

# Antiquity

## A Quarterly Review of Archaeology

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### Editorial Notes

THE exhibitions and excavations of last summer revealed very clearly the methods and aims of modern excavators. Both Ur of the Chaldees and Verulamium are big sites in every sense, and they are being excavated on a big scale. The art of excavation has now, in fact, reached maturity; the director knows what he wants and he knows how to get it. He starts with a programme to carry out, and he thinks in terms of years, or seasons. He is no longer a mere grubber up of ruins or of clay tablets or museum specimens, though these naturally have their place in any well-ordered scheme. He is out to solve certain problems by methods whose efficacy has been proved by experience.



Ur and Verulamium provide peculiarly good examples of intelligent direction of excavation on a large scale, where the site has already been chosen, or (as at Verulamium) imposed by circumstances outside archaeological control. There is scope, however, for the same discrimination; first, in the selection of sites or regions, and then more broadly still in the preliminary choice between excavation and some other branch of research. First, if it has already been decided to excavate somewhere, and it remains only to select a region, how shall the Committee or Directors come to a decision? They may either follow precedent or they may strike out a new line. They may vote

## ANTIQUITY

for some already well-excavated country or group of sites ; or they may take stock of the World and select one of its darker corners. There are many such available. Central Europe contains stratified mound-sites that still await an excavator of the first rank. South-western Anatolia (the ancient provinces of Caria, Lycia, and Pamphylia) is a virgin field, whose possible Cretan connexions are still mainly conjectural. There are similar openings in Nigeria, Baluchistan, and Turkestan, to say nothing of China.



But excavation is costly and trained excavators are none too common. Suppose that for motives of economy or otherwise, it is decided not to excavate. What are the alternatives ? There is always the possibility of an air-survey of the ancient sites of a region. This has never been attempted, outside England, for purely archaeological purposes. It is sure to be moderately costly at the start, but will probably not prove more so than excavation on a large scale, and most of the expenses will be non-recurring. It has the great advantage of providing an immediate return for the outlay, in the form of photographs. Then there is ground-survey—the exploration of a little-known region for the purpose of discovering ancient sites and placing them upon the map; of following ancient roads; of copying inscriptions; of noting the character of surface-finds on a *tell* and drawing therefrom (if possible) conclusions with regard to its age ; and so forth. The French are doing much exploration of this kind in northeastern Syria.



The present time is peculiarly suitable for carrying out one or both of these undertakings. To take a concrete example :—An international committee is organizing the compilation of a map of the Roman Empire. The results are being published on the International Map of the World on a scale of 1:1,000,000 (16 miles to 1 inch). The first sheet (part of Great Britain) has just been published, and others will appear shortly. This country is responsible for sheets covering British mandated territory, which includes of course Palestine and Transjordan. To compile a map of this area as it was at the beginning of the Christian era is a big task, and to do it properly will cost money. It can only be done by someone on the spot and he must do a lot of field-work. Even though no more than a skeleton map is contemplated by the Commission, it will be necessary to identify on the spot the

## EDITORIAL NOTES

exact sites of the stations recorded in the Antonine Itinerary and on the Peutinger Table. The problems to be solved are relatively easy but the work will take time if it is to be done properly. Ways and means need not be discussed here, but one would imagine that the best method might be the creation of some kind of *ad hoc* research studentship.



Here is a chance for the coordination of research ! Here we have on the one hand a comprehensive and practical working scheme, and on the other an obvious means of assisting it. Everyone will agree that a map of Palestine as it was in the time of Christ would be an invaluable possession. It can be produced within a very few years at a fraction of the cost of a single season's excavation. If the help of the aeroplane can be secured as well, so much the better : it is almost essential to the success of the scheme.



To sum up, we may say that while there is room for properly conducted excavations in certain regions, there are other ways of advancing knowledge which offer a bountiful return for a very moderate outlay.



After all, nearly everyone likes studying a map or looking at pictures. No one has ever said there are too many maps, though it is often said (and we agree) that there are far too many books—not only novels but books and pamphlets which are learned in the worst sense and quite unreadable. A map synthetizes a host of facts and takes up very little room. We want less excavation and less scribbling but more maps and more air-photographs !



Orientation is a thorny subject. In ANTIQUITY we have published articles on both sides. We have our own opinion on the matter, but mere opinions are of little value. It is not a subject that we have ever studied very deeply, and it is getting rather threadbare nowadays. We much regret that in the article by George Engleheart, F.S.A., on Orientation, published in our last number, there occurred expressions to which Mrs Cunnington takes exception, namely, that the Woodhenge excavators 'surely *desired* to collate Woodhenge with Stonehenge in

## ANTIQUITY

respect of orientation'; and that the 'adaptation of data to theory appears in the hypothetical orientation of Woodhenge'. Mr Engleheart assures us that by these expressions he did not in any way imply that the excavators were determined to press or distort facts to fit a preconception, but that he meant no more than this—that the excavators, struck by a general similarity in plan of the two monuments, were glad to think they discovered facts which, in their sincere belief, enabled them to find the several features of Stonehenge, including that of orientation, which they accept, matched in those of Woodhenge.



We have also received a letter from Vice-Admiral Boyle-Somerville which we regret we have not room to print in full. The writer refers to his own papers on Orientation, published in *ARCHAEOLOGIA* (vol. 73) and in *ANTIQUITY* (vol. I, March 1927). He claims that the facts are there for anyone to see, and suggests that field-observation with instruments is a test of orientation and recommends it to sceptics. We wish to be perfectly fair to both sides, but we think that our readers will now have heard enough about orientation, to say nothing of Stonehenge; and we therefore promise them a truce for, say, five years.

## VOLUME V

With the present number the fourth volume of *ANTIQUITY* is completed and expressions of appreciation continue to reach us. At the same time the number of original subscribers inevitably becomes gradually smaller—through the operation of natural causes—not, we are glad to know, through dissatisfaction. We would again point out that our supporters can help us by bringing *ANTIQUITY* to the notice of their friends. Last year quite a number of subscribers adopted the editorial suggestion of making a Christmas present to a friend in the form of a year's subscription, and we are sure that this can be extended to mutual advantage and satisfaction. With this issue we insert a renewal notice for subscriptions for 1931 and as we have said before an early response is a very great convenience. We have endeavoured to omit the form from copies sent to those who make their payments through banks, or who have paid in advance.