

## *Author's Preface*

This book, with accompanying CD, is the publication of the ceramic and stone figurine assemblage discovered in the 1992, 1993, and 1999 seasons of excavation by the Lahav Research Project, Phase III, at Tell Halif. This study of the figurines has precursors in two versions of the DigMaster Web site that, beginning in 1995, made photographs, drawings, and preliminary technical descriptions of the figurines available for general and scholarly use. However, as new information emerged, as stratigraphic associations of architecture and soil layers became more clearly defined, and as joins were found between fragments of terra-cottas, many details in those early reports necessarily changed.

The version presented here thus includes extensive revisions of descriptions and typology of the artifacts as originally presented in DigMaster. It also features detailed analyses of each artifact and the intended representations of gods and humans, where known.

The LRP was fortunate in arranging with Dr. Nancy Serwint of Arizona State University for the analyses of the figurines. The breadth of her work with Cypriot, Greek, and Turkish figurines marks her as one of the leading experts in the study of the coroplastic art as practiced in the Late Bronze through Hellenistic periods. She has brought fresh insight to the study of the Halif assemblage. Much of the description of the Halif figurines represented in this volume stems directly from her work.

It is important also to recognize that much of the effort to move both the excavation process and the reporting process away from traditional methods toward innovative digital media came from the urging and direct involvement of Chris Holland. Chris first developed DigMaster at the instruction of Joe D. Seger and later introduced to the field staff of LRP the advantages of using the newest digital tools as integral to the archaeological discipline, both excavating, recording, and reporting. His creative touch can be seen in the CD in the way the figurines are presented in several graphic formats.

Of course, the success of the figurine project has its base in the ongoing work of the LRP, whose director, Dr. Joe D. Seger, has both encouraged experimentation in the excavation and recording processes and supported the ideas about digital publication. Because of his insightful direction the Halif figurine assemblage early became the leading work in total publication and in availability of data to scholars; the original version of the online DigMaster site, which featured approximately 500 of the figurines, was visited by users from 63 countries in its first year on-line. The newer version of DigMaster, which includes collections of artifacts from Tell Maresha, excavations in Fields I and IV at Tell Halif, the Pierides Museum in Larnaca, Cyprus, the Lois Dowdle Cobb Museum, and others, provides a demonstration of the usefulness of on-line reporting and of the creation of complete on-line data sources.

An equal amount of gratitude must also be expressed for the meticulous work done in Field IV at Tell Halif by team leaders and volunteers whose work made certain that artifacts were gathered scientifically and that data were recorded accurately. The introduction by James Hardin in the 1992 season of a more nuanced technique of recording artifacts in place, particularly on floors of buildings, made possible more accurate reconstructions of the location of ancient

furnishings illustrating use patterns of activities (see *Lahav II* [Hardin 2010]) involving those artifacts. In addition, the further introduction of digital recording in the field—especially the recording of precise XYZ locations of artifact finds—produced not merely a data source that shows a three-dimensional mapping of all artifacts or of artifacts of a single type (such as all figurines) but also yielded valuable insights into the likely original deposition of the figurines. Members of the excavation team took particular care in exercising these techniques of recording.

Joe D. Seger served as overall Project Director of LRP, and Oded Borowski and Paul Jacobs were Co-Directors of the Phase III excavations (1992, 1993, and 1999). James Hardin and Keith Eades served as Field Supervisors. Area Supervisors for the three seasons included Elizabeth Cox, S. Homes Hogue, Tom Jull, Fran Mueller, Avi Navon, and John Wade. Specialists included Arlene Rosen (micro-artifact analysis), Susan Arter (faunal analysis), Chris Holland and John Vanderzwaag (computing specialists), S. Homes Hogue (human osteologist), and Eugene Futato (lithics analysis). Technical Staff in the Phase III excavations included Camp Manager and Registrar Nancy Jacobs; Registrars Barbara Miley, Erik Novak, Cindy Leverette, and Laura Smith; Photographers Patricia O'Connor-Seger, Kariman Seger, Peggy Coleman, Natalie Curtis, and Katherine Jacobs; Technical Illustrators Cindy Martin, Jennifer Vesser, Nicole Lantz, Jason Greene, and Dylan Karges.

Special note is made, finally, to the hospitality and assistance given to the members of the LRP by the people of Kibbutz Lahav. Without exception, Kibbutz Lahav members have extended to these strangers among them warm friendship, along with considerable assistance in finding materials for operating fieldwork, and remarkable care in health issues. Those of us who made repeated visits still refer to Kibbutz Lahav as our second home. We greatly appreciate and are much honored to be considered part of the Kibbutz family.

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