



2023 FRIENDS OF ASOR  
SEMINAR  
SCHEDULE BOOKLET

Raleigh/Durham, NC October 20-22, 2023  
Sessions, presentations, and times are subject to change.



# PROGRAM

## IN-PERSON (Raleigh/Durham)

This schedule is current as of October 10, 2023.

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023

Dinner will be held in the Royal Meeting Room

**7:00–9:00pm** Welcome dinner and private conversation with the seminar’s academic speakers  
(EDT)

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023

Program and meals will be held in the Piedmont Meeting Room

**8:00–9:30am** Continental breakfast  
(EDT)

**9:30–10:30am** **Naboth’s Vineyard in Context: Excavating an Iron Age Winery at Jezreel**  
(EDT)

Jennie Ebeling, University of Evansville

The beverage described most frequently in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, wine played a major role in the diet, economy, religion, and culture of ancient Israel. A well-preserved winery complex excavated at Jezreel in Israel’s Galilee offers insights into the technology of wine production during the Iron Age (ca. 1200–586 BCE) and provides context for the dramatic story of Naboth’s vineyard in 1 Kings 21. **Followed by a short Q&A**

**10:45–11:15am** Break and coffee refresh  
(EDT)

**11:15–12:15pm** **Food, Gender, and Power in Israelite Households**  
(EDT)

Carol Meyers, Duke University

Nothing is more fundamental to human existence than food, and in traditional societies like ancient Israel, growing crops and raising animals and then transforming them into edible form occupied a significant part of the daily life of most people. The latter step—the production of edible products, that is, food—was largely the task of women in biblical antiquity. This presentation will look at some of the archaeological materials that women used in making food. Then it will go a step further and look at the social, religious, and other aspects of women’s food-production tasks. In so doing, it will reveal otherwise unnoticed aspects, such as personal and social power, of women’s lives in Israelite households. **Followed by a short Q&A**

**12:30–2:00pm** Lunch break  
(EDT)

**2:00–3:00pm** **Tales the Animals Tell: Zooarchaeology and the Multispecies Communities of the Ancient Near East**  
(EDT)

Katheryn Grossman, North Carolina State University

The cities, towns, and countryside of the Near East were populated not just by humans, but also by the animals that lived, worked, and died alongside them. While we tend to think of animals primarily as a source of food and labor, new approaches to the study of human-animal interactions are foregrounding the ways that animals influenced human action and contributed to social life in the ancient world. Drawing on 15+ years of studying animal bones from archaeological sites in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and Cyprus, I will show how the zooarchaeological record provides surprising new insights into the multispecies communities of the ancient Near East. **Followed by a short Q&A**

**3:20–4:20pm** **Beer and Brewing in Ancient Mesopotamia**  
(EDT)

Tate Paulette, North Carolina State University

In ancient Mesopotamia, beer was produced on a massive scale and was consumed on a daily basis by people across the socio-economic spectrum. Beer was a gift from the gods, a marker of civilization, a dietary staple, a social lubricant, a ritual necessity, and a reason for celebration. It was consumed at feasts, festivals, and ritual ceremonies, but also at home, on the job, and in neighborhood taverns. It was produced by brewers working for the powerful palace and temple institutions and also by local tavern

keepers and homebrewers. This lecture explores the archaeological, artistic, and written evidence for beer and brewing in Mesopotamia, as well as recent efforts to recreate Mesopotamian beer. **Followed by a short Q&A**

**4:30–7:00pm**  
(EDT) Break

**7:00–7:45pm** Reception and Open Bar

**7:45–9:45pm**  
(EDT) Dinner and Plenary Presentation / Discussion

**Plenary Panel, Cultural Heritage in the Age of Conflict: ASOR in North Africa**  
Andrew Vaughn, Sharon Herbert, Carol Meyers, Eric Meyers, Jack Sasson

## **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2023**

Program and meals will be held in the Piedmont Meeting Room

**8:00–9:30am**  
(EDT) Continental breakfast

**9:30–10:30am**  
(EDT) **Of Tombstones and Atlantis: Searching for a Lost Past in Tunis and Djerba**  
Jack M. Sasson, Professor emeritus, Vanderbilt University and UNC, Chapel Hill

In Tunis and Djerba, Jack M. Sasson, a retired (UNC and Vanderbilt) Assyriologist and Biblical scholar, had glimpses of remnant communities that parallel those of his native Syria and Lebanon, alas now as submerged as Atlantis. In this informal talk, he will reflect on his personal experience of that world as evoked by his visit: Arab in culture, Jewish in religion, and French in outlook. Sasson will also report on a striking difference among those communities in their biographic use of tombstones. **Followed by a short Q&A**

**10:45–11:15am**  
(EDT) Break and coffee refresh

**11:15–12:15pm**  
(EDT) **Jesus in Galilee: An Archaeological Perspective**  
Eric Meyers, Duke University

Recent archaeological discoveries in Galilee have shown beyond any shadow of a doubt that the region was overwhelmingly Jewish in the time of Jesus. There are only a handful of sites that may be identified as gentile or non-Jewish. In addition, the identification of many early synagogues from this period has allowed us to better understand that the multiple references in Josephus and the New Testament are to actually purpose-built structures, chief among them being Magdala. Together with the many stone vessels and ritual baths found, we may today conclude that most of these Jewish sites, which date to the early Roman period, indicate that Jews were practicing purity laws based on the Torah. Also, with little to no Greek attested in the epigraphic finds from this time, therefore, a much more nuanced and accurate picture of Jewish Galilee may be drawn in the most recent quest for the historical Jesus. **Followed by a short Q&A**