

CHAPTER 4

Beginnings at Carchemish

December 1910 – June 1911

ON 10th December 1910 Lawrence sailed for Beirut on board the Messageries Maritimes steamship *Saghalién* which was scheduled to call at Naples, Athens, Smyrna and Constantinople. On the way, the ship developed engine trouble and as a result he had much more time ashore at these ports than he had expected. He seized the chance to visit Athens and explored the Acropolis with the enthusiasm born of a classical education: 'There were no porters, no guides, no visitors. And so I walked through the doorway of the Parthenon, and on into the inner part of it, without really remembering where or who I was. A heaviness in the air made my eyes swim, and wrapped up my senses: I only knew that I, a stranger, was walking on the floor of the place I had most desired to see, the greatest temple of Athene, the palace of art, and that I was counting her columns and finding there only what I already knew. The building was familiar, not cold as in the drawings, but complex, irregular, alive with curve and subtlety, and perfectly preserved. Every line of the mouldings, every minutest refinement in the sculptures were evident in that light, and inevitable in their place. The Parthenon is the protocathedral of the Hellenes. I believe I saw the Erechtheum, and I remember coming back to look again at the Propylea, and to stand again beside the Niké Apteros: but then I came down again into the town, and found it modern and a little different . . . and so only this about Athens, that there is an intoxication, a power of possession in its ruins, and the memories that inhabit them, which entirely prevents anyone attempting to describe or to estimate them'.¹

At Constantinople the *Saghalién* was delayed for several days, and Lawrence used the time to see the city and its museums. He did not reach Beirut until December 21st and arrived at Jebail, his final destination, on Christmas Eve.

In London Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, was taking the final administrative steps needed before Hogarth could begin work at Carchemish. On December 13th the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury were notified of the plans and requested to allocate £2,000, to be drawn as usual in such cases from the Museum's Grant-in-Aid for Purchases. It was not until the end of the month that Kenyon agreed formally to take Lawrence, and he then wrote a further letter to the Treasury seeking approval for the additional cost: 'an offer has been received from Mr. T. E. Lawrence (an Arabic scholar, acquainted with the country, and an expert in the subject of pottery) to join the expedition at Jerablus and to take part in the excavations. Mr. Lawrence is willing to give his services (which will be of very material value) without salary, but I would ask your Lordships to sanction the payment of his actual living expenses while engaged on the excavations, and of his travelling expenses from Beyrout to Jerablus and back'.²

p. 77

Lawrence's knowledge of Arabic was somewhat generously described in this letter, but he was now at Jebail working hard on the north Syrian

dialect that would be spoken in the neighbourhood of Jerablus. During this stay at the American Mission School he made friends with two of the teachers: Miss Fareedeh el Akle, who taught him Arabic, and Mrs Rieder, who encouraged him to improve his French. He made good progress in Arabic and even learned to read and write very simple phrases, though he was suffering from eye-strain which hampered his studies.

Hogarth intended to start work at Carchemish on about February 20th, a week before the deadline imposed by the digging permit. He left England at the beginning of the month, travelling out via Turkey. When he arrived at Constantinople, however, he found the city deep in snow and his journey onwards hindered by quarantines. As a result, by February 20th he had only reached Beirut. The following day he wrote to Kenyon that 'all direct communications with Aleppo are cut by snow. The railway over the Lebanon has been blocked for more than a month and at the best no hope is held out of it being opened again for a week. If any more snow falls it will be longer . . . As the road from Alexandretta is also impassable, there is only one possible way – to go down the coast to Haifa, from there to Damascus by train and thence via Rayak to Aleppo – an affair of three or four days . . . [Campbell] Thompson left here some days ago by that route, but it is not known if he succeeded, for no telegraph is working in the interior and no post comes down'. Two days later he added a postscript: 'A wild fall got up yesterday and still blowing. Much fresh snow on the mountains. Impossible to land at Haifa, so even that way is closed for the moment. Can't say when we can get on. If possible, I shall try crossing Lebanon on foot.'¹³

