying, “Do not be neglectful in sending word to me about your condition”. What can happen to us while you remain alive? It is you who shall send to us word about your condition’.
So were the ancient Egyptians polite? We must hesitantly answer no; our modern Judeo-Christian understanding of ‘politeness’ makes it difficult to apply to the ancient Egyptian civilisation, yet in English we lack a better word to describe their communicative phenomena. Thus we must use ‘politeness’ but recognise its limitations; ‘politeness’ in Ancient Egyptian refers to appropriate, normative, expected behaviour. In order to be ‘polite’ in ancient Egypt one must adhere to expected behaviour, dependent predominantly on the power relationship between the individuals communicating.

The Late Ramesside Letters provide a delicious example of how ancient Egyptians used language to maintain their relationships. Unlike Sir Alan Gardiner, the father of the Middle Egyptian Grammar, who dismissed the letters as ‘mundane’ and ‘trivial’, they are a wealthy resource and well deserving of study.

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For Further Reading

Chapter Three

Israel Numismatic Report: Important Finds, Altruistic Reporting, and the Law
Readers of Israeli newspapers and archaeology blogs for the last few years have seen a notable uptick in the number of coin finds reported by “good Samaritans” (both Israelis and tourists) and turned into the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), as well as some newsworthy numismatic finds at licensed excavations.

This led *The Ancient Near East Today* to ask me to look into the finds and their importance, as well as other numismatic discoveries in or related to Israel. I recently returned from Israel, where I talked with numismatic scholars, officials of the Israel Antiquities Authority, licensed antiquity dealers, and collectors. Here is my report.

**Important Numismatic Discoveries**

I surveyed several colleagues (Donald T. Ariel, head of the IAA coin department; Danny Syon, IAA chief scientific officer; Haim Gitler, chief curator of Archaeology and curator...
of Numismatics, Israel Museum, and Boaz Zissu, department head and professor of archaeology in the Land of Israel and Archaeology Studies, Bar Ilan University) for their opinions about the most important numismatic discoveries related to ancient Israel in the past 15 years—the conclusions are mine.

- All agree that the hoard of 264 gold *solidi* of Heraclius (610-641 CE) discovered in 2008 at excavations in the Giv'ati parking lot, outside the Dung Gate in Jerusalem belongs high on the list. All 264 coins were found in context, and were struck from the same pair of dies. This suggests the coins were struck nearby in Jerusalem, the only time gold coins were likely minted in Jerusalem. Ben-Ami and his colleagues also believe this find provided strong evidence for the Persian destruction of Byzantine Jerusalem in 614 CE.

- Running neck-and-neck with the Giv'ati parking lot hoard was the February 2015 discovery of more than 2,800 medieval gold *dinars*, in the ancient Caesarea harbor. Some 60 coins were found and turned in by a local diving club. IAA divers promptly

Top Left: Deniers found underwater at Caesarea. (IAA photo by lara Amit.)
Bottom Left: Deniers and quarter deniers found underwater at Caesarea. (IAA photo by Clara Amit.)
Top: One of the Caesarea deniers. (IAA photo by Clara Amit.)
returned to the site and found the 2,800, likely cargo in a ship. Yaakov Sharvit of the IAA reported that most of the coins were struck under the Fatimid Caliphate, which dominated the Mediterranean coast of the Middle East and Africa from the 10th-12th centuries CE. The oldest coin in the group was a quarter *dinar* minted at Palermo, Sicily in the 9th century CE. The latest dated to 1036 CE.

- In a 2013 auction at Numismatica Ars Classica (32, May 16, 2013) a Vespasian gold *aureus* with the unique reverse legend IVDAEA RECEPTA was purchased by David and Jemima Jeselsohn (it is now on display at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem). Gambash et. al. concluded that the coin is authentic. Based on legend, design, and portrait style, numismatists believe it was issued prior to the standard IVDAEA CAPTA victory series commemorating the Roman victory in the First Revolt (66-70 CE). The RECEPTA legend is “in direct contradiction to a triumphal ceremony and the dedication of arches to Titus for his victory over the Jews…” they write (p. 98), and conclude that this coin “expresses what must have been an earlier and short-lived policy, completely opposed to the one eventually adopted, and for that reason immediately discarded…” (p. 100). It may have been Titus “who impulsively rushed to declare, that Judea was back under the yoke (*Iudaea recepta*), only to be called to order by his father. In this case our coin is likely to have been minted in Judea, either in Jerusalem or somewhat later in Caesarea Maritima” (pp. 100-101). Donald T. Ariel of the IAA believes that the importance of this coin “has not even begun to be assimilated by historians.”

