

TELL EN-NAŞBEH IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES¹

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INTRODUCTION

The present volume grew out of the editors' long term involvement with the study, publication and curation of the archaeological remains and records from Tell en-Naşbeh (Zorn since 1986, Brody since 2002), and also from the desire to promote additional interest in and study of this important site through an academic session at the American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting held in San Francisco (across the bay from Berkeley where the Tell en-Naşbeh materials are located) in November, 2011. A special evening reception celebrating William F. Badè's work at the site was held at the Badè Museum. That year also marked the 85th anniversary of the beginning of the excavation of Tell en-Naşbeh in 1926. The necessary session time and room were secured and papers were solicited from various scholars currently working on Tell en-Naşbeh material. Papers were read by Boutin, Foster, Larkum, Zissu and Zorn. It was subsequently decided to seek publication of these conference papers. Additional papers were then solicited, resulting in submissions from Brody, Brown, and Sussman. Unfortunately, as the volume was in preparation, William "Bill" G. Badè, the son of William F. Badè, the excavation director, passed away.

¹ Unless otherwise noted all illustrations are courtesy of the Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, Pacific School of Religion.

He was 11 years old in 1935 when he and his sister Elizabeth accompanied their parents for the final season at the site. He was the last known living member of the excavation. We had hoped to interview him about his remembrances of that excavation season and his other work with the Tell en-Naşbeh artifacts (it was Bill who discovered the famous fragmentary bronze cuneiform cirlet while cleaning and conserving the metal artifacts from the site; McCown 1947: pl. 55:80). The observations of an American boy of the “dig experience” would have provided a novel view not found in other excavation retrospectives of the Mandate Era. Still, we are grateful to be able to include the comments of his family who heard of his time at the site. His passing truly marks the end of living memory of that period at the site. A bibliography of all works dealing with Tell en-Naşbeh in a significant way rounds out the present collection. We are grateful that Gorgias Press was willing to publish the resulting volume.

Tell en-Naşbeh is located on a Cenomanian limestone ridge 848 m (2762') above sea level. It is about 12 km (eight miles) north of the Old City of Jerusalem (31°53'6.00"N, 35°12'59.00"E; New Israel Grid 220559.86E – 643543.35N; Old Israel Grid 1706.1144; Fig. 1.1). It also lies immediately south of the modern Palestinian city of Ramallah. Indeed, parts of Ramallah's southern suburbs now surround the site and some houses are built in the areas of the site's cemeteries; in some cases individual homes are encroaching on the tell itself (Fig. 1.6). The site, not including surrounding cemeteries, is about 250 m north to south and 160 m east to west. It covers an area of 3.2 hectares (ca. 8 acres), though the area inside the fortifications only amounts to about 2.4 hectares and the actual area occupied by houses is only a bit over 1.7 hectares. At its height in Iron Age II it probably had a population of about 900.

