

EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING on the recent reorganization of government in Iraq we were advised to call a temporary halt to our dig at Nimrud. As it happened this suited the School for practical reasons, since after nine expeditions we had an enormous back-log of work in publication. Once before, in the year 1954 we had interrupted our activities in the field for this reason, much to our advantage.

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In Baghdad we were granted our normal facilities for work, both in the Museum and in the School house. Those who profited by this opportunity from the beginning of 1959 onwards, included the Director and Mrs. Mallowan, Mr. D. Stronach, Fellow of the School, Professor J. Læssøe, and Miss Barbara Parker our Secretary-Librarian. The last three members are still in Baghdad at the time of writing. The Assistant Director and Mrs. Oates, and Mr. D. J. Wiseman hope to be in Baghdad in the course of the year 1959–60.

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Our principal tasks in Iraq have been concerned with the examination and publication of the antiquities, including inscriptions discovered at Nimrud. The prolific yield of objects from the dig will keep many scholars busy for years to come. As usual the new Director-General of Antiquities, Sayid Taha Baqir, the Inspector-General of Excavations, Sayid Fuad Safar, to whom we extend our congratulations on their new appointments, and their staff lent us their cordial aid.

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It gave us much satisfaction to see in the Iraq Museum's laboratories the progress that had been made under the skilled supervision of Sayid Akram Shukri on the cleaning and repair of the items discovered in the season of 1958. Similar good work has been done on duplicate material in the laboratories of the Institute of Archaeology, in the University of London. These delicate and necessarily slow operations continue.

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Many readers will have seen the article discussing briefly the results of last season's work, in the *Illustrated London News* of January 17, 1959. In this issue three full pages in colour were allocated to pictures of six splendid ivories all of which are now in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Further illustrations in colour are expected to appear shortly.

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Meanwhile Professor Mallowan's manuscript of a large volume on *Nimrud and its Remains*, a fully illustrated account of the nine expeditions to the site since 1949, has almost been completed and should be ready for presentation to the publishers in the month of May.

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This issue of our Journal contains, as will be seen, a series of articles of which three, by J. Læssøe, E. E. Knudsen and P. Hulin, discuss various inscriptions from Nimrud, each in their way of peculiar interest. The technical account of what was achieved at Fort Shalmaneser in 1958 is now being prepared by Mr. David Oates who was field director during that season. It is hoped that this will appear in the autumn number of *Iraq*.

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The first article which follows on this editorial is a résumé by Dr. R. D. Barnett of the Russian Excavations at Karmir-Blur in Armenia (1949–1953) and is appropriately published here because so much of the material found at that site can be closely related to recent discoveries in Nimrud. This work has been conducted with a high degree of skill, the closely interlocking historical and archaeological sequences at these two sites mark an important stage in ancient Near East Studies.

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We should also like to call attention to the article by Miss J. M. Munn-Rankin on some ancient Near Eastern seals in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Better than any other class of objects they illustrate, often with supreme skill, perennial changes of artistic, religious, magical and historical concepts in the Near East; of them it might have been said, as Hamlet said of the players— . . . 'let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time.'

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Finally an article by Miss Joan du Plat Taylor on the Cypriot and Syrian Pottery from Al Mina is an important contribution to the history of the export trade which took place at this coastal entrepot between the ninth and the fifth centuries B.C. We are indebted to Sir Leonard Woolley who conducted the excavations at that site for making this material available for publication.

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It will be remembered that to celebrate the silver jubilee of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq an illustrated booklet was published entitled *Twenty-five Years of Mesopotamian Discovery* (1932–56), by M. E. L. Mallowan. The first edition has been sold out, and a second impression, dated 1959, corrected and with a few emendations to the text, has now been published. This may be obtained from the Assistant Secretary, Publications, British School of Archaeology in Iraq, c/o the Institute of Archaeology, 31–34, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. Price five shillings, postage extra.