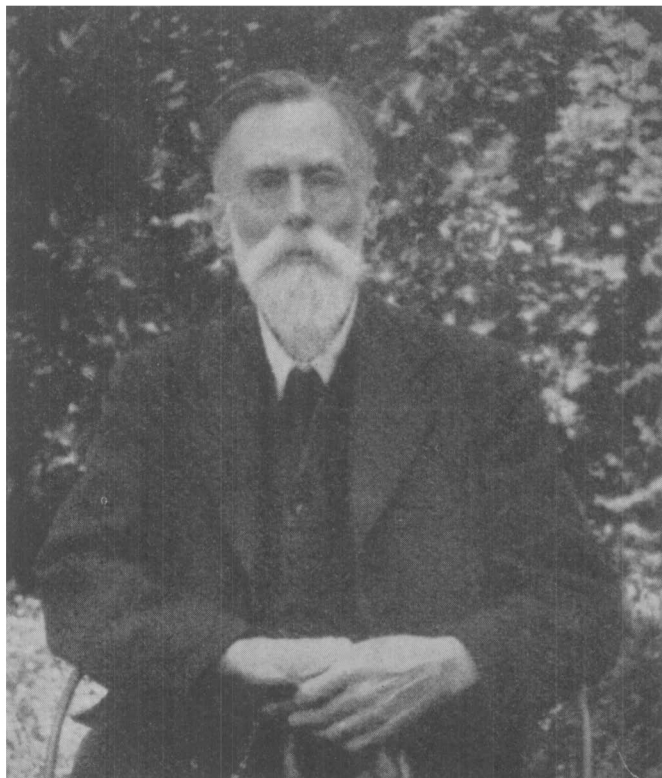


J. L. MYRES

SIR JOHN LINTON MYRES, President of the Hellenic Society 1935–38, died on 6 March 1954, in his eighty-fifth year.

A Scholar of Winchester and New College, he contributed articles on local antiquities and studied geology to occupy his spare time while obtaining first classes in Honour Moderations and Greats, and in 1892 he was elected both Craven Travelling Fellow and Burdett-Coutts Geology Scholar. Throughout his life he regarded science and arts as complementary studies; a review written after his retirement ends with the words: 'The chemical formulae in the Appendix need a clear head.' His research took him to the eastern Mediterranean, to Crete, where he shared the first excitement of Sir Arthur Evans's discoveries and the recognition of Minoan writing, to Anatolia, and to Cyprus, which became his particular sphere, though never to the exclusion of other interests. In 1894 he carried out excavations there and reorganised the Museum at Nicosia, and in 1899 he collaborated with Ohnefalsch-Richter to provide the Museum with a Catalogue. He was Fellow



of Magdalen 1892–95, winning the Arnold Essay Prize in 1899, Student of Christ Church 1905–7, founder of *Man* and its first editor 1901–3, Lecturer in Classical Archaeology at Oxford 1903–7, and Gladstone Professor of Greek and Lecturer in Ancient Geography at Liverpool University 1907–10. He then returned to Oxford as first Wykeham Professor of Ancient History. By 1915 he had published *A History of Rome* (1902), *The Dawn of History* (1911; it went into its 12th edition in 1946 and was translated into Spanish in 1950), and *A Handbook of the Cesnola Collection of Antiquities from Cyprus in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y.* (1914), in addition to more than a hundred articles which not only added to knowledge but also in many instances introduced new methods. They are listed in his *Geographical History in Greek Lands* (1953), but a few examples will show the range: *Gothic foliage carvings* (*The Builders' Journ.* 4, 1896); *The origin and purpose of the megalithic structures of Tripoli and Barbary* (*Proc. Soc. Ant.*, Ser. II, 17, 1899); *On the plan of the Homeric house* (*JHS* XX, 1900); *The early pot-fabrics of Asia Minor* (*Journ. of R. Anthr. Inst.* 33, 1903); *The Alpine races in Europe* (*Geogr. Journ.* 28, 1906); *The Siginnae of Herodotus* (*Anthr. Essays Presented to E. B. Tylor*, 1907); *The geographical study of Greek and Roman culture* (*Scottish Geogr. Mag.* 1910); *Sarcophagi from Cyprus* (*Antike Denkmäler* 3, 1912); *Herodotus the Tragedian* (*Miscellany Presented to J. M. Mackay*, 1914).

From 1916 to 1919 he was Lieut.-Commander (Acting Commander) R.N.V.R., first in the Naval Intelligence Dept. and later in the Military Control Office, Athens. He was mentioned in despatches, and was made Commander of the Royal Order of George I of Greece in 1918 and O.B.E. in 1919. His intimate knowledge of the coast of Asia Minor, *non hos quaesitum munus in usus*

(the Turkish authorities had not welcomed curious travellers, and he had trained himself to map country with the minimum of equipment), sent him out on foraging raids to bring in news and cattle for the Navy, much as patriotic Ionians must have harried the Persian coast. Oxford after the war was full of stories of 'Black-beard Myres' and his adventures with spies and Higher Authority; they were probably less incredible than the truth, and certainly in 1939 he described nostalgically how to run a boat into harbour under the enemy's guns. It is difficult to realise that in 1919 he was already fifty years old.

