

Work in the Field

IN SPITE OF DISTURBED political conditions, rising prices for services, scarcity of materials, and tightening controls, the Institute's work in its chosen field, the Near East, continued during the year 1956-57 almost as planned.

In Egypt the size of the Epigraphic Survey staff was cut in half by the inability of our three British artists and our British engineer to join the group. This reduced the scope of our efforts, but our American staff members, Dr. and Mrs. Hughes and Dr. and Mrs. Nims and one artist who is a resident of Egypt, remained at Chicago House even when bombs were falling on the Luxor airport. They used the quiet winter to tackle the particularly difficult job of tracing the inscriptions on the round columns in the hypostyle hall of the Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu and have the satisfaction of knowing that these materials, inaccessible to photography, have now been recorded.

In Iraq the Institute joined with the American Schools of Oriental Research to undertake a survey of the ancient mounds between the Tigris and Euphrates in the area south of Baghdad. The survey team was led by Dr. Robert M. Adams, Jr., of Chicago, who was assisted by Dr. Vaughn Crawford of Yale University. The work was intended to reconstruct and delineate on the map the ancient irrigation canal systems upon which the economy of the cities and towns depended and to determine from observation what could be discovered about the

R. M. Adams, Jr., on survey in Iraq



ecology of the great urban development in southern Mesopotamia in earliest times. Requiring continuous bone-shattering overland travel in jeeps and week- and month-long absences from centers of civilization, the enterprise was an epic of grit and physical endurance and has proved of great importance not only to scholarship but also to the Iraq government in its efforts to increase the present-day economic potential of the country.

The spring months of 1957 saw an Institute expedition return to Libya for further work at the Ptolemaic city site of Tolmeita in Cyrenaica. Here a villa of the early Roman period, which had been partly excavated during the spring of 1956, was completely cleared, photographed, and drawn, so that its publication can now be undertaken. The work adds effectively to our knowledge of residence construction, of the use of geometric and pictorial floor mosaics, and of the character of wall painting in this region. Simultaneously, excavation was begun in another important building located in the central part of the ancient city. This proved to have been a public bath, such as the Romans and the Byzantines after them enjoyed and used also for social and municipal purposes. It was discovered that the large lounge or grand foyer of the bath had been adorned with a number of marble statues. Several of these have been assigned to the Institute in the division of finds and will be mounted in the Institute Museum.



Excavations at Tolmeita, Libya



Excavations at Nippur, Iraq

T

HE FACT

THAT THE NEAR EAST is the Oriental Institute's laboratory does not mean that all our work is done overseas. Fortunately, and necessarily, we have a home base and are an integral part of a great educational and research organism, the University of Chicago.

At our home base, Breasted Hall (*see* Cover), our twenty-five staff members participate in the educational life of the academic community to which they belong. Here they act as teachers of students at the college and graduate levels, giving instruction in history, archeology, ancient art, and an amazing variety of oriental languages, all tools needed for proficiency and leadership in the rediscovery and interpretation of the ancient world. Classrooms, slide and study collections of original materials, and a library are on hand for their use.

At our Chicago headquarters all the objects, drawings, records, and photographs of the field expeditions are received, studied, processed, and stored—a complicated enterprise. Our inventories permit us to locate, at a moment's notice, a bead found in the excavation of a given room in an old Sumerian temple in 1935, a photograph of a painted jar from a given stratum of a mound in Iran, or the height above datum of a floor in a Hittite building in Turkey.

Using original materials produced by the excavations and the research activities of institutions the world over, we engage in research enterprises at home quite as important as those undertaken in the field. Such are the great projects of preparing the material for the first real Assyrian Dictionary, the large collection of Egyptian Coffin Texts, the

*Work
at
Home*

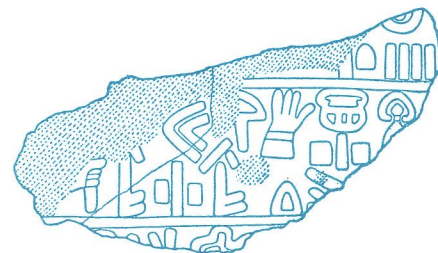
edition of the Book of the Dead. But it is not only our own projects that are served and serviced from Chicago but also those of others. We perform extensive services for those who are in the process of preparing or illustrating books. We provide services and information to scholars and educational institutions without cost and to commercial publishers for a fee.

The ultimate purpose of all our work is publication, and in this we have a high and enviable reputation, with over a hundred and fifty important volumes to our credit (ask for our catalogue). A new contract between ourselves and the University of Chicago Press once more gives us complete control over the production, pricing, and distribution of our many books. Four important volumes were issued in 1956-57, five others are in preparation, two have been reprinted, and the supply of twenty titles that were "out of stock" has been replenished by adding to the bound copies. One book by an Institute author was published this year in Arabic translation; another is being translated into Iranian. You can imagine that our Editorial Office, where all manuscripts are processed and proofread, is a beehive of activity.

In the administrative offices the far-flung threads of our enterprise and the intricate web of our relationships are held together and brought to a focal point. Here questions great and small, personal, institutional, promotional, historical, diplomatic, and international receive such attention as time may afford for the strengthening of the entire working organism, its purposes, and achievements.



Recent Institute publications



Model of Nippur foundation deposit, Institute Museum