

Antiquity

VOL. XLIV. No. 173

MARCH 1970

Editorial

Few articles printed by us in the last few years have aroused so much correspondence and discussion as Jacquetta Hawkes's 'The Proper Study of Mankind' (1968, 255). We shall publish soon an article by Dr Agrawal of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Science, Bombay, stimulated by her article, entitled 'Archaeology and the Luddites'. One of the most interesting letters we have received is from Dr Won-Yong Kim, Professor of Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Seoul National University in Korea. He writes of archaeology as 'the self-made waif', and his letter well merits printing in its entirety:

All kinds of aims and definitions of archaeology have been manipulated by workers, and impressive articles and books have been published including the latest, and monstrous, *Analytical Archaeology* by D. L. Clarke (1968). But the flow of argument as to what is archaeology or what an up-to-date archaeologist should do will never cease. What do we fuss about? Why do archaeologists go beyond their parish enclave and wander about as self-made waifs and poke their noses into the fields of study of others?

Before defining archaeology, let us first consider what is the achievement or contribution of archaeology or archaeologists from Thomsen to modern statniks. Isn't it the extension of our knowledge of human history beyond the limit of written records? What else has archaeology done? It is clear that archaeology is a branch of history that reconstructs the way of life of man, within the temporal and spatial frame, based on evidence

of his activities. Some claim that the finding of laws in culture or cultural processes should be the ultimate aim of archaeology, and archaeologists should attempt to understand and explain the past besides mere reconstructing. Are there indeed prehistoric patterns of culture and cultural processes only to be found in archaeological contexts? If there are, would anyone write a review article on those findings? To me, any problem concerning the general and basic laws underlying human cultures and cultural processes should be left to cultural anthropologists. Archaeologists do have solid material data which can be recovered by them only. But, from the moment of recovery these data immediately lose their 'solidness' because of those many bright new archaeological devices of analysis on which all sorts of 'brilliant' archaeological inferences and 'reconstruction' stand.

The so-called numerical classification of artifact types is indeed the very starting point of archaeological reconstruction. But, what is this numerical analysis? A type is to be identified by human eyes or rarely by the sense of touch. It is the way ancient men realized and understood a type or types. Did Palaeolithic men ever apply the method, or formulate a type or norm? According to modern archaeologists Montelius only created or designed types for the convenience of his study. May be. But, have modern archaeologists themselves really 'discovered' types or norms of ancient men? What is a set of attributes? Flint tools are not machine-made but hand-made. Even a life-long knapper would have found it difficult or impossible to control the shape of blades or exact angles of percussion with precision. And, knappers are not necessarily

ANTIQUITY

always such old experts. What would indeed a slight difference in the width of a blade indicate? How much are we sure all the minute attributes set up by us were deliberately formulated by ancient men? We have in Korea a type of hand hoe, made of iron, called Homi. It is used by farmers all over the country for the very same purpose of digging up roots and weeding. Yet the shape of Homi shows a considerable degree of difference according to regions. Archaeologists may immediately apply their advanced typology for the Korean Homi should it become antiquity to produce tens of types believed to have functional or temporal significances all 'discovered' by their brilliant brain and technique. A total nonsense!

After the complicated statistical analyses of upper Palaeolithic end-scrapers, Sackett sadly confesses that it will provide no more than increasingly sensitive heuristic typologies, and Palaeolithic stone tools provide no more than the raw material of space-time systematics (J. R. Sackett, 'Quantitative Analysis of Upper Palaeolithic Stone Tools', *American Anthropologist*, 1966, 68, 390). If it is so, why do we have to undergo this painstaking yet meaningless process? I am all out for Jacquetta Hawkes in denouncing the dehumanization of archaeology.

Let us get out of this labyrinth of archaeological snobbery, and stop making ourselves self-made waifs, for the sake of a clear-cut archaeology.

