

William Frederic Badè



by Jeffrey Zorn

When the biblical scholar William Frederic Badè began the excavation of Tell en-Naşbeh in 1926, he brought to the field a desire to systematize archaeological endeavors. Although he had little formal training as an archaeologist, he knew that earlier expeditions in Palestine had some-

times failed to record finds adequately or even to use sound excavation techniques, thus minimizing their value. In his view, no find was too small or insignificant: "Often the humblest of these materials—ashes, bones, pot-sherds, carbonized seeds, etc.—are the most revealing. Even a museum specimen is valuable only in proportion to our knowledge of its

Badè in 1932, exiting a cistern he excavated in the southwestern section of Tell en-Naşbeh.

human background. Every fact turned up by the spade feeds that knowledge, and any fact overlooked by an excavator, or misread through haste and incomplete study, may be an irreparable loss" (1928: 7).

That commitment led him to direct his team, in five seasons, to excavate the 8-acre site in the Benjaminite hill country, 7 miles

The humblest of materials—ashes, bones, pot-sherds, carbonized seeds—are often the most revealing. No fact turned up by the spade can be overlooked by the excavator.

north of Jerusalem, all the way down to bedrock. Tell en-Naşbeh was at its time the most completely excavated site in Palestine.

Born in Carver, Minnesota, on January 22, 1871, Badè spent his earliest years on a farm in the Midwest. In his youth he demonstrated academic interest and gifts, and studied diligently, mastering Latin and Greek. His academic abilities earned him an opportunity to attend the Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, from which he graduated in 1892. He then enrolled in the Moravian Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1894.

Thereafter he learned Hebrew and soon went on to Yale to study the Near Eastern background of the Hebrew Bible. During two years there, he improved his knowledge of Hebrew and learned Arabic, Akkadian, Ethiopic, and Aramaic. Eventually he came to read fourteen languages and to speak, in addition to the English and German he had learned as a boy in his home, fluent French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Arabic. In 1898 he received the Ph.D. degree from the Moravian Theological Seminary and was subsequently appointed professor of Hebrew and Old Testament literature there.



This photograph, taken in 1927, includes Clarence S. Fisher (front row, left), then director of the Oriental Institute's excavations at Megiddo; Badè (front row, right); Elihu Grant (back row, left), then director of the excavations at Beth-shemesh; Labib Effendi Sorial (back row, center), surveyor for the excavation at Tell en-Naşbeh; and George P. Hedley, recorder and photographer for the excavation at Tell en-Naşbeh.

In 1902 he was invited by the president of Pacific Theological Seminary (later, Pacific School of Religion) to become professor of Old Testament literature and Semitic languages, a post which he held until his death in 1936.

Badè, who was president of the Society for Biblical Literature in 1931, was intrigued by the critical scholarship that was emerging on the continent of Europe and sought to make these ideas available to American students of the Hebrew

Bible. He taught the then-still-new and radical Documentary Hypothesis, which holds that four distinct authors may be identified in the Pentateuch: the Yahwist strand (J), the Elohist source (E), the Deuteronomistic school (D), and the Priestly writer (P). As he taught his students this theory, he encouraged them to examine their own, often uncritically held, beliefs and apply critical methodology to their study of the Hebrew Bible. Badè was also interested in the concept of what he

called "Hebrew Moral Development." His book *The Old Testament in the Light of Today* and articles in German (1910) and English (1909, 1911a, 1914) show his belief that Israel's great ethical monotheism slowly evolved from polytheism, through monolatry, until it reached its peak in the genius of the literary prophets.

Badè first intended to begin work in field archaeology in 1914. His plans to excavate in the Hamath area of Syria, however, were changed both by the outbreak of World War I and by his appointment as the literary executor of John Muir's unpublished works after the death of the well-known naturalist and founder of the Sierra Club. Badè's friendship with Muir had begun shortly after he took his position at the Pacific Theological Seminary. He served a number of editorial functions for the Sierra Club. From 1905 to 1910 he was book review editor of its *Bulletin*; from 1910 to 1922 he was its editor. As John Muir's literary executor he produced *The Writings of John Muir*, in eight volumes, and *The Life and Letters of John Muir*, a biography in two volumes.

