

News & Notes

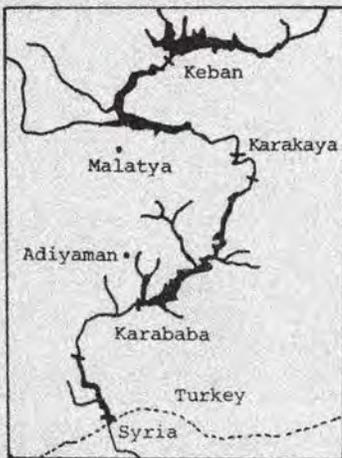
The Oriental Institute

Issued confidentially to members and friends

No. 64 April, 1980

Not for publication

DIG TO BEAT THE FLOOD IN TURKEY!



Euphrates River valley in southern Turkey.

The latest expedition to be planned by the Oriental Institute is yet another salvage excavation to rescue archaeological remains threatened by the building of modern dams. This time the location is southeastern Turkey, on the Euphrates river, where more than two hundred sites will soon be inundated by the scheduled reservoirs. In response to this threat, a number of international teams have been invited by the Turkish government to participate in the rescue program. The site of the Chicago project, under the direction of Dr. Leon Marfoe, is to be set in Kurban Hüyük, Urfa province, where the Euphrates forms the dividing line between the Taurus mountains to the north and the Syrian plains to the south. It is very near one of the new dams, on the left bank and apparently dates to the Early Bronze (the "Ebla Palace" period, ca. 2500 B.C.) and Middle Bronze (the Assyrian trading colony period, ca. 1900 B.C.) periods.

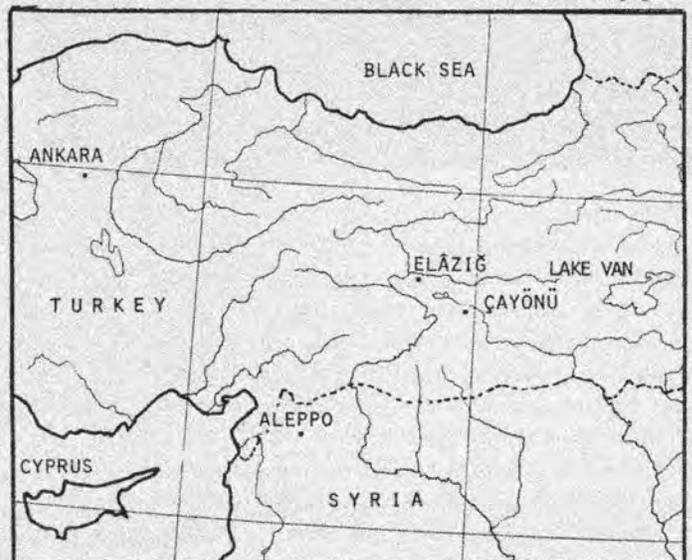
In preparation for the international salvage program, several surveys have been carried out by Turkish archaeologists for the Middle East Technical University, which is coordinating the whole affair. The reports of these surveys indicate that numerous ancient monuments, remains and settlements of all types are to be flooded in the reservoir area. These remains, which span the entire range from the Paleolithic age (ca. 15,000 B.C.) to the end of the Middle Ages (ca. 1500 A.D.) are very poorly known since archaeological excavations have been extremely limited in this area in the past.

Although the archaeology and cultural history of the region remains to be studied in detail, the Euphrates—especially at the point where it descends from the Taurus mountains onto the plains—has played a prominent part in the development of various civilizations as both a communications route

and as a border. Joint surveys conducted by the Universities of Istanbul and Chicago in the Urfa-Diyarbakir-Siirt provinces have established the importance of this area in the transition to settled life and a food-producing economy. Our knowledge of the later periods when early village communities and urban settlements arose has been expanded further by work in the neighboring Keban salvage project in eastern Turkey and the Tabqa dam salvage project downstream in Syria. Extensive investigations of these later periods are also likely to yield significant results by: the recent excavations at Tell Mardikh/Ebla and at Malatya in southeastern Turkey; the earlier Oriental Institute Syro-Hittite expedition in the Amuq; and new work being carried out by American, British and German teams on the Khabur river. Many of these excavations provide an increasing amount of evidence for the expanding relations of the south Mesopotamian Sumerian civilization with the north, up to the outposts of modern Turkey.

