

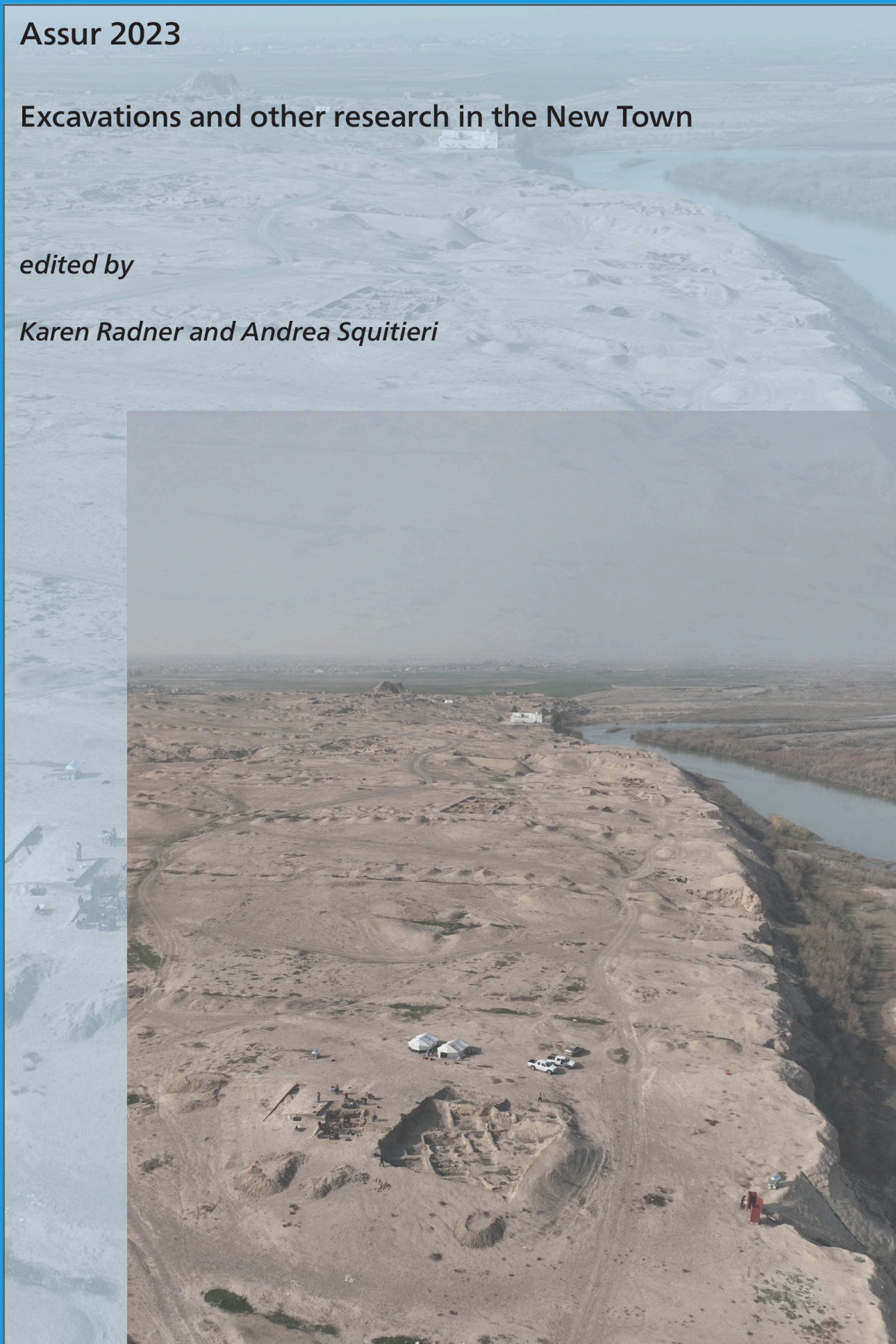
Exploring Assur

Assur 2023

Excavations and other research in the New Town

edited by

Karen Radner and Andrea Squitieri



EXPLORING ASSUR
VOLUME 1

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edited by

Karen Radner and F. Janoscha Kreppner

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PEWE-VERLAG
2024

Gedruckt mit Unterstützung der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz-Preis 2022)