- In 2011 Ariel reported that 49 limestone flan mold fragments had been found in the southern Levant, mostly unpublished, and another 26 similar fragments were found in Paphos, Cyprus. Flan molds were used to cast blank strips of metal, later struck and chopped apart to create the low-value bronze coins called *prutot* struck in the ancient
Hasmonean coin that had been triple struck. Understanding the coin provided closure to a decades-old discussion about the identity of the ruler Yntn, now known to be Alexander Jannaeus (104-76 BCE) rather than one of his successors, whose name appears on tens of thousands of overstruck Hasmonean coins.

- In 2009 Boaz Zissu and colleagues discovered several coin hoards at hidden at the Te'omim Cave in the Judean Hills. One of the hoards of Bar Kokhba silver coins included two sela’im (tetradrachms) struck from previously unknown dies. Another small hoard included Roman, Roman Provincial, Bar Kokhba, and First Revolt silver coins—the first time that First Revolt and Bar Kokhba (132-135 CE) coins have ever been found together in a licensed excavation. This allows a better understanding of the Bar Kokhba coins struck some 63 years after the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed. The hoard was also a “treasure” of sorts, besides the then 65-year-old shekel, it also contained a bronze sewing needle, and a worthless Hasmonean prutah struck some 200 earlier, suggesting that hoard owner collected historic coins!
Top Left: Boaz Zissu in the Teomim cave. (Photo by Roi Porat.)

Top Right: Part of a hoard in situ at the Teomim cave. (Photo by Boaz Zissu.)

Above: First hoard with First Revolt and Bar Kokhba coins together. (Photo by Boaz Zissu.) First hoard with First Revolt and Bar Kokhba coins together. Photo by Boaz Zissu.
In 2002 an assemblage of more than 1,700 bronze prutot of Alexander Jannaeus was found during a survey near Khirbet Mazin on the shore of the Dead Sea, near the Ein Fashka Spring. More than 300,000 coins of identical description entered the market beginning a few years earlier and were likely also found near Khirbet Mazin. This area was apparently once a royal dock and Hanan Eshel and Boaz Zissu have theorized these are coins cited in rabbinical literature, brought for a ceremony to “nullify” them according Jewish law, by dropping them into the Dead Sea. Another theory simply posits they were part of a large group of coins being shipped across the Dead Sea, for reasons not yet understood, around the first quarter of the first century BCE.

Good Samaritans
Recently a number of altruistic Israelis have turned in or reported coin finds to the IAA. The most important was the diving club that retrieved and turned in some 60 gold coins, leading to the discovery of the underwater hoard off the coast of Caesarea, discussed above.

• In June 2015, an elementary school boy found a medieval gold dinar at an as yet undisclosed location;
• In March 2016 a Trajan aureus was found at a site in Galilee (no further information has been released on the identity of the site due to fear of future illicit digging there);
• In July 2016 a coin of Alexander Jannaeus was found during renovations at the Franciscan compound near the New Gate of Old City, Jerusalem.
These are the most interesting of a dozen or so good Samaritan incidents, quite significant, Ariel points out, because such reporting is a relatively recent phenomenon. Each time a person finds an ancient coin and turns it in to the IAA it enables further research and may provide other historic clues.

The IAA has established a program in which every person who finds and turns in a randomly discovered ancient coin or other ancient object receives a special certificate of recognition from the IAA, and, as always, their names are recorded in permanent IAA records associated with the coin or object.

