

NINO & Ancient Worlds Lunch Talk

A biography of an excavation: Ernst Sellin, Frans de Liagre Böhl, and the Austrian-German expedition to Tell Balata/Shechem 1913–1939

Felix Höflmayer & Agnes Woitzuck

It is not uncommon that scholars and institutions invest a considerable amount of time, money, and initiative in excavation projects that do not see a timely publication or any publication at all. Usually, the next generation of scholars takes care about the legacy data and tries to reconstruct stratigraphy, contexts, and dating of objects based on usually incomplete data. Only rarely the specific academic, but also political, circumstances that led to the specific project are encountered, although they often have a significant impact on which data has been recorded and which has been neglected. Additionally, the whereabouts of finds, documentation, and additional archival material are rarely reported, although also this kind of data is the result of an excavation project and might be helpful for future researchers.

We report on our ongoing studies of the archival material, still preserved documentation, and finds of the Austrian (1913–14) and German (1926–1939) excavations under the direction of the German theologian Ernst Sellin and its connections with Frans de Liagre Böhl and the Dutch Shechem committee. Except for some preliminary reports, the excavation was never finally published as Sellin's manuscript was destroyed during World War II. Documents and finds have so far been located in Austria, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, and the United States in more than a dozen different museums, universities, and archives. We present the biography of this excavation, describe the post-excavation itinerary of finds and documentation, and our plans for final publication.

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Ancient Worlds Lunch Talks (extra Talk, organised by NINO)

Time: Wednesday 14 May 2025, 13:00-14:00 hrs

Room: IAS Conference Room, HMO 0.28

AWLT: free pizza is served, and everyone is welcome to bring lunch

Wednesday 14 May 2025

A biography of an excavation, 1913–1939



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