

of the development of cuneiform script, while the seal-impressions are of many varieties. At a lower level in the pit over a hundred and thirty graves were found, many of them belonging to the Jemdet Nasr period—so-called after a site near Kish in Mesopotamia—and others with pottery of somewhat later date. The sequence is much more interesting than an unmixed Jemdet Nasr period cemetery would be, and the finding of some twenty skulls sufficiently preserved for study will add considerably to the material of the period available for anthropological research. Notable among the various objects found in the graves was the large number of stone vessels; for the most part these were plain, but one small white limestone cup was decorated with a row of lions and bulls carved in relief, the first example of this *genre* that we can date, and date fairly accurately, to an early period.

*The Assyrian Expedition*

**T**HE main feature of the recent season at Tell Billa, according to Mr. Charles Bache's final report, was a street flanked on both sides with large stones and with an open drain in the center into which emptied feeder drains from the buildings. These buildings are entirely private dwellings, each with their street door having a sill of stone slightly higher than the large stones edging the street. Leading from the door, each house has a small vestibule from which one passes either to the main chamber of the dwelling or to an open court.

All courts are paved, usually with baked-brick, and around the base of the walls of the courts are base-boards of one row of baked brick set on edge, making an effective protection against seepage and consequent destruction by water of the lower courses of the *libn* (mud-brick) walls. The builders of the period, the Assyrians of the Middle Empire, must be congratulated on their mastery of the difficult art of *libn* construction. The kitchens of the dwellings were all exposed to the sky, as in present-day

houses of the district, and were usually paved with baked-brick.

At Tepe Gawra the close of the season saw Stratum X completely cleared, with but one or two exceptions. There is but little doubt that the inhabitants of Stratum X were the same as those of Stratum IX and of the three phases of Stratum VIII; there are no essential differences in the pottery, and the architecture is a duplicate of that of the upper strata.

As previously reported, a temple was found in Stratum IX [Plate VI] which almost duplicated the two temples of VIII. Continuing this sequence, in the last week of digging at Gawra, the walls of a still earlier temple were found in Stratum X. It seems definitely to be a forerunner of the other three structures, for the crenellated walls, the open vestibule at the front, and the two rooms with smaller internal walls are all present. So much had been destroyed that it was impossible to tell whether the central room had been furnished with a sacrificial podium, as the temple of Stratum IX had been.

*Two Pottery Tiles  
from a  
Han Dynasty Tomb*

**T**WO important additions have recently been made, by purchase, to the Chinese collections in the Museum, in the form of panels from so-called Han tomb 'bricks,' decorated with stamped incised designs. Such bricks have come rather recently to the notice of archaeologists and are of great interest because of their various designs and the light they throw upon costume, weapons, architecture and customs of the Han period. These two slabs just acquired [Plate VII] are of exceptional interest, because some of the motives upon them are unusual and because they have been painted.

Two types of Han tomb bricks have come to be generally recognized. There is, first, the small solid building-brick type, with one of its long narrow edges (the edge which would show) ornamented with a moulded design in low relief. Small vaulted