

CHAPTER THREE

Early Excavations (pre-1914)

Nicole Chevalier

1 The Conditions of pre-World War I Excavations

The year 1842 is traditionally considered to mark the beginning of archaeological research in the Orient. In that year, Paul-Émile Botta, French consul in Mosul, commenced the first excavations in the north of what is today Iraq. At Kuyunjik, opposite Mosul, he hoped to rediscover the remains of Nineveh, the capital of the last kings of Assyria. From then on, civilizations re-emerged from the shadows one after the other, some of which were still remembered thanks to ancient authors and the Bible, while others had long been forgotten. Travel increased during the 17th and 18th centuries, and accelerated in the early 19th century, intensifying the thirst for knowledge. In the second half of the century, from the still murky histories of ancient civilizations, appeared one after the other Assyria, Phoenicia, Sumer, Persia and Elam, Babylonia, and the Hittite world. The beginning of the great excavations did not mean the end of the traveling period, although for a long time certain regions, in particular Arabia, saw no other scientific exploration.

In this conquest of the past, the role of the countries hosting these investigations was limited in the case of the Ottoman Empire and non-existent in the case of the Persian (Qajar) Empire. For a long time the research being carried out was solely the work of the French and the English, before the arrival of the Americans in the 1880s and then the Germans, who staked their claim to Mesopotamia, while the French acquired a monopoly on excavations in Persia with

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the aim of keeping their competitors at a distance. In the period leading up to World War I, with competition for influence sometimes wearing a veneer of science, archaeology found its place in a merciless cultural competition.

At a time when the discipline was still to be clearly defined, the authors of these discoveries were rarely trained archaeologists; these arrived relatively late on the scene. Most often the original excavators were scholars, passionate about epigraphy and numismatics; diplomats drawn toward ancient sites by their careers; engineers; or at best, architects. The excavations themselves were often a source of mistrust on the part of governments, involving long negotiations in order to obtain the *firmans* (letter of permission) that authorized digs and the division of discoveries. As for the regulation of antiquities, the first such law was passed in the Ottoman Empire in 1869, although it wasn't until the inter-war period (between World War I and II) that Iran took its first steps. The effect of the first Ottoman law was negligible, but a later antiquities law, promulgated in 1884 at the behest of Osman Hamdi Bey, Director of the Ottoman Imperial Museums and of antiquities, and which introduced measures that included a ban on division of discoveries, was applied, more or less, depending on the circumstances (cf. Ch. I.4).

On the ground, relationships with provincial authorities were sometimes difficult. Local populations often looked on foreign investigators with suspicion, especially when they worked near sacred sites such as Nebi Yunus, one of the mounds of Nineveh where tradition places the tomb of Jonas, or Susa, in south-western Iran, which lies close to the tomb of the prophet Daniel. Finally, expeditions in very isolated regions aroused the appetite of populations over whom the central authorities had little power, leaving the investigators to look after themselves. Reports bear witness to acts of violence by tribes, including the Anaza, Muntafiq, Beni Lam, Sagvands, Lur, Bakhtiyari, and Kurds, all attracted by the potential wealth represented by a team of explorers. These groups rapidly came to understand the lucrative interest of archaeological sites. Under pressure from the merchants of Baghdad, tribes in Iraq engaged in the pillaging of sites, such as Telloh and Nippur, sometimes not even waiting for the archaeologists to leave. In the 19th century, archaeology was often a high-risk venture.

2 Excavations in Mesopotamia: The Beginnings

In December 1842, when Paul-Émile Botta commenced excavations on the *tell* of Kuyunjik, he was a pioneer in this endeavor. Prior to this, many British travelers had investigated the Ottoman and Persian territories. In Baghdad, the residence of the political agent of the East India Company, who exercised consular functions, served as a rallying point. In 1807, the renowned Orientalist Claudius James Rich held this post and English visitors to the region were able to see sites such as Aqar Quf, Babylon, Al Uhaimir, and Birs Nimrud (Borsippa). Rich

himself made a thorough and methodical exploration of Mesopotamia, and traveled around the entire Orient, from Damascus to Bombay, with indefatigable curiosity.

Compared to the English residency, the French consulate in Baghdad, where France had few political interests, was unimpressive. It was, however, at the request of the consul in Baghdad that a second consulate was created in Mosul, to protect the sizable Christian population in the region. The creation of this consulate and the nomination of Botta, who had shown his qualities as a naturalist in Yemen (1837–9), provided France with an opportunity. For a long time, particularly after the visit of the famous German traveler Carsten Niebuhr to Mosul in 1766, the ruins on the left bank of the Tigris had been identified with the legendary city of Nineveh.

Upon arriving in Mosul, Botta started his research, encouraged by Jules Mohl, under-secretary of the Société asiatique, who was very interested in seeing decisive progress in the field of oriental antiquity. The first investigations at Kuyunjik were disappointing, and on March 20, 1843, Botta transferred his activities to Khorsabad, a few kilometers northeast of Mosul. Some days later he discovered the corner of a palace and uncovered courtyards and rooms decorated with bas-reliefs (Figure 3.1), which were unfortunately sculpted in very fragile stone. Soon after this, he was joined by the artist Eugène Flandin, who had just finished a very important mission in Persia and who, in hundreds of drawings, recorded these reliefs, which deteriorated upon contact with the air. For his part, Botta copied



Figure 3.1 The excavations of Paul-Émile Botta at Khorsabad (after Flandin 1861: 77).

and collected squeezes of all the mysterious and still-indecipherable inscriptions accompanying them. Misled by his failure at Kuyunjik, Botta believed he was uncovering the palace of Nineveh. However, the inscriptions later showed the palace to be that of Sargon II (721–705 BC) at Dur Sharrukin.

When Botta concluded his excavations in October 1844, so many discoveries had been made that it was impossible to send everything to France. The weight of the bas-reliefs, in particular – the monolithic bulls alone weighed close to 30 tons – made transport as far as the Tigris difficult. After being dragged on chariots by hundreds of men, the collection was lowered onto rafts supported by inflated sheepskins and transported to Basra. On May 1, 1847, the first Assyrian museum in Europe was inaugurated by the French king Louis-Philippe at the Louvre in Paris. However, despite the brilliant results published in Botta and Flandin's five volumes of *Monument de Ninive* (1849–50), France stopped its research at Nineveh for a time, and Botta, appointed consul in Jerusalem in 1848, never had the opportunity to return to the banks of the Tigris.