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

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Layout und Prepress: PeWe-Verlag, Gladbeck

Umschlaggestaltung: PeWe-Verlag, Gladbeck

Umschlagabbildung: Dronenfoto der Neustadt von Assur im Februar 2023 (Jens Rohde für das Assur Excavation Project)

Druck und Bindung: Hubert & Co – eine Marke der Esser bookSolutions GmbH

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier

Printed in Germany

ISBN: 978-3-68986-000-5

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Preface

Karen Radner

To Grant Frame, in admiration

The 2023 field season at Assur saw the first of a series of excavations in the New Town that my 2022 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Award funds. I am grateful to Laith Majeed Hussein, the chairman of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, and SBAH's head of excavations, Ali Obeid Shalgham, for their trust and support, as well as to all the many other SBAH members who enable our work. A special debt of gratitude is reserved for SBAH Salaheddin and its directors, Salim Abdullah Ali and Muthanah Ahmed Issa, as well as Amr Mohammad Jasim, the head of its Sherqat branch, and his colleagues Sakhar Mohammad Ajaj and Omar Laith Allawi. Among the local staff, I want to single out Ahmed Khidr Ahmed, known as "Arabi", who served as the mission's driver and mechanic, Bashir Atiah Khalifa, who not only was the mission's cook but also freely shared his medical expertise as Sherqat's most-sought-after healer, and Mahjub Mohammad Jar, one of the last remaining "Sherqatis" who generously passed on his know how to the novice excavation workmen from Sherqat and Sdera. The success of the 2023 field season owes everything to Salim Abdullah Ali's and his team's determination to protect the site that they so dearly love and to resume its archaeological exploration.

I am deeply indebted to Peter Miglus for his advice and the encouragement with which he accompanied the project's genesis; I would not have embarked on this adventure without his blessings. I benefitted greatly from his and Stefan Maul's generosity as the joint heads of the Nineveh mission of the University of Heidelberg, who not only shared their experiences of working in northern Iraq but also housed me at various times in their excavation house in Mosul before we had a base in Sherqat. My gratitude also belongs to Margarethe van Ess and Simone Mühl of the Orient-Abteilung of the German Archaeological Institute who helped me set up the project and were instrumental in liaising with SBAH, especially in December 2021 when the idea to work in Assur first took shape.

Above all, I am tremendously grateful to F. Janoscha Kreppner who did not hesitate to join me on this ambitious project as the co-director of the Assur Excavation

Project despite his heavy work burden at the University of Münster. My co-editor for this volume, Andrea Squitieri, was as ever his cheerful but merciless self, especially when marshalling the contributors to this inaugural volume of the series *Exploring Assur* and thus enabling us to complete it before the beginning of the second field season on 5 February 2024. I am very happy that after two years with the Heidelberg Nineveh mission, the Leibniz Award allowed me to bring him back to LMU Munich, as well as hire Jana Richter and Jens Rohde for the duration of the DFG funding, which will end in January 2030. They constitute the core team of the Assur Excavation Project.

Most members of the team we assembled have worked together since the early days of the Peshdar Plain Project, which has been exploring the Dinka Settlement Complex in the Autonomous Kurdish Region of Iraq since 2015. My heartfelt thanks go to Mark Altaweel for his willingness to join the team even though the schedule of the British academic year made it very difficult for him. Despite being able to rely on a seasoned team, relocating to central Iraq brought many challenges, not least because of the inclement climatic conditions that led to the decision to work in February and March 2023. While it was still very cold in February, with temperatures frequently below zero during the night, the balmy March weather was occasionally interrupted by very strong storms that drenched the excavation and muddied the Tigris for days, seriously inhibiting both the dig and the floatation work. We were fortunate to have a comfortable home and work environment in the shape of the newly restored Andrae House and take the opportunity to thank Kamal Rash-eed Raheem who oversaw this huge project. Once having completed the renovations, he kindly agreed to join the mission as head of logistics, and it is impossible to imagine working in Assur without his unfailing support, but especially his good sense and eternal optimism. These are qualities that are badly needed in a place whose recent history is as troubled as that of Sherqat.

