You may not be aware of it, but archaeologists have a concept of "clean dirt." That sounds silly, but it is a term that is often used in excavators’ conversation and sometimes gets published. What we mean by it is that the dirt is relatively uniform, pretty much one consistency and color, untainted by ash or charcoal, and contains no sherds.

But dirt is mostly dirty and we spend a lot of time "cleaning up the excavation." When the whole excavation is dirt, and the bricks in excavated structures are made of dirt, and the baulks at the edges of the trench are more dirt, and there is sand floating or whipping around in the air, some people just might think you’re crazy when you ask them to clean up the excavation. The local workmen look at us, take brooms and sweep, humoring us and probably preparing the story of madness they will tell that night at home. We try to keep the excavation free of loose dirt and fallen-in sherds, which might confuse the dating of levels. We try to leave the work each day as neat as possible. This is pretty hopeless in a situation where sand can blow in and cover everything in a couple of hours, but we do it anyway. We have found that the camera has power over men’s minds. If we say we are preparing the area for photos, the sweeping is done more vigorously. And we do take a lot of photos. This last season we found one boy who had the concept of "clean" down pat.

So, we made him the sherd washer.

Working in dirt all day we are unclean ourselves and the showers in the dig house are extremely welcome. Last season we installed a new electric water heater when the old kerosene one failed after thirty-five years of use in Iraq. Electric devices are still not quite appropriate for our field situation because we lose electricity when storms occur. Sometimes we can be without power for days, except for the few hours each night when we run the generator. When the new heater developed a short early this season, we were able to find a new kerosene version to replace it. The kerosene heater works beautifully and that’s one fuel that is always available.

But what about the dirty clothes? Years ago we used to send the clothes out to the local town and a group of women would wash them for a fee. This arrangement broke down in 1981 and for a couple of seasons we had to do our own washing by hand, a nuisance after a day’s hard work. This year deliverance came in the form of an ancient Maytag. The Belgian Expedition was recently given a new washing machine by a Belgian company that was leaving Iraq after finishing a contract. This meant that they had this spare Maytag. It is something over thirty years old, has one of those wringers on the top, is minimally automatic, and works like a charm. The continued on page 2
Belgians sold it to us for the equivalent of $30. This machine was originally in the old American embassy, which was closed in 1967. The Belgian embassy took over the guardianship of the embassy and in the early 1970’s was instructed by the U.S. government to sell all equipment. The Belgian archaeological mission got the machine. Now it is back in American hands and is greatly appreciated. When the Belgians’ new machine is on the scrap heap, our Maytag will still be churning along.

When we arrived in Iraq in September of 1987, to begin Chicago’s 17th season of work at Nippur, we had very clear, clean ideas of what we intended to do. We had already made an agreement for hiring a 4-wheel-drive vehicle and driver. This vehicle would allow us to reach the far side of the site regardless of rain. Our intention was to carry out two operations east of the ziggurat. One, Area EA, was to be a large step-trench cut into the face of the city wall. We knew from previous work by Pennsylvania in the 1890’s and Carl Haines in the 1950’s that we should encounter Parthian (c. 100 AD) fortifications sitting on Ur III (c. 2200 BC), Akkadian (c. 2350 BC), and Early Dynastic (c. 2600 BC) structures. Having spent a good part of the past ten years working on and around the city wall at the southern end of the city (Area WC), we wanted to compare the history of its construction in a place where we could see a good sequence from Early Dynastic through Ur III. We wanted that sequence not only for what it would tell about the city wall, but also what it might indicate about the gradual transition from one period to another in the early history of the site. We knew that Pennsylvania had made sizable trenches in this area and that if we took out the backfill and sand that had accumulated in them, we could reach early levels relatively easily. If it looked profitable, we planned to sink a pit below the bottom of Pennsylvania’s trench to virgin soil. We know virtually nothing about the earliest levels at Nippur and we expected to gain extremely important information on early Mesopotamia at the bottom of the mound.

The second operation for the season was Area M, a low mound five hundred meters east of the city wall. This mound came to light in 1985, when the dune belt that borders Nippur shifted to the east. Sherds, metal vessels, and coins collected on the surface indicated that this mound was occupied in the early 14th century AD, after the Mongol invasion. There is almost no excavated material from this period in Iraq and anything we could add to the body of knowledge would be significant. There was some urgency in digging here because as the dune belt moves, farmers are cutting irrigation canals into the exposed areas and are beginning to plow.