At Beirut he was joined by an experienced archaeological overseer who had worked with him on several previous excavations. This was Gregorios Antoniou (generally known as Gregori), a Cypriot from Larnaca. Lawrence came down from Jebail to join them, and they made their way to Aleppo via Damascus. The train journey from Haifa to Damascus gave Lawrence his first close acquaintance with Hogarth, whom he had previously seen as an eminent and distant figure: 'He has been very interesting indeed so far, especially on Arabian geography . . . We had a carriage to ourselves, and were otherwise most comfortable . . . Mr. Hogarth of course knew all the country by repute, and by books, and we identified all the mountain peaks and wadies and main roads . . . at Dera'at all was sunny, and we had a French *déjeuner* in the Buffet, where Mr Hogarth spoke Turkish & Greek, & French, & German, & Italian & English all about the same, so far as I could judge: it was a most weird feeling to be actually so far out of Europe'.⁴

p. 78

At Damascus they were again delayed by the appalling weather (this was the worst winter in northern Syria for many years) and, as Hogarth reported sourly to Kenyon, the last stage of their journey was less enjoyable: 'Finally we got a train on the night of the 27th and in the company of time-expired soldiers from the Hauran and of returned Mecca pilgrims who stormed the train irrespective of class, came up here uncomfortably enough.'¹⁵ Hogarth, Thompson and Lawrence at last reached Jerablus on March 11th, more than a week after the digging permit had expired. In view of the weather the Turkish authorities made no difficulties.

The ruins of Carchemish covered ten acres and had lain untouched for thirty years. Lawrence must have been excited by the prospect of finding

out what lay beneath the surface. Hogarth later wrote this description of the city as they found it: 'The site . . . is a large oval surrounded by high embankments except on the north-east where the Euphrates flows past it. These embankments, in places as much as twenty-five feet high, conceal city fortifications of crude brick, and are pierced with two gates, one on the south and one on the west. On the north-east by the river but within the enceinte, rises a much higher and more important mound. Its summit is about 130ft above the mean level of the river, and it has evidently served as an acropolis. It is about 320 metres long from NW-SE and falls with a very steep slope to the river and a gentler one towards the town. The top is flattened and shows signs of having carried important Romano-Syrian structures, huge fragments of which have fallen down, and lie on the landward slope. The oval below this mound (i.e. the main area of the enclosed site) presented . . . different aspects in its eastern and western halves. The eastern, entirely uncultivated, was occupied in parts by hummocks and in part by superficial remains of structures of two epochs. The earlier are those of a Romano-Syrian town, largely built of earlier materials: the later are those of Arab houses, made of old blocks re-used. The hummocks appear to consist entirely of chips and stonerefuse thrown up by searchers for squared stone, and testify to the fact that the early structures on this part of the site have been very systematically destroyed by later builders. The western half of the city area is free of such refuse heaps and of structural remains later than Romano-Syrian: and less even of the latter show above the ground there than on the eastern half. A small tract near the circuit wall on the south-west has been brought under cultivation. One would expect to find the Romano-Syrian structures at any rate less disturbed on this half of the site.'⁶

Chap. 4

p. 79

Hogarth's object in this exploratory season was to find out enough about the site to judge whether the Hittite remains were worth more thorough excavation. He could not attempt any systematic digging in a single season and had not brought the equipment that would be necessary for such work. He knew that Henderson had discovered Hittite remains at the foot of the mound, including part of a large staircase. The position of this earlier digging was clear from the spoil heaps left behind and from a large stone relief still partly visible above ground. Hogarth decided to begin work in the same place since it seemed likely that there would have been buildings in the vicinity of a stairway. Also he knew that Henderson's men had reburied in their trenches some finds that could not be transported to England.

Excavation began on March 13th and soon more than a hundred men were employed. Hogarth found this workforce 'good of its kind though wholly unskilled. Since there are neither roads nor towns of any size in the district, the natives had never done navvy work and had no idea how to handle any tools but the simplest, or to deal with large stones. In training them Gregorios soon proved his value, and without him we should not have done in the following six weeks half the work that was actually done.'⁷

The expedition took over a stone-built house in Jerablus belonging to the local liquorice company. This provided little shelter from the cold weather and their first impressions of life in the village were very bleak. 'It is fortunate I brought a month's complete supplies out,' Hogarth reported, 'for there is almost nothing to be got here yet, not even bread. I have never

p. 80

been in so poor a country.¹⁸

In 1908, when the excavations had first been planned, the Museum had expected Hogarth to run them himself. Now that he was Keeper of the Ashmolean, however, long absences abroad were no longer possible. He would soon have to return to Oxford, and since the dig had started late he could spend only five weeks on the site. It had been arranged that Campbell Thompson, the second-in-command, would take over when Hogarth left. Thompson, however, was a cuneiformist with little experience relevant to these excavations, and Hogarth had some doubts about his capability. After watching him at work for a few days Hogarth wrote to Kenyon: 'Thompson ought really to have a second helper besides Lawrence. The latter will second him admirably in observing and recording – in fact he is a far better *archaeologist* properly speaking than Thompson – but not in driving'.⁹

