

# Antiquity

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### Editorial Notes

**I**N this number we publish an account of some remarkable discoveries in the hinterland of Aden, lying behind the mountains that fringe the southern coast of Arabia, now part of the Aden Protectorate. It has been explored by Europeans who have brought back drawings and squeezes, and, more recently, photographs, and the results of excavations. Modern accounts will be found in Rāthgens und von Wissman, 'Sudarabienreise', and in Miss Freya Stark's 'Seen in the Hadhramaut', concerning districts to the north and east which are closely related to the sites described here.



Southern Arabia before Islamic times was divided into warring kingdoms, but the cities were wealthy and developed an interesting civilization which lasted from about 800 B.C. to A.D. 600. The land therefore is not without a history. The Sabaeans, the men of Qataban and Dhu Raidan, were literate when our own ancestors were still in the prehistoric period; and their country is celebrated as the realm of the Queen of Sheba. Men like Halevy and Glaser and Wyman Bury have given accounts of sites which must be considered with those here recorded by Mr Stewart Perowne (pp. 133-7).



During the winter of 1937-38 an English expedition consisting of Miss Gertrude Caton Thompson, now President of the Prehistoric Society, and Miss Gardner, went out with Miss Freya Stark and

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directed the first scientific excavation ever carried out in the Hadhramaut (see *Asia*, April 1939). Not only did they find and excavate remains of the historical period (dating to somewhere in the second half of the first millennium B.C.), but they also found abundant remains of the palaeolithic period (flint implements and suchlike). These are found under such favourable conditions that eventually it should be possible to elaborate a chronological scheme, and to determine the successive stages of human development that occurred there. (This has already been achieved in rough outline by the work of British, French and American students in Palestine, especially by the excavation of the Carmel caves, and it is an achievement of which we may well be proud).



In addition, then, to sites such as 'Im'adiya and Nuqub, there are others where important remains are in great and growing danger of spoliation. Unless some sort of supervision is immediately forthcoming, no one acquainted with the circumstances can have any doubt about what will happen. Ignorance of their importance and of the urgency of the task cannot excuse the neglect of a simple administrative matter such as this.



All the work done so far to describe, record, excavate and preserve the antiquities of the Protectorate has been carried out by the enterprise of private individuals. Not only have they and their supporters at home (individuals, be it noted, not in this instance Societies) made themselves responsible for the field-work in Arabia itself, but they will probably have to subsidize the publication of their results. As for the housing of the antiquities found, there is a museum of a kind at Aden, but it owes all its merits to the enthusiasm and public spirit of an amateur who has now left the Protectorate.

What has the Government been doing all this time? The answer is that it has done nothing at all except allow a volunteer to do his best with the museum at his own expense.



It is only fair to state that Mr Harold Ingrams, the British Resident in the Hadhramaut, has a very lively sense of responsibility for the antiquities in his province. Not only has he, personally and on his

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own initiative, made arrangements for housing some of them at Mukalla (inscriptions torn from their context, etc.), but he has also drafted some excellent antiquity laws based on those of other countries. These must however remain ineffective unless followed up by the appointment of a Director of Antiquities to enforce them. He has also earned the gratitude of archaeologists by saving the Hadhramaut from at least three pseudo-archaeological expeditions. (Mr Ingrams is already known to many of us from his articles on the Hadhramaut published in the *Geographical Journal* and *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, the Lawrence Medal of which Society has recently been awarded jointly to him and his wife.



It is necessary that a Director of Antiquities for the Aden Protectorate should be appointed without delay, for now, when the Protectorate and the Hadhramaut is being first opened up, is the very time when the destruction of priceless antiquities will proceed most ruthlessly; and such destruction is irreparable, for there is no other record.

The measures that should be taken are :—

To protect known sites from spoliation.

To remove inscriptions from such sites to the safety of the Aden Museum. Neglect to do this *now* will lead inevitably to the destruction of invaluable texts which are as yet either unrecorded or only inadequately recorded.

The existing remains must be planned and recorded by an archaeologically trained architect before it is too late.

The contents of the Aden Museum need cataloguing, photographing and (so far as possible) publishing. Arrangements for the inscriptions involving no expense to the Government have been made; but more than that is required.



The principle of appointing a Director of Antiquities in such administrations is already recognized elsewhere—for instance in Malta, Cyprus, Palestine and Transjordan—and it was recognized in Egypt and Iraq where they were directly under British control. After meditating for a quarter of a century the Sudan government has at last appointed a Commissioner for Archaeology and Anthropology (Mr A. J. Arkell). It

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is the normal procedure in territories under the French, Italian, Greek and Turkish flags. Other countries which have come later within the orbit of western civilization, such as Iran for instance, stand high in the estimation of people of culture, largely on account of the regard paid to their antiquities. Some of the independent States of India have set a high standard in this respect. In Balkan countries the national monuments are sedulously cared for by properly trained archaeologists ; and the state even subsidizes the excavation and conservation of the more important sites. Only at the heart of the British Empire is it necessary, on each separate occasion when the need arises, to bring public opinion to bear upon lethargy. Nothing else obstructs the execution of a duty which is recognized in every responsible quarter. That the appointment of a whole-time fully trained Director of Antiquities for the Aden Protectorate, with sufficient funds for necessary work, would be welcomed by instructed opinion in this country, is certain. As Editors of ANTIQUITY, we think we can claim to know something of such opinion ; we could not have kept this journal afloat for twelve years if we had not had it behind us throughout. It is therefore, perhaps, not inappropriate that we should celebrate our 50th number with a demand that we are sure will receive the backing of all our readers.