

BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN IRAQ

(Gertrude Bell Memorial)

31-34 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1



REPORT & ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31st MAY, 1968



THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SCHOOL WILL BE HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY, BURLINGTON HOUSE, PICCADILLY, W.1, ON FRIDAY, 22nd NOVEMBER, 1968, AT 5 p.m., TO HEAR MR. DAVID OATES; TO CONSIDER THE ACCOUNTS, THE BALANCE SHEET AND THE REPORTS OF THE COUNCIL AND THE AUDITOR; TO ELECT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL; TO APPOINT AN AUDITOR; AND FOR ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH MAY PROPERLY BE TRANSACTED.

BEFORE THE MEETING THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

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REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

THE Council wishes to offer the congratulations of the School to Professor Sir Max Mallowan, who was created Knight Bachelor in June 1968 in recognition of his distinguished services to archaeology.

During the year 1967-68 Miss Monique Geschier acted as Secretary-Librarian of the School in Baghdad. She reorganised the library, and also undertook the running of the School hostel. School fellowships were awarded to Miss Stephanie Page, to continue her work on the tablets found at Tell al Rimah in 1967, and to Mr. Michael Jarman for the study of plant and animal remains from the School's excavations. Grants from the Fellowship Fund were made to Miss Carolyn Prater for work on the pottery from Tell al Rimah, to Miss Barbara Parker and Mr. Christopher Walker to act as epigraphists during the 1968 season at Tell al Rimah, and to Mr. Geoffrey Turner to work on the publication of his study of Late Assyrian palaces. Professor Wiseman, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee, received a grant from the Visiting Lectureship Fund to work on tablets in the Iraq Museum and to visit the excavations at Choga Mami.

The Nimrud Ivory Programme continued under the direction of Mr. Jeffery Orchard, who is now preparing the second fascicule of the First Report for publication. He was assisted by Miss Nan Shaw (conservation) and Mr. John Bradbury (photography). This year the cleaning and conservation of the fragments has been completed, an occasion for congratulation to all who have been concerned in this arduous work. The photography and cataloguing of the remaining pieces will continue in 1969.

During this session the School undertook an unusually heavy programme of excavation, since generous grants from the Oriental Institute, Chicago, and the American Philosophical Society to Mrs. Joan Oates enabled us to start work on the prehistoric site of Choga Mami, near Mandali, which Mrs. Oates had discovered in the course of a survey in 1967. The first season at Choga Mami lasted from December 1st, 1967, to February 26th, 1968, and we were assisted by Miss Elizabeth Dowman, Miss Carolyn Prater, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Jarman and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ellis. We were happy to welcome Dr. Nikolai Merbert and Dr. Nikolai Badr, of the Russian Academy of Sciences, as our guests for a short stay. Sayyid Hazim Nejeifi and Sayyid Ghassan Abdullah gave invaluable help as Representatives of the Directorate General of Antiquities. From March 12th to June 10th, 1968, we resumed work at Tell al Rimah, where the staff included Mrs. Joan Oates, Miss Barbara Parker, Miss Elizabeth Dowman, Miss Carolyn Prater, Mr. Edward Blandy, Mr. Roger Whitney and, for shorter periods, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ellis and Mr. Christopher Walker. Mr. Julian Reade continued his work on material from Tell Taya. The Directorate General was represented by Sayyid Manhal Jabr, whose energy and local knowledge were of great assistance to us.

The situation of Choga Mami has been described in *Iraq*, XXIX, Pt. 2. It was chosen for excavation because it lies in an area of marginal rainfall, on the border between the northern and southern cultural provinces of Mesopotamia, and on the ancient highway along the foothills of the Zagros. The surviving occupation levels, as far down as we have excavated, represent a village or small town, c. 350 by 100 metres, of the Samarra period, probably to be dated c. 5500 to 5000 B.C. There was evidently later occupation in upper strata which have been lost by erosion. The latest level of which