Another preoccupation was the Berlin–Baghdad Railway, which was being built by German construction companies. The route had not been fixed when the British Museum applied to excavate at Jerablus in 1908. Now, however, the railway had become a threat. Hogarth told Kenyon: 'It seems certain that the Baghdad Railway is going via Jerablus. Could you speak to Sir E. Grey [the Foreign Secretary] about the latter in view of possible future complications with the Railway? If the Company gets (as usual) a wide strip (10 kilometres or so) on either side of their line, it will include our site. But your rights to excavate it ought to be reserved . . . Of course I cannot be quite sure of the exact point chosen for the bridge-head. I doubt if it has been decided yet.'¹⁰

The choice of route was probably no accident since Hogarth later heard that the scheme to go via Carchemish had been favoured by Meissner Pasha, director of the railway project, 'simply in the hope of getting loot for himself out of the site. He is a collector of antiques and art objects!'¹¹ The railway bridge across the Euphrates at Jerablus would take several years to build, and there was already a construction camp there with a team of German engineers. Since the railway company also employed local labour, there was competition between the German and English expeditions.

Lawrence's first duties at Carchemish were a natural continuation of his work on medieval pottery in Oxford: 'It seems likely that I will take particular charge of the pottery found: that would be a business very much to my taste.'¹² Very little pottery came to light during the first few weeks, but Lawrence was kept busy and his Arabic was constantly in demand on the site. After a few days he wrote about the dig to his parents: 'Work begins at sunrise (6.0 a.m.), we breakfast first and walk down a little later. Thompson is surveying the site, and will be to the end of the week. Mr. Hogarth does the writing up of the results: I do the squeezing* and drawing the inscriptions and sculptures, and (with the great Gregori . . .) direct the men. Work goes on (with an hour for lunch) till sunset. Then home: write up journals: and catalogues: feed, and go to bed. This week has been extra busy putting up shelves, and fitting doors, windows etc. This I have done mostly, being handiest . . . We uncovered a great entrance staircase with some Hittite slabs on each side . . . there is no doubt of the great richness of the site . . . many of the slabs found have been too defaced for photography. These I have been trying to draw on a large scale for reproduction: this has been a big business. One lion's

head is very fine work, artistically: also a god or king . . . The district is exceedingly pretty, from the model-village with its spring to the Euphrates, and the plain of Tell Ahmar, and the Taurus, snow-covered, to the north. The whole affair till now has been ideal, or would be if one had time to think about it.¹³ Chap. 4

The digs were yielding many fragments of stone bearing Hittite inscriptions, and Carchemish soon proved extremely rich in these texts. Many years later the distinguished Assyriologist R. D. Barnett would write: 'The collection of inscriptions from Carchemish has proved of the greatest importance in the study and decipherment of this script. Whatever the reasons may be, the Carchemish texts equal or exceed both in number and importance those from all other sites. It certainly seems that at least in the first millennium BC the metropolis of the hieroglyphs was Carchemish.'¹⁴

The discovery of these indecipherable texts was a continuing source of frustration, especially to Thompson. Despite their hopes of a bilingual inscription, none was found and the site yielded almost nothing in cuneiform. Lawrence, however, was enjoying himself greatly and his letters to England were filled with accounts of entertaining incidents. He was more used to rough living than his companions and watched their discomfort with amusement. On March 27th, for instance, he wrote to Leeds about their living accommodation: 'the house . . . is of stone, with mud floors and roof, and from the roof little bits drop all day and all night: and it is full of birds that baptize the bald-heads at their leisure . . . Then there are the cats: Father (who is only suffered, not encouraged) . . . comes in at the holes in the roof and walls by night, and offends lewdly in our beds. Then D.G.H[ogarth] throws a boot towards it and hits Thompson, and plants it in the bath, or knocks the light down: and when he has got out and repaired damages he finds the cat in his bed when he lies down again. So much for Father. Mother is plaintive, and rather a bore: she wails aloud for food, usually about 2 a.m: then she gets it, but in a tin: of late she receives sympathy, in spite of one very irregular night, when she woke me up with her claws over the face, and [roused] the rest of the expedition (who sleep together, with piled revolvers) by trying to escape my yells by jumping off the jam-tins through the window. She only knocked the tins down of course, and fell short in the wash-basin. Of late Mother has been in the family way, with Thompson a very gallant midwife. Her four kittens . . . make a ghastly noise in the Expeditionary bedroom half the night: I am a tolerable sleeper, but the others get up two or three times each, and draw beads on each other with revolvers.'¹⁵ p. 82

