



FATHPUR SIKRI, NORTHERN INDIA, 1570. THE DIWAN-I-KHAS

In the centre of the high, vaulted chamber stands a single large column with a huge capital branching tree-like into knarled and twisted brackets

Antiquity

VOL. XXVI No. 104

DECEMBER 1952

Editorial Notes

IN September we printed eight more pages than usual in ANTIQUITY and we do so again in this number. We now print *more* review-matter in each number than before the war; and although thinner paper makes the size look smaller, the total contents of ANTIQUITY are only less by one-third than the pre-war issues. The increase in price (to 30 shillings) is generally agreed by our subscribers to be both just and necessary, and we are glad to say that our circulation has hardly been affected by it. If ANTIQUITY were as necessary to life as are food and clothing we should be charging about twice as much for it, and getting it, as one of our readers pointed out to us. But we are able to survive and flourish, and there is no lowering of the standard. We once more thank those who, by their continued support, enable us to achieve this satisfactory result, reminding them that early renewals of their subscriptions (now due) are greatly appreciated.



The Editor has had several letters enquiring about the results of his Sudan expedition at the beginning of this year. These results will be published by the Sudan Government, but he hopes to print an account also in ANTIQUITY. It will be based upon a lecture which he is giving to the British Academy on December 10th next (5.0 p.m.); admission to the lecture is by invitation, but we understand that, provided there is room, tickets may be available on application to the assistant-secretary of the British Academy (Burlington Gardens, London, W.1). It will be illustrated by lantern-slides made from the photographs taken and the plans made. The chief subjects dealt with will be neolithic rock-pictures and the castles and churches of the Sudan (Middle Nile region) during the medieval Christian period. Many are new discoveries and all are hitherto unrecorded.



Radiocarbon dating, already well known to readers of ANTIQUITY (see Nos. 100, December 1951, and 101, March 1952) is quickly taking its place as a key to the chief problem of archaeology, which is to construct a system of absolute chronology. The dates given will gradually increase in value as they become more numerous; it will not be

ANTIQUITY

until *many* samples from different sites have been dated that we shall be able confidently to determine the range in time of a given culture. Already a few freakish results have appeared to warn us not to put too much trust in a single analysis; though the cause of these aberrations is unknown, there is no reason to attribute it to the method. The need for an accumulation of dates being recognized, the corresponding need of having them regularly presented in a form convenient for constant reference will be obvious. That need so far has not been met; publication lags behind performance. Archaeologists eagerly await each release, but generally first hear of the dates ascertained in a confidential letter or conversation. The published facts are not always easily accessible. Perhaps all this is to some extent inevitable at this early stage in the development of a new technique, and we hasten to add that our criticisms are made in no carping spirit but with a sincere desire to suggest a remedy. We archaeologists owe the discoverers an enormous debt of gratitude both for the revolutionary discovery itself and for the measures they have taken to use it for the advancement of archaeology. These measures must have involved much labour and expense which they, not we, have contributed.



Here is an outstanding example of the dependence of workers in one field upon those in another. In such cases coordination by some body concerned with science as a whole would seem to be indicated. One thinks at once of such famous foundations as the Smithsonian and the Carnegie Institute, or of the various national museums. What working archaeologists need is the regular publication of a concise list of all the dates ascertained, with the usual brief facts of provenance. Such publication might be annual and take the form of a special Bulletin, which would be assured of a wide circulation, if launched with the necessary publicity. Archaeological museums and the libraries of archaeological societies would have to take it in, as it would be indispensable. The cost of printing or multigraphing would not be great, as the information would be concisely stated. The longer this problem remains unsolved the more difficult it will become, for results are accumulating rapidly.



The word *glacis* is a technical term of military architecture, used to denote part of a circumvallation. It is a loan-word from French and originally denoted a 'place made slippery by frozen rain' (O.E.D.). By analogy it was applied to a sloping revetted surface beyond the *counterscarp*, on the outer side of the ditch surrounding a fortress. This was designed so as to be swept by fire from the ramparts, and was naturally made as smooth as possible—hence the name. Archaeologists, however, have used the word *glacis* to describe the revetted inner wall of the *ditch* which in military parlance is called the *escarp*. In many prehistoric defences the *escarp* slopes less steeply than in those of modern times, though always more steeply than a *glacis*. The intention of those who miscall an *escarp* a *glacis* is probably to indicate that the *escarp* was revetted—for many were not. But a *revetted escarp* is not a *glacis*; and if technical terms are borrowed they should be used correctly. In her recent article on Early Jericho (September, p. 118), Miss Kenyon acknowledges the incorrectness of her use of *glacis*, to which Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close had called her attention; but she proposed to continue using it because the term had become so well established in Palestinian archaeology. Returning to the charge in a friendly letter Sir Charles expresses the hope that 'it is not too late to

EDITORIAL NOTES

stop this incorrect use of a well-known technical term'. He refers to Humpty Dumpty who claimed that a word meant what he wanted it to mean; but we do not know whether his claim was generally admitted as an unfortunate accident ended his career. The blasts of Joshua's trumpets could not entirely destroy the walls of Jericho, and it seems doubtful whether those of Sir Charles and the Editor combined will shatter an established but erroneous terminology. However this may be, a great gulf (or *ditch*) is fixed between the *revetted escarp* and the *glacis* in profane lands. Perhaps after Christmas an agreed solution will emerge.