We also intended to continue environmental investigations in the plain east of the ziggurat. In a trench made during 1985 we discovered a thick deposit of clay, with fresh-water mol-
lusk shells, probably indicating an ancient marsh. We intended to continue cutting this trench with a machine to gain more information on the clay deposit, including a dating for it. Our trench would cut across four ancient canals and would, thus, give dates for the water courses by means of sherds recovered in them and information on environmental conditions and ancient techniques of irrigation.

Our clear, clean plan of operations became a bit muddied when I found, on getting to Baghdad, that the vehicle and driver were no longer available. The man had been called up for the army. In between going as an official guest to a few performances at the International Music Festival of Babylon, I hurried around Baghdad trying to find another driver and vehicle. Then I tried to rent a 4-wheel-drive vehicle, or at least a pickup truck, which we ourselves would drive. Nothing was available. By now the rest of the dig staff had arrived and I had taken them down to Nippur by taxi. They proceeded to prepare the house and the field areas for work, while I returned to Baghdad in search of a vehicle. I finally rented a new, four-door, Brazilian Volkswagen sedan. This is not an ideal dig vehicle, but at least we would have a car on-site in case of emergency, we could do the shopping, and could get back and forth to Baghdad with ease.

The lack of a proper dig vehicle led us to rethink the dig strategy. We would give up work on the eastern side of the mound, at least for a time, and work in WC. The closeness of WC to the expedition house made it easy to walk to the excavation, get tools and wheelbarrows, and supply water for the workmen.

We reopened the Ur III city wall trenches of WC, an area we had not investigated since 1975. Water was very low in the nearby canal, so we thought we could get much lower here than in previous years and could answer the question of whether or not there had been Akkadian and Early Dynastic city walls below the Ur III level. Meanwhile, I was still trying to get a vehicle so that we could revert to our original plan or at least do some work on the Islamic mound (Area M) and save it from the plow. A solution was found. A local man, Nuri, who is a farmer but also does some taxi service in the countryside around Afak with a pickup truck, was willing to rent himself and his vehicle for the season. Nuri turned out to be a great find — a good driver, and a conscientious and honorable man with a good sense of humor.

At about the same time we hired Nuri, we also had the good fortune of obtaining the services of Khalaf Bedawi. Khalaf had been the foreman at Nippur in the early years of Chicago's work at the site. Carl and Irene Haines had told me many stories about him and how great he was at organizing work, dealing with workmen, and otherwise making the dig more efficient. In 1955 Khalaf was made part of the permanent staff of the Department of Antiquities. Now retired, he is again available for hire as a foreman. Returning to Nippur was like coming home, he said. When he was foreman, he built a house at the site so he could have his wife and children with him during the long, nine-month seasons then current. One of his sons was born there. It was a pleasure to get to know him after years of being aware of him as a legend.
buildings were not part of the city wall itself, but, being located just inside the city wall, were probably military in nature. We can't say for certain what the buildings were because there was very little left on the floors. They were "clean." I envision a really tough master sergeant supervising a bunch of Sumerian soldiers in sweeping the mud-plastered floors. Now that doesn't mean exactly that there was nothing on the floors. Although we found very little in the way of whole pottery or cylinder seals, seal impressions, or other artifacts on the floors, as would normally be the case, we did find masses of ash and trash and potsherds that had been dumped deliberately to raise the level. It looks as if someone swept the floors, brought in loads of junk, and then plastered over the mess. And this operation occurred twice. Jim Armstrong and Augusta McMahon did a remarkable job of digging and interpreting the strata here. Augusta, who is new to Nippur, proves to have a great gift for articulating mudbricks. The photographs of the baulks reflect that skill.

We cut a pit in the bottom of the excavation, below the big building, taking advantage of the fact that Penn had dug a lot deeper in one area. Here we found layers of trash filled with ash and sherds (again deliberate filling, not occupational debris) alternating with layers of clay that is almost "clean," but does have shells and a few sherds mixed in. This clay is very similar to that found outside the city wall in the geomorphological trench. My guess at the moment is that in preparation for the construction of the Early Dynastic city wall, the builders brought in clay from outside the city and trash from rubbish heaps to form a rampart on which to construct defensive structures. Penn reported finding a canal just outside the Early Dynastic city wall. I think that the clay in the layers we have encountered came from the excavation of this canal. Why they alternated clay with trash, I don't know at this time. Work was ended here when we reached water in the pit. We were still in Early Dynastic, though by this level we had the earliest part of the period. We were tantalized by the fact that only a few centimeters lower we might have been in remains of the Uruk (c. 3500 BC) and Ubaid (c. 4500 BC) periods. We will resume our attempt to expose the original occupation at Nippur in a later season, when the ground water is lower or when we have enough money to use pumps effectively.

