

ARCHAEOLOGY

Cancel Plans for Unearthing Cities in the Holy Land

Only Oriental Institute Plans to Go On With Program; One Expedition Head Has Been Killed in Disorders

CIVIL war in Palestine has caused cancellation of plans for Holy Land excavation this year by leading American and European archaeologists, Science Service has learned.

Only the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, among the larger American archaeological institutions, is sticking by its program. The Institute still hopes to dig beside the palace and gate of Megiddo, the Biblical Armageddon.

Although a pitched battle was reported recently at this traditional site of many battles, Dr. John A. Wilson, the Institute's director, said in Chicago, its Megiddo staff is now preparing publications but expects to return to Palestine before the end of the year.

French, German and British scientists, as well as Americans, are all affected by the turmoil in the small country which has so increasingly yielded its buried evidence of the Biblical era. At the Johns

Hopkins University in Baltimore, Dr. W. F. Albright, Vice President of the American Schools of Oriental Research, summed up a toll list of important expeditions abandoned or deferred:

The British, he says, are not expected at Lachish, where lately they found important writings on potsherds—actual contemporary evidence for the period of Jeremiah. The director of the Lachish expedition, J. L. Starkey, was killed by armed Arabs in ambush, as he rode from Lachish to Jerusalem, last January. Another director was named, but work has been deferred.

In far southern Palestine, where another British expedition led by H. Dunscombe Colt has unearthed churches containing the first documents on papyrus ever found in Palestine, there will be no continuation of the excavations this autumn.

A German expedition which arrived

in Palestine in September expecting to dig at Shechem was unable to start because of armed bands in the district. The archaeologists returned to Germany.

French scientists who have been exploring Ai, which means in Hebrew "the ruin," have been learning more about Joshua's campaigns in that region; but the French have interrupted their digging until times are more favorable.

From Dr. Eliezar L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem comes word that Jewish archaeological expeditions have suffered as a result of riots. An expedition of Jewish scientists, including members of the Hebrew University, has been making valuable discoveries in Jewish catacombs in Galilee, near Sheikh Abreik, he states. But the uncertain conditions seriously hamper the work.

The American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem is not even sure whether it can carry out the regular year's work with its students, many of whom take part in excavations in the surrounding country. Prof. Millar Burrows of Yale, President of the several American Schools of Oriental Research, says that plans are going ahead, however, as usual. The director of the school in Jerusalem, Dr. Nelson Glueck, recently reported to Prof. Burrows:

"I guess it is somewhat dangerous in Palestine, but I see no reason to get panicky about it. I can guarantee the members of the school all the archaeological experience they can stand in Transjordan. I hope to continue the excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh in the spring at the latest and perhaps for a short season in November and December."

Prof. Burrows points out that Dr. Glueck's excavations and important archaeological surveys are across the River Jordan, where the situation is different from that in Western Palestine. Tell el-Kheleifeh, where Dr. Glueck hopes to dig, is the site of King Solomon's seaport at the head of the Red Sea, where last season Dr. Glueck unearthed Solomon's copper smelting and refining plant, and other ruins of the historic port.

Regarding Palestine's archaeological prospects, Prof. Burrows says:

"Certainly there will be at most a great deal less work than there would be under peaceful conditions. When travel is unsafe and it is as difficult, as it is now, to get labor and supplies, very few organizations can be expected to carry on active work."

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