

PRESS RELEASE

Telephone: GARSTON 74151 Telex: 264114 Cables: Ambascol, St. Alban

UNCOVERING 3,000 YEARS OF HISTORY

A party of 50 British and American students will be leaving on Sunday 15th June to take part in an archaeological excavation in Jerusalem.

Twenty-five students from Ambassador College in St. Albans will be joined by students from the United States.

The original Jerusalem was known also as the City of David. There King David of ancient Israel built his palace and his throne. On that very site a tremendously important and exciting archaeological excavation is under way on a major scale.

Ambassador College is participating jointly with Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Israel Exploration Society, in this important scientific project in uncovering 3,000 years of history.

The site of this, the present big dig, is that of the original Jerusalem. The excavation begins from the South Wall of the Temple Mount, extending south from that wall.

Both Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple, later called Herod's Temple, were built on Mount Moriah. This was immediately north of the City of David. In Herod's day the top of Mount Moriah was levelled off and walled in. It is known today as the Temple Mount.

The ancient temples undoubtedly were located at the general site occupied today by the Moslem mosque, called Dome of the Rock. Most of the present Jerusalem extends north and west of the Temple Mount. It is significant that few buildings now stand on the multiple-acre area of the original Jerusalem, now being excavated.

Probably the most widespread popular interest in the project will centre on the Herodian and ancient Davidic periods, deepest down. These have the chief appeal to Christians and Jews. The Herodian period is the time of Jesus, founder of Christianity; the David period that of the beginnings of monarchical government in ancient Israel.

These, however, are not necessarily the periods of chief scientific and historical interest. Scientific interest centres on learning whatever may be revealed about life as it was lived back through the Turkish and the Arabic periods, the Byzantine, and the Roman, as well as the Herodian and ancient Israelitish eras. As a scientific archaeological excavation, every inch of

buried ruins and debris is being carefully dug - nearly altogether by hand - and thoroughly examined for artifacts.

The present excavation has succeeded in distinguishing 15 different strata, reports Professor Benyamin Mazar, former President of Hebrew University and in charge of excavation. They represent the entire long time-span from the days of the Roman occupation to Turkish times.

David Price.

Departure Information:

Students leaving Sunday 15th June

Flight BE 221

Leaving London (Heathrow) Airport at 10.50 a.m. B.S.T.

Check-in bay 79 or 81

Black and white, colour stills and 16 mm cine film of excavation are available. We will cover departure in colour, black and white stills and cine.

PRESS RELEASE

Telephone: GARSTON 74151 Telex: 264114 Cables: Ambascol, St. Alban

HEROD'S BRIDGE IN JERUSALEM FOUND TO BE BIGGEST IN ROMAN EMPIRE

The royal bridge built in the first century B.C. by Herod to cross from his palace to the Temple area had the width of a modern four-lane highway and was the largest bridge in all the Roman Empire.

This has come to light by the complete uncovering of the stub of Robinson's Arch at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, according to Mr. Meir Ben-Dov, assistant to the director of the archaeological expedition at the site. The present excavation is sponsored jointly by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Ambassador College.

He said the width of the bridge is estimated from the length of the base to be about 50 ft. (15.2m). The present excavation is continuing to uncover more of the foundations of the other five arches.

The bridge spanned the 100 yds (95m) valley between the Temple complex and the royal palace (in the present Jewish Quarter). Despite its size, the bridge was used for foot traffic only. Herod and his family used to cross over to a specially constructed area where Herod could look down at the activities in the Temple complex.

The common people entered the Temple by the Hulda Gates in the Southern Wall.

Herod was a great builder who spared no price in his many building projects. His bridge was no exception.

The base of the first arch was massive enough to allow four 6 ft. high niches to be cut into it. These may have been used as shops, Mr. Ben-Dov said. A man standing on the pavement below Robinson's Arch would have the bridge 52 ft. (16m) above him. The spring of this arch on the Western Wall is popularly known by the name of the British explorer who discovered it.

A century ago Sir Charles Warren sunk many shafts to discover the whereabouts of the bridge.

Dr. Ernest Martin, lecturer in Archaeology and Classical Studies at Ambassador College, St. Albans, returned Thursday, 21st August from Jerusalem where he has been working at the excavation with 50 students from the College.

David Price
GARSTON 74151
(from London 47-74151)
Home phone 47-72299