The location of the new Turkish dams is ideal for the study of historical problems related to the origins of the earliest kingdoms and cities in southeastern Turkey and in northern Syria. It is also pertinent to the study of the nature of Mesopotamian influence in these early periods. A large Protoliterate city with elaborate Sumerian temples of the late fourth millennium B.C. was excavated at Habuba Kabira/Qannas, and similar temples were found at Jebel Aruda and Tell Brak—all in northern Syria. A bit later, an important temple was uncovered at Malatya, with strong connections to Jemdet Nasr or Early Dynastic I in Mesopotamia. The Tell Khuera and Ebla excavations demonstrate that around 2500

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B.C., a very sophisticated civilization existed, based around large city-states and interconnected by widescale foreign relations. At the same time, a rather widespread urban civilization—sometimes called the Early Transcaucasian culture—developed in the mountains of southeastern Turkey. It produced a distinctive kind of pottery called “Khirbet Kerak” ware (after its discovery in Palestine).

How do these two distinct developments in the mountains and in the plains relate to each other and to Mesopotamia? It is only after this early development that Mesopotamian texts of the Akkadian and Ur III periods begin to give us a fairly vivid but biased picture of this region in the Early Bronze Age. This picture, however, deals mainly with the expansion of Akkadian and Ur III interests toward the north, and only indirectly with the emergence of population groups called the Hurrians and Amorites. The developments that led up to this stage of history can only be uncovered by excavations.

In the period between 2000 and 1600 B.C., documents from Mesopotamia, Syria and Turkey have shed light on the rise of the Hittite civilization in Anatolia, on the rise of Assyria and Babylon as major powers in Mesopotamia, and on the relations between these two areas. But only a few excavations have yielded remains directly pertinent to new historical problems. One such problem is raised by the finds of tablets at Kültepe and other central Anatolia sites which show the establishment of Assyrian colonies in these areas. These colonies carried out long-distance commerce in silver, tin and textiles by donkey caravans. The tablets suggest the route taken by these caravans; what happened along the way on these long trips; and the elaborate procedures used in commercial transactions. There are strong indications that the caravans passed through the areas about to be inundated by the dams in southeastern Turkey. If so, only archaeological excavations in this region can confirm this.



The site chosen by the Oriental Institute falls into the time range of these historical problems. Dr. Marfoe is of the opinion that the site is not only one of the larger and more important sites in the southern dam basin, the Karababa, but that it is the only site where occupational levels of these periods can be reached immediately. Other expeditions have selected either large, high mounds with many periods of historical occupation, or small pre-historic sites. Kurban Hüyük, in contrast, is a very low but extensive double mound where large exposures might yield easily, remains of these early periods. Furthermore, it is located at the mouth of a tributary leading from Urfa



(ancient Edessa) to the Euphrates, and could have been a way station for traffic between upper Mesopotamia and Anatolia. Also, because it is located on the transition between the mountains of the Taurus and the steppe of upper Mesopotamia, the region around the site could provide an excellent opportunity to study the relations between mountaineers and plainsmen and nomads. The region could also show how environmental degradation (particularly deforestation, brought on by long periods of abuse by logging expeditions and the like) has effected historical development.

These problems have been of long and deep interest to Dr.



Marfoe, project director of the Chicago Turkish Euphrates Salvage project, because of his experience in Syria and in nearby regions. He participated in the Tabqa salvage project on the Euphrates, and currently is excavating a site of the Halaf period in Syria. His academic background, which includes a Ph.D. in Near Eastern archaeology from the University of Chicago, and his over a dozen seasons of field work on digs and surveys in the Middle East, range from the Neolithic to the Islamic periods. His doctoral thesis was written on the historical ecology and development of a valley in Lebanon, from the Upper Paleolithic to the modern era. His interests in Syro-Anatolian archaeology have mainly been devoted to early urbanization trade, socio-political organization, ethnicity, historical ecology and similar topics.

