



Lady Mallowan, O.B.E.
1908–1993

The British School of Archaeology in Iraq, though founded in 1932, acquired its first base in Baghdad in 1949, when Robert Hamilton rented and furnished an old courtyard house on the west bank of the Tigris. In the autumn of 1950 Barbara Parker, as she was then, succeeded Hamilton as Secretary/Librarian, and remained until 1961 the only member of staff resident in Iraq during the whole of the School year, from October to June. Her first instruction from the Director, Max Mallowan, was to go and build a dig house at Nimrud, which he had chosen as the School's main site for excavation. She built the house and maintained it in good order for many years to come, a home to which those who worked at Nimrud look back with fond, if sometimes fantastic, memories. An addition to the house was a terrace at the back for afternoon tea, paved and walled with Assyrian bricks and with a superb view of the snow-capped Zagros mountains to the east. It was suggested by Agatha Mallowan that it should be edged with cherry trees, which Barbara bought in Mosul and, since the track to Nimrud was then a quagmire in early spring, she borrowed a jeep from the Chief of Police in Mosul to take them to the site. No doubt the driver helped to plant them but, sadly, the goats had the last word.

Barbara worked at Nimrud both as a photographer and an epigraphist, taking also an especial and expert interest in the seals. Her photographs, taken and developed under primitive conditions, provided many excellent illustrations for Mallowan's Nimrud reports, including *Nimrud and its Remains*. As an Assyriologist she published a considerable series of economic texts, illuminating their interpretation by her own knowledge of modern rural society and economy which, until the onset of mechanisation, had changed little in four thousand years.

In the 1950's Barbara's main contribution to the School's, as opposed to the Nimrud expedition's, welfare was her inimitable running of our house in Baghdad. Her kindness and hospitality to visiting

scholars and students, often new to Iraq, are unforgettable. The School's first Land Rover had to be taken to the north when all roads out of Baghdad were cut by the floods of 1954. Barbara persuaded the Iraqi State Railways to add a flat car to the passenger train to Mosul. Her standing with the State Railways — among other Government departments — was shown on another occasion. After a solitary visit to Nimrud she had reserved a sleeper on the 8 o'clock train from Mosul to Baghdad, but was dining at the British Vice-Consulate and was persuaded to stay the night. At 8.30 the Station Master telephoned to ask whether Miss Parker proposed to travel. Being told that she had changed her plans, he allowed the train to leave. Such anecdotes may seem frivolous in a memoir, but they illustrate the unique and quite unstudied character which endeared her to her many Iraqi friends. Her excellent personal relations with them, and particularly with our colleagues in the Directorate General of Antiquities, helped to solve many problems — or rather did not allow them to arise — and did much to create the climate of mutual trust and cooperation which has so greatly enhanced the work of the School, now the British Archaeological Expedition in Iraq, over the past forty-five years.

In 1961 she returned to the Institute of Archaeology as Lecturer in Mesopotamian Archaeology, but visited Iraq on many subsequent occasions, and was an invaluable and most welcome member of the expedition at Tell al Rimah for three of our six seasons there, publishing the Mitanni and Middle Assyrian seals. She also paid a memorable visit to Tell Brak, where the name of Mallowan was still remembered after fifty years. During the last three decades she has been an energetic member of our Council and Executive Committee, where her intimate knowledge of both academic and domestic matters — and her forthright commonsense — have been of great value in our discussions. Since her election to succeed Lord Trevelyan in 1983, she was one of our most active Presidents until her death.

We remember her with love and gratitude.

D.O.