

Editorial

It is strange and sad that politics and prejudice can still bedevil archaeology. We are all aware of the lunacies of Kossinna and the Nazi prehistorians, and the many other sad stories that lie before that—like the Minnesota Stone—and after it, such as the Rhodesian Government's refusal to face the facts about the origin of Zimbabwe: but we were surprised, distressed, and dismayed that the famous Chinese Exhibition has become involved in these unnecessary and unsavoury manoeuvres. We reported with enthusiasm the opening of the exhibition of archaeological finds from the People's Republic of China in September 1973 at the Royal Academy, Burlington House (1973, 259). This exhibition, sponsored by *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, in association with the Royal Academy and the Great Britain/China Committee, brought together nearly four hundred objects found since 1949, when the People's Republic was established, and the Chinese Institute of Archaeology, as a branch of the Academy of Sciences, was founded. The exhibition had previously been in Paris, where it was not displayed or catalogued so well as it was in London, and, after London, it went to Stockholm, Frankfurt and Toronto.

It opened in the National Gallery of Art in Washington in mid-December under two small clouds. The first is well set out by Joseph Alsop, who himself visited the People's Republic of China in late 1972, in the *Potomac* section of *The Washington Post* for 8 December 1974. 'No previous Chinese exhibition ever held, at any time or place,' he wrote, 'has remotely matched the present one for rich historical interest. . . . Even the dreary catalog

has its own historical political implications. The same splendors were displayed in Paris and in London in the period of Prime Minister Chou En-Lai's beneficent ascendancy in Peking. The idea was then gaining ground in China that scholarship should be truly scholarly instead of being ludicrously warped by the party line. Thus in Britain, for instance, the Peking government permitted the exhibition catalog to be prepared by Professor William Watson. (The resulting masterpiece of concise learning should be ordered from London through your nearest bookstore. . . .) Now, however, a new time of political ferment is well under way in Peking. The extreme left is bidding for power and is led by Chairman Mao Tse-tung's formidable wife, Mme Chiang Ch'ing. In the changed climate Peking refused to permit anything like the Watson catalog to be used in this country; and the Chinese-preferred substitute, though never positively misleading, is always safely uninformative.'

We were in Washington in the days before the opening of the exhibition and wondered what would be made of Joseph Alsop's forthright and accurate reporting. A press preview had been fixed but the People's Republic of China wished to bar reporters from Nationalist China, South Korea, South Africa and Israel. Peking does not recognize the Taiwan or Seoul Governments; South Africa and Israel are targets of China's efforts to make a great impact on the Third World. An invitation list to the press, purged on ideological grounds, was thought, very properly, by the State Department of the USA, and by the National Gallery of Art, a violation of the concept of the freedom of the press. The Gallery refused to issue its

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invitations to a purged list: the Chinese asked that the press preview be cancelled, and the State Department agreed reluctantly that this was the right solution. The exhibition is now open and attracting a large public; but visitors will remember the strange affair of the catalogue and the cancelled press conference, and ponder over the headline in *The New York Times*, for Sunday 15 December, which said, 'No Press rather than a Free One, China Decides'. What a stupid and ill-advised mistake Mme Chiang Ch'ing has made.

¶ The article which we published in our last number, 'Thermoluminescence and Glozel' by Hugh McKerrell, Vagn Mejdahl, Henri François and Guy Portal (1974, 265-72) has, not surprisingly, attracted a great deal of attention. The Archaeological Correspondent of *The Times*, in an article entitled 'Glozel: the ghost walks again', concluded thus: 'What is certain is that archaeologists will now have to revise their opinions about Glozel, or about the accuracy of thermoluminescence dating, or about both. The present range of possibilities seems to be that the objects are genuine, in their original context, and mixed with earlier material there; that they are genuine but were brought to Glozel and buried in the 1920's for purposes of hoax or fraud; or that they are modern in both manufacture and context, in which case the assumptions on which the present acceptance of thermoluminescent dating rests will have to be radically re-examined. The recent re-assessment of radiocarbon dating has been similarly controversial, even without allegations of archaeological fraud, but the method itself seems to have emerged modified and strengthened. Thermoluminescence may be about to undergo the same transmutation.' (*The Times*, 2 December 1974.)

Many of the letters we have received ask whether there is not some factor that affects the TL data—not of course the processing in laboratories: and no one suggests that the dates produced in laboratories in Edinburgh, Denmark and Paris of the same material can be open to criticism. But what are these laboratories dating? And why have we not been given the

C14 dates of associated material, and the dates of the forgeries impounded by the French police at Glozel in 1928?

