AIAR NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

# Message from the Dorot Director

Dear Friends,

October at the Albright is shaping up to be one of our busiest months of the year. Our fall lecture season is now in full swing, and we are grateful to everyone who has joined us on campus or on Zoom so far. We opened in September with talks on the Early Bronze Age in Jordan, German excavations at Tall Zirāʿa by our colleague Dieter Vieweger of the DEI, and research on the Holy Sepulchre by our Marcia and Oded Borowski/George A. Barton Research Fellow, Luca Brancazi. Our fellows also joined a field trip to the Iron Age site of El-Ahwat in Wadi Ara, followed by an obligatory visit to the Reuven Vineyard.

We are thrilled to share two pieces of good news, a new US Department of State award for work at Zippori National Park, and the return of our ECA Fellowships to our 2027–2028 round. This month we are also delighted to host the Annual Meeting for the Early Bronze Age (AMEBA) on October 15, devoted this year to visual culture.

Our fall cohort of fellows is now in residence. Blair Heidkamp (Carol and Eric Meyers Doctoral Dissertation Fellow, University of Texas at Austin) and Prof. Benjamin Saidel (Seymour Gitin Professorial Fellow, East Carolina University) are joined this month by Prof. Lorenzo Nigro (Seymour Gitin Distinguished Professor, Sapienza University of Rome), who is working on the final publication of the Italian-Palestinian excavations at Jericho from 2009 to 2025. Together they span the full chronological range of the Albright, from the Neolithic through Jericho's Bronze Age cities to the Ottoman and British Mandate periods.

Finally, as the holiday season draws to a close, I wish a Chag Sameach to all who celebrated Sukkot and Simchat Torah.

With warm wishes,

**Jamie Fraser**
Dorot Director W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research

*Albright tour to the University of Haifa excavations at el-Ahwat. From left, Jamie Fraser, Shay Bar (Excavation Director), Yuli Gekht, Anouk Riondet, Blair Heidkamp and Benjamin Saidel.*

# Upcoming Events

### Fall Lecture Program: October

All lectures begin at **5pm Jerusalem time**, with a reception at **6pm**. Join us in person at the Albright or online via Zoom.

**Download the Fall 2026 Program (PDF)**

## October

OCT
14
WED

**Alon Arad**

Emek Shaveh

*Antiquities, Ruins, and Destruction: International Law and Israeli Archaeology*

**Join on Zoom**

Webinar ID: 831 1243 5085 | Passcode: 974287

OCT
28
WED

**Federica Broilo**

Albright Institute, Annual Associate Fellow

*A Taste of the Holy Land? Exploring Travel and Hospitality in Early Nineteenth Century Ottoman Palestine*

**Join on Zoom**

Webinar ID: 883 6144 7977 | Passcode: 946167

## Looking Ahead to November

NOV
11
WED

**Lorenzo Nigro**

Albright Institute, Seymour Gitin Distinguished Professor; Sapienza University

*Jericho, the Biblical Bias, and Historically Founded*

*Archaeology*

**Join on Zoom**

Webinar ID: 870 1461 0106 | Passcode: 600525

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NOV
25
WED

**Blair Heidkamp**

Albright Institute, Carol and Eric Meyers Doctoral Dissertation Fellow; University of Texas at Austin

*Hunting at the Edge: The Role of Kites and Projectile Points at the Close of the Neolithic*

**Join on Zoom**

Webinar ID: 874 4200 7780 | Passcode: 477782

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**Subscribe for Lecture Updates**

## AMEBA 2026: Visual Culture in the Early Bronze Age Levant

**Thursday, October 15, 8:45am to 5pm**
W. F. Albright Institute, 26 Salah ed-Din Street

The Albright is proud to host this year's Annual Meeting for the Early Bronze Age. The day brings together researchers working across the southern Levant to explore imagery, iconography and the visual world of the third millennium BCE.

Attendance is free, but registration is required.

**Register Here**

# News to Celebrate

### At the Crossroads of Cultures: A New Award for Sepphoris (Zippori)

We are delighted to announce that the Albright has received a $130,000 award from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), Freedom 250 Special Edition, administered by the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, for "At the Crossroads of Cultures: The Sepphoris Interpretive Signage Project."

