

Link to the article about the archaeological dig in Omrit, Israel that appeared in the Jerusalem Post on Sept. 21, 2009:

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1253198156150&pagename=JPost%2FJPostArticle%2FShowFull>

The Macalester College Archaeological Excavations at Khirbet Omrit began ten years ago.

They are Directed by Prof. Andy Overman and run by our Classics department.

Students from across the college have participated in the summer excavations that run from the second week in May immediately following commencement until the third week in June.

During the day students excavate the Roman period temple site and at night study the contemporary issues and conflicts in Israel and Palestine.

This season was characterized by dramatic finds. Very rare pieces of architecture, painted walls and molded elements were uncovered in-situ by Macalester students. Omrit is a site unique in the antique world because it is really three temples in one. Three successive temples were built during the first century BCE - the first century CE. Each successive temple buried the previous one. The Macalester team has carefully uncovered all three temple phases over the last decade.

The finds from this summer helped confirm the theory that Herod the Great, King of the region from 73 BCE-4 BCE built most likely the two earliest phases of the Roman imperial temple complex at Omrit. The article in the Jerusalem Post addresses this claim.

If accurate this confirms that Omrit, is in fact biblical Caesarea Phillippi where the Apostle Peter made his famous confession to Jesus. Omrit was a crucial commercial and imperial site which sat on the the busiest trade route in the Roman East, the road from Tyre to Damascus. Romans used this road to keep the Parthians/Persians out of Galilee and Judea, and they used it to prepare for their attack on Jerusalem in 66 CE.

Omrit has become such a significant site that its finds will be housed in two museums - the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and in Tel Hai College in Kyriat Shmona - and Macalester College has been working with the local authorities to develop Omrit into a cultural and archaeological park.

Today Omrit sits on the Israeli-Lebanese-Syrian borders and along with a rich ancient history has watched contemporary events and conflicts unfold over the last sixty years that are not unlike those events and conflicts which account for the establishment of Omrit over two thousand years ago.

Macalester Excavations will continue at Omrit for the 2010 season. As always all Macalester students qualify to participate. If you are interested in excavating at Omrit speak to Prof. Andy Overman or Prof. Nanette Goldman in the Classics department.



Kate Petersen, Kevin Deno, Professor Nanette Goldman and Morgan Carlston pose with a rare stucco piece from the earliest Omrit Temple, now on display in the Israel



Museum in Jerusalem.

A view of the earliest Temple, fully excavated and encased within the later Temple I.



An extremely rare frescoed pedestal in-situ, just after being discovered.



The pedestal being preserved by the conservator.



An intact stuccoed pedestal which is the north face of the earliest Temple at Omrit.