

# Antiquity

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## Editorial

Our immediate and paramount concern in this Editorial is with what is happening and going to happen, unless we can all prevent it, to the Archaeology Branch of the Ordnance Survey, one of the most distinguished and important units in the British archaeological establishment. In 1920 Sir Charles Close, then Director-General, persuaded the Government to appoint an Archaeology Officer and this was O. G. S. Crawford, founder of this journal and its Editor until his death 20 years ago. Professional archaeologists who succeeded him included W. F. Grimes and C. W. Phillips. As Major-General R. C. A. Edge, former Director-General, said in a letter to *The Times* (17 November 1977): 'An Archaeological Division has been developed which is renowned for the excellence of its work and is the envy of other countries, providing an indispensable service for archaeologists, professional and amateur, in Britain and elsewhere.'

There had been rumours for some while that this Archaeology Division was being dismantled: the Archaeology Advisory Committee of the Survey, of which body the Editor and several of his advisers were members, was abruptly brought to an end and apparently replaced by a small Committee of the British Academy whose functions, powers and relevance do not seem clear to us. These rumours were confirmed in *The Times* of 25 October and since then a barrage of letters has poured in expressing the horror and fury of archaeologists and historians at the proposed plans. The Director-General, in a curiously unclear and unconvincing letter (*The Times*, 11 November), declared that 'There is no intention either to disband the Ordnance Survey's Archaeological Branch or to discontinue publication of the Ordnance Survey Period Maps.' We asked Charles Phillips, Archaeology Officer from 1947 to his retirement in 1965, to comment on the whole affair and to set out his reasoned views on what should and should not happen. Mr Phillips writes:

Today our archaeological heritage is in danger through the advance of technology and increasing population pressures. Great Britain is a bad case because, as a result of two great wars and their aftermath, those activities which disturb the soil deeply or cover it with all kinds of obstacles to its examination have greatly multiplied. I refer in particular to the necessary ploughing up of great areas of land which had suffered little disturbance for centuries and swept away many superficial relics of ancient agriculture only a short time after their significance had been recognized. Marginal lands have also been ploughed to attract grants and the Forestry Commission has added its quota to this destruction. Open-cast mining and gravel extraction have turned over and destroyed areas rich in archaeological content.

All this has occurred at a time when other technical advances like aerial photography have made us aware of what is being destroyed as never before. Attempts have been made to control this process but life must go on. If the evidence of earlier life is under continual attack every effort must be made to record the character and location of what is lost or threatened.

A large enterprise which was postponed by the 1939-45 war was the revision of the 25-inch scale map cover of the whole of Great Britain by the Ordnance Survey, originally estimated, I believe, to be completed some time between 1985 and 1990. The Survey has had an active professional interest in the accurate delineation of all the more important sites and features of antiquity since the appointment of the first Archaeology Officer, O. G. S. Crawford, in 1920. His brilliant achievement in developing this side of the Survey's work is well known. He retired in 1945 and by 1947 the present writer was in his seat.

A great opportunity now appeared to counter at least some of the effects of the damage which was accentuated by the post-war revival. The Survey now had to re-examine every part of Great Britain in the new revision which began as soon as the war ended. All the antiquities which had been shown on the older maps now came under review and many

## ANTIQUITY

more overlooked in the past would have to be supplied through the work of the Archaeology Branch. Some expansion of the Branch was inevitable. Much material which had survived the fire at Southampton in 1940 through Crawford's prescience was now available; men would have to be trained in field archaeology and their work would have to be soundly based.

As a result the Branch was expanded into a Division between 1947 and 1964 with a maximum staff of sixty-seven including six field sections normally of about five men, and each to work in one of the six Survey Regions. These men, all competent surveyors, were recruited from the Survey staff and to support them with accurate briefs on the archaeological content of these Regions part of the office staff began to examine all sources of information, earlier and current archaeological publications, a large number of air-photographs supplied by the Cambridge Committee under Professor St Joseph, the work of voluntary local correspondents, and so forth.

This work gave rise to a card index based on the National Grid system of references. Every item in due course was supplied with this reference, a brief statement of its character and a survey made in the field if this was necessary. All literary references were also provided. The statements about character could not always be correct but, at the worst, any item provided a clue which could be followed up later. The record was less intensive and its most reliable features were the supply of location and survey.

In this way a vast amount of old and new material was accumulated and the descriptions and survey of everything which could reasonably appear on the new maps were supplied to the six Regions. A point was soon reached at which this material was accepted without question by these and the new features were applied to the general revision with frequent corrections of earlier work. There was a saving of time and effort compared with pre-1947 days when Regional staff often had to worry out antiquity problems unaided.