There are others who, recently, have protested in a characteristically quiet, modest, and firm way against what Professor Won-Yong Kim calls the labyrinth of archaeological snobbery and the making of ourselves into clear-cut, unhistorical, dim waifs. In their *Archaeology of Early Man* (reviewed by Professor Desmond Clark in the next number of ANTIQUITY), John Coles and Eric Higgs write (p. 75): 'It appears unlikely that typology and the natural sciences will hold their dominating positions for long. It may well be expected, particularly in view of the impact of more and more refined chronologies, that ethology and economics will have more important influences in the future than they have at present.'



A suggestion was put forward towards the end of 1968 by Miss Audrey Henshall and

Mr Graham Ritchie that a meeting might be arranged in Scotland for everyone closely concerned with the problems of archaeology. The result of this idea was a day meeting held on 8th March 1969 at the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh. The Scottish Archaeological Forum, as it has been subsequently called, was organized to provide an opportunity to hear, discuss and assess some of the important new discoveries and reinterpretations of material, either published or as yet unpublished, by all working archaeologists in Scotland. The theme of the 1969 meeting was a broad survey of Scottish archaeological topics. The 1970 meeting will deal with the relationship between Northern Britain and Southern Scotland during prehistory and the Roman occupation. Those interested should write to Miss M-J. Mountain, *Department of Archaeology, 19-20 George Square, Edinburgh 8; Scottish Archaeological Forum 1969* (the March papers) is 8s. post-free.



More and more refined chronologies were the subject of the Uppsala Nobel Conference in August of last year, and we print a short account of that conference (p. 38) by Evžen Neustupný, one of the archaeologists present.

These and many other matters were discussed at the Royal Society/British Academy Symposium in London on 11th/12th December, the first day of which dealt largely with radiocarbon dating and its relation to historical dating and dendrochronology. The session was opened by Professor Libby, described by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, who was in the chair, as 'the patron saint of radiocarbon dating'. The symposium as a whole will be reported on by Euan MacKie in our next issue. Throughout one had doubts about how wise it was, at the moment, to modify C14 dates until there was general agreement about the half-life and a firm understanding that corrections should be made from an agreed, approved curve. Dr Switsur, of the Radiocarbon Laboratory of the University of Cambridge, writes:

I wonder if you have seen details of the latest careful determination of a value for the half-life

EDITORIAL

of radiocarbon? The result was 5660 years with a statistical uncertainty of about 40 years. This agrees fairly well with Ingrid Olsson's measurement but is younger than the mass spectrometer measurements of Mann and Watt.

This comment is all the more interesting when we remember the admonition printed as an Editorial Statement in *Radiocarbon*, namely that we must go on using the Libby value of the half-life: 5570 ± 30 years, despite the fact that the mean of the three new determinations of the half-life, 5730 ± 40 , was 'regarded as the best value now obtainable'. Now, we are told, it may be 5660 years ± 40 . Archaeologists and prehistorians realize their remarkable indebtedness to radiocarbon dating and also to the new bristle-cone pine dendrochronology: it was no understatement of Wheeler's at the London British Academy/Royal Society conference to describe C14 dating as the major contribution made by science to archaeology since the development of the new stratigraphical geology in the period 1780–1830. This is true: the new geology of the uniformitarians and the new absolute chronology of the physicists represent two of the major revolutions in archaeology.

But we historians must be told how to use this fascinating new tool. We must not be allowed or encouraged to use make-it-yourself C14 kits. We all know now that C14 years are not the same as calendar years, and that the *Pinus aristata* dendrochronology demands important corrections which will resolve the difficulties hitherto experienced between the C14 dates for ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and the historical chronologies. But we are not only the benefactors of radiocarbon dating: we are the slaves of its priests. Will they please tell us in the next few years what correction graphs we should use and what half-life adjustment factors we must make? Until then we must go slowly.