The lack of a light railway or lifting tackle imposed a considerable restriction on the digging. Some parts of the site were totally inaccessible beneath Roman cement foundations. Elsewhere, the Hittite remains lay under tons of shattered Roman masonry: 'Whenever we break fresh ground dozens of these huge blocks have to be moved. Some of them weigh tons, and we have no blasting powder or stone-hammers with us. As a result they have to be hauled, prehistoric fashion, by brute force of men on ropes, helped to a small extent by crowbars. At this moment something over sixty men are tugging away above, each man yelling

* i.e. making a copy of an inscription or design by applying wet paper over it.

Yallah as he pulls: the row is tremendous, but the stones usually come away. Two men out of three presume to direct operations, and no one listens to any of them, they just obey Gregori's orders, and their shouting is only to employ their spare breath.¹⁶ One of the three Englishmen had to be on the site whenever work was going on, and Lawrence spent a great deal of his time there. This gave him the opportunity to learn much more about the local people. Chap. 4

By the end of March, Hogarth had cleared as much of the stairway as he could. The upper part seemed to have been destroyed; in any case it gave out beneath huge stones and earlier spoil heaps that could not be moved. Lower down, however, it was well preserved and he decided to dig at its foot, hoping to find buildings. Into this area, which Henderson had not disturbed, he cut a trench leading out from the staircase and roughly equal to it in width. This eventually revealed a low wall about one and a half metres high which continued the line of the stair. Beside the wall were carved slabs, some very broken, which had evidently stood on top of it. In front was a surface paved with round cobblestones from the Euphrates, and it seemed that the wall had formed one side of a roadway approaching the staircase. Since the wall suggested a substantial building, this part of the site was later christened 'the Lower Palace'. p. 83

Unfortunately the Hittite level was nearly seven metres underground and it was therefore impossible to excavate a large area without a light railway to carry away spoil. There were also obstacles such as Roman remains and some of Henderson's earlier spoil heaps on the surface. As a result, Hogarth's trench could only extend twenty metres or so and although the carved reliefs he had found were very interesting, the rest of the Lower Palace had to remain unexplored. The reliefs evidently formed a narrative series and showed Hittite warriors in full panoply; these were of great interest since no such pictures had previously been discovered. Among them was a great slab, almost complete, which carried the longest Hittite hieroglyphic text ever found. It seemed, however, that the Hittite city had been very thoroughly ransacked and destroyed, and Hogarth feared that this did not augur well for the excavations.

Since further work near the staircase was blocked in almost every direction, he began trial diggings on the mound itself in an attempt to find out what lay within it. Pits were dug in the top and headings driven into the sides, but again the diggers faced daunting obstacles. Hogarth could not hope to do more than find out whether there were any remains of early buildings on the mound.

After only two and a half weeks' work he wrote to Kenyon: 'It is too early, of course, to prophesy: but I begin to foresee or suspect two things: (1) that there is no important *primitive* stratum here, except, perhaps, inside the big mound (2) that the earliest and most important building is in the Acropolis mound under at least 20ft. of debris and silt, and probably under much more. To get down to this, or to get into it from the sides of the mound, will be a very heavy task owing to the size and weight of the fallen blocks.' He already had doubts about recommending future seasons: 'I should not advise you to go on here in order to get only Hittite inscriptions of a comparatively late period and Hittite-Assyrian reliefs. You want cuneiform records, and early and fairly well-preserved buildings with their decoration and furniture. These we have not yet got.'¹⁷

By now Hogarth was more confident about Thompson's ability to take over the dig. Furthermore, 'in certain archaeological points on which he is weak, Lawrence is strong . . . I have found Lawrence an admirable adjutant, and you will be wise to make all the use of him you can. He gets on excellently with Thompson.'¹⁸ Chap. 4
p. 84

