
NELSON GLUECK: IN MEMORIAM

Often when one stands back from a much-praised figure and imagines the perspective of history, the adulation of the present begins to appear overdrawn and fatuous. But to apply this test to Nelson Glueck only accentuates the stature of the man. A biblical scholar whose doctoral dissertation remains a classic more than forty years after its publication,

* We have learned that the AIA will be meeting on December 27-30; therefore, the Board of Trustees of the ASOR will meet on *Thursday, December 30*.

an archaeological explorer whose individual achievement in Palestine is equalled perhaps only by that of Edward Robinson, an educational administrator who quadrupled the size of his institution during his presidency, a spell-binding lecturer, a prolific writer, not only of learned monographs, books, articles, and reviews, but also of volumes for the general reader in a vivid style rarely managed by scholars—this was clearly not an ordinary man. And of course not mentioned in this catalogue are the years of service in many capacities to the American Schools of Oriental Research and in particular to the Jerusalem School. Despite the pain of separation from home and family, he often spoke of his years as director of the Jerusalem School as among the happiest of his life. His creation of the Hebrew Union College Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem was in direct response to that experience and grew out of a desire to establish in Israel a counterpart of that institution. After the unexpected events of 1967, his return to the Jerusalem School and his reunion with the faithful Omar were for him occasions of deep emotion.

For those of us of the younger generation who came to know Nelson Glueck in the last years of his life, he was of course already a living legend. There were perhaps three characteristics which impressed us above all the others. Clearly foremost was his physical indefatigability. Although he was approaching his seventieth birthday, his eagerness to go off on any field trip, not matter how arduous, his disdain of thirst and fatigue, his refusal to ask for quarter despite the fact that time had obviously taken its toll never ceased to amaze his younger companions. Second was his large fund of fascinating stories about Albright, the Petries, and of course himself and his many adventures in Transjordan among the bedouin. His appearance in the series of evening lectures to the Gezer volunteer staff was invariably the hit of the season. Through his stories and his limitless enthusiasm, he could create more interest in archaeology and the Bible in one hour than could the rest of us in a full summer. Finally, we were impressed by his professional generosity and genuine humility toward his younger colleagues. His interest in the field work and administration of the Gezer excavations was deep, but at no point did he ever seek to impose his archaeological interpretation or administrative decision on matters which were delegated to directors and staff. His own fame as an archaeologist was world wide, but this did not mean for him that his own learning should cease.

Nelson Glueck was granted his threescore and ten, but we who knew him may perhaps be forgiven our forlorn wish that it had been fourscore. It will take many hands to gather up the threads that were held by him alone; and in regarding his life and accomplishment, we can only agree that in those days there were giants in the land.

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