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The Wolfe Expedition.¹

BY REV. W. H. WARD, D.D., LL.D.

THIS expedition had its origin in the consultations of a number of members of the American Oriental Society who felt, the desirability of exciting a wider interest in the work of gathering the monuments of Assyria and Babylonia ; and the funds for its prosecution were generously given by Miss Catharine Lorillard Wolfe of New York. The members of the expedition were Dr. Ward, who conducted it, and Dr. J. R. S. Sterrett, of the American School at Athens, and Mr. J. H. Haynes, of Robert College. Both Dr. Sterrett and Mr. Haynes had had experience in archæological work at Assos, and in collecting Greek inscriptions in Asia Minor.

The first spot of especial oriental interest visited by the Expedition was Marash, which must have been an ancient so-called "Hittite" capital. From this place a lion in black basalt, covered with Hittite inscriptions, had lately been taken to Constantinople, and the mate to it, but without inscriptions, still stands in the castle wall. Here a number of Hittite bas-reliefs, as yet unfigured, were photographed. Afterward, Carchemish, the great Hittite capital on the Euphrates, now Jerablus, was visited. Here we found, to our great surprise, a number of fine bas-reliefs, left behind by those in charge of the excavations for the British Museum, of which we took photographs. One of them has a considerable inscription. Another represents the winged Ishtar holding her breasts. Another is a nearly life-size figure, in the black stone of the region, in which nearly all the Hittite sculptures are made, of a deity wearing a two-horned cap. It is in perfect preservation, except that it is broken in two. It is a great pity that these monuments cannot be in some museum. Little more than a beginning has been made in the exploration of this remarkable site.

The Expedition passed through Urfa, Diarbekir, Mardin, and the Tur Abdin, there visiting Syrian monasteries and making inquiries as

¹ Read in December, 1885. An abstract of the author's report to the American Archæological Institute.

to the Syriac manuscripts still to be found there, on the way to Mosul, opposite Nineveh, now represented by the mounds of Koyunjik and Nebby Yunus. These were visited, as also the neighboring ruins of Khorsabad and Nemrûd, where not a few bas-reliefs, colossal lions, and altars were seen, left necessarily behind in the English and French explorations. At Nemrûd these friezes are very numerous, and covered with the inscriptions so many times repeated, and are more damaged by thirty years of exposure to the elements than by the twenty-five hundred years they were underground. We did not delay here, as our main task, for which time was much pressing us, and for which only the winter season was available, was in Southern Babylonia.

We reached Baghdad January 1st, where we spent about two weeks putting ourselves in connection with all those who had special knowledge of the antiquities of the district. M. de Sarzec is consul-general of France at Baghdad, having been promoted from Bassora in recognition of his services in discovering the archaic remains at Tello, which have added such treasures to the Louvre. There are also at Baghdad the men who had charge of all the excavations made at Abu Habba, under the direction of Mr. Rassam, and also a number of others, who still collect, by means of Arabs digging in graves, the gold, tablets, cylinders, and other objects to be found in the mounds. A considerable quantity of these objects find their way from Baghdad to Europe every year, and we are fortunate in being able to bring home a collection of them.

We were unfortunately obliged to leave Dr. Sterrett in Baghdad, while making our tour in Southern Babylonia, as he had been prostrated by a very severe illness. First visiting Hillah, a city of perhaps ten thousand inhabitants, close by the site of old Babylon, we make this our headquarters while examining the ruins of Babylon and of Borsippa. Babylon is now the quarry of Hillah, parties of men being constantly engaged in digging brick, especially from the large northern temple called Bab-il. Comparatively few antiquities of value are now found there, although the vast pile of bricks is being thoroughly gutted by rude excavation. Much more of value is found at Kesr and Jimjimeh. The latter have been explored with no scientific care, and no clue is yet found to the immense ruins. Borsippa has lately been the scene of quite careful exploration by Mr. Rassam, who has opened, just below the famous so-called "Tower of Babel," a large building, beside making tentative openings in the adjoining hill, known as El Khalil. These have been fruitful, but

have very far from exhausted the locality. The broken tower itself, appearing as if smitten by lightning, is the most conspicuous landmark in the vicinity, and has been often described.

