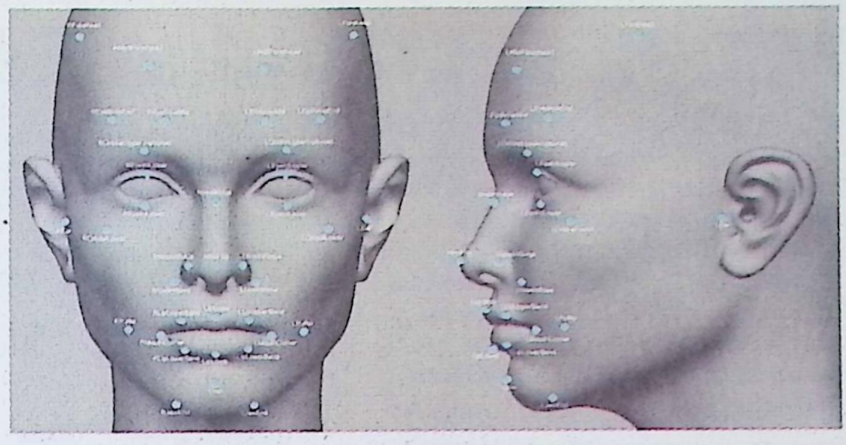
Never Forget a Face



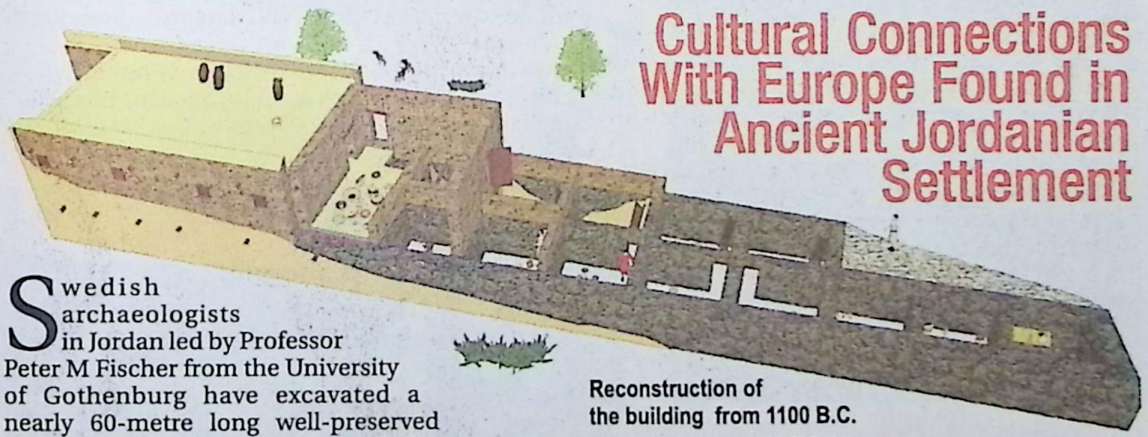
Do you have a forgettable face? Many of us go to great lengths to make our faces more memorable, using makeup and hairstyles to give ourselves a more distinctive look.

Now your face could be instantly transformed into a more memorable one without the need for an expensive makeover, thanks to an algorithm developed by researchers in MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL).

The algorithm, which makes subtle changes to various points on the face to make it more memorable without changing a person's overall appearance, was unveiled earlier this month at the International Conference on Computer Vision in Sydney.

The system could ultimately be used in a smart phone app to allow people to modify a digital image of their face before uploading it to their social networking pages. It could also be used for job applications, to create a digital version of an applicant's face that will more readily stick in the minds of potential employers. Conversely, it could also be used to make faces appear less memorable, so that actors in the background of a television program or film do not distract viewers' attention from the main actors, for example.

Cultural Connections With Europe Found in Ancient Jordanian Settlement



Reconstruction of the building from 1100 B.C.

PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Swedish archaeologists in Jordan led by Professor Peter M Fischer from the University of Gothenburg have excavated a nearly 60-metre long well-preserved building from 1100 B.C. in the ancient settlement Tell Abu al-Kharaz. The building is from an era characterized by major migration.

New finds support the theory that groups of the so-called Sea Peoples emigrated to Tell Abu al-Kharaz. They derive from Southern or Eastern Europe and settled in the Eastern Mediterranean region all the way to the Jordan Valley.

"We have evidence that culture from present Europe is represented in Tell Abu al-Kharaz. A group of the Sea Peoples of European descent, Philistines, settled down in the city," writes Peter Fischer. "We have, for instance, found pottery resembling corresponding items from Greece and Cyprus in terms of form and decoration, and also cylindrical loom weights for textile production that could be found in central and south-east Europe around the same time."

Tell Abu al-Kharaz is located in the Jordan Valley close to the border to Israel and the West Bank. It most likely corresponds to the biblical city of Jabesh Gilead. The Swedish Jordan Expedition has explored the city, which was founded 3200 B.C. and lasted for almost 5,000 years. The first excavation took place in 1989 and the most recent in autumn 2013. All in all, 16 excavations have been completed.