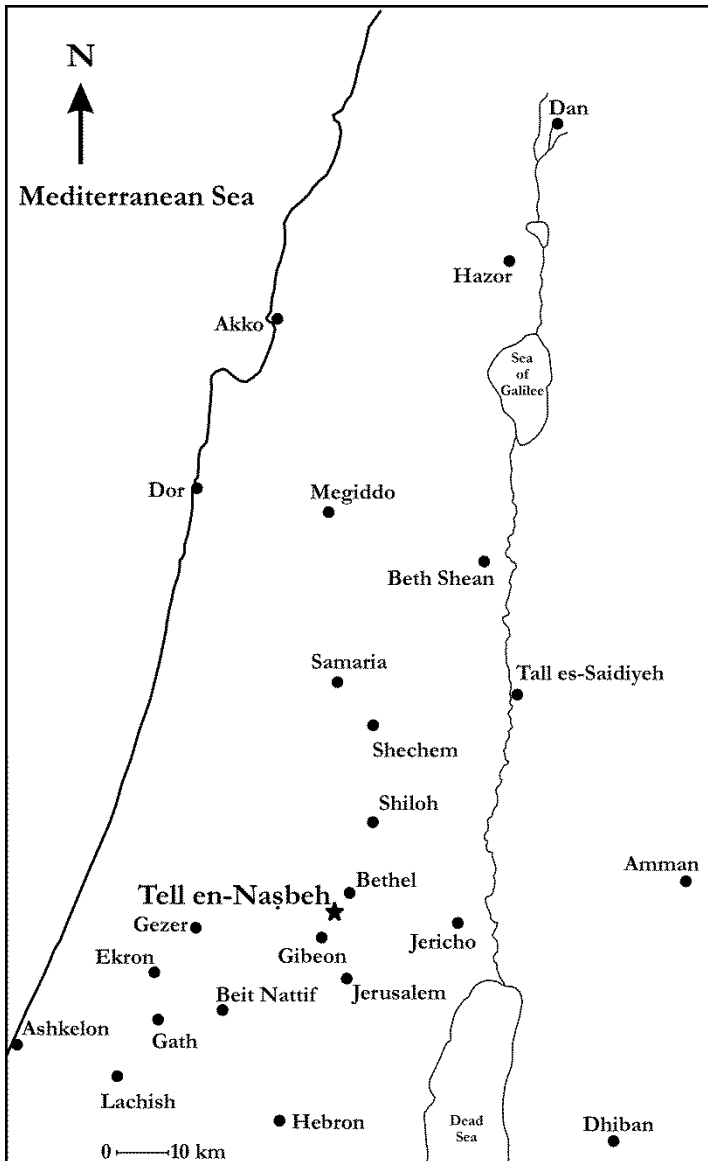


Fig. 1.1 Map showing location of Tell en-Naşbeh in relation to local southern Levantine sites.

WILLIAM F. BADÈ AND THE HISTORY OF WORK AT TELL EN-NAŞBEH



Fig. 1.2. William Frederic Badè, director of the Tell en-Naşbeh excavations, in a staged photograph exiting Cistern 369 during the 1935 season (Badè Museum photograph #1245. Courtesy of Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, Pacific School of Religion).

William Frederic Badè (Fig. 1.2), of what is now Pacific School of Religion, excavated the site in five lengthy seasons (1926, 1927, 1929, 1932, and 1935), eventually uncovering about two thirds of the site. A variety of preliminary reports were published during and after this period. Badè died in 1936, a year after the conclusion of the excavation. His death, the Great Depression, and the advent of World War II delayed the publication of the final report until 1947 (however, 12 years is less than the publication delays for many current excavations under far less difficult circumstances; for example, the third volume of Wright's excavations at Shechem appeared 29 years after the last excavation season). The two volume final report (McCown 1947; Wampler 1947) was brought to completion by Badè's seminary colleague, Chester C. McCown (Fig. 1.3), and his chief assistant during the last three years of the excavation, Joseph C. Wampler (Fig. 1.4). McCown dealt largely with the site's archi-

tecture and certain of the small finds, including late period lamps, while Wampler was mainly responsible for the publication of the pottery and certain aspects of the stratigraphy. Other chapters of special note were contributed by Muilenburg on the identification of Tell en-Naşbeh with biblical Mizpah of Benjamin and the history of Mizpah, and a concise report on the Greek pottery produced by von Bothmer. The site plans were largely the work of Labib Sorial, the excavation's Egyptian surveyor and architect (Fig. 1.5). Sorial was the only member of the staff, besides Badè, to participate in all five seasons of the excavation.



Fig. 1.3. Chester Carlton McCown, who took on the task of publishing the results of Badè's excavations, hiking in the Galilee ca. 1921 (Courtesy of Pacific School of Religion).



Fig. 1.4. Joseph Carson Wampler (on right), the excavation's chief recorder who also published the majority of the ceramics, repairing pottery with Mahmoud in 1932 (Badè Museum photograph #A816. Courtesy of Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, Pacific School of Religion).



Fig. 1.5. Labib Sorial, the Egyptian architect responsible for most of the excavation's plans, working on the 1:100 map sheet 93 in 1932; this plan depicts most of the outer two-chamber gate (Badè Museum photograph 1009. Courtesy of Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, Pacific School of Religion).

