



Results of the Eighth Season of Excavations at Tel Abel Beth Maacah: New Finds and Insights

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The eighth season focused on the Iron Age I-II in three areas: Area B in the upper mound and Areas A and K in the lower mound, with additional activity in Area O. The primary goal in Area B was to expose more of the Iron IIA citadel where the faience figurine head of a bearded man was found and where a massive wall in the east might be part of a fortification. In Area A, we have at least three phases of Iron IIA. An extensive Iron IB layer below this was violently destroyed with no occupational gap between them. In Area K to the south, we uncovered remains similar to those in Area A to its north. This includes part of a well-constructed building containing five smashed storage jars. One contained a grape pip and residue indicating that it may have been used to store wine. A jar next to it bore a faint ink inscription reading l'bnayoor "Belonging to Benayo," the northern Israelite form of the Judean personal name, "Benayahu". The material culture indicates a date in the 9th century BCE and no later than the very early 8th century BCE. This would be consistent with the dating of the script according to Christopher Rollston, who defined it as Old Hebrew. This lecture will present these and other finds from the 2020 season and discuss them within the chrono-cultural context of the Huleh Valley and neighboring regions of Phoenicia and Syria during the Iron Age I-II.