

Antiquity

VOL. XLV No. 177

MARCH 1971

Editorial

We published in the last issue Professor Brian Fagan's review of A. J. Bruwer's *Zimbabwe: Rhodesia's Ancient Greatness* in which he said 'one cannot fail to be concerned at the effect which a book like this can have on public opinion about important archaeological sites. . . . The archaeologist's responsibility is to reconstruct history without regard to vested interest or racist thinking. The resurrection of the Phoenician controversy at Zimbabwe could have serious effects on African archaeology.' This fear has proved, alas, to be justified. Roger Summers, until recently Curator of the National Museum, Bulawayo, has left Rhodesia and is now on the staff of the South African Museum at Cape Town; and Peter Garlake, until recently Senior Inspector of the Rhodesian Historical Monuments Commission, has left for West Africa. Garlake said he saw Government intervention over Zimbabwe as 'a personal attack on the integrity of archaeologists who have studied the subject in great detail'.

¶ The Rhodesian paper *Property and Finance* published in October an evil and entirely misinformed and unjustified attack on Roger Summers under the heading 'Zimbabwe pamphlets encourage Black nationalist claims'. We quote from this scurrilous, unsigned article:

The announcement that a new official *Guide Book to Zimbabwe* is being prepared is a reminder that, as tourism is one of the country's major economic growth-points, the revision of some Government-produced tourist pamphlets on the famous ruins is also long overdue. The constant theme of the pamphlets, now, reflects totally unproven assumptions substantiating Pan-African claims that for centuries Rhodesia was the centre of a sophisticated Negroid 'civilization'.

The political implications are clear: if the claims are justified, there should be no legitimate opposition to a Black take-over of the country. It is no accident that the banned nationalist groups refer to Rhodesia as 'Zimbabwe'. . . . Fortunately, the National Monuments Commission and the museums (and their associated archaeologists, whether professional or amateur) fall under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and if that Ministry can ensure that the new *Guide to Zimbabwe* is a wholly factual presentation of the country's ancient history . . . it will at least remove yet another pretext for hostile political propaganda.

This is the most outrageous and wicked double-talk. Years of archaeological research have shown that Zimbabwe is a product of indigenous Bantu peoples, and no one in his senses believes any more in Phoenicians, and King Solomon's mines, and Arabs, and the lost tribes of Israel, as the historical explanation of this remarkable site; there is no evidence of foreign builders. It is clear that scientific archaeological research is to be denigrated, if not suppressed, by the Rhodesian authorities; and as a correspondent wrote to us: 'The field is therefore wide open for the smothering of Rhodesian later prehistory. The whole business is a salutary warning to students of history and prehistory that political distortion of science and historical truth is not something that died out with the Nazi regime.'

Professor R. R. Inskeep referred to some of these problems in his Presidential Address to Section F of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, given in July 1970, and published in *The South African Journal of Science* of October 1970. He says how important it is for archaeologists to engage in works of

ANTIQUITY

haute-vulgarisation and write authoritative books which the general public can read, and refers to Summers's *Zimbabwe: a Rhodesian Mystery* as 'an excellent example of a scholarly statement presented in a form calculated to hold the interest of any intelligent reader in search of information about Zimbabwe'. We recommend the Rhodesian Ministry of Internal Affairs, who seem to be determined to pervert the facts about the early history of their country, to read Summers's book, and Fagan's forthcoming *Archaeological Guide to Central and Southern Africa*, which has an excellent chapter about Zimbabwe; and to reflect on Trevelyan's remark in his *History and the Reader* (1945): 'The harm that one-sided history has done in the modern world is immense. When history is used as a branch of propaganda it is a very deadly weapon.' It is this very deadly weapon which is now being used in Rhodesia to do harm to that country's prehistory.

☞ Something else of a curious nature seems to have happened recently in the Transvaal. Volume 1, no. 2, for October 1970 of the *Newsletter* of the South African Archaeological Society, Witwatersrand Centre, records the opening of the Johannesburg Museum of Rock Art in the Johannesburg Zoo on 5 September 1970. It is rumoured that engravings were removed and brought to Johannesburg without any proper record being preserved of their exact provenance, but we wait for comments from the National Monuments Council and the Historical Monuments Commissioner as well as the Curator of the Museum; but it seems regrettable and unfortunate that such an undertaking was ever allowed to happen. Removal ruins the sites themselves and often the engravings. A correspondent writes: 'One may well imagine what would happen in Europe if a municipal group, assisted by pseudo-professionals, dismantled many of the great prehistoric art sites in the Dordogne and then assembled them without adequate record in the market place of a provincial town.' Which reminds us of how Otto Hauser, before the 1914-18 war, tried to drill out of the wall of the rock-shelter the fine fish at Le Gorge d'Enfer.

