

# Antiquity

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## Editorial

**O**F the three matters arising out of articles in the last number on which we commented in the March Editorial, two come up for further comment in this issue, namely the Olduvai discoveries and the C<sub>14</sub> dating of the Neolithic in Europe. In an article in this number (p. 119) Dr Louis Leakey comments on the article by Dr Weiner and Dr Napier in our last issue (ANTIQUITY, 1962, 41) and offers an explanation of the apparent discrepancy between the date of 1.75 million years for Bed I at Olduvai and the date of 1.3 million years for the basalt *below* Bed I. Meanwhile, since he wrote his article, Leakey announced on 22 March that he and his wife had discovered at Fort Ternan, 40 miles west of Kisumu in Kenya, a rich fossil-bearing bed which yielded the palate of a hitherto unknown primate. This bed is dated by the potassium-argon method to 14 million years ago, and Leakey claims that this primate, neither man nor ape, stood somewhere in an evolutionary sequence between *Proconsul* dated at 25 million years ago, and *Zinjanthropus* of Bed 1 at Olduvai at 1.75 million years. It is no wonder that this discovery has been hailed by journalistic commentators as 'the missing link'—a concept which no amount of scientific writing seems to eradicate from the popular mind—and that a serious commentator, Dr Elwyn Simonds of the Peabody Museum, Harvard should be prompted to say in a talk broadcast by the B.B.C. that 'Perhaps after all the crucial aspects of human self-knowledge can better be determined by archaeologists than by astronauts'.



With these dates of millions of years in our minds, the dating of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages in north-western Europe may seem relatively unimportant, but 1000 years or less here changes our ideas as much as 100,000 years or more in the Pleistocene. We published in our last issue in an article by Professors Clark and Godwin the known dates for the origins of the Neolithic in north-western Europe (ANTIQUITY, 1962, 10) and by the time these words are printed these dates will have been discussed in the spring conference organized by the Prehistoric Society, which will be reported on by Mr Humphrey Case in the September number. We print here (p. 139) a note from Dr Giot of Rennes listing many new C<sub>14</sub> dates from France. This is written in conjunction with Messieurs Coursaget and Le Run of the C<sub>14</sub> Laboratory at Gif-sur-Yvette and reference is also made to one or two dates from the C<sub>14</sub> Laboratory at Saclay determined by Monsieur Delibrias, Monsieur Labeyrie and Mademoiselle Perquis. Our French colleagues have asked that we should point out there are these two C<sub>14</sub> laboratories near Paris with official abbreviations of GsY and Sa: British archaeologists and even British C<sub>14</sub> specialists have pardonably assumed the two laboratories to be one, perhaps because the postal address of Saclay is Gif-sur-Yvette. For the help of all we should point out that we have three C<sub>14</sub> laboratories in

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Britain namely the British Museum (BM), and Cambridge University (Q), and the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington (NPL). The Dublin laboratory (D) no longer operates, and the first dates will shortly be published from Teddington. (May we remind readers of ANTIQUITY that *Radiocarbon IV* will be published in June of this year.)

There are several interesting technical and methodological points that emerge from Dr Giot's note, such as the varying dates produced by the new and old laboratories at Gif-sur-Yvette for the Sept Îles Passage Grave, the explanation of the GsY 90 dates of 6650 and 7030 B.C. for the megalithic cist Z as due to the use of fossil tree-trunks of Mesolithic age and his cryptic remark that there is no difficulty in obtaining satisfactory results from satisfactory material. These are some of the methodological issues which it will be interesting to hear discussed at the Radiocarbon Dating Conference 1962 to be held in Cambridge, England from 23 to 28 July of this year under the auspices of the Sub-department of Quaternary Research of the University of Cambridge. The main topics proposed for this conference (the first since the Groningen conference, some of the results of which were reported in this journal by Professor Waterbolk (ANTIQUITY, 1960, 14)) are (1) the half-life of radiocarbon, (2) the application of atmospheric and oceanic radiocarbon measurements, (3) techniques, standards and errors, (4) land-sea level changes, and (5) Neolithic civilization and the spread of agriculture. This is of course, like the Groningen conference, a professional one and confined to technical experts, but the Editor of ANTIQUITY has been invited and will hope to give some account of what he thought he understood later this year.

