

Jerusalem, 18.8.39.

I returned yesterday from Transjordan after an interesting week's work there in the Jerash region, continuing the archaeological survey. Mr. Kirkbride, the British Resident in Transjordan, with whom I had lunch during the previous week, had given me permission to resume work, but for the present limited me to the Jerash district. He made the further condition that I was not to sleep out as had been my wont wherever I happened to be at nightfall, but that I was to return every night to Jerash, in a way that was a hardship, but it had its definite advantages. After a hard day's work, which commences at about 5.30 a.m., riding up and down the steep Transjordan hills and climbing around the sides of antiquity sites, one is much inclined towards the end of the day to flop down and make camp wherever one happens to be. Instead of that, this time, no matter where the day's wanderings had finally brought me, I was compelled to return to Jerash. In some instances this meant over a two-hour horseback ride. However, I have never before experienced the pleasure of being able to clean up and have a bath every night during the course of the work of exploration. My host was Mr. Harding, the Chief Curator of Antiquities, who lives in a delightfully furnished house in the midst of the Jerash excavations. A shower, a good supper, and a decent bed to sleep in certainly make all the difference in the world. Despite the restrictions imposed by Mr. Kirkbride, which, I may say, I fully understand, particularly after the kidnapping of Mr. Head, I managed to cover a considerable area, and visited a number of very interesting and important sites. To my continued surprise, the hill-country of the Jerash district shows the same occupational history as the parts of Transjordan south of the Wadi Zerqa. The break between the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century B.C. in the history of permanent sedentary occupation seems to exist also in this area.

It is symptomatic of the times that when I returned to the School yesterday, I met Sir Flinders Petrie in the hall. He greeted me with: "Well, I am glad to see you safely back." It is difficult for people who live in Palestine to understand that Transjordan, despite occasional disturbances there, is on the whole very quiet and peaceful. After having been absent from Transjordan for over a month, and listening to the protestations of my friends about returning there this time, I felt at moments that I was going almost to my certain doom. However, no sooner does one cross Allenby Bridge that the feeling of insecurity which rests heavily upon the traveller in Palestine, vanishes. Some day something may happen to me in Transjordan, but that is something which might be said of almost any person anywhere. The probability, however, is that if I am killed, it will be with kindness. I was in the Suf area this time, adjacent to Jerash. It is a district which is famous for its grapes, and they are now ripe. All the Arabs live in their vineyards this time of the year, and the villages are more or less abandoned. At every step almost, we were invited to get off our horses and rest, and whenever we acceded to the invitation, were almost immediately presented with a huge platter of delicious grapes. I have never in my life eaten as many grapes in one week as I did in the week just gone by.

Naturally in work such as ours, the curiosity of the Arab has to be satisfied. It is after all a strange thing for the Arab to see a couple of men suddenly appearing at antiquity sites and beginning carefully to search the slopes and the tops of the mound and hills for

sherds, measuring ruins and photographing extensively. We explain as much as possible, and only occasionally have to speak fairly roughly. This time, we climbed the top of a high hill called Tell Huweishan. On top of the hill there were several occupied houses. The headman of the little group resident there greeted us, and with a not uncommon display of friendliness, kissed me on both cheeks. His beard was very tough, and I thought I had been stung by a porcupine. On another occasion last year, I was out camping on a hilltop with my Arab companion, Ali Abu Ghosh. Tired, we got into our sleeping bags early, and were soon lost to the world. Some hours later, we were both suddenly awakened, and observed a circle composed of about twenty armed Arabs closing in on us. I admit I was quite frightened; and decided that if they were up to any harm, several of those nearest to me would suffer before they overpowered me. I happened to have a revolver with me which I had placed inside the sleeping bag. Ali challenged them, and I noticed that he held his rifle. Evidently, several people would have been hurt if we had been rushed. The men stopped, and in the ensuing conversation it was revealed that we were involved in a comedy which might have become serious. By not sleeping in a neighbouring tent-encampment, we had aroused the suspicions of the Arabs who had become convinced that we were up to no good business, and had decided, after evidently observing us before we went to sleep, that we were digging for treasure. We reassured them on that score, and they satisfied themselves by looking over the ground very carefully and seeing that we had dug no holes whatsoever. When asked why we had not come to their tent, I replied that I was fed up with being bitten to pieces by the bugs that frequented the tents. Our questioners were somewhat insulted, but left convinced that we were all right, if just a bit queer. The next morning, to sort of make amends for our aloofness, we went to the encampment, and stopping at the main tent, had coffee and tea served to us. On the whole, however, our experiences have been pleasant ones. The other day, while driving along one of the Transjordan roads in our car, I picked up an old blind man, and put him down some kilometres farther on at the place he had been headed for. Arab speech is full of rounded phrases of the type already familiar from the Bible. As he got out of the car, he thanked me with the following blessing: "May Allah guard you wherever you go, and in whatever you do." I learned a new curse at our excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh this year. One of the workmen got angry at another and yelled at him: "Sand in your eyes." A pleasant way of wishing him dead.

I found that the people in Transjordan were quite elated over the new degree of independence which has just been given to Transjordan. A whole ministry with fat emoluments has been conjured into existence. One of the new ministers comes from a village near Jerash and all the district is shining by reflected glory. I think the show of increased independence which England has granted Transjordan was a wise political move. For once, the British government has demonstrated that it does not always reward its enemies, but sometimes also deals kindly with its friends. I hope, and I imagine it is hoped in official circles, that the reward for good behaviour so ostentatiously given in Transjordan will have its proper effect upon Palestine. So far as I could gather, the people of Transjordan prefer their present status to any possible combination either with Palestine or Syria or Iraq.

The disturbances still continue in Palestine, if indeed considerably checked. The morning's newspaper reports that all traffic in and out of Hebron has been banned for some time, because a British military patrol had been fired on, and a British Lance-Corporal had been killed. A bomb

was thrown in one of the main streets of Jerusalem two nights ago, and 13 Jews were sent to hospital. However, the conditions are quiet enough on the whole for the High Commissioner to have deemed it possible to leave for England on a lengthy vacation.

All is well at the School. Dr. and Mrs. George G. Cameron of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago were here for several days en route from Persepolis to Europe before returning to America. Dr. Fisher, who has been spending the summer at Ain Karim, is returning at the end of the month. I shall drive out there then to bring him back. The 65 cases with the Khirbet et-Tannur antiquities have now been shipped to America, I am glad to say. They were very carefully packed ~~and~~ boxes made to order for each stone, and were put on board the Excambion which left Haifa on August 14th. It is a grand collection, containing many objects and bas-reliefs of unique importance. I am planning at present to leave for America for the lecture-tour on the American Export Line boat Excalibur on September 11th. During my absence, Dr. Fisher will be in charge of the School.