

Antiquity

A Quarterly Review of Archaeology

VOL. X No. 39

SEPTEMBER 1936

Editorial Notes

AS we near the end of our first decade, it is natural to look both forwards and backwards. The habit of reminiscence is a recognized sign of age, but we will spare our readers until our next, the fortieth, number, when we propose to tell them something about the origins of ANTIQUITY. Fortunately its founder had sufficient faith in its future, even before the first number had appeared or even been discussed, to jot down from time to time notes on the development of the idea, and a few of the more important dates.



Who knows what the next decade holds in store for us? Certainly not the scientific worker who demands only to be given the means of carrying on his researches for the advancement of knowledge. The work he does may be organized on a national basis and his problems may present themselves under a national guise; that is merely fortuitous. It is necessary to concentrate upon a limited region (or subject) in order to achieve results, and in many instances the region selected is one's own country or part of it. But no one knows better than the archaeologist how dependent he is upon the workers in another region. One of the difficulties encountered in 'megalithic' research, for instance, is the relative backwardness of the workers in adjacent regions, such as Ireland, Brittany and the Iberian peninsula. That backwardness is being remedied, particularly in Northern Ireland, where an active group is at work; but it will remain somewhat of a handicap for many

ANTIQUITY

years to come. Even the most bigoted nationalist must admit this mutual interdependence, and does so in practice. But the advance of knowledge here is conditioned by the pace of the slowest.



Then, again, the organization of what is called international research is impeded by those recent but obsolete obstructions—inde- pendent sovereign States. Recent they are, judged by the time-scale of history and archaeology, which is marked off in centuries and millennia ; and obsolete because they bear no relation to the means of production and transport that scientists have created. To the archaeologist, national frontiers are a temporary phenomenon of no more importance, and no less, than those other frontiers, political and military, which he meets with from time to time in his researches. Sometimes he abuses them as unmitigated nuisances—when, for instance he comes across a distribution-map of some type of prehistoric object—sword, brooch or pot—that stops short at some national frontier. What we all want to know, of course, is the *total extent* of its distribution. Its range over a political region that had no existence at the time is mean- ingless, and the evidence, presented in this way, may even convey a false impression. To some extent the student must be bound and confined within such limitations, so long as they exist ; but he should never allow himself to be dominated by them.



These remarks apply mainly to the individual worker. When we come to consider co-operative research, the difficulties can only be realized by those who have made a resolute effort in that direction. The whole trend of modern science is towards undertakings that involve international co-operation. Meteorology and astronomy are perhaps the best instances. The organization of science has outstripped the political and social organization of most of the world which still holds it in bondage.



The late Professor Haverfield, in his articles in the Victoria County History of England, kept reminding his readers that to speak of ' Roman Hampshire ' or ' Roman Worcestershire ' was an absurd anachronism, for such entities had no existence in Roman times. They may be

EDITORIAL NOTES

adopted as necessary units of study, but no more. Let us for a moment suppose that Britain is still divided up into kingdoms, and that some one sets out to compile a map of Roman Britain—a perfectly legitimate aim, for Britain is an island, and was formerly a single province of the Roman Empire. The organizer may be supposed to be a subject of the Kingdom of Wessex : he has to obtain the co-operation of his colleagues in the adjacent Kingdoms, and they are all anxious to collaborate. Their activities, however, are restricted and to some extent coloured by the policies of their respective governments. Mercia adopts the scheme with enthusiasm, so far as Mercia is concerned, but for political reasons cannot collaborate with East Anglia, portions of whose territory are included upon the sheets allotted to Mercia. Kent is slow to act and suspicious of all that emanates from Wessex. Northumbria lay for the most part beyond the effective Roman frontier, and is for the moment inordinately proud of the fact ; consequently the project has no propaganda value and is adopted without enthusiasm. Wales is in the throes of recurrent revolutions ; Cornwall has no archaeologists, and Scotland no maps. (We hope no one will quote these remarks out of their context !).



We have now almost forgotten the parochial patriotisms of the Heptarchy, though they were real enough in their time. We forget that Great Britain has been a single political unit for barely more than a couple of centuries, and that some of the most vocal nations of Europe are still younger. The mere supposition (as above) that our own regional animosities still existed is enough to make them appear absurd. Perhaps some future Editor of this Review, endowed with ampler scope and greater freedom of expression, will be able to set down plainly, as a matter of history, what has now to be told in the form of a parable. We commend it to him, whoever he may be, as a subject for the Editorial Notes of the hundredth or thousandth number !



So far as the policy of this journal is concerned we have consistently tried to disregard national bias both in the selection of articles and in the expression of opinion. Being human, we have not always succeeded. But we do claim that we try always to act in what we believe to be the interests of science and of our readers. Our standard of judgment

ANTIQUITY

is scientific worth, not national ballyhoo. We have not hesitated to criticize the short-comings of British institutions when we have thought such criticism was needed—in the matter of the organization of research and museums, for instance. On the other hand, we have tried to do justice, and get justice done to the very real achievements of our fellow-countrymen whenever we think they deserve it.



Professor R. G. Collingwood writes (from 15 Belbroughton Road, Oxford) :—

‘ Since Professor Haverfield’s death, his project for a complete *corpus* of Roman inscriptions in this country has been going forward. Most of the inscriptions have been re-read and drawn by myself ; much new material has been added ; and arrangements for publication have been made with the Clarendon Press. The collecting of materials is now almost at an end. During the present year a final search is to be made for inscriptions not yet collected. To help in organizing this search three clearing-houses have been establishd. For England, south of a line joining Gloucester to the Wash, the collector is Mr C. E. Stevens, Magdalen College, Oxford ; for everything north of that line, Mr E. B. Birley, Chesterholm, Bardon Mill, Northumberland ; for Wales, Mr. V. E. Nash-Williams, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. If any one reading this announcement knows of Roman inscriptions in private possession or in out-of-the-way places where they are likely to have escaped search hitherto, he is invited to communicate with the appropriate collector, and any information he can send will be gratefully welcomed. Every inscription of Roman date is wanted, except the following three classes : (1) coins, (2) makers’ names stamped on Samian ware, (3) inscriptions brought from foreign countries by travellers in modern times ’.

We hope that any reader of these lines who can help will do so. Here at any rate is an undertaking where co-operation is easy, and where a minimum of effort may yield a maximum of result.