

ARCHAEOLOGY

Long-Sought Temple of Ishtar Found by British Explorer

Discovery of Ruins Believed Key to Nineveh's History Ends Archaeological Hunt of Hundred Years

IN THE MOUNDS of earth that represent the proud old royal city of Nineveh, archaeologists have at last uncovered remains of the long-sought temple of the city's beloved goddess, Ishtar. Dr. R. Campbell Thompson of the British Museum has reported the discovery.

For about a hundred years, off and on, archaeologists have been digging into hillocks of land on the east bank of the Tigris and finding there buildings and sculptures and writings that attest to Assyria's one-time magnificence at its capital, Nineveh. They have located several temples, and the beautiful palace of Sennacherib, and the spacious palace of the king Ashurbanipal. But the heart of Nineveh, the temple to Ishtar, goddess of love and war, remained undetected.

This temple was sought because of its key place in Nineveh's history. It is the first building mentioned in Nineveh's ancient career. The city took its name

in honor of Ishtar, who was called Nina in early times. Records tell of an Assyrian king re-building the temple to Ishtar as early as 1830 B. C. Again in the ninth century King Ashurbanipal re-built the temple to his own taste. Dr. Thompson had predicted that perhaps the oldest records in Nineveh might be found lying beneath the ruins of Ishtar's temple—if the temple could only be located.

Verified Year Later

First evidence of the missing temple was a mass of Assyrian brick six feet thick and lying about seven feet below the surface. The brick were encountered near the ruins of the palace of Ashurbanipal. Dr. Thompson, recalling the description of Nineveh written by King Sennacherib, figured that this brick ruin might well be the lost temple. The brick were found at the close of the season of 1929-1930, and it was not until the next season that the expedition had a chance to verify its theories regarding the new-found ruins.

Excavation has revealed remains of a pavement of inscribed burnt brick, still lying in place. This is some of the construction work done by order of King

Ashurbanipal, when he re-built Ishtar's temple. An inscribed brick records the re-building campaign from 884 to 860 B. C. A broken sculpture of the same king has been pieced together. An inscription on the back tells how the king conducted a foreign expedition to obtain timber for construction purposes, and that he had this likeness set up in the temple.

The temple was looted several times, once in the siege of 612 B. C., when Nineveh fell before the Chaldeans, and later when the Parthians combed the ruins for building materials.

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BACTERIOLOGY

Not All Bacteria Die When Deprived of Water

NOT ALL bacteria die when deprived of water and placed in arid surroundings, experiments of Dr. C. N. Stark and B. L. Herrington of Cornell University have shown. The investigation was undertaken in the hope of throwing light on the perplexing question of whether life without water is possible. Bacteria are among the smallest living creatures.

According to one scientific view, perfectly dry bacteria would live forever. The opposite view is that in the complete absence of water life is impossible.

"The facts can probably never be definitely determined," the Cornell investigators reported to the Society of American Bacteriologists.

"Those who believe that really dry bacteria will live forever can always maintain that death occurred as a result of the method of drying the bacteria, rather than from the dryness itself. Similarly it can be held by others that failure of the bacteria to die was due to incomplete drying. The problem is further complicated by inability at present to distinguish between free water, bound water and water of constitution."

By a special method bacteria were very rapidly dried to an extremely low moisture content. Of the organisms tested, two-thirds of the streptococci originally present grew readily in culture media after 97 days under dry conditions. Only two or three per cent. of the original number of certain kinds of organisms were able to survive under the dry conditions.

The material on which the organisms grow is an important factor. Exposure of dry bacteria to free oxygen gas killed many of them.

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