Sepphoris, just northwest of Nazareth, is one of the most important archaeological sites in the Galilee. Over the centuries it was home to Jewish, polytheist and later Christian communities living side by side; it is closely associated with the redaction of the Mishnah, and it is traditionally identified as the birthplace of Mary. Yet despite decades of American and Israeli excavation, visitors to Sepphoris National Park encounter its streets, synagogues, churches and world-class mosaics with little to help them understand what they are seeing.

Over the next twelve months, the project will design, fabricate and install a unified trilingual interpretive system across the park, with around ten large outdoor panels and twenty QR-linked stations offering audio and visual content at some thirty locations. High-resolution photogrammetry will guide the placement of signs and visitor routes, and universal design features, including tactile illustrations, will make the site more accessible to visitors of all ages and abilities. A small display will also tell the story of nearly a century of American and Israeli archaeological cooperation at Sepphoris.

The project is led by recent Gitin Professorial Fellow Dr. Shulamit Miller (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev) in partnership with the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, with advisory support from Prof. Zeev Weiss (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Prof. Eric Meyers (Duke University), whose excavations transformed our understanding of the site. Work begins this autumn, and we look forward to sharing progress in future issues.

*The excavated heart of ancient Sepphoris, with its paved Roman street running through the lower city. Photo by Gabi Laron.*

### ECA Fellowships Return for 2027–2028

We are delighted to share that the Albright's ECA Fellowships, funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), have been reinstated, thanks to the tireless advocacy of our friends at CAORC.

We are very pleased to welcome these awards back into our portfolio of fellowships. Our 2027–2028 round will include four ECA Fellowships, one **ECA Professorial Fellowship** and three **ECA Junior Fellowships**. The junior awards are reserved for PhD candidates and recent graduates within five years of completing their dissertation, supporting early-career scholars at a critical stage of their careers. All four are being advertised now alongside our **other fellowships**, with applications due in December.

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## Fellowships

### 2027–2028 Fellowship Applications Now Open

A reminder that applications for the Albright's 2027–2028 fellowships are open, with awards for doctoral students, recent PhDs and senior scholars of all nationalities, including the Lydie T. Shufro Summer Research Fellowship, the Carol and Eric Meyers Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, the Marcia and Oded Borowski/Barton Research Fellowship, the Seymour Gitin Junior Fellowship, the Ernest S. Frerichs Annual Professorship and the Seymour Gitin Distinguished Professorship.

Applications close in early December. Please share widely with colleagues and students.

**View Fellowship Details**

# Progress Updates on Our Grants

We continue to make strides on our two-year, $1.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of State through ECA's Cultural Heritage Center and the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem.

## Galilee Heritage Project

For the first time in more than 1,400 years, the synagogue and the mosaics discovered by Prof. Jodi Magness and the Huqoq Excavation Project were fully exposed and visible together. It was quite a sight!

*The Huqoq synagogue and its mosaics fully exposed, with the project's new site sign in the foreground. Photo by Shua Kisilevitz.*

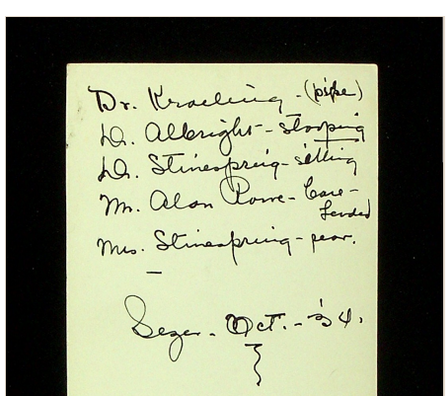
Before the mosaics were covered again for their protection, we documented the entire synagogue through drone photography, laser scanning, and detailed photography of the mosaic panels. This record will help us develop a digital reconstruction of the synagogue and share new views of it in the future. New signage was created and installed around the site.

## The Albright Family Archive

Project Conservator Alejandra Sanchez continues to conserve, transcribe and digitize the recently acquired Albright Family Archive. This month's featured item is a remarkable photograph from October 1934.

