

PREFACE

The purpose of this booklet is to present in a condensed form the most reliable information available on the early days of the petroleum industry. This information is necessarily far from complete, partly because our knowledge of ancient technology is so slight and partly because there have so far been so few analyses of ancient materials available. The author has ventured to correct the last point by procuring and analysing some old mastics of which both the application and the date were known. He is of course aware that the information thus acquired is still vague, but he hopes that this lack of data will be repaired in the near future. Most of the samples discussed in this book were procured by Dr. H. Frankfort, to whom my warmest thanks are due. The archeological side of our investigation presented grave difficulties especially on the collection and translation of the texts quoted in our book, which task would have been too much for a chemist, had he not had the kind help of such experts as Prof. R. Campbell Thompson, F. Thureau Dangin, Prof. Dr. J. Ruska, Prof. Dr. J. Ph. Vogel, Dr. A. de Buck, Prof. Dr. D. Cohen, Prof. H. Lamer and Dr. H. M. R. Leopold, for whose suggestions and corrections he wishes to express his sincere gratitude. Last but not least my thanks are due to the Trustees of The British Museum and The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago who graciously gave their permission to include so many important illustrations from their collections and excavations.

The author is of course aware that his treatment of the subject is far from complete but he hopes it will be of some use to archeologists and petroleum engineers. Any corrections and suggested amendments will be gratefully received.

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