

Archeologists unearth 3,300 year old complex in Israel

October 16 2014, by Bob Yirka

A team of archeologists working in Israel's Tel Burna dig site have unearthed the remains of a large stone complex dating back approximately 3,300 years. Information about the finding was presented at the recent European Association of Archaeologists' meeting held in Istanbul.

Initial examination of the ruins suggests the site was an ancient cult complex—a rather large one at that with side walls measuring up to 52x52 feet. Thus far [archeologists](#) have uncovered mask fragments (parts that covered the nose), connected cups (their purpose has yet to be discovered), scarabs (stone representations of the beetle typically used as an amulet) and very large vessels known as pithoi.

The relics suggest the site was use as a cult complex, likely dedicated to the worship of a god, though the researchers can't say with any certainty which one that might have been. The most likely candidate, they told the press recently, is the storm god Baal, who was worshiped by many Middle Eastern peoples during the time that the complex was active. Like many others, he was believed to be a fertility deity, one of the most important or popular of the time. Other gods have not been ruled out, including the war goddess Anat. Other evidence of worship was burnt animal bones, suggesting sacrificial rituals.

The connected cups are particularly intriguing as examples of them have been seen before—the ones found at the new dig site are believed to have come from Syria, due to their design. Though there is scant

evidence of their use or purpose, archeologists generally believe, the researchers report, that they were likely cultic objects. Because of the newness of the site, the artifacts have not yet been tested for residue analysis—the researchers are eager to find out what was held in the large pithoi, some of which were nearly as large as a full grown person—some at the site were sunken and some held smaller vessels inside of them.

The site has not been fully excavated yet and leaders of the excavation team noted that unlike most other excavation efforts, digging at Tel Burna, including the newly found complex, can be conducted by amateurs if they are so inclined to help out.

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