Thus several things were achieved. A new class of highly experienced field archaeology surveyors was created and a nucleus of publicly available information arose which soon became a national less-intensive record. Much that was now recorded must soon disappear or be vitiated by modern developments. In particular the work of the less rapidly moving archaeological bodies like the three Royal Commissions was given future support when their work should move into new areas and they could be saved much troublesome preliminary work. The encouragement given to this activity of the Division by a succession of Survey chiefs showed that they

believed it to be of advantage to the Survey and to the country as a whole.

In 1977 the Survey is now an organization much motivated by commercial considerations and so we must not be surprised when we are presented with a situation imposed without consultation with the profession in which the experienced Survey sections have been disbanded and the record side has lost its supply of necessary books. Its other sources of information have also become precarious.

The Director-General has set out his intentions for the future in a vague and unconvincing letter to *The Times* on 11 November last. In general his plan is to rely on information coming from the system for archaeological work set up in recent years by the Department of the Environment which he believes affords total cover of Great Britain. This is an illusion for it is notorious that this system applies in little more than fifteen counties and large tracts including much of the north of England and all Scotland do not possess it at present. Even where it exists the staff concerned are often inexperienced and overburdened with other duties.

The Director-General also makes the following statement: 'Since the Ordnance Survey does not employ professionally qualified field archaeologists we hope that the adoption of these arrangements will not only reduce duplication but further improve the reliability of archaeological classification, and we have every hope that we can rely on the co-operation of the archaeological profession to secure success.'

Only two observations need be made on this. After the work done since 1920 to make this side of the Survey's work professional this is a thoroughly retrograde step and the disbandment of the experienced field surveyors, generally acknowledged to have few equals in the country today, is a disaster. Further, although the progress of knowledge leads to new classifications of antiquities it is doubtful if this part of the work will ever be better performed than by the arrangements now ended.

The post of Archaeology Officer has been abolished and the central control required in the business of survey and record has gone. There are unclear references to new arrangements in this letter which can inspire no confidence in anyone who knows the intricacies of this work. The experience of a very skilful body of men has been thrown away and the record, which is generally approved as desirable by the archaeological profession, is now faltering.

One could go further and mention the period maps, always low-priority productions and now menaced by their dependence on a record which must now be less reliable in its content and the absence of experts to compile these maps or any further editions.

An official Study of the Ordnance Survey is said

## EDITORIAL

to impend and no doubt the position of archaeology in the Survey will be considered. We can only hope that the archaeological profession, which seems to be united in its uneasiness at recent events, will be properly represented, and that there will be no further unilateral action without consultations as in the present case.

We most heartily agree with the careful, considered but forthright statement by Mr Phillips and are grateful to him for setting out the problem so clearly. He and we write these words in early December, and hope by the time they appear in print the Ordnance Survey and their masters will have realized the error of their ways and the fury and dismay with which their proposals have been received in all archaeological and many non-archaeological circles. They were discussed in Westminster in November. The Baroness Stedman was given a difficult time in the House of Lords and made many unsatisfactory answers which showed she had not done her homework and did not understand what all the fuss was about. In the House of Commons, Mr Leon Brittan, in a skilful series of well-informed questions, elicited from Mr Guy Barnett the following disastrous information: 'The Ordnance Survey does not propose to replace its Archaeology Officer, who has retired, with a trained archaeologist. It intends to rely on outside professional opinion to ensure the accurate classification of archaeological sites surveyed for topographical mapping purposes.' Monstrous! Sir Charles Close and O. G. S. Crawford must be turning in their graves: we hope their ghosts will haunt and torment the Baronesses Stedmans and Messrs Guy Barnetts of the world and all their evil cronies who have or are in the process of destroying one of the most splendid features of British archaeology. As Professor Renfrew says (*in lit.*, 27 November), 'certainly one of the most notable archaeological scandals for many years'. Why cannot our lords and masters, elected or bureaucrats, understand that a map must show the past in the present: the public as a whole want on their maps accurate and detailed information about the visible antiquities from past cultural landscapes. A map is a palimpsest of the past and the present and the purchaser expects to read not only the way from Steeple Bumpstead to Helions Bumpstead, from Much Piddle to Wyre Piddle, from Homer to Wigwig, but to have identified to him the nature and whereabouts of disused railways, deserted medieval villages, martello towers, prehistoric barrows and

roman villas—the multi-coloured tapestry of our past against which we operate at present. That other countries do not have antiquities clearly marked on their maps is their misfortune. We feel very strongly about the sudden, mean and underhanded plan to emasculate the Ordnance Survey's Archaeology Service, and hope it is not too late to defeat the ignoramuses who are trying to force this bad plan on us and turn back twentieth-century archaeological progress by 60 years.