With the end of World War I and the establishment of the British Mandate in Palestine, Badè realized that there would be increasing opportunities to excavate within the borders of ancient Israel. He saw archaeology as a valuable tool for correcting, revising, or confirming tradition and felt that seminaries should teach archaeology along with Hebrew, Greek, and literary criticism.

With this conviction, Badè decided to travel to Jerusalem and attempt to organize an excavation. Before he arrived there on February 11, 1926, he had already corresponded with William F. Albright about a number of unexcavated sites in Palestine. Among them was Tell en-Naşbeh, a possible location of the biblical city of Mizpah. Although Albright himself thought nearby



Potsherds spread out on tables at Tell en-Naşbeh for examination and possible restoration. Note in the background the baskets full of sherds still to be examined.

Nebi Samwil was a more likely location of Mizpah, Badè was intrigued by Tell en-Naşbeh and decided to excavate. He took up temporary residence at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and began the dig in April 1926.

In the six weeks before the excavation began, preparations were made, permits secured, land rented, and supplies purchased. An aerial photograph of the site taken by the German air force during World War I helped determine where on the tell to dig, because Badè knew that the buried remains of ancient buildings affected the growth of plants above them and that the outlines of those hidden structures could be seen from the air in the proper light. Clarence S. Fisher, then director of the Megiddo expedition, provided not only useful technical advice (especially in recording finds) but also loaned the dig his surveyor and four Egyptian foremen to take charge over the workers; by the 1932 expedition the number of personnel had grown to as many as one-hundred-and-fifty men, women, and children.

Five seasons of excavation were

conducted: 1926, 1927, 1929, 1932, and 1935. As a rallying point for supporters, Badè founded the Palestine Institute in 1928 at Pacific School of Religion. The expenses of the excavation were borne partly by the profits from his Muir volumes and partly by funds provided by friends interested in his work. The members of the supervisory staff had to pay their own way to and from Palestine but were considered guests of the excavation during the dig season (Badè 1934: 12).

Archaeology as a scientific discipline was just coming into its own during the years of the Naşbeh excavations. Badè was concerned with wringing every bit of evidence he could from each find and well understood the importance of recording materials in situ. Before beginning his own expedition, he studied archaeological methodology as it had been developed in the American Southwest, an area that he realized was environmentally similar to the Near East. During the early years of the excavation he read exhaustively and sought out the advice of all the major archaeologists of the time. He



During the 1927 season at Naṣbeh a series of fourteen storage bins were found in an area between the massive Iron Age fortification walls and an earlier casemate wall. Here, workers clear bins in this "intramural area."

was particularly indebted to both Albright and Fisher for their advice on subjects from methodology to ceramic typology. As a result of his study and direct assistance from these men he was able to pay close attention to problems of technique as they occurred in the field, about which he wrote, "Long observation and study of methods of archaeological excavation in the field had convinced me that excessive eagerness to make a showing with museum specimens is the bane of some recent as of much earlier work. The primary purpose should be the application of a technique that will enable us to unriddle, by all scientific means and at whatever pains, the meaning of the human materials embedded in the strata" (1928: 6–7).

Slowly he and his assistants evolved their own methods of excavation and recording; he later described these in his work, *A Manual of Excavation in the Near East* (1934), which "served as a handbook for a generation of archaeologists" (King 1983: 77). One of his primary concerns, in fact, became training future archaeologists. In the manual

During 1929–1935 Badè conducted five seasons of excavation at Tell en-Naṣbeh. His work there convinced him it was the site of the biblical city of Mizpah.

he noted the need for, and his own methods of, preparing students for excavations (1934: 12–13; see also 1931). He inaugurated a series of three courses on field technique at the Pacific School of Religion, to which students who had performed well in other areas of the seminary curriculum were admitted. These seminars included instruction in

pottery typology and restoration, recording methods, and surveying techniques (Badè 1931: 16–17). After completing these archaeological courses, those who had excelled were eligible to become staff members at Tell en-Naṣbeh. Badè was also involved in teaching American field archaeologists through a course at the University of New Mexico (where he himself had first studied methodology). There, methods which he used in Palestine and incorporated into his own manual were applied to the American Southwest.

