

LAWRENCE E. STAGER Lawrence E. Stager spent the greater part of the year organizing and launching the archaeological expedition to Ashkelon, Israel, one of the great Mediterranean seaports of antiquity. The first of many seasons of investigation yielded remains from the Middle Bronze Age through the Crusader Period, including a church with frescoes and wall inscriptions, a Byzantine bathhouse (or bordello), several phases of the

Persian Period, Philistine houses and courtyards of the Iron Age, and Canaanite bread ovens and courtyards from the 13th century B.C. Work on the wealth of materials excavated from the first campaign continues in our laboratory at the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Esse, Associate Director and Oriental Institute Research Associate, in preparation for a lengthy monograph which we hope to have in press before beginning the second season of excavations in spring, 1986.

The first installment of a long-term study dealing with ancient Israelite society will be published in the fall of 1985 as the "Archaeology of the Family" in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260. There I examine changes in the highland frontier after 1200 B.C., as newcomers established hilltop villages, cultivated intermontane valleys, and pioneered new land for agriculture by terracing the slopes. I suggest that spatial patterning within villages, particularly multiple-family (*bet 'ab*) compounds, and certain toponyms were influenced by patrilineal kinship throughout the Iron Age. I select a few examples to illustrate some of the tensions which developed from the interaction of three key components in the structure of ancient Israelite society—kinship, clientship, and kingship. As the highland population continued to grow and monarchy became a reality, the frontier was effectively closed. Opportunities for acquiring new land in the traditional manner diminished. These circumstances created hardships for many unmarried males who had little hope of inheriting the family estate. They had to look elsewhere for patrons and positions. From the ranks of these noble "youths" came ready recruits for the military, the government, and the priesthood.