When the final report was published it was hailed as a great and valuable achievement in advancing knowledge of the archaeology of ancient Israel (Albright 1948; May 1948; Perkins 1948; Sellers 1948; Simmons 1948; Vincent 1948; Wright 1948). Criticisms at this point tended to be minor, often focusing on Wampler's statistical method for determining dates for pottery types, and then the dates of the features in which they were found. However, it was not long before Kenyon's harsher appraisal appeared (1950). She faulted the excavators for not digging stratigraphically (i.e. according to debris layers, not according rooms), a common problem at the time. She also noted the lack of full cross-referencing which, for example, prohibited anyone from determining all the pottery types found in a specific tomb. Wright, who originally had much good to say of the report, later (1969: 126–29) was more critical of Badè's efforts in comparison to the work of his own mentor, Albright, at Tell Beit Mirsim. However, as others have subsequently noted, Albright did struggle with stratigraphy when he did not have the luxury of destruction layers sealing in situ ceramic assemblages, as in his Stratum B (e.g. Green 1987: 56), which is precisely the situation Badè faced at Tell en-Naşbeh. Possibly Albright would have done a better job with Tell en-Naşbeh than Badè, but how much better is debatable. For example, in the site's environs Badè located several cemeteries and 70 tombs. This contrasts with Albright who failed to find any tombs at Tell Beit Mirsim, though subsequent looters found them in abundance close by the site (Ben-Arieh 2004).

PROBLEMS WITH THE 1947 REPORT

Despite McCown and Wampler's exemplary efforts to produce a final site report after Badè's death there is no doubt that the 1947 report does contain some severe problems that have greatly limited its usefulness to scholars. Some of these same issues are found in other reports of the period (and in some from long after) and so are not unique to Tell en-Naşbeh. Some derive from the nature of archaeological work in Mandate Era Palestine, some arise from choices made in how the data would be presented in the report, and some result from the interpretations of those who produced the report.

The first problem involves the lack of published detailed site plans and plans which group the site's architectural features into

distinct strata. Most of the site's remains, though not all, were published on a single 1:400 plan (fig. 10.1 is a reduced and adapted version of this plan). Some areas are presented in more detail in text figures, and some features are not shown on the 1:400 plan, but only in the figures. A series of more detailed 1:100 plans were prepared, and some were published in McClellan's article (1984), but were not reproduced in the 1947 report. Similarly, hundreds of photographs were taken of the excavation in progress, but only a sample was included in the report. Unfortunately, many features were not documented by even a single photograph and excavation areas were usually not photographed in as clean a state as in modern excavations. Section drawings are few and schematic, which is not surprising since debris layer oriented archaeology was largely unpracticed at the time. Relatively few of the 1000+ excavated architectural features are discussed at all in the 1947 report; most are treated only in a few summary lists. All this has limited scholars in their ability to understand the stratigraphy proposed in the 1947 report, or to reanalyze it.

Similarly daunting problems face those wishing to restudy the site's pottery and other small finds. From the way in which the pottery types are described it is impossible to determine the specific find spots for virtually all of the ceramics. Such details are only provided for the type piece itself and a few examples from select other contexts, usually tombs and cisterns. All other representatives of a type are grouped under broad stratigraphic categories. For example, for pot Type 89 it is reported that 19 rims came from Stratum I contexts, but not which specific contexts. Coverage of other small finds is equally problematic. For example, pl. 105 in Vol. 1 of the report shows seven bone "spatulas" and the text mentions them only in passing; however, record cards for the excavation document a total of 94 spatulas. Only a few cisterns and tombs come anywhere close to full reporting. Two examples will suffice. From Cistern 370, 97 vessels are cited and illustrated, but 281 objects of all classes were recorded; thus citations attest to only 35% of the total number of recorded finds. From Tomb 32, 119 vessels are reported, but 792 objects were recorded; thus only 15% are mentioned in the 1947 report. Because of this incomplete reporting and indexing of artifacts it is impossible to reconstruct the contents of any given feature.

