

## *Chogha Mish in Khuzestan*

The second season of excavations at Chogha Mish lasted from February 5 to June 27, 1963. In addition to Professor Helene J. Kantor and the writer, who initiated the excavations of the site at the end of 1961, the Director of the Oriental Institute, Professor Robert M. Adams, and Dr. Donald Hansen participated in the work for a short period before they began the excavations at Gundi Shapur. Dr. Robert Biggs, now on the staff of the Oriental Institute, worked with us as a volunteer for about two weeks in February, and Miss Clair Goff, a student at the British Institute of Persian Studies in Tehran, spent about three weeks with us in March, helping with the drawing of pottery. Messrs. M. Shahnazi and M. Moshirpour served as commissioners on behalf of the Department of Antiquities of the Iranian government. The number of local workmen fluctuated between a minimum of twenty and a maximum of about eighty.

Early in the second season the stratigraphic cut in the high part of the site, which had been begun during the first season, was completed. At a depth of nearly 90 feet below the highest point of the site we reached virgin soil, thereby completing the evidence for a long sequence of prehistoric cultural phases, characterized by painted pottery, on this part of the site.

The main activity of the second campaign, however, was concentrated in the lower parts of the site, where more than twenty strategically located areas of various sizes and shapes were excavated. By this means it was established that the main occupation of the greatest part of the site was during the Protoliterate period (about 3200 B.C.). At several points we dug through the Protoliterate levels to ascertain the thickness of the occupation debris of that period. In addition, several deeper cuts were made below the Protoliterate levels and, in each case, earlier prehistoric materials, char-



*Dr. Kantor giving instructions in the marking of sherds at Chogha Mish in Khuzestan.*

acterized by painted pottery, were encountered.

In several of the soundings very interesting architectural remains were cleared. The walls consisted almost entirely of unbaked mud-brick, often badly destroyed down to the bottom course or two of the foundation. Remains of rather imposing buildings and elaborate drains bear witness to a city of considerable importance in the Protoliterate period.

The finds of the 1963 season consisted predominately of pottery, most of it in fragments. Detailed study and analysis of the pottery provide the basis for distinguishing the various phases of the prehistoric and Protoliterate cultural periods. It was laid out by date and level in large sherd-yards adjacent to the soundings, where boys trained by Dr. Kantor

washed, sorted, and marked the sherds prior to the recording and selection of representative specimens for the study collections. We estimated that several hundred tons of sherds were thus treated during the season.

In addition to the pottery there were a small number of metal objects, fragments of stone vessels, flint implements, stone agricultural tools, spindle whorls, terra-cotta animal figurines, and various other small objects. Especially noteworthy are the seals and seal impressions on clay, many of them found in minute fragments when the debris was sifted. These will require careful and patient study before their designs can be fully reconstructed.

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