It was a pleasure to attend the Golden Jubilee Dinner of the Oxford University Archaeological Society in the Randolph Hotel on Saturday, 8th November 1969, and this pleasure was only slightly diminished by the fact that it fell to us

to propose the health of the Society, a toast replied to elegantly by Professor Christopher Hawkes, who had been the Society's President in the Trinity Term of 1927. This Society must surely be the oldest University undergraduate archaeological society in Europe and therefore in the world. It was not, we are delighted to learn, the first University society at Oxford with archaeological interests. The Oxford University Brass Rubbing Society was founded in 1893 under the presidency of Viscount Dillon, President of the Society of Antiquaries: it published a journal in two volumes and collected money for the preservation and refixing of brasses. The interest of this Society widened and in 1901 a new name was chosen, the Oxford University Antiquarian Society, 'for the study of monumental brasses and kindred subjects'. The programme for the Michaelmas Term 1901 announced lectures and visits, including a cycling excursion to Cassington, with the distance, seven miles, firmly stated. Membership rose to 119 members but then declined, and in October 1911 the Society had been dormant for 'a year or two'. It was resuscitated and in the Michaelmas Term of 1911, the first term of its new life, papers were read by E. T. Leeds, R. G. Collingwood, and O. G. S. Crawford. The last meeting of the Society was for a group photograph on 13th June 1914. The Society was disbanded during the 1914–18 war.

On 20th October 1919 a meeting was called in Oxford to form a new Society. The policy was the discussion of a very large range of subjects and especially the undertaking of excavations, and Christopher Hawkes, in his Golden Jubilee Dinner speech, stressed the strength of the OUAS as shown by its excavation policy and practice. The new Society has been in continuous existence from 1919: in 1927 it took the momentous decision of admitting women to membership. This step had been proposed as early as the Hilary Term of 1920 and had caused much discussion. A lady reading *Literae Humaniores* applied to join the Society. The minutes of the Society, to quote from an admirable typescript history written by P. W. Dixon of New College, the President of the

ANTIQUITY

Society for the Trinity Term 1967, record that 'It was decided that the lady in question should be brought to excavations and if the Society was satisfied she should be proposed for election.' Dixon comments cryptically: 'Either the Society or the lady in question was not satisfied, for there was no election.' There is a wonderful Droop-like feeling about all this.

We have all had our lantern troubles and inevitably the Oxford University Archaeological Society had its share. It had arranged that the New College Library Clerk should work the lantern for a fee of ten shillings a term, but in 1929 a note says 'The New College Library Clerk has got married and so cannot stay out at night. The Secretary now has to work the lantern.'

The official minutes of the Oxford University Archaeological Society are illuminated by an unfortunately incomplete story in Biblical style called 'The Holy Book of the OUAS', unsigned, but in the handwriting of B. H. St John O'Neil. Brian O'Neil's 'Holy Book' has much to say about the difficulties and inadequacies of lanterns, and it is indeed ironic that when he returned from London to read a paper to the Society on 30th October 1944, in the same room and apparently with the same machine that had caused him so much trouble 20 years before, Richard Atkinson had to announce that 'the New College lantern had mysteriously disappeared' and that no lantern was available at all!

The list of Presidents of the OUAS is a golden chronicle of archaeologists: to select, invidiously, a few: Louis Clarke, Ian Richmond, Charles Oman, Noël Myres, W. A. Pantin, A. H. M. Jones, Brian O'Neil, H. W. Llewellyn-Smith, Christopher Hawkes, Kathleen Kenyon, Arnold Taylor, Michael Maclagan, William Friend, Peter Shinnie, Martin Jope, Richard Goodchild, John Bradford, Anne Whiteman, Richard Atkinson, John Eames, Michael Apted, Leslie Alcock, Nicholas Thomas, Hector Catling, Peter Fowler. This is an almost unbelievable list of what, to use the word in its older usage, should be called Oxford worthies, and it prompts us all to think: do undergraduate archaeological societies flourish best where

there are no degree courses in the subject? Certain it is that Oxford, despite Arthur Evans and Tylor and Balfour and John Myres, and the efforts of Christopher Hawkes, is against an Honours Course in Archaeology; yet has produced, as the Golden Jubilee list of the Society reveals, so many of the important figures in the present archaeological scene.