☞ We were delighted to receive a letter dated 12 October 1977 from Dr Gary W. Carriveau, Research Physicist in the Research Laboratory of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It said:

The editorial section of the March 1977 issue of *ANTIQUITY* contains references to thermoluminescence dating problems. There is a comment implying that the TL date 'skeleton' for the Julsrud collection has been kept in a 'closet'. Please accept the enclosed photocopy as evidence that a careful study has been made of the Julsrud dating results, and that these new conclusions have been openly published.

We turned to the article with the greatest interest: it is 'Thermoluminescence dating and the monsters of Acambaro' by Gary W. Carriveau and Mark C. Han and it is in *American Antiquity*, 41, no. 4, 1976, 497–500. It is compulsory reading for anyone concerned with the problems of TL dating, with special reference to the Acambaro forgeries, and Glozel. The italic summary head of this article is immediately arresting: *Thermoluminescence dates for the Julsrud collection, excavated near Acambaro, Guanajuanta, Mexico, are shown to be invalid. Evidence is offered showing that these figurines were fired shortly before they were found.* The collection of figures belonging to the late Waldemar Julsrud was excavated in the vicinity of Acambaro during the early 1940s: when we were shown them in the University Museum at Philadelphia ten years ago, they seemed palpable forgeries which should never have been taken seriously by anyone. Yet they were. Julsrud himself wrote a book about them in 1947 entitled *Enigmas del pasado*, published at Acambaro; C. C. DiPeso wrote a note about them in *American Antiquity*, 18, 1953, 388–9; and in 1973, C. H. Hapgood published his *Mystery in Acambaro* (Griswold Offset Printing, Brattleboro, Vermont). The TL and C 14 dates published by Hapgood range from  $6480 \pm 170$  BP to  $3060 \pm 120$  BP, that is to say, in Christian chronology, which we still prefer, to between 4700 and 1230 BC.

## ANTIQUITY

The Carriveau-Han comments are crisp: 'Reported TL dates for this collection are invalid. A note in the latest monograph of Hapgood concerning the retraction of the TL dates is in error. He states the reason these dates are unacceptable is that the firing temperature is too low for accurate dating. We have performed measurements that show the firing temperature was between 450 C and 650 C. These dates . . . are sufficient to anneal geological thermoluminescence. The dates are invalid because this material fails to pass the essential "plateau" test for thermoluminescence dating.' They describe their tests and conclude by placing 'the time of firing at about 30 years before 1969, a time very near to the discovery of the figurines'. *Whew!*

We immediately wrote to Dr Martin Aitken in Oxford and Dr Hugh McKerrell in Edinburgh asking for their views on the TL debunking of the monsters of Acambaro and wondering if, perhaps, this might throw any light on the monsters of Glözel. Martin Aitken replied:

I am very glad that you drew my attention to the Carriveau-Han article since to my mind it clears up the Julsrud business. I think it is excellent that Han has joined in this convincing explanation of why the 1969 TL measurement gave erroneous indication that the objects had been fired in antiquity.

Certainly there is the point that 1969 was fairly early days for TL and evidently not everybody was then being rigorous over the plateau test (though I think we instituted it at Oxford back in 1963 or 4). However, I think it would be wrong to raise the cry that all early TL results are to be disbelieved. To my mind the important moral to draw is that results which are not properly published should be ignored, whether they are TL, C14 or whatever. In this particular case the 1969 results were published not by the Laboratory concerned, but at second hand in a monograph entitled *Mystery in Acambaro* originating from Griswold Offset Printing in Brattleboro.

As regards Glözel the mystery remains. Specifically, the tablet tested at Oxford passed the plateau test and so far as I have seen the data this applies to the Edinburgh/Risø material too.

At the time of correcting the galleys of this Editorial (Christmas 1977) no comments have been received from Dr McKerrell, which is sad.

☞ While we are talking about forgeries in American archaeology we refer, which we have not done in these pages before, to the Grolier Codex. As most readers of ANTIQUITY know, the Maya developed a

very elaborate calendar (more accurate than the Julian calendar), a vigesimal system, a system of glyptic writing, and had evolved the concept of zero. The Maya priests kept scroll books: these codices were arranged in almanac form so that they could be used for measuring time, foretelling the future and fixing the propitious dates for sacrifices and other major functions. Three codices—and only three—were thought to have survived the depredations of the Conquistadores who destroyed the Maya scrolls as evil and pagan documents: the most famous of these three is the Dresden Codex. The discovery, therefore, of a fourth Codex was a matter of the greatest excitement and importance not only to American archaeologists but to archaeologists all over the world. This fourth Codex first came to general notice when it was exhibited in 1971 by the Grolier Club, the famous association of bibliophiles and bibliographers in New York. The Codex has since been published in facsimile.