Though Lawrence found digging 'tremendous fun, and most exciting and interesting',¹⁹ his letters reflect the growing doubt about a second season. Indeed, Hogarth was now considering the alternative sites he had visited in 1908, notably Tell Ahmar, which he thought might repay two seasons' work in 1913–14 if Carchemish came to nothing. Lawrence was enthusiastic about this prospect, especially since Hogarth would not be free to work there, 'and the place would be left to Thompson and myself. Thompson is not a digger, so the direction of that part would be my share . . . Mr. Hogarth suggested that a season or half a season with Petrie in Egypt might be valuable experience: and of course it would be. Digging in any case would be always a thing I would try to do, and the more I know of it the better.'²⁰

While Lawrence worked at Carchemish, his father was still trying to reach some kind of arrangement with Vyvyan Richards about financing the projected printing venture. Neither of Lawrence's parents liked Richards, and they would have been happy to see the scheme abandoned. Lawrence, however, stuck to it tenaciously, urging his father on: 'I do not much concern myself about the exact arrangements (one cannot at this distance) but I would prefer one on which Richards . . . agreed: if not, let it be . . . [father's] arrangement, since it is he who provides the money. Only it is not a gift or loan to Richards, as a person merely. It is an attempt to get started the press we both desire so much: the mere question of whether Richards himself is approved or not does not enter the question hardly at all. I gathered that Florence [Messham] does not like him: his assumption of intellectual conceit tired her: but remember that people do not usually wear their inside skin out. I think myself that he is quite a heaven-sent partner.'²¹

He returned to the subject in another letter: 'Richards has been a little remiss in the business line I expect: of course he has no time to spare for it, with all the interest of type-designing, and the annoyance of his school-work. I do not think a lease of less than twenty years would be sufficient: my own wishes would put it at thirty or forty to be altogether on the safe side. But I fear very much he will never get it done: in which case I fear my opportunities of doing something good that will count will be very small: at least I am not going to put all my energies into rubbish like writing history, or becoming an archaeologist. I would much rather write a novel even, or become a newspaper correspondent:— however there is still hope that Richards may pull the thing through: I am doing nothing to help out here, while he is going steadily ahead through twice as much mess as we have any conception of, with no side interests whatever. There is something really great – and fine – about the man. One feels so selfish enjoying oneself out here when one might be in the fight. It is no laughing matter to be working against the twentieth century.'²² p. 85

Despite this passionate outburst, Lawrence was progressing steadily towards an archaeological career. In due course Hogarth wrote to Flinders Petrie, head of the British School of Archaeology in Egypt: 'Can you

make room on your excavations next winter for a young Oxford graduate, T. Lawrence, who has been with me at Carchemish? He is a very unusual type, and a man whom I feel quite sure you would approve of and like. He has very wide and exact archaeological knowledge, though not of Egyptian things, and, in view of his being employed in the future by the British Museum or others, I should very much like him to get some experience of your School, particularly in tomb digging. I think if you put him to help, for example, on a prehistoric tomb site you would not repent it. If he goes to you he would probably come on foot from north Syria. I may add that he is extremely indifferent to what he eats or how he lives. He knows a good deal of Arabic, though it is of the northern Syrian variety. I hope very much that you will be able to make room for him, for about a month at least, for I can assure you that he is really worth while.¹²³

Hogarth and Gregori left Carchemish on April 20th, having given Thompson careful instructions about work to be attempted during the rest of the season. In practice, the amount that could be undertaken was limited by the number of workmen that could be properly supervised. Thompson and Lawrence, together with Sheikh Hamoudi, a local man trained as an overseer by Gregori, could not handle more than eighty men. Hogarth felt that the season had already produced a number of worthwhile finds, as he told Kenyon: 'You have got and will continue to get quite enough Hittite sculpture and inscriptions . . . to justify the dig. Small things are still very few. I regard the result so far as adequate, but not brilliant, and unless the yield of the Palace increases or the western part of the site proves better preserved, I should probably not advise a second season. But a full first season must be done.'¹²⁴

After Hogarth left, Lawrence sent home a fuller account of life on the dig: 'After breakfast we go down to the site, at which the men have been under their overseers since about 5.30 . . . The men dig till 8.30, have a half hour's rest, and then go on till twelve, when they knock off for an hour and a half: after that they work till five. We have dinner about seven or half-past, according to the mercy of Haj Wahid, the cook-cavass.

p. 86

'While the men dig we loaf: which resolves itself into copying inscriptions, measuring depths and levels, and photographing. For the last I have five cameras, none much good but my own. Thompson is only a button-pusher. While we are at work on the top of the hill there is very little to do, as at present; so Thompson and I have divided the day, working each a morning or an afternoon at the house on our finds, or at the digs, alternately. I have control over the pottery . . .

