

R E P O R T

on the Institute's Excavations in the Harran Area,
in Collaboration with the Turkish Antiquities Department
April/June 1951

The Expedition was in charge of the Director and Bay Nuri Gökçe, Director of the Hittite Museum in Ankara. The Director was assisted during the whole season by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gough; for the greater part of the time by the Institute Scholar for 1950/'51, Mr. Basil Hennessy; and for shorter periods benefited from the advice of Dr. D. Storm Rice and Mr. Donald Wiseman. Bay Nuri Gökçe, during the first half of the season only, had the assistance of Bay Baki Oğün of Ankara University.

The Director and the Goughs left Ankara by train on the evening of Monday 16th April, and after collecting equipment at Adana, arrived in Urfa on 20th April. The Expedition van, which had left Ankara on 15th April, in charge of Baki Bey, with a driver and two servants, reached Urfa the same day. After some delay due to heavy rain, Yarımca was reached on 23rd April, and work began the following day. Bay Nuri Gökçe, who had been delayed in Ankara, joined the party on 3rd May.

The Camp:-

Two large tents were in use, one belonging to the Institute and the other to Dr. Waechter. The smaller Institute tent was used by the Director and four small, military type tents were loaned by the Bayındır Department (Office of Public Works) in Urfa. Some purchases were made in Ankara to supplement the camp outfit provided for the Harran expedition in the previous year, and the Institute is now in possession of a full complement of such equipment. An unsuccessful attempt was made to obtain equipment such as picks and shovels from the Açana material left to the Department by Sir Leonard Woolley, and these had eventually to be bought in Urfa. Their price was not included in the combined excavating account, so that they will remain the property of the Institute for future use. The removal of earth was greatly facilitated by the loan of ten metal wheelbarrows from the Bayındır Department.

After the move to Sultantepe, two rooms in the local Primary School were put at our disposal by the Millî Eğitim (National Education) authorities, and these proved an invaluable asset in the heat and high winds of the last weeks.

Local Staff:-

A reliable camp-servant/guardian, cook and driver were brought from Ankara and a dig-foreman with previous experience at Karatepe, was enlisted at Adana.

Labour:-

From the beginning the expedition was faced with the serious difficulty of having no skilled workmen. After an unsuccessful experiment with three pick-men from Açana, it proved necessary to do some training on the spot, but this was hampered by the move to a new site and the continual replacement of men for other reasons. At Yarımca, local Arabs were first enlisted, but it was then discovered that numbers of "Göçmen", Turks repatriated from Bulgaria, were available, and these proved immensely more intelligent and hard-working. A nucleus of them remained the whole season. In Sultantepe, some local Kurds were enlisted, but almost immediately withdrawn on account of the beginning of the harvest. It then proved necessary to recruit labour in Urfa, and to arrange for their accommodation and food. Until then, the daily wage agreed upon with the local authorities had been £ 2.50 per day, not including tax. It now rose to £ 3. The number of men employed varied from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 60, according to the labour available.

Climate:-

It would still be difficult to suggest an alternative season to April/June, though the work was repeatedly held up by rain in the first fortnight and frequently interrupted by high winds and dust in the last. September/November which is at present a favorite season for excavations on the Plateau, has certain disadvantages for Turkish Colleagues.

Transport:-

The expedition was supplied from Urfa throughout the season by the Morris "10" van originally belonging to the Açana expedition. The car proved quite inadequate for the amount of heavy work involved. The high expense of repairs and the impossibility of obtaining new tyres of the correct size on the Turkish market, caused continual anxiety, and eventually curtailed the programme of archaeological reconnaissance. It seems almost essential that a more suitable vehicle should be provided for the Institute, if similar work is to be undertaken in a coming year.

The Season's Work:-

Excavations at Yarımca lasted from 24th April to 11th May. Dr. Rice carried on a subsidiary excavation at Harran from 8th to 16th May. Work began at Sultantepe on 16th May and lasted till 13th June. A number of Sunday reconnaissances were made of the surrounding district. Among many sites visited in the Jullab Valley, were Uşki Harran, Tell Ambar and Anas Hüyük, at all of which Assyrian remains have come to light in the past. Two unrecorded ruined cities of the Pre-Islamic Aramaic (?) period in the Tektek mountains were visited, and Aramaic inscriptions were copied in the rock-cut tombs (Kirk Nagara) behind Urfa.