As ever, our publisher Peter Werner patiently and meticulously oversaw the production of the volume. I am

pleased to continue the excellent collaboration that we started in 2016 with the publication of the first volume of the series *Peshdar Plain Project Publications*. At LMU Munich, I am grateful to Denise Bolton for proofreading the entire volume at short notice.

Finally, I offer my heartfelt thanks to the institutions that provided the funding for our work: in addition to the German Research Foundation (DFG), which supports the project through the Leibniz Award, funding was made available by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, the Bavarian State Ministry for Science and Art and the Austrian Embassy in Baghdad as well as LMU Munich through the generous endowment of the Alexander von Humboldt Chair for the Ancient History of the Near and Middle East which I have held since 2015. It was a great honour to present the results of our first season at Assur at the Chai Talk at Al-Mada House in Baghdad (9 June 2023) and a lecture at the Mosul Heritage House in Mosul (11 June 2023), both co-organised by the Goethe Institute Iraq, at the 551. Stiftungsfest of LMU Munich (30 June

2023) and as a Leibniz Lecture organised by the DFG at the DAAD-University of Cambridge Research Hub for German Studies in Cambridge (14 November 2023).

I dedicate this inaugural volume of the series *Exploring Assur* as a small token of my gratitude and respect to my old friend Grant Frame, one of the world's leading experts in the history of the long-lived kingdom of Assyria but also its eventual nemesis, the Neo-Babylonian Empire. We first met in Helsinki in 1997 and have worked closely together since 2007 when he asked me to join the Editorial Board of the series *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (RINAP). In the past years, we have also co-edited the *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire* (RINBE) series, and with the Leibniz Award funding, we recently embarked on the next legs of completing and updating A. Kirk Grayson's monumental *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia* (RIM) project, with our new publication enterprises *Royal Inscriptions of the Kassites and Kudurrus* (RIKK) and *Royal Inscriptions of Assyria* (RIA). Thank you, Grant, for your friendship, humour and generosity.

A. Introduction

Karen Radner

On 7 April 2022, the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage headed by Dr Laith Majeed Hussein granted permission to a research project with the title “Excavations and Geophysical Exploration in Assur as well as Restoration of the Andrae House”, jointly headed by Karen Radner (LMU Munich) and F. Janoscha Kreppner (University of Münster). We are immensely grateful to Dr Laith and SBAH’s head of excavations, Ali Obeid Shalgham, for their trust and support, as well as to all the many other SBAH members who enable our work (**Fig. A1**). Funding for the project is provided by the German Research Foundation (DFG) through a 2022 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Award. According to the agreement with SBAH, the work programme consists of three parts:

1. The restoration of the excavation house originally used by Walter Andrae, severely damaged in late 2016 as the result of ISIS occupation and its capture through Iraqi state forces;

2. the geophysical prospection of Assur employing magnetometer and electrical resistivity tomography (ERT); and
3. archaeological excavations focused on the southern part of the city (“New Town”).

We are grateful for the logistic and legal support of Kamal Rasheed Raheem and Goran Omar Muhammad who travelled from Sulaymaniyah to Baghdad to assist us in the negotiations with SBAH in April 2022. That our old friends Zuhair Rajab Abdullah al-Samarraee and Anmar Abdullilah Fadhil joined us at SBAH to lend support to our application was immensely touching.

After receiving the license, we travelled to Sherqat on 8 April 2022 to meet with the local SBAH representatives, headed by Salim Abdullah Ali (**Fig. A2**). As a first step towards the new collaboration, it was agreed that I would dedicate some funds to the renovation of the SBAH office building outside the ruins of Assur (**SBA1**) so that it could



Fig. A1: Ali Obeid Shalgham, the head of the SBAH excavation unit, presents the signed and stamped excavation license to Karen Radner and F. Janoscha Kreppner. Photo by Goran Omar Muhammad (7 April 2022).



