

The Institute of Archaeology

HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

MADABA PLAINS PROJECT REPORT: THE FIRST TWO WEEKS.

Andrews University's new archaeological excavation at Tell el-^CUmeiri in Jordan began June 18 with an exciting discovery according to Project Director Lawrence T. Geraty. Just beneath the surface Square Supervisor Lloyd Willis of Spicer College in India found the seal impression of the prime minister of Baalis, an Ammonite king known till now only in Jeremiah 40:14. This is the first extra-biblical reference to this monarch who reigned over central Jordan ca. 600 B.C. The expedition's Chief Archaeologist, Larry Herr of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary-Far East, and Artist Peter Erhard of Andrews University's Art Department collaborated on the preliminary drawing of this most important find.

During the first two weeks of the project the 75-member team of archaeologists, scientists, and volunteers was involved primarily in two activities: 1) A three-day orientation in which they were addressed by His Royal Highness Prince Raad ibn Zeid, U.S. Ambassador Richard Viets, and other government and academic officials. Much instruction concerning archaeological field methods as well as general information on Jordan was crammed into the available time. 2) Six days in which 64 randomly-chosen 6x6 meter squares from all over the city were dug to

a depth of only 10 cms. in order to collect potsherds and lithics from both the surface and topsoil. Preliminary analysis of the 400 full pails of pottery and some 50 flints indicates that Tell el-^CUmeiri was extensively occupied in the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age (the 3rd millennium BC), the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1900-1550 BC, the Patriarchal Age), the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200 BC, the Mosaic Age), and the Iron Age (ca. 1200-500 BC, the Period of the Israelite Monarchy). According to Larry Herr, the data so far collected suggests that the ancient site was one of the most important sites in the whole country east of the Jordan River during the Patriarchal Age and that during at least much of the Israelite Monarchy the site was controlled by the Ammonites.

In addition to the pottery, flints, and seal impression, many other interesting objects have been found, including a cylinder seal, several scarabs, fibulae, arrowheads, ostraca, human and animal figurines, and pieces of jewelry. These essentially surface finds suggest the probability that Tell el-^CUmeiri will yield a rich harvest of interesting data as excavation begins in earnest.

Toward the end of their 2nd week in Jordan four permanent fields of excavation were begun.

Larry Mitchel of Pacific Union College is supervising the field of the southern slope where the earliest occupation is expected. Doug Clark of Southwestern Adventist College heads the team at the western fortifications. The field containing the western gate of the inner city is being supervised by John Lawlor of Baptist Bible College and School of Theology in Pennsylvania while James Battenfield of Grace Graduate School in California is directing the field on the northern slope which extends toward the only spring in the region.

Øystein LaBianca, chairman of AU's Behavioral Sciences Department and staff anthropologist at the Institute of Archaeology, joined the team for its first two weeks in order to set up the ecology lab and help the regional survey team begin its work; these latter two activities are now being carried on by Patsy Tyner and Robert Boling, respectively. The ecology lab analyzes all the plant and animal specimens to see how they affected the social and political world and how ancient man related to

his natural environment. The regional survey is exploring an area within a 5 km. radius of the tell and has already discovered several ancient cemeteries, quarries, and towns, including several Ammonite towers characteristic of the region. It is also studying ancient water systems in the region with the hope that the new knowledge can better help Jordan to utilize its scarce water resources and increase agricultural yields.

A very frustrating delay in getting the team's equipment and supplies through customs delayed Don May's main goal of setting up the expedition's darkroom and photographic procedures, but with the help of his AU photography students, Larry Coyle and Jonathan Hearon, everything is functioning well now. Another AU professor, Glenn Johnson of the College of Technology, and his team have prepared a topographical map of the site and laid out all the excavation areas. Rachael Hallock heads an efficient kitchen crew who have produced excellent food. This has surely contributed to the good health experienced by all the staff members thus far.