The Naṣbeh expedition employed the so-called Reisner-Fisher method, in which the tell was divided into 10-square-meter sections and then excavated in strips. After bedrock was reached and all finds recorded (with their locations carefully noted), the excavated segment was filled in and became the dumping ground for the next section. This was common archaeological practice for its time, but its major weakness is that it does not allow for controlled stratigraphic interpretation. It was only when the balk method was introduced into Palestinian



Workers excavate an Israelite four-room house during the 1927 excavations at Naşbeh. Many such three- and four-room houses were excavated at the site, often built into the casemate wall.

archaeology that vertical stratigraphy (and more accurate dating) became more widely possible (Franken and Franken-Battershill 1963: 9–10).

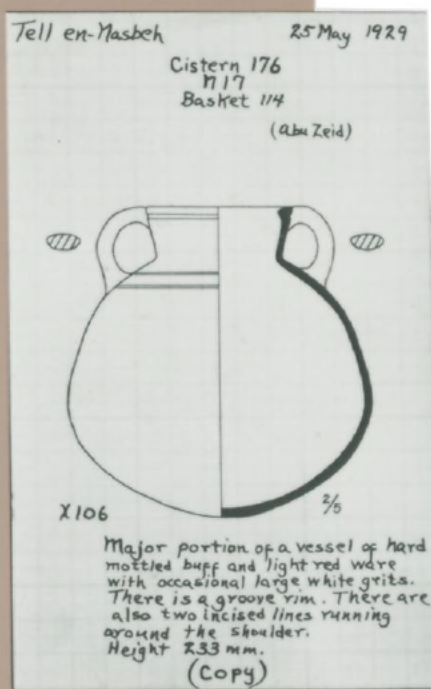
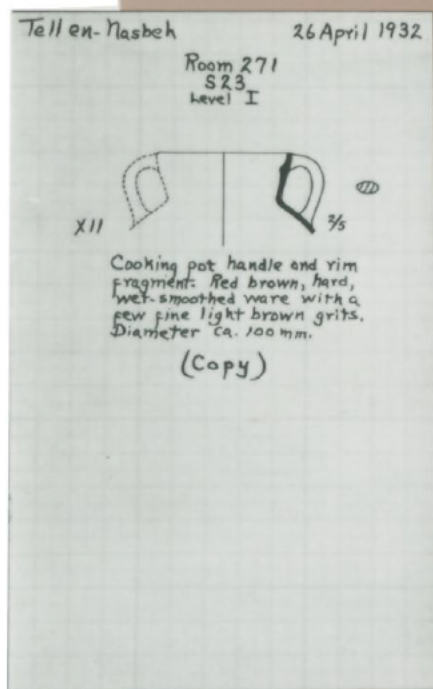
During the course of the Tell en-Naşbeh excavation, more than 7,500 objects were drawn and described on millimeter cards, including sherds that were not to be kept but which were felt to be important diagnostically. Badè and his chief recorder, J. C. Wampler, were among the first to perceive that in sites where there are no sharp breaks in occupation, different periods can be determined only through the gradual replacement of one ceramic type by another. They carefully photographed every wall, structure, room, and tomb and were the first expedition to make a film of their work.

Because Badè entered the field of archaeology late in life, he was not able to master entirely the intricacies of pottery typology. In the early years of the excavation he relied very much on the advice of others. But as his own abilities improved, he was able to prove the experts wrong. For example, many scholars initially dated Tell en-Naşbeh's great city-wall to the Middle Bronze Age. By cutting a section through the wall, Badè was able to show that it was not constructed any earlier than the Iron Age. In a trench dug up to the wall he noted that debris from inside the city had been poured outside the fortifications, resulting in reverse stratification; the earliest material was on top, the latest at the bottom.