'The most pleasing part of the day is when the breakfast-hour gets near: from all the villages below us on the plain there come long lines of red and blue women and children, carrying bread in red-check handkerchiefs, and wooden measures full of *leben* on their heads. The men are not tired then, and the heat is just pleasant, and they chatter about and jest and sing in very delightful style. A few of them bring shepherd's pipes, and make music of their sort. As a rule, they are not talkative: they will sit for minutes together at the house-door without a word . . . Some of the workmen are rather fine-looking fellows: all of course as thin as sticks: and the majority small: there was no one within an inch of Mr. Hogarth's height: indeed the majority are hardly more than mine. Many shave their heads, others let their hair grow in long plaits, like Hittites.

'Today, Saturday, is pay day . . . Each man, or nearly each man, gets an

extra every week, according to the value of his finds. This little gamble Chap. 4
appeals to them immensely.¹²⁵

Lawrence's plans for the future were now gradually changing. When he came to Carchemish he had had three firm projects. The first was to prepare an Oxford B.Litt. on medieval pottery; the second, to set up a printing press with Vyvyan Richards; and the third to develop his thesis on Crusader castles into a book.

Now, however, he was strongly attracted by the life he was leading at Carchemish. Outdoor work on the dig was balanced by intellectual luxuries in the evenings, such as talking to Hogarth and Thompson or reading. The idea of combining field archaeology with travel and writing, as Hogarth had done, appealed to Lawrence greatly. He was thinking increasingly of Doughty's example and began to find himself more interested in the people of Syria than in its ancient buildings. Before leaving England he had thought of travelling among the itinerant Soleyb, a people in whose company he might pass unobtrusively among the Arabs. In May, as the prospects for a second season at Carchemish faded, he wrote earnestly about the idea to his parents: 'The Soleyb . . . are not gypsies . . . and deny all connection with them. They are pagan, and by common consent the original, pre-Arab, inhabitants of Arabia. They go on foot, often, by preference, since some have wealth and baggage-camels: are great hunters of gazelles, hospitable simple folk, in no way fanatical. They are much despised by the Arabs, who as you will see in Doughty are feather-brained and rampol-witted. He always has a good word for the Soleyb, but told me he thought their mode of life would be very primitive . . . I am not trying to rival Doughty. You remember that passage that he who has once seen palm-trees and the goat-hair tents is never the same as he had been: that I feel very strongly, and I feel also that Doughty's two year wandering in untainted places made him the man he is, more than all his careful preparation before and since. My books would be the better, if I had been for a time in open country: and the Arab life is the only one that still holds the early poetry which is the easiest to read . . . the Soleyb . . . never touch Egypt or Sinai; but wander among the Aneyza, as far as Resafeh: sometimes a few will come into Damascus: more to Baghdad (from which I would start): usually they will only trade with towns like Resafeh, through the agency of half-nomadic Arabs. A spring and summer with them (which is what I was thinking of) would be a fresh experience: but I have no intention of making a book of it. I would not even go down in Arabia proper . . . I do not like the modern habit of wrenching all legends into the purpose of anthropology.'¹²⁶ Lawrence discussed the idea with Hogarth, who reminded him that the Soleyb were reputed to eat the gazelle they hunted raw. Hogarth later recalled that this 'seemed to give him pause!'¹²⁷ p. 87

On his return to England, Hogarth drafted a long report for the British Museum, setting out the conclusions he had been able to reach about the digs. He ended: 'I venture to recommend that the work be allowed to continue under Mr. Campbell Thompson's direction . . . throughout the coming summer, so long as he is able to keep it going economically, or until he has proved that neither the Acropolis nor the ground near its landward foot and on the West of the site is likely to yield adequate return to your expenditure . . . If in the course of May and June, he hits on a

favourable spot or on spots where the Hittite stratum can be explored, without too great expenditure, he might well be allowed to continue as long as funds are available . . . even six months more work at present rates would leave a balance on the total credit probably sufficient for winding up the excavation . . . A site, so extensive and so notorious as Jerablus, demands, I think, a very full trial, which can hardly last for less than a full season.¹²⁸

