

(Hisban, cont'd)

of the Late Islamic centuries on the tall; 2) architectural and archaeological surveys of buildings to the south of the tall; 3) ethnoarchaeological interviews with local residents; and 4), examination of pertinent textual sources and traveler's accounts dealing with these centuries.

A major focus here was a complex of farm buildings, known as the "qasr," in the village of Hisban. The team took measurements and mapped it, making artistic representations of these buildings. It appears that this complex has undergone several episodes of construction, destruction, and restoration. The earliest construction appears to be during the pioneer period, in which an earlier foundation (perhaps dating back to Roman times) was used for the building. An earthquake in 1927 destroyed parts of the house, but repairs have been made since the 1970s to restore the first floor for storage. In addition, two caves, beneath and extending directly to the south, were also modified for habitation and other uses. Possible cistern openings, a pen for animals, and a major structure inside the cave, possibly used as a storage facility, were also found.

Maria Elena Ronza (University of Rome), a Roman architecture historian, has discovered some important new insights about the nature of the Roman and Byzantine buildings on the summit. After spending time inventorying and drawing architectural fragments from various locations, she has established that some of the column bases and capitals were typical of Late Roman construction, while others are Byzantine. Based on these fragments and the remains of foundation walls, she affirms that a public building existed on the summit during Late Roman times. It had a small podium, four columns in front, a vestibule with anta-capitals, and a cella. It is likely that it was a temple, but could also have been an administrative building or even a nymphaeum. A very exciting discovery also relating to the Roman period was the finding of a neatly cut stone in Area M, which turned out to be an inscribed

door lintel. Found by Teddy Burg (Notre Dame University) and Keith Mattingly (Andrews University), the 1 m x .50 m stone contained four lines of neatly chiseled Greek letters. Initial reading indicates a Late Roman or Early Byzantine date for the lintel, which may have adorned the entrance to the Byzantine church on the summit. No inscription of this length (over 100 letters) has previously been found at Tall Hisban.

The political role of Hisban during the Umayyad (630's/40's - 750 A.D.) and Abbasid (750-12th century A.D.) periods was illustrated clearly for the first time this season. Earlier excavations suggested that these periods were ones of abatement. The new excavations uncovered two rooms in Field N, on the northwest corner of the tall. This is the first Umayyad-period architecture that has been identified at Hisban. The rooms, built against the Hellenistic fortification wall and close to the northern sally gate, attest to continued occupation of the tall well after the Islamic conquest. After an earthquake of the mid-7th century A.D., which was responsible for the collapse of the stone barrel vaults, the structure was reoccupied and continued to be used into the Abbasid period. (Øystein S. LaBianca and Bethany Walker)



Borstad Visits AU

Dr. Karen Borstad visited Andrews University from Feb 20-27, 2001. She developed the DIER system software used by the MPP for storing and analyzing excavation data. She is currently the assistant manager of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) responsible for the design and development of GIS applications for cultural resource research and management. While on campus she updated the Jalul database, and trained others to synthesize multiple seasons of data, link graphics to the database and generate statistical reports.

On Feb 26, Dr. Borstad spoke for the Horn Archaeological Museum Lecture-

ship. Her lecture was entitled: *The King's Highway: Its Role in the Holy Land in Biblical Times*. Her primary research involves the study of both roads from OT times and Roman roads.

The "King's Highway" or the royal road was the main N-S route stretching from the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus. In biblical times, Moses promised Edom and Sihon, king (Num 21:25; Deut 2:26-27) of Hesban (Tall Hisban) that the Israelites would strictly follow the road while passing through their territory. According to the 9th-century B.C. Moabite stone, King Mesha claims that he repaired that part of the highway that crossed the Arnon (Wadi Mujib). Later, the road was used by Nabataean traders until Trajan conquered them and had it rebuilt. After that time it was known as the "Via Nova" or "Trajan's Road." By the end of the Roman period much of the Road was paved with cobblestones and marked with milestones. Today the modern Jordanian King's Highway and many other roads use the much of the same route from ancient times.

Dr. Borstad has discovered cobblestone paving and milestones along the King's Highway as well as traces of other ancient roads. Using the GIS she is able to predict their routes through rough terrain. One newly discovered road served as a pilgrim route from Amman to Mt. Nebo and then onto Palestine. Many of these routes began in antiquity as com-



Karen Borstad

3

mon paths which developed into the roads connecting Palestine with the King's Highway or the Desert Highway. Through the GIS program Borstad is rediscovering these ancient routes. (Robert D. Bates)

Possible Amorite ruins at MB and LB Age Tall al-'Umayri consist of a moat cut into a ridge on the western side of the tall with a rampart up to the city walls and a large multistory building with two well-

tered-cobbled surface was located on which a fenestrated cultic stand was found. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)