Tell en-Naşbeh is the only site

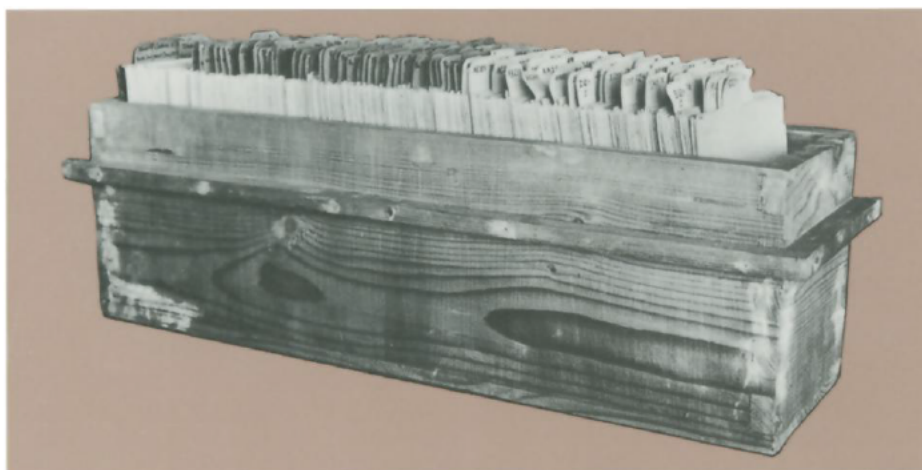
of its size to have been so completely excavated. This was due in part to the relatively shallow deposit on the site. Badè wrote, "It has been part of our method to excavate to bedrock, by successive levels, every square foot as far as we go. Similarly, every stone of any wall still in place has been drawn to scale on our maps. . . . To run trenches and guess what lies under unmoved debris between them is precarious. The systematic excavation and accurate mapping of all structures, strip by strip and level by level, is more expensive, but in the end far more revealing" (1928: 13). It is now most common to excavate only part of a site so that in the future archaeologists may check earlier results and interpretations of data.

A total of 672 rooms and 387



Impression made by a seal found in tomb 19 of the western necropolis of Nasbeh during the 1932 excavation. The upper register contains the name Jaazaniah; in the middle register this individual is described as "servant of the king"; the lower register shows a fighting cock. Badè identified the owner of the seal with the Jaazaniah mentioned in 2 Kings 25:23—one of the four army-captains who came to Mizpah after the departure of the Babylonian army in 586 B.C.E. (A further reference is made to him in Jeremiah 40:8.)

Two typical millimeter cards from the Nasbeh excavation. In his manual, Badè (1934: 38) described the card on the right, for an object with the registry number of 1051, as follows: "The entry X106 on the left side under the drawing shows that this vessel is the one hundred sixth object from the cistern 176 of which a millimeter-card record has been made up to that point in the series. The notations above the drawing show that the cistern is situated in the 10-meter quadrangle whose northeast corner intersection-lines on the topographic mound are N 17, and that it was recovered in the one hundred fourteenth basketful of artifacts yielded by the cistern. The foreman of the excavating gang was Abu Zeid."



The millimeter-card file for the 1932 excavation season.

bins, caves, cisterns, silos, and tombs were cleared within the town and another 71 tombs were excavated outside the walls. The tombs provided rich collections of Iron Age pottery and other small finds, including the seal that bears the name of Jaazaniah, one of the captains of the forces in the open country during the Babylonian siege, who later met with Gedaliah, Nebuchadnezzar's new governor, at Mizpah (2 Kings 25:22–24, Jeremiah 40:7–8). Also significant are the 86 *lmlk* (meaning, "of the king") and 24 clear Yehud seal impressions that were found. The *lmlk* seals were used to designate royal standards of measure or for taxation in Judah and are therefore important for understanding the administration in the country from the late eighth to early seventh centuries B.C.E. The Yehud seals were used for administrative purposes in the Persian period (the sixth through fourth centuries B.C.E.).

