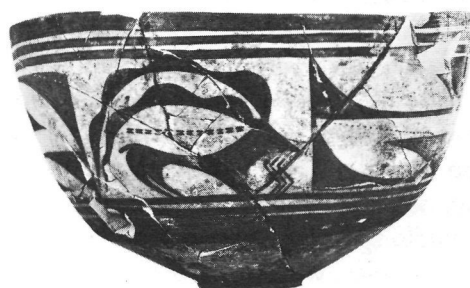


The Iranian Expeditions

IN CHARGE: MAURITS VAN LOON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ARCHEOLOGY

The major operation of the Oriental Institute in Iran, covering the years 1931-39, was the excavation of Persepolis, the dynastic capital of the Achaemenids. In 1934 the University Museum of Philadelphia and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston became joint sponsors with the Oriental Institute of this project, which included also excavations in the environs of Persepolis, namely, at Naqsh-i-Rustam, Istakhr, and Tall-i-Bakun, covering periods from prehistoric to Islamic times. Besides the definitive report on Persepolis excavations by Dr. Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, Volumes I and II, other publications have appeared over the years: A. Langsdorff and D. E. McCown's *Tall-i-Bakun A*, G. G. Cameron's *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*, and Schmidt's *The Treasury of Persepolis*. The final volume of Schmidt's report, *The Royal Tombs and Other Monuments* (Volume III of *Persepolis*), covering



Bowl from Tall-i-Bakun in Iran, ca. 4000 B.C.

excavations at Naqsh-i Rostam, the rock-cut tombs of Darius the Great and his successors, and all known rock reliefs of the Sasanian kings, has been sent to the printers.

Two other volumes resulting from excavations at Persepolis are also nearing publication, R. T. Hallock's *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* and R. A. Bowman's *Aramaic Ritual Texts from Persepolis*. The first of these deals with 2000 cuneiform tablets inscribed in the Elamite language and dated to the time of Darius I (around 500 B.C.), and the second with Aramaic inscriptions on green chert ritual objects from the time of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I.

After these publications on the late Erich F. Schmidt's all-important excavations at Persepolis, the reporting on his work at other sites in Iran has been a pressing concern of the Oriental Institute. Steps have been taken to process for publication Schmidt's meticulous records of his work in Luristan, Rayy, Istakhr, and Tall-i-Bakun. His work at Fara in Iraq is also awaiting publication.

The manuscript for the Luristan publication, by Maurits van Loon, is already in draft form. The most important among the sites dug there by Schmidt is a ninth- to seventh-century B.C. sanctuary dedicated to the goddess Ninlil (or her local equivalent) at Surkh Dum-i Luri, which yielded over 1800 decorated bronze pins, cylinder seals and other objects. Most of these were recorded in the field on photographs and inked drawings of the highest

quality, which greatly facilitates the work remaining to be done. It is to be hoped that inclusion of this visual record in the printed report will prove financially feasible. Dr. John A. Brinkman is working on the 14 short cuneiform inscriptions from Surkh Dum. His study is to be included in the contemplated publication.

Publication of the results of Schmidt's extensive work in and around Rayy is next on the list of priorities. Although the sites tested include the fifth- to fourth-millennium B.C. settlement of Chashmah-i Ali and the fourth- to first-millennium B.C. settlement of Murtazagird, the bulk of the finds, 8770 in all, consists of glazed and other decorated pottery from the medieval Islamic city of Rayy itself. Dr. George C. Miles of the American Numismatic Society and Dr. Oleg Grabar of the University of Michigan have initiated the processing of these rich materials.

Also working on this project are Mrs. Deborah Thompson, who is well advanced in preparing the publication of the remarkable stuccos which decorated the late Sasanian to early Islamic palaces at Tepe Eshqabad, south of Rayy, and Dr. Richard N. Frye of Harvard University, who is working on the ostraca inscribed in Middle Persian and Arabic from Tepe Eshqabad.

The ultimate publication of all the results of Schmidt's epoch-making work in Iran continues to be a goal of the Oriental Institute.



A Luristan bronze horse bit formed of two winged ibexes connected by a bar.