

Thursday, August 10, 1967

Yesterday morning, Saul Weinberg and I got into our Wagoneer at 5:45 A.M. and drove via Mandelbaum Gate, past the Damascus and Herod Gates to St. Stephen's or the Lions' Gate on the east side of the Old City Wall. I had previously, as I have already mentioned, made an appointment with Father Sylvester Saller and Father Spijkerman of the Monastery of the Flagellation to meet them there at 6 A.M. and take them with us to Gezer. The approach up the hill from the main Jericho Road to the gate proper is usually blocked off by a policeman, but no one was present, so we could drive right up to the entrance of the gate. Both of the Fathers were prompt, and then we drove via the Hebrew University to the Tel Aviv Road, and picked up the photographer, Mr. S. J. Schweig, who also wanted to go with us to Gezer. I have traveled the road westward from Jerusalem countless times and each time find something new to see. The traffic on the road to Tel Aviv can get almost impossible at various times of the day, particularly if one gets behind a slow moving truck. Intensive work is being undertaken to transform it into a four-lane highway, and I should think that in about six months the work will be completed. There is an awful lot of blasting through rock and removal of debris that must make the building of this addition to the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway a most expensive undertaking.

Fortunately, the Latrun Road is now open, and that must save some 8 to 10 kilometers. We took it and rolled along the rich plains through which it passes. Much of this area had previously been in no-man's land. There is a turnoff, before one gets to Ramleh, leading to Tell Gezer via the Kibbutz of Gezer. We arrived in good time. It took us about 45 minutes from Jerusalem to the tell. Our camp is very well organized, with tent accommodations for about 125 people. Each tent is placed on a cement foundation. The fieldhouse we erected two years ago is permanent and is serving its purpose beautifully.

Soon after we arrived, Dr. Dever, the Director of the excavations, and Dr. Darrell Lance, the Co-Director, took us around on a slow and painstaking trip of examination of the excavations. One great