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have had to be abandoned. This has heartened the staff of School and Gallery alike to the point where they are prepared to promise for the next decade a record of achievement equal to and better than that already made in the field of the fine arts at Yale.

C. N. JR.

EXCAVATIONS AT DURA- EUROPOS, 1934-35

THE last season of excavations at Dura-Europos on the Euphrates (Syria), conducted by Yale University with the cooperation of the French Academy of Inscriptions, was as rich in finds as the previous seasons. Under the competent direction of Professor Clark Hopkins, whose scientific advisers were, as before, Professor F. Cumont of the Academy of Inscriptions and Professor M. Rostovtzeff of Yale, and with the untiring support of President Angell and the enthusiastic collaboration of the staff of the expedition, results of great scientific importance have been reached.

Ancient Dura had three periods of life: the first hundred and fifty years it was a Macedonian military colony founded by the great general of Alexander, Seleucus Nicator (280-130 B.C.); then there were almost three hundred years in which Dura was an important fortress and a flourishing caravan city under the rule of Parthian kings (130 B.C.-165 A.D.); and finally there were approximately one hundred years during which it was a strong frontier fortress of the Roman Empire (165-256 A.D.). About 256 A.D. Dura was captured by the Sassanian kings, successors of the Parthians, and soon ceased to exist.

The excavations of 1934-35 added a good deal to our knowledge of these last two periods in the life of Dura: the Parthian and the Roman. The first discovery of great importance was that of a

temple and clubhouse of Palmyrene caravan merchants and desert guards (mounted archers), a building unique in its character. We must not forget that Dura was a kind of minor ally and associate of the great caravan city of Palmyra, the queen of the caravan trade between the Parthian and the Roman Empires. The rich temple of this Palmyrene "fonduq" was in an excellent state of preservation when excavated. It was dedicated to the "Fortunes" (Tychai) of the three sister caravan cities: Dura, Palmyra, and Anath (which last still exists under the name of Anah, about one hundred miles to the south of Dura), as the three cult bas-reliefs of the temple found in the ruins of the main chapel of the temple testify. These bas-reliefs have just been placed on exhibition in the Yale Gallery of Fine Arts.

The most interesting of the three is that which represents the god-protector of Dura, Zeus Olympios, the patron of the Seleucid dynasty, being crowned by the founder of the city and of the dynasty, the deified Seleucus Nicator. The donor, a noble Palmyrene, performs a sacrifice in honor of the divine group. Inscriptions in Palmyrene give the identity of the gods and of the donor. The second bas-relief shows the goddess-protector of Palmyra, Atargatis, and, the third, the god-protector of Anath, Aphlad. Highly interesting is the statuette of Nebu, the Babylonian god, inventor of writing, found in the same place.

No less important were the discoveries bearing on the Roman period. Excavation was completed of the famous Dura Synagogue, rebuilt by the Jewish community of Dura in 245 A.D. and gorgeously adorned with paintings which illustrate the most important episodes of the history of the Jews as narrated in the Old Testament and in some of the



THE GOD OF GOOD FORTUNE OF DURA
Crowned by Seleucus Nicator, founder of
the city. Temple bas-reliefs, c. 159 A.D.



THE GODDESS OF GOOD FORTUNE OF PALMYRA
Crowned by the Goddess of Victory.

apocryphal books. It was established that the Synagogue of 245 A.D. replaced an earlier, smaller, and more modest Jewish house of prayer, also adorned with paintings but of a purely decorative character. After excavation was finished, the paintings of the Synagogue, most ancient and unique relics of early Biblical art, were taken down and transported to Damascus, where, in the new Museum of the Syrian State the Dura Synagogue, will be reconstructed for the Government by the excavator, Henry Pearson of the Yale School of the Fine Arts.

