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DISCOVERIES

Ancient Byzantine Church Discovered in Tiberias

Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority

Excavations by the Israel Antiquities Authority in Tiberias have discovered in the lower part of the city, a Byzantine church (4th-5th centuries) paved with magnificent polychrome mosaics decorated with geometric patterns and crosses. Three dedicatory inscriptions written in ancient Greek were incorporated in the mosaics. In one of the inscriptions, deciphered by Dr. Leah Di Signi of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is the line: "Our Lord, protect the soul of your servant..." [Our Lord=Jesus]

Another one of the mosaics features a large cross flanked by the letters alpha and omega (A to Z in Greek), traditional monograms for Christ. According to Dr. Moshe Hartal (who with Edna Amos directed the excavation), in 427 the Church issued a decree prohibiting the placement of crosses in mosaic floors in order to prevent them from being stepped on. "The presence of so many crosses in the floors of the church that was exposed here thus confirms the church dates to the period prior to the ban," he said.

The church's remains were discovered adjacent to ancient public buildings including a basilica, bathhouse, streets, and shops. It is the oldest church yet uncovered in Tiberias and the only one that has been found in the center of the city.



Byzantine mosaics date from the founding of Tiberias in the first century CE

The remains of a Jewish neighborhood, dating to the 10th-11th centuries were also found in the excavations. These remains extend up to the foot of the cliff in the high part of the city, in an area that was probably once residential. “The discovery of the remains of the church in the middle of the ancient city, like that of the Jewish neighborhood and the magnificent city that existed in Tiberias more than one thousand years ago, greatly contributes to our understanding of the town planning, its scope and its structures,” archaeologists on behalf of the Antiquities Authority said. Indeed, the discovery of the church in the heart of the Jewish quarter disproves the theory that the Jews prevented the Christians from establishing prayer halls in the middle of the city, they added.

Re-written from <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0708/S00315.htm>

Archaeologists unearth 8th century church in Syria

Archaeologists in central Syria have unearthed the remnants of an 8th century church site in the ancient town Palmyra, some 245 kilometers (153 miles) northeast of the capital Damascus, Syria. A Syrian-Polish archaeological team recently discovered the church, believed to be the largest ever to be discovered in the country said Walid al-Assaad, the head of the Palmyra Antiquities and Museums Department. He did not say specifically when the church was discovered or the exact date the church was built.

Re-written from Associated Press report by Albert Aji



<http://www.physorg.com/news145814874.html>

Bejeweled Anglo-Saxon Burial Cult Discovered

Archaeologists have discovered a seventh-century woman's jewelry-draped body laid out on a specially constructed bed and buried in a grave that formed the center of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery, in Yorkshire. Her jewelry, which included a large shield-shaped pendant, gold and glass beads, a jet pin and the layout and location of the cemetery as well as excavated weaponry, such as knives and a fine *langseax* (a single-edged Anglo-Saxon sword), lead the scientists to believe she might have been a member of royalty

who led a pagan cult at a time when Christianity was just starting to take root in the region. The cemetery, named Street House, consists of 109 graves, most of which were dug in a square around the bed burial. Sherlock believes the identity of the deceased might include Ethelburga, the wife of King Edwin of Northumbria, who converted to Christianity and was made a saint. Other possibilities are Eanflaed, the wife of King Oswiu, or Oswiu's daughter, Aelflaed. The

jewelry



discovered includes a blue gemstone with scalloped-shaped carving. Small red gems resting on gold foil, which would have reflected light when the piece was worn, surround the central stone. Also found (in one of the perimeter graves) were Iron age coins, pierced to hang as if they were crucifixes, suggesting that at least one member of the group was interested in Christianity. In

657, at around the time the cemetery was established, an abbey was erected nearby, marking a "turning point in the history of Christianity in Britain," archaeologist Mike Pitts said.

"The whole focus of the cemetery is based upon the bed burial -- it is our view that this was erected first and the other graves were dug around it," added Stephen Sherlock, who worked with the [Teesside Archaeological Society](#), which recently published a report on the research. Archaeologist Michael Pitts noted "It seems to revolve, quite literally, around a woman... Her bed burial is stridently pagan, a sort of rare, female equivalent of ship burials, as she is laid out on a vehicle to deliver her to the afterworld."

Re-written from Jennifer Viegas, *Discovery News* April 11, 2008

<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/2008/04/11/anglo-saxon-cult.html>

Foundation of a 12th-Century Chapel Uncovered in the UK

The foundation of a 12th century chapel, along with some human remains, has been uncovered in West Acre in the UK. Despite records mentioning the existence of St Peters Chapel, researchers could not find any traces of the edifice, which was dismantled at the time of the Reformation. Working with Steve Brown, a metal detectorist, professional archaeologists John Shepherd and Michael de Bootman identified the site to the west of West Acre and started digging at the end of last month.

