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The Levant: Palestine, Israel and Jordan

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22.1 Introduction

The Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) has over time acquired a number of flint collections from the Israel, Jordan, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Figure 22.1). Together they number some 4,986 artefacts, and notably includes material from important excavations at sites such as Mount Carmel and Shuqba cave: sites that helped establish the prehistoric culture history sequences in the Levant. The bulk of the collection was received from fieldwork conducted during the British Mandate in Palestine – either directly at the time or indirectly from the purchase of material from the Ipswich Museum in 1966 – and includes material from Turville-Petre and Dorothy Garrod. This period of fieldwork represented not only the opening up of early prehistory, but the most active period of British archaeological involvement in the region (Gibson 1999). The collection is thus a product of a distinctive moment in the history of the region.

22.2 Collectors

22.2.1 Francis Turville-Petre

Turville-Petre was admitted as a diploma student in Anthropology at the University of Oxford in 1921 (the same year as Dorothy Garrod), to study physical anthropology and cultural anthropology (ethnology with archaeology and technology) and went on to become one of the first trained archaeologists to work on prehistory in the region. His Galilee Survey from 1923 to 1925 (Turville-Petre et al. 1927) and the later excavations he conducted at Mugharet el-Kebara (following an invitation from Dorothy Garrod during her work in the Carmel (Turville-Petre 1932a, 1932b)), were both important early steps in recognizing the early prehistory of the Levant, and for a short while Turville-Petre was a leading light in the establishment of prehistoric research in the Levant. As noted elsewhere, he is now an often forgotten figure (or confused with Flinders Petrie) (Bar-Yosef and Callander 1997).

Turville-Petre’s work was conducted under the auspices of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (BSAJ), which he had joined in 1923. The BSAJ was established in 1919 by the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), the British Academy, the British Museum, and the new Mandate authority to conduct research and train archaeologists and administrators for the new Department of Archaeology, and is the

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1 Most of which still requires collections management attention and numbering.
formal donor of much of the Levantine material in the PRM. It nearly did not survive the Second World War, but was revived for a period by Kathleen Kenyon, although after the 1967 was effectively split with the establishment of the British Institute in Amman for Archaeology and History. The two bodies were remerged in the 1990s as the Council for British Research in the Levant, with the BSAJ premises re-launched as the Kenyon Institute. The early archives of the BSAJ are held by the PEF. Turville-Petrie’s discovery of the ‘Galilee Skull’ in 1925 helped gain international attention to the BSAJ’s work, and increased its own interest in prehistoric research (Gibson 1999). It may have been because of Turville-Petrie’s illness that the BSAJ initially invited Dorothy Garrod to continue prehistoric research, but he did return to the field with her (Figure 22.2), before giving up his archaeological career and dying in 1942.

Figure 22.1 Map of Israel, Palestine and Jordan showing sites referred to in Chapter 22.
Turville-Petre’s pioneering work at Kebara was important not only for the discovery of very fine Natufian remains, but also for the identification of an earlier industry, that in 1954 Garrod was to define as the Kebaran (Garrod 1954), now seen as the earliest of the Levantine Epipalaeolithic sequence. Kebara cave was subsequently excavated by Stekelis (the original finder of the cave) in 1951–1965 and more recently re-excavated by Bar-Yosef between 1982 and 1990 (Bar-Yosef et al. 1992).

22.2.2 Dorothy Garrod

The material that comes from Dorothy Garrod’s collections from this region, some 2,824 pieces, is particularly interesting in this historical context. Garrod had completed her anthropology diploma at Oxford in 1922, where she would have studied prehistory in the PRM, before working with the Abbé Breuil in France for two years. She subsequently accumulated field experience working both on important French Palaeolithic projects and her own excavations. Her work at the Carmel caves (1929–1934) was especially important to establishing the Palaeolithic sequence on the region, although her use of European terminology has partially been replaced in subsequent years. Her achievement was substantial, and the use of European terminology, sometimes criticised as colonial, understandable in the absence of any other work at the time. By the 1950s as more material was becoming available, she had begun to develop a more local terminology (including the Kebaran and the Antelian to replace the Aurignacian) although Levantine archaeologists continued to use the term Mesolithic for some time to describe what is now referred to as the Epipalaeolithic, the terminal Pleistocene industries of the Levant from c. 19,000 BCE.