☞ In their article in this issue Professor Mulvaney and Mr Soejono describe some of the pioneer work of Van Stein Callenfels, and refer to him as 'gargantuan'. This allusion may be lost on many of our younger readers and we should like to draw their attention to the following paragraphs from G. H. R. Von Koenigswald's *Meeting Prehistoric Man* (1956):

The remains of ancient Hindu culture, with its temples and inscriptions, reliefs, statues of gold, silver, bronze and stone—perfect in symmetry, a symphony in beauty of form, springing from a profound mystic realm of thought, so fascinated the archaeologist at work in Java that he hardly had an eye for other problems. As late as 1920 Van Eerde writes of the 'total obscurity of Indonesian prehistory'. It is due to one man, Dr Pieter Vincent Van Stein Callenfels, that it did not remain so. Stein, also called 'Tuwan Sétan' or 'Tuwan Raksasa' by his Javanese friends (a *raksasa* is, as we have already seen, a giant of Hindu mythology, of fearsome exterior and large eye-teeth) and known among the Europeans usually as 'Ivan the Terrible', was already a legendary figure in his lifetime, and in my day undoubtedly the best-known European not only in Indonesia but in the whole of South-East Asia. More than six feet tall and weighing a good 24 stone,* he would have made a striking figure even in Europe: among the slightly built Indonesians he was a giant! His appearance was accentuated by his black beard, which was already beginning to turn grey when we first met; by his long hair—except in special circumstances, he had his hair cut only once a year, preferably on the date of the Battle of Waterloo—by his deep and very sonorous voice, and particularly by his keen and at the same time merry eyes, for Stein was fond of a joke. With a poker-face he would talk the greatest imaginable nonsense, just to see how much he could get people to believe, and he could come out with pungent and witty repartee. Stories about him are legion!

It is only natural that anyone of Stein's size must have an unusually large appetite. If he was going on a journey he would bring rations for four persons, which he himself calmly devoured. In Manila he once ate, for a wager, everything on the extensive menu, first from top to bottom and then from bottom to top. Twenty bottles of

* 152 kg; or, for the benefit of our American readers, 336 lb.

EDITORIAL

beer and two of Hollands gin a day were not too much for him. . . . He had an innate horror of total abstainers. At the time of the Prohibition he was conversing with an American colleague on the subject of human races. 'I only know two,' said Stein. 'And what are they?' inquired the American, interested. 'Very simple,' replied Stein, 'one drinks beer and the other whisky.' 'Which do I belong to, then?' the American wanted to know. Whereupon Stein said very affably, 'My good friend, I am talking of anthropology, not zoology!'

Stein possessed incredible powers of concentration. We once put him to the test. He could simultaneously read a book, carry on a conversation and overhear a second conversation. He was a genius at languages and his knowledge of Javanese particularly was so thorough that he could tell from a man's dialect which part he came from. He was a specialist in Sanskrit and knew numerous old Javanese tales and legends by heart, narrating them like an accomplished actor. High-placed Javanese were pleased to invite him to stay, and he would sit of an evening in the big *pendopo*—an open structure with only a roof—surrounded by the whole village, telling of princes and *raksasas*.

Although Stein also began by studying Hindu archaeology, he gave this up to devote himself to the much less spectacular subject of prehistory. He not only carried out excavations in Java, but also investigated shell-hills in Sumatra and the Malay peninsula and made a penetrating study of the Toales, a primitive tribe in the Celebes. Stein's collections are for the most part in Djakarta Museum, but only a fraction of his scientific work has been published in professional periodicals. With his huge thirst, Stein needed money, and so many reports of his were published in the papers, especially the *Surabaische Handelsblad*.

Stein did pioneer work in the archipelago. For a long time he had to work alone, and it was not until later that Dr A. N. J. Th. a Th. van der Hoop, geographer and aviator, attached to the Prehistoric Department of Djakarta Museum, came to join him, also as—shortly before the war—did Dr W. Willems. In 1938 we saw Stein for the last time at a congress in Singapore, where he was working at the Raffles Museum. He was at the time suffering from a huge tumour on his back (he proudly sent us a photo, his last, of this) which would not heal and as a result of which he died on 27 April at Colombo, aged only fifty-four.