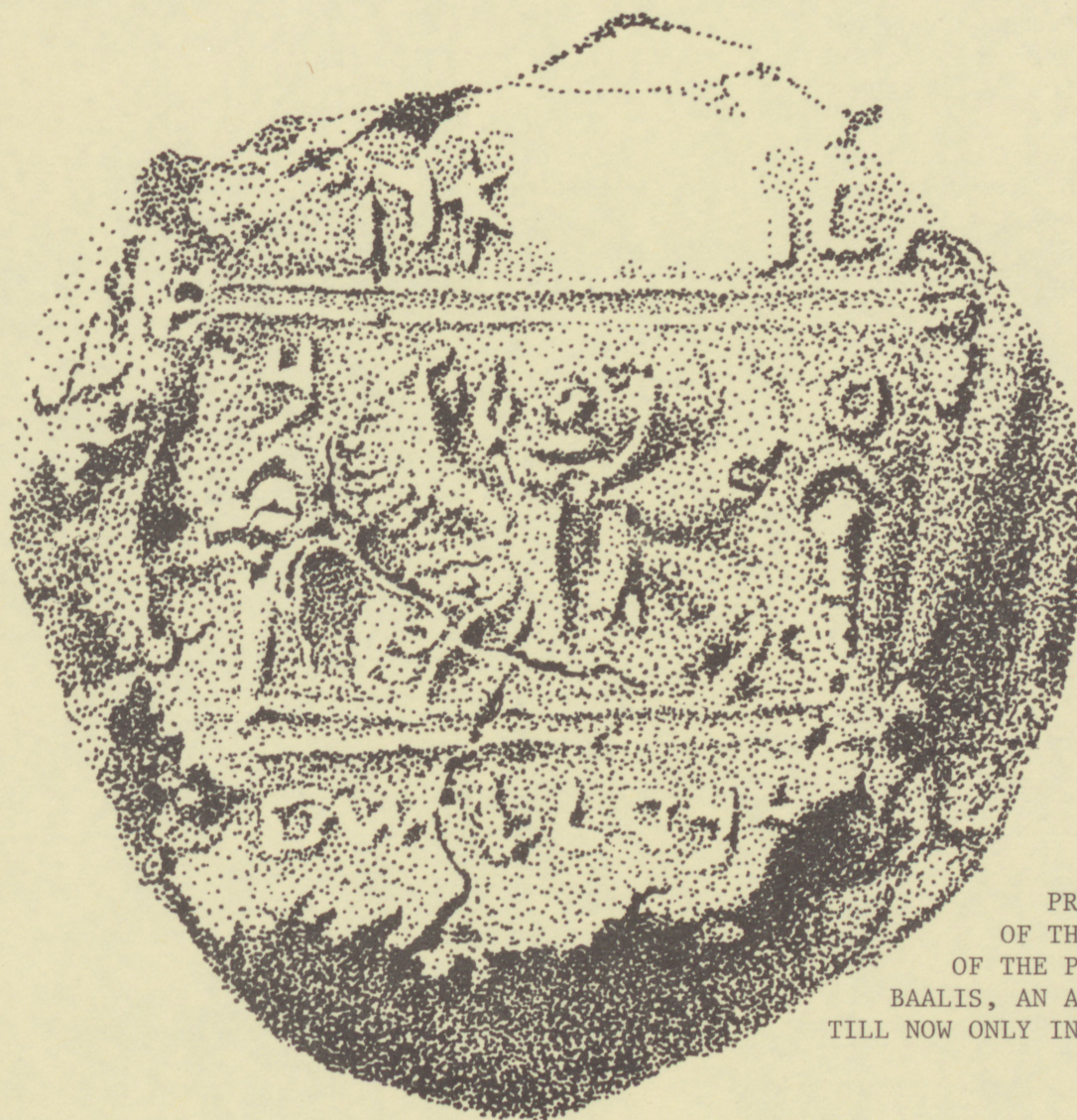
One innovation initiated by the new project that has attracted much favorable comment is the computerization of much of the data in the field. Larry Herr produced a field manual based on the team's previous experience digging at nearby Heshbon but incorporating many advances in method. James Brower, programmer and systems analyst for the Institute of Archaeology, has helped to produce the forms and software that is being tested for the first time.