The present Editor of ANTIQUITY has always approached problems like Rouffignac, and Piltown and Glozel, as matters of history and detection: not as conflicts between science and history, between physics and archaeology, but as stories, often scandalous, that must be studied in detail. He regrets that it is only very recently that he has read Harry Söderman's *Policeman's lot: a criminologist's gallery of friends and felons* (New York, 1957). Söderman was a Swedish policeman, who was seconded to the French police at Lyons, and while there was made a member of the famous or infamous (it depends on your thinking: 'Jeune homme, êtes-vous Glozélien ou non?', as Reinach once asked Christopher Hawkes) Comité d'Études of 1928. We published in our last number two photographs of the Comité at work (if work is the right phrase for their uncontrolled activities) and Harry Söderman is in the grey fedora in the top photograph (1974, PL. XXIX). He was reluctant to join the Comité but the Lyons police were certain no Frenchman was going to be involved, particularly when Edmond Bayle, head of the Paris Police Laboratory since the end of World War I, and almost the direct successor of Alphonse Bertillon (who died in 1914), was doing research on the Glozel finds. It was, incidentally, Bayle's report that revealed a cotton thread dyed with an aniline dye in one tablet, and a potato sprout in another, and caused the *New International Year Book* for 1928 to say, 'M. Bayle turned out to be an excellent detective. . . . Thus Glozel becomes a hoax and ranks among the most famous in history.'

Söderman set out from Lyons on the noon express to Vichy—a five-hour journey. His companions were Déperet, Roman, Mayet, and Arcelin, and, as he says, 'an elderly lady who soon became as silently fascinated as I by the conversation of the four savants. It was really awe-inspiring. World-famous names flashed by our listening ears. Stretches of hundreds of thousands and even millions of years obviously were bagatelles to these men dedicated to

studying the origin and development of the human race. The talk had a scale and a sweep to it which I found exhilarating. Nothing like it had come within my ken before.'

He had been puzzled what to put in his kit before he set out on this curious mission. He included a fingerprint outfit, a pistol, a very small camera, some small surgical instruments, a strong magnifying glass, a flashlight, and a pair of handcuffs of a special kind which had just been given to him by their inventor M. Melon: they were called *melonettes*—a pleasant play on *menottes*, the French word for handcuffs. Old Déperet asked Söderman what police equipment he had brought with him on his Glozel enquiry and Söderman opened his despatch case. Déperet asked him 'to put them on his hands, explaining that he wanted to feel for once what it was like to be handcuffed'. 'I put them on him', wrote Söderman, 'and the instant those infernal things closed around his fragile wrists a fearful doubt swept over my mind. Had I brought the keys with me? I had not. A minute search of my portfolio and all my pockets revealed the awful fact. When the truth began to dawn upon poor Déperet, his kind smile gradually became melancholy and his face grew haggard. In about twenty minutes time we were due to arrive at Vichy, where scores of journalists, press photographers, and newsreel men would be waiting for us on the station platform.

'What to do? What to do? A cold sweat broke out all over my body while I racked my brains as to how to get out of this situation. In French railway carriages there are always a few tools—at least a pickaxe, a small shovel, and the like—stored in a glass-covered case for use in emergencies. But a glance at delicate old Déperet convinced me that he could never endure harsh treatment. Next I thought of the locomotive. The engineer certainly must have tools, but he would be difficult to get to. Still, something had to be done. I was planning to perform the circus stunt of climbing over the tender to reach the locomotive.

'The elderly lady, our fellow passenger, who had been observing the goings-on while busily knitting, suddenly said, "Why don't you try one

of my hairpins? I have read in several detective novels that hairpins are very good for picking locks."

'She drew a hairpin from her hair and handed it to me. . . . Contrary to the bragging of their inventor, those wretched *melonettes* were easy to pick. In a short while, I had opened one of them. And high time too, because the train was already slowing down for the Vichy stop. One of the cuffs was still around poor Déperet's wrist. I tucked the rest of the gadget up into his sleeve, and to make assurance double sure, fastened it with a piece of string, also supplied by the amiable lady, who fished a length out of her big handbag. . . . Smiling genially, we alighted from the train and were interrogated by the world press.'

(Chapter 17, pp. 163–83, 'The Glozel affair'.)