Fig. A2: Meeting the SBAH representatives of Salaheddin province and the Sherqat office in the SBAH building at Assur. From left to right, Muthanna Ahmed Issa, F. Janoscha Kreppner, Omar Basharaty, Salim Abdullah Ali, Karen Radner, Sakhar Mohammad Ajaj and Jan Heiler. Photo by Omar Leith Allawi (8 April 2022).

house the team in spring 2023. This work started soon after on 13 April 2023 and was completed by the end of June. In addition to rewiring the building, secure storage facilities were constructed on the roof as well as in the courtyard of the office building, where additional outside sanitary facilities with a shower and a toilet were built. The renovation work was supervised by Kamal Rasheed Raheem and I was able to inspect it personally during a visit on 4 July 2023 while on excavation in Gird-i Rostam (Penjween district, province of Sulaymaniyah, co-directed with Dan Potts of New York University).

Spurred on by the successful realisation of the refurbishment of the SBAH office building, I then decided to change my initial plans concerning the renovation of the ruined excavation house originally occupied by Walter Andrae and his team. Originally, this large-scale enterprise was meant to start during the excavation campaign scheduled for February and March 2023. Now, it was agreed that Kamal Rasheed Raheem would supervise the project which was meant to start as soon as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) had authorised the renovation plans submitted by SBAH to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Authorisation was granted on 12 September 2022, and work began soon after. Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi, head conservator of

the Sulaymaniyah Archaeological Museum, kindly agreed to join the project, having previously overseen the restoration of the Tabira Gate, which ISIS had destroyed, in a project led by Tobin Hartnell of the American University of Sulaymaniyah.

On 5 November 2022, while working at Khorsabad as the epigraphist of the team headed by Pascal Butterlin (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), I was able to meet with Raheem and Ali to discuss progress. As the renovation work was advancing smoothly, it was decided that rather than the SBAH office building, the Andrae House should accommodate the team in the spring season. This was a key development as it allowed me to substantially increase the size of the team (**Fig. A3**). The building work was completed in January 2023, and the Andrae House was then supplied with basic furnishings, including a generator, kerosene heaters, a full kitchen unit, beds, and some tables and chairs. The furniture and equipment for the workrooms were only procured at the beginning of the spring campaign, while the fitting of purpose-built metal shelves continued until the end of March. The refurbishment of the excavation house was completed with the installation of solar panels on the roof of the south wing and a photovoltaic system housed in the west wing in August 2023 (**SB5**).



Fig. A3: The team on the roof of the southeastern part of the excavation house. Drone photo by Jens Rohde (17 February 2023).



Fig. A4: The plaque honouring Walter Andrae's work at Assur and the plaque commemorating the restoration of the excavation house that he inhabited for twelve years, as installed by SBAH Sherqat in the southwestern corner of the courtyard in February 2023. Photo by Karen Radner.

On 18 February 2023, we celebrated Walter Andrae's 148th birthday in the courtyard of the house where he had lived for eleven years and unveiled a plaque honouring his achievements in Assur (**Fig. A4**). We are immensely grateful to the institutions that provided the funding for renovating the excavation house: the German Research Foundation (DFG), LMU Munich, the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, the Bavarian State Ministry for Science and Art, and last but not least the Austrian Embassy in Baghdad. Without Kamal Rasheed Raheem's infectious optimism and his vision of resurrecting the beautiful building that he remembered so fondly from his time on the SBAH team at Assur in 1981–1982, that work would never have started as early as it did and would certainly not have been completed as swiftly as it did.

The new excavations at Assur aim to unravel the settlement history of the southern extension of the city, called “New Town” (*ālu eššu*) in the Assyrian sources from the mid-second millennium to the late 7th century BC, by using modern archaeological technology as well as state-of-the-art documentation and sampling methods. So far, excavations in the New Town have been relatively limited: Walter Andrae worked here in his Search Trenches 11 to 16 during his residency in Assur from 1903 to 1914, and further work was undertaken in 1989 and 2002 by the SBAH that remains largely unpublished.