There are two immediately intriguing results of general interest in the new dates published by Giot—the date of the Passage Graves, and the date of the megalithic cists in the Tumulus de St-Michel. We already have the Ile Carn date of  $3030 \pm 75$  B.C. Now Gif-sur-Yvette produces 3055, 3215, and 3430 for Ile Carn (a corbelled Passage Grave like Ile Carn), and 2470 and 2785 for the Mané-Kernaplaye, St-Philibert, Passage Grave while Saclay produces a mean of eight counts for Kercado as 3880 (I give the dates all as B.C. without their plus/minus factors to simplify this present discussion). What does all this tell us? That the Breton Passage Graves were in existence in the fourth millennium B.C. (Compare the dates for Tara or Los Millares or Tustrup.) If we disregard the date of Cist Z at St-Michel with its dates of 6650 and 7030 (and why should we until it is proved that the wood was from *couërons*?) we are left with the Saclay date of 3760 B.C. for the central cist and the Gif-sur-Yvette dates of 2985, 2920 and 3130 for cist Y. What does all this tell us? That some of the Breton long barrows (and a particularly large one for that matter) were in existence in the fourth millennium B.C. Giot and his colleagues have already accepted these dates and written them in to the French (1962) edition of their *Brittany* (1960), and they may be right. But we, maybe craven-hearted, are not satisfied that we yet have enough C14 dates to produce the answers to our megalithic problems. We want two dozen dates from each of southern France, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Britain—and from the collective tombs of the East Mediterranean. Meanwhile *festina lente*.



We have already commented on the wealth of evidence of early settlement disclosed by air photography in the Welland Valley, put into map form by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and published by them in their *A Matter of Time* (1960, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 10s. 6d.). The sites in the Welland Valley lie between the Fens and the limestone uplands, partly in Northamptonshire and partly in Lincolnshire and range in date from the Neolithic to the early Anglo-Saxon period. All these sites will eventually be destroyed by gravel-digging, 'Before that happens' says the Council for British Archaeology in a letter dated 9 February 'they must be speedily but systematically

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examined by excavation'. There is now in existence the Welland Valley Research Committee with Mr M. W. Barley as its Chairman. This Committee requires for its Research Fund £3,000 a year of which about £2,000 a year is already ensured from the Pilgrim Trust and the Ministry of Works. The Council for British Archaeology wishes to appoint a qualified archaeologist to undertake full-time research for a period of not less than two years in the Welland Valley. The Council has never before, in the seventeen years of its existence, appealed to the public for funds. Here is something most worthy of support. Donations should be sent to *The Council for British Archaeology, 10 Bolton Gardens, London, S.W.5.*



The British Academy has recently produced a book which it is the duty of all seriously interested in the study of antiquity to read with great care. It is called *Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences* and is a report of a survey done by a Committee of the Academy between 1958 and 1960. It is published for the Academy by the Oxford University Press and costs 9s. 6d. It is worth this money alone for the information it gives about facilities for research in the humanities and the social sciences outside Britain. This investigation began because of a feeling among the officers and committees of the Academy that many engaged in research in the subjects for which the Academy has stood since 1900, are 'hampered by lack of adequate funds or by the difficulty of discovering the sources from which funds are available for their purpose'. It surveys all the problems involved—universities, museums, libraries, learned societies, publication, study leave and travel grants. It recommends the creation of 'a Council for Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, whose members would be appointed by the Lord President of the Council (or the Lord Privy Seal) and would be persons who possessed knowledge and experience in the fields of research covered by the Council'. It adds 'The members of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research are appointed after consultation with the President of the Royal Society: those of the Council for Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences should be appointed after consultation with the President of the British Academy'.