In the Spring 1976 issue of *The Book Collector* Sir Eric Thompson, who died in September 1975 (*Antiquity*, XLIX, 237–8), wrote an article in which he showed that the Grolier Codex was a forgery—'a fake', as Philip Howard has described it, 'that would not fool a single Maya' (*The Times*, 15 May 1976). Sir Eric is generally regarded as having been the greatest authority on Mayan glyphs. The Grolier Codex, like the Julsrud monsters from Acambaro, provides a cautionary tale, as do the Moulin Quignon jaw, Piltown, Rouffignac, Glözel, and the Schleswig Turkey.

☞ A visit to Malta last year, albeit made lovely by seeing the temples in the warm, clear sunshine of October and picnicking in their neighbourhood off cheese-stuffed *burreks* accompanied by delicious Gozitan wines (we particularly like the wines with a drawing of the Gigantija on their labels), confirmed, only too unhappily, that the present Maltese administration is not doing all it should, and in some cases much it should not, to preserve and conserve these incomparably important sites. The matter first came to our attention following a visit of the Prehistoric Society of Great Britain to Malta. Professor John Evans wrote to *The Times* and while they published his letter they, for some unexplained reason, did not publish further letters from Dr David Trump and others. The matter mainly concerns the two great temples at Mnajdra: extensive quarrying is taking place

## EDITORIAL

behind them and the sites are now dwarfed by an enormous crane employed by the new so-called marble industry. In *The Sunday Times of Malta* for 13 March 1977, Richard England, the distinguished and world-known Maltese architect, and the designer of the megalithic stamp reproduced in these pages (*Antiquity*, 1, 2), wrote a clear account of the present situation in an article with the deliberately startling title of 'Murder at Mnajdra'. In a letter to the Prime Minister of Malta dated 9 May, Professor Evans referred to 'the permanent and irreversible alteration of the landscape in the immediate vicinity of such an important monument'.

The Maltese Director of Information, Mr Pellegrini, wrote a letter to *The Times* which was published on 6 May 1977 saying that quarrying at Mnajdra is being carried out in existing workings which had been in operation over previous years, and that this was a completely different matter from the opening of a quarry on a part of the untouched landscape in the area, and stated that 'the Government of Malta has taken the necessary steps to ensure that as soon as quarrying by Malta Marbles Ltd on the site comes to an end they have to landscape the site, level it and plant trees to embellish the surroundings'. In a letter to us our old friend, Dr Francis Mallia, Director of the Museums Department of Malta, emphasized the inoffensive method of extraction and the temporary nature of the plant being used, and added 'The other quarry nearby, which was operating on the conventional method of blasting, with all its attendant nuisances, has been stopped.'

We saw Dr Mallia during our visit to Malta and he pointed out that since 1971 the Government of Malta has undertaken a general campaign of restoration of monuments, doing much more for their care and protection than in any previous comparable period. This is good news; but the dreadful spectacle of Mnajdra and its crane will remain for years. Already some trees have been planted and the great gash in the hill behind the site may be partially hidden in the end, but the damage to the original dramatic appearance of the site has been done and cannot adequately be repaired. Nor do we like the way in which Hagiar Qim and the Gigantija on Gozo are now fenced in by tall stone pillars. The magic of some of these incomparable temples is vanishing. We have sympathy with the necessity of protecting ancient monuments, and also with the need of Malta to

develop its few resources as best it can, but the situation at Mnajdra today is as if an enormous crane were operating immediately behind Stonehenge. The Maltese temples, the oldest architectural buildings anywhere, are the patrimony not only of Malta but of the world.

We have spoken of the development of resources: one of Malta's main and growing resources is the tourist trade. The tourists would be happier if they felt the Maltese Government was sincerely and totally concerned with the preservation and conservation of their ancient monuments in opposition to *all other considerations*. At the moment, the murder of Mnajdra suggests that this is not so.

It is good to know that Lord Duncan Sandys has raised these matters with the Council of Europe and UNESCO at the instigation of *Din L'Art Helwa*, the Maltese National Trust.

