

## EDITORIAL

THE Annual General Meeting of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq will take place on Wednesday November 18th 1959 in the rooms of the Royal Geographical Society which once again has kindly lent them for the occasion. Our President, the Rt Hon. Lord Salter will take the chair. Professor Mallowan and Mr David Oates will discuss Fort Shalmaneser and illustrate the discoveries with lantern slides.

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We have to record with deep regret the death of Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, G.C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O., who had served on our Council from the time the School was founded. Of recent years illness had prevented him from attending our meetings, but he had always encouraged archaeological work in Iraq and had given his powerful support to Gertrude Bell when the Iraq Museum was first established.

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Since the excavations at Nimrud have been temporarily suspended members of the Expedition have been catching up with the task of publication. The editors of this Journal are grateful to all who have applied themselves to this task, and it will be seen that the time which would otherwise have been spent in digging has been well used in writing. The impact of these special studies will before long make itself felt in the broader fields of archaeology, geography, history, linguistics and literature.

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This number of the Journal is unusually bulky, richly illustrated, for in spite of the heavy cost of production the editors have felt reluctant to defer publication of such important material which is mainly, but not entirely, devoted to the discoveries at Nimrud. *Iraq* continues to increase its circulation, but rising costs may before long compel us to sell it at a higher price.

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The first three articles are detailed accounts of the 1958 Expedition to Nimrud. This means that each of the nine campaigns conducted on the site since 1949 has been broadly recorded in this Journal and the ground is now prepared for the larger, general studies that must follow. Many hundreds of illustrations will still be needed to do justice to the varied discoveries which have been made during the last decade.

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Amongst these contributions, the Interim Report on Fort Shalmaneser, by David Oates, is of primary importance. This describes the sequence of occupations: foundation in 844 B.C.; repairs and reconstruction by Esarhaddon after 680 B.C.; sack and destruction by fire c. 612 B.C.; and two brief attempts at

reoccupation thereafter. Apart from the splendid collections of ivories and variety of small finds including documents, the unique ground-plan of this vast fortress is a new contribution to the history of ancient military architecture.

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Amongst the special studies which follow in this series that by Joan Oates on the late Assyrian pottery from the Fort is a detailed analysis of a ceramic which spans a period of not more than fifty years before and after 600 B.C. Closely dated archaeological criteria of this kind are invaluable evidence which have a wide bearing on chronological problems.

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The description by Professor J. Læssøe of the near life-size stone statue of Shalmaneser III here illustrated for the first time concerns a monument of great importance. This notable addition to the legacy of Assyrian sculpture in the round, now in Baghdad, is a companion to the famous statue of Shalmaneser's father, Aššur-našir-pal II which has been in the British Museum since its discovery by Layard more than a century ago.

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An account of the various types of fibulae by David Stronach based in part on the discoveries at Nimrud traces the popularisation of the safety-pin in Assyria after 750 B.C. The origin of this article, indispensable to the hitching up of our garments, can be traced back to Italy and Greece in the fourteenth century B.C. Seven hundred years later Western Asiatic haberdashers were twisting them into ingenious shapes: *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*.

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Dr H. W. F. Saggs has published another set of letters from the large collection discovered in the chancery of the North West Palace at Nimrud in 1952. They were mostly written in the last quarter of the eighth century B.C. and show us how efficient Assyrian administrators were in all matters of detail. Interesting are references to heavy rains, floods and extremely cold winters. The climate in this part of the Near East was then much the same as it is today.

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Finally, David and Joan Oates have described their discoveries at Ain Sinu, a Roman frontier post in Northern Iraq. The main features of the plan consist of two large Roman military buildings: a castellum which formed part of the frontier defences of the easternmost extension of the Roman Empire, and a large barracks.

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The occupation of Ain Sinu and by inference the frontier line from Sinjar to Mosul; were dated by a range of coins to the years 197–237 A.D. A representative range of Hatrene pottery associated with the buildings is a new and invaluable addition to the history of ceramic. This is a notable discovery which has enriched our knowledge of Roman influence beyond the Euphrates.