With about three weeks left in the season, we decided to stop work on the east side of the city and return to Area WC. It was clear that we could not answer in so short a time the problems posed by the six meters of Early Dynastic deposit in Area EA; it will take a lot more work, including the removal of Penn dumps, to find out what is going on here. But Area EA has already given us valuable new insights into the area around the zigurrat. We have known since Penn's work in the 1890's that the Parthian constructions around the zigurrat created a high, dominating focus for the entire site. Haines' work in the 1950's gave an indication that there was unusually massive, high construction of the Ur III period east of the zigurrat. It was not obvious, however, that already in the Early Dynastic period there were huge expenditures in labor and materials to protect the most sacred precinct with defensive walls that were higher than the city wall itself.

We were fairly certain that a return to Area WC for the remainder of the season would allow us to answer important questions posed by our previous work. In trying to write up the report on this area, we found ourselves wishing we could put in a little pit here or a trench there, where puzzles lay. Now we had the chance to do so.

When we did our large-scale excavations in Area WC, in 1975, we concluded that Ur III kings had built two city walls at Nippur. The earlier wall one took a turn under the later one and we assumed that this corner marked the kind of jog that sometimes occurs in city walls. We had been bothered by the possibility, however, that instead of a city wall with a jog, we had a large public building down there. We needed to cut through the later wall and see what the earlier construction was. We laid out a long trench.
across the line of the city wall and began to cut in both directions. On the outside of the city wall, we wanted to find the outer edge of a moat that had been cut some time after the Ur III period and that we had previously dated to the 1st millennium BC on the basis of sherd s in the debris. In the rest of the trench we wanted to find the inner edge of the upper Ur III city wall and find out what was contemporary with it as well as what happened to the earlier “city wall.” Our results were extraordinarily gratifying.

We did in fact find the full width of the ancient moat and can now date its origin to the Kassite period (c. 1300 BC), when yet another small city wall seems to have been built over the Ur III one. We can show that after some time the moat dried up and was filled in by the sand. We knew from previous work that the WC area of Nippur was abandoned for several centuries after the Kassite period. The moat was partially recut after 700 BC at the same time new defensive walls were built to protect this part of the revived city. Without our trench this year, we could not have sketched in such details.

The findings toward the inside of the city wall were equally important, but the Kassites who had made the moat had also cut deep, ragged holes down into the mound, destroying much of the earlier layers. The upper Ur III city wall had a very good, sloping inner face and was at least 14 meters thick. But, the lower “city wall” did, in fact, turn out to be not a city wall but a big public building. This building happens to have been situated at the southernmost corner of the site when there was no wall around this portion of the city. Beneath this building there are ashy layers and several bread ovens associated with houses. Under the houses and ashy layers is clean sand that is virgin soil. This isn’t the usual stuff we call sand at Nippur, which is really a mixture of lots of silt, some sand, and minute pieces of shell, but real sand. You could make a good beach under Area WC.

Our work in Area WC this year established that the Ur III people at Nippur expanded the city outside the previously walled area of the city. Then, possibly under Ibbi Sin, the last king of the Ur III dynasty, they extended the city’s defenses to enclose this area.

We closed down the dig in early December and worked on notes and artifacts in the dig house while a few workmen mixed mud plaster and re-coated about half the building. John Sanders did his usual magic act, turning field drawings and notes into exact plans. Peggy Sanders photographed all the last-minute finds while finishing drawings of objects and doing part of the house inventory. Steve Cole, a new staff member, having almost no inscriptions to read from excavations this season, did a lot of digging and site supervision, as well as drawing hundreds of potsherds. We let him escape to Baghdad for a couple of weeks during the season so he could study a group of Nippur tablets he is using for his doctoral dissertation. And Muhammad Yahya, the Iraqi Antiquities representative, was busy registering the objects in the Arabic version of the catalog. All of us glued together pottery, much of which had come from several rich but smashed Ur III graves, found under the city wall.

We left Nippur on December 13 and went to Baghdad to turn in objects. I saw the crew off on Royal Jordanian Airlines and a few days later I followed. We have been getting good deals and great service from Jordanian. The Jordanian staff all along the line was especially helpful in seeing that a trunk of cuneiform tablets we were returning to the Iraq Museum arrived safely with me in Baghdad and I cannot thank them enough.

We are already planning for next season, which will be in the coming fall or winter. This campaign will coincide with the hundredth anniversary of American excavation at Ur and in Iraq. Pennsylvania’s first expedition departed from the U. S. in mid-1888 but due to bureaucratic delays in Istanbul, it did not reach Nippur until January of 1989. Chicago’s involvement with Nippur began forty years ago, in the fall of 1948, when it reopened the site in a joint expedition with Penn. So, we will be observing a double anniversary in our 18th season.