His heart could stand the strain no longer. When the manager of his hotel found him in his room, his wallet and the gold watch presented personally to him by the King of Siam had already disappeared. . . .

¶ We publish in this issue (p. 41) a note by Mr Basil Greenhill, Director of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; it deals with the boat found last year at Graveney in Kent. A fuller account of this very remarkable discovery from the pens of Miss Angela Evans and Mrs Valerie Fenwick of the British Museum will appear shortly. The boat was, at the time of writing, in the preservation tank at Greenwich and it is good to know that such a tank now exists. It is nice to think that one of the legacies of this work on the Graveney boat might be a plant where at last relatively substantial quantities of water-logged timber could be first preserved and then conserved. The absence of such a centre has previously been a notable lack in Britain, and clearly it would be an excellent thing if the discovery and conservation of the Graveney boat led to the establishment of such a centre in the National Maritime Museum.

¶ A good friend of *ANTIQUITY* wrote, on seeing that a new edition of Watkins's *The Old Straight Track* was about to be published, 'Can nothing be done to stop this?', and by the same post there dropped through our letter box the first edition of a new quarterly called *The New Diffusionist: a Survey of Inter-Relationships in Cultural Anthropology*. It is edited by C. E. Joel and published by G. Kraus, 34 Parsonage Lane, North Mymms, Hatfield, Herts, England. No. 1 was October 1970 and the price for its thirty-four pages is only two shillings (10p), modest indeed. It does seem strange to start a journal to advocate diffusion when everyone with any sense since Worsaae, Lubbock, and Tylor argued perfectly cogently that diffusion was one of the main explanations of cultural change. What had to happen was the demonstration that alleged diffusion was chronologically and culturally possible, and that it had in fact happened. As A. J. B. Wace wrote

ANTIQUITY

twelve years ago in this journal, 'It is one thing to sit today in a comfortable study in Göttingen or Oxford and move a Neolithic people from Malatia to Pharsalus. It was a totally different thing for a Neolithic people to move lock, stock and barrel, several millennia ago.' (*Antiquity*, 1958, 31.)

What Mr Joel and Mr Kraus do not seem to understand is that diffusion is not the only explanation of cultural change: independent invention and parallel development are other explanations and all played a part in human history. As Lowie said, 'in the nineteenth century, evolution . . . lay down amicably beside diffusion'. So they should now. What Mr Joel and Mr Kraus also do not appreciate is that Elliot Smith and Perry were not advocates of diffusion but of hyper-diffusion: they took the diffusionist model of the past to an extreme, and were not the first or last to do so. Miss A. W. Buckland was a most violent and uncompromising hyper-diffusionist and from 1878 onwards, while Elliot Smith was growing up in New South Wales and qualifying as a doctor in Sydney, was publishing her polemics demanding a single origin for most inventions. Years after Elliot Smith's *The Ancient Egyptians* (1911), Lord Raglan in his *How Came Civilisation?* (1939) was insisting that all higher culture and civilization came from southern Mesopotamia. Lowie in his *History of Ethnological Theory* refers to 'the unfathomable ignorance of elementary ethnography' displayed by Elliot Smith and Perry, and the Editor is delighted to see that in *The New Diffusionist*, Joel mistakenly gives him credit for that splendid remark. What we said in *The Idea of Prehistory* was that Elliot Smith and Perry 'abandoned any pretence of scientific method . . . circumstances of time, place and function were brushed aside. . . ' What he does not quote is that terrifying sentence in the Huxley Memorial Lecture given by Elliot Smith in 1928. The lecture was called *Conversion in Science* and in it he said 'The set attitude of mind of a scholar may become almost indistinguishable from a delusion.' It was these almost indistinguishable delusions that beset Miss Buckland, Elliot Smith, Perry, Raglan, Heine-Geldern, and now Mr Joel. Joel declares

that in *The Idea of Prehistory* we wrote a whole chapter 'demolishing the Diffusionist thesis with . . . no better success than his many predecessors'. What unfathomable ignorance of ethnological and archaeological theory makes Mr Joel suppose that the demolition of Egyptocentric hyper-diffusionism has anything to do with the accepted validity of diffusion?

But of course nothing can be done or should be done to stop *The New Diffusionist* or the re-publication of Alfred Watkins. Everyone is entitled to their views: all we ask is that they set them out displaying some knowledge of current thinking in archaeology and some attempt to evaluate their views in relation to the views of others. In this matter, cure is better than prevention. The cure can be provided by the quiet, popular, advocacy by scholarly archaeologists of what seems to them the most acceptable theories of cultural origins and change at the present day. In a word, we are back to the Zimbabwe issue: what we need is more *haute-vulgarisation* and less *basse-charlatanerie* and pseudo-scholarship.

