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Walker, Doneva, "Classifying Ethnographic Photographs from Tall Hisban: Toward an Improved Process for Analyzing Old Photographs from Jordan" (2014). *Posters, Presentations, and Papers*. 30.

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Classifying Ethnographic Photographs from Tall Hisban

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this project is to come up with an improved process for classifying and analyzing hundreds of ethnographic photographs collected by LaBianca and his students during the original Heshbon Expedition (1971-1976) in Jordan. To this end, expedition photographs are being scanned and entered into the computer using NVivo, a commercial qualitative data analysis software. As photographs are being entered they are being categorized using two frameworks: the food system observation guide originally proposed by LaBianca (1990) and the “seven little traditions” framework proposed more recently by LaBianca & Witzel (2007). The findings resulting from this experiment in categorization will serve as the basis for coming up with an improved categorization scheme.

Seven Little Traditions

1. Local Level Water Management
2. Mixed Agro-pastoralism
3. Fluid Shared Commons
4. Residential Flexibility
5. Hospitality
6. Honor and Shame
7. Tribalism



REFERENCES

LaBianca, O. S. (1990). *Sedentarization and nomadization*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.

LaBianca, O. S., & Witzel, K. R. (2007). Nomads empires and civilizations. *On the Fringe of Society: Archaeological and Ethnoarchaeological Perspectives on Pastoral and Agricultural Studies*.

PROCEDURE

- Import photos
- Organize into folders
- Create nodes for categorization
- Code photos
- Annotate

PROGRESS TO DATE

Clear classification of photographs collected in the field makes it easier to interpret them more accurately. Nvivo has provided the means by which this goal can be attained. Creating an improved system for classifying ethnographic photos will ultimately lead to improved analysis of ethnographic photos in the future. The foundation for a simple and efficient system has been established. The goal is to continue to use the two frameworks of the food system observation guide and the “seven little traditions” in order to find the best way to classify these photos.