Botta's departure and the suspension of the consulate put an end to the first period of French research. Aware that archaeology was their only means of distinguishing themselves, some consular agents undertook their own research, particularly Simon Rouet, who discovered the reliefs of Bavian and Maltaï. However, in spite of Botta's warnings, the French stopped their investigations, leaving the way clear for the English. Botta's fears were justified: a young traveler, Austen Henry Layard, had already visited the *tells* of Assyria, and the great Orientalist, Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, was traveling in Persia with an eye for inscriptions. When, in January 1852, after a six-year hiatus, Victor Place took over the post of consul in Mosul, the English were already at work. For a decade, from November 1845, to summer 1855, Layard and William Kennett Loftus, a British geologist, assisted by Hormuzd Rassam and partially instructed by Rawlinson, explored the *tells* of Assyria with little interruption.

The second period of French excavations at Khorsabad commenced with Victor Place. This time, things looked promising: unlike the Scientific and Artistic Expedition to Mesopotamia and Media led by ex-consul Fulgence Fresnel and assisted by the epigraphist Jules Oppert and architect Félix Thomas, which was languishing in Babylon at the time, the expedition led by Place aroused the enthusiasm of Orientalists. And unlike Botta, who dedicated himself to the copying and study of inscriptions, Place was passionate about architecture and hoped to uncover the palace of Sargon in its entirety. Rather than simply collecting attractive sculpture, he aimed to make a first study of Assyrian architecture. A lack of other monuments for comparison made this difficult, but he was aided by Thomas, who contributed to the success of the mission through the acuteness of his observations and the boldness of his reconstructions. Finally, to imbue his discoveries with "mathematical precision," Place recorded his excavations photographically. To the 14 rooms discovered by Botta, Place added 186 more, uncovering an impressive palatial complex.

Place spared no effort to give France an Assyrian collection without equal in Europe. But after success came failure. On May 21, 1855, the boats transporting the collection down the Tigris were attacked by tribes and sank in the Shatt al-Arab. Most of the cases containing Place's discoveries at Khorsabad and those of Fresnel at Babylon were lost downstream from Qurna, putting an end to French exploration in Assyria. However, although Place was unable to deliver this extraordinary material to the Louvre, the results of his research were published in *Ninive et l'Assyrie* (1867–70). This groundbreaking work is still of great use today for the study of Assyrian palace architecture.

If the French can claim the first discoveries in Assyria, it was the English who gave this research its fullest expression. The arrival of the English in Assyria was led by Layard, who until then had only made surface explorations. In 1840 he stopped in Mosul before heading on to Persia, where he stayed with the Bakhti-yari tribe. Then, on returning to Mosul, he met Botta, who was beginning his excavations. From this meeting was born his project to undertake excavations, which he discussed with Sir Stratford Canning, the English ambassador. Canning was all the more interested in helping Layard because the knowledge of territorial questions that he had acquired during his stay in Persia could be best employed to defend English interests. Not only did Canning smooth the way with the Ottoman government in order to obtain a *firman*, he also subsidized the early work with funding relayed by the British Museum.

Botta had barely left Mosul when, in November 1845, Layard started work at Nimrud (biblical Calah) and launched a first excavation which continued until June 1847, whereupon he returned to London to prepare a publication of his discoveries (Layard 1849a, 1849b, 1853a, 1953b). He left behind his assistant, Hormuzd Rassam, brother of the English vice-consul in Mosul, and Henry James Ross to continue the work. On October 1, 1849, he returned for another expedition that lasted until April 1851.

For financial reasons, the French focused their efforts on Khorsabad, although, at the request of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Place attempted excavations at Nebi Yunus and at Qalat Sherqat (Assur). The English, on the other hand, diversified their work. Although Layard mostly worked at Nimrud, and to a lesser extent at Kuyunjik (Figure 3.2), particularly in Sennacherib's (704–681 BC) palace, from the first exploration onwards he explored Qalat Sherqat and made numerous surveys. Unlike Botta and Place at Khorsabad, Layard worked at sites where more than one Assyrian king had built his palace. This meant that the size and diversity of the discoveries made by Layard exceeded those made by the French. Apart from the reliefs, which were remarkable both for their number and variety, alabaster vases, bronze objects, glass, ivory, and other objects made up a magnificent collection without equal in the Louvre. In addition, part of the library of Assurbanipal (668–627 BC) was also found at Kuyunjik. The scale of these discoveries explains the reaction of the French minister Léon Faucher, who, on his return from London in 1851, pushed through

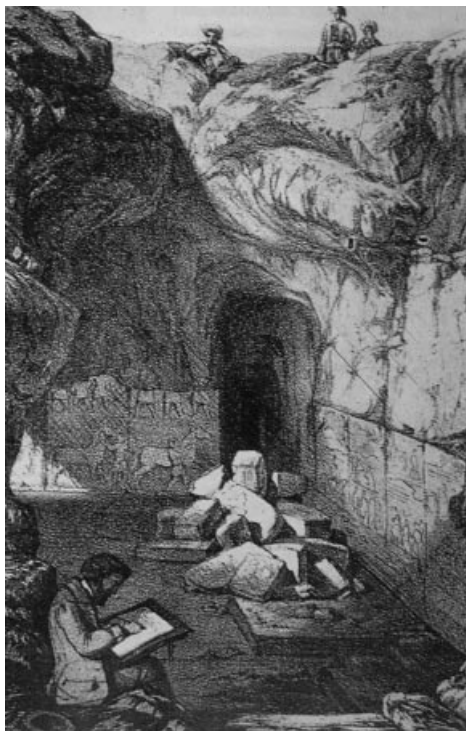


Figure 3.2 “Entrance passage, Kouyunjik” (after Layard 1853b: 340, opposite).

parliament the approval for finance to recommence excavations at Khorsabad and to send a mission to Mesopotamia and Media.

The fact that funding was often modest may explain the rushed excavation technique that privileged the use of trenches and tunnels in order to uncover the bases of the walls where the excavators hoped to find reliefs. This worsened when Rassam took charge of the work, which became a hunt for bas-reliefs. However, in the context of the time, Layard’s research was judged favorably, particularly by Place, who visited his sites on several occasions in order to learn about his excavation techniques.