Garrod was one of the first of a series of British women pioneers in archaeology in the Levant, to be followed by others, most famously Kathleen Kenyon. Garrod’s The Stone Age of Mount Carmel (1937) was a major landmark in its field, published rapidly on the completion of her fieldwork and she went on in 1939 to be appointed to the chair of archaeology at Cambridge, the first woman to hold such a position at the university. Her significance can be measured not only by her own string of publications,
but by the books that have come out since, including Ronen’s 1982 volume reporting the proceedings of an international symposium celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of her work at the Carmel caves (Ronen 1982). This not only included his appraisal of her work, but a report on more recent excavations by Jelinek at Tabun (Jelinek et al. 1973). The volume also includes a report on the British Palaeolithic by Derek Roe, who held part of the collections now in the PRM, when he used them as teaching collections in the Baden Powell Research Centre. Other publications honouring her memory include Davies and Charles’s book *Dorothy Garrod and the Progress of the Palaeolithic* (1999) and Smith’s short paper in *Antiquity* (2000).

In addition to the object collections, the PRM also holds a series of over 700 negatives from Garrod, which have been used to illustrate a number of the above publications and which have now been scanned thus easing their accessibility. This collection of photographs adds to the historical value of the collections in the PRM. Prints of the photos are also held in the Bibliothèque du Musée des Antiquités Nationales along with a collection of her papers, including her fieldnotes (Smith et al. 1997) which, together with the object collections, may allow for some reassessment of the important sites she investigated.

### 22.2.3 Charlotte Baynes

Some 279 stone tools from the region came to the PRM through a transfer from the Ipswich Museum in 1966, having been donated to Ipswich by Charlotte Baynes. Charlotte Baynes assisted Turville-Petre in his Galilee survey (described in the preface to the project report by John Garstang, then Director of the BSAJ, as seconding him) and contributed geological notes to that report. Bar-Yosef and Callander (1997) mention that Garstang praised her for washing and classifying the flints from Zuttiyeh cave. Baynes was also to work in Iraq with Turville-Petre and Garrod, and again at Kebara. Most of the material she donated probably came from the Galilee project, but some was found on Mt Scopus, presumably during episodes spent at the BSAJ in Jerusalem.

### 22.2.4 Flinders Petrie

Best known for his work in Egypt, the PRM includes 82 objects from Petrie’s survey work on his Palestine Expedition, collected from around Ghaza. Petrie had been working in Egypt since the 1880s, but became interested in Palestine in the 1920s following the end of the First World War. The donation of material to the PRM was from the British School of Archaeology in Egypt, a body established by Petrie in 1905. Petrie died in Jerusalem in 1942 and the School did not long survive him, being closed in 1954. The bulk of his material from Palestine is held in the Petrie Palestinian Collection at the Institute of Archaeology in London (Ucko 1998; Ucko et al. 2007).

### 22.2.5 Alison Betts

The last of the major collections in the PRM is that collected by Alison Betts during her Ph.D. fieldwork, given to the PRM in return for fieldwork funding (1984.21.1–32). Although working many years later than the other major donors of material, Betts was also a pioneer of research, commencing work in the previously largely unexplored, arid parts of Jordan. Her main research was in the eastern deserts of Jordan where in 1979 she began the *Black Desert Survey* project. The PRM holds material from this survey, including about 973 flint artefacts from the site of Ibn el-Ghazzi (Betts 1985), primarily dating to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB), c. 9200–7500 BCE (see

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2 http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/garrod/
below). Although it is not so well known as the site of Dhuweila, which was partially excavated by Betts (1998) and known for the presence of rock art (also represented albeit on a small-scale at Ibn el-Ghazzi (Betts 1987)), it is a good reflection of Betts’ contribution to our knowledge of Neolithic settlement and land-use in the arid margins of Jordan. Her pioneering work has inspired much subsequent research, including the major research conducted by Garrard around Azraq and Jilat, and more recently a series of new desert projects, including current work by Rollefson and by Muller-Neuhof. One of the key research issues is whether the PPNB exploitation of this area represents the first steps towards nomadic pastoralism, or simply the seasonal exploitation of resources by PPNB populations living in larger communities to the west on the edge of the Jordanian plateau.