Already in February 2022, when visiting Assur together with Simone Mühl and Felix Wolter, Karen Radner and F. Janoscha Kreppner had identified a location in the New Town on a hilltop near the Tigris, close to the southern city wall, as particularly suitable for new fieldwork, also because it immediately adjoined the area “New Town 4”

excavated by SBAH in 2002. There, the Iraqi team had uncovered Assyrian residential architecture underneath Parthian architecture and tombs assigned to the Parthian period, and thus the depth of the occupation layers could be particularly well assessed. While the results of this work have never been published in full,¹ some preliminary reports and parts of the field documentation, mostly concerning the upper layers, were kindly made available to us by SBAH Sherqat while we were working at Assur, courtesy of Salim Abdullah Ali who supervised excavations in this particular trench.

During the first field season in February and March 2023, Salim Abdullah Ali, Amer Mohammad Jasim, and Sakhar Mohammad Ajaj were the SBAH representatives from the Tikrit office, the capital of the province of Salaheddin, and from Sherqat, which is a branch of SBAH Salaheddin. Other local SBAH staff members seconded to be part of the team were Muthanna Ahmed Issa and Omar Laith Allawi. The field season was divided into four stages that overlapped in time:

In the first stage, the survey network in the coordinate reference system WGS 84/UTM Zone 38 North was set up for the excavations and geophysical prospection and marked in the field. To this end, F. Janoscha Kreppner arrived in Sherqat together with Cajetan Geiger, Jan Heiler, Jean-Jacques Herr, Jana Richter, Jens Rohde, Andrea Squitieri, Kamal Rasheed Raheem and Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi on 8 February 2023.

In the second stage, geophysical prospection and sediment coring were conducted from 13 to 25 February 2023. The geophysical prospection was led by Jörg Fassbinder and undertaken from the south of the New Town towards the north and reached the southern parts of the inner city. Eight sediment cores were taken by a team headed by Mark Altaweel from the area chosen for the new excavations to the west, to a maximum depth of 5 metres. In addition, Christoph Forster established a wireless local area network that covers both the excavation house and the excavation area in the New Town. To achieve these goals, Karen Radner arrived in Sherqat with Mark Altaweel, Jörg Fassbinder, Christoph Forster, Lena Ruider and Marco Wolf on 12 February 2023.

The third stage started on 18 February and lasted until 23 March. Archaeological excavations were carried out

¹ For summaries see Duri/Rasheed/Hamze 2011; 2013. With funding provided by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Peter Miglus is currently working towards a more comprehensive publication of all the SBAH excavations undertaken at Assur from 1979–2002 together with Qays Hussein Rasheed who headed the Iraqi team that explored the New Town in 2002.

with the associated processing of the pottery and small finds. Ellen Coster, Veronica Hinterhuber, Susanne Weber and Tarik Willis joined the team on 17 February 2023, and later on 9 March 2023, Hero Salih Ahmed from Sulaymaniyah. The field team included 15 workers from Sherqat and Sdera, including Mahjub Mohammad Jar as an expert excavator (“Sherqati”).

The fourth stage lasted from 25 to 30 March 2023, during which time the final documentation was completed, and the handover of the samples and finds selected by SBAH for the Iraq Museum was prepared. The team left Iraq on 31 March 2023.

Joint heads of mission:

- Karen Radner (LMU Munich); 12 February–31 March 2023;
- F. Janoscha Kreppner (University of Münster); 8 February–31 March 2023.

SBAH archaeologists:

- Salim Abdullah Ali (SBAH Salaheddin), as principal representative (**Fig. A5**);
- Amr Mohammad Jasim (SBAH Sherqat), as representative;



Fig. A5: F. Janoscha Kreppner, Kamal Rasheed Raheem, Salim Abdullah Ali, and Karen Radner in front of the map of Assur in the SBAH office building. Photo by Sakhar Mohammad Ajaj.

- Sakhar Mohammad Ajaj (SBAH Sherqat), as representative;
- Muthanna Ahmed Issa (SBAH Salaheddin);
- Omar Laith Allawi (SBAH Sherqat).

