

A beautiful silver bowl of the same period has been recovered in a late grave at Ur, and forms a choice piece of the Babylonian Section. It is decorated with fluting and a rosette on the under side and has a bronze coin imbedded in the centre inside, with an almost illegible Pehlvi inscription on the rim.

In 570 A.D. Muhammed was born in Mecca. In 635 A.D. the Romans were driven out of Damascus by the followers of the Prophet, and in 636 A.D. the Sassanids were routed at Kadisiyah, fifteen miles west of Kufa, leaving Babylonia open to the invaders. The following year, Ctesiphon was taken. In 702 A.D. Baghdad was built by the 'Abbasid Caliph Mansur, and with that date our survey of the Babylonian Section comes to an end. A few coins of the 'Omayyad and of the 'Abbasid caliphs, minted at Wasit on the Tigris, have been recovered at Nippur (*Museum Journal*, March 1924, p. 75).

## The Nippur Seal and Terracotta Collections

Seals and terracottas are eminently characteristic of the Mesopotamian culture. They are found in all the levels and in all the stages of its development, from the Sumerian to the Arab period. Their use was not limited to Mesopotamia, but extended east and west from India to Syria and Egypt. The seal is a personal mark of identification. With the seals are included their impressions on clay. The collections of seals of Ur and Nippur in the Babylonian Section have been published in several volumes (PBS, Vol. XIV, *Culture of the Babylonians from their seals in the collections of the Museum*, 1925; Ur Excavations, Vol. II, *Archaic Texts*, 1935, Vol. III, *Archaic Seal Impressions*, 1936). Flat cylindrical, cone-shaped and ring seals show a rich variety of scenes and figures, cut in intaglio in shell, marble, hard stones, hematite, semi-precious stones, glaze, frit, etc. Many bear inscriptions, royal and private names, or short prayers. They form the most vivid and extensive illustration of religion, art and mythology, which happily compares with and completes that derived from larger monuments.

The popular, humbler terracotta figurines play the same part compared with the major productions of the sculptor in stone, plaque reliefs, stelae and statues in the round. They are found everywhere, in tombs,

in private houses, and in the temples, always in large quantity. Modelled by hand or stamped in hollow moulds, in the round, or only in plaque relief, they reflect in their multiplicity of details the religious inspiration and the daily life preoccupation of the Babylonians at every period of their culture, under the ever-changing political rule. Gods and goddesses, men and women, animals, utensils, toys and furniture, all contribute new details to folklore, history and ethnology. The figure of the nude woman, mother and love goddess, for example, is still the object of many interpretations (cf. PBS, Vol. XVI, *Terracottas from Nippur*, 1930).

## Nuzi

In the last decades, excavations in northern Mesopotamia, in the plains east of the Tigris, which were to be the homeland of the Assyrians in the second and first millennia, have been, as in southern Mesopotamia, carried down almost to virgin soil, and thus have added considerably to our knowledge of a much earlier history, back to 3200 B.C., and eventually to neolithic times. The sites selected are small—compared to Khorsabad, Nineveh, Calah and Ashur—but they were early settled as indicated by the numerous fragments of painted pottery scattered on surface ground, and early abandoned, so that their undisturbed levels have provided archaeological records in regular sequence.

The excavations at Nuzi, Tepe Gawra and Tell Billa, first undertaken by private means, were soon supported by official institutions and some joined actively by the University Museum.

Nuzi, near Kirkuk in Iraq, was first regularly excavated by Professor Edward Chiera in 1925. The site had been destroyed by fire in ancient times. In the ruins of the house of Tehiptilla and his heirs, Professor Chiera found over a thousand business tablets of the former owner. In 1927 the work was resumed by the Semitic Museum and the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University, together with the American Schools of Oriental Research of Baghdad. More tablets came to light, also the remains of a palace and of a temple, all resting on the so-called Hurrian level dated in the second millennium B.C. In 1928, Dr. R. H. Pfeiffer of the Boston University joined the staff, deeper shafts were opened and reached the Sumerian, Akkadian and Cappadocian levels. In 1930, the