Now in the confusion and contradictions about Glozel from 1924 until now, and, we fear, for some time to come, this is a most amusing and fascinating story. Clearly here is fact surpassing fiction: the old lady with the knitting, the hairpins, the big handbag, the ball of string, and the knowledge of detective stories, *must* be no other than Miss Marple. We consulted Dame Agatha Christie and Sir Max Mallowan and they say, alas, it cannot be. But, whoever she may have been, what was she doing in that compartment, and what happened to her when the train stopped at Vichy, and the Comité d'Etudes got to work?

There was one Englishman on the 1928 Comité: Söderman describes him as 'Dr Foat, an English specialist in Hellenic cultures'. There are two photographs of his backside in the Musée at Glozel. But who was he? He agreed to the report of the Comité d'Etudes which declared that all the Glozel material was authentic, but did he publish his own testimony anywhere? We would like to read it: it would be a primary document, as were those testimonies of Dorothy Garrod and Pedro Bosch-Gimpera that we have already published in these pages. Or has he vanished for ever like the pseudo Mademoiselle Marple with the hairpins and string—perhaps murdered on the Orient Express or the Blue Train? Information, please, about Dr Foat.

☞ We have been taken to task for saying that we should develop historical archaeology in Britain and asked what we mean by this. Admittedly all archaeology is history, and its *raison d'être* is to write history, supplementing and correcting and improving written records where they exist, and writing prehistory where they do not. We were using the phrase as it is widely used in America, and outside Britain and western Europe generally, for what we call here post-medieval and post-post-medieval archaeology. Historical archaeology in this sense became a serious aspect of archaeology in Britain as a result of the post-war excavations and research in our towns and cities such as Leicester, London, Exeter, Southampton and York, and perhaps most spectacularly and seriously, through the work of Martin Biddle at Winchester. The Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology came into existence in 1966, growing out of the Post-Medieval Ceramic Research Group founded in 1963. The first issue of its journal, *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, was published in 1968 and contains (pp. 102–3) a short account by K. J. Barton of the origins of the Society. In the same number (pp. 104–5), Ivor Noël Hume writes of the development of historical archaeology in America: he tells us that at a meeting on the campus of Southern Methodist University at Dallas, Texas, a Society was established 'to foster the study of non-aboriginal archaeology in the western hemisphere'. This was the Society for Historical Archaeology: unlike its British near-counterpart its sphere of interest is limited by culture rather than by time. The British Society was founded 'to promote the study of the archaeological evidences of British and Colonial history of the post-medieval period and before the onset of industrialization', and they elsewhere define their field as 1450–1750 AD.

A glance through the *Newsletter* of the American Society for Historical Archaeology shows how widespread is the interest in this subject and how vigorous the activity of historical archaeologists from all over America from the Caribbean to northern Canada. The address of the Society is the *Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of*

Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83843, and the Secretary/Treasurer is Roderick Sprague of that University. It is good to know that there has been founded an Australian Society for Historical Archaeology: its address is the *Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, 2006*. Started in 1970, it publishes a newsletter that comes out six times a year, edited by Judy Birmingham and R. Ian Jack; this newsletter has included articles such as Judy Birmingham on nineteenth-century tombstones and Vincent Megaw's account of the excavations at Captain Cook's Landing Place at Kurnell. The Australian Society has published the first in its *Studies in Historical Archaeology*: it is by Graeme Henderson, Assistant Curator of Marine Archaeology in the Western Australian Museum. Monograph no. 1 is called *The Wreck of the Elizabeth* (53 illustrated pages, Sydney, 1973, \$2.50) and reports the discovery and exploration of the barque which sank near Perth in September 1839. Further titles are announced as follows: *Elizabeth Farm House, Parramatta*; *James King's Pottery at Irrawany, New South Wales*; *The Tasmanian Aboriginal Settlement at Wybalenag, Fluden Island*; and *Reprinted catalogues of some nineteenth-century Australian potteries*. All good wishes to the Society.


☞ We were happy to spend a week last December in Colonial Williamsburg and to study the archaeological work of that remarkable and interesting foundation. First settled in 1633 as Middle Plantation on a tidewater peninsula between the James and York river in south-eastern Virginia, it originally stood within a ten-kilometre stockade and served as a refuge from Indian attacks. The College of William and Mary was founded there in 1693. In 1699, after the burning of Jamestown, Middle Plantation became the capital of Virginia and was renamed Williamsburg to honour William III. It was the political, social and cultural centre of Virginia until in 1780 the capital was moved to Richmond. Here Virginia had established the first theatre, the first successful printing press, the first newspaper and the first paper mill. Williamsburg

