

# **It Is the Land of Honey: Discoveries from the City of Rehov, the Early Days of the Israelite Monarchy**

## **Exhibition and catalogue**

### **The Exhibition**

Exhibition at the Land of Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, open from 12 January through 31 October 2016

Tel Rehov in the Beth Shean Valley, one of the largest tells in Israel, was excavated between 1997-2012 by archaeologists from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, headed by Professor Amihai Mazar. The site was continually occupied from the beginning of the Late Bronze Age until the end of the Iron Age II, with traces of an Early Bronze II-III fortified city as well. The most extensive remains uncovered date to the 10<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the Iron Age IIA, corresponding with the biblical period of the United Monarchy and the northern kingdom of Israel, until the rise of Jehu's dynasty. The finds from this period comprise the focus of a new exhibition at the Land of Israel Museum in Tel Aviv, opening on January 12 and running until October 31, 2016.

Numerous aspects of the rich material culture dating to this period that were revealed at this major site are presented, with an emphasis on the Canaanite background of the population, the cultural and political affiliation with the Israelite kingdom, and unique aspects of the local architecture and cultic practices. A salient feature of the Iron Age IIA city was the exclusive use of mudbrick to construct all buildings, incorporating wooden beams in walls and floors. Each building was unique in its architectural plan, and did not resemble any of the common blueprints of the Iron Age II, such as four-room houses or pillared buildings. Notable among these unique structures are Buildings CF and CP; the latter is considered to have been of a special cultic nature, containing a large amount of special items, such as two four-horned pottery altars, and a rich assemblage of domestic and cultic objects. . Tel Rehov comprises the Iron Age IIA site with the most inscriptions found to date, including two that mention the name "Nimshi", the father or grandfather

of Jehu, who usurped the kingship from the Omride dynasty (2 Kings 9), as well as a rare ostrakon with the name Elisha in red ink, found in the cultic Building CP. An open-air sanctuary unearthed in the eastern part of the mound, included a platform and *massebot* (standing stones), is a unique example of such a sanctuary in Ancient Israel. All of these intriguing objects, as well as numerous others, are presented in the exhibition, within the cultural and social context of Iron Age II northern Israel.

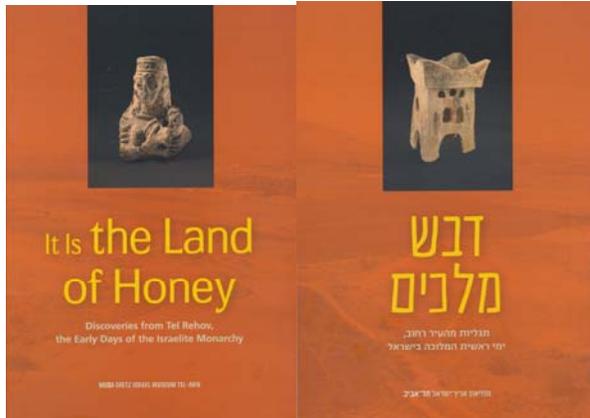
The highlight of the exhibition is the well-preserved, industrial-scope apiary found at Tel Rehov, dated to ca. 900 BCE, which is the only such facility ever found in an archaeological excavation. The apiary is presented along with textual evidence of beekeeping in ancient Egypt and Anatolia, ethnographic practices in modern times that are strikingly similar to ancient methods. Remains of bees found in charred honeycombs were identified as Anatolian bees, which are foreign to the Land of Israel. This discovery has important implications for the possible existence of sophisticated trade relations between Anatolia and northern Israel at that time. .

These unique and unprecedented discoveries make Tel Rehov one of the most important and intriguing sites in the study of ancient Israel during the 10th-9th centuries BCE.

The exhibition is curated by Dr. Irit Ziffer. All the exhibits are on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Guided tours and educational activities are provided.

## The Catalogue



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This lavishly illustrated publication is issued in conjunction with the special exhibition It Is the Land of Honey. Discoveries from Tel Rehov, the Early Days of the Israelite Monarchy held at the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv. It contains a summary of the excavation results concerning the 10th-9th centuries BCE, including stratigraphy, architecture, the unique apiary, two exceptional buildings and various topics relating to everyday life. An additional article discusses bees and honey according to ancient Near Eastern and Aegean written and visual sources.

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Amihai Mazar with participation of Nava Panitz Cohen, Shmuel Ahituv and Nimrod Marom

Flight of the Bee: Myth and Art Irit Ziffer