

The Sea of Galilee Boat: A 2,000 Year Discovery

NOVEMBER 5, 2013

OZARK HALL AUDITORIUM, 6pm

Reception and Book Signing to follow,
sponsored by
the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies

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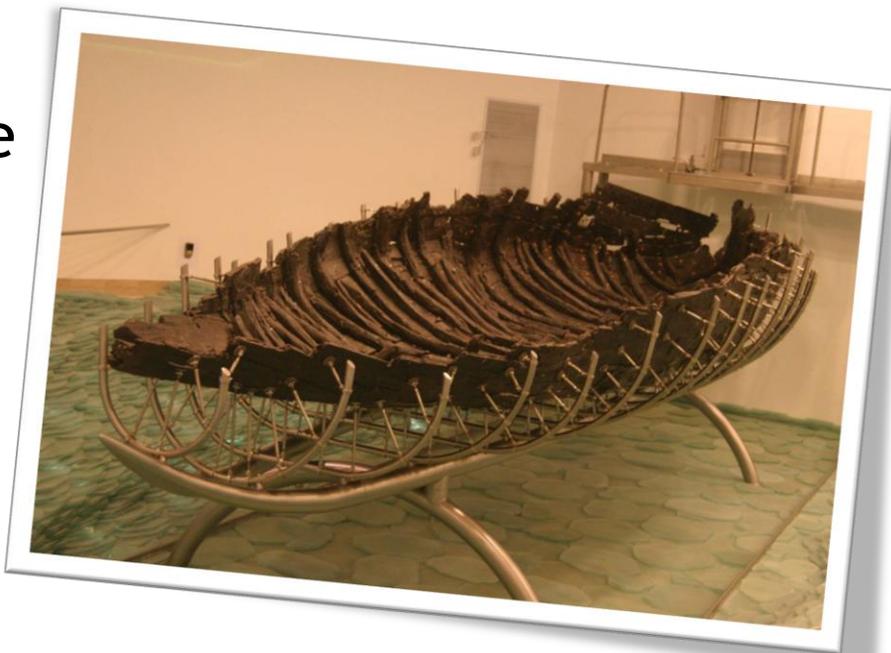
On a cold, cloudy day in early February 1985, Shelley Wachsmann, then resident nautical archaeologist for the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums, drove to Kibbutz Ginosar, an agricultural settlement near the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Two brothers, avid amateur archaeologists, had found a boat buried in the lake, its outlines revealed by receding lake waters.

The boat was "possibly ancient," according to the handwritten note placed on Wachsmann's

desk a day or two before. Nautical archeologist Wachsmann in 1986 led the Israeli team that excavated a fishing boat that may have plied the Sea of Galilee in the time of Jesus. Discovered by kibbutz members on the sea's muddy floor, the 26-foot-long vessel, built mainly of Lebanese cedar and oak, has been radiocarbon-dated to roughly 15 B.C. (give or take 85 years).

An arrowhead like those used by Roman archers in the First Jewish Revolt was found on the boat, leading to speculation that the vessel was used by Jewish rebels in the naval

battle of Migdal (birthplace of Mary Magdalene), when Roman soldiers slaughtered some 6700 Jews in 67 A.D. Although this "generic fishing boat" cannot be definitively linked to either the Gospel stories or the Jewish rebellion in Galilee, Wachsmann's engrossing account of its excavation and restoration, enlivened by photographs and drawings, provides a well-positioned window on the biblical past.



Professor Shelley Wachsmann (Texas A&M)

From 1976 to 1989 Wachsmann served as the Inspector of Underwater Antiquities for the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums. During that time he was directly responsible for the nautical heritage of Israel. He carried out numerous underwater archaeological surveys and excavations in the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Sea of Galilee. Among the projects he directed were the excavation of a Late Bronze Age cargo off the Carmel coast, probe excavations of a late fifth century BC wreck near Kibbutz Maagan Michael, a sixth century AD Byzantine wreck off Dor and the search for cannon jettisoned by Napoleon during his

In 1986 he directed the excavation of the Sea of Galilee Boat, a 2,000-year-old boat found in the Sea of Galilee near the ancient site of Migdal. At the completion of the excavation the boat was moved intact to a conservation pool at the Yigal Allon Museum at nearby Kibbutz Ginosar where it is now on exhibit.

Beginning in 1990, Wachsmann became Meadows Visiting Assistant Professor of Biblical Archeology in the Nautical Archaeology Program, Texas A&M University. In 1993 this Chair was converted to a tenure-track position for which Wachsmann was appointed and in 1999 he received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Since 2009 he has served as the Coordinator of the Nautical Archaeology Program.

In 2008 he became an Adjunct Scientist of the Institute for Exploration (IFE), and in 2011 an Academic Trustee of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA)

