

# Antiquity

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## Editorial Notes\*

**P**ROGRESS in archaeology is made possible only by publication of the evidence ; Pitt-Rivers went so far as to say that the date of a discovery was that of its publication. Until the evidence has been published—that is, 'made generally accessible or available'—it cannot be freely used to reconstruct the remote past ; the display of objects in a museum or of photographs and drawings in a temporary exhibition does not, in archaeology, constitute publication<sup>1</sup>. That is only achieved when the archaeologist concerned, whether as excavator, finder, or photographer, describes and illustrates the evidence in a book or periodical. But knowledge is advanced not only by the primary publication of, for instance, an excavation, but also by articles and monographs discussing special aspects or problems of prehistory. A glance through the contents of current periodicals should therefore give one the latest news from the archaeological front, for it is in periodicals more often than in books that advances are first registered.



These notes are meant to convey to the readers of *ANTIQUITY* a few impressions derived from three recent periodicals which happened to appear about the same time. Their cumulative effect was most impressive ; here was a mass of good stuff, well produced, full of ideas freshly presented, but likely to escape the notice of many. Some of the articles of course deal with special problems ; but even specialists in particular periods may be credited with a general interest in subjects outside their own sphere, and

- \* 1. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society for 1950* (New Series, Vol. XVI) ; edited by J. G. D. Clark, assisted by K. P. Oakley and S. Piggott. London Agents, H. K. Lewis & Co., 136 Gower St., London, W.C.1. Price 28s.
2. *L'Anthropologie*, Vol. LV, No. 1-2 (published May, 1951) ; edited by Masson et Cie, 120 Bvd. S. Germain, Paris. Annual subscription, 2700 francs.
3. *Germania*, Vol. XXIX, 1951, No. 1-2 ; edited for the Römisch-Germanisch Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts by Professors Bersu and Wagner. Price D.M. 16.

<sup>1</sup> The British record of publication during the last 30 years is one to be proud of, but like every other country we have skeletons still hidden in cupboards. The decades go by and we still await the publication of such major excavations as those at Windmill Hill, Avebury, Caistor-by-Norwich, Salmonsbury.

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it is one of the functions of ANTIQUITY to maintain that interest. Few major unsolved problems, for instance, touch so many special spheres as that of the spread of the Indo-European languages; 'tracking the elusive Indo-European', says Mr Hutchinson<sup>2</sup>, 'has been a favourite sport of archaeologists and philologists ever since the days of the brothers Grimm'. The problem has its roots far back in the mesolithic period, its trunk in the Bronze Age and its branches extend into the Iron Age and from India to Ireland. Though primarily of course a philological problem it concerns almost all prehistorians, however narrow their chosen field of research may be. Mr Hutchinson's tentative conclusion, that 'certain types of axe-hammer and axe-adze appear in the Aegean at times and in places which agree with those associated with the infiltration into the Levant of the first Indo-Europeans' is one that concerns classical scholars as well as prehistorians.



Mr McBurney breaks new ground in his 'Geographical Study of the Older Palaeolithic Stages in Europe'. As he says, such a study can only be undertaken when the data are numerous and adequate for the task, so that the geographical method, in its modern sense, has only now become applicable to the Old Stone Age. There is no reason to doubt that it will ultimately prove as valuable there as in the later periods, for it is fundamentally sound. The importance of reconstructing the climate and vegetation of past periods is now generally recognized; a crucial instance is the Sahara, where such essentially 'wet' animals as the hippopotamus and crocodile flourished during the human period. When adequate data have been collected, the application of the geographical method to the Sahara should yield results of outstanding importance; for here a relatively small change<sup>3</sup> in climate must have altered the character of half a continent, converting desert into steppe and parkland and filling dry wadis with perennial rivers.



Of the eleven articles in *P.P.S.*, 1950, two are excavation-reports, and five belong to that valuable and essentially British class which deals geographically with the prehistory of a region. This is not a full review, nor are we attempting to do more than record a few impressions. No more is possible within the limits of space here adopted which prohibit even the mention of several obviously important—perhaps more important—contributions.



