

EDITORIAL

Although the general situation in Iraq and the United Nation's restrictions on currency transactions have precluded any resumption by the School of its normal research activity in the country after June 1990, local staff in Baghdad have shown great loyalty and devotion and have continued to take care of School premises and property. A U.N. mission (sent to supervise the return of antiquities to Kuwait) reported some war damage to archaeological sites, including Ur, and to the fabric of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. Sadly, some local museums were subsequently damaged and antiquities looted. Following an overture from Dr. Damerji, Director-General of the Department of Antiquities and Heritage, the Director and Assistant Director of the School applied for visas towards the end of 1991 with a view to making short visits to Iraq in order to discuss the general archaeological situation and the affairs of the British Archaeological Expedition to Iraq. The visas were granted, and the Assistant Director visited Iraq from 18–26 April 1992, while the Director was there from 8–14 August 1992. The visits went off without problems and were useful as a preliminary re-establishment of contacts.

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The Director, Dr. R. J. Matthews, has completed his work on a volume entitled "Cities, Seals and Writing: Archaic Seal Impressions from Jemdet Nasr and Ur", to be published in Berlin as volume 2 of the series *Materialen zu den frühen Schriftzeugnissen des Vorderen Orients*. The volume includes a full iconographic discussion of the Jemdet Nasr tablet seal impressions, an analysis of their role within the archaic administration system attested by the tablets, and a full publication of all known "city seal impressions" from Jemdet Nasr, Ur and Uruk. He has an article in this number of *Iraq* on the 1920s material from Jemdet Nasr. He and Mrs. Wendy Matthews participated in the Spring 1992 season of excavations at Tell Brak.

The Assistant Director, Mr. Tony Wilkinson, accepted a post as Research Associate at the Oriental Institute Chicago from 1st January 1992, and was given leave of absence for this purpose. Mr. Wilkinson has completed his report on the North Jazira Project, which is shortly to be published in the School's series *Iraq Archaeological Reports*.

The Secretary-Librarian, Miss Helen McDonald, has completed a register of Nimrud pottery (now in the British Museum), and is organizing a Nimrud archive and constructing a database for the Nimrud collections in general. She also took part in the excavations at Tell Brak in Spring 1992.

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Although the School has been unable to resume research and survey in Iraq, in accordance with its charter (which defines the School's sphere of interest as "Iraq and the neighbouring countries"), support has been given to Professor Oates's excavations at Tell Brak, a continuation of the late Sir Max Mallowan's work there under the School's auspices in 1937–8, and to the London–Bahrain Archaeological Expedition's excavations at Saar, directed by Dr. Harriet Crawford, Dr. Robert Killick and Mrs. Jane Killick. The work at Tell Brak has concentrated on the exploration of two large Akkadian religious complexes and, in another area, a very informative stratigraphic investigation of late 4th and early 3rd millennium buildings. The third season of excavations took place from December 1991 to March 1992 at Saar, the first settlement site dating to the Dilmun period (c. 2000–1750 B.C.) to be extensively investigated using modern methods. Saar is essentially a single period settlement with a temple on the highest point and a lower town with a layout of remarkable regularity.

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In view of the political situation, Fellowships and grants were not advertised for 1991/2. However, grants were made to the following: Mr. Carl Phillips to study an 'Ubaid influenced site at Umm al Qaiwain in the United Arab Emirates; Dr. Alastair Northedge, Mr. Derek Kennet and Mr. Andrew Petersen to prepare for publication the Samarra survey; Mr. David Tucker to enable him to prepare for publication his sherd survey of Balawat.

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The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday, 4th December 1991. Following the meeting, Mr. Tony Wilkinson (Assistant Director) lectured on "Town and Country in Upper Mesopotamia: the Rise and Decay of Early Bronze Age Towns".

The ninth Bonham Carter Memorial lecture was given by Dr. Alastair Northedge on Wednesday, 12 June 1991 under the title "Survey and Excavations at Samarra".

At the Summer Lecture on 17th June 1992, Dr. Georgina Herrmann lectured on "The Nimrud Ivories: Art or Craft?". Her volume *Ivories from Nimrud V. The Small Collections from Fort Shalmaneser* appeared at the beginning of this year.

In the series *Abu Salabikh Excavations*, A. R. Green's *The 6G Ash-Tip and its Contents* is now available.

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Dr. Jane McIntosh has taken over from Mrs. Jane Killick as Assistant Secretary (Publications). Thanks are due to Mrs. Killick for her efforts on the School's behalf.

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Rising printing costs have unfortunately necessitated an increase in the School's membership subscription to £25 p.a. from 1993. Means to reduce printing costs are now being actively sought, and it is hoped that the new subscription rate will be held for a good period.