

Antiquity

VOL. XXVIII No. 112

DECEMBER 1954

Editorial Notes

SINCE our last number appeared Londoners have been queuing in thousands to gaze at the foundation-walls of a Roman temple found in the heart of the city. The site was only open to the public for a few hours at the end of the day, before the walls were removed and set up again on an adjacent site; but during that short time it was seen by about 30,000 people each day, everyone of whom had been willing to stand for quite a long time in a queue. It is easy to dismiss the whole thing as a Nine Days' Wonder created by a press stunt; but it should be remembered that the whole affair was started by a leading article in the *Times*, strongly criticizing the impending destruction of the remains, which but for that leader would have taken place. Thanks to it public opinion was aroused, an extension of time was granted, some most important sculptures were found, and the remains were removed instead of being annihilated. We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to the *Times* for giving that lead.



The cost of preserving the temple *in situ* would, we are told, have been half a million pounds. We were also told that the matter had come before the Cabinet and not unnaturally it was decided to be impossible. When it was thought that the remains would be destroyed some archaeologists claimed that it would not really matter because all the essential facts would be recorded in the technical report, to be published at some date in the probably remote future. Flinders Petrie said the same thing about the destruction of the upper layers of a stratified city-mound. When destruction is inevitable and reconstitution elsewhere impossible, then we must be content with the fullest possible record (which, as Mr Eric Birley pointed out in the *Times*, should include a model); here the facts have shown that destruction was not inevitable and that a defeatist attitude was therefore unjustified. Public opinion, aided by the press, saved the situation, and saved also several first-rate marble sculptures which but for its intervention would have been churned into fragments by bulldozers.



What is the upshot of it all? First, that public opinion is on our side. To keep it on our side we must react with sympathy and imagination. People like to see the actual remains themselves, if possible *in situ*, if not then reconstituted somewhere else. This desire is a healthy one, not mere sentimentality; 'seeing is believing', and for all the thousands who queued and viewed that temple, Londinium will in future be not just a

ANTIQUITY

bookish abstraction but a concrete, once-living thing they have seen and walked over. We admit to being similarly impressed ourselves by recent visits to Cnossos and Pompeii which brought those places to life in a way that no reading of archaeological reports could do or had done. How much more so must it be with those to whom archaeology is not a whole-time preoccupation? And let it not be forgotten that, as the ultimate paymasters, they are entitled to call the tune. The Government is necessarily one move behind public opinion, and affairs like this of the Mithras Temple should strengthen our hands when public money is demanded for archaeological purposes.



Television tells the same story, as readers of Dr Glyn Daniel's article in this number will learn. The archaeological programmes have been extraordinarily popular.



Another lesson of the Mithras affair is that cooperation between the world of industry and business on the one hand and of archaeology on the other is most profitable for the latter—and if publicity is welcomed, for the former as well. A good example is the recent excavation of a Roman barrow at Holborough in Kent, where the Company concerned did far more than was expected to help the archaeologists. Such cooperation is common also in the world of scholarship; big businesses have financed the publication of books that otherwise could not have appeared. Amongst those recently reviewed in ANTIQUITY there are at least four examples of this form of subvention, each involving large sums of money.



We print elsewhere an article by Mr Seton Lloyd describing how the city mound of Beycesultan in Anatolia came to be found and chosen for a large scale effort. It is a good example of field archaeology at its best. By way of commentary, and because the substantive reports are, naturally, not yet available, we print here (by kind permission of the Editor of the *Times* and of the writer) a letter from Professor V. Gordon Childe, printed in the *Times* of 4 August last:—

‘Unexpectedly exciting prospects for prehistory, as well as for ancient history, have been opened up by the excavations at Beycesultan, described by Mr Seton Lloyd in your columns. The surprise has been, of course, the revelation of such highly original cultures in a corner of Asia Minor between Cilicia, the Halys basin, and north-western Anatolia. In these three regions the culture sequence is familiar, thanks to extensive excavations at Mersin and Tarsus, at Alaca Hüyük, Alişar, and Boğazköy, and at Troy respectively. From 1500 B.C. the newly discovered sequence proves to diverge unexpectedly from those revealed at the foregoing sites. Was it equally aberrant in the third millennium? Shortly after 2000 B.C. the comparatively uniform cultural development on the Plateau and in the Troad was abruptly interrupted; about 1800 B.C. Troy VI was founded by a new people bringing horses and novel traditions in potting and probably in burial rites (cremation), while incidentally the same style of pottery appears equally abruptly all over mainland Greece; by 1700 B.C. the “Indo-European” Hittites (whose presence may be deduced a couple of centuries earlier from written records) are archaeologically attested at Boğazköy by cremation burials accompanied by horses’ bones. The origin of the innovators in each case remains an enigma. Continued excavations at Beycesultan must contribute to its elucidation even if they do not directly reveal the source of the innovations’.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Our readers will remember that four years ago *ANTIQUITY* published an account of Professor Braidwood's excavations at Jarmo in Iraq (XXIV, 1950, 189-95). Jarmo is a key site because it is the oldest known permanent habitation-site of food producers, and therefore of crucial importance as a landmark in human history. For that reason we reprint below an account recently circulated of the aims of this year's expedition, which are admirably comprehensive. Noteworthy is the emphasis on Radiocarbon dating, and on the study of animal-bones on the spot by a specialist. We still have much to learn about the domestication of animals, and this is the way to learn it.