*L'Anthropologie* was founded in 1890 by the fusion of the old and valuable *Matériaux* with the *Revue d'Anthropologie* and the *Revue d'Ethnographie*. A substantial part of each number is concerned with physical anthropology and ethnography. Less than half the space is devoted to original articles, the rest being given to reviews and notes. The reviews always summarize the contents and often contain lengthy and valuable criticisms. In the present number is a study exemplifying the use of a graphic method, based upon statistics, for recording the characteristic features of palaeolithic flint-work; though laborious, it seems to have possibilities. Then comes a description of rock

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<sup>2</sup> 'Battle-axes in the Aegean', *P.P.S.*, 52.

<sup>3</sup> By this I mean a southward deflection of the course of the Atlantic low pressure systems which is small in relation to world-wide climatic phenomena.

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pictures in the massif of Tefedest, Ahaggar (Central Sahara), some the work of a pastoral people during a more humid period. A few lines at the end record the existence, at the debouchment of the Oued Mertoutek, of 'fine neolithic sites abounding in worked flints, decorated pottery, hammer-stones, etc., with fine large tombs near by'. How often have we read such tantalizing remarks before, but how seldom is any other record published! Yet these later sites, and the pottery in particular, may prove to be of crucial importance for African, and even perhaps European, prehistory. The authors of the article seem fully conscious of the need of studying the Saharan neolithic sites, of which there are 'vast agglomerations' beside the old river valleys, now dry but once flowing and capable of supporting a large population. Cannot our French colleagues organize an expedition to study *only* these later sites, selecting for preference those (here mentioned) in the middle of Amador where are thick stratified deposits containing a fossil fauna and flora sealed up beneath a layer of salt? Until some such intensive study is made the archaeology of the Sahara will remain formless and void as at present.



But valuable as are the original articles and reviews, the best reading of *L'Anthropologie* is usually to be found in the Notes where M. Vaufrey comments upon current events. Though he is himself most interested in the earliest periods (especially of North Africa) he has long been struggling to direct the attention of his compatriots to the vast and almost neglected field of the early metal ages in France; and in one of his six recommendations to the *Centre national de la Recherche scientifique* he calls particular attention to this need, to remove the 'humiliating reproach that France is a blank on the map for those periods' (p. 157). If we might make some suggestions for a beginning, it would be to publish a corpus of line-drawings of the hoards of the Bronze Age. There are many other tasks waiting, e.g. to make plans of megalithic monuments including the barrow or cairn as well as the burial-chamber. Geographical studies of the distribution of certain typical objects would be invaluable to students of British and European prehistory. So would be a corpus of dated prehistoric pottery. For those who prefer to work in the open air, France with its Roman roads provides a virgin field. A regional study of the Dark Age cemeteries of Normandy is badly needed. There are as yet no archaeological air-photographs of any site in France. No one realizes these deficiencies more fully than M. Vaufrey himself, who has pointed them out often in print; but the pioneer critic is always a voice crying in the wilderness and a target for obstructionists. The purpose of this paragraph is to assure his readers that M. Vaufrey is merely voicing opinions commonly held (but often courteously withheld) in this and other countries, where work on the lines indicated has been part of the normal routine of every archaeologist for several decades. He is only ahead of his times in France; it is not he who is out of step in the march of progress.



*Germania* is the organ of the Romano-German department (Kommission) of the German Archaeological Institute. The long and honourable history of these bodies is part of the history of modern archaeology. The last of the regular series bore the reference number of Jahrgang 27 and purported to be for July-October, 1943, though appearing in 1949. In 1950 Professor Gerhard Bersu was invited to take up again the work which he was doing until Nazi *schweineerei* put an end to it. Professor Bersu had been Director of the Frankfurt Institute, the headquarters of the Römisch-Germanisch