This photograph offers an extraordinary glimpse of leading archaeologists gathered at Alan Rowe's British-sponsored excavation at Gezer in October 1934. A handwritten note on the back identifies the group. William F. Albright, then director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, is stooping at the center, alongside Dr. Carl Kraeling (with pipe), Dr. William F. Stinespring (sitting), Mrs. Stinespring (at the rear) and the excavator himself, Alan Rowe (bare-headed).

More than an excavation photograph, it captures scholars from different institutions and traditions coming together at a formative moment in the archaeology of the southern Levant. Albright's presence is particularly noteworthy. He had just completed his own excavation campaign at Bethel, which closed in September 1934, making this photograph a fascinating record of the archaeological community at work that same season.



*"Archaeological Minds at Gezer, 1934," front and back. © Albright Family Archive.*

# Albright Live

Missed the opening lecture of our fall season? Dorot Director Jamie Fraser's talk, "The Site That Broke the Ceramic Clock: Radiocarbon Dating, Pottery, and Rewriting the Early Bronze Age 'Collapse' in Jordan," is now available to watch on our YouTube channel. The lecture explores new radiocarbon results from Khirbet Ghozlan in northern Jordan and what they mean for our understanding of the end of the Early Bronze Age.

**Watch the Lecture**

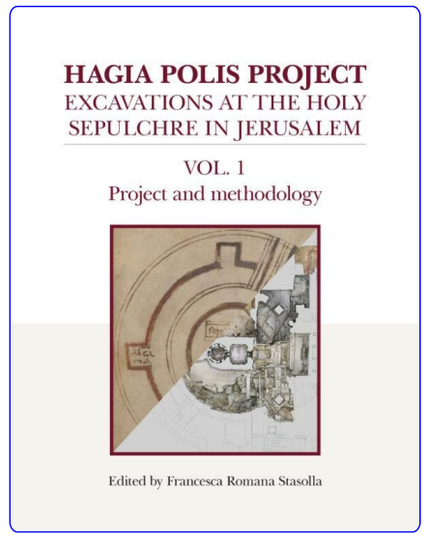
Find more past lectures on **Albright Live**.

# News from the Library

## Recent Additions to the Albright Library

The Albright Institute Library is pleased to announce three new additions to its collection, generously donated by members of its scholarly community.

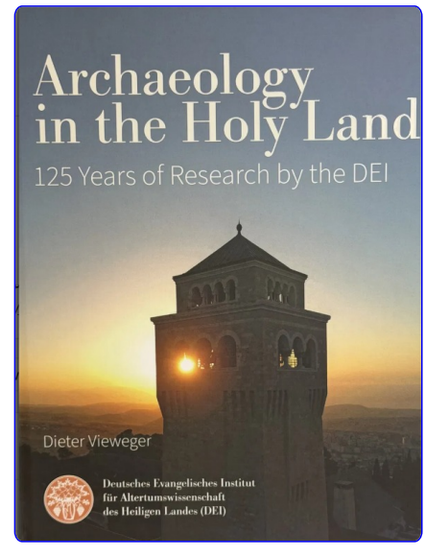
***Hagia Polis Project: Excavations at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Vol. 1, Project and Methodology***, ed. Francesca Romana Stasolla (Milano, Edizioni Terra Santa, 2026; Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior 60). The first volume of a new series presents the project's methodology and its investigation of the church's floor, substructures and underground infrastructure. It was donated by current Albright Fellow Luca Brancazi, who contributed two



chapters, including “Faunal Remains from the Holy Sepulchre: Archaeological Perspectives on Historical Practices.”

***Magica Levantina (Mag. Lev.)***, ed. Robert W. Daniel and Alexander Hollmann (Leiden, Brill | Schöningh, 2025; Sonderreihe der Abhandlungen Papyrologica Coloniensia 52). A scholarly edition of magical texts from the Levant, with translations and notes. Donated and inscribed by Alexander Hollmann, NEH–Albright Fellow in 2016.

***Archaeology in the Holy Land: 125 Years of Research by the DEI***, by Dieter Vieweger (DEI, 2026). A history of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in the Holy Land and its work at Tall Zirāʿa, Jerusalem and Tiberias. Donated and inscribed by the author, who spoke at the Albright in September.




The Library warmly thanks Luca Brancazi, Alexander Hollmann and Dieter Vieweger for their generous contributions. These volumes strengthen the Albright’s research collections and reflect the continuing scholarly connection between the Institute, its Fellows and the Library.

