Essential, however, for Greek and Roman burial customs, would be the lamps and vessels for oil to keep lights burning during the funeral and afterward at the grave. These were entirely absent in the Airport cemetery. By contrast, full-length leather shrouds were used for several of the corpses, and leather purses were identified, in addition to the numerous pairs of varied sandals and shoes.

This emphasis on leatherworking opposed to the use of pottery is characteristic of a Bedouin rather than a settled community. The Arabs were known for their leatherwork in antiquity. The absence of lamps shows that the burial rites were indeed of a separate tradition from the common practice even in nearby settled communities. Among sandals, some are thickly studded with nails in the tradition of the Roman army. The bones show a high incidence of injuries which could also be the result of military service.

The cemetery at Queen 'Alia International Airport thus offers remarkable evidence for the relations between Arab tribes, and the Roman armies at the eastern border of the empire. The Institute is proud to be able to offer a full and well-documented publication of this site.

M.M. Ibrahim
R.L. Gordon

FIRST SEASON OF JOINT EXCAVATIONS AT ABU HAMID

A joint archaeological expedition of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan and CNRS, France, with the cooperation of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan started on 10 January, 1986, a rescue operation under the directorship of Dr. Geneviève Dollfus (Directeur de Recherche du CNRS) and Dr. Zeidan Kafafi (Acting Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Yarmouk University). Participants included scholars and students from both institutions and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

The site of Abu Hamid is located in Ghor il-Balawneh, 16 kilometres north of Deir 'Alla. It occupies a large area between the village of Abu Sidu in the east and the Jordan River in the west, about 1,400 metres east-west and 400 metres north-south.

In the area of the site there are two springs which divert in wadis flowing into the Jordan River. Because these springs provide a permanent source of water, the location is ideal for settlement.
Tell Abu Hamid was discovered in 1975 during the first season of the Jordan Valley survey undertaken by Prof. Dr. Moawiyah Ibrahim, Dr. M. Khair Yassin and Dr. James Sauer.

One of the goals of the expedition was to discover the function of the site and its relationship to contemporary sites such as Teleilat Ghassul, Beer es-Saba', and Farah North. A second aim was to determine whether the site was occupied seasonally or year-round and to determine the length of occupation. A related goal was to define the nature of subsistence of the group in the late 5th and early 4th millennia B.C. Because the site extends over a large area, and because it was partly bulldozed for cultivation, authorities at the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Yarmouk University and CNRS consulted with the Department of Antiquities and decided to begin a rescue excavation.

In spite of the damage to the site, the excavation obtained good information about the way of life in the late 5th and the early 4th millennia B.C. Some of the houses seem to be rectangular. Walls were built of mudbricks and in some cases, stones were used. Others could have been pit dwellings.

A microscopic study of flint tools will indicate their precise functions. The tool assemblage suggests an economy based on farming, rather than hunting and gathering. Grinding tools of basalt and limestone, used to prepare grain, support this interpretation.

Floral remains consist of barley, wheat, and some legumes. The faunal remains consist of goat, sheep, pig and a few cattle and fox; these finds indicate that these villagers also practiced herding. No burials were discovered in this season, but schematic figurines of animals in clay and stone were discovered.

After the end of the first season (February 28, 1986) preliminary reports will be published in the Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and Paléorient.

After the end of the second season, to take place October–November 1987, a book of the final results will be published in the Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of Yarmouk University and the Monograph Series of CNRS. The material will be studied and published by Jordanian, French, and specialists from other countries.

The expedition was funded by Yarmouk University, CNRS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris and the National Geographic Society.

G. Dollfus
Z. Kafafi

TELL IRBID

Excavations were carried out at Tell Irbid by the Institute, a foreign team, the Department of Antiquities and the Municipality of Irbid in the spring of 1985. A ten-week season is planned for July through September of 1986.

The excavated portion of the tell is to the north-west and is an "escarpment" left by the municipality's removal of the tell to expand the business district of the growing modern city of Irbid. Thanks to the cooperation of all parties, this section of the tell, as well as others, will remain for future work. Although it may not