

Editorial


PLATES XI^b AND XII

The King of Sweden, the Goths and the Wends celebrated his ninetieth birthday last November and we congratulate an archaeologist who has been a subscriber to this journal since its foundation in 1927: and a television birthday interview showed him in his study, a set of bound volumes of *ANTIQUITY* behind him. Several books have been specially produced in his honour for this occasion; a most attractive one is *Kungen Gräver: en bok om arkeologer och arkeologi*. It is edited by Olov Isaksson with a text by Lars O. Lagerqvist and Maj Odelberg and produced by Askild and Kärnekull in conjunction with the Statens historiska museum, Stockholm. We quote from the book: 'Gustav VI Adolf has in seven decades made important contributions in northern and classical archaeology. In his time the King has taken the initiative and supported archaeological excavations in different parts of Sweden, as well as abroad. And at many of these he has often assisted the investigations in the field. Himself a keen collector of art and antiquities, King Gustav has presented many new acquisitions to the Swedish public collections, as well as initiating and advising upon the setting up of several new museums.'

The book is a brief history of Swedish archaeology as well as a tribute to the King, and we find here Olof Rudbeck's 1679 map of old Uppsala, a 1780 drawing of the opening of Kivik, a fine picture of Bror Emil Hildebrand who was Riksantikvarie from 1837-79, and an amusing photograph of an amateur archaeologist called Klockhoff wearing a bowler hat and fingering the porthole of a long stone grave at Oringe in Ostergotland. There are many pictures of the King excavating and visiting

excavations in Sweden, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Japan, Mesopotamia, and Denmark.

The frontispiece is a charming photograph of the King, then Prince Gustav Adolf, digging with Oscar Montelius in 1905 at Kulla-Gunnarstorp in Skåne. It immediately brings to mind the story which J. M. de Navarro used to tell in his lectures (and which his pupils go on telling in theirs) of Montelius turning to the Prince on one such occasion as that photographed here and saying, 'Young man, if you didn't have another job to go to, you would make a good archaeologist.' An opportunity occurred a few years ago of asking King Gustav whether this story was true, or just another part of archaeological mythology. He was amused, thought for a while, and said, 'I do not recollect the occasion, but I would go on telling the story in your lectures if I were you.' By kind permission of the Swedish Statens historiska museum and Messrs Askild and Kärnekull we reproduce here (PL. XII) the 1905 photograph of Montelius and the man who, though he did carry out another and difficult job, also made a good archaeologist. Old Montelius would indeed have been pleased.

 We also include here another personal photograph, of Richard Leakey and his wife, Dr Meave Leakey, holding the complete femur and new skull found at East Rudolf, Kenya, in 1972 (PL. XI^b). This skull, which was found in September and was shown to the late Dr Louis Leakey a few days before his death, was announced on 9 November, simultaneously to the National Geographic Society in Washington and the Elliot Smith commemorative symposium at the Zoological Society in London. Richard

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Leakey explained that since the initial exploration in 1968 more than eighty hominids had been discovered in the sediments that cover some thousand square miles to the north-east of Lake Rudolf and that these include at least two forms of hominid. Before the 1972 season both were from beds above a volcanically derived tuff dating from 2.6 million years ago, but in 1972 the horizon below the tuff yielded not only *Australopithecus* but the fragmented skull (which after preliminary reconstruction, gives a minimum cranial capacity of 800 c.c.), two complete femurs, and parts of a tibia and fibula all with morphological features closely paralleling modern man. Leakey explained that while detailed examination of the material had not yet been made, he and his colleagues consider it evidence of the genus *Homo*. If this is so, *Homo*, as well as man's co-existence with *Australopithecus*, extend back to beyond 2.6 million years. No wonder the daily papers on 9 and 10 November had banner headlines such as 'Sensational discovery of African skull', 'New missing link found', and 'Man grows older by a million years'. Meanwhile we await the full publication of this skull, officially referred to as *I470 Man*—the catalogue reference in the Kenya National Museum. Of one thing we can be certain: the Lake Rudolf finds will be of the very greatest importance in the story of man's evolution. All good luck to Mrs Mary Leakey and her son Richard, still only twenty-eight, who are carrying on and extending the work begun by Louis Leakey in East Africa over forty years ago.