Harran:-

Some notes provided by Dr. Rice on the results of his excavation at Harran are here appended.

Yarimca:-

At Yarimca work began with the complete clearance of the very finely constructed stone pavement on which the Sin stela had been found lying in 1949. This proved to be a paved courtyard, flanked on the north side by a columned stoa in the Classical manner. The base of one square shaft was found in secondary use. This building may, it is hoped, be exactly dated by two Roman coins, (not yet cleaned or examined), one of which was found in a crevice of the pavement itself and the other directly beneath it. The stela must therefore have been in secondary use.

Attention was then turned to the large stone building, whose walls were apparent on the surface, a little higher up the hill to the north. This revealed a series of fairly large rooms, surrounding a courtyard twenty metres square, in the centre of which a stone well was still being used by the villagers. As the plan of the building appeared, it was possible to see that exactly one half of it was completely lost. Like all villages in the area, Yarimca has a sort of dew-pond, marking the spot from which earth has been continually quarried for making bricks; and since the edge of the quarry had reached to within a few feet of the central ^ewall, the missing half was in this way accounted for. An extension of the excavation to the north, showed that the building did not extend in this direction, but also resulted in the discovery, in a contemporary outbuilding, of a very fine deposit of Islamic pottery vessels, one of which bore a Kufic inscription dateable to the ninth century A.D.

The two buildings so far discovered, could accordingly be taken to represent re-buildings by the Sabians in Classical and Islamic times respectively of a much older moon-shrine. But attempts to locate such a building at a deeper level were frustrated by several circumstances. In the first place in early Islamic times the area had been used for the construction of underground granaries, and the entire site proved to be honey-combed with deep circular pits, full of ashes and broken pottery, when eventually, at a depth of three metres beneath the surface, walls of sun-dried brick were encountered, of the type associated with Assyrian public buildings, they appeared to be mere unplastered foundations, and to have little pottery and no objects associated with them.

The prospect of continuing to trace these walls, beneath a great mass of Islamic debris, increasing in depth to the north and east, was not an encouraging one, particularly in view of the total absence of objects to confirm their date and character. At a conference on 5th May it was accordingly decided

that the results to be expected of the site would not justify the expenditure of the combined sum at our disposal, and that an alternative site should be considered. Two days later the Council was informed of this decision by cable, and Sultantepe was named as the site chosen. The camp and a party of workmen were transferred to Sultantepe on 14th May and work began there the following morning.

Sultantepe:-

This site was first visited during a reconnaissance on 8th May. A feature of great interest was the enormous size of the three basalt column-bases, projecting from the ground at what appeared to be the approach to the ancient citadel, and the fragments of Assyrian pottery visible on the surface at approximately the same level. Cylinder-seals and other small objects brought in by villagers, confirmed the impression that the Assyrian Empire was here represented by an important settlement, and brought to mind the fact that fragments of cuneiform tablets, purporting to come from this site, had already reached the Ankara Museum. Attention was meanwhile drawn to the remains of a Roman mosaic lying just beneath the surface, on the outskirts of what must have been an extensive Roman settlement at the foot of the main mound. A part of this mosaic pavement was cleared by Mr. Gough the following day, and the fine quality of its colour and workmanship aroused great interest.

The Roman Bath:-

When work began at Sultantepe, it was agreed that Mr. and Mrs. Gough should take charge of a small separate excavation in the Roman building containing the mosaic, using about ten men. When the interesting character of the building became evident, it was proposed by Mr. Gough, that he should contribute towards the cost of this excavation, fifty pounds Sterling from the sum allotted to him by the Council for an approved piece of research (see paragraph No 387 in the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Friday, March 2nd, 1951). As no objection was raised by the Officers, this was agreed to, and a larger number of men employed. The building, which proved to be the remains of a miniature Roman bath, was completely excavated during the season. Mr. Gough's preliminary note on the results is as follows:

The small Roman bath to the south of Sultan Tepe can probably be assigned, in its present state, to the late 3rd or early 4th century A.D. Two examples of Constantine's "Gloria Exercitus" issue were found on the pavement itself, together with a small bronze piece of the Byzantine Emperor Marcianus (450-457). The lettering of the inscription and the abbreviation sign also point to a relatively late date.