A final problem, not related to the nature of the publication itself, hampers efforts to use the site's artifacts. The recording method used at Tell en-Naşbeh was adopted from the system used by Clarence S. Fisher, an early adviser of Badè. If no floor level could be determined for a room all artifacts from the tops of the room's walls, to the base of its walls were reported as coming from one homogenous unit. If some indication of a floor could be determined for a room artifacts from below that level would be given a separate designation within the room. For this reason it is usually impossible to determine which sherds (and most of the ceramics from the rooms are sherds, not complete forms) were floating in debris high above floor level in redeposition, which were found on or at least close to a floor, and which came from below a floor. Such an approach to recording makes any chronological or contextual study of the artifacts virtually impossible.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF TELL EN-NAŞBEH

Perhaps the most important reason Badè chose to excavate at Tell en-Naşbeh was to determine whether the archaeological remains uncovered there could shed any light on the possible identification of the site with biblical Mizpah of Benjamin, a topic of much debate up to that time (ably discussed by Muilenburg in the 1947 report and again in 1954–55). The only other site today which some consider a rival candidate for this identification is nearby Nebi Samwil. Both sites have reasonable claims to this identification based solely on textual data. Unfortunately later occupation at Nebi Samwil removed virtually all architectural remains and in situ deposits from the Iron Age (Magen 2008; Magen and Dadon 2003; Magen and Har-Even 2007). Thus, it is very difficult to characterize the site's occupation during that period. However, while Iron Age II pottery was found in redeposited fills, apparently nothing from Iron I was found there. This is a period that should be represented at any site identified with Mizpah, and such material is found at Tell en-Naşbeh. Similarly, no remains from the Babylonian period of the 6th century were uncovered at Nebi Samwil (though remains from the subsequent Persian period are reasonably abundant). Material of this period should be well-attested at any site identified with Mizpah and is found at Tell en-Naşbeh. Finally no trace of the famous wall associated with Asa of Judah's building campaign (1 Kings 15: 22) was found at Nebi Samwil. Could an entire settle-

ment's wall disappear and leave no trace? Tell en-Naşbeh was surrounded by a massive set of fortifications that could well be those associated with Asa. Thus, on the basis of the surviving archaeological data Tell en-Naşbeh is still the best candidate for the Iron Age Mizpah of Benjamin.

A NEW ERA IN TELL EN-NAŞBEH STUDIES

Because of the various problems outlined above Tell en-Naşbeh was the subject of relatively few scholarly works after the publication of the 1947 report, appearing mostly in works related to Israelite architecture and town planning (e.g. Shiloh 1970). Work undertaken by Zorn in his dissertation (1993) considerably revised and clarified the stratigraphy presented by McCown and Wampler. The revised stratigraphy uses Arabic numerals in order to avoid confusion with the Roman numerals used in the 1947 report.

Some Chalcolithic remains were recovered, but the first real settlement is Stratum 5 in Early Bronze Age I (ca. 3200 BC). After that, the site was abandoned until the Iron Age I (ca. 1200 BC) when Stratum 4 was established. This was followed by Stratum 3, which was continuously occupied and rebuilt from the tenth to the beginning of the sixth century. Stratum 3, which initially represents a modest rural agricultural settlement but came to take on the role of a Judean border fortress as well, is divided into three sub-phases. The original 3C settlement of three- and four-room houses was protected by a casemate-like wall. Subsequently in 3B a massive offset-inset wall with an inner-outer gate complex was constructed slightly down slope from the 3C town, most likely in the ninth century. Stratum 3A represents additional modifications to the town plan subsequent to the construction of the fortifications. Stratum 2 witnessed a complete change in the site's layout, in accord with the site's new role as a Babylonian administrative center following the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE (Zorn 2003). Stratum 2 seems to last through the Babylonian period into the Persian period, until the late fifth, perhaps early fourth century. A few in situ deposits suggest a violent end to the site, but the agent of the destruction is not known. After a gap the site was occupied, but more sparsely, apparently around the beginning of the second century BCE into the Roman period. Remains of a Byzantine era church and tombs were found off the main site. The two most important results of the reevaluation of the site stratigraphy include the documentation

of the presence of a massive Inner (four-chamber) and Outer (two-chamber) gate system in Stratum 3 (reduced to just the two-chamber gate in Stratum 2), along with the identification of the until then unsuspected remains from the Babylonian period which helped foster additional research into that previously largely unknown era.