Local logistics:

- Kamal Rasheed Raheem (Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage; retired), as head of logistics (**Fig. A5**);
- Ahmed Khidr Ahmed, known as “Arabi” (SBAH Sherqat), as driver;
- Hussein Abdallah (SBAH Sherqat), as house guard;
- Ali Hussein (SBAH Sherqat), as house guard;
- Bashir Atiah Khalifa (SBAH Sherqat), as cook;
- Ali Hussein Abdallah, as assistant cook (8 February–16 March 2023);
- Omar Hussein Abdallah, as assistant cook (17 February–31 March 2023);
- Ali Saad, as janitor.

Archaeological team:

- Mark Altaweel (University College London); 12 February–19 February 2023;
- Ellen Coster (University of Münster); 17 February–31 March 2023;
- Jörg Fassbinder (LMU Munich); 12 February–26 February 2023;
- Christoph Forster (Datalino; www.datalino.de); 12 February–2 March 2023;
- Cajetan Geiger (Bochum University); 8 February–2 March 2023;
- Jan Heiler (Heidelberg University & LMU Munich); 8 February–31 March 2023;
- Jean-Jacques Herr (LMU Munich & Archaios; <https://www.archaios.fr>); 8 February–26 February 2023;
- Veronica Hinterhuber (LMU Munich); 17 February–31 March 2023;
- Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi (seconded from Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage for find restoration); 8 February–31 March 2023;
- Jana Richter (LMU Munich); 8 February–31 March 2023;
- Jens Rohde (University of Münster & LMU Munich); 8 February–31 March 2023;
- Lena Ruider (LMU Munich); 12 February–26 February 2023;
- Hero Salih Ahmed (seconded from Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage for pottery processing); 9 March–31 March 2023;
- Andrea Squitieri (Heidelberg University & LMU Munich); 8 February–31 March 2023;
- Susanne Weber (LMU Münster); 17 February–31 March 2023;

- Tarik Willis (University of Münster); 17 February–31 March 2023;
- Marco Wolf (LMU Munich); 12 February–26 February 2023.

Local excavation staff (Fig. A6):

- Abu Hais Sa'la, as site guard;
- Issa Ibrahim Atiyah, as site guard;
- Mahjub Mohammad Jar, as foreman (“Sherqati”);
- 14 workers from Sherqat and Sdera.

In addition to the many people working on-site in Assur, various researchers and research teams are processing and analysing finds and samples (§D1) collected during this first field season:

- Animal remains: Joris Peters (LMU Munich);
- Human DNA analysis: Johannes Krause, Philipp Stockhammer and the team of the Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie, Leipzig;
- Material studies: Silvia Amicone and the Competence Center Archaeometry – Baden Wuerttemberg (University of Tübingen): §E2;
- Palaeobotanical analysis: Claudia Sarkady and the Archäobotanisches Labor Eggstätt: §H3;
- Physical anthropology: Rafał Fetner (University of Warsaw);
- Radiocarbon dating: Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie, Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim: §D1.3;

- Sedimentology: Eileen Eckmeier (University of Kiel) and Andreas Stele (Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege): §C4;
- Textile analysis: Annette Paetz gen. Schieck and the Deutsches Textilmuseum Krefeld: §I;
- Wood analysis from charcoals: Katleen Deckers (University of Tübingen, within the context of the ERC project “Climate, Landscape, Settlement and Society: Exploring Human-Environment Interaction in the Ancient Near East” (CLaSS) led by Dan Lawrence (Durham University): §H2;
- XRF analysis: Michaela Schauer (LMU Munich): §E2.

We are very lucky that some of them have been able to produce reports of their work already for this first publication of the Assur Excavation Project, in addition to the reports on the mapping campaign (§C1), the geophysical prospection (§C2), the coring work (§C3) and the excavation (§D), as well as first assessments of the pottery (§E1), the small finds (§F) and the epigraphic finds (cuneiform: §G1; alphabetic: §G2, by Holger Gzella). We are extremely grateful to Dr Laith Majeed Hussein and his SBAH team in Baghdad for enabling us to export the various kinds of samples that underpin the analyses. The return of the leftovers of these samples was formally accepted by SBAH in Baghdad on 23 October 2023.