It is not absolutely certain as yet which area we will be investigating. Much will depend on local conditions such as the availability of vehicles and labor. One option will be the opening of a new area on the top of the West Mound, where we should be able to gain a tremendous amount of information on the latest occupations of the city. Nippur is one of the most promising sites for the stratigraphic excavation of the early Islamic levels and their immediate predecessors. There has been, as yet, no large exposure with accurate, detailed recording of these levels at Nippur or elsewhere. We would carry out this operation in conjunction with the reopening of Area WA, where sand prevented our continued exposure of a stack of temples that could rival the Inanna temple for objects and information. The sand has moved to the side of our WA trenches and we can work there with much less difficulty than we had in the early 1970’s. If we have problems with vehicles and labor, we will instead expand the investigation of 7th century buildings near the expedition house. If previous work here is any indication, this will be a very rewarding operation. On photos taken with a kite we can see indications of very large, formally-laid out buildings, probably of a governmental nature, just below the surface. On the air photos the building plans look crisp and clean.
Anatolia after the Hittites

Around 1200 BC, the Hittite Empire disintegrated and political cohesion in Anatolia was lost. There follows a dark age of two centuries only intermittently illuminated by references in Assyrian sources. When, around the 10th century BC, local sources become available again, a very different political configuration is revealed. In the west of the country, the Phrygians hold sway; in the east, the Urartians are firmly established around Lake Van; and in the south-east, a number of Neo-Hittite states continue many cultural aspects familiar from the Hittite empire. At the same time, a foreign influence dominated the west coast of Anatolia — the Ionian city states. This political fragmentation is the hallmark of the first half of the 1st millennium BC Anatolia, and it produces a rich and diverse cultural-artistic milieu.

The political domination of Anatolia by the Persians in the 6th century BC reintroduces a unity not seen since the Hittite Empire. At the same time, this foreign influence changes little in the underlying Anatolian culture. With the defeat of the Persians by Alexander during 333 BC, Anatolia is once again a land-bridge transmitting a foreign culture, this time from the west to the east. The Hellenistic kingdoms resulting from Alexander’s conquest display considerable cultural diversity, some truly Greek in character while others are distinctly oriental.

The course will examine the history and material culture of this millennium of indigenous kingdoms and foreign domination, from the Phrygian capital of Gordio to the Hellenistic center of learning at Pergamon.

Selected readings will be made available. For those who wish to do advance reading, Anatolia II by Henri Metzger in the Ancient Civilizations series published in 1969 by Nagel Publishers, Geneva, Switzerland, is recommended. Though out of print, it may be found in libraries or second hand bookshops.

INSTRUCTOR:
Ann Murray is a doctoral candidate at the University of London preparing a thesis on the history and archaeology of the Keban region of Turkey during the 2nd millennium BC. For six years she was Assistant Director at the British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara.

This class will meet at the Oriental Institute from 10 am - noon on seven Saturdays from April 2 through May 14.

Queens of Ancient Egypt*

"Now my heart turns to and fro.
In thinking what will the people say
They who shall see my monument in after years,
And shall speak of what I have done..."
—Hatshepsut

Their names and representations in art capture the imagination, but what is actually known about the queens of dynastic Egypt, and what sorts of lives were led by ancient Egyptian women in general?

This course will examine the position of women in ancient Egypt with regard to determinism and autonomy, social and religious attitudes, and questions like legal rights and literacy, often with surprising results. Against this backdrop we will view the queens about whom the most is known. For instance, Nefertiti’s portrait head has become almost a symbol of Egypt, yet soon after her lifetime an attempt was made to wipe out all memory of her because of the part she played in her husband Akhenaten’s religious reforms. Ankhesenamen, the wife of Tutankhamen, was involved in mysterious political strategies after her husband’s death. Hatshepsut declared herself king and she was not the only woman to rule as pharaoh.

Source material for the course will be sculpture, painting, translated textual material, and archaeological evidence, presented in slides, lectures, discussions, and occasional Xerographs. A suggested reading list will be available, but no text is required.

INSTRUCTOR:
Elizabeth Shannon, M.A., is an Egyptologist presently working toward her doctorate in Art History at the University of Chicago. She has worked with the Egypt Exploration Society Excavations at Amarna and published on the topic of artists’ styles in ancient Egyptian tombs.

This class will meet at Cobb Hall across the Quadrangle from the Oriental Institute from 10 am - noon on eight Saturdays from April 2 through June 4, with no class meetings on April 30 and May 28.