While we write about Oxford let us remind our readers of the fine poem on the Pitt-Rivers Museum which appeared in the *New Statesman* on 5th December 1969. It was by James Fenton and we quote the first stanza:

It is shut
22 hours a day and all day Sunday
And should not be confused
With its academic brother, full of fossils
And skeletons of bearded seals. Take
Your heart in your hand and go;
it does not sport
Any of Ruskin's hothouse Venetian
And resembles rather, with its dusty girders,
A vast gymnasium or barracks—though
The resemblance ends there.

We congratulate the *New Statesman* on printing this poem and on the poem by Laurence Lerner called *Sterkfontein Man* published in their issue of 21st November, which began:

Warmed by dung and closeness
He sat in the crook of the dark
Surrounded by sons. At his side
The long slit shouting with light,
Beyond were the roars, the running,
Earth's long hair in the sun,
The smell of food and dying.



Professor Lyle Borst is at it again and goes from weakness to weakness. We noted (*Antiquity*, 1969, 172) his theory, first published in that year (*Science*, 163, 1969, 567–9), that peculiar misalignments in the layout of Canterbury Cathedral were attributable to the fact that the Christian builders worked on a floor-plan left by their megalithic predecessors: and we said that this theory was fantasy. Since then Professor Borst has subjected other cathedrals

EDITORIAL

and churches to his specialist analysis and finds that 'the architectural plans of cathedrals at Canterbury, Wells, Winchester, Gloucester and Norwich, and churches at Wing, Bucks, and Knowlton, Dorset, disclose megalithic designs of an explicit kind' (*Nature*, 25th October 1969, 335). There seem to be Borst-Woodhenges underneath every Christian building he visits, and it is not surprising that on a visit to Scandinavia he demanded that there should have been henge monuments under Nidaros Cathedral at Trondheim and the cathedral at Turku in Finland.

And, to our great personal distress, chambered long barrows are not immune to reinterpretation from this highly personalized and deplorable astro-archaeology. Rodmarton, Stoney Littleton, and Littleton Drew are all pressed into service by the Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the State University of New York at Buffalo. It is sad that Borst manipulates his circular theories at Stoney Littleton on an inaccurate plan, and that his plan of Littleton Drew says that the scale of this well-known site is unknown. It is unnerving that he relies frequently on a non-existent book by Professor Piggott entitled *The Megalithic Culture of the British Isles*, allegedly published 15 years ago, and that all his plans are given scales only in megalithic yards.

Is this a folly and nonsense that should be dismissed in a few lines in our Book Chronicle? No: because Borst's article appeared in *Nature* (admittedly, while we are dealing with astro-megalithism, we should note that Norman Lockyer was once editor of that illustrious journal). The 25th October 1969 issue of *Nature* contained Borst's article entitled 'English Henge Cathedrals'. *Nature* was taken in; and so were those eminently sensible men Sir Eric Fletcher and Sir John Betjeman, who, when giving evidence against the siting of an aerodrome which would demolish Wing church, said that now it was realized that this splendid Anglo-Saxon church was on an old sanctuary going back to the 3rd millennium BC, it was of even greater importance that it should not be destroyed: this, they said, might be the oldest religious building in Britain. And the BBC was

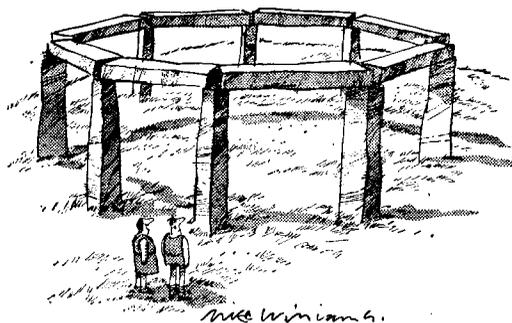


'This book shows how the roundabouts on the M4 are built on a system of ancient burial mounds, and on clear nights you can see a headless motorist . . .'