declined in the nineteenth century but in the nineteen-twenties the Reverend William Goodwin originated the idea of restoring the early colonial area, and succeeded in interesting John D. Rockefeller Jr to sponsor the project. The restoration began in 1926; Colonial Williamsburg's archaeological programme began in 1928 with the exploration of the site of the Capitol, soon followed by work at the Raleigh Tavern, at the College of William and Mary, and at the Governor's Palace. Its Department of Archaeology has existed, virtually without interruption, since 1928 and can today claim to house the products of one of the most consistently sustained archaeological endeavours anywhere in the world. 'By the 1950's', to quote Ivor Noël Hume, the present Director of Archaeology at Williamsburg, 'the application of archaeological techniques and reasoning to colonial American sites had ceased to be dismissed as an antiquarian affectation. Archaeologists and historians were learning that those precepts could be applied to any period, no matter how recent, if, by digging something up, one could learn more than was to be determined from written records' (preface to *Five artifact studies*, ed. I. Noël Hume, Williamsburg, 1973).

I. Noël Hume, who came to America from the Guildhall Museum, London, has been working at Williamsburg for seventeen years, ably supported by his wife, Audrey, a research associate of the Department of Archaeology. In this time they have shown what detailed information can be obtained from the ground about the culture of the last two hundred and fifty years. His own two books, *Historical archaeology* (New York: Knopf, 1969) and *A guide to artifacts of Colonial America* (New York: Knopf, 1970), provide an admirable introduction to the subject, and we congratulate him on his achievement, which was suitably recognized in January of this year by the award of a medal at the Charleston, South Carolina, meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology. This eighth meeting was held jointly with the Sixth International Conference on Underwater Archaeology, and its theme was 'Toward archaeological science through the material remains of culture'.

Colonial Williamsburg has produced two new publications. The first, from which we have already quoted, *Five artifact studies*, consists of a group of papers by present and past staff members describing the contents of an early eighteenth-century well in Williamsburg, and the evolution of shoe-buckles, bayonets, horse-shoes and window glass in Williamsburg. It is volume I of a new series: *Colonial Williamsburg Occasional Papers in Archaeology*, edited by Noël Hume; the contributors are Audrey Noël Hume, Merry W. Abbitt, Robert H. McNulty, Isabel Davies and Edward Chapel (Williamsburg, 1973, 116 pp., 61 figs. and illustrations, \$7.95). The second is *Archaeology and the colonial garden* by Audrey Noël Hume, and will be of use to archaeologists interested in the preservation and history of colonial gardens and in the history of garden tools and equipment. It is the seventh in the Colonial Williamsburg series of popular archaeological booklets.

We reproduce here (PL. 1) two illustrations of recent work at Williamsburg. The first is of excavations at the site of the first public mental hospital in America. Here, while uncovering strata of the 1700-1710 period, archaeologists found remains of what is believed to have been the home of Francis Nicholson, the first colonial governor to reside in Williamsburg and the man who devised the layout of what became one of America's planned cities and one of the few specifically planned as a capital city. The second illustration is of Noël Hume excavating old wine bottles in the yard of Wetherburn's Tavern. These contained cherries and show the making of either cherry brandy or brandied cherries in the eighteenth century in Virginia.

 The Secretary of the British Academy, Dr Neville Williams, has supplied us with details of the new British Institutes in Afghanistan and South-East Asia. The British Institute of Afghan Studies was opened in Kabul in July 1972 as a centre of research for British scholars working in the fields of archaeology, history, languages and geography. Initially Mr Stuart Swiny served as Assistant Director; in July 1973 he was joined by the first Director,


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Dr David Whitehouse. On 1 October 1974, when Dr Whitehouse took up his appointment as Director of the British School at Rome, he was succeeded by Dr A. McNicoll as Director in Kabul: Miss D. Colvin has been appointed Assistant Director. The sponsoring society in London is the Society for Afghan Studies, founded in June 1972: its President is Sir Harold Bailey, its Chairman Mr Peter Fraser, and its Secretary Dr D. W. MacDowall.

