

EDITORIAL

The School has suffered a sad loss in the death of Sir John Troutbeck, President of the School in 1966–70. His long and active interest in the School while Vice-President (1951–4) and Chairman (1955–65) is recorded above.

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With *Iraq* volume XXXIII, Sir Max Mallowan, now President of the School, has laid down his responsibilities as Editor of this journal. He took over from the late Professor C. J. Gadd in 1949 and for twenty-three years has energetically guided affairs so that today the journal is established both academically and economically. In addition to his own distinctive contributions Sir Max has always been eager to ensure that preliminary reports of the School's excavations and epigraphic discoveries should appear without delay. He has also encouraged many younger scholars to this same end. Professor D. J. Wiseman, associated with Sir Max Mallowan in the editorship since 1953, continues as Editor and is joined by Mr. J. D. Hawkins.

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British School of Archaeology in Iraq. The School has appointed Mr. Nicholas Postgate, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and formerly Lecturer in Akkadian at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, to be Assistant Director in Baghdad for three years from February 1972. He succeeds Mr. Jeffery Orchard who has resigned in order to take up an appointment as Lecturer in Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Birmingham. The School is grateful to Mr. Orchard for all that he has done since he was first awarded a Woolley Memorial Fellowship in 1960. He was subsequently made Secretary-Librarian (1961) and then Assistant Director of the School (1964).

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The Director, whose report on her first season of excavation at Umm Dabaghiyah is presented here, is carrying out a second expedition to work at the same site this spring. Dr. Julian Reade plans further work at Tell Taya this coming autumn.

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We are glad to include in this volume a report by the distinguished palaeobotanist, Dr. Hans Helbaek, on the plant remains from Choga Mami, a site which was the

subject of an article by Dr. Joan Oates in *Iraq XXXI*, 1969. Dr. Helbaek has rendered signal service to Mesopotamian archaeology through his application of modern techniques to the study of floral and faunal remains. The material reported on in the present number of *Iraq* was processed in the field, under difficult conditions, by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Jarman of the British Academy and Cambridge University Research Project in the Early History of Agriculture. The entire seed collection was brought to Cambridge for further study by kind permission of the Director-General of Antiquities, Baghdad, and generously lent by Cambridge to Dr. Helbaek. We have to thank all these persons and institutions for their generous participation.

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Following Dr. P. R. S. Moorey's reconstitution of the hoard of metal objects from Tell Sifr, now in the British Museum (*Iraq XXXIII* (1971), 61-86), they were analysed by Dr. Hugh McKerrell of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. This work was part of a major programme of surface analyses by radio-isotope non-dispersive X-ray fluorescence designed to elucidate the early history of alloying in the ancient Near East and Egypt. It will be published elsewhere in due course. In the meanwhile readers of *Iraq* may be interested in the Sifr results, which were not predictable. The axes, mattock-heads and adze-blades, nos. 1, 2, 5 and 8 (7 was not tested), alone proved to be good tin-bronzes; nos. 4, 13, 28, 66 and 81 had some tin in them, but all the other objects were of copper not tin-bronze. This is a significant result in view of the common assumption that by the Old Babylonian period in Iraq tin-bronze had generally superseded copper in the production of tools and weapons. Tin was clearly available, but sparingly used for objects, such as the shaft-hole axes and mattocks, where it would be most appropriate. Nor were the alloys necessarily consistent for any one type of artefact, as no. 3, exactly comparable to nos. 1 and 2 in form and function, did not contain tin.