

IRAQ

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Abstracts

Giacomo Benati: The Beginning of the Early Dynastic Period at Ur

This article presents a reconsideration of the architecture, stratigraphy and finds from Building Level H, excavated in Trial Pit F at Ur. Analysis of Woolley's original excavation records, kept at the British Museum, provides the basis for a contextual reconstruction. A new complete study of published and unpublished materials now housed at the British Museum and at the Penn Museum of Philadelphia is offered here. Distribution of in situ artefacts is examined here in order to provide insights on the function of the excavated loci. Finally, pottery and glyptic assemblages, considered from a regional perspective, are used to define the chronological horizon of Level H.

Tim Clayden: Kassite Housing at UR: The Dates of the EM, YC, XNCF, AH AND KPS Houses

A study of the excavated structures at Ur which Woolley identified as domestic and possibly Kassite (or later) in date. Through an examination of the objects excavated in the structures and associated graves (principally pottery, glass and faience vessels, scaraboids and tablets) the housing in area EM is dated to roughly the 13th century b.c. while the remains in areas XNCF, AH, YC and KPS are dated to the 8th/7th centuries b.c. The review also presents a summary history of Ur from the mid third millennium b.c. to the neo-Babylonian period highlighting the periods of royal patronage at the city.

F. M. Fales and R. Del Fabbro: Back to Sennacherib's Aqueduct at Jerwan: A Reassessment of the Textual Evidence

The aqueduct in limestone blocks at Jerwan in the present day Dohuk region of Iraqi Kurdistan is one of the most imposing monuments erected by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681 b.c.) as part of his vast hydraulic program for Nineveh. This aqueduct, subject of a precise and innovative, albeit brief, investigation by Thorkild Jacobsen and Seton Lloyd in 1933, was re-examined in September 2012 by the two authors with an eye to the cuneiform texts engraved on the stone surfaces. The present study is aimed at a survey of the various specimens of royal inscriptions A-C, in their various occurrences and in relation to the architectural features of the monument; specifically, a new geographical analysis of inscription B is suggested. An updated contextual overview is provided of the approximately 200 inscribed blocks bearing so-called "inscription D", benefitting from new collations. Finally, working hypotheses are presented on the probable place of origin of this text, and on the historical phase in which the puzzling placement of its written components could have taken place.

E. Jiménez: New Fragments of Gilgameš and other Literary Texts from Kuyunjik

The public availability of photographs of the entire British Museum Kuyunjik collection has allowed the identification of many hitherto unplaced fragments. Some of them are particularly relevant for the reconstruction of passages in a number of ancient Mesopotamian literary texts. These are published here for the first time. They include three new fragments of the Gilgameš epic, one or two of the Theodicy, several of the Diviner's Manual and of the Rituals of the Diviner, several prayers previously only poorly known, and fragments from the seventh tablet of the exorcistic series Muššu'u.

Vito Messina: Further Bullae from Seleucia on the Tigris

This paper makes available clay sealings found during the last campaigns of the Italian expedition at Seleucia on the Tigris whose publication was delayed by the 1990-91 Gulf War. The sealings were discovered in the North Agora—where a large archive building containing more than 25,000 sealings was also unearthed—and provide additional information on the iconography and style of the subjects impressed on their surfaces by official and private seals. Most of the sealings were found in the context of the stoa, a public building facing the archive on the opposite side of the agora, but seem to have been displaced there accidentally or for some reason, difficult to ascertain, only at a later date: originally they were probably kept in the archive building itself.

Davide Nadali: How Many Soldiers on the “Stele of the Vultures”? A Hypothetical Reconstruction

The study presents a reconstruction of the arrangement of the soldiers of Lagash as represented in the first and second registers of the “Stele of the Vultures” of King Eannatum according to both philological and iconographic data. Through a process of deconstruction, it is possible to read the composition as the result of a combination of two perspectives employed by the Sumerian artists.

Haider Oraibi Almamori: The Early Dynastic Monumental Buildings at Umm Al-Aqarib

This article presents the results of excavations conducted at the site of Umm al-Aqarib, in the Dhi Qar Governorate of Iraq, in the years 1999-2002 and 2008-2010. Despite significant practical difficulties, the excavations revealed an Early Dynastic city of major importance, with monumental architecture including two large temples, called here the White Temple and Temple H, and a palace. In interpreting the excavation results, the author argues that Umm al-Aqarib, and not Jokha (Umma) as has previously been thought, was the central settlement of the kingdom of Gišša during the Early Dynastic III period, and that the White Temple, the largest yet known from Early Dynastic Sumer, is to be identified as the temple of Sara, city god of Gišša.

E. Robson and G. Zólyomi: Mesag Reports a Murder: Cuneiform Tablets in the Collections of Norwich Castle Museum and Cambridge University Library

We present editions of five cuneiform tablets in the collection of Norwich Castle Museum and two held by Cambridge University Library. The Norwich tablets comprise three tablets from the well-known “Mesag archive” or “Umma C” from the Sargonic period; one small tablet from Ur III Umma; and a fragment of an unprovenanced Old Babylonian account. Those in Cambridge are both from Ur III Girsu: a wool receipt and part of a balanced labour account.

Saber Ahmed Saber, Hussein Hamza and Mark Altaweel: Report on the Excavations at Tell Sitak: The 2010 Season

Recent excavations at Tell Sitak in Iraqi Kurdistan contribute new information on the Neo-Assyrian and Sasanian occupation of this region. The site was most likely occupied between the eighth and sixth centuries b.c., in other words during the Neo-Assyrian period and perhaps for some time after. Architectural remains suggest that during this phase its primary function may have been as a fortress; smaller finds include ceramics and one Neo-Assyrian cuneiform tablet. The site was occupied again in the later Sasanian period, perhaps between the fourth and seventh centuries a.d. Remains from this period include ceramics carrying a variety of stamp seal impressions and substantial evidence for ironworking at the site.

Saber Ahmed Saber, Zuhair Rejeb and Mark Altaweel: Report on the Excavations at Merquly: The 2009 Season

The site of Merquly is located in a mountain pass c. 40 km north-west of Slemani (Sulaimaniyah), Iraq. Excavation at the site in 2009 revealed a fortified structure whose rooms at multiple elevations reflect a terraced structure adapted to the steep landscape contours of its setting. Both architectural preservation and quantity of finds were relatively limited; however, despite the nearby presence of a prominent Parthian period rock relief, ceramics suggest a later Sasanian date for the site. The authors discuss the 2009 season's results, and consider possible parallels for the preserved architecture, although further work is needed to securely date and characterize the site.

M. Sandowicz: Nabonidus and the Forty Thieves of Uruk: Criminal Investigation in Neo-Babylonian Eanna

This paper studies a group of documents produced in the course of investigation into the activities of a gang that operated in Uruk in the latter part of Nabonidus' rule. It examines the composition of this criminal group and the offences committed by its members. Above all, however, it seeks to reconstruct the procedures implemented by the temple officials in response to a hitherto unpublished royal writ BM 114574, a document that throws new light on the involvement of the king in the administration of justice in the Neo-Babylonian period.