

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM AT THE  
LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A Report on the Occasion of the Dedication of the Museum  
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by

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Although the Archaeological Museum of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is forty-six years old, the artifacts in the museum range in age from about 100,000 years ago to the time of Jesus and the New Testament church. At the time of the purchase of the original collection in 1929, it was claimed that no Palestinian collection of antiquities in the United States was equal to it in completeness,<sup>1</sup> and today it remains one of the best collections in this country. So far as I have been able to discover, at no time in its history has the museum as such been dedicated. It is therefore appropriate on this occasion to share with you a bit of its fascinating history. Past, present, and future are vitally interrelated in our lives, and our identity as persons and as a part of the community of God's people in all ages is tied up with the Bible, the people of the Bible, and the understanding of the Book and its people. This museum is a part of the story of God's ancient people and a part of our story too, for we ourselves are a part of the biblical story in its elongated form. It is a dynamic grasp of the meaning of the past that gives us a present basis for moving constructively into the future.

I. The Acquisition of Our Artifacts

First, we take a look at how we acquired our artifacts. Dr. Melvin Grove

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Kyle, President of Xenia Theological Seminary in St. Louis (1922-30), recommended to Louisville Presbyterian Seminary that the seminary purchase a particular collection of antiquities from Vester & Company in Jerusalem. Mr. John D. Whiting of the American Colony of Jerusalem had collected these original items over a period of many years.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Kyle himself was an Egyptologist, archaeologist, author, editor, noted lecturer, Moderator of the earlier United Presbyterian Church (1927), and the first person ever designated Professor of Biblical Archaeology in the world.<sup>3</sup>

In conference with Dr. John M. Vander Meulen, President of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary from 1920-1930, Mr. Brainard Lemon, a director of the seminary and an elder in Second Presbyterian Church of Louisville, offered to establish an Archaeological Department in the seminary. This department was to consist of two things: the collection of the artifacts already mentioned and the endowment of a lectureship in Biblical Archaeology.<sup>4</sup>

The collection was purchased by Mr. Lemon for the seminary and was shipped in twelve boxes from Palestine on March 23, 1929. In a letter from Vester & Company to Dr. Kyle, dated April 5, 1929, we find these words:

"When the shipment was being embarked..., the rope of the winch broke and one of the boxes... fell into the sea. It was promptly fished out and we hope that no damage resulted...." According to the invoice, the shipment consisted of 288 items. Most of them were pottery, though there were some pieces of stone, metal, and alabaster. The evidence seems to indicate that the shipment reached Louisville in April, 1929.

The Department of Biblical Archaeology was established, and Dr. Kyle was made its permanent lecturer. Lamentably Mr. Lemon died on July 23, 1929. At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the seminary on May 6, 1930, Dr. Kyle gave the members of the Board a guided tour of the museum, whose contents he had arranged in six upright glass cases in a room at the seminary

2 25.51 Right of Dr. Arnold B. Rhoads

at First and Broadway. Although Dr. Kyle lectured at Louisville Seminary for a time in the field of Biblical Archaeology and made use of the materials he had recommended, Mr. Lemon's untimely death prevented the continuation of a separate Department of Biblical Archaeology at the seminary, and Dr. Kyle died too on May 25, 1933.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Mr. Lemon's gift of the archaeological collection and Dr. Kyle's impact on the life and character of this seminary did not die. Mr. Lemon's two grandchildren, Mrs. Albert C. Dick, Jr. and Mr. William Chambers Tyler, have been invited to participate with us in this memorable occasion.

During the years that have passed since Mr. Lemon's initial gift, one or more archaeological items have been given to our museum by each of the following persons whose names are arranged in alphabetical sequence: the Rev. John T. Bare, Professor and Mrs. W. D. Chamberlain, Professor C. Morton Hanna, Miss Mildred V. Horn, Mr. Kenneth R. Hougland, the Rev. Lewis Marshall Johnson, President C. Ellis Nelson, Professor Arnold B. Rhodes, and Mrs. T.C. Wemple. Our 288 items have increased to 350.

## II. The Use of the Museum Thus Far

We now turn from the story of how we have acquired our artifacts to the story of how we have used the museum thus far. We have noted that Dr. Kyle arranged the original items in six glass cases and made use of them in his teaching. As visitors entered the door of the room, they could move clockwise around the room and view the contents of the cases in chronological sequence. On the top of each case was a large, framed card, identifying the age of the materials. These materials, for the most part, represent the various Bronze and Iron Ages.

The first publication of typical specimens of the pottery after it was

obtained by the seminary was made by Dr. W. F. Albright, who had been Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem since 1921 and who became W. W. Spence Professor of Semitic Languages at Johns Hopkins University in 1929. This publication appeared under the title of "Pottery Chronology of Palestine (1929)" in The Revised Edition of The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia in 1930. The revising editor was none other than Melvin Grove Kyle.

