

## USAGE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA IN NORTH AMERICAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST LITERATURE 1937-1980

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The purpose of this dissertation was to determine how archaeological data have been used in Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) literature of North America since the first SDA attained advanced qualifications in the discipline (1937). The early twentieth-century SDA literature showed a strong tendency to apply archaeological information apologetically, especially in defense of scriptural reliability and sometimes seeming to imply that Scripture is reliable because archaeology has declared it so. The thesis was that increased expertise as heralded by the formal training of such SDA scholars as L. H. Wood, E. R. Thiele, S. H. Horn, and their successors, would introduce a more balanced and diversified usage of archaeology in denominational literature.

In order to test this thesis, SDA books containing archaeological data and representative SDA periodicals from the same period (1937-1980) were examined for archaeological usage. This archaeological usage in each of these sources was then classified and analyzed within the framework of three main periods. These divisions coincide with the periods of maximum involvement by the most prolific writers.

To demonstrate the contemporary setting and to elucidate direct input, a limited study was also made of the leading developments in general North American biblical archaeology as focused in the publications of W. F. Albright and his school.

It was noted that in SDA publications, trained archaeologists and biblical scholars gradually took over the task of the archaeological writing which had formerly (even in the 1940s) been dominated by amateurs. Consequently, publications moved in the direction of more cautious and responsible usage of archaeology. The amount of apparent apologetic was considerably reduced, and that which did occur was usually much better informed and less dogmatic. Simultaneously, interests expanded to include a much wider concept of the biblical context, as demonstrated in the reports of the excavations at Heshbon (jointly sponsored by Andrews University and the American Schools of

Oriental Research). There was also a gradual but steady increase in exegetical application of archaeological data.

These trends indicate a growing maturity which will face, without loss of faith, interpretations of data which may at times be difficult.