From Hillah we started, with some anxiety on account of the condition of the waste country, taking our caravan southeastward, through the region between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, as far south as the junction of the Shatt-el-Hai and the Euphrates, and so nearly as far south as the valley had been deposited by the rivers and settled in the period of old Babylonian history. The country is not wholly safe, and, so far as we could learn, has not been visited by foreigners for many years. In portions of the region we visited sites partially explored by Taylor and Loftus, and near the southern limit we came upon the track of De Sarzec ; but in many places we could not find that any explorer had preceded us. Striking out first eastward from Babylon to El Ohemir, we then turned southward, along the line of the old great canal, which is now filled up so as to carry almost the appearance of a road, and which bears the name of Shatt-el-Nîl. This we followed in good part, past the ancient tower, or *ziggurat*, of Zibliya, to Niffer. This magnificent mound has never been at all explored, and is one of the most promising in all the East. Here losing the Shatt-el-Nîl, though we constantly heard of it, we still passed southwardly, exploring the region between the two great rivers, examining nearly all the principal mounds as far south as the junction of the Shatt-el-Hai and the Euphrates. Among these mounds may be mentioned, after Niffer, Bismya, Dhahar, Hammam, Fara, Yokha, Umm-el-Aqarib, Tello, and Zerghul. We took notes of the geographical position of as many points as possible, using the prismatic compass, and of the diggings at any of them. Reaching Merkez, a town at the junction of the Shatt-el-Hai with the Euphrates, we here crossed to the west side of the Euphrates, and visited Mugheir, the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, which was the furthest point south reached by us. Here turning northward we passed up the west bank of the Euphrates, back to Hillah, crossing the river once on our way to visit the great mound of Warka. In this long and anxious trip we visited all the sites of importance that time and strength would allow. The chief ones not seen are Abu-Sharein, a little south of Mugheir, an important and very ancient ruin, supposed to be the Eridu of the Babylonian Flood story ; Sifr and Senkereh, both explored by Loftus, and the hitherto unvisited Delêhem, a conspicuous and important mound on the edge of the Affej marshes, which we were very sorry not to visit.

Having returned to Hillah, we spent several days there recruiting and studying the antiquities brought from Babylon by the natives, and then returned to Baghdad, on our way turning aside for a more careful study of Abu-Habba, opened by Mr. Rassam, and a visit to Tel Ibrahim. On March 18th we again left Baghdad for the sea-coast, by way of the Euphrates river and Syrian desert, for Damascus and Beirut. We first visited Akerkuf, a conspicuous mound near Baghdad, and then, on the Euphrates, near the origin of the Sakhlawieh canal, we examined the mound of Sufeira, which I had hoped might be the old Sippara, as Abu-Habba does not seem to be more than the less important Sippara of the sun. Finding Sufeira to be of no importance, I visited the neighboring mound of Anbar, of which I was informed by the Mudir of the village of Sakhlawieh, and which, though a place well known in mediæval Arab geography, had not been found by modern travellers. I found it an immense mound, of the same rank as Niffer and Warka, and I have elsewhere more fully described it, and identified it with the old and principal Agade and Sippara of Anunit. Here we crossed the Euphrates and passed up the western bank, through Hit and Anah to Ed-Deir, just above the junction of the Khabûr river. Here we struck westward into the desert, and passed through Erech to Palmyra, where we spent five days taking photographs, and copying and taking impressions of the Palmyrene inscriptions. From Palmyra we passed through Homs (Emesa) and Damascus to Beirut. Our object had been to visit personally as many as possible of the important sites of Babylonia, and discover what is the hopefulness of further exploration and excavation, and what the feasibility of making collections of tablets and other objects of ancient art and literature. While doing this we would, though forbidden to do any excavating, make what explorations were possible. Accordingly, we took bearings everywhere with the prismatic compass, to all the mounds in sight, added what geographical data it was possible to collect, took photographs, and carefully examined, so far as time would allow, all the mounds we could reach. Some sites of very great importance we have seen, never visited before, and have obtained a much better idea of the relative importance of those known. The four most important mounds of Babylonia are probably Babylon, very much the largest of all, then Niffer, Warka, and Anbar. It is remarkable that these four mounds probably represent the four cities of Gen. x. 10, founded by Nimrod, Niffer being generally believed to be Calneh, Warka Erech, and Anbar, discovered by us, being probably

Accad, the Agade or Sippara of Anunit of the Assyrian monuments, and the Sepharvaim of the later Scriptures. Of these, only Babylon has been very much explored, and that in the most desultory way, principally by Arabs, except at the northern portion called Bab-*fil*. Indeed, no clue has yet been found to the major part of the ruins of Babylon, their great extent having discouraged explorers. Warka, or Erech, has been attacked by Taylor and Loftus, and one of the principal constructions exposed, but little more was done. Niffer and Anbar are entirely virgin to the explorer's spade. The excavation of these places is sure to yield abundant and most important results. Of the secondary mounds there are great numbers, and some of them are sure to be very fruitful. Among them may be mentioned, besides Abu-Habba, already quite thoroughly explored, and Birs Nemrûd, which has also received much labor; Mugheir, where Taylor and Loftus have left much yet to be done; Bismya, Dhahar, Hammam, Yokha, Umm-el-Aqarib, Zerghul, and Jabra, not one of which has been opened at all, and any one of which may give us as valuable results as those obtained by M. de Sarzec at Tello. Of all these, two discovered by the Wolfe Expedition invite especial attention: Anbar, with its long history extending from the earliest mythical period down through the Caliphates, and Umm-el-Aqarib, which appears to have been a sacred city of graves from ancient times, and which is now marked with visible lines of graves, over which are scattered fragments of vases of stone and pottery, and numerous flint knives, and sand. We may also mention Jabra, on the west of the Euphrates, and a little north of Anbar, as probably a late city of much importance, and the only one where the walls of sun-dried bricks are in part still standing. The field for exploration will not be exhausted in many years of diligent labor.