

## **Early Bronze Age in southern Jordan - remarkable time in an unusual place.**

The Near East is an area not only very important for the history of culture, but also very vast and diverse. The history of the land legible thanks to many scientific analysis makes it one of the most significant for learning the history of mankind - from the moment representatives of our species left Africa app. 200 thousand years ago until the present times. The Early Bronze Age period in the Near East area is one of the most fascinating research problems in contemporary archaeology. Lasting for app. 1700 years (3700-1950 B.C.), the period abounded in events and cultural changes. During the Early Bronze Age the first urban centres appear, production technologies of various objects are developed (e.g. metalurgy) and long-distance trade flourishes. At that time important social changes repeatedly occurred in the lands of Egypt and Near East - the first kingdoms of spatial character appeared (Egypt in Predynastic, Archaic and Old Kingdom periods) and cities-states controlling smaller areas, a hierarchical structure of particular communities was shaped and gradually deepened, cults and funereal customs developed. Writing systems and the ideology of power and religion are developed and became a crucial factor of cultural existence. People's migrations are clearly visible and the influence of mobile nomadic groups on the functioning of especially the area of south Jordan, which in an environment of dynamically changing areas could not be a "white spot". Unfortunately, the state of research on the problems of the early Bronze Age in areas of the Levant is not uniform. That is why the main aim of our project is an attempt to establish the role of the region of southern Jordan in this important period. Through archaeological excavations at selected sites we will try to describe the stages of human activity in this period in the area of interest. As an example, we'll use the area covering the micro-region of At-Tafila city located in southern Jordan. Our goal will also be the answer to the question about the possible contacts of the region with Egypt and the rest of Levant which were the areas where at this time important changes were taking place and the state of research on Bronze Age seems to be much more advanced.

Thanks to already begun surface prospection, we know that this region gives a huge chance of finding answers to questions which bother archaeologists. It consists high number of archaeological sites dated by us for the Bronze Age. Therefore, key research problems will be the issues of settlement network and structure, external contacts and influences, architectonic and funereal traditions and ceramic and flint stone production during the Early Bronze Age. Our excavations will be also supported by specialized laboratory analysis, so that we will know the exact age of discovered artifacts as well as methods for their production and use.

The work of our project will also provide an important contribution to the protection of heritage and archaeological sites in the area, often underrated today, because of its relatively unspectacular character. They surely constitute the key to the development of scientific knowledge. The study will also let us to develop work in the coming years.