22.3 Collections

22.3.1 Carmel Caves

The Carmel cave sites, including Et-Tabun Cave, El-Wad, Mugharet-es-Skhul and Mugharat el-Kebarah, lie on the western edge of Mount Carmel, today overlooking a narrow coastal plain in northern Israel. Sea level has varied in the past, but was at some times during the Palaeolithic c.130m lower than today, resulting in a wider coastal plain (Bar-Yosef et al. 1992). The sites of et-Tabun, el-Wad and es-Skhul are all in the Wadi el-Mughara, or Valley of the Caves. Kebara lies a dozen kilometres to the South. Garrod’s excavations were conducted as a rescue response as the caves were at that time under threat of rock quarrying for the new port at Haifa.

The material from the Carmel cave sites held by the PRM represents an almost complete illustration of the stratigraphic sequence. However, Garrod’s material was widely distributed to many collections, leaving every collection as representing only a small part of the whole. The lack of detailed contextual information also limits the potential for using this material to reappraise Garrod’s results. There is some potential for deploying new analytical techniques on the material; for example residue analysis has been successfully conducted on part of Garrod’s collections from Tabun Cave held at the Centre of Research into the Anthropological Foundations of Technology (CRAFT) at Indiana University, Bloomington (Loy and Hardy 1992). Loy and Hardy note that one of the most promising aspects of their work is that material curated in museum collections is suitable for this type of analysis. Blood residue analysis is not without its sceptics (cf. Odell 2004), although the biggest issues concerning this type of study are the small sample sizes examined and the use of material with limited contextual information (Haslam 2009).

There is, however, an enormous value for using this material for teaching purposes and for reference. Despite the limited primary research potential, the value of such stratified material for reference purposes is very high. Most British research in the Levant that recovers Palaeolithic material does so within survey contexts and consequently often suffers from a lack of good stratified sequences for comparative purposes. The collection in the PRM provides a useful stratified comparanda and presents an opportunity to give team members familiarity with such material both in advance of fieldwork and during analysis.

_Et-Tabun cave._ Garrod excavated at et-Tabun over five seasons, 1929 and 1931–1934 (Figures 22.3 and 22.4). The PRM’s material – handaxes, flake tools and some cores – held from Garrod’s work at et-Tabun are mostly from her Layer E, which she had described as Upper Acheulean (Micoquian), but which was later reclassified as Acheulo-Yabrudian. There is a substantial holding of this material, as it includes a second collection that was held by the Ipswich Museum. Although Garrod lists
Figure 22.3 Photograph of stratigraphy at Dorothy Garrod’s excavations at et-Tabun, present-day Israel, taken in 1930 (PRM Photograph Collections 1998.294.633). The photograph was donated to the PRM in 1986 by Suzanne Cassou de St Mathurin.
the numerous museums that received material (Garrod 1937) she does not give any indication of the proportions donated to each museum, and the list from the UK alone comprises 11 collections, and there are 29 other museums on the list. The combined collections do, however, appear to provide a good run through the stratigraphic sequence within Layer E. Et-Tabun has been subject to substantial excavation efforts since the primary work by Garrod, with work by Jelinek (1967–1971) and then by Ronen of Haifa University from 1973.

**El-Wad:** Garrod excavated at el-Wad over five seasons (1929–1933), following some preliminary trial work by Lambert in 1928. The el-Wad cave has since been excavated by F. Valla of the French Archaeological Mission in Jerusalem and by O. Bar Yosef of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1980–1981), and subsequently by M. Weinstein-Evron and Daniel Kaufman on behalf of Haifa University. The PRM collection is much smaller than the material held from et-Tabun. The material ranges from Natufian (layer B), to Atlitian or Kebaran (layer C), to Upper Palaeolithic Aurignacian (layers D and E), to Levallois-Mousterian (layers F and G).

