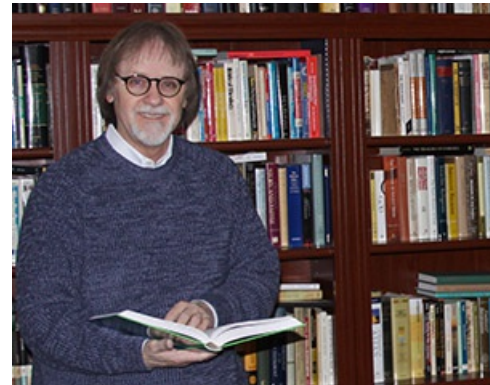


PROFESSOR'S NEW BOOK EXPLORES ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF SAMARIA

Most people in the Pittsburgh Seminary community know Dr. Ron Tappy, G. Albert Shoemaker Professor of Bible and Archaeology, as the one who directs The Zeitah Excavations. But many may not know that Ron is also internationally recognized as a world expert on the archaeology and history of Samaria—ancient stumping grounds of Ahab and Jezebel and capital of the northern Kingdom of Israel till the conquering Assyrians swooped in during the late eighth century BCE.

Ron's latest book, in fact—*The Archaeology of the Ostraca House at Israelite Samaria: Epigraphic Discoveries in Complicated Contexts* (ASOR Nov. 2016)—tells the story not only of a very important group of inscriptions discovered at Samaria (shipping dockets recording the delivery of wine, oil, and other goods to the capital city), but also the stories of both the archaeologists and the funders behind the find. What makes the picture even more interesting is Ron's setting the stories in the context of what was happening around the world during the time of this dig—the Harvard expedition to Samaria beginning in 1908, just six years prior to the start of World War I.



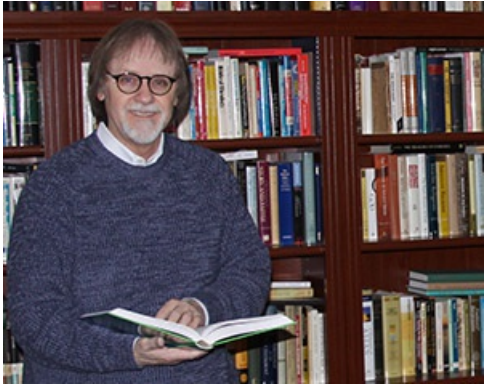
“The people involved in this endeavor range from excavation director George Andrew Reisner—actually, an expert in Egyptian archaeology who died in his sleep in his excavation camp behind the Great Pyramid on the Giza Plateau—to philanthropist Theresa Loeb Schiff, sister of James Loeb, who established the Loeb Classical Library,” notes Ron. “And as is often the case, the people who over time have not drawn the spotlight in this saga are actually the actors who kept the story going—like David Gordon Lyon, curator of Harvard's Semitic Museum. When he was on site at Samaria, Lyon kept an extensive personal diary that illuminates everything from the team's serious interpersonal conflicts to problems with photographic equipment to double-crossing by some of the hired help, just for starters. And without Lyon's consistent work back in Cambridge, Mass.,—writing reports on the excavation to the President of Harvard, interfacing with funders, acting as the excavation's liaison with the American Schools of Oriental Research, for example—the expedition might well have ended far short of discovering the Ostraca.”

Readers can discover this fascinating story in chapters 1 and 6, complete with photographs of the site and the people involved. Ron's book also includes section drawings from the excavation that he has enhanced and colorized, never-before-published original field drawings of the Samaria Ostraca showing the inscriptions, and extensive quotations from Reisner's and Lyon's private excavation diaries.

By invitation as a leading scholar on the southern Levant, Ron will speak on the ancient city of Samaria at an international conference titled “The Last Days of the Kingdom of Israel” in Munich, Germany, in March.

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