

Antiquity

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Editorial Notes

THIS is the 120th number of ANTIQUITY, which has now concluded 30 years of its existence. Our circulation continues to rise steadily, as it must if we are to cope with the continuous rise in the cost of production. Archaeology is now popular; archaeological books are best sellers, and their standard is, on the whole, high. Throughout all these years we have tried to maintain our own standard and to give our readers popular but authoritative news and comments on what archaeologists are discovering. Our last number was very well received, and from the letters we have had we know that our readers liked it. We value these expressions of opinion very highly, and wish to thank those who wrote them; they could do us a good turn by getting others to subscribe and by giving their friends, as a Christmas present, a year's subscription to ANTIQUITY.



Part of our business is to keep readers up-to-date in the matter of books about archaeology, and this we do by printing reviews of them and by our advertisements. We do not, of course, censor our advertisements, but readers may be assured that the books we advertise are all of them good value and would also make useful Christmas presents! *Bones for the Archaeologist*, for example, by Dr Cornwall, is indispensable for an excavator because it shows him how to identify all those tiresome but important animal bones which turn up and embarrass him wherever he digs. Animal bones provide essential information about the life of prehistoric man, whether he was a hunter of game, a fisher or a herdsman. Perhaps we may be excused, in this context, if we mention also our own book, *Archaeology in the Field* (also a Phoenix House book) which is still selling well.



We wish to congratulate the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, which this year celebrates its Silver Jubilee. In order to mark the occasion a special exhibition is being held in the British Museum, by kind permission of the Trustees. The exhibition was declared open by Sir Leonard Woolley, on 14 November and will continue for a period of two months, in the Assyrian Basement, where the famous Assyrian sculpture found by Layard a century ago is also displayed and newly arranged. The School has excavated at eleven Mesopotamian sites which range over a period from about 5000 B.C. to 300 B.C., and have revealed the early development of city life in the Tigris, Khabur and Balikh valleys. Here may be seen the magnificent polychrome pottery from Arpachiyah, c. 4500 B.C., and pictures of the earliest domed buildings; the first sculpture from N.E.

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Syria, c. 3400 B.C. ; a golden altar panel from the Eye Temple at Brak, c. 3000 B.C., and many other treasures of predynastic and early dynastic times. Afterwards, written records, mostly on clay tablets, reflect the increased economic prosperity which is illustrated by an abundance of metal work, jewellery and technological progress in all the arts and crafts. The arrival of the horse and the wheeled car, c. 2000 B.C. is well demonstrated by discoveries at Chagar Bazar in the Khabur valley. More recent work is illustrated by the remarkable finds from Nimrud (ancient Calah, the military capital of Assyria) where for seven seasons since the War, buildings, documents, art treasures and topographical information have widened our knowledge of the ancient Near East, particularly in the period 900–612 B.C. Notable exhibits from Nimrud include the earliest writing on waxed ivory tablets; a gold and ivory plaque depicting a lioness killing an Ethiopian; a collection of small ivory masterpieces, and a treaty tablet six hundred lines in length drawn up between King Esarhaddon of Assyria and the Medes in the year 672 B.C.

A handbook entitled *Twenty-five Years of Mesopotamian Discovery* describing the progress of Mesopotamian archaeology during this period has been written by Professor M. E. L. Mallowan who has directed all the School's archaeological expeditions. This short illustrated book will be available at the exhibition.



It is now common to deplore the cumbersome processes involved in collecting archaeological data out of a growing number of books, periodicals and unpublished collections ; an ever larger part of research work consists in repeated compilations which often result in the independent recording of the same facts by different individuals, in personal files which are seldom open to public use. In order to meet the obvious shortcomings of such a wasteful process, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique recently experimented at the French Institute of Archaeology in Beirut with a new method of recording archaeological data, combining the advantages of the public, but rigid, inventory in book form with those of the flexible, but usually private, index on loose notes. To reach that goal, it was found convenient to substitute—or add—to the traditional bound catalogue a set of cards containing the most minute description of the objects concerned, in terms of a precise analytical language—a 'code'—specially designed for that purpose. The elements of any description, for a given document, are transcribed on the card through a system of punchings, which make it possible to pick out in a few seconds, with the help of a simple and inexpensive instrument, all the cards punched in the same position(s), i.e. all the documents presenting one or several features in common.



The first index of that type concerns the metal tools of the Bronze Age found between the Balkans and the Indus Valley, with the exclusion of Egypt. It is now complete, in so far as the documents have been available to its author Mr Jean Deshayes, in the libraries and museums of Europe and the Near East ; the number of cards amounts at present to about 3,500*.

* For more details concerning the scope and nature of the index, see *Le fichier mecanographique de l'outillage*, a pamphlet edited and distributed by the French Institute of Archaeology in Beirut.

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There is no limit to the number of descriptive features which can be recorded for any given object, nor to the number of ' questions ' which can be asked of the index in a single sorting operation. New documents are filed in as they become available, so that the index is easily kept up to date. Finally, it can be used by persons speaking different languages, for the definition of each individual feature in the code is given either by a drawing, or by a clear specification which will eventually be translated in English, German and Russian. Experimental indexes of the same nature are being set up for other fields of archaeology : weapons, ceramics and various sorts of iconographical documents such as coins and cylinders. It is hoped that an international agreement may soon be reached on the methods and standards of objective analysis which are thus proposed ; the wide distribution, at a relatively moderate cost of such public indexes should then meet the needs of all scholars for an improved method of handling a mass of documents which will otherwise prove more and more unwieldy.



Museums are essential for all students of archaeology, but they are somewhat unaccountable in their habits, as we all know to our cost. How often have we arrived, notebook in hand and full of eager anticipation, only to find the doors closed ! How could we know beforehand that we had chosen the wrong day ? We could not, because there was no comprehensive guide to tell us. That has now been put right by Index Publishers Limited, who have printed an excellent booklet giving just this information about the museums and picture galleries of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Index Publishers Ltd., 69 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, 3 shillings from publishers, 50 cents in U.S.A. and Canada). The Index has been produced with official support and co-operation, and contains details of over 700 institutions and is illustrated with more than 100 photographic reproductions. Archaeologists and tourists will find it quite indispensable.



Professor Leslie White, of the Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, writes saying that he is collecting materials for a biography of Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) who, together with Sir Edward Tylor, is generally regarded as the founder of anthropology. He is anxious to obtain photostatic copies of letters written by Morgan to certain well-known people with whom he is known to have corresponded, and in order to help him to achieve this we print their names here, in the hope that librarians or others may be able to help ; the date of the correspondence is given in brackets :—Charles Darwin (1871-77), Sir John Lubbock, later Lord Avebury (1871), Sir Henry Sumner Maine (1871-80), John Ferguson McLennan (date uncertain), Herbert Spencer (1872-77), Edward Burnett Tylor (1873), Charles Staniland Wake (1875).