The presentation of a revised stratigraphy in general fostered renewed interest in the site. This is especially evident in the increased number of publications using the site material beginning around 1990, as found in this volume's master site bibliography.

FUTURE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK ON TELL EN-NAŞBEH

Because of the current political climate the chance for future archaeological work at Tell en-Naşbeh, at least in the near term is slim. The site lies close to the border between the West Bank (the Palestinian Territories) and the municipal boundary of Jerusalem. It is located in Zone C, the area still largely controlled by Israel, but which eventually is to be turned over to the Palestinians. For a while an Israeli checkpoint stood just east of the tell on the road running north from Jerusalem (it is now located south of the site). Except for work done by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) most archaeological work in Israel is carried out by, and financed by, volunteers, mostly from abroad, under the direction of staff from an academic institution (usually an Israeli university in partnership with foreign institutions, many from the United States). This has allowed large, reasonably funded projects to flourish. Work in the Palestinian controlled areas is conducted at present primarily by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (PDACH). There have been attempts at joint archaeological projects with some foreign governments/institutions but these have been relatively few so far. Because of the site's location, and the often times unpredictable nature of local politics, which has included violent confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians, an archaeological project involving foreign institutions and volunteers on their mutual border in the near future is not likely. Few foreign institutions would allow their staff and volunteers (often primarily college students) to participate in a research project in a potentially dangerous area, even if the actual chance of violence is relatively small. Even one such incident would be a legal, financial, and public relations nightmare for an American university.

It also has to be admitted that politically the Palestinians have little reason to excavate an Iron Age Israelite site such as Tell en-Naşbeh. Publicizing the presence of what was once the Judean capital, albeit briefly, on the very doorstep of their own current capital runs counter to their own efforts to bolster national heritage in the area.

However, if/when new work could be undertaken at the site it is worth asking what could such an excavation achieve? First, as noted above, Badè was quite successful at locating cemeteries and tombs in the area around the tell. It seems likely that since his day other tombs have been discovered around the site by looters and then plundered of their materials for sale on the antiquities market. Renewed work at the site should attempt to document the specific location of the tombs Badè excavated relative to the main site (which was not done in the 1947 report) and also plot the locations of subsequently looted tombs; in addition, an effort should be made to locate any additional undiscovered tombs around the site. Because the site is in the Palestinian territories studies of human remains from such tombs might well be possible, something which is currently impossible in Israel due to the out-sized importance of religious parties in Israel's Knesset.

The area in which Tell en-Naşbeh has played the greatest role over the years is in understanding Judean town planning. The reason for this is obvious. The published 1:400 site plan gives the impression that most of the tell was excavated. Indeed, about two thirds of it was excavated, much of it down to bedrock. However, there are areas on the site that were not excavated, or apparently not excavated down to bedrock. For example, much of the area in the north central part of the site bounded by grid squares R15–R21 on the north to Z13–22 on the south was never touched, much of it because of the presence of large rubble heaps created over the centuries by local farmers clearing the tell's top soil of stones in order farm the tell (Badè had to rebury the excavated portions of the site at the end of each season so that farming could continue). Similar large rubble heaps are found in the south central and south-eastern parts of the site. Clearing away these rubble heaps would open large areas for further excavation. Such excavation would likely reveal a great deal more information about the site's plan and road system and add to the corpus of Israelite domestic architecture. The only caveat to this is that due to erosion remains along

the central spine of the hill on which the town was built tend to be more fragmentary than those located toward the periphery of the site. Re-excavation of some of the squares between the inner four-chamber gate and outer two-chamber gate would likely clarify issues regarding their construction and integration as a single architectural unit.

