

India: Living Heritage at Risk

# ARCHAEOLOGY

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## The Maya and the End of Time

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## Making Money in Ancient China

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## Lost Churches of Medieval Sudan

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## Rescue of Turkey's Mosaics

**PLUS:**  
Ancient Southern BBQ,  
The First Bra, Bog Army,  
Cahokia Cup of Joe





## Mosaics of Huqoq

In June 2012, Jodi Magness of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill began her second season of excavation in the village of Huqoq, in Israel's lower eastern Galilee. There, in the remains of a Late Roman or Byzantine synagogue, she discovered an extraordinary mosaic depicting female faces flanking a medallion with Hebrew or Aramaic inscriptions. In another area of the floor, Magness uncovered an image of the Biblical

judge Samson placing torches between foxes' tails. Although archaeologists have found mosaics in three other synagogues in this area of the Galilee, the example from Huqoq is unprecedented—it's the earliest securely identified image of Samson in a synagogue in Israel. "This scene comes right from Judges 15:4," says Magness, "and shows Samson taking revenge on the Philistines, the Israelites' traditional enemy." It's also interesting that in the Wadi

Hamam synagogue only a few miles away, archaeologist Uzi Leibner of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem found a mosaic in 2008 that he thought might also depict Samson. By comparing the clothing and size of the figures—both are portrayed as giants—it's now possible to identify the Wadi Hamam image as Samson as well. The question remains, though, whether Samson had a special significance in this area of Israel.

—MALIN GRUNBERG BANYASZ

## Medieval Fashion Statement

When archaeologists pulled up the floorboards during extensive restoration work at Lengberg Castle in Austria, they found a space filled with dry organic material, including branches and straw, processed wood, leather, shoes, yarn, rope, and more than 2,700 textile fragments. Among the textiles were 17 linen shirts, a complete pair and a fragment of men's underwear, and four lace-decorated linen bras—which push back the earliest date for this type of women's undergarment more than 500 years. Using both their archaeological context—the fill layer was likely created during a fifteenth-century renovation of the castle—and radiocarbon analysis of fibers from two of the bras, Beatrix Nutz of the University of Innsbruck dated the garments to between A.D. 1390 and 1485. There are numerous medieval written sources that describe bras as "breastbags," but until this discovery no one had any idea what these garments looked like. According to Nutz, we also know from contemporary sources that women likely made the garments themselves and did not rely on male tailors. The discovery will enable archaeologists and clothing historians to learn more about tailoring by women.

—JARRETT A. LOBELL

