

The Nippur Expedition



Site of Inanna Temple on left; areas dug in 1962/63 at right and upper center.

During the winter of 1962/63, the Nippur Expedition returned to Iraq for an eighth season of excavation. The season was a short one, from the middle of September until the middle of January. Work was continued at the site of the Inanna temple, and soundings were made in the vicinity, particularly on the southwest between the temple and the old bed of the Euphrates River.

The essential parts of the Inanna temple had been excavated during the previous season, but, in our effort to reach the bottom of the mound, we left some details within the temple to be cleared up later. This has now been done, and our investigation of the Inanna temple is

finished. As so often happens when small areas are opened up, the soundings indicated that more work should be done in the area southwest of the temple. Our findings suggested that this was, or at least a great part of it was, an open area from Early Dynastic times to the Parthian period—a span of more than two thousand years. Future excavations may answer the questions the soundings posed.

During the coming winter, the expedition expects to go back to Nippur for a ninth season. The area to be investigated next is the Ekur, the huge complex dedicated to the city god Enlil. The expeditions sent out by the University of Pennsylvania late in the nine-

teenth century excavated most, but not all, of the main courtyard, cleared the ziggurat, and discovered the location of the Enlil temple which we dug in 1948/50. Much work is still to be done. The remainder of the courtyard and the casement walls surrounding it are still to be excavated, and the relationship of the Ekur to the neighboring Inanna temple should be established. It will take several seasons to remove the overburden of an old dump, the walls of the Parthian Citadel, and the great amount of accumulated debris between the Citadel and the brick pavements of the Third Dynasty of Ur.

James E. Knudstad will be in charge of the expedition. Since he came to the Institute in 1957 as Field Architect, Mr. Knudstad has been a member of Institute expeditions to Nippur in Iraq, Ptolemais in Libya, Chogha Mish in Iran, and Nubia in Egypt. He also took part in the Archeological Reconnaissance in Turkey and Iran and the Prehistoric Project in Iran. During the past winter, he was the Field Director of an expedition to Nubia in the Sudan. Next winter he will be returning to Nippur for the third time, to begin a complete study of the Ekur—a structure which was truly the heart of religious life in Mesopotamia.

RICHARD C. HAINES
Field Director