One of the current archaeological fads in the Levant is household archaeology. That is, archaeological endeavors which attempt to elucidate the behaviors of the occupants of a dwelling's various rooms. It is even hoped that the functions of sub-spaces within individual rooms can be determined. The vast number of entire, or nearly entire buildings that were excavated at Tell en-Naşbeh, and which belong to the main Iron Age II phase (Stratum 3 of the revised stratigraphy), might seem to make the site a perfect candidate for household archaeology on a massive scale. However, there is a major problem that negates any hope of such a program. Of the hundreds of Stratum 3 rooms excavated none of them contained in situ deposits left as a result of the room's destruction, and such deposits are the very foundation of household archaeology. Without such snapshots of the last moments of a building's existence it is impossible to create even a satisfactory approximation of the activities that were undertaken in the various spaces inside a dwelling just before it came to an end. This lack of in situ assemblages is not an artifact of the excavators' methods for they did uncover a few such deposits in Stratum 2 of the Neo-Babylonian to Persian periods, proving that they were capable of identifying them. Instead, it is a result of the nature of the end of Stratum 3. It seems that in order to construct the new Judean administrative center of Stratum 2 the previous settlement was leveled, filled in, and built over. In other words, Stratum 3 was "destroyed" as a result of a program of peaceful urban renewal, not sudden destruction by some enemy. This means that the inhabitants had sufficient time to remove any of their possessions that they wanted to take with them. Installations cut into the bedrock, such as cisterns and silos, or sunk into debris such as stone-lined storage bins, or which were otherwise unmovable, such as ovens or heavy stone presses and basins used for olive oil extraction are the primary materials found that hint at the inhabitant's activities. There are also occasional ground stone implements, such as complete saddle querns or mortars, that might reasonably be expected to reflect some, but not all,

of the functions of a specific room. What are largely lacking, besides the ceramics, are the clusters of small objects that suggest certain activities. For example, there are no in situ groupings of loom weights to suggest weaving, nor religiously affective items that might suggest household cult. Only Room 625A and its cluster of iron tools (see the article by Brown in this volume) suggests a specific functional role for a space. Renewed excavations would likely turn up additional unmovable installations, but not major clusters of in situ artifact assemblages. The occasional cluster might be uncovered, again like Room 625A, but such finds will not provide the sort of comprehensive data needed for a successful program of household archaeology. Because of the nature of archaeology in Palestine of the 1920s and 1930s there are no floral or faunal assemblages recorded from the site. Careful excavation with modern methods might be able to recover floral and faunal remains imbedded in the floors of specific rooms, but it will remain uncertain whether these reflect the final use of such spaces, or merely reflect the totality of the room's functions throughout its existence.

Renewed excavations might be able to clarify certain aspects of the chronology of the site's stratigraphy. As noted above, in situ deposits are lacking from most of the site's architectural features. A few Stratum 2 rooms containing such assemblages were found, which allowed that stratum to be assigned a date from the beginning of the sixth century to the end of the fifth century. It is possible that other assemblages of Stratum 2 might be uncovered. The dates for the beginning of Stratum 2 provide a date for the end of Stratum 3, around the beginning of the sixth century. Excavations in the previously unexcavated areas listed above would certainly provide more examples of Stratum 3 architecture, though, for the reasons mentioned above, probably no in situ ceramic assemblages. Using modern methods it would be possible to isolate materials above and below living surfaces/floors. Sherd data from below the floors of Stratum 3 would provide a *terminus post quem* for the construction of those buildings. Similar careful excavation and collection of sherd material from within building walls might suggest some dates for structural modifications. Remains of Stratum 4 are very fragmentary and difficult to date. It is possible though that rock cut features originating in Stratum 4, such as silos, crossed over by walls of Stratum 3 might be found and provide finer dating for that period. Stratum 5 of the Early Bronze I is even more poor-

ly preserved than Stratum 4, though tombs of this period might be uncovered.