In April 1851, Layard returned to England, putting an end to his archaeological activities in order to begin a brilliant diplomatic career, and the trustees of the British Museum gave Rawlinson the responsibility of coordinating research in Mesopotamia. Until this point, the French and the English had worked successively on the Mesopotamian sites. After Layard’s departure, the two groups found themselves face to face. In this new context, Rawlinson not only had to direct Rassam’s research – and later that of Loftus and Taylor – but also to maintain friendly relations with the French missions to Khorsabad and Babylon, while defending England’s archaeological interests.

Despite his good will, the situation in Assyria was contested. On the one hand, Rassam finally drove Place away from Qalat Sherqat, where the latter had temporarily interrupted surveying. On the other hand, Rassam did not respect the agreement which had been made between Rawlinson and Place concerning a division of the exploration of Kuyunjik. In December 1853, Rassam discreetly commenced excavations in the zone reserved for France. Through his daring, he discovered the palace of Assurbanipal, reliefs of hunting scenes, and a considerable number of tablets, constituting part of Assurbanipal's library. After Rassam's departure in March 1854, Loftus and his assistant William Boutcher, who had learned their trade in southern Mesopotamia, recommenced the excavations. Loftus's methodological effort was laudable, and he went to great lengths to describe the architecture in detail, particularly the palace of Assurbanipal.

Although these excavations were still bearing fruit, work came to an end in the middle of 1855, leaving the work unfinished. Rawlinson's return to London, a lack of funding, and the onset of the Crimean War may have all played a part in this decision. For the next half-century, Assyria was no longer the scene of great excavations, and British excavators returned to the area very rarely. However, it was not without success that George Smith traveled to Nineveh in 1873 to recover missing parts of the Assyrian story of the Flood and, between 1878 and 1882, Rassam returned to the site of his old successes.

3 Phoenicia

In 1860, following the massacre of the Christians of Lebanon by the Druze, France sent an expeditionary force of 6,000 men. It was in these exceptional circumstances that Napoleon III decided to attach an archaeological mission to the military force, part of a long-established tradition. The archaeological team was led by the renowned Orientalist Ernest Renan, and it was these political events that provided the young scholar with an opportunity to fulfill a dream. In 1857 Renan had emphasized the importance of exploring Phoenicia to the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Several scholars, including the Duke of Luynes, who had provided France with the inscribed sarcophagus of Eshmunazar, king of Sidon, had already visited the land. The discovery of the sarcophagus suggested that a scientific expedition would lead to the discovery of other Semitic texts, like those found in Cyprus, Naples, and North Africa.

After leaving France on October 14, 1860, Renan had barely a year to accomplish his mission with the assistance of the army and, in his Sidon excavations, Dr Charles Gaillardot, who resided in Syria. Renan explored the sites of Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, Umm el-Amad, Ruad, Tartus, and Amrit. At the end of April he was in Palestine and spent a month traveling in Galilee and Judah. However, in August 1861, when the French troops received the order to leave the country, Renan interrupted his work and focused on the transport of his discoveries.

Although the Lebanese part of his mission was more or less accomplished, the second part, on Cyprus, remained to be undertaken; but sickness and the brutal death of his sister Henriette, who accompanied him, forced him to return to France. The realization of Renan's Cypriot program was left to Melchior de Vogüé, William Henry Waddington, and Edmond Duthoit.

Of all the sites explored, it was at Sidon that the research went furthest, thanks to the work of Gaillardot, who continued excavations after the departure of the mission. Afterwards, apart from the haphazard activities of a family of French consular agents, work at Sidon was conducted by Turkish officials: Osman Hamdi Bey and, later, Theodor Macridi Bey, Director and Curator, respectively, of the Ottoman Imperial Museums, from 1887 onwards. It was only in 1914 that Georges Contenau resumed the work commenced by Renan.

Renan was working in a completely new field. With this mission he literally created the new discipline of Phoenician archaeology from the ground up. He elaborated it in a great publication, the *Mission de Phénicie* (1864 and 1874), which remained the discipline's fundamental text for more than 50 years. Finally, on his return to France, he dedicated himself particularly to Semitic epigraphy. In 1867, with three fellow members of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, he persuaded the Académie to sponsor the Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum (CIS) project, which led to research into Semitic texts written in alphabetic scripts. As a result, the study of the Phoenician, Nabataean, Palmyrene, and South Arabian languages and their texts progressed rapidly.

4 Arabia

In contrast to other parts of the Ottoman Empire, research in Arabia was long limited to research trips and the copying of inscriptions. Although some Orientalists doubted that important archaeological remains were to be found there, the quest for inscriptions was encouraged, particularly after the establishment of the CIS project. At the time of the project's creation, however, epigraphic material from Arabia was still rare.

While visiting Yemen as part of the mission sent in 1762 by King Frederick V of Denmark, Carsten Niebuhr did indeed report the presence of inscriptions. But it was only in 1810 that Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, a German teacher, and again in 1834 that James Raymond Wellsted, a British officer on the brig *Palinurus*, made the first copies of South Arabian inscriptions, one at Zafar (the capital of Himyar), the other at Qani', an incense port on the Hadramaut coast. Finally, in 1843, at the instigation of Fresnel, then French consul in Jiddah, a pharmacist in the service of Mohammed Ali and later of the Imam of Sana'a, named Thomas Joseph Arnaud, brought back numerous inscriptions from Marib, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Saba, and Sirwah. The scientific impact was such that, in 1847, the French Ministry of Public Instruction entrusted Arnaud with an

epigraphic expedition, the activities of which were severely compromised by increasing unrest in the region. Nevertheless, Arnaud's explorations helped to pave the way for work by the Frenchman Joseph Halévy and the Austrian scholar Eduard Glaser some years later.