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Kommission. At that time Wiegand was head of the whole organization (the German Arch. Institute), whose headquarters were in Berlin. When he died before the war he was succeeded by a Nazi stooge whose name I do not remember. Bersu is now Director of the Institute; but as it cannot function completely under present conditions he is working at Frankfurt on Main. The Kommission's building was gutted by fire, but the library was saved, and as soon as the old building can be rebuilt, or a new one erected, a fresh start can be made. All archaeologists will hope that priority may be given to this work, so that German archaeology may get going again. Meanwhile Bersu is struggling to overtake arrears of publication. The years 1944-50 are covered by two parts numbered Jahrgang 28. Jahrgang 29 (heft 1-2) restarts the regular series of publications, and it is hoped eventually to resume the normal quarterly numbers. That its contents are good goes without saying; they are not only good in themselves but justly proportioned. Of the 171 pages, 66 contain eleven original articles covering every period from mesolithic to medieval. Notes and reviews follow, amongst the latter being included outstanding Italian, French, Danish, Belgian and English books. There is a long list of recent publications, followed by what is in many respects the most important section, the *Fundchronik*—a geographically arranged record of recent finds in Germany. As was said above, the publication of discoveries is of supreme importance for archaeology. That was always true; but it is truer than ever now that we have entered an era in which warfare involves not only the total destruction of museums, but also the looting of their contents by barbarian hordes.



Amongst the articles is an amusing exposure of Reinerth whose 'oldest road in the world' proves to be an old shore-line of the lake of Federsee! The next is an account of the Chamer group of pottery in Bavaria, which has a deceptive resemblance to our grooved ware. It has what is called plastic decoration in the form of raised ribs applied to the surface. Wares of this type are widely distributed in the Neolithic period, occurring in caves in Italy, and in Spain. It obviously originates from the imitation of basket-work. Of special interest to British and Irish archaeologists, especially those who have had the good fortune to work in the field here with Professor Bersu, is the plan (opp. p. 140) of the Carolingian settlement at Burgheim, Lkr. Neuburg, on the Danube, excavated in 1949. It neatly exemplifies one of Bersu's favourite theses, namely, that pits are cellars and imply houses of wood or wattle-and-daub built above them. Again space forbids the mention of other articles. We wish the Institute every success in the new start it has made under experienced and able direction.



Jericho is not only a unique site geographically, with its perennial spring, river, salt lake and 1200-foot depression below sea level; it is also one of the oldest cities in the world. From the 6th millennium when mesolithic hunters resorted to the spring of 'Ain es Sultan down to Joshua's trumpet-blasts in the 2nd there was no break in the occupation, so that in the course of time a *tell* formed, and *tells* mean buried history. Unfortunately Jericho attracted the attention of excavators before the technique of excavation was perfected—or at any rate before it was practised east of Europe. But much remains intact, even of the exciting lowest strata; and it is good news indeed that the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem will begin excavations there in 1952. They will be in the charge of the School's Director, Miss K. M. Kenyon, D.LIT., F.S.A.,

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Lecturer in Palestinian Archaeology at the University of London Institute of Archaeology. Though we cannot, for obvious reasons, find space to appeal for support very often, we gladly make an exception here, because the excavations may produce results of decisive and far-reaching importance. The address to which readers may send their contributions is the Hon. Treasurer, British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 2 Hinde St., Manchester Square, London, W.1. We hope to be able to publish something about the results achieved during 1952.



The next will be our 100th number, completing the 25th year of continuous publication. Already a few messages of greeting are beginning to reach us, and we hope to be able to publish a selection in that number. The Editor himself expects to be out of reach of correspondence then, as he intends to go on an expedition (backed by the British Academy) to explore a little known part of the Nile Valley between the 4th and 5th cataracts, returning in March or April. It is hoped that before then, and soon after this present number appears, his *History of the Fung Kingdom of Sennar (1504-1822)* will have been put on sale (Bellows, Gloucester, £2 17s). Publication has been made possible only by the generous help of the Wellcome Trustees. The book embodies much research, and is nearly 400 pages long, with illustrations (many from the author's photographs). A small edition only is being printed. The author's interest in the subject dates from his excavation of Abu Geili for Sir Henry (then Mr H. S.) Wellcome in 1914 (see the review on pp. 161-3). All things considered the Editor feels that at the end of 1951 he will have earned a busman's holiday.