We hope this recommendation will be implemented and soon; the envisaged Committee would be parallel to the D.S.I.R. though not costing the state, or expending, the 12 million pounds which the D.S.I.R. does annually. Such a Council might well eventually take over control of the Royal Commissions on Ancient and Historical Monuments, some aspects of the Ancient Monuments Branch of the Ministry of Works, and the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey—the eventual organization of all of which is being considered by a Treasury Working Party whose report has not yet been published.

Archaeology is especially considered in the Academy report. 'In respect of Archaeology' it says (p. 69), 'the chief needs are an increased number of university posts, especially junior posts, and a central fund from which grants can be made for excavation, publication, other archaeological projects of a less expensive nature, capital expenditure by the British Schools, scientific reports and expenses of part-time and free-lance archaeologists'. What the report does not stress is that archaeology falls between the stools of the natural and humane sciences, or rather embraces in time and technique matters proper to both. Archaeology is and has been eligible for grants from the D.S.I.R. Unless it receives grants of a special nature such as scientific laboratories receive, it will founder, and this point was well made by Professor Richard Atkinson in a recent letter to *The Times* (2 March, 1962). Sir Charles Snow's deliberately provocative adumbration of two cultures in his pedestrian Rede Lecture, so vindictively lambasted by F. R. Leavis in the 1962 Richmond Lecture published *in toto* in *The Spectator* for 9 March, 1962 (*L'affaire Evans-Palmer* has not yet touched these depths of abuse) sets up in the popular imagination two polarities

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which are illusory. There is such a wealth of study in between, like Archaeology and Geography, that suffers in such a polarized set-up and probably suffers because we divide learning between a Royal Society and a British Academy. They may well do these things better in France and in Russia and the satellite countries with their centralized Institutes.

But to say this, *en passant*, is in no way to decry the present report. It demands the full and constant support of everyone in and out of press and Parliament until it is fact. To the ordinary person it is the only available account of how research is encouraged in the United States and Canada and Australia, and of what the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* in France, the *Nederlandse Organisatie voor Zuiver-Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek* in Holland, and the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* in Germany do, and after reading it, the initials *C.N.R.S.*, *Z.W.O.*, and *D.F.G.* will mean much for us. Let us hope that the day is not far distant when *C.R.H.S.* (or *C.R.H.S.S.?*) will be added to *D.S.I.R.* A footnote to all this: this fine report was not financed by Her Majesty's Government but by the Rockefeller Foundation of America. Our gratitude to a great American foundation for providing the facilities for us in Britain to think about how we should put in order our non-scientific national house.



There is an increasing amount of archaeological tourism abroad and there are few months of the year in which individuals and parties do not set out to see the Breton megaliths, the French caves, Roman Provence, or to venture further afield to Altamira or Cerveteri and Tarquinia. While France, Spain and Italy amply repay the attentions of the archaeological tourist from these islands—and Greece and Egypt do so dramatically—travellers to the past in the present should not forget the archaeological pleasures of the Low Countries, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, or the island to the west of them which, whatever the politicians and nationalists may say, is more akin to Great Britain in antiquity than to anywhere else. The *Shell Guide to Ireland* by Lord Killanin and Professor Michael Duignan has drawn attention again to the thousands of remarkable ancient monuments in the Emerald Isle. The names alone are a chaplet of ancient greatness—Newgrange, Lough Crew, Tara, Fournocks, Kells, Glendalough, Monasterboice, Clonmacnois, Dun Aengus and the Skelligs. The Irish Tourist Board (Bord Fáilte Eireann) is delighted to assist and foster archaeological travel in Ireland; it is particularly interested in organizing 'study' or 'special interest' groups and in dealing with schools, universities, extra-mural departments and field-clubs. An advertisement of the Board appears elsewhere in this journal (p. 85). The Board, with commendable foresight and wisdom, has an archaeologist on its staff, Mr P. J. Hartnett, who excavated Fourknocks and who reviewed the first volume of Professor de Valera's *Irish Megalithic Survey* in the last number of *ANTIQUITY* (1962, 73). Mr Hartnett will be delighted to deal with any queries from readers of *ANTIQUITY* who want guidance as to how to see the great monuments of Ireland.