* Because this course was oversubscribed in the Winter Quarter, we are offering it again.

Class sizes will be limited and early registration is recommended.

FURTHER INFORMATION 702-9507. Tuition is $60 plus $30 annual membership in the Oriental Institute.

Please register me for the course:
☑ Queens of Ancient Egypt
☑ Anatolia after the Hittites
☐ I am a member and enclose a check for $60
☐ I am not a member but enclose a SEPARATE check for $30 to cover a one year Oriental Institute membership

Name

Address

City State Zip

Daytime telephone

Please make checks payable to:
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE. Mail to: EDUCATION OFFICE, The Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637
DOCENT TRAINING COURSE

The annual training course for new Museum docents will begin on Monday, March 28, and continue on subsequent Mondays for nine weeks. This course, an introduction to the history and culture of the ancient Near East, is given by members of the Institute faculty. The course will consist of lectures, gallery workshops, films and seminars.

A seminar will be arranged one evening a week for those who would like to become week-end docents and cannot attend classes during the day.

After completing the course, new docents are expected to spend one half day a week giving tours in the Museum for at least a year. All docents must become members of the Oriental Institute.

Anyone interested in becoming a docent and taking the course should call Janet Helman, Volunteer Coordinator, at 702-9507 for more information or to make an appointment for an interview.

FREE SUNDAY MOVIES AT THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

All films will be shown at 2 p.m. in Breasted Hall

March 6 Rivers of Time
March 13 Myth of the Pharaohs / Ancient Mesopotamia
March 20 The Royal Archives of Ebla
March 27 Iran: Landmarks in the Desert
April 3 Of Time, Tombs, and Treasure
April 10 The Egyptologists
April 17 Iraq: Stairway to the Gods
April 24 Egypt: Gift of the Nile
May 1 NO FILM
May 8 Megiddo: City of Destruction
May 15 Preserving Egypt's Past
May 22 Egypt's Pyramids: Houses of Eternity
May 29 The Big Dig

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Lectures will be presented at 8 p.m. in Breasted Hall at the Oriental Institute.

Institute members may make dinner reservations at the Quadrangle Club, 1155 East 58th Street, 702-2550 before members’ lectures. They will bill the Oriental Institute and we, in turn, will bill you. Please print your name and address at the bottom of your dinner check, as well as signing it, so that we know where to send your bill.

April 6 William Dever, The University of Arizona Archaeology and "Popular Cult" in Ancient Israel.
April 20 Gus Van Beek, The Smithsonian Institution, An Overview of the Excavations at Tell Hemmeh, Israel.
May 4 Douglas Esse, The Oriental Institute, Ashkelon in the Persian Period: A Levantine Emporium.
May 16 Annual Oriental Institute Dinner in the Museum for the excavations at Nippur.

JUST PUBLISHED

SAOC No. 44

AS No. 22
Old Babylonian Letters from Tell Asmar by Robert M. Whit ing, Jr. This volume represents the first step of a comprehensive treatment of the Ur III and Old Babylonian tablets found at this Iraqi site. All letters written in Akkadian are included, each given in transliteration and accompanied by a translation when feasible. Significant historical problems and major points of grammar are discussed, and a comprehensive glossary is included. Pp. xiii + 177 including 27 plates, 1 text figure, and 3 tables. Paperbound. Price $26.00 (O.I. Members’ price with 20% discount is $20.80 + P&H).
THE SUQ

FACTORY CLOSEOUT

King Tut's Game (Senet)
The manufacturer has unfortunately decided to discontinue the King Tut games, but fortunately we were able to buy, at a discounted price, as many as we could store. This game was developed by Peter Piccione of the Oriental Institute and comes with a detailed description.

Deluxe Tut
regularly $12.95
now $8.95
(wooden game pieces)

Regular Tut
regularly $6.00
now $4.00
(plastic game pieces)

Postage $2.00
No discount is available to Members on sale items.

BACK IN STOCK

Pocket Egypt  A fold-out from the British Museum depicting chronology, major gods, royal names, and more — for only $1.95   Members $1.75   Postage $1.00
Small Egyptian Hippo  Blue glazed hippo (2 ¾"x 1 1/8") from the British Museum   $12.00   Members $10.80   Postage $2.00

NEW BOOKS

Finlay, Syria & Jordan: A Travel Survival Kit
$8.95   Members $8.06
Hobson, World of Pharaohs   $19.95   Members $17.95
Jacobson, The Harp that Once ...   $40.00   Members $36.00
Postage $2.00 each additional book $.75

Illinois residents please add 8% sales tax on all items ordered.

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