

EDITORIAL

On New Year's Eve 1995 Professor Seton Lloyd, the doyen of Near Eastern archaeology, suffered a massive stroke and a week later died in hospital. He had served the School as a member of Council from 1963, as President from 1979 to 1982 and, from 1984, as a Vice-President. Recently he had been unable to attend meetings but still maintained a lively interest in matters relating to the School. We shall miss him. With University College London and the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, the School co-hosted a memorial lecture at the Institute of Archaeology on 27 June by Professor David Hawkins, entitled "A traveller in Turkey: a tribute to Seton Lloyd".

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Much of the last year has been taken up with submissions to the British Academy in connection with its Review of Schools and Institutes, which was finally published this Autumn. The repercussions and practical implications of the review are not yet entirely clear and many issues remain to be discussed and resolved but the main points, as they affect the future of the School, are as follows.

The Academy, as principal provider of funds from public sources, is to take a larger role in formulating overall strategy and influencing the work of the Schools and Institutes through a "Board for Academy-sponsored Institutes and Societies". BASIS will be responsible for formulating strategy, for apportioning the grant made available by the Council of the Academy and for monitoring performance and expenditure. It is recommended that secretarial and administrative functions be performed by a new, centralised British Academy Secretariat and that once this is in place, the Academy cease to fund the UK secretariats of individual institutions.

The suggestion that the School should cease to maintain any physical base in Baghdad has met with considerable resistance from the Council, which has made clear its wish to reserve the option of returning in due course to pursue its academic activities in Iraq. Although, following Dr Curtis's recommendation reported below, it is intended to give up for the time being the present Expedition House in Baghdad, the Council will nevertheless strive to continue worthwhile activities in Iraq as long as income and reserves permit. In the interim, as fieldwork in Iraq remains impracticable, the Council has agreed to give substantial support to post-excavation work in a determined effort to clear the publications backlog. To this end no fieldwork is envisaged until at least 1999 but serious consideration is being given to the School's long-term planning for fieldwork either within Iraq (circumstances permitting) or in neighbouring countries such as Syria or the Gulf states.

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The British Academy will still not allow members of the School to travel under its auspices to Iraq. Travelling as a private individual, Dr John Curtis attended a symposium in Baghdad on "New discoveries and research work on the culture of Babylonia" from 1–2 October. He was able, on that occasion, to visit the School premises. In view of their increasing delapidation he recommended that they be vacated.

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In the light of a recommendation by the Charity Commissioners, subsequently endorsed by the Academy Review Committee, the composition of the Council and the mechanisms for election of Council Members and Officers have been reviewed during 1996. The resulting proposed changes in the Constitution of the School will be voted on by Members of the School on 4 December 1996 at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

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In view of the present emphasis on post-excavation work, the School has appointed Ms Anna Lethbridge as Publications Officer. Working part-time from September 1996, she will be seeing our

forthcoming publications through the press. Several of these are nearing completion and 1996 has seen the publication of *Literary Texts from the Temple of Nabû* as a fourth volume in the *Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud* series, co-authored by our President, Professor D. J. Wiseman, and by Dr Jeremy Black, a previous Director of the School. Details will be found on the back cover of this journal. Small grants were made towards the preparation for publication of excavation reports on Brak, Rimah and Abu Salabikh.

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Our Director since 1988, Dr Roger Matthews, was seconded as Acting Director from October 1995 to the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. From 15 March to 11 May he returned to the School's employ for a final successful season as Field Director at Tell Brak, which is reported in this volume and which was supported as its main project by the School. On termination of his contract with the School on 30 September 1996, he took up the post of Director in Ankara. We congratulate him on his new appointment and wish him well, and we thank him for his services to the School during a difficult period.

Our Secretary-Librarian, Miss Helen McDonald, whose contract expired on 31 March 1996, joined the Brak excavations and is now working as post-excavation Research Assistant on the Brak final reports.

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This year grants were awarded to the following scholars: to Ms Elizabeth Cooper for the study of transitional EBIV–MBI pottery from Tell Kabir near Tell Banat in north Syria, to Ms Laurinda Dugay for a study season at Tell Ahmar and Tell Banat in connection with EBA burial practices, to Dr Julian Henderson for further excavation and survey work on the Early Islamic glass and pottery tells at Raqqa, to Mr Peter Magee for the preparation of pottery samples from Ur and Nineveh for PIXE-PIGME analysis, to Dr John MacGinnis for a joint study of texts with Aramaic epigraphs on Sippar tablets in the British Museum, and to Dr Andrew George for his collaborative project with Dr Farouk Al-Rawi to publish further texts from Sippar. Yet another article resulting from this latter project is published in the present volume.

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The Bonham Carter lecture this year followed the Council meeting on the 6 June. It was given by Dr Harriet Crawford, who spoke on "The rebirth of a Dilmun town: Excavations at Saar, Bahrein". The School has supported these excavations for a number of years.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 4 December 1996 and will be followed by a lecture by Dr Jeremy Black on "The Sumerians in their landscape".

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In February 1997 our Chairman, Professor David Oates, will celebrate his seventieth birthday. We take this opportunity of sending him our very good wishes.