

Thanks for taking such good care of the inner person. Meal after meal so beautifully cooked. Mensif, Musakaan, Kuusa mashi. And always in a time of crisis you remember what the food was. "When that thief fell in the fishpond I was cooking French fries." "I told all the people on the trip to eat homous and green onions for breakfast. Then they wouldn't get sick." Remember cooking Thanksgiving dinner at the dig at Diban? Grapefruit first, then pigeons, roast lamb, vegetables, salad, and caramel custard. All somehow done on a primus in the desert.

How many thousands of us have come and gone. Students, researchers, teachers, guests. While you, our dear central character, have always remained on stage, nourishing us with your food, delighting us with your stories, protecting our school with your vigilance. Thank you, Omar, we are counting on you for the next forty years!

Yours ever affectionately,  
Anne

## Annual Professor Reports on "Pilgrimage to ACOR"

This is the story of a "journey to the center." Ours was not however a religious pilgrimage to a "center of the sacred" but an intellectual journey to a place of study, the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman. The experience there as Annual Professor forms the basis of this report and a pilgrimage metaphor its focus.

### Identity

Who is the pilgrim? This one happens to be a Professor of New Testament who, after a decade or more of sizable administrative involvement, projected a year's sabbatical by way of a full-time return to the classroom.

What motivates a pilgrim to make the move? A stimulus for me came in the form of a student's probing question at one of those most sacred of all times on a seminary campus, the post-chapel coffee break, "And what books have *you* read lately?" So, I came to Amman to read a book. A second motivation had lingered after an earlier whirlwind tour of Jordan fostered the desire someday to return for a longer stay. So, I came to Jordan for a year.

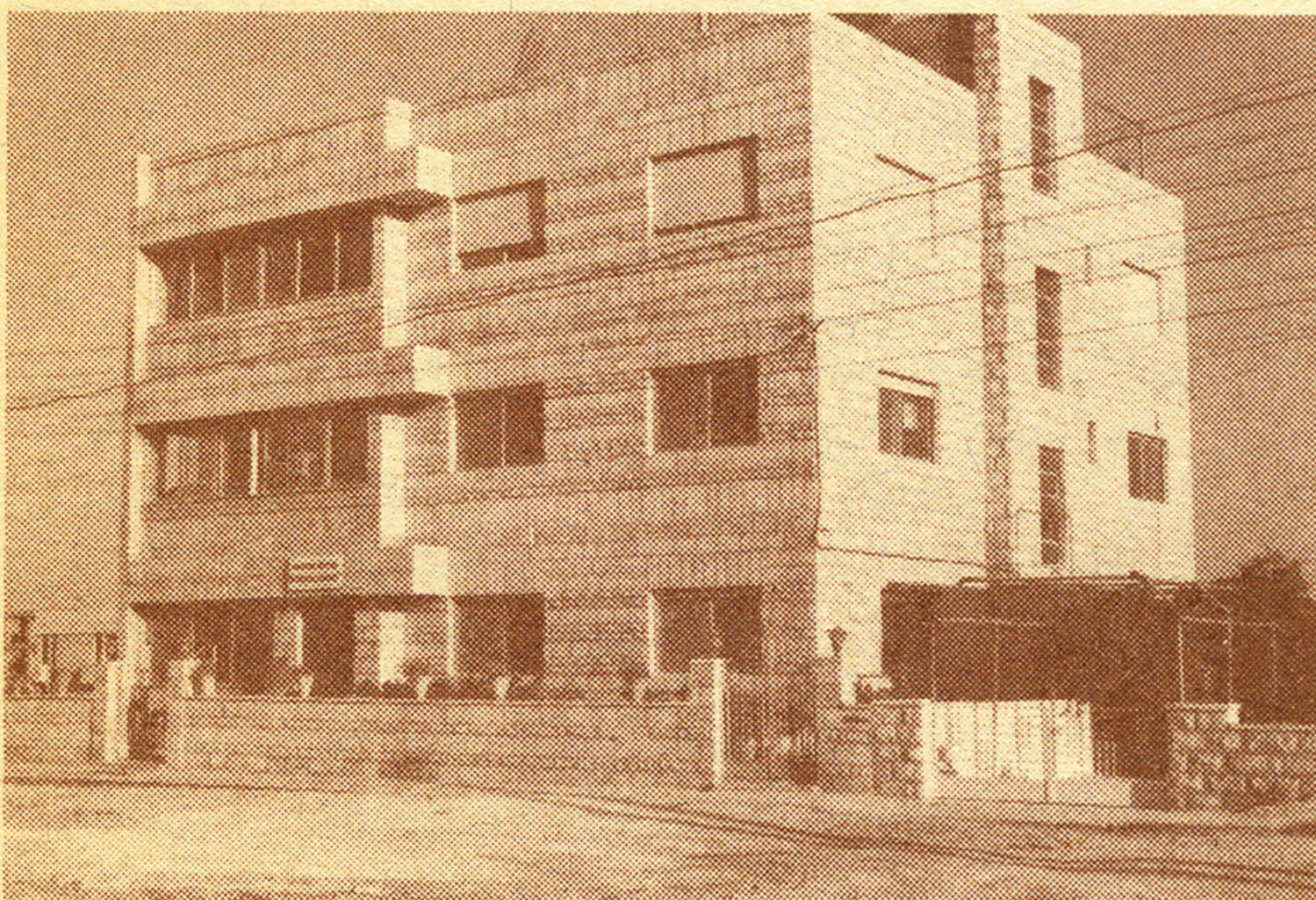
An ACOR impulse came at breakfast in Dubuque with Director James Sauer. Responding to my interest in Jordan and a place to stay, he was kind enough to suggest that I apply for an appointment as Annual Professor. Up to that moment this had not occurred to me as a realistic option. In due time I applied, and the Trustees approved. So, there I was, Annual Professor at ACOR for 1978-79.