Meanwhile we have just received the completed prospectus for what is now to be called The Louis Leakey Memorial Institute for African Prehistory. The development of this expanded centre for the study of African prehistory is to be seen within the context of a long-term, comprehensive extension of the activities of the National Museum of Kenya: it is an expansion of the established and well-known Centre for Prehistory and Palaeontology set up in 1962. Professor T. R. Othman, Chairman of the Museum Trustees of Kenya, writes in a preface to the prospectus:

In recognition of the great work and contributions by the late Dr Louis Leakey, the proposed Institute will be named 'The Louis Leakey Memorial Institute for African Prehistory'. Such a decision is a humble tribute to a person who was undoubtedly one of the great men of this century. The successful implementation of the plans for the Institute and the continuation of quality research in the various fields in which Dr Leakey was such a successful pioneer are intended as a meaningful, living reminder of a man who has given so much to us all.

Those who want to know more about this ambitious and most worth-while scheme should write to *Mr R. E. Leakey, Secretary to the Museum Trustees of Kenya, P.O. Box 40658, Nairobi, Kenya*. It is hoped that construction of the Institute will begin in 1974.

Good news from Kenya, but bad news from Dorset. There has been mounting alarm and despondency and a sense of mystery about the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Farnham since it closed to the public some nine years ago, and we have already referred to this in these pages. A sign saying 'Closed until further notice' hangs on the gate of the museum, but in *The Times* for 15 December 1972, Peter Hopkirk reported that Mr Kenelm Digby-Jones, one of the advisers to the present owner, Mrs Stella Maumen, had just told him that the museum would never be reopened. Captain George Pitt-Rivers began selling the Benin material in the 1950s. Mrs Maumen, formerly Mrs Stella Pitt-Rivers, acquired the Museum on the death of Captain Pitt-Rivers in 1966. To quote Hopkirk, 'One of the world's greatest museum collections of African art treasures has been broken up and much of it is sold.'

Professor W. F. Grimes, writing as Honorary Treasurer of the Council for British Archaeology, set out its views in *The Times* for 21 December, and we quote from his letter:

We can now publicly express our long-felt concern about the future of this unique material and in particular those portions which are integral to British archaeology and form a part of this country's cultural heritage.

It is apparently too late to look for the maintenance of the integrity of the whole collection

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made by a very remarkable man but we must insist that at least the British material be kept together. Furthermore we do not accept that the original museum at Farnham must necessarily be written off. . . .

We were cautiously prepared to welcome Mr Kenelm Digby-Jones's assertion that the archaeological collections and other works of art were still intact and would eventually acquire a regional home; but clearly this statement was inaccurate in that, to an unknown extent, British material has already been removed from Farnham and is in dealers' hands. This is disgraceful and further dispersal of the archaeological material must be stopped. . . .

We hope that collecting institutions throughout the world will share our concern by refraining from the acquisition of objects piecemeal from the Farnham Museum. . . . There is only one rightful place for the whole collection and that is in England and preferably in Wessex. The situation now exposed is comparable to the loss from this country of a Rembrandt or a Titian. In such cases the Government has shown itself willing and able to act. The major difference here is that the Pitt-Rivers material is peculiarly British and very much belongs to us all whatever the legal minutiae.

These forthright words of Professor Grimes need to be brought to the attention of everyone from the Prime Minister downwards. We cannot allow any further dissipation of the archives and collections of the General who has often been called 'the father of modern scientific archaeology'. Perhaps by the time these words are in print the State may have stepped in to prevent the rape of the Farnham Museum and avert a national archaeological scandal.

¶ The first Royal Society/British Academy symposium was held in 1970 and dealt with science and archaeology with special reference to radiocarbon dating. We published an account of the proceedings in a brief note (*Antiquity*, 1970, 136-7). The second symposium was held in the rooms of the Royal Society in December 1972 and the theme was 'The Place of Astronomy in the Ancient World': the published papers will be reviewed here in due course. A third symposium on 'The Origins of Agriculture' is proposed for 1974.

The astronomy symposium was a success judging from the large numbers who attended, but the number of archaeologists and historians present was not as large as expected. Two minor criticisms may be made of the organization of the symposium: first, perhaps too much time was devoted to astronomy in literate societies in the ancient world and not enough to attempting a real assessment of the precise astronomical and mathematical knowledge possessed by the inhabitants of western and north-western Europe between 4500 BC and 1500 BC—particularly those who built megalithic monuments. Secondly, discussion did not follow papers but was lumped together into a session at the end of the day with speakers restricted to three minutes or so and covering a very wide variety of topics. Fewer papers and longer discussion might have been better.