The Chicago Turkish Euphrates Salvage Project has been offered a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and now is awaiting formal permission to dig from the Turkish Department of Antiquities.

—Elda Maynard—

EXHIBIT OF CARTHAGE THEN AND NOW OPENS IN APRIL

The first exhibit to be housed in the newly renovated hall of the Oriental Institute Museum will be Carthage Then and Now, on loan from the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The show opens the end of April and runs through July.

Theme of the exhibit focuses upon two aspects of archaeological research of ancient Carthage (now Tunisia). The first is the radical transformation which has overtaken the site during recent years, the second aspect involves the advantages of the newer excavation techniques practiced by the current American teams in Carthage as compared with the old methods.

Dr. Lawrence E. Stager, associate professor of Syro-Palestinian archaeology here at the Oriental Institute, and his Chicago-Harvard team have just concluded a five-year campaign of excavation, which by coincidence is partly responsible for the title Carthage Then and Now. The "Then" refers to the excavation in 1925 by Francis W. Kelsey of the University of Michigan and founder of the Kelsey Museum, concentrating on the area of the Sanctuary of Tanit (the Phoenician goddess, consort of Ba'al Hamon). His research provided detailed information about the sanctuary and about child sacrifice in Punic Carthage. By choice and by luck, Dr. Stager's team was assigned by the Tunisian Institute of Archaeology and Art, the same site! Its excavation results and techniques are the "Now" in the exhibit of Carthage Then and Now.

Religious life, however, is but one aspect of the exhibit. Another is trade between Carthage and the rest of the Mediterranean which passed through the twin harbors (the rectangular commercial harbor and the circular military harbor), both now

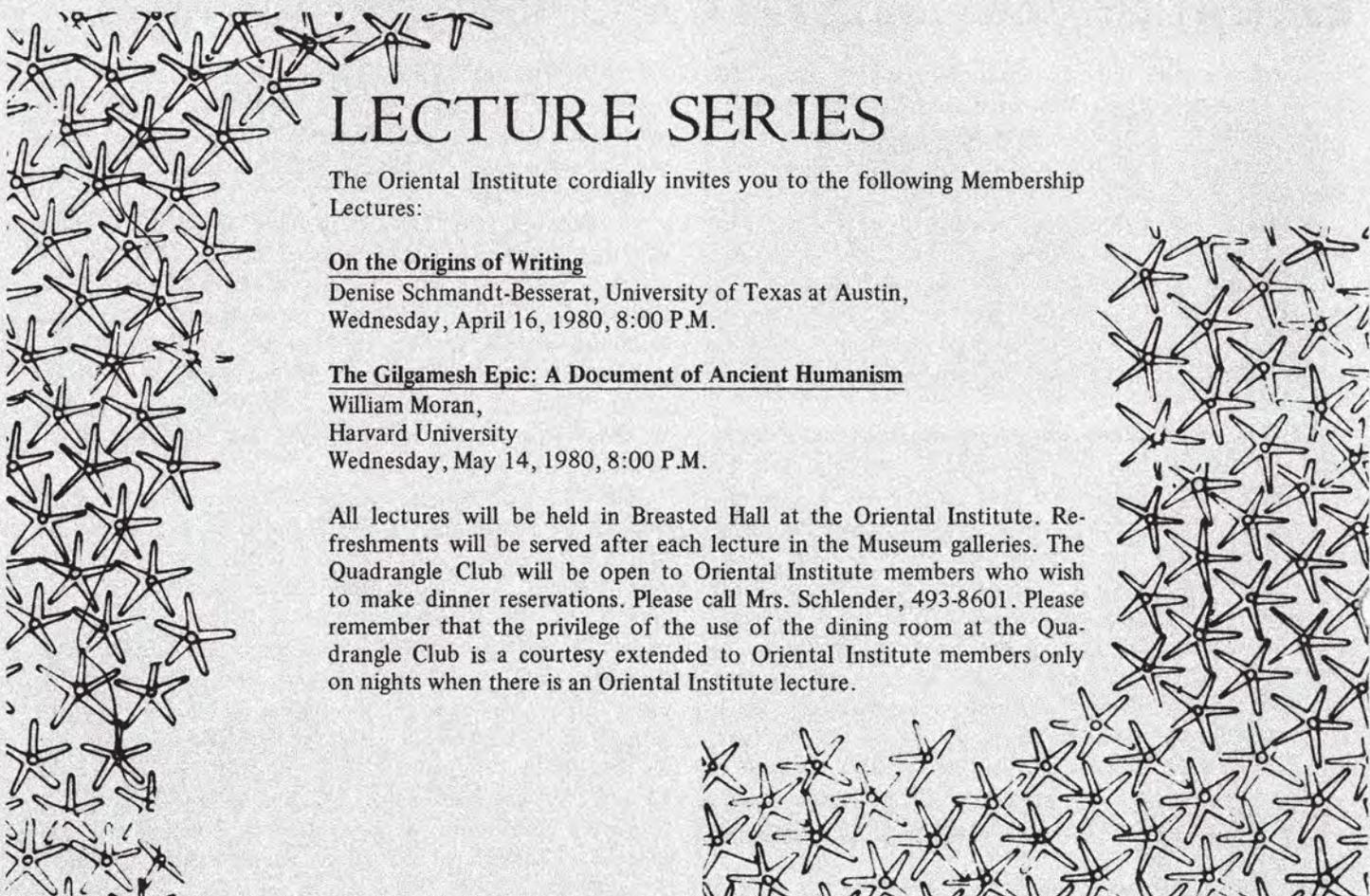
known to have been constructed in the late fourth or early third century B.C. Here again, Dr. Stager's team has been of help for the second area assigned to the Chicago-Harvard group was the rectangular commercial harbor used by the traveling salesmen of the day.