He (Steve) noticed the slightest traces of mortar adhering to pieces of flint in a field near St Peters pit and Michael and I followed up this sighting with a radar survey of the field, said Shepherd. The results were spectacular. Not only did they locate the building, but the radar showed that it survived in very good condition and was quite large - not a simple cell or room but something that resembled a small church, he added.

The specialists, who were joined by 25 volunteers from all over the country, opened up a trench that revealed the outline of the building in its entirety. It measured almost 7m wide and 24m long. It was probably built in the early 12th century and underwent a number of changes in ground plan, said Shepherd.

Finds included a number of coins from the mediaeval period, pilgrim badges showing that the church was visited by pilgrims returning from Walsingham, window glass and the lead that held it in place, pottery and iron nails from the interior of the building.

Re-written from August 4th, 2008 Thaindian News http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/foundation-of-a-12th-century-chapel-uncovered-in-the-uk_10079666.html

Archaeologists unearth 12th century abbey in aptly-named Abbeytown

Hundreds of years of history came to light in Abbeytown after archaeologists unearthed the remains of a 12th-century abbey. A team of volunteers painstakingly pieced together some of the buried secrets of Holme Cultram Abbey last week during a 12-day dig. The abbey, founded in 1150 by the Cistercian Monks from Melrose Abbey, by the 15th-century grew larger than Carlisle Cathedral. The wealthy abbey owned more than 6,000 sheep and mined salt at Saltcotes and Crosscanonby, producing what was thought to be the best salt in Britain.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII, the abbey fell into disrepair and much of its stone was taken away to build houses. Only the abbey's church remains above ground although this was subject of an arson attack in 2006 which gutted its interior.

Now, the West Cumbrian Archeologists Society team have uncovered what they believe to be its cloisters in the first ever dig on the south side of the historic site. "There are no plans of the abbey," said society secretary Pat Bull. "We have an idea of what might be here because the Cistercians built their abbeys to a similar plan. But no-one's ever dug here." Jan



Walker, chairwoman of the society and fellow dig co-ordinator, said: "We have uncovered a medieval drain, some medieval pottery and some bits of dressed stone." The volunteers' work has also uncovered glimpses into how the monks lived – they have uncovered a medieval midden, or rubbish heap complete with animal bones, oyster and whelk shells.

Re-written from *Thaindian News* by Sarah Newstead

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/archaeologists-unearth-remains-of-12th-century-abbey-in-uk_10095657.html September 14, 2008

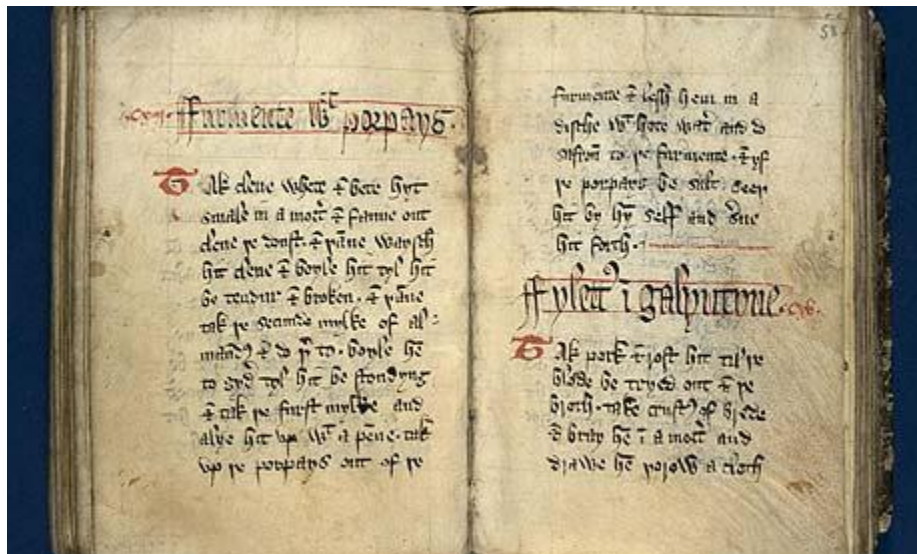
13th century church unearthed in Bulgaria

A team of archaeologists discovered an ancient church in the city of Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria, dating back to the 13th century, along with remains of an ancient graveyard. Prominent archaeologist Nikolay Ovcharov led the team that unearthed the church, known as St. Ivan Rilski. It is the place where the relics of the saint Ivan Rilski were once saved before being sent to the Rila Monastery. Near the church, a graveyard reserved for the burial of aristocrats was found. The church and the graveyard such finds as a golden ring with a two-head eagle as well as numerous silver coins, jewelry and ceramic utensils. The bird on the ring was a symbol of the dignity of the Orthodox countries rulers in 14th century, which reveals it belonged to a boyar, the archaeologists commented.