About a half of the mosaic floor of the main hall was still in a good state of preservation and of the inscription at the north end of this only the first three or four letters of each line were lost. This inscription records that the bath was intended for "men and the beauties of Aphrodite" and that it

"refound its youth" (was restored) by the energy of someone whose name has now unfortunately been lost.

As nothing remained above ground level and the western and southern sides had been extensively robbed it was possible to get satisfactory results at the north and east sides only. The furnace room to the north supplied heat for three small hot plunges, the tepidaria being to the west of these. The floors of these tepidaria were again decorated with mosaic of a pattern different from that of the main hall. Although these mosaics were almost completely destroyed, but the hypocaust system largely remained, together with some of the pipes which carried the water away. On the east side were a large and a small plunge, probably cold. The larger of the two had a plain white tessellated floor, the smaller a simple coating of cement. On this side also were other rooms whose purpose is not yet clear. They had been badly damaged and later reoccupied in the Arab period. It is possible that they were changing rooms. South of the tepidaria, the only certain feature was a large room with a white tessellated pavement.

The Main Mound:-

The turfed summit of Sultantepe reaches a height of nearly fifty metres above the surrounding cultivated plain, and the mound must therefore be considered one of the highest accumulations of occupational debris in the north Mesopotamian area. It was thus impressive to find remains of the late Assyrian period only seven metres beneath the summit. A long occupation in Roman times accounted for the greater part of the later remains.

Work was started in the vicinity of the citadel gateway, (areas A and D) where a deep recess in the side of the mound made a good deal of preliminary clearing necessary in order to avoid dumping over the line of column bases. Since it was necessary to employ unskilled men for this work, a step-trench (B) was simultaneously started on the northern side of the hollow, and an extremely careful stratigraphical check made, from near the summit down to the Assyrian level, which proved to coincide with the column-bases. This work was undertaken by Mr. Hennessey and occupied him completely until 4th June. The results showed the development of the post-Assyrian settlement from modest beginning at a time when Hellenistic coinage was still in use, to a period of maximum prosperity, perhaps in the second century A.D., where it was characterised by the use of much fine terra sigillata, some pieces bearing dateable potter's marks. For the rest, the excavation of the gateway ended in something of a disappointment, since very little of the original architectural setting could be recovered. Only a few tell-tale fragments of standing brickwork could be traced among the ubiquitous Roman grain-pits, and these again were much denuded by the continual drainage of rainwater from the summit of the mound. The lines of the gateway suggested in the plan, are accordingly based on a minimum of evidence.

The Palace/Temple:-

While this work was in progress, the appearance of some large baked bricks projecting from the side of the mound on the northwest side, led to the discovery of the building whose investigation became the main preoccupation of the work for the rest of the season (C). Being covered in most places by some metres of later debris, it proved accessible only where exposed by the conformation of the mound. Even so, it proved possible partly to clear a succession of chambers and, eventually to obtain a surprisingly clear idea of its plan and character. The chambers, some of which were paved with baked brick of the normal Assyrian size, and in two cases covered with bitumen, were separated by walls of sun-dried bricks two metres thick, and the wall-faces painted white over the mud-plaster. Several rooms contained large deposits of Assyrian pottery vessels, stone bowls and other objects, whose identification was confirmed by the discovery in one chamber (C2) on 24th May of four small cuneiform tablets, which appeared to belong to a secondary occupation at a time when the building was already partially in ruins.

By this time, the ^{lat}eral investigation of the plan had been carried a stage further by cutting a trench (E) across the northernmost extremity of the summit, and the eastern limits of the building had been ascertained. When the step-trench (B) in the gate area came to an end on 6th May, it was decided to supplement it by a sounding in the pre-Assyrian levels; and a location could accordingly be chosen for this new trench just beyond the east wall of the building (F). It was during the first day's work on this project that a very large deposit of cuneiform tablets were encountered just beneath the surface.

