

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE REPORT FOR 1964/65

Robert M. Adams

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To the Members and Friends of the Oriental Institute:

It will always be a moot question when the field of ancient Near Eastern studies formally came of age. Some would opt for the age of initial discoveries, such as Carsten Niebuhr's identification of the site of Babylon and his return with accurate copies of inscriptions in an unknown script from Persepolis in 1765, or Champollion's famous paper on the Rosetta Stone read before the French academy in 1822. Others, I think with greater justification, would draw the line in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This was a time when universities first began to nurture disinterested, fully professional research and when the boundaries of substantive fields of scholarship began to emerge and then to be systematically pushed back into the unknown by specialists in many centers. It was also a time, as Seton Lloyd has written, of the birth of a conscience among those who were feverishly mining the ruins of ancient cities for statuary and inscribed materials, and whose successors soon would deserve to be called archeologists.

To specify the period around a century ago, Auguste Mariette had taken charge of the Egyptian service of antiquities in 1858, introducing the long struggle to establish an Egyptian national museum which remains one of the world's greatest. The year 1859 saw the recovery of the Codex Sinaiticus by Tischendorf. Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, a monument of still-useful scholarship, began to appear in 1863. Schliemann chose the mound of Hissarlik as the site at which to dig for ancient Troy in 1868, and in 1872 George Smith announced his discovery of a fragmentary cuneiform tablet con-

taining an account of the Flood. In the midst of this era of rapidly advancing discovery, on August 27, 1865, James Henry Breasted was born. The span of a century since then, like the contributions of the founder of the Oriental Institute himself, virtually encompasses our field.

As the man whose memory we honor would have wished, the past year has been one of many new beginnings. Most of the generation of scholars recruited as young men by Breasted now are moving into the ranks of elder statesmen in their fields, and a younger generation, now more largely trained in this country (in considerable part because of the interest in oriental studies which Breasted stimulated), comes forward to continue their work. This has been reflected in a number of new appointments and promotions: Erica Reiner to the rank of full professor of Assyriology, Klaus Baer (formerly at Berkeley) and Edward Wente to associate professorships in Egyptology, Ake Sjöberg (Uppsala) to an associate professorship in Sumerology, and Robert Biggs, John A. Brinkman, and Miguel Civil as assistant professors of Assyriology. Others who have joined our staff during the past year include Maurits van Loon, Museum Secretary and field director of our newly formed (with the aid of a National Science Foundation grant) Euphrates Valley Expedition; Philo Houwink ten Cate, collaborating with Professor Hans Güterbock in the study of Anatolian languages; and David Weisberg, on the staff of the Assyrian Dictionary.

These changes, usually considered only on their highly individual merits, cumulatively form a pattern which embodies the hope and intent of the Oriental Institute to remain in the forefront of its field

during the years to come. Naturally, the methods, emphases and assumptions of the field will change; to a larger degree than we realize, they probably are changing continuously. Yet the need to preserve a heritage of scholarship is also with us. It finds a current and fitting expression in the publication of a massive volume honoring Professor Benno Landsberger on his seventy-fifth birthday. The contribution to that volume, from his former students and distinguished colleagues in many lands, testify to a tradition of scholarship we must continue to emulate.

Other beginnings during the past year, while new in their specific features, in many cases take directions which Breasted already initiated. Our newly constructed field headquarters on the mound covering the Sumerian city of Nippur, for example, is the first we will have had in Iraq since the days of our excavations on the Diyala plains before World War II, but even the details of its design incorporate lessons learned by the old Iraq Expedition under Henri Frankfort's leadership. Moreover, it reflects the same commitment which Breasted then stressed to work in depth, without arbitrary limit in the period of excavation or in the range of specializations employed, in order to bring dead cities back to life in all their former richness and complexity. Similarly, a new film illustrating something of the aims and methods of Egyptology, as well as the full scope of the Oriental Institute's research activities in the Nile Valley, bears at least certain points of resemblance to Breasted's pioneering documentary of the thirties, "The Human Adventure." Under production on our behalf by Charles Sharp of Cameras International, at this writing the film is nearing completion

and should be ready to receive your critical reactions early in the fall.

A vital consideration in the Oriental Institute's program has always been its cultural outreach to the Chicago community. While changing in specific objectives and methods over the years, there has always been recognition that an indispensable part of the task of recovering the original evidence on the backgrounds and history of the great oriental civilizations was the effort to interpret and present it as a whole to the widest possible audience. Our membership program, including its newsletters, public lectures, and other features, has been one means of attaining this end. Of course the Museum itself, one of the world's few really great repositories of Near Eastern antiquities, is another.

With the aid of a group of interested friends of the Oriental Institute, under the leadership of Mr. Press Hodgkins and Mrs. Theodore D. Tieken, an effort is under way to expand this program, by this means intensifying our dialogue with the Chicago community. While details remain to be worked out, it is anticipated that the coming year will see an invigorated exhibit policy within the Museum, a considerable expansion in the schedule of lectures as well as a diversification in their format, and a closer articulation of our teaching and guide programs with the needs of Chicago's schools. By the time of our next report, a year hence, I trust that a description of the program will have become largely redundant as its full impact gradually becomes known.

As is almost always the case, there have been many distinguished visitors during the past year whom it has been a pleasure to welcome and with whom it has been a pleasure to work for varying

periods. Particularly to be mentioned are Dr. R. D. Barnett, Keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities in the British Museum; Professor Halet Çambel, Robert Braidwood's Istanbul colleague and co-director of the Prehistoric Project; Père Roland de Vaux, of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem; and Professor Ezat O. Negahban, from Teheran University. On a much larger scale, the Oriental Institute also was host to the American Oriental Society, which assembled for its annual meeting in April at the University of Chicago's elegant new Center for Continuing Education. Members of our Visiting Committee, as well as President and Mrs. George W. Beadle, were on hand to greet almost three hundred delegates at a reception in our Museum halls.

I must close this review of the year's activity on a different note. On October 3, 1964, Professor Erich F. Schmidt passed away in Santa Barbara after a long illness. Characteristically, he overcame increasing physical incapacity to work almost until the end, leaving us the completed manuscript for a third magnificent volume on his excavations at Persepolis. Imaginatively and meticulously carrying forward some of the most crucial of the great projects which Breasted envisioned, he had become the doyen of Iranian archeology. We are joined by colleagues and friends in many countries in mourning his loss.

Cordially,

Robert M. Adams

DIRECTOR