**Have you published your research recently?** The Albright Library would love to receive a copy! To discuss a donation, please contact Head Librarian Ruba Shweiki (ruba@aiar.org).

### Visitors Welcome

Over the past month, the Albright Institute Library has welcomed a number of visitors from outside the Institute, including academics and students from both local and international institutions. It has been wonderful to see researchers making use of the library's collections and resources. Researchers and students interested in visiting the library are welcome to email **library@aiar.org** or submit a Visit Request Form through the Albright Institute website.

## Staff News

### Staff Field Trip to the Galilee

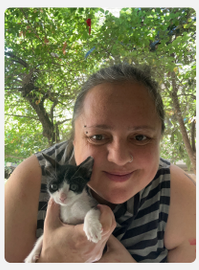
The Galilee Heritage Project also brought Albright staff and resident fellows to the Galilee in early September. Project Manager Shua Kisilevitz arranged a day for the group to see the work at Huqoq firsthand, with an introduction by IAA archaeologist Waseem Hamdan. They then enjoyed a cruise on the Sea of Galilee, visited the Secrets of Huqoq exhibition and the ancient boat at the Yigal

Alon Center, and shared lunch by the river at Yardenit. It was a welcome chance to see the Albright's work in the field, spend time together, and share laughs.

*Albright staff and resident fellows visit Huqoq on September 2 and gather around the project sign. From left: Mary Kamar, Fahad al-Masu, Shua Kisilevitz, IAA archaeologist Waseem Hamdan, Gitin Prof. Shulamit Miller, Alejandra Sanchez, Barton/Borowski Fellow Luca Brancazi, Ahmad Elyan, Ashraf Hanna, Fouad Khoury, Rasha Shamieh, Ruba Shweiki.*

## Staff Spotlight

Each month we spotlight a member of the Albright team. This month, meet **Yuli Gekht**, our Assistant Director and the mastermind behind this fall's lecture program.



*Yuli with kitten.*

### Yuli Gekht

*Assistant Director, Albright Institute*

Born in Kharkiv, Ukraine, Yuli moved to Israel with her family at the age of nine and grew up in Rishon LeZion. In 2005 she came to Jerusalem to study archaeology, fell in love with the city, and never left.

Before archaeology, Yuli worked in high tech, and she still brings that background to her work today. Yuli has worked on numerous excavation and publication projects over the years, including at Tel Dor, Wadi Hamam, Tiberias, Tel Esur and Tel Shikmona.

Outside of work, Yuli enjoys live music, building up her record collection, and planning an off-the-grid hike across Scotland. At the moment she is fostering a kitten found abandoned in the Albright's courtyard. She would love to hear from anyone interested in adopting! Yuli can be contacted at yuli@aiar.org.

# Support the Albright

## The Omar and Hisham Jibreen Kitchen Campaign

Two names, one kitchen, eight decades of service. We're honoring the extraordinary legacy of Omar and Hisham Jibreen, uncle and nephew, whose combined dedication shaped the Albright's kitchen and table for generations, by naming the kitchen in their memory. With Hisham's son Daoud now carrying the tradition into a third generation, this campaign is both a tribute and a continuation. To learn more about their legacy, view some photos, and to support the campaign, use the link below.

**Support the Campaign →**

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## Centennial Paving Stone

Leave your name, or honor someone else's, on the Albright's campus for generations to come. For $250, you can purchase a named paving stone, placed along our pathway of supporters on the Institute's grounds. It's a small gesture with lasting presence: every stone tells a story of someone who helped carry the Albright into its next century. All donations are tax-deductible in the US.

**Purchase a Paving Stone →**

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## Get Involved at the Albright

Interested in a larger gift, a named fellowship or staff position, a campus naming opportunity, or a legacy gift to secure the Albright's future? We'd love to talk. Reach out directly to Dorot Director Jamie Fraser (**jamesfraser@aiar.org**) or Director of Philanthropy Laura Rheintgen (**laurar@aiar.org**) to discuss what's possible.

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## General Donations

You can make a difference. Every gift, large or small, helps sustain the Albright's mission in Jerusalem.

**Donate Here**

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