Fig. A6: The excavation team on the day before the beginning of Ramadan, with the foreman (“Sherqati”) Mahjub Mohammad Jar kneeling to the right of the table. Drone photo by Jens Rohde (22 March 2023).

B. The Andrae House, a monument in its own right: a brief history of the building and its use

Karen Radner & Jana Richter²

120 years ago, the so-called Andrae House was built in the middle of the ruins of the ancient city of Assur to provide a base for the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft headed by Walter Andrae, a trained architect who oversaw most of the construction himself from 1903 onwards. According to Iraqi law, a building receives heritage status when its age exceeds a hundred years.³ Following this definition, the Andrae House itself is a monument within the archaeological site of Assur, and it is consequently part of the dossier submitted to UNESCO when Assur was included in the World Heritage List in 2003, as only the second property in Iraq after Hatra (1985).

In fulfilment of the research permit issued by the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in April of 2022, and as a practical preparation for the first season of new excavations in February and March of 2023, the work programme at the onset of the new project encompassed the repair and restoration of the dilapidated Andrae House. Among the locals of Sherqat, the building is commonly referred to as the “German House” (*al-bayt al-almānī*), “Walter’s Palace” (*qaṣr Fāltr*), “Andrae’s Palace” (*qaṣr Andrayh*) or simply “The Palace” (*al-qaṣr*), and considered a landmark worthy of pride and protection. It has been the subject of a 2020 book written by local historian and retired director of the SBAH Sherqat office Mohammad Ajaj Jarjis, published under the title *Qaṣr Andrayh: maqarr bi’ta at-tanqīb al-almāniya fī Āšūr* (which translates as *Andrae’s*

Palace: the headquarters of the German excavation mission in Assur). But despite the popular emphasis on continuity and preservation, archival materials in the possession of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, kept in the photo archive of the Vorderasiatisches Museum and the central archive of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, attest to extensive changes within and around the building during its existence, as the present contribution aims to highlight.

B1. A brief sketch of the Andrae House’s fortunes from 1903 to 2023

Overlooking the Tigris from its position on the eastern edge of the site and close enough to the old quay wall originally constructed by Adad-nerari I of Assyria (1305–1274 BC) to offer easy access to riverine traffic and transport (**Fig. D1.1**), the house served as Walter Andrae’s permanent residence and base for all his work in Assur. For the twelve years from 1903 to 1914, Andrae lived in the house, interrupted only by two nine-month-long trips to Germany in 1908 and 1912 and a shorter health-related stay in Baghdad over the summer of 1909.⁴

After the German excavation was closed down just before World War I began in 1914, the Ottoman police authority took over the former expedition house as their local headquarters (*qishla*), and the building served in that function until 1920. Following the Iraqi Revolt of 1920 against the proposed British Mandate of Mesopotamia and the subsequent creation of the Kingdom of Iraq under British Administration (“Mandatory Iraq”), the house became the administrative headquarters of the Sherqat district.

After 1929, once the district headquarters had been moved to the town centre of Sherqat, the house stood empty and was handed over to Sheikh Ajil Al-Yawar as a source of reusable building materials. He had the doors

² The authors wish to thank Mohammad Ajaj Jarjis, Sakhar Mohammad Ajaj and Kamal Rasheed Raheem for sharing their knowledge about the house with us, Peter Miglus for information on the 2000 restorations and Helen Gries for help with Andrae’s photographs and paintings. We are very grateful to Daniel Schwemer and Joachim Marzahn of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, to Alrun Gutow and Olaf Teßmer of the photo archive of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, and to Beate Ebel-Borchert of the central archive of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin for their permissions and support of our archival research. High-resolution scans of Andrae’s excavation photos were provided by Alrun Gutow, and Michaela Hussein-Wiedemann digitised the ground plan sketches from Andrae’s letters, and we wish to thank them for their speed and diligence.

³ Jarjis 2020, 35.

