

Heshbon) was suggested to him. He began digging there in 1968. Although the site yielded no evidence of the Exodus, remains from the time of Solomon were found. Horn was quick to publish the results of the excavations and was honest with what was found. The scholarly world was impressed with both of these facts. The doors that Horn opened have led to Adventists becoming major players in the world of Syro-Palestinian archaeology. Recently Adventists have held the top five posts in *ASOR* and are digging at three sites in Jordan. (Owen Chesnut)



LaBianca Lecture

Dr. Øystein LaBianca, director of the Tall Hisban excavations and professor of Anthropology at Andrews University, presented a lecture entitled “Anthropology and Biblical Archaeology: The View from Tall Hisban” on Feb. 26, 2007 at Andrews University.

LaBianca began his presentation by defining anthropology as the study of culture, and described how cultures are created, how they differ from one another, and how they persist and change over time. He explained how archaeology can aid in the study of anthropology by identifying material aspects of a particular culture. He then went on to discuss the Madaba Plains Project, and its predecessor the Heshbon Expedition, giving an overview of its history and goals, and how the interests of the project changed over time from a narrow focus on the Exodus question to a broader understanding of indigenous culture. It was the Food Systems Model which led to a wider perspective of how foreign groups interact with local people (including the concepts of intensification

and abatement, civilization and empire, and great and little traditions).

LaBianca then focused on the concept of great and little traditions. He views Jordan as a crossroads of civilizations and an excellent place to study this concept. The former is reflected in the material culture and ideas of the dominant or ruling people and the latter by the remains of the indigenous culture. An example of this can be seen during the Roman period when aqueducts were used to provide water at the site of Jerash (great tradition), while at the site of Hesban they used cisterns (little tradition). Parochialization occurs when parts of a great tradition are appropriated by local peoples. LaBianca sees this happening throughout the Ancient Near East. Examples of parochialization (and how it effects periods of intensity and abatement) include local water management, mixed agropastoralism, residential flexibility, fluid landlord territories, hospitality, and tribalism. Specific examples from the MPP project area include the 6th-century BC Baalis seal, found at Tall al-‘Umayri, that borrowed elements from Egypt and Phoenicia, and locally made kitchen ware with an inscription which imitates the better made Egyptian variety during Mamluk period Hisban.

The concept of great and little traditions has implications for Biblical Archaeology according to LaBianca. It is evident that great traditions leave persistent residues (ruins, remains, writing) while little traditions are less quantifiable. The periods of the Patriarchs, the Judges, and even the tribal kingdoms (Israelites, Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites) mentioned in the Bible are represented by little traditions. The Patriarchal narratives, for example, are filled with little traditions whether it be water harvesting/agropastoralism (Gen 13), hos-



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pitality (Gen 18), or honor and shame (Gen 35). Biblical archaeology can be done in a different way. While finding temples, palaces, or inscriptions can indeed yield remains that support the historicity of the Bible, other less high-profile remains are also illustrative. Little tradition-type remains that support the historicity of the Bible have been found at all of the Madaba Plains Project sites. Collared-rim storage jars, and the so-called Manasseh bowls, have been found at Hisban, ‘Umayri and Jalul. This pottery is thought to represent the presence of the tribe of Reuben. Isaiah 5 mentions vineyards with watchtowers, of which more than three dozen have been found in the MPP project area.

This focus should help reveal more about the Israelites because their history is one of struggle against being obliterated by a succession of civilizations (great traditions). So when little traditions are revealed archaeologically, through the aid of anthropology, more light on the backgrounds of the Old Testament and its peoples is also revealed. (Owen Chesnut)

