

# NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

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## 4 Mersa/Wadi Gawasis and Ancient Egyptian Maritime Trade in the Red Sea

~ Kathryn A. Bard and  
Rodolfo Fattovich

Mersa/Wadi Gawasis was the site of an ancient Egyptian harbor on the Red Sea, which was mainly used during the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2055-1650 B.C.E.) for seafaring voyages to Punt and Bia-Punt. Excavations at the site from 2003-2011 have uncovered ceremonial structures located along a cliff above the shoreline, and eight man-made caves/galleries, which were mainly used for storage. No permanent architecture has been found at the site, suggesting that it was only used as a temporary harbor before and after voyages. Most supplies for the expeditions, including pottery, seeds of emmer wheat and barley, timber and papyrus ropes for the ships, were carried from the Nile Valley across the eastern desert by means of donkey caravans. Foreign ceramics found at the site from the Gash lowlands, Eritrea, and Yemen suggest that Punt was located in the southern Red Sea region.

## 12 One Philistine's Trash is an Archaeologist's Treasure: Feasting at Iron Age I, Tell es-Safi/Gath

~ Louise A. Hitchcock, Liora Kolska  
Horwitz, Elisabetta Boaretto,  
and Aren M. Maeir

This paper presents evidence for feasting in the late Iron Age I Philistine culture from a circumscribed locale in Area A at the site of Tell es-Safi/Gath. The remains are characterized by architectural features, installations and rubbish dumps containing a rich array of animal bones, symbolic objects, and a series of unique installations all dating to the tenth and eleventh centuries B.C.E. These activities are informed by paral-

els from Mycenaean Late Bronze Age feasting events, though at Tell es-Safi/Gath they may have served a different purpose, specifically, the maintenance and promotion of Philistine cultural identity through the adoption of behaviors and symbols from the Aegean past by portions of the Philistine population.

## 26 A Feast in Papua New Guinea ~ Aren M. Maeir

This contribution offers comparative evidence to the previous contribution on Philistine feasting. During a visit to Papua New Guinea, I documented and participated in a traditional feast in a remote village in the Finisterre Mountain Range. Although the cultural manifestations seen were very different from those of ancient Near Eastern cultures, various aspects which I witnessed provide interesting analogies for understanding ancient feasting in general, and archaeological evidence of feasting from the ancient Near East in particular.

## 36 Illuminating the Past: Exploring the Function of Ancient Lamps ~ Ameera Elrasheedy and Daniel Schindler

This article enhances our understanding of how the oil lamps found throughout the ancient Near East were used by the ancients. By testing two kinds of replica oil lamps (open and closed), the authors demonstrate that these lamps gave off relatively little light. Ancient residences were dynamic in terms of how space functioned in order to capitalize on available natural light sources. The authors make the point that scholars need to continually recognize and negotiate the distance and difference between themselves and their ancient subjects. That is, we cannot presuppose that oil lamps were used in the same way as artificial lighting is used today.

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## The Gebel Barkal Stelae and the Discovery of Ancient Nubia: Auguste Mariette's Inspiration for Aïda

~ Thomas Schneider

Giuseppe Verdi's opera Aïda, first performed in 1871, goes back to a scenario suggested in 1865 by French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette. It can be shown that Mariette took his inspiration from the five historical stelae discovered at Gebel Barkal on the fourth cataract of the Nile, the ancient Nubian capital city of Napata, in 1862, as well as some additional sources. Aïda is not an opera based on an actual historical narrative; however, it incorporates motifs attested in historical sources between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries B.C.E. that were combined by Mariette in a historical collage. E.g., the priests' plot to kill an innocent man in the temple of Amun in Aspelta's Banishment Stela is paralleled by the trial and killing of the innocent Radames by priests in Aïda. This article situates the opera within the discovery of ancient Nubia in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

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## Books to Dig into

The God Resheph in the Ancient Near East

~ Author: Maciej M. Münnich

~ Reviewer: Spencer L. Allen

Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence

~ Author: Craig A. Evans

~ Reviewer: John M. Vonder Bruegge

Materiality and Consumption in the Bronze Age Mediterranean

~ Author: Louise Steel

~ Reviewer: Marian H. Feldman

Exploring the Narrative: Jerusalem and Jordan in the Bronze and Iron Ages

~ Editors: Eveline van der Steen, Jeannette Boertien, and Noor Mulder-Hymans

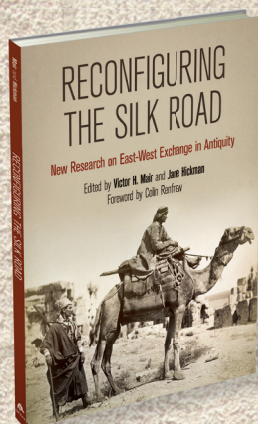
~ Reviewer: Jeremy M. Hutton

From Conquest to Coexistence: Ideology and Antiquarian Intent in the Historiography of Israel's Settlement in Canaan

~ Author: Koert van Bekkum

~ Reviewer: Matthew Suriano

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### RECONFIGURING THE SILK ROAD

*New Research on East-West Exchange in Antiquity*

Edited by Victor H. Mair and Jane Hickman.

Foreword by Colin Renfrew.

From the Bronze Age through the Middle Ages, a network of trade and migration routes brought people from across Eurasia into contact. Their commerce included political, social, and artistic ideas, as well as material goods such as metals and textiles.

*Reconfiguring the Silk Road* offers new research on the earliest cultural interactions along the trade and migration routes across Eurasia, mapping the spread and influence of Silk Road economies and social structures over time.

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