

Archaeologists Dig Up Fabric From King David and Solomon's Day

Israeli archaeologists have discovered fragments of "remarkably preserved" 3,000-year-old fabrics, leather and seeds dating to the era of the biblical kings David and Solomon.

This is the first discovery of textiles dating from the 10th century B.C. "and therefore provides the first physical evidence" of what residents of the Holy Land wore, said Erez Ben-Yosef, the lead archaeologist with the Tel Aviv University excavation team that did the dig.

The excavation, carried out in southern Israel at the ancient copper mines of Timna – believed by many to be the site of King Solomon's mines – took place in late January and February.

The textiles, just 5-by-5 centimeters in size, are the remnants of clothing, tents, ropes, cords and bags. They were preserved thanks to Timna's extremely dry conditions, the archaeologist said.

Ben-Yosef said the fabrics, which vary widely in weaving style, color and ornamentation, provide "new and important information" about the Edomites, the descendants of Esau who often fought against the Israelites and mined in Timna.

"Luxury-grade fabric adorned the highly skilled, highly respected craftsmen managing the copper furnaces," said Ben-Yosef. "They were responsible for smelting the copper, which was a very complicated process."

Vanessa Workman, a member of the excavating and analysis team,

said the Hebrew Bible is chock-full of references to fabrics and dyes. "Blue colors and green colors and red colors and what the high priest wore, the tabernacles. Linens, woolen fabrics."

Workman said the discovery at Timna "is an affirmation" of biblical texts. "It brings the desert culture of that period alive." {eoa}

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