The CIS was behind Halévy's epigraphic mission in 1869. From that dangerous expedition Halévy brought back not only a useful map of northeastern Yemen and some antiquities, but also, above all, copies of 685 inscriptions from at least 37 sites. He was followed by Eduard Glaser, who organized four expeditions to Yemen between 1882 and 1895, the first of which was conducted under the auspices of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Having long waited in Sana'a for the Ottoman Sultan's *firman*, he began traveling in the northeast of Yemen and in the Zafar area at the end of 1883. At the conclusion of this expedition, Glaser provided the Académie with 276 copies and squeezes published in the CIS and some antiquities which, along with those collected by Halévy, were amongst the first ancient South Arabian objects to reach Europe. During his later expeditions – in 1887 he was financed by the Prussian Academy – he visited the region of Aden and reached Marib, but did not succeed in entering the Jawf. Like Halévy, who chose to keep this quiet, he had to resign himself to having the inscriptions copied by local people. His results were impressive, as attested by both his epigraphic work – he was a pioneer of South Arabian epigraphy – and his journal, which became a reference work for the geography and ethnography of Yemen. The Austrian Academy made a further venture into Yemen in 1898 with the expedition of David Heinrich Müller and Carlo de Landberg, who tried in vain to reach Shabwa, the capital of Hadhramawt.

In 1876–8, the English Orientalist Charles Montagu Doughty became the first scholar to explore northwestern Arabia. He visited the Nabataean site of Meda'in Saleh and the oasis of Tayma, where the Babylonian ruler Nabonidus (555–539 BC) moved his official residence (Ch. II.43), and collected more inscriptions. There was also Charles Auguste Huber, who entered Arabia for the first time in 1880 and explored part of the region between Tayma and al-'Ula, in the company of the German Julius Euting. In 1883, Huber returned for another expedition, during which he was murdered. However, the antiquities which he was transporting from Tayma, as well as his papers, were retrieved by Félix de Lostalot, the French vice-consul in Jiddah. Finally, in the run-up to World War I, from 1907 to 1910, it was the turn of Fathers Antonin Jaussen and Raphaël Savignac of the École biblique in Jerusalem, who made the first detailed study of Mada'in Saleh, Tayma, al-'Ula, and other sites, and of the Austrian Orientalist Alois Musil, who conducted a series of surveys in northern Arabia between 1908 and 1915.

Following Rawlinson's return to London in 1855 research in Assyria was suspended for a time, but there was no shortage of work in Europe, where scholars studied the documents brought back to Paris and London. In many ways, the first research concerning Bahrain was linked to discoveries made in Mesopotamia, particularly those of Khorsabad, including inscriptions mentioning the name of

a certain Uperi, king of the land of Dilmun. The location of this mysterious land was long a subject of speculation, even if, in 1880, Jules Oppert identified it correctly with the island of Bahrain, based on the works of ancient authors and the inscriptions of Khorsabad. Rawlinson came to the same conclusion a few months later, on the basis of a cuneiform inscription found on the island of Bahrain by Captain E.L. Durand. On this occasion Durand compiled an inventory of the island's antiquities and described the mysterious tumuli fields where he made a few quick excavations. After him, the Englishmen Theodore Bent and Francis Beville Prideaux, a colonel in the Imperial government of India, and, to a lesser extent, the Frenchman André Jouannin, applied themselves one after the other to solving the mystery of the Bahrain tumuli and the identity of Dilmun.

5 Excavations in Mesopotamia: The Second Period

It was the French representative at Mosul who in 1842 had successfully inaugurated the resurrection of the palaces and temples of Assyria; and it was another French representative at Basra who thirty-five years later made a no less far-reaching discovery in the mounds of Chaldea, which opened the second great period in the history of Assyrian and Babylonian exploration – the period of methodical excavations in the ruins of Babylonia proper. (Hilprecht 1903: 216)

It was in these terms that in 1903 Hermann V. Hilprecht, the excavator of Nippur, hailed the role of the French in Mesopotamia and particularly that of Ernest Chocquin de Sarzec, who, beginning in 1877, had led several campaigns of excavation at Telloh (ancient Girsu) in southern Iraq (Figure 3.3). He had thus contributed to the first recognition of the Sumerian civilization, the existence of which had been predicted by certain philologists but never confirmed archaeologically.

The circumstances surrounding the beginnings of this work are unclear. What is certain is that Sarzec showed perspicacity in understanding the importance of the site, and speed in beginning excavations with his own funds. In 1878, on his return to France, he submitted his findings to the Orientalist William Henry Waddington, then French Minister of Foreign Affairs, who in turn showed them to Léon Heuzey, curator at the Louvre. In 1881 Sarzec's collection, acquired by the French state, constituted one of the gems of the newly created department of Near Eastern Antiquities.

Despite the difficulties he experience – renewal of the long-refused *firman*, rebellious tribes, and so on – Sarzec, without archaeological training and guided from Paris by Heuzey, who had never visited the site, led 11 campaigns, uncovering many important finds, including thousands of tablets, dating from the period of the 1st Dynasty of Lagash (c.2600–2450 BC) to the end of the Neo-Sumerian era (c. 2000 BC). It was only in 1900 that, exhausted by the unhealthy climate



Figure 3.3 The brick pillars of Gudea at Telloh (after Sarzec 1884–1912: Pl. 52.2).

of the marshes of southern Iraq, Sarzec completed his final campaign of excavations at Telloh, before dying the next year. However, the exploration of Telloh continued for a time, from 1903 to 1909, under the energetic leadership of Captain Gaston Cros, whose soldierly qualities and experience acquired during several geographical expeditions in the Sahara allowed him to continue research, despite the hostile climate created by the revolt of the Muntafiq Arabs.

In fact, Sarzec was not the first to have explored southern Mesopotamia. In 1849, Loftus, for whom England created an Exploration Fund, visited and excavated Warka (Uruk), Tell al-Muqqayar (Ur), Senkereh (Larsa) and other sites. And John George Taylor, English consul at Basra, undertook soundings in the step-tower (*ziggurat*) of Tell al-Muqqayar and explored the surrounding area in 1854 at Rawlinson's request. The results, however, were considered disappointing, so the arrival in Paris of news of Sarzac's discovery of the Sumerian civilization was met with enthusiasm and, as stressed by Hilprecht, launched the second period of excavations in Mesopotamia. But while only the French and English had been involved during the first period of excavation, from the 1880s onwards they had to reckon with the presence of American and German scholars as well.