The entire team is living and working out of the Baptist School in Amman, Jordan's capital city. Each day they travel by specially arranged busses to the digging site. Their day begins at 3:30 a.m. but they go to bed at 8 p.m.--taking advantage of the daylight hours and working in the field when it is coolest. Geraty thinks they have an

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Editor: J. Bjornar Storfjell
Editorial Assistant: Bea Bogdanovich

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PRELIMINARY DRAWING
OF THE SEAL IMPRESSION
OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF
BAALIS, AN AMMONITE KING KNOWN
TILL NOW ONLY IN JEREMIAH 40:14.

exceptionally compatible and well-qualified staff this year and is very optimistic that they will have a successful season. "Compared to Heshbon," he says, "our new site is incredibly rich and rewarding. I'm surprised no one seemed to know about its importance until our own Heshbon survey team under Robert Ibach discovered it more than a decade ago. It was probably missed by earlier explorers because no modern road led by the site."

The team is very busy but it is not all work. Their very first weekend in Jordan they travelled down the King's Highway visiting such important biblical sites as the Moabite capital, Kerak, the vicinity of Sodom, the Edomite capitals of Bozrah, Teman, and Selah, and

especially the hauntingly beautiful Petra, often called the "rose red city half as old as time."

Other Andrews University personnel on the team this year include faculty members Richard Davidson and Gillian Geraty, doctoral students Merling Alomia, James Fisher, John Hackwell, Colin House, David Merling, Zdravko Stefanovic, and Randy Younker, MDiv student Richard LaCom, and college students Elvira Ferreira, Cheryl Jacob, Yvonne Hackwell, Howard Krug, and Glenn Montgomery. Each student receives 12 hours of academic credit as part of the summer adventure in Jordan.

Geraty notes that none of the success so far would have been possible without the substantial financial backing of numerous generous donors to the project.

COMMITTEE FOR THE SUPPORT
OF THE
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Recently a new committee was formed on the campus of Andrews University. Called the "Committee for the Support of the Horn Archaeological Museum," its chief aim is to provide support for the reestablishing of the exhibit area of the museum. During the months of April and May David Merling, a doctoral student in archaeology, coordinated a "telethon" to contact AU Seminary alumni asking their help in reaching the goal. The results have been very gratifying, and we thank all those who have so generously sent contributions toward the renovation. It is our hope to complete this project by Alumni Weekend in 1985.

We still have a long way to go, and as a special "thank you" to those Newsletter readers who wish to contribute \$100 or more toward the renovation fund we will send you a replica of an ancient Palestinian oil lamp. This lamp will be a symbol of our friendship and appreciation of your support.

Donations to this fund should be made payable to the Horn Archaeological Museum and marked "TELETHON." We all look forward to the day when our collection can once again be displayed for our visitors, and thank all who are willing to support us in this goal.

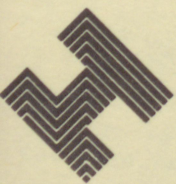
BIBLE LAND TOUR

A twelve-day tour of the land of the Bible, "In the Footsteps of Jesus," will be conducted by Dr. Robert M. Johnston, professor of theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University. The tour will depart from New York on August 19, 1984, and turn August 30.

The tour will visit Petra (in Jordan), Jericho, Ein Gedi, Qumran, Caesarea, Hebron, Beersheba, Mount Carmel, as well as Jerusalem and Galilee, and many other important sites.

Associate host on the tour will be Elder Clark McCall, pastor of the Campbell, California Seventh-day Adventist Church. The cost of the tour, round trip from New York, is \$1,395, which includes first-class hotels, comfortable motorcoach, and two meals per day, admission fees, and airfare.

For a brochure giving details you may write to Dr. Johnston at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104; or to A-1 Travel, Inc., 1105 St. Joseph Road, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103 (telephone toll-free outside Michigan 1-800-468-6868).



Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum

Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104

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