**IAA Rules on Buying and Exporting Ancient Coins and Objects**

The antiquities trade is a controversial issue. But the 1978 Israeli antiquities law provides for the legal trade in ancient artifacts, including coins, which is overseen by the Israel Antiquities Authority. Senior members of the IAA’s coin and robbery prevention units were anxious for me to present the guidelines on the legal purchase of coins or ancient objects.

1. It is legal to purchase ancient coins and objects only from dealers with current IAA licenses.
2. Once a buyer purchases an item and receives a receipt (which must include the dealer’s specific inventory number), the object and receipt must be presented to the IAA for export approval.
3. It is highly recommended by the IAA that the dealer should SHIP the object to the buyer after the export license is received. All licensed dealers maintain a numbered photographic database of their inventories, and these records are transmitted via computer to the IAA offices.
4. Purchasers who wish to carry their objects out of Israel must make appointments with the IAA numismatic department, which will view the coins and then forward the request for export to the Antiquities Robbery Prevention Unit for final approval. This process can often take several weeks, as well as a time-consuming appointment for the initial examination. For this reason shipping by the dealer is recommended.

*David Hendin is first vice president and adjunct curator at the American Numismatic Society and author of Guide to Biblical Coins, 5th Edition and 16 other books.*
Chapter Four

The Gamla Excavations Final Report: The Rest of the Story
The Gamla Excavations Final Report: The Rest of the Story

By: Danny Syon

The importance of Gamla lies in that it is one of very few sites described in detail by the contemporaneous historian Flavius Josephus in connection with the First Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE), and the fact that it was never resettled after 67 CE. Extensive excavations have yielded vast amounts of information related to the war against the Romans that enable the resurrection of life in a Jewish town of the period. The appearance of the third volume of the final report on Shmarya Gutmann’s excavations at Gamla is an opportune moment to reflect on the unusual conception and birth of this project.

Shmarya Gutmann, participated in Yigael Yadin’s pioneering excavations at Masada, uncovering there the dramatic remains of Jewish zealots. Gutmann was drawn to
Gamla because he considered it the ‘missing link’ in the archaeology of the First Jewish Revolt. Born in Scotland, Gutmann came to Ottoman Palestine in 1912 with his parents at the age of three. As an adult he was deeply involved in high level intelligence and diplomatic work in the years before and after the creation of Israel. Though he had climbed Masada in 1932, field archaeology was a pursuit that he came to later in life.

Gamla is located on a camel hump shaped hill – hence its name, from the Semitic word for camel – in the lower Golan Heights. It was inhabited during the Early Bronze Age. Protected on three sides by steep ravines, the site was defended on the east by an immense wall. The site was not settled again until the Hellenistic period. The Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus annexed Gamla to his state in 81 BCE, and in 66 CE Flavius Josephus — commander of Jewish forces in the Galilee — fortified the site against the Romans.
Josephus, probably an eyewitness, described the siege of Gamla by three Roman legions in painful detail; after an unsuccessful attack, a second succeeded, in which the Jewish defenders were eventually slaughtered, along with thousands of women and children, many of whom perished in an attempt to flee down the steep northern slope. Based on Josephus’ ambiguous words, this act that has been interpreted by many as a collective suicide. He himself survived the rebellion by surrendering to Rome at Yodfat in 67 CE, becoming a slave, then a citizen and historian.

Gutmann was a man of vision, who could reconstruct in his mind’s eye the events of the siege, and his sights were long set on Gamla. With his charisma succeeded in motivating armies of volunteers to dig the site for 14 seasons (1976–1989), each lasting about five months. This charisma is responsible for the fact that, just out of engineering school, I became an archaeologist.

But Gutmann was not a man of paperwork. The final publication was in fact made possible by the meticulous record keeping of Zvi Yavor, who from day one took on this task and continued till the last season, and that of David Goren, who supervised an area. We formed Gutmann’s core team, and we received important help from Department of Antiquities (now the Israel Antiquities Authority) surveyor Michael Feist, who insisted on coming to Gamla even when we were not ready for him. This resulted in a huge number of plans that accumulated that were very important—if somewhat disorganized—for the architectural report.

Gutmann’s drive was first of all to find remains associated with the war. As a result, he insisted on sifting every single bucket of dirt, a decision that paid off in the quantity and diversity of the finds presented in the final publication. In fact, some chapters, such as the pottery, military equipment and weaponry, the limestone vessels, the coins and the jewelry are expected to be important references for years to come.