### Destination

Pilgrims have a destination; they are not drifters or wanderers. Religious pilgrims set their sights on a holy place, a

"center out there." ACOR holds no claims to theophanies or miracles and houses no relics of saints. Thus it does not qualify as a holy site for pilgrims. But it does qualify in other respects, and Jordan makes its own strong appeals, both as the scene of biblical events and as a country and culture with integrity quite apart from biblical interests.

ACOR--exactly what is it? It happens to be a number of things, and its priorities may vary. For one, as a "service" agency it strives to be helpful in coordinating activities and providing information and assistance. Seasonally it takes on the special coloring of a "dig" or of heavier "hostel" demands. By title however it is neither a dig headquarters nor a tourist hotel but a "center of research." On a year-round basis it functions as an active academic center with its own facilities, staff, and appointees, and a program of teaching, research, and publication.



*American Center of Oriental Research,  
Amman, Jordan.*

### When the Pilgrim Gets There

What do pilgrims do when they arrive? Annual Professor at ACOR--exactly what does it mean? The job description has been minimal, leaving accountability largely up to the mutual integrity of Director and Annual Professor. What follows is an accounting for a particular year.

#### A. *Research*

The project submitted to the Trustees was "Moving 'Outside the Camp': An Investigation of the Biblical Metaphor of Pilgrimage." The objective was to trace in Scripture the theme of God's people on the move and to analyze specifically the motif in the Epistle to the Hebrews, together with its call to live "outside the camp."

1. *Hebrews*. Interest in whatever orientation to the "outside" there may be in Hebrews, and whatever relevance it may have for the notion of pilgrimage, was both long-standing and recent. It went back to Charles C. West's 1959 paperback, *Outside the Camp*. More recent interest was stimulated by a 1976 *SBL* paper by William G. Johnsson, since published (*JBL* 97 (1978) 239-51). In the relative absence of secondary literature, but with the availability of the necessary primary sources in the ACOR library, my exegetical efforts meant a respectable number of hours of homework with lexicon, concordance, and dictionary.

2. *Pilgrimage*. Clarity in defining the issue proved as elusive as it remains crucial. The extent to which pilgrimage exists as distinctively itself and not as synonymous with either nomadism or forcible exile or wandering or tourism, and the extent to which there may be some overlapping with any or all of these, is



a matter of the "total field" which the anthropologist talks about. (cf. Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 1978). A confident assessment requires having in hand at least eight sets of data, and I can make no such claim. Four of these are the issues which frame this report--identity, destination, arrival, and return. There are four more. a. *Point of origin*. Where does the pilgrimage originate, and what are conditions like there? b. *Way of getting there*. How do pilgrims travel? c. *Duration*. How long does the pilgrimage last, and is it to be repeated? d. *Language*. How are pilgrims described both by themselves and by others? There was a time among Copts when a tattoo marked the successful pilgrim. In any given expression it needs to be determined whether the language is that of a literal spatial movement from here to there or whether

life itself has figuratively become one long pilgrimage even (or especially) in the midst of frozen immobility, or a combination thereof. "Total field" assessment is far easier to talk about than to achieve.

But why ACOR? Admittedly much can be said in favor of doing this type of work in an environment of richer library resources. Much can also be said for a location such as ACOR's with its "on site" possibilities for considering an issue like camp/wilderness influences on pilgrimage symbolism or learning something about Islam and the significance of *Hajj*. An intriguing question at the beginning remains so at the end. How did it come about that in pre-Islamic Arabia Christian communities were called "camps"?