When these words are in print the Editor of *ANTIQUITY* will be travelling in Eastern Europe as the guest of the Bulgarian and Hungarian Governments. Professor Piggott has already given us an account of some of the results of the visit he made in 1960 with Mr T. G. E. Powell, Miss N. K. Sandars and Mr J. D. Cowen to Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria (*ANTIQUITY*, 1960, 285) as a study-tour sponsored by the British Academy. We believe that travel and cultural exchanges between all countries is of the greatest importance and particularly those between either side of the temporary political barrier nicknamed

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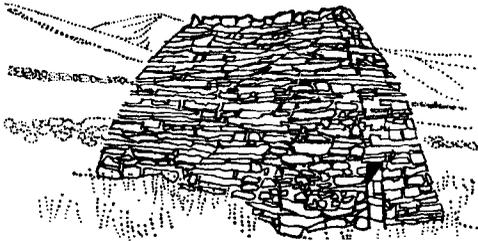
the Iron Curtain. We have this year the fourth post-war International Congress of Pre-historic and Protohistoric Sciences in Rome (ANTIQUITY, 1961, 156). The previous three Congresses were in Zurich (1950, see ANTIQUITY, 1950, 171), Madrid (1954), and Hamburg (1958, see ANTIQUITY, 1958, 247). We would like to see the 1966 Conference in Warsaw or Prague or Belgrade or Bucharest or Sofia or Moscow—and we print with pleasure in this issue Dr Marija Gimbutas's review of Mongait's book on *Archaeology in the U.S.S.R.* recently made available to us in a Pelican edition.



As we go to press we are delighted to learn that one of our advisory editors, Professor Dr Gerhard Bersu, has been awarded the Gold Medal of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and we send him our warmest congratulations. Eighteen years ago, in 1944, another of our advisory editors, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, was awarded this high honour, and, looking back along the list of Gold Medallists, he would appear to be the senior living recipient, the Abbé Henri Breuil, who received the Gold Medal in 1937, having died last August. Fortunately we have still with us, in addition to Sir Mortimer, as Gold Medallists, Dr van Giffen, Sir Cyril Fox, Dr Brøndsted, and Dr Claude Schaeffer. Long may this be so.

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## VISIT IRELAND'S WEALTH OF FIELD MONUMENTS



**I**RELAND, a small country, has for its size a remarkable concentration and diversity of interesting field monuments. These monuments range from early Neolithic down to late Georgian and include such outstanding sites as Newgrange, Lough Crew and Tara; Monasterboice, Clonmacnois and Glendalough; and countless mediaeval abbeys and castles.

Our really exciting places are well sign-posted and are easy to get at. For instance, within a six-mile radius of Dublin city half a dozen prehistoric sites can be visited in a

single afternoon. A day's bus ride will include such major sites as Tara, Newgrange, Fourknocks and Lough Crew. Equally accessible from the city are the great monastic centres of Kells, Glendalough and Monasterboice. Further west, within easy reach of Sligo city, are the great Passage Grave Cemeteries of Carrowkeel and Carrowmore as well as dozens of isolated megalithic tombs. Around the North Mayo coast right up to Killala Bay there are Court Cairns and Dolmens. Galway city is a convenient base from which to explore Connemara and the Aran Islands.

We will be happy to advise groups in planning itineraries and other problems of group visits. We are prepared, on request of a group, to travel at short notice to centres in Britain to give illustrated talks and to answer any questions concerning accommodation and transport. We will also advise on archaeological excavations at which selected students will be welcome.

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