Hogarth must already have known that a satisfactory exploration was impossible, given the scale of the site, the small workforce that remained, and the obstacles presented by post-Hittite debris. In these circumstances a first season could show that further digs were warranted, but could not definitely prove the contrary. Thompson was now to test a large area by digging pits at intervals in the hope of chancing on something that would justify more thorough excavation, although as Hogarth said, 'pitting over a site, which carried no superficial indication of what its lower stratum contains, is haphazard work at best'.²⁹

On May 14th the site was visited by Gertrude Bell, already a traveller and archaeologist of some distinction. Hogarth's two young assistants did their utmost to conceal their inexperience and the season's disappointing results. Lawrence wrote home: 'she told Thompson his ideas of digging were prehistoric: and so we had to squash her with a display of erudition. She was taken (in five minutes) over Byzantine, Crusader, Roman, Hittite, and French architecture (my part) and over Greek folk-lore, Assyrian architecture, and Mesopotamian ethnology (by Thompson); prehistoric pottery and telephoto lenses, Bronze Age metal technique, Meredith, Anatole France and the Octobrists (by me): the Young Turk movement, the construct state in Arabic, the price of riding camels, Assyrian burial-customs, and German methods of excavation with the Baghdad railway (by Thompson). This was a kind of hors d'oeuvre: and when it was over (she was getting more respectful) we settled down each to seven or eight subjects and questioned her upon them. She was quite glad to have tea after an hour and a half, and on going told Thompson that he had done wonders in his digging in the time, and that she thought *we* had got everything out of the place that could possibly have been got: she particularly admired the completeness of our note-books.

'So we did for her . . . It would have been most annoying if she had denounced our methods in print. I don't think she will.'³⁰

Gertrude too wrote home about the meeting, but if their efforts had impressed her, she did not comment on the fact: 'I . . . found Mr. Thompson and a young man called Lawrence (he is going to make a traveller) who had for some time been expecting that I would appear. They showed me their diggings and their finds and I spent a pleasant day with them.'³¹

Thompson was planning to finish work at the end of June; without cuneiform inscriptions the dig held little interest for him and he was to get married as soon as the season was over. Early that month Lawrence wrote to Leeds that 'the site looks as though it has small-pox with complications, pits and eruptions everywhere . . . and Thompson is packing with a sort of ghoulish joy . . . the course of true love.'³² Hogarth, however, was in less of a hurry. The dig could be continued cheaply for some time, and the cost so far was barely more than half the budget. He therefore wrote telling Thompson to stay on as long as there was worthwhile work,

perhaps even into August. Lawrence was delighted, although an extension to the season would interfere with the plans he had made to visit Syrian castles. He wrote to Hogarth: 'the idea of digging on is glorious, for there is really hope of several parts of the digs.'¹³³ Thompson's dismay can be imagined, but he wrote loyally to Kenyon: 'Both Lawrence and I are delighted at the prospect of continuing, however long . . . Lawrence tells me that he is in no wise troubled by the heat of this country, as he walked continually throughout last summer through Syria . . . I spent a year at Mosul, six months in the Sudan and two summers at Chicago'.¹³⁴

Towards the end of June their luck began to turn, and they made a series of interesting finds. Earlier, they had extended Hogarth's trench at the foot of the staircase a few metres and discovered that the 'Lower Palace' wall turned back at right angles. By excavating inside this corner they had hoped to reveal the interior of a palace room; but to their disappointment the back of the wall was only rough stonework and this had cast doubt on the whole 'Lower Palace' theory. Now, however, they discovered rooms behind the wall in another place; the truth was that their first pit had struck some kind of courtyard. They also found two Hittite houses with walls standing to a good height and interesting pottery including a great many model horses made from terracotta.

Lawrence's delight over these finds was shortlived. On June 24th they received a cable from Kenyon which contradicted Hogarth's instructions: 'Thompson care of British Consul Alep. When Palace with north acropolis and houses and tombs well tested stop work Kenyon.' Thompson replied at once: 'Closing fortnight'¹³⁵ and Lawrence wrote to his family dejectedly: 'Have had orders to clear out as soon as possible: so in a fortnight we will shut down the digs. By the terms of the telegram from the British Museum they are so disappointed at our results that there will be no second season. It is a great pity for we had on the strength of our former orders, just begun important clearances. We will leave the site like a warren, all disfigured with rubbish heaps and with all the work only half done: altogether about the most unsatisfactory job that one can imagine.'¹³⁶