The excavation of Tell en-Nasbeh revealed a wealth of significant in-



Badè examining the seal of Jaazaniah. The seal—which is 19 millimeters long, 18 millimeters wide, and 12 millimeters thick—was dated by him to around 600 B.C.E. It is made of alternating layers of black and white onyx, with some skillfully ground away so that the rounded oval top looks like an eye.

formation for the study of Iron Age Palestine and its relationship to the Bible. The city-wall was built in sections, as though by different gangs of laborers. Badè connected this with the account in 1 Kings 15:17–22, which indicates that Asa, king of Judah, built Geba and Mizpah from materials he stole from Baasha, king of Israel, while the latter was fighting against Damascus. Asa issued a corvée decree commanding workers to carry off the stones and timber and build (or fortify) the two cities.

Badè died in 1936 before anything but the preliminary reports of the excavation had been published. The task of preparing the material for the final report fell to C. C. McCown, Professor of New Testament at Pacific School of Religion, and to Wampler, an alumnus and

chief recorder during the last three seasons. These volumes were considered model reports for their time¹ and have served as the basis of recent studies on demography and urban-planning—see Branigan (1966), Shiloh (1970, 1978), and McClellan (1984).²

Badè's work made significant contributions to the field of archaeology in his generation. His concern for systematic excavations and careful recording of data, as well as for training the next generation of archaeologists, provided a sound model for his colleagues. Although his methodology has been superseded as the field has advanced, his own dedication and work contributed to its advance in his own lifetime.

Notes

¹See the reviews by Tufnell (1948) and Wright (1948).

²See the excellent bibliographies produced by Vogel (1971) and Vogel and Holtzclaw (1981) for more information on reports dealing with Tell en-Naşbeh.

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BADÈ INSTITUTE

Pacific School of Religion **Berkeley, California**

A Doctoral/Postdoctoral Fellowship in Biblical Archaeology

The Badè Institute at Pacific School of Religion was founded and organized by Professors William F. Badè and Chester C. McCown. The core of the collection consists of materials from Tell en-Nasbeh, probably biblical Mizpah, excavated by Badè between 1926 and 1935. It represents one of the earliest scientific excavations in Palestine, uncovering an eight-acre mound and exposing a small city that flourished between 1000-586 B.C.E. The Badè Institute maintains a limited library of archaeological books and periodicals and operates a small museum where materials related to biblical archaeology are on permanent display. It also houses a fine collection of historic printed Bibles accumulated by the late John Howell, a San Francisco rare book dealer.

The person holding this fellowship will function as a half-time coordinator of the Badè Institute. Duties involve maintaining the library collection and assisting persons in their use of the rare book collection; coordinating a series of lectures on archaeology throughout the school year; giving tours to groups and working with volunteer docents; supervising a loan exhibit program whereby materials are circulated to churches; maintaining, developing, and installing exhibits in the museum; ordering and monitoring the development of a slide collection in archaeology and

the fine arts; and working with faculty and students to enhance the use of all the resources of the Institute.

The fellowship is offered to those engaged in research related to the material cultures of the ancient Near East, preferably the archaeology of the Levant. The research resources of the Berkeley area are available.

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Applicants must be in advanced candidacy status for a Ph.D., or have completed a Ph.D. within the past three years, in the archaeology of Israel-Jordan-Syria-Lebanon, or some aspect of ancient Near Eastern studies. Persons with archaeological field experience in these countries are preferred.

Applicants should send a curriculum vitae and statement, no longer than 1000 words, explaining why they are interested in the position and their qualifications. Applications must be supported by three letters of recommendation, one from the Ph.D. advisor, and one from a field director for whom the applicant has worked. Deadline: February 1, 1989. Send application materials to: Dean of the Faculty, Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709.