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BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN IRAQ

(*Gertrude Bell Memorial*)

20 WILTON STREET, GROSVENOR PLACE, LONDON, S.W.1



REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MAY, 1953



THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SCHOOL WILL BE HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, BURLINGTON HOUSE (FAR LEFT CORNER OF QUADRANGLE), PICCADILLY, ON TUESDAY, 1st DECEMBER, 1953, AT 5 p.m., TO HEAR PROFESSOR MALLOWAN; 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.

Tea will be served at 4.30.

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

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REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

PROFESSOR MALLOWAN completed his fifth successive season at Nimrud. His account of it was published in the *Illustrated London News* of August 8, 15 and 22, with photographs which included the magnificent ivory head of a lady, discovered in 1952, and cleaned and restored in the laboratories of the Iraq Museum.

Excavations were continued in the 'Burnt Palace,' in which many ivories had been found. Most of the plan of the building has now been revealed. There is stratigraphic proof of five successive occupations of the site between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C. Associated with the earliest were many foundation boxes, some containing sets of seven-winged devils—small clay figurines, deposited as protective charms. There is strong evidence that the building containing the ivories was occupied by King Sargon (722–705 B.C.).

In the north-west palace of Assur-nasir-pal II a well partly excavated by Layard a century ago was dug down to bedrock. In the sludge was discovered a document of the first importance, namely a pair of ivory boards, originally hinged, one of which, inscribed with the name of Sargon, recorded that the boards had been made for a text to be set up in his new palace at Dur Sharrukin (Khorsabad). With them were other sets of wooden diptychs and traces of Assyrian inscriptions on wax. This discovery proves that some of the ivories found at Calah were made for the new Assyrian capital, and enables us to assign many of the best to Sargon's reign.

Within the akropolis many other objects of historical and artistic importance were found. They included sets of ivory bulls, a polished limestone lion's head, alabaster vases, a seal impression of Shalmaneser III (859–824 B.C.), cylinder and stamp seals and jewellery. A private house near the ziggurat contained the archives of a wealthy merchant who did business for nearly 40 years in the reign of Assur-bani-pal. This quarter of the city was sacked and burned down at the end of his reign, c. 630 B.C.

Extensive excavations were made for the first time in the outer town. About half a mile north of the ziggurat was discovered a palace of Adad-nirari III (810–782 B.C.), with walls brilliantly decorated with frescoes; yet another set of ivories which could be dated to that king's reign; and the royal bathroom, its large water jars still leaning against the walls.

Our thanks are due to many institutions which gave most generous help to this successful work. Details are given on page 7. The Iraq Petroleum Company also provided machinery and equipment and took air photographs.

The British Museum gave Mr. D. J. Wiseman, of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, leave to join the Expedition to decipher the inscriptions. The School Fellowships were held by Mr. R. W. Hamilton and Mr. J. H. Reid, who shared the survey work and architectural drawing. Dr. Joan Lines, a research student at Cambridge University, supervised the recording of the pottery and helped in the field and in dealing with the small antiquities. Mr. P. Hulin, another research student, helped in every department. Miss Barbara Parker undertook the photography and continued her preparations for publishing the Assyrian business texts discovered in 1952. Sir Allen and Lady Lane copied the Assyrian frescoes, and Mrs. Ernest Altounyan made water-colours of Nimrud. Mrs. Mallowan assisted in photographing and repairing the antiquities.

Thanks are again due to Dr. Naji al Asil, Director General of the Antiquities Department, for his unremitting aid to the Expedition and the School, and for the help of his skilled colleagues on innumerable occasions. Sayyid Izzet Din es Sanduq represented the Department, and in addition to his duties assisted in the survey. Dr. Faraj Basmachi completed the catalogue.

Public interest in the work at Nimrud may be judged from the thousand visitors from Iraq and abroad who inspected it. Professor Mallowan gave a British Council lecture in Baghdad. Many distinguished Iraqis and the British Ambassador (our Vice-President) were present. Dr. Naji al Asil took the chair.

1954 will be devoted to preparing the definitive volume on the five expeditions to Nimrud. Mrs. Mallowan (Agatha Christie) has most generously given the copyright of her next book, *A Pocket Full of Rye*, to the School. The proceeds will be used for future excavations in Iraq and for producing a volume in a format worthy of the magnificent material discovered at Nimrud.

The 1953 issues of *Iraq* are detailed on a separate sheet.

On behalf of the Council,
R. BROOKE-POPHAM.

EDWARD KEELING.

October, 1953.