A last touch was given also to the excavation of the Dura Mithraeum, the beautifully preserved shrine of the great god of the Roman Empire and of the Roman army. Almost intact the paintings of the Dura Mithraeum were taken down and transported to Yale, where, in the Gallery of Fine Arts, the chapel will some day be reconstructed and exhibited, a counterpart as it were of the Christian chapel of Dura, with its modest but highly impressive paintings, which has been exhibited here since 1933.

Dura in the Roman times was a strong Roman fortress. No wonder, then, that we continue to find there an increasing volume of material illustrative of the military life of the Roman army of the third century A.D. Especially interesting is the set of various defensive and offensive arms and weapons: bronze and iron cuirasses for men and horses, swords, parts of bows, artillery arrows and stone bullets, etc. (Some are now lent to the Higgins Armory, Worcester). Most striking and important are the shields. The Roman soldiers of Dura, following an age-old tradition of Greek military life, liked to have their shields not only efficient but also decorative. They therefore adorned them with painting. Some specimens of such shields made of wood were found previously. One, gorgeously painted, has recently been restored in France and is now on exhibition.

Three more were found last season, all splendidly preserved. One shows the standing figure of the Syrian god-protector of the Roman army—the god-warrior, the invincible Jarhibol, who for a while became *the* god of the Roman

Empire. The second shows with a sequence of scenes illustrating the age-old struggle between the East and the West—the battle between the Amazons, personifying the East, and the Greeks, representing the West. Most impressive, however, is the third shield showing the famous capture of Troy by the Achaeans—the wooden horse ready to enter the city gate in the presence of Cassandra and Priam, and the sack of the city and the murder of Priam. Episodes in the siege of Troy were depicted by the most famous artists of classical Greece: Polygnotus, Parrhasius, etc. At Rome, in the portico of Philip, were exhibited paintings of another Greek artist, Theodorus, illustrating the *Iliad*. Reflections of these classical works of art are found in the pictures on many Greek vases of the fifth century B.C. and in the reliefs of the so-called Homeric cups of the third century B.C. and again in pictures and reliefs of Roman times (e.g., two painted friezes in private houses of Pompeii, a picture of a Roman grave of Hermopolis [Egypt], and the famous bas-reliefs of the so-called *tabula Iliaca* in the Albani Collection in Rome). The shield of Dura is one of these reflections. Excellently preserved in all its gorgeous colors, it is very illuminating. Since the shield is made of local wood (Aleppo pine), it is clearly the work of local Syrian artists. The choice of subjects is characteristic of the high standard of education of the Roman soldiers and officers.

The exploration of the city of the dead—the necropolis of Dura—yielded good results. While most of the graves had been robbed in ancient and modern times, the expedition succeeded in finding some which were intact. In these were discovered a large number of terra cottas, glass, pottery, and coins. Charm-

ing, for example, is a little glazed bottle with reliefs, which reminds one of the famous creations of Ennion, the great Hellenistic glassmaker of Antioch.

The ruins of a large and well-constructed temple of the supreme god of Palmyra, Baalshamin, were also found in the necropolis. An inscription in Palmyrene gives the date (36 B.C.) and the names of the god and dedicant. This is earlier than any other inscription now known in this language.

M. I. R.

TEXTILES

IN the past few years we have been gradually accumulating a collection of third-century textiles from the excavations at Dura-Europos. Last summer, through the generosity of the Curator of Textiles, Mr. George Hewitt Myers, a large number of these textiles were cleaned and the most important pieces were mounted by Mrs. Yates of the Textile Museum in Washington. All the fragments will be dealt with by Monsieur Pfister of the Musée Guimet in the final report of the excavations. As this report will not appear for some time and as the textiles are now on exhibition, it may be useful to call attention to a few of their outstanding features.

The majority of the fabrics are of wool, both warp and weft. This is an interesting and important contrast to the finds of the following century from Egypt, which are regularly linen. The obvious explanation of the difference is that in most parts of the Empire local material was sure to be used for ordinary fabrics, and we may be confident that these fragments of cloth from Dura were made from the fleece of the ancestors of those sheep which still find a scanty subsistence on the desert. But, now and then, cloth for particular pur-