Re-written from *Thaindian News* June 30th, 2008

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/business/13th-century-church-unearthed-in-bulgaria_10066053.html

University of Manchester John Rylands University Library Shares Richard II's royal cookbook online



Pages from *Forme of Cury*, a 14th-century cookbook being digitized for online viewing.
Photograph: University of Manchester John Rylands University Library

Forme of Cury, a recipe book compiled by King Richard II's master cooks in 1390, details around 205 dishes cooked in the royal household and sheds light on a little-studied element of life in the Dark Ages. Written in Middle English, it contains the instructions for making long-forgotten dishes as blank mang (a sweet dish of meat, milk, sugar and almonds), mortrews (ground and spiced pork), and the original quiche, known in 14th century kitchens as custard. It

is one of 40 literary treasures being made freely available on the internet for the first time by the University of Manchester's John Rylands University Library.

Other Middle English manuscripts to be digitized and put online include one of the [earliest existing editions of the complete Canterbury Tales](#) by Chaucer, John Lydgate's two major poems [Troy Book and Fall of Princes](#) and 500-year-old [translations of the Bible](#) into English. The project will reunite fragments of a 15th-century manuscript of Chaucer's Miller's Tale, in an online collaboration with the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia.

Jan Wilkinson, the director of the John Rylands library, said “For the first time it will be possible to compare our manuscripts directly with other versions of the texts in libraries located across the world, opening up opportunities for new areas of research. We hope that this will be the beginning of a wider digitization program, which will unlock the tremendous potential of our medieval manuscripts and printed books for the benefit of the academic community and the wider public.”

Re-written from The Guardian by Anil Dawar September 22, 2008

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/sep/22/10?gusrc=rss&feed=technologyfull>

Ancient Russian Birch Bark Manuscripts Now Accessible on the Web

Russian scholars translating relic birch bark manuscripts into English and Modern Russian, have posted their translations on the internet at www.gramoty.ru.



The project, under the guidance of the Novgorod Museum Reserve, presents 1049 manuscripts dating from the 11th – 15th centuries found in archeological excavations in Veliki Novgorod, Vitebsk, Zvenigorod, Tver, Torzhok, Pskov, Staraya Russa and Rurik sites. The website includes photos of the birch bark manuscripts (*gramoty* in Russian) and text copied in the Old Slavonic language with the modern translations and basic information about these manuscript rarities.

Source: oreanda.ru

Re-written from <http://www.russia-ic.com/news/show/4955/>

Rare Medieval Turf Labyrinth Restored

Conservationists have restored a rare medieval earth and grass maze in north Lincolnshire, but they cannot explain why it was made and or exactly when. Dubbed Julian's Bower, the labyrinth is cut into the landscape at Alkborough in the form of twisting and turning interlocking rings measuring 44 feet in diameter.

The design of Alkborough's labyrinth is strikingly similar to the 13th-century walkable labyrinth found on the floor of Chartres Cathedral. The site has been a popular attraction in recent years, but visitors' walking over it, eroded it. The work was overseen by the local Maze Community, working with English Heritage and North Lincolnshire Council to re-surface the monument using funding from the South Humber Bank Wildlife and People Project as well as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Yorkshire Forward.

Keith Miller, English Heritage inspector of ancient monuments, said: "Julian's Bower is a name which was given to turf mazes in several different parts of England. The Alkborough relic is incredibly puzzling and its survival is nothing short of miraculous."

Re-written from <http://www.24dash.com/news/58/22379/index.htm>



Evidence for early clock-making in York

A small circular copper-alloy disc shows that in 1300, York was at the forefront of science and engineering. Discovered during excavations on the site of the former York College for Girls in Low Petergate, it has been cleaned to reveal an abbreviated Latin inscription - *SIGNUM ROBERTI HOROLOGIARII* - or “The seal of Robert the clockmaker.”



Given that the first clocks installed in a number of major English churches only a few years before the seal was made, the find is exceptional. Indeed York was previously notable for its absence from this list - until now.

Experts say it is likely that Robert the clockmaker was engaged on works in York in 1300 probably at York Minster, although the first references to a clock there do not appear in the surviving documents until much later.

Dr Richard Hall, director of Archaeology at York Archaeological Trust, said: “This is one of the most interesting single objects that we have found for some time. We are still trying to find out more about it - for example, we haven't yet managed to read the last part of the inscription, which should tell us where Robert came from. It opens up a new insight into the sounds and wonders of medieval York.”

More information on the excavations can be found on York Archaeological Trust's website at www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk

Re-written based on

http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/yorknews/display.var.1280776.0.turning_back_time_to_york_1300