The walls of the room in which the tablets lay proved to run at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees to those of the main building, and to take more nearly the line of the eastern side of the mound. While the tablets were being extracted, part of an adjoining room was cleared, and appeared to have many of the characteristics of the chambers in the main building itself, though the pavement level was some 1.50 metres lower. It was not, therefore surprising to find later that the tablets were conclusively associated in time with those found in the main building by objects lying amongst them.

As clearance proceeded, the shape of the deposit became gradually more clear. A semicircle of large wine-jars had been arranged at the foot of the wall, and the space thus enclosed was filled with tablets and other objects, apparently thrown down or carelessly piled ~~skewer~~ upon each other, to a depth of about 70 centimetres. Only a section of the pile about 1.50 metres square could be cleared in the remaining days of the season, and this only to a depth of 30 centimetres. It is not yet possible to tell whether the line of wine-jars may be taken as enclosing a corner of the room, or as forming a complete semicircle against an open wall; but in either case the extent of the deposit could hardly be less than five or six times the volume of the space

already cleared. On 13th June clearance was suspended and the area sealed with mud-plaster. A reliable guardian has since been appointed for the site, and his salary will be shared between the Institute and the Antiquities Department.

The tablets themselves were all unbaked and in an extremely frail condition, being themselves sometimes less hard than the ground in which they lay. The extraction was undertaken by Mr. Hennessy and Mrs. Seton Lloyd, who evolved a technique which now appears to have proved entirely satisfactory. They were extracted separately. Paraffin wax was used sparingly; first, in the ground, to assure the adherence of small loose fragments, and afterwards in camp, to unite and strengthen the separate parts of each. Wherever possible the inscribed face was left clean and the wax fed into the open cracks or applied along the edges. Only in very rare cases where tablets were too fragmentary to move, was wax applied in large quantities. As a result of this treatment, it will be possible for an epigraphist to make a fairly detailed preliminary reading before baking, and, as the electric kiln ordered by the Antiquities Department some time ago, seems not yet to have been delivered, this will be a considerable advantage.

After treatment, the tablets were wrapped separately in tissue-paper, and packed between layers of cotton in eight petrol tins. They accompanied the Director when he returned to Ankara by air on 16th June and were delivered to the Hittite Museum two days later. Those so far unpacked show no signs of having suffered from the journey.

Dr. D.S. Rice's Note on Finds in
the East Gate at Harran.

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It all started with a piece of a fine Kufic inscription found by a local Arab, and it was for the remainder of that inscription that I originally started to dig. Work was slow and difficult. Big, heavy stones had to be removed without special tackle and a defensive wall built only 3 metres from the gateway made it difficult to dispose of the rubble. In five days, however, and by working double shifts, half the gateway was cleared down to the threshold and what remains of the horse-shoe arch and the two reliefs was completely cleared. The inscription in 13 fragments of varying size adds up to some 12 metres and gives the name of an Emir of the house of Numair who ruled Harran in 451 AH (1059).

I should like to stress some of the more significant features:-

1. The inscription. We have very few inscriptions of the period. It has been suspected for some time that flowered Kufic, which is characteristic of some Egyptian inscriptions and of which samples are also found in Syria, had come from further east. This is now proved. Upper Mesopotamia was a link in the chain and a vital one.
Very little is known of the Numairids except from historical records. This, to my knowledge is the first inscription. It gives interesting details about their genealogy and titles which are not supplied by any other source. It is significant that this small dynasty, swaying as it was between the Byzantines, the Fatimids of Egypt who had just started a subversive movement in Iraq, and the Abbasids - could afford such a splendid piece of architecture.
2. The sculptures. ^{Two} Two pairs of hunting dogs with collars and chains, are the earliest Islamic sculptures in stone. The artist has shown a very subtle understanding of the difficult material of basalt and the effect is striking. There are a few pieces of sculpture at the palace of Mshatta but they are not very well dated yet. The next are the sculptures on the walls of Amida but these are a century later. I do not count stucco of which there is a great deal in Omayyad palaces.
3. The pottery. Pottery finds prove that, towards the end of the XIIth or in the early XIIIth century, the two towers flanking the gate were encased completely in ^{limestone} white walls which are responsible for the preservation of this unique monument. The pottery dates the wall which is standing everywhere to a considerable height.