A word is in order concerning the working relationship between Albright and Kyle. The two scholars decided to excavate the site known as Tell Beit Mirsim ("the mound of the house of the fast camel driver"), regarded as the biblical Kirath-sepher, also called Debir (see Josh. 15:15-16; Judg. 1:11-12). You will recall that Albright was Director of the American School and Kyle was the President of Xenia Seminary. These two institutions sponsored the undertaking, and excavation was carried on at the site in four campaigns between 1926 and 1932.<sup>6</sup> It was discovered that the site had been occupied "from the late third millennium to about 589 B.C. The chief importance of this work was the care devoted to the pottery sequence, which was promptly published and has become a standard basis of comparison for Palestinian archaeologists."<sup>7</sup> You will recall that it was sometime during the period of the campaigns at Tell Beit Mirsim that Dr. Kyle recommended that Louisville Seminary purchase its first artifacts from Vester & Company in Jerusalem.

Dr. Robert F. Ogden, who taught Old Testament at Louisville Seminary from 1938 to 1940, made extensive use of the museum in his teaching and writing. In fact, he made a detailed catalog of a large number of its representative objects, including a photograph and careful description of each piece. He also placed identifying cards beside many of the key exhibits. His work has been of inestimable value to some of us who have succeeded him

as teachers of Old Testament in this school. Dr. Ogden also wrote an article entitled "The Museum at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary," which was published in the seminary's periodical, The Register, for October-December, 1938.

In his cataloging project, Dr. Ogden was in consultation with Dr. James L. Kelso, then Professor of Old Testament at Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, and Dr. G. Ernest Wright, then a member of the faculty of McCormick Theological Seminary. Dr. Kelso had been one of Dr. Kyle's students at Xenia Seminary and later worked with Kyle and Albright at Tell Beit Mirsim. Ernest Wright had taken his Ph.D. degree under Albright at Johns Hopkins and became an eminent archaeologist also.

As a student in Louisville Seminary, I studied Old Testament under Julian Price Love, Robert F. Ogden, and W. A. Benfield, Jr. When I first joined the faculty of this institution in 1944, President Frank H. Caldwell discussed with me the significance of our museum and expressed the desire that its contents be completely cataloged, and Professors W. D. Chamberlain and W. A. Benfield, Jr. informed me of many of the details pertaining to the museum and placed in my hands materials to assist me in my study and use of its artifacts. For nineteen years I gave hundreds of persons -- individuals, Sunday School classes, women's groups, men's groups, youth groups, children's groups, and other groups -- a guided tour of the museum. When I taught classes in Biblical Archaeology, I used the museum to help me in my work. This I also did for classes in Old Testament Introduction whenever the classes were small enough to get them into the room where the artifacts were kept.

There has been interest in the museum through the years. Lourena Eaton, a teacher at Du Pont Manual High School, wrote an extended article with numerous photographs of our pottery entitled "Pottery with a Past," which was published

in The Courier-Journal Magazine for Sunday, April 1, 1951 (pp. 42-44).

I furnished Ms. Eaton the best information I had concerning our pottery at that time. James B. Pritchard compiled and edited The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament, which was published by Princeton University Press in 1954. Among the varied contents of this volume are photographs of some of the key pieces in our museum. Over the years a goodly number of biblical scholars have visited the museum. On some occasions it has been my pleasure to give them a guided tour. On other occasions I have been privileged to go through the museum under the guidance of such field archaeologists as W. F. Albright and James L. Kelso. Years ago I received a letter from an Israeli scholar, whose name I cannot now remember, requesting me to send him photographs of our pottery to assist him in lecturing on Palestinian pottery in Palestine. This request confirmed anew the high appraisal of our collection.

In 1963 this seminary moved from its location at 109 East Broadway to its present location. A generous bequest to the seminary by Mrs. J. H. Horn of Louisville provided housing for our antiquities in the library on our new campus.

I had read various archaeological works, studied Biblical Archaeology as a part of my graduate program at the University of Chicago, taught classes in the subject at Louisville Seminary, and visited archaeological sites and museums in nine countries of the Near East and a number of archaeological museums in Europe. In fact, I had observed seasoned archaeologists at work on tells in Palestine. Yet I felt that a scholar with excavating experience should do the thorough cataloging needed in our museum. Therefore, when the Rev. John M. Salmon, was invited to join our faculty in 1963, I requested that he be given the major responsibility for the museum, since he had had such

experience. Professor Salmon gladly agreed to assume this responsibility, taught courses in Biblical Archaeology in which he made use of the museum, gave guided tours through the museum, and assisted the administration in selecting new cabinets to be used in displaying our treasures. Since the cabinets could not be obtained at once, the antiquities were for a time placed again in their old cabinets, which had been moved from First and Broadway. Soon, however, the new cabinets arrived, and Professor Salmon rearranged the artifacts in them in accord with the information available at that time. He was planning to make a thorough catalog of all of these items and prepare new identification cards for each cabinet and its contents when he accepted another position. During and after Dr. Salmon's time with us, students occasionally showed visitors to our campus through our museum.

### III. Plans for the Use of the Museum in the Future

We have thought about the acquisition of our artifacts and the use to which our museum has been put thus far. At this point we give our attention to plans for the future, some of which are in the process of being actualized at the present time.

