

1 Introduction

To the Members and Friends of the Oriental Institute:

The political turbulence of the modern Middle East often affects those dealing with the ancient Near East. Our excavation house at Chogha Mish in southwestern Iran has been closed since that country's Islamic revolution in 1979. In the autumn of 1980, for the first time in several years, our expedition to Iraq was forced to remain at home because of the Iran-Iraq war. In Turkey, which saw a military coup in September 1980, the Institute's prehistoric expedition continued working in the field through the changeover; and one of our cuneiformists came in for museum research on the very day the airports reopened for traffic. Fortunately some of the interruptions are minor (the Iraq team expects to be at work again this coming fall), and an occasional enforced layoff usually means salutary attention at home to writing overdue excavation reports.

The Institute's salvage excavations at Kurban Höyük (Turkey), under the direction of Leon Marfoe, began in the summer of 1980 with a short preliminary season to map out research strategies on the site. The first lengthy excavations are now just under way (June 1981) and will investigate what type of settlements the Euphrates trading region in southern Turkey had at the time of the late Amuq and Ebla phases in Syria. This excavation has been made possible by a substantial grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, matched dollar-for-dollar by generous contributions from our members and from the Visiting Committee.

This year the Assyrian Dictionary project marked its sixtieth anniversary with a festive fund-raising dinner sponsored by the Visiting Committee. At the dinner, the article-writing fraternity of young faculty and research associates demonstrated hitherto undetected musical abilities; and Matthew Stolper gave an unforgettable performance as a downtrodden Mesopotamian husband coming home from a hard day at the mud works. With this lavish display of talent and the generosity of the Visiting Committee, the Institute has now succeeded in raising over \$88,000 (of a targeted goal

of \$186,000) toward dollar-for-dollar matching funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Assyrian Dictionary, with significantly expanded staffing from NEH money, now has five volumes in various stages of production.

The Epigraphic Survey, after completing major overhauls of the plumbing and electrical systems at its headquarters, is turning its attention to the west-bank temple complex at Medinet Habu. Smithsonian grants continue to support a major portion of these operations, which are discussed fully below.

The Museum has organized several special exhibitions: nineteenth-century photographs of the Near East (Bonfils), folk costumes of Palestine ca. AD. 1900 (Klingeman collection), Islamic bindings and bookmaking, and *Alexander and the East*. The Islamic bindings show has been sponsored in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities; and its opening was marked by a symposium and the publication of a detailed, illustrated catalogue.

New faculty appointments this year were Matthew W. Stolper, associate professor, and Martha T. Roth, assistant professor—both appointed in the field of Assyriology as replacement for Assyrian Dictionary staff members who had resigned (Hermann Hunger and Maureen Gallery).

At the end of June I will have completed three terms as Director since 1972 and have declined reappointment. Effective July 1, Robert McC. Adams will be the new Director. His many friends, including those of you who knew him as Director from 1962 to 1968, will welcome his leadership in what promises to be a challenging and interesting period.

In concluding these remarks for the ninth time, I am more than usually aware of the enormous debt of gratitude which we all owe to you, our members, for your continuing interest and support. You have made it possible for us to continue active programs of research in financially very stringent times. I must select for a special word of thanks our extraordinary Visiting Committee and its chairman, Margaret Cameron; this committee has taken the initiative in numerous fund-raising enterprises to keep our archeological and philological projects flourishing. It is particularly appropriate in this Annual Report for members to commend our peerless Sub-Committee on Membership (Albert Haas, William Roberts, Roderick and Madge Webster), who have helped plan expanded public programs and are largely responsible for the fourfold increase in membership over the past eight years. I would also like to take this occasion to thank publicly those who have shared the

burdens of the Institute's administrative office over the past few years: Elena Druskis, Mary Ellen Cowan, Susan Smith, and Evada Waller. I am deeply indebted to all of you, for it has been your continuing cooperation that has made possible the research activities described in the following pages.

June 28, 1981

JOHN A. BRINKMAN
Director

Postscript. We regret to report that Nabia Abbott, Professor Emeritus of Islamic Studies, died on October 15, 1981 at the age of 84. Miss Abbott, an outstanding scholar in the field of Arabic papyrology and historian-biographer of illustrious Islamic women of the Middle Ages, had recently seen and appreciated the Festschrift prepared in her honor as part of the 1981 issue of the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. Her rich and meticulous scholarship will long be a standard of excellence in her field.