vestiges remain yielded pottery of transitional Samarra-Hajji Muhammad type, and a few Hajji Muhammad sherds. Sunk through this from a higher occupation level that has entirely disappeared was a well containing late Halaf polychrome sherds of the best Arpachiyah quality, together with hitherto unknown but approximately contemporary material, probably of Iranian origin. Elsewhere on the mound another late well produced Hajji Muhammad and later 'Ubaid types, and a large pit contained a consistent range of Early Dynastic material. One important aspect of the site, therefore, is the evidence that it yields for chronological relationships between North and South Mesopotamian cultures, at least in the area of Mandali, and for connections with Iran. Our first impression of this evidence is that the culture represented by Samarra pottery is here quite distinct from Hassuna. We found no Hassuna pottery, and it is rare at the closely comparable site of Tell as Sawwan. It seems that Hassuna is a culture of the rainfed northern plain of Mesopotamia, while Samarra flourished in central Mesopotamia along the fringes of the alluvium. One sherd of early Eridu ware (Eridu XVII) was stratified in a Samarra level, and the Samarra assemblage also included a series of broken terracotta female figurines with heads rendered in a naturalistic manner, but with an elongated profile and hair style which is in its most pronounced form is an obvious lineal antecedent of the 'Ubaid "lizard-headed" figurines from Ur. We would therefore suggest, on the material evidence alone, that the prosperous Samarra settlement at Choga Mami represents an intermediate stage between the early rain-fed agriculture of the northern plain, as typified by Hassuna, and the full efflorescence of the 'Ubaid economy in the south, which must have been based on large-scale irrigation. This accords with other observations we have made. An ancient canal bed, lined with sites of all periods including Samarra and Hajji Muhammad, approaches Choga Mami from the direction of Mandali, where it could have drawn water from the perennial Gangir river, and on the north side of the mound we found a series of water-channels, some of which were of Samarra date and very probably served as irrigation channels. Complementary evidence of climatic and ecological conditions was obtained by the collection of animal bones and seed and grain samples from different levels. We have also begun to collect evidence for changes in the regime of water-courses in the neighbourhood, at points where alternating phases of deposition and erosion can be linked with archaeological sites of different periods.

At Tell al Rimah work continued on the central mound, where further investigation of the terrace outside the great temple revealed a complex sequence of structural changes. It now appears that a formal paved terrace existed only on the east side, and that both its retaining wall and the monumental stair leading to it were secondary to the temple. They may have formed part of the second phase of construction during which the ziggurat was completed. A number of Old Babylonian tablets were found near the head of the stair, some in the fill of the foundation trench for the terrace wall. They are largely concerned with agriculture, and clearly continue the series found in the same spot last year. A trench was also opened against the south face of the mound, to investigate the earlier occupation of the site. This part of the mound is riddled by modern caves, but we found evidence of a long occupation during the Ur III period. The buildings had evidently been terraced up the slope and in most cases only substructures remained, but these produced remarkable evidence of the sophisticated

architectural techniques current at the end of the third millennium B.C. Mud brick arches were freely employed, and in one structure we found the remains of three tiers of vaulting. Each vault was constructed by the "pitched-brick" method, and rested on pendentives, giving the effect of a shallow oval dome.

Our major effort was concentrated on the site of the palace where more than 200 Old Babylonian tablets were found in 1967. Once again we were obliged to excavate six metres of stratified debris to reach the palace. A surprising find in the Middle Assyrian level was an attractive green alabaster stamp seal of the Jemdet Nasr period in the form of a recumbent cow. Seventeen rooms of the palace have now been wholly or partially cleared, and this season yielded about forty more tablets, including an addition to the archive of the lady Iltani and records of the issue of wine from the royal stores. Beneath a part of the palace we found a still earlier building, in which was the seal impression of a man described as "servant of Shamshi-Adad", obviously Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria (c.1852-1819 B.C.) This provides further useful confirmation of the date of the foundation of Tell al Rimah as a town, and suggests that the palace was built by one of its independent rulers after the death of Shamshi-Adad.

We once again offer our thanks to Dr. Faisal al Wailly, Director General of Antiquities, and to Professor Fuad Safar, Inspector General of Excavations, and their staff for their unflinching co-operation.

On behalf of the Council,

M. E. L. MALLOWAN,

Chairman of Executive Committee.

D. OATES,

Director.

COLIN KERR,

Hon. Treasurer.

28th October 1968

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