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Art News 1946/47

Excavations

Anuradhapura, Ceylon. During the reconstruction of parts of the Ruvanweli shrine, the most worshipped stupa of the celebrated ruin site, diggings were necessary which led to important archaeological finds. A structure dating from the 1st century B.C. has been discovered. There came to light many relic-urns of pottery or stone containing reliquaries of gold or crystal, among which miniature models of the stupa in its original shape. A very remarkable ivory female statuette, a gilt Buddha image of copper or bronze, 18 cm high, representative of the best period of sculpture in Ceylon, and a copper casket containing gold jewellery and Arab coins of the 10th century have further been unearthed.

Baghdad. The Antiquity Department of the Iraqi Government has completed a first season of ten weeks excavating at the site of the ancient Eridu, the saint town of the Sumerians and believed by them to be the oldest city of the world. The mound at present known as Abu Shahrain has a high platform of about 300 square metres, which is dominated by the ruins of a ziggurat built by the Third Dynasty kings of Ur. There are indications that the entire platform was covered with temple buildings. Enki or Ea, the god of the Abyss, was the patron god of Eridu. Former excavations at this place, the most successful of which was carried out by J. E. Taylor in 1854, could not be finished. A statue of a lion in black granite, 1½ metres high, which had already been seen by Taylor, has now been rediscovered.

Beirut. A colonnade of great dimensions has been unearthed, on which was found an inscription saying that Berenice and Herod Antipas II have restored the colonnades and marbles of an important monument built by their grandfather, Herod the Great. These monuments have been mentioned by Flavius Josephus. The colonnades were found in the position they occupied after their fall in the great earthquake of 529.

Chiva (Usbekistan). Excavations in the Kizyl-kum desert, which led to the discovery of the town of Toprak-kala in 1938, were resumed last summer. The walls of the palace dating from about 2,000 years have been laid bare to a depth of some 25 m. The building covered a surface of 8,000 qm; many rooms are well-preserved. Household chattels and coins have been found, further an alabaster statue of a nude woman and unique frescoes in different colours, among which a woman harper and a fragment of a female head. The investigations are to be pursued this year.

Istanbul. An archaeological expedition of the University discovered remains of a Hittite city in South Eastern Anatolia.

Jerusalem. Excavations have been resumed by the Palestine Department of Antiquities in the citadel on the western site of the present walled city of Jerusalem, near the Jaffa gate. The results are such as to change beliefs about the extension of the city of David. The first and oldest part of the wall now examined seems to date from the Hellenistic period; it, therefore, cannot be the wall of the Kings. It is also supposed that the trial of Jesus did not take place in the lower palace of Herod, the so-called Antonia, but in the upper one, and that, thus, the former opinion that Via Dolorosa led from south towards Calvary, was correct.

Recent restoration work of the Church of the Tomb of the Virgin executed by the Palestine Department of Antiquities has cleared the masonry which blocked the 12th century doorway and revealed the carved basis and a strip of the contemporary pavement. Part of an underground Byzantine cistern has been discovered beneath the courtyard of the church.

Malatya, East Anatolia. An expedition undertaken last summer in order to establish a more precise dating of Louis Delaporte's discoveries at Arslan Tepe has succeeded in collecting most important information. Pottery simultaneous with the Hittite Realm confirm the opinion that the second occupation of the site reaches back into the 2nd millenary. Many fragments of painted pottery different from the prevalent pieces and to be dated from the end of the 3rd to the beginning of the 2nd millenary belong to a civilization hitherto not found in that region. Further constructions have been laid bare beneath the « Porte des Lions »

Nablus, Palestine. Much importance is attributed to finds made by Father Roland du Vaux, director of the École archéologique française at Jerusalem, during three months of digging at El Fahra, 10 miles north east of Nablus. He believes he has discovered the remains of Thirza, ancient capital of the Israelite kingdom. Ruins of at least 20 houses dating from 5000 to 900 B. C. have been found, furthermore a jar containing a child's bones estimated to be at least 5000 years old, a tomb of 1700 B. C. containing the bones of a young man with a bronze belt by his side, a finely wrought bronze dagger, a battle-axe, and pieces of pottery. Most remarkable is a scarab seal showing a woman and typifying the god of fertility. The excavation of the whole area, which is to furnish final evidence, will last for years.

Paris. As reported to the Académie des Inscriptions, the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient undertook several expeditions during the war. Buddhist stupas were found in Tongking, and a pre-Khmer town discovered in Cochinchina. Prehistoric finds were made in Laos.

