Tell es-Sultan 2015: A Pilot Project for Archaeology in Palestine  
~ Lorenzo Nigro

Sapienza University of Rome and the Palestinian MoTA-DACH have been committed since 1997 to the protection, scientific re-evaluation, and tourist rehabilitation of Tell es-Sultan, ancient Jericho. Excavations, surveys, and restorations over 14 excavation areas have allowed us to update our knowledge on the history of this long-lived site in the ancient Near East, and made it possible to match data collected by three previous expeditions in a comprehensive picture. From the Pre-Pottery Neolithic to the Bronze and Iron Ages, across ten millennia, Tell es-Sultan provides a lens through which to thoroughly investigate the Southern Levantine culture, its interconnections and achievements, and to test archaeological methods and the potential for a shared and respectful study of the past.

Beyond the River Jordan: A Late Iron Age Sanctuary at Tell Damiyah  
~ Lucas Petit and Zeidan Kafafi

Tell Damiyah, located in the Central Jordan Valley, is identified by most scholars with the historical city of Adama, an important town destroyed by Pharaoh Shoshenq I in the late tenth century B.C.E. It is mentioned in the Old Testament along with sites like Sodom and Gomorra, and was ruled by a king. However, the minute dimensions of Tell Damiyah – only a few hectares at the most – makes this identification and description, at least at first sight, not very likely. A joint team of the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities and the Jordanian Yarmouk University has recently discovered the remains of a late Iron Age sanctuary built on the summit of Tell Damiyah. The objects under study offer an alternative explanation for the important international role the site must have played during the Iron Age.

Understanding the Land of the Bible – Gustaf Dalman and the Emergence of the German Exploration of Palestine  
~ Marcel Serr

Gustaf Dalman (1855–1941) was the first director of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in Jerusalem (GPIA), Germany’s equivalent to the French École Biblique et Archéologique Française and the American School of Oriental Research (today, the Albright Institute). A theologian by trade, he followed very wide research interests that included the topography, the ethnology, the languages, the history and archaeology of the land of Israel. Dalman’s approach was based on his belief that one has to study the Holy Land in order to understand the Bible. In combining various research perspectives on the land of the Bible, he established the German “Palästinawissenschaft” – the scientific exploration of Palestine. His work culminated in his magnum opus “Work and Customs in Palestine.” Unfortunately, politics interfered with his research work.

Imagining Mari: Jean-Claude Margueron and the Archaeology of Tell Hariri
~ Elizabeth Knott

Mari has been known to the modern world for over eighty years, yet familiarity with the city itself – its layout and history – has been limited. Early excavations unearthed important structures and sensational finds that came to dominate discussions of the city and created particular kinds of lenses through which the city was seen. Several decades ago French excavations under the direction of Jean-Claude Margueron began investigating the anatomy and development of the city, but Mari’s finds continued to provide the main basis for modern knowledge of the site. Margueron’s research, newly published in English, creates the potential for a watershed moment in the history of Mari scholarship, allowing those outside the circle of specialists to better understand the famous buildings, monuments, and texts, and promoting the inclusion of Mari’s archaeological data and material into other syntheses, histories, and studies.

The Epigraphic Digital Lab: Teaching Epigraphy in the Twenty-First Century c.e.
~ Heather Dana Davis Parker and Christopher A. Rollston

The dictum “nothing ever stays the same” is certainly true of academics. Fields of knowledge are always in transition, and the field of Northwest Semitic epigraphy is no exception to this. Data continue to accumulate, methods of data analysis are constantly being refined, analyses of data are continually nuancing previous understandings and conclusions, and ways of presenting such conclusions often change. This paper focuses on the technological innovations that are impacting the study of inscriptions. A primary focus will be the use of digital technology in drawing ancient texts and palaeographic script charts and how to teach this technology in an epigraphic digital lab. Emphasis will be placed on the linear alphabetic Northwest Semitic corpus; however, the technologies, techniques, and methodologies discussed can be applied to other epigraphic fields.

View of the religious buildings and monuments east of the “Great Royal Palace” in Mari, Syria, in 2009. Photograph by Elizabeth Knott.

Books to Dig into

60 Book Review
Israel’s Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective: Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience
~ Editors: Thomas E. Levy, Thomas Schneider, and William H. C. Propp
~ Reviewer: Jeremy M. Hutton

62 Book Review
Cultural Expression in the Old Kingdom Elite Tomb
~ Author: Sasha Verma
~ Reviewer: Leslie Anne Warden