

*A Report
from Ur*

THE first months of this season's work at Ur have been notable for the uncovering of the burial places of three rulers of the most splendid period in the city's history. The kings are Ur-Engur, who about 2400 B.C. built the Ziggurat at Ur, his son Dungi, and his grandson, Bur-Sin. Late last year the Expedition uncovered part of the front wall (of bricks stamped with the name of Bur-Sin) of what now proves to be the annex of a much larger building erected by Dungi. The clearing of this was difficult because the enormous mud brick walls built around the Sacred Area by Nebuchadnezzar ran right across the site and had to be dug through [Plate VIII]. Below these were private houses of the twentieth century B.C. which must be removed before the work of the Third Dynasty is laid completely bare.

Not more than half of Dungi's building has as yet been brought to light; it is built of very solid walls of burnt brick laid in bitumen, with square and rounded buttresses along its outer face and flights of stairs leading from its central court to upper chambers at the southwest end. Beneath the floor there is a huge brick-lined pit, more than twenty feet deep, which has been filled in with clean packed soil. In a recess on one side is a bricked-up door through which steps lead down to a square brick platform at the pit's bottom; from this, broad stairs run down to left and right and, passing beyond the limits of the pit, enter long vaulted rooms or passages. The meaning of the pit and to what the

staircases lead makes a strong appeal to the imagination; what the answer is, has yet to be learned.

Bur-Sin's annex is more modest, but still is one of the best examples of building preserved at Ur. The fittings of one room show that it was intended for worship, presumably of the deified king, but the building is primarily a tomb. In Bur-Sin's courtyard a small shaft leads under a wall and through a corbelled doorway into a long vaulted chamber, still standing almost intact, which can only have been the king's grave [Plate IX]. It had been plundered by the Elamites who swept down from the Persian hills and brought the Third Dynasty to an end; nothing was left but a few scattered bones. A smaller tomb under the pavement of the courtyard, probably that of a prince, had been as thoroughly cleared out, with only a few bits of gold remaining. Empty as the tombs are, they none-the-less are ample reward for the labor of excavation for they constitute one of the most monumental ruins in Mesopotamia.

*An Amphora from
the Hope Collection*

TO the third quarter of the fifth century before Christ has been assigned a large group of vases associated with the vase-painter Polygnotos. This artist is not to be confused with the great painter of murals, Polygnotos of Thasos, of whose Polyxena on the walls of the Lesche at Delphi a poet of the anthology wrote that "on her eyelids lay the whole of the Trojan war." Yet, to the work of the great Polygnotos, the vases of this group do not stand unre-



NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S WALL OVER BUR-SIN'S BUILDING, UR



INTERIOR OF BUR-SIN'S TOMB, UR