' A unique team of archaeologists and other scientists are combining this winter in a joint investigation of the dawn of civilization in the Middle East. Robert J. Braidwood, professor of Old World archaeology in the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute and professor of anthropology is general director of the expedition, the Iraq-Jarmo project. Aimed at correlating all discoverable facts about men, plants, and animals in an environment of approximately 7000 years ago, the expedition will concentrate on that revolutionary period in history when men turned from food-gathering-cave-dwelling savagery to agriculture and the settled village-farming community. New techniques of radiocarbon dating (first developed by the University of Chicago's Willard F. Libby) will be used in the attempt to establish an accurate time scale for the period.



' Members of the staff of the 1954-1955 expedition, in addition to Braidwood, are Bruce Howe, of Harvard's Peabody Museum, who has charge of the affiliated operations of the Baghdad School of the American Schools of Oriental Research: Howe has been appointed Baghdad professor of the school for the coming year. Professor H. E. Wright, Jr., of the University of Minnesota's Department of Geology, with the aid of a Guggenheim fellowship, will continue studying the physiography and ancient climates of the region. In addition, the effort to reconstruct the ancient environments and ecology when the first village farming communities appeared has been expanded by a generous grant of the National Science Foundation to the University of Chicago's Department of Anthropology. As a result, Professor Frederick R. Matson of the Pennsylvania State University will be able to apply new techniques of radiocarbon dating to charcoal obtained from varying strata of ancient hearths. Also on this Foundation's grant is Professor Charles A. Reed of the University of Illinois who will study animal remains to discover the domesticated and wild animals associated with the ancient villages. It is anticipated that several other scientists, including specialists in plant lore, will be able to join the expedition in the spring of 1955.



' The expedition was to begin by surveying the drainage basin of the Greater Zab river, which lies east of Mosul in Iraq. During the winter months, the expedition will make a tour of many of the westerly archaeological sites in Mesopotamian Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Carbon¹⁴ samples will be collected from those westerly sites which range from the end of the food gathering stage to that of the established village-farming communities. An effort will be made to reappraise the past archaeological and environmental evidence concerning these areas. In the spring of 1955, the project will attempt to complete its excavations at Jarmo, Palegawra, and possibly one or two other surface sites in Iraq's Chemchamal Valley.

ANTIQUITY

The Iraq-Jarmo project is the prehistoric aspect of the Oriental Institute's present programme in Western Asia. Heretofore, the approach to this period of revolutionary transition has been haphazard rather than well-rounded. The archaeologist—primarily trained for the interpretation of cultural rather than environmental evidence—has been forced to attempt his own reconstruction of the history of climate and of the physical and natural surroundings. By pooling the efforts of both archaeologists and natural scientists who are expert in their fields, the project hopes to arrive at a new and broader grasp of the subtle interrelationships between man's culture and his natural environment at one of the most critical points in history'.



A colleague writes, à propos of our last Editorial Notes :—' I admire your restraint in dealing with French museums ; . . . There is a collection of Merovingian, Carolingian, or what not, inscriptions at Vence (Alpes Maritimes) which I have badly wanted to see ; but the building has been " appropriated " for a telephone exchange, and so they are inaccessible '. Another writes :—' In France I had the opportunity of visiting some archaeological museums, and of verifying your statements . . . I wonder how many answers to problems of West European prehistory could be obtained by an archaeological expedition equipped with dusters and vacuum cleaners instead of spades ! He adds that the Grand Pressigny museum is exceptionally good and well arranged. Another writes to ' congratulate you on your pertinent editorial on museums . . . When I recently revisited the major continental museums, after an interval of thirty years, I was greatly disappointed in their appearance. They seemed so drab, poorly lighted, colourless and inadequately labelled '.



Another correspondent reluctantly agreeing with all that is said and implied by way of criticism of French museums) writes in praise of the Dutch ones. It will be recalled that we did single out the Leiden Museum, which is the Dutch National Museum, for favourable mention ; and we have no doubt at all that others at Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Nijmegen and Utrecht, which we were unable to visit—and doubtless many others besides—are equally deserving of praise. Our correspondent is particularly enthusiastic about the Central Museum at Utrecht, where ' the ecclesiastical and municipal authorities have combined their efforts : the results, installed in the buildings of the former convent of St. Agnes, must be seen to be appreciated '.

CORRIGENDA

No. 111 (September, 1954), pp. 183-5 and Plates VIII and IX. The two tombs were those numbered A and B. Others have been dug since at the same place (Katsambas).

Ibid, p. 160, lines 19 and 23, for *century* read *dynasty*.

„ p. 162, line 5, for *Atchana III* read *Atchana VII*.

„ „ 4th line from bottom, for *M.L. II* read *L.M. II*.

No. 104 (December, 1952), p. 197 : cancel lines 7 to 15 (' South of ' to ' s.w. and s. ') and the two southernmost linear earthworks at Pigbush Passage on plan, p. 195. They are merely enclosure-banks.