

## RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN JORDAN

In this article I would like not only to outline the discoveries which have been made in the country since the appearance of Vol. V of the Annual of the Department of Antiquities (Summer 1960) but to mention also the work of preservation and restoration which has been undertaken at more important ancient sites in Jordan, by means of the generous gift given to the Department of Antiquities by the present Government out of the American Wheat Endowment Fund. This generous gift, I can say without exaggeration, made the year 1960/1961 a memorable period in the history of the Department of Antiquities in the field of excavation, restoration and preservation.

Professor H. Kalayan, the architect of the Department of Antiquities of Lebanon, and Mr. G.R.H. Wright were invited to give advice in the work of restoration and preservation of the archaeological monuments in the country, and indeed their advice was invaluable to the Department of Antiquities.

As regards the chance archaeological discoveries which have been made during the above mentioned period, although they were few compared with the number made in the previous few years, owing to the bad drought which discouraged inhabitants from building and digging, they were nevertheless of the greatest importance to the archaeology of the country in throwing new light on its historical background.

In the field of excavations, eleven foreign archaeological expeditions carried out work in different parts of the country with the aid of the Department of Antiquities, taking advantage of the facilities given to them by the Antiquities Laws and Regulations. The names of the sites excavated and the leaders of the expeditions are as follows :

**Fater R. de Vaux** : Tell el Far'ah, Nablus District, on behalf of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem.

**Dr. Joseph Free** : Dothan, Jenin Sub. District, on behalf of the Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

**Dr. G. Ernest Wright** : Balata, Nablus District on behalf of the Drew-McCormick Seminary and the American School of Oriental Research.

**Dr. James Pritchard** : El Jib, Ramallah Sub-District, on behalf of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Berkeley.

**Dr. Henk Franken** : Deir Alla, Salt District on behalf of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, University of Leiden, Leiden.

**Father Robert North** : Tulleilat Ghassul, Madaba Dist., on behalf of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome.

**Prof. Kelso** : Beitin, Ramallah Dist., on behalf of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Miss Diana Kirkbride** : Dhaiqa and el Baidha, Ma'an Dist., on behalf of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

**Mr. Peter J. Parr** : Jericho and Petra, on behalf of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

**Prof. Paul Lapp** : Iraq el-Amir, Amman Dist., on behalf of the American School of Oriental Research, Jerusalem.

**Dr. Kathleen Kenyon** : Jerusalem, on behalf of the British School of Archaeology and École Biblique et Archéologique Française.

#### **CHANCE DISCOVERIES**

The discoveries made in the western bank of the Kingdom were supervised and recorded by myself, while for those from the Eastern Section, I relied on information in the files of the Department of Antiquities in Amman.

**Jerusalem** : During the excavation of foundations for a new building in the Espanol Nuns Convent in the Old City, a hoard of nineteen copper vessels was discovered at a depth of about 2.50 cm., below the surface. Several of the objects have inscriptions in the Mamluk Naskhi script of the 13th century A. D. written in two ornamented circles and eight squares. One of them has the name of the owner, Easa el Masri, inscribed in clear Muthaleth script, showing that the owner acquired these objects in the 16th century A. D.

The inscriptions on one of these vases read as follows :

(3) الدو(ا)لة النامية	(2) الاقبال الزائد	(1) العز الدائم
(6) الامر النافذ	(5) العلاقة الدائمة	(4) الكرامة الغالية
(1) <i>The Permanent glory</i>	(2) <i>The Excessive Prosperity</i>	(3) <i>The growing (State) ?</i>
(4) <i>The Precious Prestige</i>	(5) <i>The Permanent relation</i>	(6) <i>The (executed) order</i>

It is to be noted that these writings are merely ordinary religious blessings, and have no relation with history or Quran.

**Jerusalem** : Father Maurice Blondel Chief of St. Anne's Convent has brought to the Department of Antiquities a tombstone of basalt measuring 44cm., in length and 20cm., in width, inscribed with an epitaph of nine lines in the Cufic script dating to the 10th century A. D. The slab was discovered in the excavations in the courtyard of St. Anne's, and the epitaph reads as follows :

- (١) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
- (٢) قل هو الله أحد
- (٣) الله الصمد لم يلد
- (٤) ولم يولد ولم
- (٥) يكن له كفواً أحد
- (٦) هذا قبر جيهانة
- (٧) بنت بشر (?) ماتت
- (٨) في شهر رمضان
- (٩) سنة احدى وثلثين وثلثمئة

(1) Basmala<sup>1</sup> (2) Say : He, Allah is one (3) Allah is He on whom all depend (4) He begets not, nor He is Begotten (5) And none is like him (6) This is the tomb of Jihaneh (7) daughter of Bushr (?) She died (8) In the month of Ramadhan (9) in the year 331.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Quran Text, el Ekhlas, Chapter 112 revealed at Mecca.

**Jerusalem** : A shaft-grave with two arcosolii built of limestone of the 1st/2nd century A. D., was found on the land of Lt. Farah Mustaklem and his partners while constructing a row of shops at Salah - Dine St. just behind the building situated opposite the American School of Oriental Research Premises.

The objects found in the grave included three gold earrings, two beads, two glass bracelets, one glass ring, and a glass vase.

**Jerusalem** : During the excavation of foundations for the new building of the Y. M. C. A. beside its present building in the Nablus Road, a 1st/2nd century A. D. shaft-grave was discovered. The only object found was an intact pottery jar.

**Jerusalem** : A massive wall about 18 metres in length running from south to north and turning east at the northern corner was discovered accidentally in the course of digging foundations for a school in the land situated to the south of Haram - Sherif inside the Dung Gate.

The Department of Antiquities undertook the clearance of the northern corner of the wall in order to establish its date, but unfortunately, the work had to be terminated before this was done. Another season's work was carried out by the Department with the collaboration of Dr. Kathleen Kenyon, Director of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

Two five-meter trenches were cut across the northern part of the wall, which runs parallel to the south wall of Haram. Between the wall and the Haram a paved street was exposed, apparently earlier than the wall and cut by it. A pavement was also discovered on the south, some four meters lower, and apparently formed part of a magnificent colonnaded enclosure. One column is still standing in position, to its full height, though most of the paving-stones of the court have been removed. Portions of the building must have been covered with marble, since many broken fragments have been found.

The plan of the building had not been established, when work had to be suspended. It was destroyed probably in Ommayad times, but whether it belongs to the Early Arab or Late Byzantine period is uncertain. It is very much hoped that the work can be resumed in the near future.



**Hizmech** : Jerusalem Sub - District : A 1st/2nd century A. D., shaft grave was discovered accidentally in the course of digging foundation for a new building. The tomb had been robbed anciently but broken pottery lamps representing the period were relieved.

**El Adasieh** : Jerusalem Sub - District : A chambered - tomb of 1st/2nd century A. D., was discovered by the Jordan army while converting a cave into military purposes. Pottery lamps of the period were recovered.

**Bethlehem** : While widening the Street of Nativity, immediately opposite the Sansur Cigarette Factory, a stretch of about nineteen meters of stone water pipes has been discovered. Some of them bore inscriptions. Such stones have already been found, and more than a dozen similar inscriptions are well known from the edition of Father Germer Durand<sup>1</sup> republished by Clermont Ganneau<sup>2</sup> and Charles Wilson<sup>3</sup>. They bear the names of the Roman centurions who built the Syphon. The previously discovered inscriptions have the names of the Consul L. Clemens, giving a date of A. D. 195 during the reign of Septimius Severus, but two of the newly discovered inscriptions bear the name TITINI which is similar to that first discovered by Germer Durand and read by him TITIANI p.<sup>4</sup> For this reading Father P. Vincent substituted TITINII<sup>5</sup> and father Benoit<sup>6</sup> confirms the last reading, adding that he doubts whether the final P of Germer - Durand can be confirmed.

**Bayyoudh, Nablus** : During the levelling - up of land belonging to es - Sayad Rafiq el - Masri, situated at a distance of about twenty meters to the northwest of his house at el Bayyoudh, on the southern slopes of the northern mountain at Nablus, labourers chanced upon a number of Ommayad pottery lamps. The discovery was immediately reported to the Department of Antiquities, and the investigation of a dump of fine black burnt soil in which the lamps were alleged to have been found was commenced. A chambered tomb oriented north - south about 4×450 m in size was discovered, built up of

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<sup>1</sup> Germer Durand, *Echos d'orient*, IV (1900/1) 9-11, 134-136 ; 201 (with photos ; V. 1901/2) 140 ; VII (1904) 260.

<sup>2</sup> Clermont - Ganneau, *Rec. d'Arch. Or.* 4 (1901, P. 119 ss ; *PEF. Qu. Stat.* 1905 ; 75 ss.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Wilson, *P.E.F. Qu. Stat* 1905, 75 ss ; *Revue Biblique*, 1901, 107 ss ; 1902, 280, *CIL III Supplementum*, parts II page 2328 No. 14383.

<sup>4</sup> Germer Durand, *Echos d'Orient*, IV, 1900/1,10).

<sup>5</sup> *The Revue Biblique*, 1901, P. 108, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> In a letter to the Department of Antiquities.

dressed limestone, but plastered on the outside with ash and lime. The entrance was through a narrow doorway approached from the outside by a descending flight of three steps. Within the tomb a further two steps lead to the hall. The lintel and jambs of the doorway were in situ, but the stone door was missing. The jambs and lintel were identical to those of Roman tombs elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. The ceiling of the chamber had been badly destroyed by the effect of a strong earthquake, perhaps that of 747 A. D., and this made the clearance of the cave rather difficult, as the major inner part of it lies under the street, and in the foot-hill of the mountain. But despite this, two sarcophagii in the eastern side of the chamber, another in the western, and a loculus in the north western corner were cleared. The contents of the sarcophagii and loculus had been thoroughly rifled while in the hall there were more than a hundred skeletons completely disturbed, presumably the work of tomb robbers, and frequent reuse. However about ten glass tear and perfume bottles, and one pottery lamp, and the rim and shoulder of a jar of the late Byzantine period were recovered, while more than forty-five pottery lamps and one intact pottery jar with lid of the Ommayad period were also found, in addition to a collection of iron and glass bracelets, beads, Kohl stick and about three baskets of sherds. There were also four decayed and illegible coins, one of which has Roman characters.

It can be assumed from the door-way and the coins that this tomb was built in the 1st/2nd century A.D., and then reused in late Byzantine and Ommayad times. But unfortunately all the contents of the Roman and Byzantine periods had thoroughly disappeared owing to the repeated use of the tomb in later periods.

**Tell Mitlib, Jericho** : The Department of Antiquities undertook the excavation of the piece of land to the west of Tell Mitlib and separated from it by the main road which originally had been cut through the Tell. A pavement of coloured mosaic with geometrical figures of the 6th/7th century A.D., was discovered at a depth of two meters below the surface. Unfortunately the work had to be suspended at the end of the financial year before the excavation had been completed. It is hoped that another season's work will be carried out in the future in order to complete the excavation.

**Orif : Nablus Sub - District** : A hoard of Ommayad golden coins was discovered by the children of the Village, nineteen of which were acquired by the Officer Commanding Nablus Sub - District and given to the Department of Antiquities on the 30th of June 1960 (see Article on page 76).

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<sup>1</sup> G.W.L. Harding, Roman Family Vault at Jebel el Jofeh. *Q.D.A.P.* XIV; Dr. Awni Dajani, Herodian tomb at el Badhan, *A.D. A.J.* Vol. I; A Chamber Tomb at Jerash referred to in *A.D.A.J.* Vol IV (unpublished).

**Sa'ir : Khalil Sub - District** : A Middle Bronze Age tomb was discovered by one of the inhabitants of the Village, and about ten Scarabs and a few sherds representing the period were brought to the Department by the digger.

**Kh. Zif : Khalil Sub - District** : In the course of converting some of the ancient caves situated to the west of Kh. Zif and to the north of Tell Zift itself to military purposes by the Jordan Arab Army, a Roman tomb of the 1st/2nd century A. D. Was discovered.

The tomb consisted of a main hall of approximately 5.20 m square oriented North to South and approached through a narrow door-way, the stone door of which was missing. In the northern part of the hall there was a platform very simply cut in the rock of the inner wall of the cave upon which the broken pieces of a sarcophagus was found. On both the east and west sides of the hall were two small chambers, each containing a shaft grave with two arcosolii. Very few objects of the period were recovered owing to the fact that the cave had been opened and robbed anciently. Beside the main hall from the east there was another cave oriented east to west and containing three loculii in the northern, three in the western, and three in the southern sides of the cave, but their contents were found turned over and robbed anciently.

**Amman** : In the course of excavations carried out at Jebel el Qala'ah, the Department came upon a quadrangular altar decorated on all four sides as follows : —

**Side A** : Eagle standing with outspread wings, looking to the right, holding a crown in its beak. This is the symbol of the highest God, Baalshamin, "the Master of the Skies" of the Semites, identified with Zeus Hypsistos by the Greco-Romans.

**Side B** : Bull walking, This can be understood as an animal for sacrifice.

**Side C** : Man leading a ram, again an animal for the sacrifice.

**Side D** : Male bust with a radiate nimbus, beneath a crescent. This is the combination of two divine figures ; the radiate bust is the sun, Helios, and the crescent is the symbol of the moon, Selene.

The front of the altar is the side decorated with the eagle, toward which the bull and the ram are moving.

The altar is dedicated to the High God Baalshamin and his two assessors, the sun and the moon. This triad of deities is well known ; two parallels are : —

<sup>1</sup> See Fig. 1 Pl. XXIII.



An altar from Tyros<sup>1</sup>, with the eagle in front, and the figures of the sun and the moon on the two sides.

An altar from the Jebel Druze<sup>2</sup>, with the eagle on the front, the figures of the sun and the moon on the back.

This altar ranges in date from the 1st to 3rd. Centuries A. D., and Dr. Dajani has suggested that it might be the altar of the Roman Temple situated a few meters to the East of the Jordan museum on Jebel el - Qala'ah.

**Beitrawi : Zerka Sub - District** : In the course of cutting a new road between Zerka and Sukhneh in the western slopes of the hill where the ruins of **Beitrawi** lie, labourers of the Public Works Dept. found an Early - Middle Bronze tomb constructed of stones. Pottery vessels were recovered, but unfortunately no drawings or photographs were made and the labourers removed every thing before the arrival of the representative of the Department. Dr. Dajani Director of Antiquities comments that this is the first tomb of Early Bronze - Middle Bronze date constructed of stones to be found.

**Amman** : A Roman Tomb of 2nd/3rd Century A. D., was discovered in the course of digging foundations on Jebel el - Jofeh, near the Iron Age II Tomb discovered in 1959 (A.D.A.J. Vol. IV). It contained the usual funerary objects of this period.

**Amman** : An early Iron Age tomb was discovered at Jebel el - Nuzhah in the course of cutting a new road. Animal figurine, saucers, lamps and Jugs were recovered.

**Irbid** : An early Iron Age tomb was discovered in Street No. 7 and produced pottery objects of the period.

### Restoration and Preservation

In the field of restoration and preservation, the Department of Antiquities directed its full attention to the most important ancient sites of tourist interest. Most of its efforts were concentrated on restoring the Roman Theatre in Amman, and it succeeded in completing the major part of this work, so that for the first time in nineteen centuries that monument had restored to it some of its original life and purpose. About six or seven international groups have held performances in it, and it has now become an important centre for public festivals in the heart of the Capital. The work is still going on, and it is hoped that the Department will be able to complete its restoration within the next few years.

In addition to this the Department carried out the removal of the huge heaps of soil and debris which had accumulated on the walls of the Roman Citadel on Jebel el - Qala'ah during the past ages, and which had hidden the major parts of the walls,

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Cumont, Syria, VIII, 1927, PP. 163-167, Pl. XXXVIII.

<sup>2</sup> M. Dunand, Le Musée de Soueïda (BAH, 20) Paris, 1934, PP. 22 s., No. 19.



and also removed a good part of the debris from the southeastern sides of the Citadel. It is hoped that when the necessary funds are available it will be possible to resume the work of uncovering walls completely in accordance with the scheme laid down for the project.

In Jerash, the Department cleared the Roman street running west from the Roman bridge through the Tetrastyle, and leading to Kh. el Kittah. It also uncovered the steps of the Artemis Temple, and completed the rebuilding of the stage of the Southern Theatre.

In Petra the work was concentrated on restoring the fallen column of the Khazneh, rebuilding the Roman Monumental Gate, and clearance of the Roman theatre. Also useful work was done in clearing and building up the paths to the high place and the Deir, so making these monuments very accessible to visitors.

For Kh. el-Mafjer, the palace of the Omayyad Caliph Hisham ibn Abd el-Malik, the Department has prepared a scheme to be carried out in stages for restoring and re-erecting the fallen columns of the main hall of the baths and re-roofing the hall in order to protect the mosaics from the weather, which is beginning to threaten them. The first step already completed was to rebury the mosaic under 30 cms of sand and 15 cms of soil to protect them from falling stones and the feet of the workmen during the work.

Four columns with their capitals out of sixteen have so far been rebuilt to their full length, using the original stones wherever possible. The stones used have been collected from the debris removed in the course of the excavation of the palace from 1935 to 1948, but the task will be more difficult next season when stone has to be found for the remaining twelve columns. It is possible that we shall have to go back to Kh. es-Samra — the original quarry from which stone for the palace was obtained — situated at a few kilometers to the north of the Palace, to cut the new stones for the work of restoration.

The Department has also completed restoring the Mihrab of the main Mosque at the Palace and has made further excavation to determine the limits of the labourers' settlement excavated by Dr. Dajani in 1957. It has succeeded in determining the limits on the northern and eastern sides, while the western limits have not yet been established.

In addition to the above, it has removed a large heap of debris situated between the main hall of the Palace and the main hall of the baths with the hopes of finding a connection between the two; however no connection was revealed.

The Omayyad Aqueduct at Nuweimeh also received the attention of the Department, and all fallen stones have been replaced and the dangerous parts rebuilt. The walls and arches have been strengthened by applying cement to the cracks between the courses while the ceilings of the arches have also been coated with cement.

The walls of Jerusalem have also received the attention of the Government and since 1956 an annual allotment had been made in the budget of the Department for their preservation. About eight thousand sq. meters in the area situated between the Golden Gate and the Citadel have been strengthened by applying cement to weak places, and in the current year's budget a further sum has been allotted, so it is hoped to resume the work shortly.

The Department has also concerned itself with the Arab Palaces in the Eastern Desert and in this connection has prepared a scheme to be carried out in stages for their restoration and preservation.

The work of restoring Qasr Kharaneh, Qasr Amra and Qasr Mushetta has been begun during the past year, and it is hoped that a further season's work will begin in the very near future on these and other Palaces.

**Farah S. Ma'ayeh**