In 1884, following a meeting of the American Oriental Society at which it was decided that America must follow the example of England and France, Catherine Wolfe financed an expedition which, for the first few months of 1885, undertook

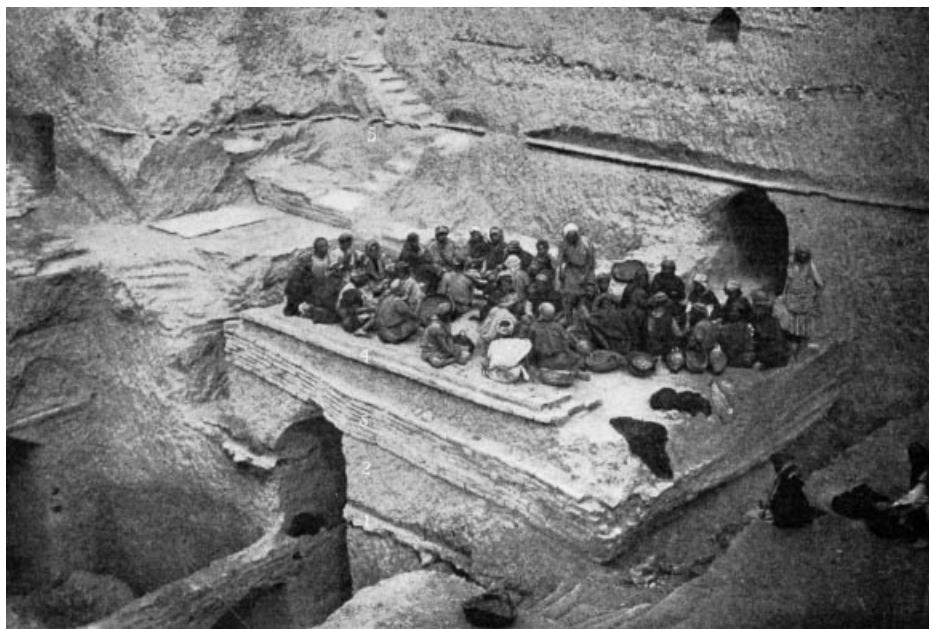


Figure 3.4 “Excavated section of the southeastern court of the Ziggurat in Nippur” (after Hilprecht 1903: 377, opposite).

a methodical exploration of archaeological sites between Baghdad and al-Muqqayar. However, a mission was not established immediately, and it was only in 1888 that the Babylonian Exploration Fund was created, giving the Americans the financial means to establish themselves at Niffar (ancient Nippur). From 1888 to 1900 four campaigns were undertaken by the University of Pennsylvania, led first by John P. Peters, then by John H. Haynes, and finally by Herman V. Hilprecht (Figure 3.4), who also worked briefly at Fara (ancient Shuruppak) and Abu Hatab (ancient Kissura). At Niffar, not only did the expedition uncover a palace, tombs, and the building complex of the temple of Enlil, it also made important epigraphic discoveries, dating to a variety of periods. However, despite significant financial resources, the excavators failed to obtain the results they had hoped for, not only because of a lack of experience but also because of internal strife within the expedition.

In the final years leading up to World War I, only the Germans were fully active. After the premature closure of the Nippur excavations, the American presence continued for a time thanks to the excavations of Bismaya (ancient Adab), opened in 1903 by Edgar J. Banks and financed by the Oriental Exploration Fund of the University of Chicago. This work was terminated, however, at the end of 1904. For their part, the English, who from 1878 to 1882 with Rassam and from 1888 to 1891 with Ernest A. Wallis Budge had not only worked on

their old Assyrian sites, but also on other sites in Assyria and Babylonia – Balawat, Babylon, Nebi Yunus, Tell Daillam, Der, Birs Nimrud, Abu Habbah, and Tell Ibrahim, amongst others – left Mesopotamia permanently in 1905, after a brief return under the aegis of the British Museum to Kuyunjik, where the final pre-war excavations were led by L.W. King and R. Campbell Thompson. As for the French, after abandoning their excavations at Sippar, begun in 1894 by Father Vincent Scheil in the name of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, they were unable to find a successor to Gaston Cros to continue the work at Telloh. In 1912 there remained only the modest excavations at Al Uhaimir (ancient Kish), led by the Abbé Henri de Genouillac, which were terminated after a single season.

Although late in arriving, the Germans were remarkably active in Mesopotamia from 1899 onwards. Until then, excavations had been led by more or less skilled amateurs and Orientalists without any particular archaeological knowledge, but, with the arrival of the Germans, Mesopotamian research became more professional.

Their first work commenced in 1887. On this occasion, Dr Bruno Moritz, with the assistance of Robert Koldewey, opened several trenches near Telloh, on the *tells* of Surghul and of al-Hiba, pre-empting the French, who were unable at the time to obtain authorization from the Ottoman government to recommence their excavations and who were worried that the Germans would usurp their place at Telloh. However, this first experience in southern Iraq did not immediately lead to further investigations. Already very active at the classical sites on the coast of Asia Minor, Germany was seemingly occupied in the pre-classical field by its excavations at Zincirli in Syria. However, after a trip to Mesopotamia (1896–8) by Eduard Sachau, professor of Oriental languages at the University of Berlin, a substantial mission to Babylon was organized in 1899 under the direction of Koldewey.

Unlike earlier excavators, Koldewey was a professional archaeologist. Apart from his training in both architecture and archaeology in Berlin and Munich, he had great practical experience, having worked at Assos, on Lesbos, and in Italy, Sicily, and Syria. As for Mesopotamia, in addition to his participation in the Moritz mission, he had accompanied Sachau on his trip and knew Babylon. Koldewey's work was to revolutionize Mesopotamian archaeology, as it was with him that the first methodological research was conducted. It was during the Moritz mission that he perfected his technique for the excavation of mudbrick architecture. He was also able to determine the existence of foundation trenches by observing differences in the color of the soil, a hitherto unknown technique. On his visit to Babylon in 1900, the French archaeologist Jacques de Morgan did not hide his admiration: "A distinguished architect and archaeologist, Koldewey leads the work, with the aim of finding the Babylonian fortifications. German militarism goes as far as archaeology. We have no reason to complain, as this well-led research brings results which we would surely not have thought to search for" (de Morgan 1902: 138).