The next twenty years were full of activities. He was General Secretary of the British Association 1919–32, President of the Royal Anthropological Society 1928–31, of the Folk-Lore Society 1924–26, of the Hellenic Society 1935–38, and of the British School at Athens 1934–47. The last responsibility continued after his retirement in 1939, during the difficult years of the war, and was combined with a still more ticklish job, the General Secretaryship of the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, in which his pugnacity in the interests of international goodwill was a chief cause of sanity in the years of post-war hysteria. His help and advice were freely given, to New College and especially to its Library, and, as the writer remembers with special gratitude, to St. Hugh's College, to the Honour School of Geography, of which he was *pater et rerum inventor*, to the Archaeological Survey of South Africa, and to individuals whatever their academic status, provided that they shared his enthusiasm for finding things out. The steady flow of articles and reviews continued; his interest in the concrete was undiminished ('*The Structure and Origin of the Minoan Body-shield*' in *Man*, 1939, is a good example), but he was increasingly led to explore the influences which determined artistic form and the relation between poetry and art. *The Political Ideas of the Greeks* was published in 1927, and in 1930 he gathered together in the 600 packed pages of *Who Were the Greeks?* (Sather Lectures, 1927) the results of forty years of study and creative thinking about the countless influences which produced the unique phenomenon of Hellenism. They are very like his lectures, at once a Grand National and a labyrinth, from which the ant stored up illegible fodder for future sustentation and the grasshopper drew pure enjoyment—to regret thirty years later the evanescent vividness of those striking details about Vampires. Of the two categories of good lecturers, those who knew a lot and enjoyed their omniscience and those who knew a lot and enjoyed what they knew, the Wykeham Professor was *facile princeps* of the second group.

He became Sather Professor of the University of California in 1927, Hon. D.Litt. Witwatersrand in 1929, Officer of the Order of St. Sava in 1930, Hon. D.Sc. Wales and Huxley Memorial Medallist in 1933 (*The Cretan Labyrinth, Journ. of the R. Anthr. Inst.* 63), and Hon. Ph.D. Athens in 1937, and he received the Order of Dannebrog in 1939 and the Gold Medal of the Society of Antiquaries in 1942. His Knighthood was conferred on him in 1943. In the same year he gave the Frazer Lecture at Cambridge (*Mediterranean Culture*, 1944), and in 1953 he received the Victoria Medal of the Royal Geographical Society. *BSA* 37 was presented to him to mark his seventieth, and in July 1949 there was a Special Issue of *Man* in honour of his eightieth birthday. Since then his publications have included: 1950: *Dryos Cephalae* (*CR* 64); *Minoan dress* (*Man* 50); *Homeric art* (*BSA* 45); *The film in the service of art criticism* (*Eidos* 1); *Easter in a Greek village* (*Folklore* 61); 1951: *The structure of stichomythia in Attic tragedy* (*Proc. Brit. Acad.* 34); *The tomb of Porsena at Clusium* (*BSA* 46); *The Man and his past* (*Essays presented to O. G. S. Crawford*); 1952: *Scripta Minoa II*, in which Sir Arthur Evans's material on Linear B Script is published, itself a gigantic work; *The pattern of the Odyssey* (*JHS* LXXII); 1953: *Geographical history in Greek lands; Herodotus, the father of history; Ancient Groceries* (*Greece and Rome* 22).

The last title is a fitting reminder of his richest gift. He was both φιλομαθής and φιλόσοφος. No detail was too technical, remote, or trivial to excite his interest, and all were made to contribute to a sum of wisdom which included experience of the present as well as knowledge of the past. His vast learning was the reverse of encyclopaedic; when he set out to write a Catalogue of Cypriote antiquities, it became a survey of Cypriote civilisation. The power to see small things as parts of a large design and amorphous masses as orderly stages in a development, to illuminate the unknown by a happy analogy with the familiar, and to bring together things which had never been thought of simultaneously, gives his books their peculiar quality. The interpretation is so creative that it perpetually approaches the sphere of imagination, and sometimes crosses into it, but if a conclusion was challenged, he would immediately produce fifty precise pieces of evidence in its support. The result is that his books are at least as fruitful for the sceptical as for the credulous reader, and most profitable of all for the reader who is prepared to set off in pursuit of the game which he has put up. Even in the last year of his life, he refused to write his reminiscences because there were so many more interesting subjects. No one who has heard him talk would find this easy to believe; the stories, rich in themselves, were made irresistible by the wit and drama of the telling, and on one legendary occasion he ended, 'Yes, yes; like Odysseus, I have seen much and remembered more.' But it is certain that there would always have been new ideas to express, for he resembled Odysseus also in his inexhaustible resourcefulness. ἐνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε. . . .

D. H. G.