

ARCHAEOLOGY

# Ruins of Sargon's Palace Yield New Magnificences

## Human-Faced Bulls and Winged, Horn-Turbaned "Genii" Guard the Gate Through Which the King Passed

**M**ERMAIDS, unicorns, sphinxes, and the strange winged "genii" typical of Assyrian sculptural art have been dug up by archaeologists of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, working under Dr. Henry Frankfort, in the ruins of Khorsabad in Mesopotamia.

Khorsabad was the capital of King Sargon of Assyria, who reigned early in the eighth century, B. C. For some reason he was dissatisfied with Nineveh, the ancient capital of his nation, and decided to build a new royal city for himself. His venture in city-building, however, was not permanent; after his death his successor returned to Nineveh, and Khorsabad's magnificent palaces and temples were left to crumble and be drifted over by centuries of desert dust, undisturbed until the spades of the Oriental Institute's workmen broke through.

Outstanding among the new finds are four great carved panels that guarded the palace entrance. Two of these bear representations of the human-faced winged bulls, the guardian genii of Assyrian sacred and official places. The other two show winged genii in human form, wearing horned turbans to show their supernatural character. These appear to be sprinkling the bulls with sacred water from small pails which they carry in their left hands. All four of the figures are of heroic size, approximately three times as tall as a man.

### Phenician Ideas

The Assyrians, a nation of conquerors, had many (if rough) contacts with other peoples and absorbed some of their ideas. Thus, among the palace and temple sculptures Dr. Frankfort lists winged sphinxes, which are Phenician, and back of that originally Egyptian.

Connected with the palace by a special corridor was a temple to the god of historians and writers, Nabu, and on the wall of the corridor is inscribed a prayer to the god by the king. Nabu must have been favorable to the supplication of Sargon; for he is still one of

the best remembered of all the rulers of that ancient and far-away land.

Sargon ruled when Assyria and Egypt were fighting it out for world dominance. The Kingdom of Israel, lying between these two giants, frequently got tramped on during their struggles. The twentieth chapter of the Book of Isaiah records an attack by one of Sargon's generals on an Egyptian stronghold, Ashdod.

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PHYSICS

## Part of Records Saved From Stratosphere Wreck

**T**WO complete and valuable scientific records have been salvaged from what at first appeared to be a hopeless tangle of wrecked instruments in the gondola of the ill-fated balloon Explorer of the National Geographic-Army Air Corps stratosphere expedition.

One film record is the complete history of cosmic ray intensity measurements from one of the detectors. The other is a record of temperatures in and out of the gondola, sun and sky brightness, the time of each measurement and the tilt of the gondola during flight.

Finding these two valuable records spurs the hope that elsewhere in the pile of twisted instruments there may be other useful records.

With the discovery of the two new records the sum total of results now obtained for the flight include:

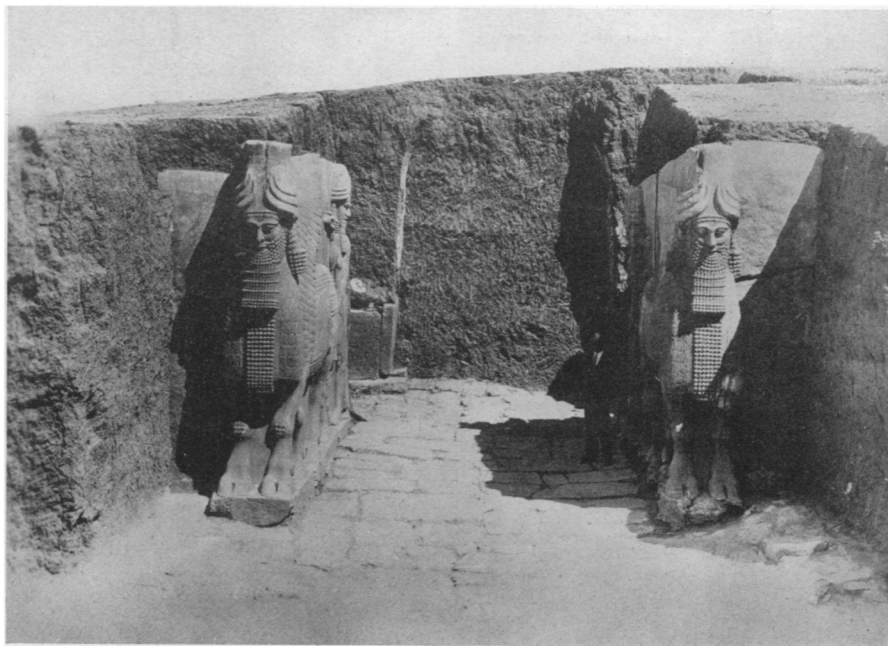
1. Salvage of the large spectroscope and its scientific records. This is the instrument which hung on a cable below the gondola and was released on its own parachute.

2. Recovery of part of the records taken on two other spectroscopes inside the gondola.

3. Recovery of both barographs for recording air pressure and hence the altitudes attained during the flight. The high elevation as given by both instruments is 60,613 feet—only 624 feet below the official world's altitude record made on the 1933 flight of Commander Settle and Major Fordney.

4. Proof that a stratosphere balloon can be built whose gondola is livable at extreme heights and that automatic instruments of the type employed worked perfectly. The pneumatic, automatic valve atop the balloon bag worked perfectly at all times.

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**IMPERIAL GATEWAY**

*The original paving can be seen in the foreground, over which must often have passed the wheels of King Sargon's chariots.*