But Gutmann had to be practically bullied into publishing preliminary reports, which appeared in three modest books in Hebrew and short yearly reports in *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, published by the Department of Antiquities. I therefore decided to take on preparing and publishing the final report, even though at the time I had no degree in archaeology, no professional home and no idea how I was going to pull
Top Left: Sifting
Center Left: Railroad constructed to move excavated dirt
Bottom Left: Ballista balls

Top Right: Roman military equipment
Bottom Right: Arrowhead in situ
this off. I knew that in order to find good contributors I would need scholars of high reputation to write key reports.

I found these two ‘anchor’ scholars at Caesarea, where I participated during the 1980s in the underwater excavations led by Avner Raban from the University of Haifa, in addition to my time at Gamla. These were Andrea Berlin, who agreed to study the pottery during a casual chat as I drove her to the airport, and Jodi Magness, who agreed to take on the military equipment. My friendship with these admirable scholars is still strong as is my appreciation of their important contributions.

Huge quantities of pottery were housed partly in the basement of the Golan archaeological museum in Qaṣrīn and partly in an apartment provided for free by the Qaṣrīn local council, headed by Sami Bar-Lev, who had been involved in archaeology himself and had a soft spot for Gutmann. Berlin spent several summers living in this apartment with her baby son and worked on the material. Indeed, the first volume to
appear in 2006 was Gamla I: The Pottery of the Second Temple Period.

During the last excavation years, Goren invited Shimon Gibson to study the soft limestone vessels and I asked several scholars to study other finds. The reports on the architecture and stratigraphy naturally went to Yavor and Goren. Yavor got up the eastern and western areas, inhabited continuously from the first century BCE to the fall of Gamla in 67 CE, while Goren got the enigmatic Hasmonean area (area B), which was totally abandoned for an unknown reason at the very end of the first century BCE, while life went on either side of it.

Meanwhile I obtained a position with the Israel Antiquities Authority and had a professional base and also obtained my Ph.D. from Hebrew University. A three-year grant from the Shelby White-Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications enabled me to take time to coordinate and edit the various reports that started to come in and also helped support Yavor and Goren, who otherwise could not have finished their reports. An additional grant from the Yad Hanadiv foundation, which I received through the Israel Antiquities Authority, enabled me to solicit the talents of three young scholars to study and publish the scale weights, loom weights, spindle whorls, stucco fragments and worked bone implements.

A fourth report on the lamps of Gamla is still due, co-written by Shulamit Terem and David Adan-Bayewitz, as is a full study of the Early Bronze Age pottery by Yitzhak Paz. It is hoped that the fresco fragments will be published in the foreseeable future, while many metal artifacts still await a redeemer. All the Gamla volumes will become fundamental references documenting Jewish life in the Roman period, and the Roman military that put an end to the site.

The fact that it took 30 years from conception to publication is due to innumerable factors that I would simply call ‘facts of life’. Delays, revisions, lost manuscripts and sabbaticals of 31 authors all contributed, as did the meticulous style editing of the Israel Antiquities Authority publication department. But the story of the Gamla excavation is one of perseverance, something that Gutmann himself, and the defenders of Gamla, both embodied.
Danny Syon is Head of the Scientific Assessment branch of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

For Further Reading

The contents of the Gamla Final Publications can be found in the following links:
Gamla I (downloadable in low resolution)
Gamla II (table of contents and foreword)
Gamla III, Part 1 (table of contents and foreword)
Gamla III, Part 2 (table of contents and foreword)
Select chapters are available for download on my Academia.edu page
The volumes can be obtained directly from the Israel Antiquities Authority
Alex Joffe is the editor of the Ancient Near East Today. The publication features contributions from diverse academics, a forum featuring debates of current developments from the field, and links to news and resources. The ANE Today covers the entire Near East, and each issue presents discussions ranging from the state of biblical archaeology to archaeology after the Arab Spring.

Cynthia Rufo is ASOR’s Archivist and Website Manager.
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