¶ We note a new American journal called *Popular Archaeology* of which the first issue came out in August 1972. It is published bimonthly by the De Poer Publishing Corporation, Box 18387, Wichita, Kansas 67218. The Managing Editor is Dan Vap and the Editor Ken Lucas: the subscription for 26 issues in America is five dollars. The first few issues contain some really good articles on The Layman in Archaeology, Petra, Lepinski Vir, Tassili and so forth. Inevitably the editors have to steer a difficult course because to be popular they must refer to matters that are on the edge of sense and nonsense, so that here we also find articles on hunting Noah's ark, Velikowsky, and some of Cyrus Gordon's theories about Hebrews and Chinese in early America. But their treatment of the alleged Viking runestones in America is fair and wise. We are shown the Heavener Runestone, the Minnesota stone, and the Poteau stone and are then told: 'Archaeological travelers should be well advised that the dominant opinion of the runestones is that they are fakes. But neither side has come up with enough evidence to convince the majority of Americans either way. Perhaps a cold six-pack of mead will await the person who finally gives the runestones the status of a major archaeological discovery or dismisses them as worthy

successors of the Piltdown Man.' For all its teething troubles, this new journal may do a great deal to interest the ordinary American public in archaeology. It is packed with bits of information, reviews and comments and seems very good value.

☞ Tom Lethbridge died in the autumn of 1971 (*Antiquity*, 1972, 5-6). *The Legend of the Sons of God* (London: Routledge, 1972, 118 pp., 10 figs. £1.75) is his last book and published posthumously. It is subtitled 'A fantasy?' and he has been careful throughout to say he is only putting forward a theory. The last words of the book are: 'Many people will think it is all rubbish. Others will see some sense in it At least I hope I have given a few something to turn over in their minds, to see whether they can produce anything more satisfactory than I have been able to do.' This strange, sad book is a curious, but characteristic, mixture of fact and fancy, of good sense and nonsense, of sensible archaeological and ethnographical observations and odd views based on extra-sensory perception. He believes that the sons of God mentioned in Genesis were groups of Martians who landed at various places in the world and were unable to get back. They were guided to places like Cornwall and south Brittany by megalithic monuments which were reservoirs of bio-electronic current generated by numerous excited human bodies engaged in ritual dances. He says the stones were 'deliberately charged, not for any religious purpose . . . but to serve as navigational beacons from the air', and adds, with engaging frankness, 'This suggestion is probably quite enough to classify me as a "nut-case" to many readers.'

Lethbridge has swung his pendulum, using the method described in his earlier books *E.S.P.* and *A step in the dark*, and has dated the Merry Maidens and the Pipers near Lamorna Cove in Cornwall to 2540 and 2610 BC, respectively, by this method: both he and his wife experienced electric shocks from the stored bio-electric force when they touched the stones. He believes, as most of us do, *pace* Mr Kellaway, that Geoffrey of Monmouth's

account of the origins of Stonehenge enshrines legends surviving from prehistoric times, but he is not satisfied with H. H. Thomas's derivation of the blue stones from Preseli. He accepts Geoffrey literally and finds the origin of the bluestones in an outcrop of diorites 15 miles north of Dublin, and says that the original circle was set up in Tipperary; he even dates this non-existent circle by his pendulum to 2650 BC. R. S. Newall lent him six blue-stone chips from Stonehenge and the pendulum dated them to 1870 BC. He also believes in the truth of Madoc's journeys to America, and repeats the legend that the Mandan Indians spoke Welsh. He has not read David Williams but finds Boland's *They all discovered America* 'useful to the general reader'. He is wise and cautious about Mystery Hill and suggests the so-called altar stone is the floor stone, or bed, of a cider press.