For many years there was a growing accumulation of archaeological contributions, and several of us knew that all the items in the museum should be thoroughly cataloged, photographed, arranged as attractively as possible, and be made more readily available for educational purposes to church and civic groups as well as to our own students. In response to this need, Miss Mildred V. Horn, daughter of Mrs. J. H. Horn and a member of the Bardstown Road Presbyterian Church, through her generosity made possible the fulfillment of our dream.

In the planning stage I recommended to our seminary administration that we seek to get Dr. Joseph A. Callaway, Professor of Biblical Archaeology at

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, to undertake this project for us. I had known Dr. Callaway for a long time and was acquainted with his skill and knowledge as a field archaeologist. Dr. Callaway entered into contract with us and in the fulfillment of it has cleaned our artifacts thoroughly, photographed and cataloged every item, rearranged the materials to make them more effective as an educational instrument, included recent acquisitions in the display, provided identifying cards for the exhibits in our cabinets, prepared a cassette tape for use by persons or groups who wish to take a guided tour of the museum at any time the library is open, and made valuable suggestions throughout the entire undertaking.

Among the many factors included in Miss Horn's generosity was the means to purchase from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem a photographic copy of the complete Isaiah scroll from Qumran Cave I near the Dead Sea to serve as the focal point of the museum. This replica is 25 feet, 8½ inches long and 11 inches high, and is the only copy of its kind in this part of the United States. A special cabinet has been built for it, in order that everyone who visits the museum may see the scroll in its entirety. Even children will have it impressed upon them that this is the way a very early "book" of the Bible really looked.

The large Isaiah scroll is usually dated about the second or first century B.C. The best evidence points to 1945 as the year the goatherd Muhammad ed-Deeb found the scroll, to 1947 as the year Syrian Archbishop-Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel bought the scroll, and to 1948 as the year the scroll was identified.<sup>8</sup> The 54 columns of Hebrew are of varying widths and essentially intact. They had been ruled on the hair side with a sharp instrument, but the scroll had not been rolled on sticks. Its 17 sheets of parchment had been sewed together with linen thread. While



its text is close to the traditional Masoretic text in most important matters, there are some differences in spelling, wording, grammar, the frequency of the use of certain consonants to represent vowel sounds, and in other matters.<sup>9</sup> William H. Brownlee, who has specialized in the study of the scroll, has called attention to its value for textual criticism, its interpretative character, what he regards as a Messianic emphasis in the famous Servant Song of Isaiah 52:13-53:12, and the possible significance of the division of the scroll in the middle. There are 66 chapters in the Book of Isaiah. At the end of what we know as Chapter 33, there is in the scroll a type of blank space which occurs nowhere else in the scroll. Brownlee draws the conclusion that at an earlier time there may have been two volumes of Isaiah, Chapters 1-33 and Chapters 34-66, and finds what he regards as an amazing parallel in the overall structure and outline of the two sections.<sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly the scroll will engage the attention of scholars and Bible students for many years to come. It is fitting for us to have such an item for our centerpiece, since the purpose of the museum is to enable us better to understand and interpret the Bible.

This report has emphasized that real people of antiquity made and used the items exhibited in our museum, and that real people of our contemporary world have made this museum possible. Such an institution keeps us reminded that the biblical message is inseparably related to a particular people, in a particular part of terra firma, over a particular period of time, and to a particular series of historical persons and events -- all of which God chose for the sake of all peoples, all the world, all times, all persons, and all history. We are confident that our museum will be used more widely than ever before, and we hope you will not only browse through it tonight, but that you will also return as persons or as groups to participate in a guided tour of its fascinating and instructive contents and linger to read the cards which describe its artifacts.

Louisville Presbyterian

Notes

<sup>1</sup>This claim was made by Dr. Melvin Grove Kyle, as recorded in The Register, January-March, 1930.

<sup>2</sup>According to his letter addressed to Robert F. Ogden, Louisville, Kentucky, dated November 29, 1938.

<sup>3</sup>Most of this information about Dr. Kyle comes from Who Was Who in America, but the last statement by word of mouth from Dr. James L. Kelso.

<sup>4</sup>John M. Vander Meulen, "President's Annual Report," May 7, 1929.

<sup>5</sup>See John M. Vander Meulen, "A Review of the Past Ten Years of the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary - 1920-1930," p. 6; "President's Tenth Annual Report," May 6, 1930; J. R. Cunningham, "President's Annual Report," May 5, 1931, p. 9; "President's Annual Report," May 3, 1932, p. 5; "President's Annual Report," May 2, 1933, p. 3; "President's Annual Report," May 1, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>W. F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949), p. 43; C. C. McCown, The Ladder of Progress in Palestine (New York: Harper & Bros., 1943), pp. 85-86.

<sup>7</sup>Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup>See William H. Brownlee, "Muhammad ed-Deeb's Own Story of His Scroll Discovery," Journal of Near East Studies, XVI (1957), pp. 236-239; Millar Burrows (ed.), The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery, I (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950), pp. vii-ix.

<sup>9</sup>Burrows, op. cit., all sections which pertain to the Isaiah scroll.

<sup>10</sup>William H. Brownlee, The Meaning of the Qumrân Scrolls for The Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 155-259.