p. 90

Notes for Chapter 4. Beginnings at Carchemish

December 1910 – June 1911

1. T. E. Lawrence to his family December 1910 *HL* pp. 115-16; *MB* pp. 26-7. Bodleian MS Res C13.
2. F. G. Kenyon to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, late December 1910. BM/A holds Kenyon's manuscript drafts of this and other letters. His secretary normally added the exact date to the draft when typing out a letter, but in this instance did not.
3. D. G. Hogarth to F. G. Kenyon 21-23.2.1911. BM/A.
4. T. E. Lawrence to his family 26.2.1911 *HL* pp. 135-7. Bodleian MS Res C13.
5. D. G. Hogarth to F. G. Kenyon 2.3.1911. BM/A.
6. D. G. Hogarth, report to the British Museum 20.5.1911, pp. 3-4. BM/A.
7. *Ibid.* p. 3.
8. D. G. Hogarth to F. G. Kenyon 16.3.1911. BM/A.
9. *Ibid.*

10. D. G. Hogarth to F. G. Kenyon 2.3.1911. BM/A.
11. D. G. Hogarth to F. G. Kenyon 10.5.1912. BM/A.
12. T. E. Lawrence to his family 1.3.1911 *HL* p. 138. Bodleian MS Res C13.
13. T. E. Lawrence to his family 20.3.1911 *HL* pp. 141-2. Bodleian MS Res C13.
14. R. D. Barnett in *Carchemish* Vol. III (London, The British Museum, 1952) p. 258.
15. T. E. Lawrence to E. T. Leeds 27.3.1911 *L-L* pp. 17-18; *MB* p. 31-2. Leeds papers.
16. T. E. Lawrence to his family 31.3.1911 *HL* p. 143; *MB* p. 33. Bodleian MS Res C13.
17. D. G. Hogarth to F. G. Kenyon 1.4.1911. BM/A.
18. *Ibid.*
19. T. E. Lawrence to his family 11.4.1911 *HL* p. 148; *MB* p. 35. Bodleian MS Res C13.
20. T. E. Lawrence to his family 16.4.11 *HL* p. 149. Bodleian MS Res C13.
21. T. E. Lawrence to his family 11.3.1911 omitted from *HL* p. 140; *MB* p. 30. Bodleian MS Res C13.
22. T. E. Lawrence to his family 11.4.1911 omitted from *HL* p. 147; *MB* p. 34. Bodleian MS Res C13.
23. D. G. Hogarth to W. M. F. Petrie 10.7.1911. Ashmolean A.
24. D. G. Hogarth to F. G. Kenyon 24.4.1911. BM/A.
25. T. E. Lawrence to his family 29.4.1911 *HL* pp. 150-1; *MB* pp. 35-6. Bodleian MS Res C13.
26. T. E. Lawrence to his family 11.5.1911 *HL* pp. 206-7 (where the date is wrongly inferred as 11.5.1912). Bodleian MS Res C13.
27. D. G. Hogarth, *The Life of C. M. Doughty* (London, OUP, 1928) p. 176 n. 1.
28. D. G. Hogarth, report to the British Museum 20.5.1911, pp. 39-40. BM/A.
29. *Ibid.* p. 20.
30. T. E. Lawrence to his family 23.5.1911 *HL* pp. 161-2; *MB* pp. 36-7. Bodleian MS Res C13. Lawrence's closing remarks were meant seriously. Gertrude Bell was already influential. She was twenty years older than Lawrence and eight years older than Thompson.
31. G. M. L. Bell to her family 18.5.1911 *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*, ed. Lady Bell (London, Ernest Benn, 1927) Vol. I, pp. 305-6.
32. T. E. Lawrence to E. T. Leeds 2.6.1911 *L-L* p. 22. Leeds papers.
33. T. E. Lawrence to D. G. Hogarth 8.6.1911 *MB* p. 38.
34. R. C. Thompson to F. G. Kenyon 14.6.1911. BM/A.
35. R. C. Thompson to F. G. Kenyon 24.6.1911. BM/A. Kenyon's telegram, as received in Carchemish, actually read: 'Thomanson care of Britsch Consul Alep. When palace with norwth acropovliot and houses and tombs well tested shop work. Kenyon'.
36. T. E. Lawrence to his family 24.6.1911 *HL* p. 172; omitted from *MB* p. 39. Bodleian MS Res C13.