This book is the quintessence of Lethbridge, the ambivalence of scholar and anti-scholar, critical and uncritical, wise and unwise, sound and lunatic, shrewd and silly, perceptive and preposterous, stimulating and stupid, that made him such an exciting, lovable, and contrary person. How sad there will be no more books to taunt us, tantalize us, and, so often, teach us. He has certainly gone out with the most fantastic theory of megaliths that has ever been propounded: it puts Elliot Smith's *Children of the Sun* into the shade. *TCL, ave atque vale.*

☞ We wonder what Tom Lethbridge would have made of *Mysterious Britain* by Janet and Colin Bord (Garnstone Press, 1972. 262 pp., with at least 250 unnumbered diagrams and illustrations. £5.90). He would have approved of the photographs of which some are most remarkable, and include Wilson's photograph of the Loch Ness monster in April 1934 and two photographs of ghosts, one beside the altar of Newby Church near Ripon, and the other, taken in 1936 in Raynham Hall, Norfolk, showing, or purporting to show, a shadowy form gliding down an ancient oak staircase—the Brown Lady of Raynham who was known to haunt the house. But for the rest of it, the book

is a tarradiddle of rubbish and nonsense: everything that constitutes the lunatic fringe of ancient history and archaeology is here—stone circles, leys, rites of spring, mazes and labyrinths, UFOs, King Arthur, the Holy Grail, hill-figures, and of course Katharine Maltwood and the figures of the Zodiac in the countryside around Glastonbury.

Lethbridge would have liked the reliance which the authors place on psychometry as a key to our understanding of the past. The psychometrist Iris Campbell visited the Mayburgh monument in Westmorland in 1944 and had this to say:

This site would seem to come in to a period approximately BC 15,000; it was more in the nature of an experimental area for the trying out of the sun's rays at certain angles and conditions . . . one is very conscious of its period of decline and eventual break up; what brought about this was due to a cleavage in the community that functioned here. There were two kinds of magic in force, one evil and one good; it was a truly concentric area where the magnetism was induced from the four points of the compass, forming with the circle the complete Celtic Cross.

[In approximately 15,000 BC!—Ed.]

Miss Campbell was also let loose at the Keswick circle. Here she did not, fortunately, venture on some impossible date, but confined her psychometry to describing the site:

These stones were part of a Memorial Assembly Place where Kings came to mourn their Dead. A central Meeting Place where Priests would come from surrounding Centres—but of a funereal nature; performing their funeral rites by weaving different cosmic colours around the bier in order to speed the departure of the passing soul.

Another psychometrist, by name Olive Pixley, was let loose on the Coronation Stone in Westminster Abbey. This is how she reacted:

The stone is quite impersonal. I can get no history from it. It has no power to absorb earth radiations, and is in a constant state of transmission of cosmic energy. It is a meteorite. I get an instant contact with a strong ray coming direct from the moon . . . pure moon energy. . . . The throne itself is vibrant with history—the stone silent and remote.

Mysterious Britain has been well reviewed in the daily and Sunday papers because the reviewers to whom they gave the book are ill-informed journalists, and this is the real sadness of finding such books prominently displayed in reputable bookshops. There cannot be, and should not be, a censorship of archaeological rubbish, but we must point a finger to it when it happens. Sometimes books like this one make one despair of all the efforts made by popular books, television programmes, extra-mural classes, and all other media of mass communication. But let us not despair: let us go on plugging what seems to most people to be the truth in all possible ways we can—and hope that the general reading public will see what brittle, insubstantial crackpots are those who find the writing of *The New Diffusionist* and *Mysterious Britain* preferable to learning about the early history and archaeology of the British Isles from reputable and authoritative books.

☪ We have already referred in this Editorial to the most unhappy affair of the dispersal of the Pitt-Rivers collections from the Museum at Farnham, and as we go to press there is a ray of hope: we are told that meetings are taking place now (the first week in February) at a high level, the outcome of which may be that what is left in Britain of these collections could be acquired for the nation. Let us wish these negotiations all success.

Our readers are recommended to read the very good article by Celia Haddon and Antony Terry in *The Sunday Times* for 14 January of this year. It is entitled 'Pitt-Rivers: a family treasure and its fate' and contains the sentence 'Within a few weeks a major collection of English archaeological objects built up by the Pitt-Rivers family should be offered to one of the country's leading museums.' Commenting on this article in *The Sunday Times* for 28 January 1973 Professor Julian Pitt-Rivers of the London School of Economics and great grandson of the General, said 'steps should be taken by a public body to acquire what remains of this collection for the nation. The descendants of the General would warmly welcome such a solution.'



PLATE XII: EDITORIAL

Prince Gustav Adolph of Sweden and Professor Oscar Montelius at the excavation at Kulla-Gunnarstorp, Skåne, in the year 1905

See p. 1

Photo: Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm