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HESHBON EXPEDITION

THE SECOND CAMPAIGN AT *TELL HESBÂN* (1971)

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The first campaign at *Tell Heshbân* was carried out in 1968,¹ and the second season was planned for the summer of 1970. The outbreak of the first phase of the Jordanian civil war in June of that year, however, forced a cancellation of the expedition, although some staff members, including the director, were already in Amman and most others were en route to Jordan. Rescheduled for the next summer, the second campaign was successfully conducted from July 5 to August 20, 1971.

Heshbon's history from literary sources,² and a description of *Tell Heshbân* and its geographical location³ have already been covered. For this reason these will not be discussed in this report.

Organization

Andrews University was again the chief sponsor of the expedition, but sizable subventions were made by Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the American Center for Oriental Research in Amman (ACOR).⁴ Smaller contributions came from several private individuals. A word of thanks is due to all those who, through their financial support, made the expedition possible and thus shared in its success.

The headquarters were in the American Community School

¹ Preliminary reports of the first campaign were published in the *AUSS*, 7 (1969), 97-239 (henceforth referred to as "Heshbon 1968"); *BA*, 32 (1969), 25-41; *RB*, 66 (1969), 395-398.

² W. Vyhmeister, *AUSS*, 6 (1968), 158-177.

³ See "Heshbon 1968," pp. 97, 98.

⁴ Upsala College, East Orange, N. J., was to be a co-sponsor of the 1970 campaign and shared in the expenses of that aborted expedition.

on the western outskirts of Amman. The school was graciously lent to the expedition by the school board through the good offices of its chairman, Richard Undeland of the United States Embassy. It provided excellent facilities for housing the 50 staff members and kitchen personnel, and for the various archaeological headquarters activities. Four classrooms served as dormitory-style bedrooms and the large octagonal auditorium as a dining room. An office was provided for the director and the registrar of objects and a large classroom was used by the architects, pottery registrar, and anthropologists. A spacious janitor's closet was converted into a darkroom. A kitchen was present on the premises and the large open inner courtyard was used for washing, reading, and cutting pottery.

The daily program was similar to that of the 1968 campaign. This time, however, transportation to and from the *tell* was provided by a 40-seater bus hired from the De La Salle College in Amman.

The staff of 51 consisted of 40 overseas members and 11 Jordanians. The foreigners, of whom nearly 20 were graduate students, came from the United States of America, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Britain, and Norway. An instructor and seven students of the University of Jordan, and two officials and one former inspector of the Department of Antiquities represented the host country.

The director of the expedition was again Siegfried H. Horn. He had served as the director of the ACOR during the preceding six months and had made all preparations for the dig. Roger S. Boraas was once more the expedition's chief archaeologist. Of other 1968 staff, however, only a limited number were again present. Only one of the four previous Area supervisors returned to Heshbon in 1971. This placed an additional burden on the chief archaeologist who was responsible for coordinating all field work and supervising the students' training program. In the following list staff members are mentioned in connection with the Areas in which they spent most of their time, although a few shifts of assignments took place during the season.

Area A, on the summit of the acropolis where the remains of

a Christian church had been discovered in 1968, was supervised by Dorothea Harvey. Her associate was Benjamin C. Chapman and the Square supervisors were Rahab Hadid, Marvin Meyer, Joyce Miller, Hussein Qandil, Ghassan Ahmad el-Ramahi, and Udo Worschech.

In Area B, on the shelf below and south of the acropolis, which consisted of only one Square in 1968, the work was expanded by three new Squares. The Area supervisor was James A. Sauer, who was also the expedition's pottery expert and responsible for all pottery reading. His associate was Carney E. S. Gavin and the Square supervisors were Adeb Abu-Schmais, Andy Glasbergen, Larry Herr, Taysir Islim, G. Arthur Keough, Nabil Khairy, and Philip Post.

In Area C, on the western slope of the *tell*, the work was continued in two of the four Squares excavated in 1968 and two new Squares were opened during the present season. Henry O. Thompson served again as supervisor. His associate was Ralph O. Hjelm. Square supervisors were Charles Armistead, Samir Ghishan, Robert Ibach, Bonita Meyer, Nabil Salim Qadi, and William H. Shea.

Work was continued in only the northernmost of the three Squares opened in Area D in 1968. However, two new Squares were added in the north to connect Area D, located on the southern slope of the acropolis, with Area A. The Area supervisor was Lawrence T. Geraty and his associate was Gerhard F. Hasel. Serving as Square supervisors were George van Arragon, Miriam Boraas, John Lorntz, Lutfi Ostah, and Lina Sa'adi.

Areas E and F were Roman-Byzantine cemeteries. Area E was on the eastern slope of *Gourmeyet Heshbân*, the hill separated from *Tell Heshbân* on the west by the *Wadi Tala'*, and the cemetery of Area F on the western slope of the southern extension of *Tell Heshbân*. Excavations in both Areas were new enterprises, supervised by S. Douglas Waterhouse. His assistants for the major portion of the season were Eugenia Nitowski and Wayne Stiles. Several other staff members were, however, assigned to him on a rotational basis.

Julia Neuffer, a professional editor who plans to assist in the

final publication of the excavations, worked in all Areas in order to familiarize herself with the various aspects of the excavation sites and their peculiar problems.

Bert De Vries was once more on the surveying staff, joined by architect Carl H. Droppers. This smoothly working team completed the survey of the *tell* begun in 1968 and drew a contour map (see Fig. 1). They also made Plans and Elevations of all architectural remains as these were excavated, and were frequently called upon to provide levels for various excavated features.

The staff photographers were Alvin Trace and Mary Bachmann, the latter chiefly in the capacity of darkroom technician. Since the field work was expanded in 1971 over the previous season and many more objects were found, the photographers were kept extremely busy. Udo Worschech, besides working as a Square supervisor in Area A, was responsible for color photography.⁵

Robert M. Little, the 1968 expedition's anthropologist, was able to join the present expedition for only a brief time and helped with the excavation of the skeletal material from two tombs. Øystein Labianca was responsible for all bone material found on the *tell* and also helped in the tomb Areas as much as his time permitted.

The Department of Antiquities, which through Director-General Mansour Bataineh issued an excavation permit, was most helpful in lending one of its officials, Mohammad Murshed Khadija, to serve very efficiently as the expedition's foreman. Through his friendliness he endeared himself to all staff members, and his leadership qualities made him a most valuable member of the organization. Hussein Qandil, an inspector of antiquities and an archaeologist in his own right, was assigned to the expedition as the department's representative. Thanks are also due to Mr. Bataineh for having secured a permit for the expedition's geologist to make a geological survey of the *Heshbân* area and travel freely throughout that part of the country. Mr.

⁵ All photographs reproduced on Pls. I-XVI, except where other credit is given, are the work of the staff photographers of the Heshbon expedition.

Bataineh also kindly assisted the expedition in obtaining permission from the proper authorities to make aerial photographs of *Tell Heshbân* (see below).

Hester Thomsen was once more in charge of all pottery registration, an exacting task this season because the expedition's pottery expert saved more than 22,000 sherds for further study. She was assisted by four full-time pottery washers, one of whom also operated the rock saw to cut all pottery indicators (rims, handles, bases) in order to obtain their profiles.

Kathleen Mitchell was secretary to the director and registrar of finds. She cleaned the objects as they were discovered and entered them in the registry book and on cards. This was a formidable task in view of the fact that about 900 objects were found, three times as many as in 1968.

The camp director was Marlyn Chapman, and her daughter Judy served as messenger girl on the *tell* and helped in numerous other capacities especially at headquarters. Mohammad Adawi, the major-domo of the ACOR and cook of many American expeditions, served us again in the same capacity. He had four assistants. Two young Americans, David Undeland and Tim Smith, whose parents lived in Jordan, joined the expedition and made a fine contribution. The medical needs of the staff and workers were cared for by W. Shea, a physician who served as a Square supervisor in Area C.

Reuben G. Bullard, a geologist of the University of Cincinnati who for several years has been on the core staff of the Gezer expedition besides serving as geological advisor to other expeditions on the West Bank and Cyprus, made a geological survey of *Tell Heshbân* and its surrounding territory. Although other commitments limited the time he could devote to the Heshbon expedition to two weeks preceding the official excavations, he was able to identify approximately 60 kinds of stones used as material for buildings and domestic utensils. He also discovered several quarries from which the ancients procured building stones as well as sites from which they obtained clay for bricks and pottery.⁶

⁶ R. Bullard, *AUSS*, 10 (1972), 129-141.

It should also be mentioned that after long negotiations with the civil aeronautics board and the military authorities of Jordan, we were granted a permit to make aerial photographs of *Tell Heshbân*. Since aerial photos frequently reveal topographical features not noticeable from the ground, these pictures were highly desirable. During a flight in the early morning of August 12, the staff photographer, Alvin Trace, took a series of black-and-white as well as color pictures. The plane used was a Piper Cub rented for that purpose from the Royal Jordanian Aero Club and piloted by one of the club's flight instructors. Pl. I:A gives a sample of the resultant pictures.

All legible coins of the 1968 and 1971 seasons have been identified by Abraham Terian.⁷

*Aims*⁸

In Area A a monumental Byzantine building identified as a Christian church had been partly excavated in four Squares opened in 1968. The apse in the east, the northern outside wall, a row of three column bases, and an underlying wall separating the nave from the northern side aisle had been excavated by the end of the first season. Work in all four Squares was continued and two more Squares were opened in 1971 in order to pursue the western and southern extremities of the church, and to discover whether it had been built on earlier remains or on bedrock.

Area B in 1968 consisted of one Square, a trial shaft, to ascertain, if possible, the sequence of occupational strata existing on the *tell*. Here were found the remains of a deep wall. In the northern part of the Square a lime kiln had been intersected and a deep fill containing much late Iron II (7th-6th cent. B.C.)

⁷ A. Terian, *AUSS*, 9 (1971), 147-160. His 1971 coin article is scheduled for a future number of the *AUSS*.

⁸ The strategy, methods, and techniques employed were essentially the same as in the previous season and their description needs therefore no repetition (see "Heshbon 1968," pp. 110-117). It may be repeated here that the letters A-F stand for Areas A-F; the first numeral after these letters, for the number of the Square referred to; and the following numeral preceded by a colon to the locus number; hence, A.3:14 means Area A, Square 3, Locus 14, while D.6 refers merely to Area D, Square 6.

pottery⁹ encountered. The aim for this season was to clean out the kiln (some of whose stone and dirt contents had been washed into the Square by three winter rains), to continue the excavation of Square B.1 in depth, and to open three additional Squares in hopes of further illuminating the *tell's* occupational strata.

It had been originally hoped that Area C on the western slope of the *tell* would intercept any city wall the *tell* may have possessed. This expectation met disappointment. Instead, a thick layer of accumulated debris of Ayyūbid/Mamlūk times was encountered. By the end of the 1968 season, however, building remains of the Early Byzantine and Late Roman periods were hit in Square C.1. It was therefore decided to continue the work in this Square as well as in C.4 where in 1968 a large cistern had been cleaned and walls of an impressive Ayyūbid/Mamlūk building uncovered. A new Square (C.5) was opened west of C.1 to ascertain whether the lower slope might contain remains of a city wall, and later another new Square (C.6) was opened east of C.4.

The excavations of Area D, where a southern ascent to the acropolis had been discovered in 1968 and Islamic structures in Squares D.1 and D.2, were planned to join this Area with Area A in order to find the connection between the Byzantine church and the later Islamic buildings on the summit of the *tell*. For this purpose two new Squares (D.5 and D.6) were opened, north of Square D.1 and directly south of Area A.

That the territory surrounding *Tell Ḥesbān* contained ancient cemeteries had been well known for a long time, and many opened Roman and Byzantine rock-cut tombs were visible on adjacent hills. However, during the last two years the villagers of *Ḥesbān* had discovered some new tombs which had evidently contained enough valuable objects to justify their continued search. They were rewarded with finding a large number, among which were two of rather unique architectural design. One was a large family tomb of the 1st cent. A.D. whose opening was closed with a rolling stone, the first such tomb found east of

⁹ This pottery was published by E. N. Lugenbeal and J. A. Sauer in *AUSS*, 10 (1972), 21-69.

the Jordan River. Another somewhat later tomb had a swinging door of solid stone. To study these clandestinely excavated tombs and discover any others which had so far escaped the recent tomb robbers, a team was put to work in Areas E and F whose locations have already been described. Area F proved to be the most productive.

Accomplishments¹⁰

Following this Introduction are the excavation reports written by the Area supervisors. Summarily stated, these reports provide the following picture:

Area A: It has become clear that the Byzantine church was a typical basilica-type structure consisting of a nave separated from two side aisles by rows of columns. Four column bases of the northern row and two of the southern have been found *in situ* (although two of the northern ones showed slight dislocations), as well as five others dislocated in the ruins of the building. Consequently, the church had at least six columns in each of the two rows. Since the western part of the building has not yet been excavated, neither has its original length been ascertained nor its entrance uncovered. It has been established, however, that the northern and (possibly the) southern outside walls of the building were founded on bedrock by the Byzantine builders. The same is true of the northern column-support wall. The wall supporting the southern row of columns was, however, of Roman origin and was reused for that purpose. The church builders also incorporated into the foundation of the wall adjacent to the apse wall a Corinthian capital which must have come from an earlier Roman monumental building. The southern aisle was ca. .70 m. narrower than the northern one, because, had the aisles been of equal width, the southern outer wall would have been built over a large cistern (D.5:5).

Square A.2 yielded evidence of extensive quarrying in Roman times as well as the entrance of a subterranean double cavern reaching east and south. The cave was also dated to the Roman

¹⁰ This part of the Introduction, as well as the Area reports, has greatly benefited from Sauer's critical review of the conclusions based on the available ceramic and numismatic evidence.

Period and, because of an anvil-like stone table and a firepit in the northern sector, may have been an artisan's workshop. When the church was built it had already fallen into disuse.

No building remains earlier than the Roman Period were discovered in Area A, although a few Late Hellenistic and some Late Iron II sherds were found. It seems apparent that, if the eastern summit of *Tell Heshbân* was occupied in pre-Roman times, all vestiges of such an occupation were thoroughly destroyed by the quarrying or building operations of the Roman and succeeding periods.

Area B: The continuation of Square B.1 and the work in the new Squares B.2-4 revealed the existence of 16 archaeological strata in that Area. Stratum 1 represented Modern remains in topsoil, while Stratum 2 (boulders and soil) dated to Mamlūk times according to pottery and coins. Beneath this stratum were the pits and the L-shaped robber trench of Stratum 3. Stratum 4 contained the circular lime kiln, discovered in 1968, which most probably had been constructed and used during the early 5th cent. A.D. It is possible that it was built and operated in connection with the construction of the Christian church on the summit of the *tell*. That no remains from the time between the 5th cent. A.D. and the commencement of the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk period (ca. A.D. 1174) were found in Area B leads to the impression that at least this portion of the *tell* was unoccupied during the intervening centuries.

Strata 5 and 7-12 consisted of alternating layers of plaster (previously called *huwwar*) and brown dirt, altogether ca. 1.00 m. or more thick. These layers were found in B.1-3 and had also been uncovered in 1968 in the western part of Square D.3, adjacent to B.3. It seems that these layers were plaster resurfacings of a roadway leading to the stairway (excavated in 1968) in Area D, the southern access to the acropolis. These plaster resurfacings were probably laid down between the 1st and the 4th cent. A.D. In Stratum 12, the lowest of these strata, a north-south row of well-cut paving stones came to light in B.3, which may have been curbstones on the (north-south) roadway's west side. It is possible that this roadway connected the fort of Esbus (the name of Heshbon in Roman times) with the north-south

via nova, built in the early 2d cent., and the Jericho-Livias-Esbus road of which milestones are extant.

Stratum 6 was rock tumble, possible destruction evidence of a severe earthquake that hit Transjordan in A.D. 365. Stratum 13 represented a pre-roadway occupation level of Early Roman times, and included a partly excavated cave or cistern in B.4.

The massive Wall B.1:17B, already exposed in 1968 and also uncovered in B.2 in 1971, belonged to Stratum 14. Its origin is still not clear and must be ascertained during the next season. Several loci in B.3 produced homogeneous Late Hellenistic pottery, and they (along with an unexcavated B.3 cistern?) belonged to Stratum 15. Stratum 16 consisted of a massive, 6.50 m. deep fill in B.1, which contained only Late Iron II pottery including two ostraca, one found in 1968 and another in 1971. Thus far this massive fill has been encountered primarily in B.1; in the adjacent Square B.4 bedrock was reached less than 2.00 m. below ground surface. It is not yet known whether the deep depression in B.1 was man-made or of natural origin, nor is it clear when and for what purpose it was filled.

Area C: In Squares C.4 and C.6 parts of a frequently rebuilt Ayyūbid/Mamlūk structure, labeled the "north building," were uncovered. Along its inside walls was a plastered stone bench, part of which was made of a column drum. Underneath it was a clay lamp containing 66 Mamlūk coins made of a bronze core covered with silver. Buried in or under the pre-Islamic (probably Byzantine) layer beneath this house were the remains of a possible fetal or stillborn child.

An Ayyūbid/Mamlūk *ṭabun* and a large cistern (already cleaned in 1968) were outside the north building to the south in a courtyard. Rock-cut channels ran between the cistern and other installations lying outside the limits of excavation. One channel led from the cistern toward the west balk in which it was lost and another connected with an unexcavated cavern in the south. Pottery evidence pointed to a Roman date for these installations. The cistern, however, had been reused in Islamic times.

Umayyad evidence in Square C.4 was quite complicated. It consisted of several disconnected wall stumps and soil layers

underneath the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk *ṭabun* and around the cistern. One wall, three or four courses high, 1.30 m. wide, and 5.00 m. in preserved length—seemed to have served a defensive function for the western perimeter of the city, or for a compound in which the north building stood.

In Square C.1 excavations were continued where they had ended in 1968. Here several Byzantine wall fragments and a water channel were uncovered. In the southwest corner of the Square was an impressive 5.25 m. long wall consisting of large field stones, dated to the Early Byzantine period. Since this wall (C.1:8) ran into the west balk at an oblique angle, its continuation was expected to appear in the adjacent Square C.5. This did not happen. The apparently corresponding Wall C.5:7 ran at a slightly different angle and level from Wall C.1:8 and was of probable Umayyad origins.

The Late and Early Roman periods were represented in Square C.1 by several wall fragments and surface fragments, probably the slim remains of domestic buildings destroyed beyond connecting recognition by later building activities. Of the pre-Roman periods, a few Late Hellenistic sherds, but no structural remains, were found in Area C. However, one wall (C.1:30) could be dated to the Late Iron II period, making it thus far the earliest architectural feature discovered at *Tell Ḥesbân*.

Area D: In Square D.1 excavations began at a fine Umayyad stone pavement which the Department of Antiquities wanted to preserve. Therefore only in the eastern part of the Square, where the pavement had already been removed in ancient times, could excavations be carried on. It was found that the Umayyad pavement overlay an earlier one of greenish clayey limestone. Underneath the makeup for this pavement were layers of fill containing Roman and some Late Iron II pottery. It was also discovered that the 1.50 m. thick perimeter Wall D.1:4 had been laid on bedrock, probably in Early Roman times, and that it had remained in use from that time on throughout the city's history. During the following centuries, however, its upper portions experienced several rebuilds.

Square D.5 reached from the north-south axis in the west to the western wall of the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk vaulted room, already

partially excavated in 1968. Here was uncovered a further section of the Umayyad pavement reaching as far north as the southern outside wall of the church, also found in this Square. However, the eastern part of the pavement had been ripped out, probably prior to the construction of the vaulted room.

Incorporated into this pavement was the mouth of a huge cistern with an estimated capacity of 229,000 liters. It seems to have been originally a cave with an entrance in the east. This entrance had been walled up and a vaulted ceiling built over it. The pottery evidence yielded by the cistern showed that it had been in use during the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk periods, although it was constructed much earlier.

The collapsed vaulted room, built in Ayyūbid/Mamlūk times, was almost completely excavated. Its eastern wall was an extant north-south wall which had existed at least since the Byzantine Period. As three sides of the room contained no breaks, its entrance must have been in the not yet fully excavated north wall. The floor of this building had covered over a cistern of ca. 79,200 liter capacity. The stratigraphically excavated mass of debris in the cistern furnished a large number of domestic objects, coins, and pottery. A blocked-up channel in the eastern wall of this cistern connected it in a carefully engineered system with two smaller cisterns in the eastern part of Square D.6, holding approximately 3,100 and 3,400 liters, respectively.

East of the vaulted room ran an east-west wall, founded on bedrock during the Roman Period and used until Ayyūbid/Mamlūk times, although its function remains uncertain. In the Early Byzantine period the space between this wall and the church was covered by a geometrically designed tessellated floor, of which only patches were preserved. Whether this mosaic floor lay inside a room adjacent to the church or in a small open courtyard could not be ascertained.

Areas E and F: The search for previously undiscovered tombs in Area E was unproductive. Area F, however, contained among others, two distinctively designed tombs (F.1 and F.5) which were cleaned and studied despite their recent clandestine discovery and looting by villagers. Of other tombs initially discovered by the expedition, only two (F.4 and F.6) contained

large amounts of their ancient contents in bones and mortuary equipment. Even these tombs had been entered in ancient times, robbed of such valuables as silver and gold objects, and then filled with dirt and resealed.

Tomb F.1, called the "Rolling Stone Tomb," was the first of this architectural design found east of the Jordan River, although several such tombs are known on the West Bank. Tombs of this construction can be dated to the first half of the 1st cent. A.D., and most belonged to noble families. *Heshbân's* Rolling Stone Tomb included an open forecourt and a relatively elaborate facade with two parallel walls providing a track in which a disk-shaped stone door, ca. 1.26 m. in diameter and .36 m. thick, could be rolled to either side of the low entrance. The interior was a rock-cut main chamber from which radiated 12 burial tunnels (*loculi*). Although the tomb had already been spoiled before our season of excavations began, the human bones found there indicated the presence of at least 76 skeletons.

Tomb F.5, the "Swinging Door Tomb," was also unique for *Heshbân*. Here, in a stone frame on the exterior of the low entrance was hinged a still-operable solid stone door. The interior of the tomb was a central rock-cut chamber with *arcosolia* on three sides, each of which had two trough-like caskets covered with large, flat, square, terra-cotta tiles. Although this tomb, together with Tomb F.1, had already been robbed of its contents before our expedition arrived, we were able to retrieve from it a cache of undamaged pottery vessels, fortunately overlooked by the recent robbers.

Tomb F.4 was a Roman tomb of a construction frequently found at *Heshbân*. It consisted of a vertical rectangular shaft at the bottom of which were four burial recesses, the long sides of the shaft having two trough-like graves and the narrow sides two *loculi*. Tomb F.4 contained bodies in all graves, but no pottery. Among the objects found were two brooch-like fibulae and a bronze incense shovel.

Tomb F.6 was an Early Roman tomb in which the central rock-cut main chamber had a total of nine *loculi* cut into three walls. Although this tomb had been entered in antiquity, it had not been opened in recent times. The bones were found as they

had been scattered throughout the tomb before it was filled with dirt and resealed, probably in Byzantine times. However, much pottery, some glass vessels, several pieces of jewelry, and other mortuary equipment were recovered from it.

Conclusions

The main results of the 1971 season have been only briefly summarized above and, for further information, the reader is referred to the Area supervisors' more extensive preliminary reports which follow. However, at this point we must deal with the question: What has been learned from the first two seasons, and what can be expected from the third season of excavations scheduled for the summer of 1973?

Among the significant accomplishments in the stratigraphic work was the development, through the ceramic analysis done by J. Sauer¹¹ and the stratigraphic refinements provided by the data of Area B, of what would seem to be an adequate comprehensive stratigraphic sequence to account for all major stages of occupation on the site found to date. The major question remaining in some doubt is the precise scope of the Late Byzantine occupation, as yet evident primarily in numismatic data in Area C, and in mosaic fragments in Area A (associated with the church).

Several auxiliary functions made substantial progress and contribution to the overall comprehension of the occupation history on the site. The completion of a contour map (Fig. 1)

¹¹ A detailed preliminary study of the Heshbon pottery of the 1971 season by Sauer is published concurrently with this report as AUM, Vol. 7.

The chronological terminology which is used throughout the present report is based on that study, where both historical and archaeological data have been considered. Those terms which are relevant to Heshbon and which are most frequently used in the Area reports are as follows:

Mamlūk	A.D. 1250 - 1516
Ayyūbid	A.D. 1174 - 1263
Umayyad	A.D. 636/661 - 750
Late Byzantine	A.D. 491 - 636
Early Byzantine	A.D. 324 - 491
Late Roman	A.D. 135 - 324
Early Roman	63 B.C. - A.D. 135
Late Hellenistic	198 - 63 B.C.
Late Iron II	ca. 700 - 500 B.C.

and the supplemental aerial photography (Pl. I:A) added competent records in new dimensions. The extensive numismatic finds will provide corroborative insight to the steps made in stratigraphic refinement and the major progress in ceramic analysis. The analysis of the bone material¹² should provide additional insights on the economic and ecological framework of the occupations represented. Finally, the research directed at necropolis evidence succeeded in locating a variety of samples of burial facilities, particularly of the Roman and Byzantine Periods, providing extensive additions to the object horizons in addition to allowing more detailed comparisons of East and West Bank tomb architecture in the periods involved.

The major and certainly unexpected result of the excavations was that *Tell Heshbân* did not seem to contain remains of a period preceding the 7th cent. B.C. So far the earliest pottery encountered in any appreciable quantity came from the 7th-6th cent. B.C. (Late Iron II). It has come to light in every Area excavated on the *tell*, and even a few sherds of that period have been found in the Area F cemetery. Architectural features from that time, however, have so far been meager and have been discovered only in Area C. This surprising revelation means that all evidence thus far encountered indicates that *Tell Heshbân*, identified since at least the time of Eusebius with OT Heshbon, cannot be King Sihon's capital of Moses' time.

Furthermore the two seasons of excavations have shown that the site of *Tell Heshbân* did not enjoy an uninterrupted occupational history. Several gaps of occupation have been noted, the earliest of which existed between ca. 500 B.C. and Early Roman times, supported by ceramic and numismatic evidence. Beginning with the 1st cent. B.C. Esbus, as the city was then known, seems to have had a time of prosperity which lasted through the Byzantine and Umayyad periods. Again the city seems to have fallen into oblivion at the end of the Umayyad period, but under the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks *Heshbân* once more flourished. From the 15th to the 20th cent., when the modern village of *Heshbân* was founded, it was again a ruined and unoccupied site.

¹² See Ø. Labianca, below, pp. 133-144.

Plans

A primary aim of the third campaign will be to excavate to bedrock those Squares already opened in order to assure that no existing earlier strata will have eluded us in our search for ancient Heshbon. Since all excavations thus far have been only in the acropolis area, another aim of the next season will be to carry out soundings in the lower parts of the *tell* to ascertain whether the archaeological history there is the same as on the acropolis and its slopes. It is furthermore planned to make an archaeological survey of the territory surrounding *Hesbân*, especially in the *Wadi Hesbân* and around *'Ain Hesbân*, in search for another possible candidate for OT Heshbon.

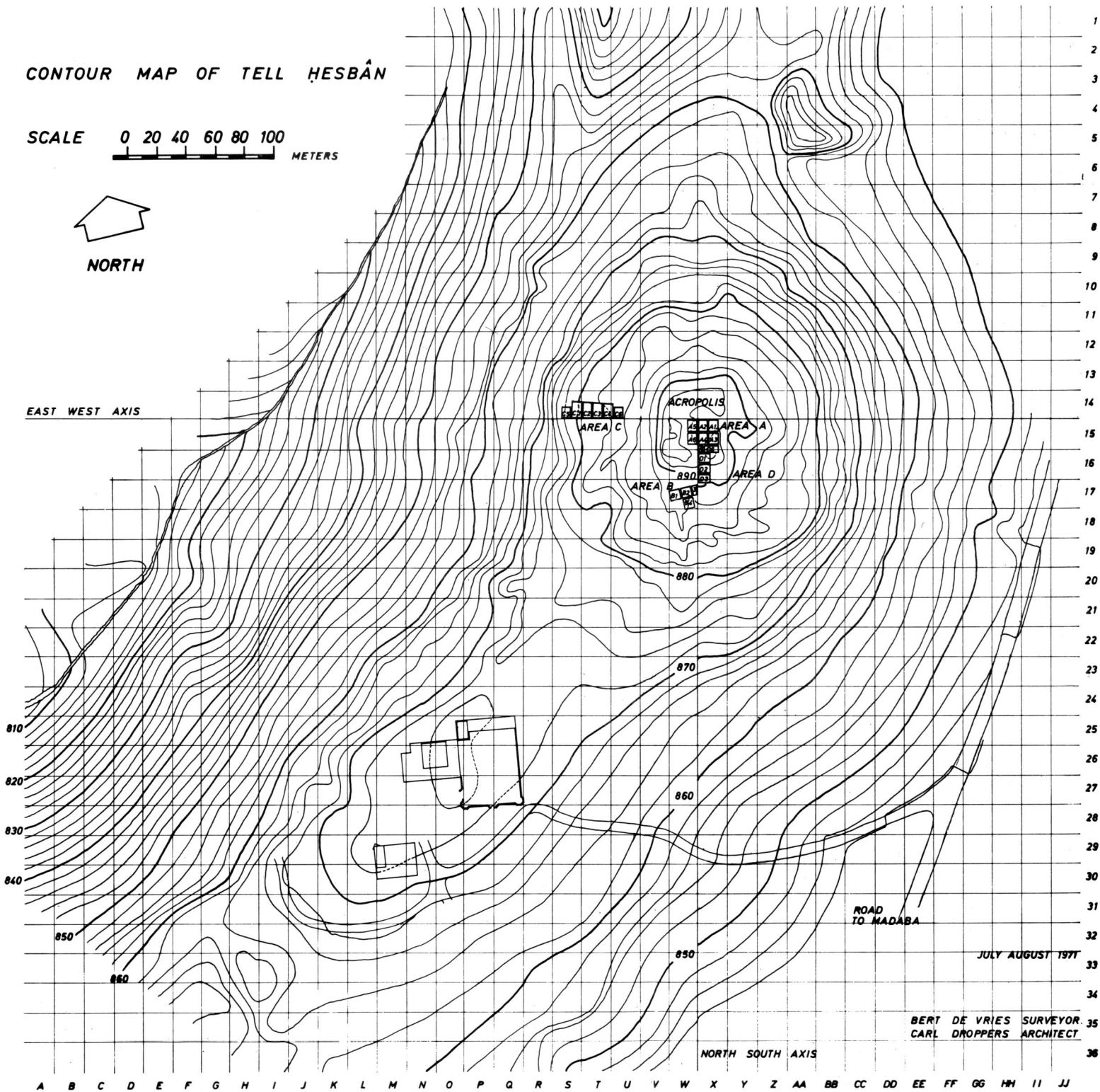


Fig. 1. Contour map of *Tell Hesbân*, showing the locations of Areas A-D of the 1968 and 1971 excavations on the acropolis