

Historic discovery: Jews, Arabs related

The implication that long-feuding peoples share a common ancestry has developed into a political rift that threatens the study of potentially one of the greatest historical discoveries ever according to a leading biblical scholar.

David Freedman, professor of biblical studies at the University of Michigan, said that information on tablets being excavated in Ebla, Syria, may prove biblical accounts if they are backdated 500 or more years.

"For the first time, if this information is correct, we have authentic data for a very early period (2,600-2,400 B.C.) supported historically in relationship to the Bible," Freedman said.

References on the tablets to up to five ancient cities and the name of a king match biblical designations in Genesis 14 of the Old Testament, said Freedman, basing his evidence on conversations with the Ebla excavation's translator, Giovanni Pettinato of the University of Rome. Two of the cities reportedly mentioned both on the tablets and in the Bible are Sodom and Gomorrah, the ruins of which have never been found.

"What's important about that the

chronicling of Sodom and Gomorrah) is that after Genesis 14, in Genesis 19, Sodom and Gomorrah are wiped off the face of the earth and never rebuilt," Freedman said. "All of this happened in the lifetime of Abraham."

Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people, was also a Syrian progenitor, Freedman said. That deduction, which the Bible reiterates in Deuteronomy (26: 1-9), is apparently unacceptable to the Syrian government, he added, which has been accused of sequestering information on the tablets which tend to support the theory of common ancestry between Jews and Arabs, attested in the Bible.

Freedman said that cultural bias between the two nations permeates scholarly pursuits to the extent that an archaeologist who has been involved in a dig in Israel is considered to have sacrificed his or her objectivity and is no longer qualified to excavate in Syria.

Freedman's hypotheses are detailed in the December 1978 issue of the Journal "Biblical Archaeologist." If they are accurate, his theories would lend historical credibility to as old a portion of the Bible as has ever been factually documented.

Are the Sycamores out of their tree?

That zany Sycamore family is on stage again at Our Lady of Mercy High School.

The Sycamore's and their various eccentricities are the focus of "You Can't Take It With You," the Kaufman Hart play which plays at the high school at 8 p.m., Nov. 16-17.

"The Sycamores are a peculiar family," said Ronald Sill of the Mercy drama department.

"There's one normal daughter and everyone else has their own idiosyncrasies."

Mercy senior Lisa Bileti of West Bloomfield will take one of the leading roles, that of Penelope Sycamore. Ms. Bileti has appeared in Mercy's production of "Up the Down Staircase," and has served as student director in "Finian's Rainbow" and "Mame."

She travels with a children's theater group, "The Actors' Workshop."

Lisa Hane of Farmington Hills has the role of Martha Vanderhof. Ms. Hane, a senior, has appeared in Mercy's "Up the Down Staircase," "Hello Dolly" and "Finian's Rainbow."

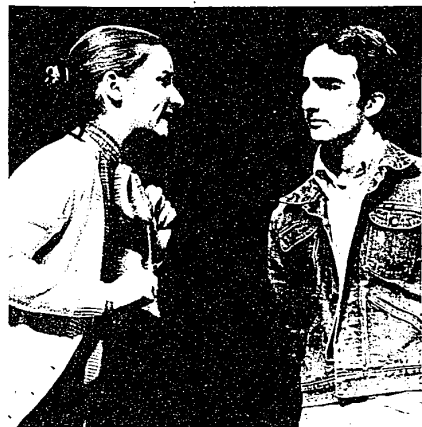
She has appeared in "Stop the World, I Want to Get Off" with the Macomb County Community College players and "The Philadelphia Story" at the Farmington Player Barn.

THE NORMAL member of the Sycamore family is played by Michelle Krasnewich. Ms. Krasnewich has

appeared in the Mercy productions of "Finian's Rainbow" and "Mame."

Tickets are \$2.25 at the door. For further information call the high school at 476-8020, ext. 223.

Mercy High is at 11 Mile and Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.



During rehearsals Lisa Hane as Grandma Sycamore conducts a serious discussion with Vinny Doyle.



Lisa Bileti plays Penny Sycamore, who's surrounded by an eccentric family.

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