⁴ Andrae 1908b, 25; 1909a, 38; 1909b, 45; 1913, 43; Jordan 1909, 44; 1912, 26; Koldewey 1909, 17 (quoting reports by Julius Jordan).

and windows removed for installation at his own house, which was constructed during the years 1929-1931, and also some of the stone walls dismantled for gypsum extraction.⁵ After that, the Andrae House was left in ruins for decades, with many of the remaining ceilings and walls collapsing.

In 1978, it was decided that the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) of Iraq was to resume archaeological research in Assur. The Andrae House was renovated and enlarged to serve as a base for all Iraqi and foreign missions working at the site. Among others, it housed the German teams led by Reinhard Dittmann in 1986-1989, by Barthel Hrouda in 1989-1990 and by Peter Miglus in 2000-2001.⁶ At that time, the house was also turned into the headquarters of the SBAH's Sherqat office. It continued to serve as such until 2008 when a new purpose-built building was constructed outside of the fortification wall at the main entrance to the site, near the Tabira Gate.⁷ Importantly, the new SBAH office building's power and water supplies were connected to the modern town, unlike the Andrae House, which used a generator and an ancient well that had been put back to use in Andrae's time; today, this well is dry.

In 2015, an ISIS terrorist cell took possession of the vacant building and subsequently used it as a military barracks to operate in the Sherqat region. When the Iraqi armed forces attacked late in 2016, the terrorists stripped the building of everything of value, including all furniture, doors, windows, electricity cables and water pipes, and smeared the walls with offensive and obscene graffiti. The Iraqi aerial attacks leading to the recapture of the house resulted in severe damage to the roof of the Great Hall (SB4) and sadly also the destruction of one of the mature palm trees in the courtyard. Once the fighting was over, the staff of SBAH's Sherqat office provisionally cleared and cleaned the house but otherwise had to leave it in ruins. The shell of the building stood empty until September 2022.

In May 2022, Karen Radner received the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Award of the German Research Foundation (DFG) and was in a position to use some of its funds for the restoration of the Andrae House, as part of the fulfilment of the stipulations of the research permit issued by SBAH in April 2022. Her longtime research partner Kamal Rasheed Raheem, the recently retired head of the Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, had overseen the restoration of several similar buildings from



Fig. B1.1: The excavation house from the south, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.

the early 20th century in Sulaymaniyah. Having worked in Assur as a recently graduated SBAH employee in 1980, he agreed to supervise the restoration of the Andrae House. The sculptor and conservator Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi, also from Sulaymaniyah, was recruited to provide further expertise in restoring the historic building using traditional construction methods. He documented the ongoing restoration process, which resulted in a photograph exhibition that was installed in one of the rooms of the west wing in February 2023 (**Figs. B1.1-17, B4.11**).

The involvement of Kamal Rasheed Raheem and Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi was made possible through the generous support of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, which had previously sponsored Barthel Hrouda's work in Assur in 1989-90. The restoration started in September 2022 in close collaboration with the SBAH Sherqat office and was completed in January 2023. In February and March 2023, the building housed the team for the first season of the new excavations and in November 2023, after solar panels and a photovoltaic system had been installed, a smaller team stayed there again to work on the pottery.

⁵ Jarjis 2020, 30.

⁶ Dittmann 1990; Hrouda 1991; Miglus 2000.

⁷ Jarjis 2020, 35.



Fig. B1.2: The eastern gate as seen from the bank of the Tigris, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.



Fig. B1.3: The southeastern corner of the excavation house with the dining room, as seen from the bank of the Tigris, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.



Fig. B1.5: The courtyard's southeastern corner, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.



Fig. B1.4: The courtyard's southwestern corner with the western gate, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.



Fig. B1.6: The façade of the southeastern block of the excavation house, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.



Fig. B1.7: The western gate as seen from inside the excavation house, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.



Fig. B1.9: The courtyard as seen from the roof of the north wing, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.



Fig. B1.8: The eastern gate as seen from inside the excavation house, before and after restoration. Photos by Akam Omar Ahmed Al-Qaradaghi.