With regular, if not generous, financial means provided by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society, or DOG) – created in Berlin in 1898 under the patronage of the German Emperor Wilhelm II – and with a large team, the Babylon mission constituted a base which allowed the Germans to expand, first toward the north where, in 1903, the excavations of Assur began under the direction of Walter Andrae, previously an architect at Babylon. The Germans then headed south, to Warka (ancient Uruk) where, following a number of surveys carried out in 1902 and 1903 by Koldewey and Andrae, Julius Jordan, also a Babylon veteran, began excavations in 1912. On this occasion, a preliminary examination was performed not only Warka, but also of Birs Nimrud (Borsippa), Fara, Abu-Hatab, where some excavations were carried out, Larsa, Id, Jokha (Umma), Hammam, Bismaya, where the Americans had established a base for a brief exploration, and elsewhere. The only German mission not affiliated with the Babylon team and the DOG was that of Ernst Herzfeld at the Islamic city of Samarra. This was supported by the German government and various institutions from 1912 to 1914. And thus Mesopotamia became a center for German research in the Near East in the lead-up to World War I. It was not the only one, however. German archaeologists were also very active in Palestine.

6 Palestine

For centuries, European travelers had taken the Palestine route, and the period preceding the 19th century had witnessed an abundance of explorations and publications. But it was in the middle of the century that the first scientific studies began, with some scholars actively exploring the sites of the Holy Land. From 1850 to 1851, and again in 1863, Félicien de Saulcy carried out several excavations and surveys. Although the scientific merit of his work may be contested, he was a pioneer in Palestinian archaeology thanks to his excavation of the so-called “tombs of the kings” near Jerusalem. Above all, in 1868, the great French Orientalist Charles Clermont-Ganneau, at the time translator and First Secretary of the French consulate in Jerusalem, discovered the stele of Mesha, king of Moab. From then on, Palestine became Clermont-Ganneau’s chosen domain, and he even explored it under the aegis of the British Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), from 1873 to 1874.

Beginning in 1865, when the PEF was created in London, Palestine became an arena of British and American scientific predominance, marked by the work of the English Egyptologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie, the American Frederick Jones Bliss, and the Irish scholar Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister. In 1890 the arrival of Petrie, who had acquired significant experience as an excavator on numerous sites in Egypt, was a turning point for research in the region. At Tell el-Hesi he conducted an important stratigraphic excavation and undertook a meticulous study of the ceramics. Later, Bliss, Petrie’s successor at Tell el-Hesi,

until 1900 – when he and the PEF went their separate ways – both explored the Ophel in Jerusalem, in collaboration with architect Dickie Archibald, and, with Macalister's assistance, continued the exploration of sites in southern Judah, including Tell Zakariya (Azekah), Tell el-Safi, Tell el-Judeideh, and Tell Sandahanna (Mareshah). After becoming head of the PEF, Macalister excavated Gezer, originally identified by Clermont-Ganneau in 1871, from 1902 to 1909.

At the turn of the century, improvement in Germany's political relations with Austria on the one hand and Turkey on the other, along with the debate in Germany about the historicity of biblical narratives – the so-called *Bibel und Babel* question – spawned the excavations in Palestine so desired by German and Austrian scholars. As in Mesopotamia, the German presence made itself felt, but here it had a less hegemonic character. Thus, the geographical/topographic description of the Holy Land, commenced by the English under the direction of Captain C.R. Conder and Lord H.H. Kitchener, then a lieutenant, was completed in the regions to the east of the Jordan river by the Germans. In particular, the engineer and archaeologist Gottlieb Schumacher, while preparing the construction of the Damascus-Haifa railway, provided the first maps and detailed descriptions of archaeological sites in the Hauran, the Golan Heights and the district of Ajlun.

Thanks to financial support from a number of sources – the Imperial Academy of Vienna, the Austrian Ministry for Public Instruction, the Deutsche Palästina Verein (German Palestine Society, DPV) and the DOG – German and Austrian scholars embarked on some ambitious projects. Beginning in 1901 and continuing until 1904, the Austrians, represented by Ernst Sellin, a professor at the University of Vienna, with the assistance of Schumacher, made significant surveys at Tell Balatah (Shechem) and Tell Tannek. Finally, from 1907 to 1909, Sellin, along with Carl Watzinger, commenced work at Jericho (Figure 3.5), in a joint mission with the Germans who, for their part, excavated Tell el-Mutesellim (ancient Megiddo) under the direction of Schumacher, from 1903 to 1905, supported not only by the DPV, but also by the DOG and Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Nor were the Americans inactive. In 1908 a mission from Harvard University was initiated at Sebaste. Although the excavations were originally led by Schumacher, in 1909–10, it was the great Egyptologist George Andrew Reisner and the Semitist David Gordon Lyon, with the assistance of the architect Clarence Stanley Fisher, who explored ancient Samaria. Only the French held back, and the country's archaeological presence in the region would have been negligible in the run-up to the war were it not for the efforts of the Dominicans of the École biblique in Jerusalem.

7 Anatolia and Northern Syria: The Search for the Hittites

At the start of the 20th century, one civilization remained shrouded in mystery: the Hittites, whose realm extended from central Anatolia to northern Syria. The



Figure 3.5 The northwest tower of the EB III city walls at Jericho, excavated (after Sellin and Watzinger 1913: Pl. 6a).

period of the great explorations, which followed that of the reconnaissance trips with the first descriptions of monuments made in 1834 by the Frenchman Charles Texier and the first pictures made in 1860 during the mission of Georges Perrot in Galatia and Bithynia, commenced tentatively between 1893 and 1894 with Ernest Chantre. In the Hittite heartland, Chantre undertook the first surveys at Boğazköy, Yazilikaya, Alaça Höyük, and Kara Höyük. However, at the end of the 19th century, although research in this field intensified, it was mainly due to the efforts of the English and Germans.

