

## NOTE ON THE INLAY STANDARD

THE interpretation of the inlay standard in the MUSEUM JOURNAL of September, 1928, brought the following remarks from Mr. Woolley in a letter dated from Ur, November 18, 1928.

"There are a few details which ought to be corrected as they give a false impression in view of what I had said about the standard not being a reconstruction. P. 229, line 5: You say 'if this is the original order?' None of the inlay here has been disturbed at all. P. 230, bottom: This is incorrect. In this part two heads had been broken off and one was replaced, the other not found; but the figures though slanting outwards from the lapis ground are in position; each is cut in a single piece of shell and no two half figures have been jumbled together, for there are no half figures to jumble. They were simply pressed back flat into place.

"P. 232, line 5. Here you may be right. The last three figures in this row were dislodged and lay apart slightly from the standard; they seemed, however, to be in order and the position of each was noted and they were restored according to the notes written on the back of each as it was picked out of the earth; at the same time their order in the soil may have been accidental and your point about the rope is a strong one. On the other hand, inlay of this sort was not unique and the craftsman seems sometimes to have employed 'stock figures' without much regard to their suitability.

"P. 232, last line but one: As to 'reconstruction,' the three figures already mentioned were replaced. Much of the border on both the main panels was reconstructed; otherwise nothing in these panels except bits of lapis background has been disturbed. Of the end panels, that on the left in the illustration (p. 230) is original so far as it is complete. The pieces of inlay were attached to the end of the banquet scene, so that it was clear in which register each came. The upright staff in the top register lay across the goat (which clearly ought to have another to balance it) and I could not be sure how it ought to be arranged. The whole of the bottom register is right in so far as the positions go, but the spacing may be inaccurate for no lapis background remained and the exact relation between the figures was thereby lost. The second end panel is partly a reconstruction based on the first: the pieces were in complete disorder.

“I can say this with authority as—apart from some work on the border of the standard—the whole restoration of it and of the gold bull’s head of the harp was done by myself (so I must pass as a ‘Museum expert’!)”

The interpretation of the inlay standard was done with the help of photographs. After seeing the original in London, I think it is fair to say that on the three points raised by Mr. Woolley, he is right on the first, wrong on the third even if we blame the Sumerian artist, and we both erred in the interpretation of the second. Two right legs, one stripped and wounded, the second covered with a fringed loin cloth, cannot belong to a single man. They are not jumbled together but belong to a group: a wounded man helped from the battlefield by a companion. One head is still missing. The position of the left legs is better seen on the original. There are two figures in the group cut out of a single piece. But the second right leg need not be explained as slanting outward from the lapis ground.

For the care and ingenuity of his reconstruction in general Mr. Woolley needs no commendation.

L. L.