

EMORY

Program in Mediterranean Archaeology

Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies ~ MESAS



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*Understanding Biblical Women:
The Contributions of Archaeology and Ethnography*

Wednesday, March 7, 2012

7:30pm

Michael C. Carlos Museum, Reception Hall
Emory University

In this presentation I will focus on two important sources of information for reconstructing women's activities during the Iron Age (ca. 1200-586 BCE): archaeological remains from households in ancient Israel and Judah and ethnographic accounts from late 19th-early 20th century Palestine. I will begin by reviewing the accounts of bread baking in the Hebrew Bible; according to the biblical writers, everyday cooking activities in domestic contexts were performed by women, while bread baking in more specialized contexts – like the Jerusalem Temple – was done by men. I will then describe the process of transforming grain into bread during the Iron Age and examine the archaeological correlates for these activities. Ethnographic data, including late 19th-early 20th century photographs and accounts by pilgrims, western anthropologists, and local authors, reveal the gendered aspects of traditional cooking activities; this information will be used to suggest women's control of bread baking in antiquity. I will conclude by describing how women's lives may have been impacted by the professionalization of bread production by men in ancient times and in early 20th century Palestine and Transjordan.

Upcoming Lecture:

Wednesday, April 18

Ann Gunter

*Tracking the Frontiers of
the Hittite Empire*

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