In addition, the exhibit provides information about Carthaginian industries: the history of the mint of Carthage of the Punic period; displays of famous mosaics and pottery of the Roman period which continued to be made even as late as the Byzantine periods; and iron-smelting and processing as early as the Punic period. Domestic life is well illustrated by the so-called "House of the Greek Charioteers" which has yielded an assortment of cosmetic, personal, and utilitarian items—as well as gemstones and beads.

The history of Carthage spans almost fifteen hundred years, from its misty beginnings in the eighth century B.C. to the end of the seventh century A.D. when it finally succumbed to the Arab invaders. The international rescue operation, launched in 1972 by the Tunisian Institute of Archaeology and Art under the auspices of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), became necessary because of the dramatic transformation during the twentieth century of the land which covers the ruins of the ancient city. As recently as 1925, most of the area which had formed the ancient city was open fields, but just before World War II began the acceleration of modern urban building and consequent obliteration of the fifteen hundred years of history. So, although Cato the Elder said to some 2000 Romans that "Carthage must be destroyed!" (and it was), today, thanks to the international archaeologists, it is reappearing.



Lawrence Stager (left) with his graduate student co-workers on their most recent excavation this past summer of the burial ground of the ancient city of Carthage (now Tunisia). The urn near Stager's hand is one of the burial urns that contain the incinerated remains of the children sacrificed to the gods by the Carthaginians.



LECTURE SERIES

The Oriental Institute cordially invites you to the following Membership Lectures:

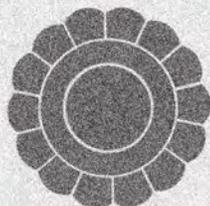
On the Origins of Writing

Denise Schmandt-Besserat, University of Texas at Austin,
Wednesday, April 16, 1980, 8:00 P.M.

The Gilgamesh Epic: A Document of Ancient Humanism

William Moran,
Harvard University
Wednesday, May 14, 1980, 8:00 P.M.

All lectures will be held in Breasted Hall at the Oriental Institute. Refreshments will be served after each lecture in the Museum galleries. The Quadrangle Club will be open to Oriental Institute members who wish to make dinner reservations. Please call Mrs. Schlender, 493-8601. Please remember that the privilege of the use of the dining room at the Quadrangle Club is a courtesy extended to Oriental Institute members only on nights when there is an Oriental Institute lecture.



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