**Mugharet-es-Skhul:** The Mugharet-es-Skhul or Cave of Kids, although under the charge of Garrod, was the responsibility of her colleague Theodore D. McCown (Figure 22.2) and it is his account of the site in the excavation report (Garrod and Bate 1937). McCown recognized four main layers: Level A was seen as a ‘mixed’ stratum, while levels B1, B2 and C were designated ‘Lower Levallois-Mousterian’. The site has attracted attention primarily for the ten individual Neanderthal remains that were uncovered and whether they represented intentional burial. The PRM holds some 337 flint implements from the site, all marked ‘MS’ and with a corresponding layer noted.
Mugharat el-Kebarah: Now more generally referred to simply as Kebara Cave, this was excavated by Turville-Petre in 1931 with Baynes, following trial trenching by Garrod and McCown in 1930 that had revealed a Natufian layer above a previously unknown industry. Garrod suggests that Turville-Petre described the material as Kebaran (Garrod 1954), but there is no mention of this name in his reports (Turville-Petre 1932a, 1932b). Stekelis hoped to obtain further in situ Natufian and Kebaran material in his 1951–1965 research, but did not recover any, leading him to focus on the Mousterian to Aurignacian sequence (Schick and Stekelis 1977). Bar-Yosef’s continuation of Stekelis’ work focused mainly on the Mousterian (Bar-Yosef et al. 1992). Therefore, although the type-site for the Kebaran, the only material recovered was from Turville-Petre’s excavations, and none of the more recent excavations have been able to add to his data.

The material kept at the PRM was studied by Garrod for her 1954 article, along with collections at the Palestine Archaeological Museum (which received one third of the material from the excavation), the British Museum and the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Material from the Manchester and Glasgow University Museums was only studied from notes and drawings. All in all, one third of the material was given to British museums, the remaining third went to the USA.

In his 1932 report, Turville-Petre divided the stratigraphy he excavated at Kebara into a Layer A (Bronze Age to modern), Layer B (Lower Natufian), Layer C (to become the Kebaran), Layer D (Aurignacian) and Layer E (Aurignacian). Garrod reported in 1954 that he also had a layer F for the Levallois–Mousterian.

The PRM’s collection includes: from Layer B Natufian lunates and microliths, including examples of stones with Helwan retouch, as well as bone points displaying various manufacturing techniques and 30 bone pendants (cf. Phillips et al. 1998); from level C a small sample of Mesolithic (Kebaran) tools, together with ‘gravette points’ and blades with high gloss; from D Aurignacian tools; and from Layer E blades, retouched blades, scrapers and cores.

22.3.2 Shukbah Cave

In the western Judean Hills lies the town of Shukbah, and about a kilometer south is the Wadi en-Natuf where Garrod excavated the Shukbah cave. It was to become the type site for the Natufian culture (Garrod 1929: 222), now dated between 13,000 and 10,000 cal. BCE. Garrod only spent one 2-month season at the site, before she became caught up in excavations at Mount Carmel, during which time she cut a trench in the main chamber (I) and a small sounding in Chamber III. The sequence she uncovered included a late ‘Levallois-Mousterian’ layer, on top of which was a Mesolithic layer (Garrod 1928), the first time it had been encountered in a stratified deposit. Within this were hundreds of crescent-shaped lunate tools, a type of microlithic flint implement that was previously unknown. Despite noting that ‘the greater part of the cave… still remains to be excavated’ (Garrod 1928: 185), she never returned to the site and it was not for another 70 years that archaeologists would again investigate the area (Boyd and Crossland 2000). The Pitt Rivers holds approximately 257 flint implements from the site and 6 bone points/drills from stratum B.

22.3.3 Prehistoric Galilee

The prehistoric Galilee was Turville-Petre’s first fieldwork project in Palestine (Turville-Petre et al. 1927). Of the material donated directly to the PRM in 1925 from the BSAJ, the sites of Mugharet El Emireh (38 objects), Mugharet El Zuttiyeh (24 objects) and Mugharet el-Amud (3 objects) are represented, albeit in small quantities. The vast majority of the Turville-Petre Galilee collection was, according to Garrod
(1955: 141), deposited in the Palestine Archaeological Museum. For the el-Emireh collection, for example, ‘of 706 traceable specimens which make up the collection from the undisturbed area of Emireh, 620 are in the Palestine Archaeological Museum, and the remainder are distributed between the British Museum, the PRM, the Manchester University Museum, and the Glasgow University Museum’ (Garrod 1955: 142). The PRM el Emireh collection was examined by Garrod in the 1950s as part of her reassessment of Turville-Petre’s work at the site (Garrod 1955).