☞ It was a great excitement to visit Lascaux again a few months ago and to marvel anew at its beauty, the freshness of the colouring and the vigour of its art. It is one of the seven wonders of the prehistoric world of Western Europe. We first visited it with Dorothy Garrod and Suzanne de Saint-Mathurin in 1947 before it was opened to the general public, and then many times in the years following until it was closed to the public in 1963 because the paintings were fading and being covered by a fungus. These troubles have been solved but not so satisfactorily that the general public can be admitted, or, as far as we understand, will ever be admitted as they were in the fifties, in their thousands each day. A replica of the cave is being constructed near by and we understand this is scrupulously accurate and beautifully done: but this operation, with its employment of highly skilled artists, will take a great deal of time and money. So far only a tenth of the replica has been completed and we have no idea when this ambitious project will be satisfactorily achieved and the tourist thousands brought back to Montignac. Meanwhile very small groups of two to six are admitted each day: those who are anxious to be put on these rather exclusive lists should write to *M. et Madame Sarradet, 7 rue de la Constitution, Perigueux 2400*. Naturally, preference is given to bona fide professional archaeologists and research workers—and there is a very long waiting-list.

We wrote in February of last year and were given an appointment at 1800 hours on 7 September. We found ourselves (Production Editor and Editor)

## ANTIQUITY

waiting anxiously with four other people: on time there arrived the guide and it was Jacques Marsal, one of the original discoverers of the cave, whom we had known since he had first shown us round in the late forties. He is now a sound and very well-informed guide. In conversation after our visit I asked him about the dog Robot who is a standard part of the story of the discovery of Lascaux. We quote from our own *Man Discovers His Past* where we wrote:

. . . The most exciting discovery was made on the 12th of September 1940, at Lascaux. It was made by four boys who were out rabbiting with their dog Robot. The dog fell through a hole in the roof of the cave—a hole made by the uprooting of a tree in the previous winter's gale. The boys climbed down to rescue their dog, and found themselves in a large cave, the walls and roof of which were decorated with painted and engraved animals.

Marsal was scornful: 'Yes', he said, 'we did have a dog, but it was not involved in the discovery of Lascaux. The story, as you and others have often set it out, was a piece of sentimental propaganda to amuse and encourage foreigners, particularly English and Americans.'

The true story is set out in Pierre Fanlac's book entitled *La Merveilleuse découverte de Lascaux*, written, printed and published by himself at 12 rue Professeur-Peyrot, Perigueux, in 1968. The traditional story must now be varied in several ways. First: the cave of Lascaux had been known—as a cave, not as a painted cave—for a long time: it was called *le trou du diable* and the entrance to it was revealed *twenty* years before the events of 12 September 1940 by the collapse of a tree. Secondly, there were five not four boys. There were three locals: Jacques Marsal, Marcel Ravidat, and Pierre Fanlac, and two *refugés* from Paris, Simon Coencas and Georges Agnel. Thirdly, they were not rescuing a dog: they were a local adolescent gang engaged in warfare with another local gang of *refugés* whom they called *les étrangers*. *Le trou du diable* was to be their secret headquarters and in occupying it they found Lascaux and made one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of all time.

So perishes another archaeological legend, and we recollect how the Abbé Breuil once told us that when, in her old age, he taxed the daughter of Marcellino de Sautuola about the *Toros! Toros!* story, she said she had no recollection of it—which is sad, unless it merely means that the memories of

old ladies, like old men, often fail? But we shed a tear for poor Robot: he seemed such a nice part of the history of archaeology as did the little girl of five at Altamira. We can only hope that the young Kurdish boy 'who had come from a distance' and who is supposed to have enabled Rawlinson to copy the Behistun inscriptions in 1847, will never be debunked.



☞ Mention of the Abbé Breuil reminds us that last year was the centenary of the birth of that great and most remarkable man, whose influence on Palaeolithic archaeology was, and is, profound. In his honour, and with the good sense they display in these matters, the French issued last October a Breuil stamp which we reproduce here. It is not, in our view, a very good likeness, but the gesture of its existence is fascinating. Who can imagine whatever mandarins decide on the design of our stamps in Britain, occupied as they are with birds and beasts, arranging for the celebration of the centenary of one of our great archaeologists and anthropologists? Even Stonehenge has so far failed to make the grade, whilst the French have had stamps of Lascaux and Carnac for many years.

☞ We receive, very regularly, statements from Lloyds Bank describing their contributions to current archaeology: these are most commendable, and we warmly applaud them. It occurred to us that Barclays Bank, who are our Custodian Trustees, might also be interested in these matters. As a first and immediate result, Barclays have paid for the colour-plate with which this number opens, and we are most grateful to them for their interest and generosity.