

## TOL-E-BAKUN: Prehistoric Mound Near Persepolis

THE Iranian Expedition, sponsored jointly by the Oriental Institute of Chicago, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the University Museum carried on extensive excavations in the Persepolis area during the winter and spring of 1937. While much of interest in the way of objects and information resulted from the explorations of the Palace Complex and the City site of Istakhar, it is with the discoveries made in excavating the prehistoric mounds with which the Museum is chiefly concerned. A note on these by Dr. Ehrich Schmidt, Field Director follows. Publication of other results will appear in a later issue of the Bulletin.

HERZFELD and Langsdorff examined one of two low mounds, situated about two kilometers south of Persepolis. They found beautiful ceramics which Herzfeld was inclined to consider neoliths. I may state at once that copper objects occurred in all strata of the hill during the excavations of this season, so that we are not dealing with the remains of a period earlier than the introduction of the use of this metal.

The excavations of the 1937 season, just completed, defined three strata in Tol-e-Bakun A: the first and earliest is characterized by the beautiful ware known from Herzfeld's excavations. It is painted in shades of dark gray to red brown on a cream or gray colored ground. The paste, as a rule is greenish gray. Conventionalized animals, mainly ibex and moufflon form the most striking designs; but great varieties of geometric symbols are also used on this attractive ware. The Second (TB A II) contains coarser ware, decorated mainly with geometrical patterns, while the paste is often buff-colored. However, only the final comparison of the ceramics will clearly separate the finds of the two lower strata. It seems that features of Stratum I survive.

The pottery of the third stratum (TB A III) is plain red. Painted ceramics have disappeared, a fact suggesting a total culture break. At present it is not possible to identify this stratum with any known culture period in Iran, though we are sure it precedes the historical era. We attribute Strata I and II tentatively to the period of Tepe Hissar IB and IC of northern Iran excavated by the Museum in 1930, while Hissar IA seems to be earlier than the beginning of Tol-e-Bakun A-I occupation.

Tol-e-Bakun B is a puzzling mound. We tested it from the summit to the base; but the only results are coarse brown potsherds and great numbers of bone awls. Since metal and other objects of an advanced material culture seem to be absent we are well justified in considering this mound neolithic.

We consider Tol-e-Bakun B sufficiently tested but Tol-e-Bakun A has to be further excavated in order to obtain a complete corpus of ceramics, figurines, and other objects of its early and most interesting period. Prehistoric studies, here as elsewhere, aim, of course, at determining the cultural development from the earliest times up to the beginning of recorded history. Therefore our tests have to spread to other mounds in the plain of Merv Dasht. We want to define all culture periods that left their traces in the environs of Persepolis. E. S.

## EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

FOR the past two years enforced economies within the Museum necessitated the initiation of a charge for docent service to school classes visiting the Museum. This resulted in such a drastic reduction of the numbers of teachers able to bring their classes and so many flattering protests that it was decided to resume the free docent service this winter, as a major part of the Education Department's activities.

To this end the ground floor of the Sharpe Wing was turned over to the Education Department, giving it room for a new classroom, junior members' studio, offices, and galleries for special children's exhibits. The large courtyard in front of the Sharpe Wing has been opened, allowing the school buses to deliver the children directly to the Education Department entrance, and to park there during the children's visit to the Museum.

The program of talks offered to the schools was revised to correlate more exactly with the schools' curricula for the various grades, and was approved and endorsed by Dr. Gerson and by the Philadelphia Department of Visual Education.

The results have been almost overwhelming. Every possible hour open for talks has been engaged by the schools into January, and during the first three weeks of October the department has given 91 lessons to 3312 pupils of the city and its environs, many of them now visiting the Museum for the first time.

Experience has proved that through the children we interest the parents, and the department feels confident that the widely increased service to the schools this winter will have a far-reaching effect in interesting the citizens of Philadelphia in the service to the city represented by the work of the University Museum as a whole. C. H. D.

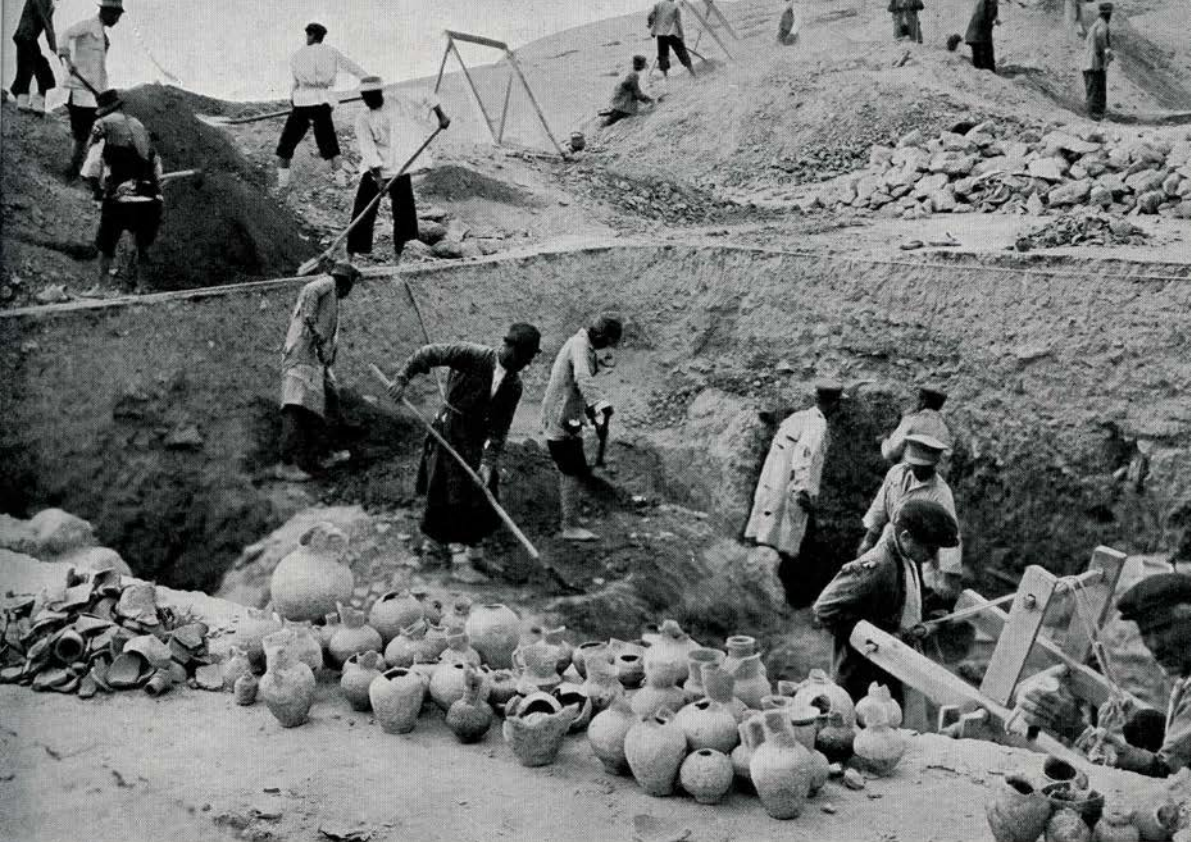


PLATE X

Tol-e-Bakun. Trash pits are treasure pits.



A Jar from Tol-e-Bakun.



Painted ware, black on gray, Ibez design from Tol-e-Bakun