An Institute in Singapore, to be concerned initially with archaeology, cultural anthropology and the history of South-East Asia, is going forward on modest lines. British scholars working on South-East Asian subjects have for some time felt the need for facilities in the area to assist their research: a visit by Professor Maurice Freedman in 1971 established that a base in Singapore would best meet these requirements. This proposal was fully acceptable to the countries concerned and was well supported by the British diplomatic missions. The British Academy decided to found a British Institute in South-East Asia, consisting of a Director with a residence in Singapore, 'from which', to quote Dr Williams's letter, 'by personal contact, including much travel, he can promote joint endeavour with local scholars on research objectives of mutual interest, keep British scholars informed of needs and priorities with regard to projected research, and facilitate access for those seeking to work in that area'. Unlike the existing British Schools and Institutes overseas, it is not envisaged that there should be a supporting learned society in the UK with a separate London headquarters, nor that a specialist journal should be launched. The management of the South-East Asia Institute resides in a Committee of the British Academy to which the Director is responsible. The Australian Academy of the Humanities, which already has commitments in Indonesia, is making a contribution towards the cost of the Singapore Institute. Dr Milton Osborne has been appointed its first Director, and takes office in August of this year.

Readers may wonder what has happened in the last few years to our British Schools in the Near East. The British School of Archaeology

in Iraq received the approval of the Iraq Government to its application for permission to continue work in June 1973, under the terms of an Iraqi law of 1972 by which all cultural institutions were required to register. But on 12 August 1973, by a decision of the Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq, the School was closed. No reasons for that action were given: the hostel and the library remain closed, although the archaeological work of the school has in fact been continued under the title of the British Archaeological Expedition in Iraq, directed by Mr Nicholas Postgate, and has received every assistance from the Iraqi authorities.

 A letter from Professor Thurstan Shaw who was, until last year, Professor of Archaeology at Ibadan in Nigeria, runs:

I was much interested in Peter Shinnie's letter which you quoted in your December editorial (1974, 259). By a coincidence, on 7 November I publicly expressed somewhat similar sentiments when seconding the vote of thanks to Desmond Clark for his Huxley Memorial Lecture at the Royal Anthropological Institute. Among other things I said, 'We owe Professor Desmond Clark a great debt of gratitude for helping to give the prehistory of Africa the place and the importance it deserves. It is a sad fact that nowadays there is more interest in the archaeology and prehistory of Africa in America than there is in this country . . . the majority of those who have contributed most to archaeological work in anglo-phone Africa in the last forty years were trained in universities in this country, yet of them I could name six whose research work has been in Africa but who are now teaching in American universities, and more who have refused a similar invitation. Whereas in this country we have a number of posts specifically concerned with the archaeology and prehistory of Asia, we have only one specifically concerned with Africa and that in a centre for West African Studies, not in an archaeology or anthropology department. I know there are those concerned with guiding the academic life of this country and with university policy who have been trying to redress this imbalance—because imbalance it is—and to get more courses on African archaeology and prehistory included in University curricula. I hope

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that Professor Desmond Clark's lecture will serve to strengthen their hands and to gain them influential allies: for he has indeed shown that the prehistory of Africa is not peripheral but paramount!

¶ We mentioned in a footnote in our last issue (1974, 263) the sad news of the death of Don Pedro Bosch-Gimpera which had just reached us. Since then we have learnt of the deaths of three other distinguished archaeological scholars, Spiridon Marinatos, Rodney Young, and Emil Vogt, who had for so long been the doyen of Swiss archaeology and Director of the National Museum at Zurich. Dr Marinatos was killed when his own excavations on Thera collapsed under him: it was in these pages that he first set out his then revolutionary ideas about

Thera/Santorini (*ANTIQUITY*, 1939, 425-39) and he had suggested that he should give us soon his revised ideas on the controversy. We also note with regret the deaths of two men who in their several ways had done a very great deal to make archaeology understandable to a wide general public: Leonard Cottrell, who, by broadcasts and writing, established himself as one of the best exponents of *haute vulgarisation*, and Alan Sorrell, whose thoughtful, informed and imaginative reconstructions of archaeological contexts in prehistoric, proto-historic and historic times did much to make the past live again through the eyes and hand of a very talented artist. We print (PL. VIII), two (black-and-white) impressions of his work, as a very inadequate reminder: the Heathrow 'village' and Totnes Castle.

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PLATE I: EDITORIAL

(a) Excavations in 1972 at the Mental Hospital, Williamsburg

(b) I. Noël Hume excavating eighteenth-century wine bottles at Wetherburn's Tavern, Williamsburg

See pp. 4-5

Photos : Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



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PLATE VIII: EDITORIAL

Reconstruction drawings by Alan Sorrell. (a) Totnes Castle, Devon, as it might have appeared early in the fourteenth century. (b) Based on excavations at Heathrow (London Airport). The village, which included a temple (foreground), existed sometime between 500–300 BC

See p. 7

Photos : a, DoE, Crown copyright b, London Museum;



b