taken in. They put out a Third Programme talk by Ian Rodger which was printed in *The Listener* for 27th November 1969. It was entitled 'Megalithic Mathematics' and began with a photograph of Wing church and continued with an account of stories of ghostly headless horsemen: we were back at once to the old straight-trackers and Rodger has his 'lattice of communication' dating from the time of the megalithic mathematicians. Rodger approves of Thom's megalithic yard and of Borst's henge cathedrals and says: 'It's possible that the legends of the headless horseman are a distorted and disguised relic of the men with their standard measurement of 2.72 feet who first tried to survey this land.'

The Editor of ANTIQUITY has been accused (p. 62) of publishing material for fun: did our friend the Editor of *The Listener* publish Rodger's tarradiddle of nonsense for fun? Is this why he included in the same number not only Atkinson on Thom, but Geoffrey Grigson's brilliant review of John Michell's *The View over Atlantis*, one of the dottiest books to have appeared for some while? We wonder, since

ANTIQUITY



'Don't worry about it, kid, I don't know either and I designed the damn' thing'

we know Karl Miller and since he published at the end of the fantastic Rodger article the devastatingly amusing cartoon by Barry Fantoni which we reproduce on p. 5, by his kind permission and that of BBC Publications.

However that may be, it is clear that Stonehenge and megalithic architecture are now so much a part of the general public's awareness of the prehistoric past that any joke will pass, as it has passed about cave men and cave art for a long time. There was a most amusing cartoon published in the *Evening Standard* on 17th November 1969 and we publish it again here, by kind permission of the artist and the *Evening Standard*.



It is already well known to our readers that a fine exhibition of Early Celtic Art is being held in association with the 1970 Edinburgh International Festival which runs from 23rd August to 12th September. This exhibition, to which many museums in the British Isles, Ireland and the continent of Europe are generously lending many of their treasures, will be transferred later to London. The newly founded Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh has, very appropriately, planned a colloquium on 'The Early Celtic World'. This will be held during the course of the Edinburgh exhibition and Festival, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,

2nd to 4th September. The scope of this colloquium will cover not only the art-historical aspects of the early Celtic world, but the general background of migrations and influences between roughly the 6th century BC and the 1st century AD, with particular treatment of certain special aspects such as religion, clothing, the transmission of Early Celtic Art to Early Christian Art, and the Celts as seen in Classical authors and in Irish Epic. Speakers will include Professor Dr O-H. Frey of Marburg, Professors Jackson and Piggott of Edinburgh, Professor Hawkes and Miss Nancy Sandars of Oxford, Mr T. G. E. Powell of Liverpool and Dr Máire de Paor of Dublin. The full cost of the conference and accommodation (with dinner and breakfast) will be £7 (£2 for non-resident members). Those interested should write to: *Dr A. M. Snodgrass, Organizing Secretary, Celtic Colloquium, c/o The Institute for Advanced Studies in The Humanities, 12 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9JT.*



Stop Press: We have just heard of two new funds for archaeological research, one for work in England, the other for work in the Mediterranean. The first, sponsored by the Royal Society of Arts, is the Maltwood Fund for Archaeological Research in the County of Somerset. The total sum for distribution will normally be limited to £1,000 in each of the next three years. Information about this fund can be obtained from J. S. Skidmore, Assistant Secretary, *Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, Adelphi, London WC2*. In order that the grants may be awarded in time to be of service for schemes planned for the summer vacation of 1970, applications are asked for by 28th February 1970—the day before this issue of ANTIQUITY is published. But there are subsequent years and late applications may possibly be entertained. The second fund is the Ellaina Macnamara Memorial Scholarship of which details will be found on p. 83.