#### B. *Educational Program*

1. *Religious Symbolism*. While the Annual Professor at ACOR is a research and not a teaching appointment, the position does imply one teaching responsibility, namely offering a course for interested people in the community. I chose a class in religious symbolism, designed for "visual enlightenment" or "sharpened seeing" of symbols, with special reference to Near East archeology. What Othmar Keel set out to do in *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 1978, needed to be done. More remains to be done. It takes an architect to alert us in biblical studies to the importance of "eye" or "hand" symbolism, for example. (Rudolf Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate*, 1958, pp. 11-21).

For the course I prepared a syllabus with annotated bibliography limited almost exclusively to materials available in the ACOR library. The intention was to demonstrate (if it needed demonstration) that, small though it may be, the library had enough resources to keep anyone interested in the subject occupied

for a considerable time. The course must have created some interest. A follow-up appeared in the *Jordan Times* six months after the class was over.

2. *Classical Archeology*. With the abundance of resources in Syro-Palestinian archeology surrounding one, it becomes easy to by-pass the fascinating world of classical archeology. At the invitation of the *Friends of Archeology* I prepared two illustrated lectures on Ephesus and Corinth, the first one delivered also on the campus of the University of Jordan. A motif of these presentations was the meeting of East and West. Past and present controversies of "Orient vs. Rome" (as e.g., in the notorious "Chalice of Antioch" days) or East vs. West can survive only on partial truths. *Both East and West* remains a more accurate way of putting it.

3. *Other Courses*. It was a privilege to take advantage of the classes taught by ACOR colleagues: Dr. Gary Rollefson, Albright Fellow, "Old World Prehistory" and Dr. James Sauer, "History and Archeology of Jordan in the Iron Age."

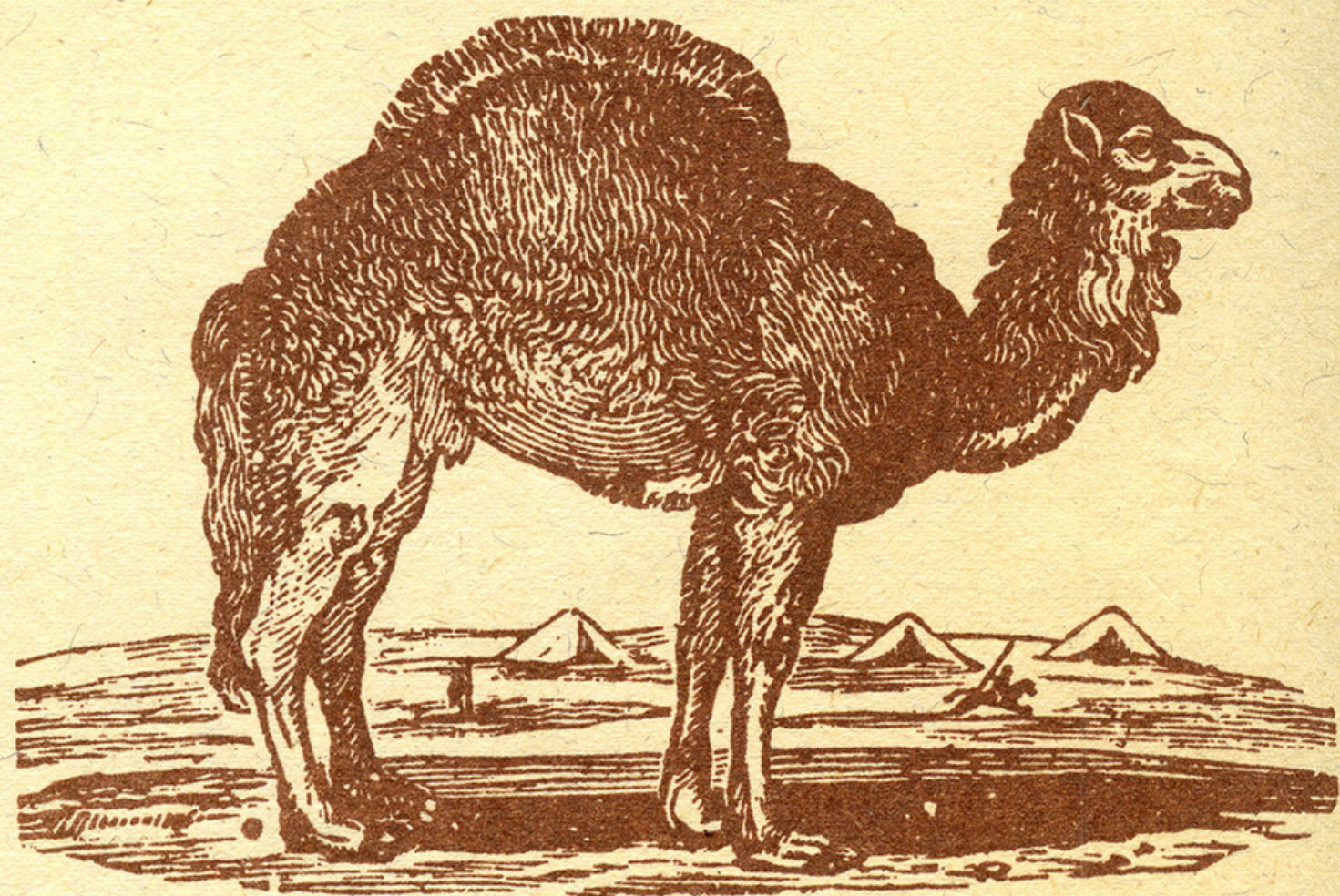
4. *University of Jordan*. My direct contacts with the University were largely a matter of using the library and visiting with the faculty of archeology. Indirectly there were numerous contacts since Barbara, spouse and nutritionist, taught full-time in the newly-formed program of human nutrition as a member of the Faculty of Agriculture. Problems remain, but when one understands that there was no University of Jordan before 1962, one can only stand in amazement at what has been accomplished.

