

Immediately  
For release August 27, 1986

Public Relations Department  
Loyola University of Chicago  
820 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
(312) 670-2860

Monica M. Walk  
For additional information contact:

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR RETURNS  
FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG IN ISRAEL

Something shimmered in the earth beneath the hot Israeli sun. The excavator carefully sifted through a layer of dirt and uncovered a gold brooch: a well-preserved link from the tenth century and a rare treasure for the Israel Museum in 20th century Jerusalem.

Loyola professor of anthropology James Calcagno, Ph.D., made the unusual and unexpected find when he spent two months in Ashkelon, Israel on an archaeological dig. Calcagno acted as an assistant supervisor on the Leon Levy Expedition, an 85-member crew excavating a "tell" at the site of Ashkelon during the months of June and July.

"A 'tell' is a site with successive settlements layered on top of each other," Calcagno explained. "Various occupation levels are layered in one general area. Jerusalem is a more famous example of a 'tell' with the final layer intact; the people living there today are still forming the most recent layer of occupation."

The Ashkelon 'tell' has yielded material from the Bronze Age (3200 B.C.) through the Crusader Period (13th century A.D.). Calcagno's golden find from the tenth century falls into the Islamic period.

The archaeologists and anthropologists at the site also unearthed various architectural features, including a church, housing, and cisterns; artifacts such as scarabs (sacred egyptian beetles), figurines, and carved bone; and an abundance of pottery.

Weekend field trips rounded out the archaeological experience.

"We worked five days a week and had Fridays and Saturdays off," Calcagno said. "On those weekends we sometimes had tours of such places as Jerusalem, Masada, Qumran, and Jericho. Other times we were on our own. It was interesting to experience the current culture in Israel, as well as the archaeology in different areas."

(More)



This is the second summer--or field school--for the Ashkelon site. The project is directed by Lawrence Stager, Ph.D., a member of Harvard University's faculty. The dig, scheduled to run for a period of 20 years, draws experts from Canada, France, England, and Italy, as well as from Israel and the United States. Volunteers, such as the three Loyola University students who also participated on the trip, contribute to the expedition work force as well.

As a physical anthropologist, Calcagno's forte lies in the study of biological material from past civilizations. While archaeologists are interested in the cultural remains of the human, physical anthropologists are interested in the skeletal remains. No physical anthropology was done at Ashkelon, but as Calcagno says, "Certainly, somewhere at Ashkelon there must be a cemetery."

In the meantime, he is content in knowing that he made a rare find for the Israel Museum.

#####

82086bev