Museums

Bedford, England. A collection of Chinese porcelain and jade, metalware, glassware, pottery, and embroidery, acquired by James Macgregor Forbes during his 35 years' residence in China, has been presented to Bedford Town Council by the collector's widow.

Boston. Miss Lucy T. Aldrich has presented her collection of Japanese porcelain and prints to the Museum of Fine Arts.

Cambridge, England. The Fitzwilliam Museum, all the galleries of which are now open again with the exception of the Oriental Ceramic Room and the Greek and Roman and Ancient Egyptian Department, is showing its acquisitions made during these last years. They include the bequest of Islamic pottery and Chinese bronzes and jade carvings left to the Museum by Oscar Raphael.

Cleveland. The Museum of Art has acquired a stone head of a colossal Siamese Buddha, attributed to the Lopburi School of the early 14th century, from the Edward L. Whittmore collection.

Detroit. The Institute has received a Gupta brown sandstone relief of Buddha, likely early sixth century.

Indianapolis. The John Herron Art Institute has been presented by Mrs. James William Fesler with a winter landscape by the 15th-century Chinese painter Tai Chin, formerly in the Matsuda Collection. There is only an other known work by this artist in America.

London. For the exhibition of Indian art prepared by the Royal Academy for the winter 1947/48 an executive committee of authorities in the subject has been formed with Sir Alfred J. Munnings as chairman and Sir Richard Winstedt as vice-chairman. A similar executive committee has been set up in India with Mrs. Sarojini Naidu as chairman, and several sub-committees for the selection of works in the various branches of Indian art. Dr. Percy Brown is secretary to the main committee.

Oxford. A museum of Asiatic Art is to be annexed to the Ashmolean Museum. Dr. William Cohn has been appointed consultant of the Museum. The basis of the annex will be formed by the Sayce and Farrar collections, of which the latter is particular rich in K'ang-hsi and Yung-chêng porcelains.

Exhibitions

Berne. Some 200 Japanese wood-cuts from the 17th to the 19th centuries lent by William Boller were on view at the printroom of the Art Museum.

Boston. An exhibition entitled « Animals in Art » and organized at the Museum of Fine Arts united from own and other possession Greek, Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese and other old sculptures as well as representations in coins and seals, in enamels and textiles.

The jade collection of Mr. and Mrs. William Lawrence Keane chiefly remarkable for its white, green and yellow pieces of the Ming and Ch'ing periods is being lent for exhibition to the Museum of Fine Arts.

Chicago. The Art Institute held a loan exhibition of over 100 rare Persian, Turkish, Indian and Asia Minor carpets from museums and private collections.

Detroit. Under the title « Small Bronzes of the Ancient World » Francis W. Robinson, curator of ancient and medieval art at the Art Institute, has assembled nearly a hundred Mesopotamian, Hittite, Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan and Roman works from museums, dealers and private collectors.

London. The Oriental Ceramic Society (48, Davies Street, W. 1), founded in 1921 with George Eumorfopoulos as its first president, has raised its membership from twelve to two hundred. The Society will held annually three exhibitions of selected specimens from the collections of its members, each devoted to a different subject, which will in the course of time exemplify the whole range of Eastern ceramic wares as well as bronzes and jades. The Society began to carry through its new programme with an exhibition of a hundred pieces of Chinese blue and white Ming porcelain and some pieces of the Yüan Dynasty, all belonging to members of the society. The show was running from Nov. 1 to Dec. 21. An exhibition « 2,000 Years of Chinese Ceramic Figures » followed.

An exhibition of modern Indian artists, part of the Unesco Exhibition of Paris, was on show at India House from February 10th to March 5th. It included works by four members of the Tagore family, among whom Rabindranath Tagore. Seventy pictures by Indian children were also shown.

Paris. René Grousset organized an exhibition of Indian Painting at the Musée Cernuschi. It comprises coloured reproductions of frescoes of the caves of Ajanta and of other temples, made by the Indian artist Katchadourian in original size, further Indian miniatures from a Benares collection.

The Musée Cernuschi is preparing a comprehensive exhibition of Tibetan art to be held towards the end of this year.

The Association des artistes chinois en France had an exhibiton at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts.

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New York. Lindsay Hughes Cooper, formerly associate curator of Oriental Art at the Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, has joined the staff of the C. T. Loo Galleries.

Paris. The orientalist Jacques Bacot, who has discovered at Litang, Tibet, works of art and manuscripts, has been elected by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres a free academician in succession to General Gouraud.

Extracts from *Pallas, International Art and Archaeology News Bulletin*
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