In 1888 the Germans, backed by the German Orient-Comité, opened their first great pre-classical excavations in northern Syria at Zincirli (ancient Sam'al), capital of a small Aramaean kingdom, the indigenous population of which was similar to the Hittites. Carl Humann, Felix von Luschan, and Robert Koldewey continued working there until 1902. But it was in 1906, while undertaking large-scale excavations at Boğazköy, that Hugo Winckler, on behalf of the DOG, and Theodor Macridi Bey, representing the Ottoman Imperial Museums – he also excavated the neighboring site of Alaça Höyük – revealed the site of Hattusha, ancient capital of the Hittite empire, making significant architectural and epigraphic discoveries. English scholars too, like William Mitchell Ramsay, William B.A. Wright, and Archibald H. Sayce, made important contributions to the field



Figure 3.6 The Lion Gate of Boğazköy during the excavations of 1907 (after Garstang, 1910: Pl. 60).

between 1880 and 1895. In 1907 and 1911 the Liverpool Expedition led by John Garstang (Figure 3.6) uncovered the remains of a palace and fortifications at Sakçegözü, near Zincirli. As for the mission organized in Anatolia by Cornell University (1906–7), its exploration of the regions of Ankara and Konya resulted in the collection of a large number of documents from the Hittite domain.

Finally, on the eve of war, the English and the Germans met along the Berlin–Baghdad railway (*Bagdadbahn*), where they contributed to the resurrection of the Aramaean and Neo-Hittite cities of northern Syria. In 1899, Baron Max von Oppenheim, diplomat and archaeologist, camping at less than 2 kilometers from the railway line, commenced the excavations of Tell Halaf (Guzana), to which he returned from 1911 to 1913 with a sizeable team, including the architect Felix Langenegger and Karl Müller, students of Koldewey. In 1911, David George Hogarth recommenced the excavations of Jerablus (Karkamish), a site known for some time by travelers and briefly explored in 1879 by Patrick Henderson, British Consul in Aleppo, under the aegis of the British Museum. Direction of the excavations passed quickly to R. Campbell Thompson, then to C. Leonard Woolley, assisted by Thomas Edward Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), who closed the excavations in the spring of 1914. Thirty years later André Parrot wrote of these two missions:

Although the Andrae expedition explored Assur, two other sites opened almost simultaneously, further west, one at Tell Halaf, at the Khabur springs, the other at Karkamish on the bank of the Euphrates. It is not without interest to point out that political preoccupations were clearly not uninvolved in the choice of these two sites, both near to the *Bagdadbahn*, then under construction. The English and the Germans both had a particular interest in the creation of this modern long-distance rail-link toward the Persian Gulf and India. It was no surprise at all therefore to find, in these truly strategic positions, Max Freiherr von Oppenheim and T.E. Lawrence. (Parrot 1946: 234–5)

8 Research in the Persian Empire

Travels on Persian soil, as in the Ottoman Empire, increased dramatically in the early 19th century. Here the English were very active, as political conditions were favorable to them. The failure of the mission of General Gardane, sent in 1807 by Napoleon I to meet Fath Ali Shah, cleared the way for England's political agents, some of whom were interested in antiquities. At a time when excavations were beginning in Assyria, Rawlinson had been engaged since 1836 in copying and deciphering the trilingual rock inscription of Darius I at Bisotun, and Layard was visiting the Bakhtiyari tribe.

The French returned to Persia only briefly. First came the engineer Charles Texier (in 1838), followed by the architect Pascal Coste and the painter Eugène Flandin (in 1839–41), who accompanied the diplomatic mission of the Count of Sercey. While excavations commenced in Assyria in 1842, the time for Persia was yet to come, even if Flandin and Coste stayed at Persepolis for two months, where they undertook a great number of soundings in order to better understand the architecture there. Finally, if at this date the archaeological remains of Fars were reasonably well known, Susa, which was isolated in the remote province of Khuzestan, remained practically unknown.

The English – Rawlinson and Layard, to name but two – were the first to visit the ruins of Susa, and the first to explore them. In 1851, as part of the British commission to settle border disputes between the Ottoman Empire and Persia, William Kennett Loftus made a first reconnaissance of the site in the company of Colonel W.F. Williams. From 1853 to 1854, Loftus conducted excavations there and uncovered a building with columns – the *apadana* – constructed by Darius I (522–486 BC) and rebuilt by Artaxerxes II (404–359 BC). In his *Travels and Researches in Chaldaea and Susiana* (1857), Loftus published a plan of the site and the palace with interesting commentary. However, these excavations were prematurely interrupted. On the one hand, Loftus was the victim of the hostility of the local population, who were alarmed by research near the tomb that was said to contain the remains of the prophet Daniel. On the other, Rawlinson, who was also supervising the excavations at Susa, seemed to be disappointed by the results. And thus Loftus left Susiana to continue excavations in Assyria. It was

only 30 years later that large-scale work restarted on Persian territory, this time at the initiative of the French. In the meantime, Franz Stolze, who, in 1874, joined a German astronomical mission, visited a number of sites in Fars, including Pasargadae and Persepolis, in the company of Friedrich Carl Andreas, producing an important volume with numerous photographic plates.

Marcel and Jane Dieulafoy were important French travelers in Susiana. Dieulafoy, an engineer of the French office of roads and bridges, was passionate about oriental art and its links to the Occident. In 1881 he left for Persia to study, among other things, the remains of the Sasanians. His wife Jane became both photographer and chronicler of the expedition and her account of their expedition (Dieulafoy 1887), launched her career as a writer. During his visit to Susa, Marcel Dieulafoy recognized the importance of the site. On returning to Paris, he worked to obtain funding from France and permission from Persia to begin excavations at Susa. Before leaving, he wrote *L'Art antique de la Perse* (1884–9) in which he laid out the results of his first visit to Persia.

From 1884 to 1886, two campaigns of excavations were undertaken at Susa, with significant difficulties, as told by Jane Dieulafoy (1888). During the first campaign, Marcel led work across the entire site before concentrating in the second campaign, because of a lack of funds and time, on the *tell* of the Apadana, where Loftus had previously worked. Despite difficult working conditions and the shortness of time, the results were spectacular. The remains of the palace of the Persian kings – including the monumental capital of an Achaemenid column and parts of the glazed relief brick panel of the guards – were sent to Paris, where they constituted the centerpiece of the Susa collections in the Louvre. In 1893 Marcel Dieulafoy published *L'Acropole de Suse*, and although his conclusions inspire little confidence, his qualities as a traveler earned him great scientific renown. But even though Dieulafoy had attracted the attention of the scholarly world to Susa, it was Jacques de Morgan – geologist, prehistorian, linguist, and numismatist, and passionate about natural history – who demonstrated its full scientific importance, beginning in 1897.