📖 The success of the Exhibition of Celtic Art in Edinburgh was repeated in London, and it was most gratifying to see the large and enthusiastic crowds who filled the Hayward Gallery on the South Bank. Warmest congratulations to all those associated with its planning and mounting. 12,500 copies of the excellent catalogue of the Exhibition were sold, and we hope it will be kept in print by the Edinburgh University Press. A special hard-back edition has now been published at £1.50. This is something which all students and libraries should acquire.

📖 Warmest congratulations also to all those in the British Museum responsible for the New Assyrian Galleries there, which were opened to the public in early December 1970. After being closed for seven years, the Assyrian galleries are rebuilt and reorganized and we can now study and admire the sculptures and bas-reliefs from Nineveh, Nimrud, and Khorsabad. To mark this occasion the British Museum have produced a new guide *Assyrian Palace Reliefs in the*

EDITORIAL

British Museum (London, 1970, 45 pp., 20 pls. 60p); it is by R. D. Barnett and W. Forman, and is a shortened version of their *Assyrian Palace Reliefs; and their Influence on the Sculptures of Babylonia and Persia* (Prague, 1959).

As we go to press we revert to Rhodesia and Zimbabwe because we have just seen the 2 January 1971 issue of *The Illustrated London News*, a paper which has, for seventy years, had a most distinguished record of archaeological reporting. The first article in the first issue of 1971 is by R. J. Malcahy and is called 'In search of King Solomon's mines', and it takes us straight back to the mythological model of the past. Mr Malcahy on Zimbabwe is essentially no different from Geoffrey of Monmouth on the Ancient Britons except that Geoffrey had no archaeology to help him: Malcahy doesn't understand the archaeology and naturally finds ignorance unhelpful. He writes: 'Archaeological findings confirm the absence of enough evidence to pronounce a positive verdict . . . Zimbabwe keeps its mystery—though if it was the source of Solomon's wealth it resolves a still greater mystery.'

These are sad words to read in an English journal. We quoted in *A Hundred Years of Archaeology* (1950, 311) Bruce Ingram's letter to the Editor of 16 February 1949 in which he set out the high aims of *The Illustrated London News* as a purveyor of archaeological *haute-vulgarisation*, and we then said 'A survey of *The Illustrated London News* in the last half-century will show how brilliantly Ingram achieved his aims.' We have perhaps taken Ingram's achievement too much for granted, and, since his death, archaeology has not been so well served by and in that journal which he edited so well for so long. The brilliance has been dimming; in the issue of 2 January, it is tarnished. Let us hope *The Illustrated London News*, which has meant so much as a vehicle of archaeological reporting to the world, may get back to the Ingram days of objective, informed, authoritative, and well-illustrated articles.

We are delighted to learn that Professor Merpert of the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow has agreed to become one of our Advisory Editors. We look forward to close co-operation with him and to his advice and help.

Several apologies. The first to Dr Nowell Myres for mistitling his book (*Antiquity*, 1970, 150, and the Index) to make it appear as though it were an exclusively archaeological work. Its correct title is *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England*; it is a work of the widest historical scholarship using the archaeological material as one of the prime sources for the reconstruction of the past as good historians always should. Secondly, to those who have misunderstood the ambiguity (*Antiquity*, 1970, 257) which caused Colin Renfrew to ask 'Was Schliemann unknown in 1890?' Of course he was not unknown to the world and particularly the world of learning. But when he collapsed at Christmas 1890, in Naples, he had no papers or money with him: no one knew who he was, and at first he was refused admission to a hospital. And an apology to T. G. E. Powell who gently upbraids us for saying that we have both been writing about megaliths for half a century (*Antiquity*, 1970, 266). How right he is: it is only thirty-five years but sometimes it seems longer. Perhaps this is because the Editor was born, over half a century ago, in a small schoolhouse in Pembrokeshire, out of whose bedroom windows a ruined cromlech could be seen, in and around which he well remembers playing during the 1914–18 war.

And the Production Editor reminds us that further apologies may be required when this issue is printed; because of the Electricity Go-Slow and the Power Cuts that plagued Britain in early December, the illustrations were arranged and prepared by candlelight.*

* And now (12 Feb.), due to the Postal Strike, we are going to press without benefit of incoming proofs from several authors, whose indulgence we crave. If the strike goes on, we may miss our posting date.