Much of the rest of the material in the PRM appears to have come from the Ipswich Museum, donated by Charlotte Baynes. Apart from her contributions in the field and in the notes on the geology of the site there is no specific explanation as to why Baynes had acquired a private collection of material, but it appears as a rather random collection of small samples from a number of locations, and might almost be more of a souvenir collection than a serious set of reference material. The collection includes material from other locations around Jerusalem, which may be the result of casual collecting. Most of it appears to be surface material. It includes: large weathered creamy chert tools such as handaxes, probably a surface collection from Wadi Fareh, west of Deishun; a mixture of samples from Deishun East, Deishun West, Deishun North and Wadi Saleh cave (all Galilee); a small collection from ‘hill sites north of Jerusalem’ listed as Tel el Ful, again probably all surface collections; a very mixed collection made up of microliths to large adzes, which may include some excavated material, as some artefacts appear fresh with inked labels ‘F/NA’ and ‘F/NB’; numerous flints and quartz, possibly a surface collection from Wadi Fareh, many of which have ‘W. b. D.’ inked on them; and finally eight miscellaneous pieces from Mount Scopus, including Palaeolithic handaxes.

22.3.4 Black Desert Survey

Alison Betts’ fieldwork in Jordan was sponsored by a number of bodies, including the PRM, and in return she donated a small collection of Black Desert survey material, and a larger collection of material from Ibn el-Ghazzi, a site located during the survey and subject to three trenches and three test soundings (Betts 1985). The survey collections are of limited research interest, but the Ibn el-Ghazzi material has not been subject to more than the preliminary examination reported by Betts in 1985. The soundings and trial trenches excavated were insufficient to provide much detail on the site and the very sandy soil made it hard to separate PPNB and Pottery Neolithic layers, which may have led to the assemblage being of mixed origin (Betts pers. comm.). Ibn el-Ghazzi is important as an example of the PPNB and Pottery Neolithic colonization of the arid margins of Jordan, and in light of the current surge of interest in this process it may appeal to someone to study the material. The material includes assorted lithics, including numerous point and point fragments, bags of débitage, retouched tools and green (copper) stone.

22.3.5 Wadi Gaza and Tell Jemmeh

A small collection of material from Wadi Gaza came to the PRM via the Ipswich Museum. This material was collected by William Matthew Flinders Petrie in the Wadi Gaza [Ghazzeh] area of Southern Palestine while engaged in fieldwork for the British School of Archaeology in Egypt at the site of Tell Fara in 1929. Wadi Gaza is the Arabic name for this area; it is known in Hebrew as the Nahal Besor. Although there are several boxes of this material, containing some 55 stone implements between them, it has limited value, as most of it is heavily rolled bifacial material and has very limited information on provenance. It appears most likely that it represents surface collections made during the course of Petrie’s projects in the Gaza region.
There is also a small, eclectic collection of 25 pieces from Petrie’s 1926–1927 season at Tell Jemmeh (Petrie 1928). Petrie erroneously identified the area with the biblical site of Gerar and dated much of the material according to the Egyptian chronology that he was familiar with, although many of the objects were of local origin. The collection consists mainly of flint sickle blades. Petrie often made up ‘sets’ of flint sickle blades for distribution to museums from individual pieces found and it is therefore not certain if groups of blades were found in situ together. Five pottery vessels, a quernstone, rubbing-stone, pottery loomweight, bronze hook, ostrich shell fragments and 2 sea shells makes up the remainder of this collection.

22.3.6 Uncertain Provenance

There are a number of smaller groups of material that have very little obvious value and have been donated at various stages to the PRM with limited information. One small collection (1952.6.1–5) represents a personal collection made during four months with the Arab Legion in the 1950s. The collector, Longstaff, noted that the material came from ‘large areas of flattish desert covered by lumps of toffee-coloured flint (rather poor)…[and] from areas between Ma’an and Azrak, including Zirka.\footnote{Pitt Rivers Museum accession register.} It is more an interesting reminder of British activity in the region post-war than anything of archaeological value.

22.4 Conclusions

The PRM collection from Palestine, Israel and Jordan is primarily a collection of Stone Age Levantine flintwork from key excavations undertaken in the inter-war period of the 20th century. While there may be some scope for use-wear analysis, the real value of the collection lies in the breadth of material represented across a long stratigraphy, which can inform future comparative fieldwork.

References