5. *Field Trips*. ACOR's educational program involves numerous field trips. Some are conducted under the auspices of the *Friends of Archeology*. Some are organized by the Director, others are the responsibility of the Annual Professor.

6. *Arabic*. A passing note can mention a stumbling attempt to learn some Arabic. There were just enough lessons to verify what one already knows--there are no six easy steps to proficiency in Arabic.

### C. *Field Work*

The one field experience for the year was SS'79, a walking survey of three weeks in northwest Syria directed by James Sauer. Preparatory to the eventual selection of a site(s) for excavation, this survey was an experience in "roughing it" with wind-tossed tents, blistered feet, and all. It also produced a collection of sherds, the happy observation of an intense interest on the part of the villagers in what we were doing, and of our identification by at least some of them as "foreigners (or Americans) helping us to study our own history."



### D. *Travel*

Travelling on our own (in addition to the aforementioned field trips) we were able to cover the length and breadth of Jordan, much of Syria, Egypt from Cairo to Abu Simbel (with son Robert, a fast-stepping Cairo student, as tour guide), and, to visit the campus of AUB in Leban-

on. The return trip allowed a few transitional days in Paris. And whatever one may want to say in favor of "East *and* West" and not "East *vs.* West," it has to be admitted that the Arabic music of Amman radio and "The Marriage of Figaro" in the Paris Opera House remain some worlds apart.

#### Return

What do pilgrims do back home? What promises to be different as a result of their having gone? In terms of quantity, my answer is simple. I returned five pounds to the good. Weighing in twenty pounds lighter (the result of no particular effort of eating less or exercising more), I found that my accumulation of notes in folders and notebooks weighed in at twenty-five pounds. In terms of quality, the accounting must be less precise. Students in the classroom have the right to expect the most direct benefits. My offerings are planned to range from the exegesis of Hebrews to presentations on religious symbolism to the consideration of the pilgrimage motif in biblical theology. I will be reading an *SBL* paper on "The Orientation to the 'Outside' in Hebrews," with more to follow if subsequent programs allow it.

More generally, a year's experience in another culture and another religion means that a person cannot return the same. Impressions remain, too numerous to be expressed at any one time. They wait to be lived out. Several can be mentioned here.

1. Happily, ACOR holds a solid position of respect in Jordan. Its influence and acceptance in Syria is healthy and growing.

2. ACOR is vibrant with an international flavor. Spanish, French, and Belgian friends among others are much in

evidence to add their individuality to the center's American life.

3. Jordan is a vast laboratory for archeological and historical study, ranging from pre-history to modern Islam. Especially for pre-historians (and this comes as a surprise to me) does Jordan offer vast frontiers.

4. Jordan, like many others, finds itself in an era of rapid and profound change. The powers that be are not oblivious to the importance of antiquities for a modern culture. Through an active Department of Antiquities they look also to ACOR for leadership in dealing with the past honestly and competently.

5. Arab feelings, not in sympathy with Camp David agreements, run deep. To underestimate or to ignore these feelings hold its own foreboding prospects. The question is, is anybody listening?

At the end we return to the beginning. Asked by another student I could now affirm that a few things have been read. I came to Amman to read a book, and in this I succeeded. For colleagues planning a leave I can point to my experience as interesting and worthwhile enough to have changed the question. It is no longer, "Why spend a sabbatical at ACOR?" The question is, "Why not?"

*I gratefully acknowledge the support and friendliness of a number of people--The Board of Theological Education and Ministry of The American Lutheran Church and the Regents and Administration of Wartburg Theological Seminary for granting the leave; Lutheran Brotherhood of Minneapolis for a grant; ACOR Trustees for the Appointment; James and Susan Sauer and Mohammed Adawi at ACOR for more than can be itemized--Edwin A. Schick.*