

The Mithraeum at Caesarea Maritima

by Robert Jehu Bull, Andrew H. Bobeck, Jane DeRose Evans,
Robert S. Fritzius and Alexandra L. Ratzlaff

DESCRIPTION:

In 1973, Robert J. Bull began the excavation of a vault on the south side of the Inner Harbor of Caesarea Maritima, Israel. The vault was one of a row of warehouses built to store goods unloaded from the harbor built by Herod the Great. This monograph begins with an introduction by Bull and Jane DeRose Evans of the excavation process. The study of the stratigraphy takes into account the later excavations of the adjoining vault, and publishes new photographs, plans, and section drawings. The original construction phase, the vault's transformation into a Mithraeum, its abandonment, and its final use as a "charnel house" are meticulously discussed and analyzed. The monograph also includes detailed studies on the frescoes and the medallion found inside the vault. Alexandra Ratzlaff offers an exhaustive study of the medallion and the fragmentary wall paintings depicting Mithraic iconography. The Caesarea Mithraeum is only one of two excavated from the eastern half of the Empire, and Ratzlaff places the decoration and finds from the Mithraeum in the context of the practices of Mithraism in the ancient world. Bull and Robert Fritzius discuss their reconstruction of the ceiling splay and their interpretation in terms of astrological symbolism important to Mithraism. Andrew Bobeck explains the technical processes used to recover information about the frescoes. Two appendices by Evans catalog the small finds from the vault and explain the phasing of the probes in a diagram. The Joint Expeditions to Caesarea Maritima: Volume 2. The Mithraeum Vault will be the final publication of this "legacy excavation" directed by Robert J. Bull describing the structure and the material culture found.

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CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHIES:

Robert Jehu Bull (BA, BD, STM, DLitt, PhD) was the emeritus director of the Drew University's Institute for Archaeological Research, later the Joint Expeditions to Caesarea Maritima (JECM), where he excavated from 1971 to 1996, exposing major parts of the city's street plan, warehouse complex, a residential quarter, and parts of the hippodrome. His work enlightened over one thousand volunteers from around the world who excavated with him, along with many more who saw the exhibit "The Search for Herod's City", heard him lecture or read reports of his excavations in *Acta Iranica*, the *Bible and the Spade*, *Biblical Archaeologist*, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, *Israel Exploration Journal*, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea* and in the *JECM Excavation Reports*. He was a much-beloved teacher of church history at Drew University's Theological School, from which he retired as Professor emeritus in 1991. Before excavating at Caesarea, he excavated and led excavations at Shechem, Balatah, Ai, Pella, Tell er-Ras, and Khirbet Shema'. Andrew H. Bobeck (MSEE, Honorary Doctor of Engineering, Purdue University) retired from Lucent Bell Laboratories in 1989. During his forty years of employment he earned over 120 US patents and was presented with "The Valdemar Poulsen Gold Medal" and "The 1981 Thomas Alva Edison Patent Award." He is co-author of the book "Magnetic

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Bubbles" (1975). After his retirement, he turned to art, digital graphics and photography. His book "Techniques for Improving Digital Photographs" by Outskirts Press covers in depth the graphics know-how he used to recover the faded colors of the Caesarea fresco. He can be reached by email at a7bobek@AOL.com or at his website www.andrewbobek.com. Jane DeRose Evans (PhD, Classical Archaeology) is a Professor of Art History and affiliated with the Department of Greek and Latin Classics at Temple University. She has excavated in Greece, Italy, England, Israel, and France. Currently, she is serving as the specialist numismatist for the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis (Harvard and Cornell universities) and Bir Madkhour (George Washington University). Since Dr. Bull asked her to publish the coins of Caesarea (The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima: Excavation Reports v.6, The Coins and the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Economy of Palestine, 2006), she was fortunate to collaborate with him on the ongoing research from the JECM excavations. Robert S. Fritzius (BS EE, Purdue University) retired as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1978. He has published the Introduction and First Part of an English translation of Walter Ritz's "Recherches critiques sur l'Électrodynamique Générale," *Annales de Chimie et de Physique*, 13, 145-275, (1980). He has served as staff artist for the excavations at Elusa, Israel (see Nabatean Archeology Today, 1986, fig. 63; *Liber Annuus*, 39 (1989), plans 1, 3 and figs. 1-12). Fritzius is a member of the American Astronomical Society (AAS), the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), and the Venus Exploration and Analysis Group (VEXAG). Alexandra L. Ratzlaff (PhD, Classical Archaeology) is a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem and a University Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Maritime Civilizations at the University of Haifa. She recently completed a two-year Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Haifa. In 2014, she received her PhD from Boston University. She has conducted fieldwork and research in Israel since 2004 at the Roman Fort at Yotvata, Tel Kabri, Achziv, Dor, Birsama, among other sites. Her research and publication projects focus on the Roman army, Roman and Byzantine ceramics, the Late Antique maritime economy and trade networks of the Mediterranean world.