Another area where renewed excavations could help clarify chronological issues involves the site's massive offset-inset wall. Until the last two decades it was generally believed that the site's fortifications were those constructed for Mizpah by King Asa of Judah in the early ninth century, as recounted in 1 Kings 15:22. Recently, however, here have been attempts to redate the walls to other periods: Katz suggested a period post-dating the eighth century (1998: 132); Finkelstein has argued for a date in the time of King Jehoash at the end of the ninth century (Finkelstein 2012: 24–25). For Finkelstein such a redating is required by his Low Chronology scheme that posits that there was no significant state in Judah until the post-Omride era. If there was no state to build massive fortifications, then the walls of Tell en-Naşbeh, which match the solid wall of Megiddo in size, could not possibly be dated to the early ninth century (Finkelstein 2012: 22–23). However, this dating is based primarily on his reconstruction of Israelite and Judean history, not on conclusive archaeological data from Tell en-Naşbeh itself. The material data needed to settle the issue, a stratigraphic excavation of the debris layers piled up against the wall, a cut through the walls, along with the collection any sherd material recovered from the wall itself, and any sherd material from below the base of the wall, is lacking. Badè did make a cut through the wall at the north end of the site, but apparently did not record the ceramics he found inside the wall. He also excavated adjacent to the city wall at several points, but material from these cuts (such as the deep sounding made between the south face of the four-chamber gate and the adjacent 4-room house) were not conducted or recorded in a stratigraphic manner, and so are worthless for dating the wall. Stratigraphically excavated trenches in the debris adjacent to the city wall in the area between the two gates (where Badè apparently did not reach bedrock in several places), below the walls of the four-chamber gate (which are built on the fill piled against the inner face of the town wall, and which Badè left in place), and perhaps on the western side of the site in Y11–13 (where again Badè does not seem to have excavated deeply), could, with a cut through the wall at some point, provide the data necessary to put the chronology of the construction of the fortifications on a firmer footing.

TELL EN-NAŞBEH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

However, since it seems unlikely that there will be renewed excavations at Tell en-Naşbeh anytime in the near future an important issue is whether scholars can expect anything new to be said about the site based on the currently available records and artifacts? As is evident from the papers presented in this volume, and other studies published over the last two decades, the answer is a resounding yes. The essays by Zissu and Klein and Zorn attest to the insights still to be gained on the site's architectural remains. Those by Brody and Sussman show the important role that the site's ceramics can continue to play. The papers by Brown, Boutin et al., and Larkum document how the use of modern scientific analytic techniques on the curated artifacts can shed welcome light on Israelite life ways. Finally, Foster's paper highlights the important interplay between modern museology and the Badè Museum that houses many of the Tell en-Naşbeh artifacts and all the site records. It also attests to the importance of making these records available online.

As for possible future studies, only a few examples can be suggested here. One possibility would be to examine the Tell en-Naşbeh pottery (both typologically and petrographically) on a regional scale, with sites on both sides of the border of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. How common were northern forms and fabrics at this border town, and how does the relative quantity of northern forms at Tell en-Naşbeh compare to assemblages at other northern Judean/Benjaminite sites? Was the area relatively open to contacts with the north (at least as far as ceramics can suggest) or relatively closed? As noted above, major features were not well-documented in the 1947 report. For example, a full publication of the abundant material from Tomb 32 would provide data on burial practices in the early part of the Iron Age II era. The Early Bronze I material is still in need of systematic study. As more forms of scientific analysis are developed and become inexpensive enough to use on a large scale Tell en-Naşbeh may have much to offer on Israelite diet, health, trade and commercial activities, and so on.



Fig. 1.6. Satellite image of immediate environs of Tell en Naşbeh (kidney shape feature near center of image). The road on the right connects Jerusalem with the Nablus/Shechem region to the north. Note the encroachment of modern buildings in the vicinity of the site. The buildings to the west (left) and north (top) of the site are built over two of the settlement's ancient cemeteries (Image: © 2014 Google Earth).

Badè had hoped to undertake a study of the fingerprints found on the site's ceramics. With today's scanning and computing technologies such a study, including other sites in Israel, might yield interesting results. Source analysis of various ceramics from Tell en-Naşbeh has already been undertaken by various scholars, but, as suggested above, more could be done (Mommsen, Perlman, and Yellin 1984; Zorn, Yellin, and Hayes 1994; Gunneweg et al. 1994). For example, the wedge- and circle-decorated pottery, found so abundantly at Tell en-Naşbeh and other sites in Israel, has also been found in Jordan and northern Arabia (Zorn 2001). From where does this pottery originate and what would such a study reveal about international connections in the later Babylonian-Persian

periods? In many ways the list of possible projects involving extant Tell en-Naşbeh material hinges only on the imagination of archaeologists working in the area, and on the availability of modern scientific analytical testing techniques. Hopefully other scholars will take up the fascinating challenges and opportunities offered by this site.

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