De Morgan is surely the greatest French explorer of Persia, having carried out research from the banks of the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. A long stay in Armenia, where he worked as a mining engineer, allowed him to indulge his passion for archaeological research, publishing the results in his *Mission scientifique au Caucase* (1889). From 1889 to 1891 he undertook a major geographical, geological, archaeological, ethnographic, and linguistic mission, exploring the regions of the Caspian, Kurdistan, and Luristan, and finishing at Susa. Published in his *Mission scientifique en Perse* (1894–1905), the results were considerable.

De Morgan not only realized Susa's scientific importance, he also collected information for the French legation in Tehran aimed at reserving the site for French researchers, despite the blunders of the Dieulafoy mission. Finally, after 10 years of protracted negotiations, in 1895 Nasr ed-Din Shah granted France a monopoly on excavation throughout Persia. In 1900, the agreement was



Figure 3.7 The Apadana and château at Susa (Archives du département des antiquités orientales, Louvre Museum, 2694).

replaced by a new treaty, signed by Mozzaffer ed-Din Shah on his visit to Paris, confirming the monopoly and conceding to France all discoveries made in Susiana. It was in this context that the *Délégation Scientifique Française en Perse* (DSP) was created in 1897. De Morgan, then Director of the Antiquities in Egypt (1892–7), resigned his post and became Director of the *Délégation*.

In de Morgan's view, Susa had to be the Delegation's center of activity (Figure 3.7). Like Dieulafoy, he had been impressed by the site from his first visit, but, unlike his predecessor it was less the Achaemenid Persian remains that interested him than the "lost story of Elam." In addition, at the base of the Acropolis, the presence of flaked stone tools – which he attributed to the prehistoric period – led him to hope that at Susa he might find clues to the origins of Egyptian civilization. Outside Susa, de Morgan hoped to extend the activities of the Delegation across Persia, and thus he organized several archaeological trips and various scientific surveys. In 1901 and 1911 he traveled through the Talesh region near the southwest coast of the Caspian Sea, while from 1902 to 1903 Joseph-Étienne Gautier and Georges Lampre explored, to the northwest of Susa, the *tells* of the Deh Luran plain, such as Tepe Musiyan. Soon, however, de Morgan dedicated all his efforts to the investigation of Susa.

Thanks to the Susa excavations, the scientific contribution of de Morgan and his colleagues – in particular Father Scheil for the texts – was considerable. Not only was the Elamite civilization finally revealed but, beginning already in the first excavation, important Babylonian monuments from various periods were discovered – like the stele bearing the famous law code of Hammurabi – that had been seized as booty in Mesopotamia during campaigns by Elamite kings in the 12th century BC (Ch. I.2). However, these results were not sufficient. Controversial both in his management of the Delegation and in his scientific decisions, and tired by many years in the Orient, de Morgan resigned in October 1912, bringing an end to the DSP.

For the 15 years of the DSP, de Morgan had been unable to obtain funding commensurate with the privileged concession obtained by the French, and thus he had concentrated his resources at Susa. Yet, by doing so and by virtually ignoring the rest of the country, France accentuated the unfairness of a contract which excluded foreign researchers from Persia, even if, in 1905, the German scholar Ernst Herzfeld was able to visit Pasargadae, prior to the start of the excavations which he undertook after the war. Following de Morgan's resignation, the creation of two new missions, one at Hamadan and the other at Bandar Bushehr, led by Charles Fossey and Maurice Pézard respectively, and of the Mission archéologique de Susiane, jointly led by Father Scheil and Roland de Mecquenem, reflected the French desire to diversify and extend French research in Iran on the eve of World War I.

De Morgan's archaeological research was often criticized later. His method of excavation, which he himself described as "industrial," and his ignorance of that used by others – Petrie in Palestine, Koldewey and Andrae at Babylon and Assur – contributed to the diminution of the scientific value of his work, even though it was quickly made available to scholars through the series *Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse* (1900–12). However vulnerable to criticism his excavation method was, his scientific method, which pushed him from his early years to attach to his own projects scholars from various disciplines, associating archaeology with all the sciences capable of contributing something to the explanation of the evolution of mankind, was a harbinger of the multidisciplinary archaeological research of the future.

9 Conclusions

When World War I broke out, major excavations were still under way, both in the Ottoman Empire and in Persia. However, only the German mission at Babylon remained active, staying on until 1917, at which point it left suddenly, ahead of the advance of the British army in Mesopotamia, thus bringing an end to 18 years of solid exploration.

In three-quarters of a century, many sites presumed to be rich had been examined, if not excavated. Having begun with excavations, the primary goal of which had been the discovery of museum objects, English archaeologists realized the need for stratigraphic observation, and at the turn of the century, thanks to German architects, archaeologists moved toward the systematic excavation of ancient architecture.

In 1914, England and France, having been responsible for the first phase of research, had not only shown the way to America and Germany but also, particularly in the case of France, allowed themselves to be surpassed by the latter, which approached large sites like Babylon and Assur with a large and highly qualified staff. Only Persia remained a hunting-ground still reserved – albeit for only a short time more – for France.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For the early French excavations in Assyria see, e.g., Fontan and Chevalier (1994). Another good resource on early work in Assyria is Larsen (1996). Some of the same subject matter, along with a review of early British, American, and German excavations in southern Mesopotamia, is found in Lloyd (1980). The early explorations of Loftus at Susa in the mid-19th century are discussed in Curtis (1993). The most recent account of excavations at Susa from the first half of the 19th century to 1968 can be found in Chevalier (2010). For the history of the earliest excavations at Hittite sites, see Garstang (1910). Readers wishing to enjoy a pleasant presentation of Oppenheim and his excavations at Tell Halaf should consult Cholidis (2002). Similarly, Wartke (2005) is an account of early work at one of the major Neo-Hittite cities of northern Mesopotamia. Hilprecht (1903) provides a very helpful overview of early research in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Arabia from the late eighteenth to the turn of the 20th century. Parrot (1946) is also an excellent resource on the history of Mesopotamian archaeology until the mid-20th century. For more on the history of exploration in Arabia, see Hogarth (1904). For the history of biblical archaeology, see Tubb and Chapman 1990 and Moorey (1991b). Trümpler (2008) is the beautifully illustrated catalogue of an exhibition on archaeology and its relationship to politics and colonialism from 1860 to 1940.