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Editorial Notes

IN our last number we promised to write a longer account of the first number of 'Ancient India', which reached us as we were going to press. Instead of a full-dress review we propose to say something about it in these Notes, and to add a few remarks about some journals and other publications received. Such publications are the best possible evidences of life (or death) in the bodies that produce them; all have been sent to us for review and are dealt with on their merits, as we see them, without fear or favour. We say this because we know that it may be said that our opinions are sometimes influenced by personal considerations—the reply is that we know a good thing when we see it.



'Ancient India' contains an air-photograph (almost the first of its kind from that country) which, bad as it is, reveals a new world. The view of Tughlaqabad, one of the seven cities of Delhi, shows a medieval town, with its houses, streets, walls and mosque; and it is merely one of many, awaiting similar revelation. From Syria and Iraq to Burma, the ancient east is strewn with these deserted cities whose plans—and that is the prime need—can now be obtained so easily by air-photography. But even now, 30 years after the brilliant discovery of Old Baghdad (Samara) by Major Beazeley during the last war, no air-photographs of that city have been published, and the only complete set of vertical photographs of it, so far as we know, were taken from mail-plane between Baghdad and Mosul in October 1928.



The air-photograph of Tughlaqabad is bad because it was taken at the wrong time of day. It is well known that, to obtain the best results from shadow-sites, that is sites whose features are outlined by their shadows, the photographs *must* be taken when the sun is low and the shadows long—otherwise banks and mounds do not cast a shadow. The one in question appears, so far as we can judge, to have been taken when the sun was as nearly vertical as possible; consequently the remains of the ancient streets and houses are much less plainly visible than they would have been if the photograph had been taken at the proper time. However, all this is criticism, not of the Editor of 'Ancient India' but of the R.I.A.F. photographer.

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Stuart Piggott contributes an article on 'The Chronology of Prehistoric North-west India' illustrated by a map, drawings of typical objects, and a graphic table of affinities between India on the one hand and Iraq and Iran on the other. From this it appears that India can now produce two cultures at least (Quetta and Jhangar) that may be contemporary with the oldest prehistoric cultures of Iraq (Uruk and Ubaid). Thus we may find that the mounds of the Indus culture cities contain, in their as yet untouched lower layers, a full sequence of strata going back to a very remote beginning.

The technical but extremely important task of conservation is dealt with by M. S. Vats (Repairs to the Taj Mahal) and Khan Bahadur Mohd. Sana Ullah ('Notes on the preservation of Antiquities in the Field'); and there are articles on pottery and coins. It is altogether admirable, we think, that an Indian archaeological publication should contain an air-photograph, a measured drawing of pottery, and practical hints for the use of workers. The format is above praise and the type a most welcome change from the wretched ill-set illegible stuff that the Government of India usually produces. 'Ancient India' is of course not printed by the Government, but by the Baptist Mission Press of Calcutta. The subscription rate is 7 rupees or 11 shillings for four numbers (two years) and it can be obtained from the Manager of Publications, Civil Lines, Delhi. It is extremely good value for the money and we wish it every success and a long life.

A correspondent has written protesting against the statement (ANTIQUITY, xx, 2) that 'so far there has been no serious or organized attempt to instruct Indians in modern archaeological technique'; and pointing out that such attempts were made by the late Mr Mackay at Mohenjo-daro and Taxila. Further progress along these lines was cut short by government retrenchment. Our statement that 'such methods as air-photography and post-hole technique' do not appear to have been applied is also called in question; and the two air-photographs of Mohenjo-Daro (Plates I and II of the book), which revealed new information and suggested an excavation (discontinued for financial reasons) are cited in evidence. We hardly think, however, that two air-photographs in twenty years disposes entirely of our criticism.

Air-photography is the chief preoccupation of two splendid volumes which publish the researches of Father Poidebard. A review-article of his earlier volume, written by the late Sir George Macdonald, was published 12 years ago in ANTIQUITY (viii, 373-80, 1934). The present volumes, one of text and the other of plates, deal with the whole system of Roman remains in Northern Syria, including the network of roads. To have recovered all this and reconstructed it on a map, adding plans and drawings of innumerable forts and such like, is an achievement that is, in air-photography, unique, and in archaeological discovery as a whole very rare. One can compare it only with that of the greatest pioneers—Schliemann, Evans and Stein (whose air-work in the same region still remains unpublished). The title of the book is *Le Limes de Chalcis*, par R. Mouterde et A. Poidebard; the plans and surveys are by J. Lauffray and S. Mazloum; the cover bears the name of Geuthner and the date 1945. A note at the end states that the printing was completed on December 31st 1944, on the presses of the Catholics at Beyreuth; the books reached us from the British Council, with a label stating that they were made

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in Canada. This is all rather puzzling but we heartily congratulate all concerned on a very fine piece of research carried out (we are sure) under great difficulties.



The aeroplane, armed with a camera and someone who knows how to use it, is the best possible vehicle for conducting rapid raids into new territory such as, in the past, the French have made with conspicuous success, from the day of Cailliaud (who did his explorations in the Sudan with, and sometimes even in front of, the Turkish army of conquest) to those of the missions in Persia and Baluchistan. In a monograph on *The Organisation of research and of prehistoric studies in France* (1941), Monsieur Vaufrey pleads, not for the first time, for the adoption of more up-to-date methods. It is flattering to us in this country that so many of his illustrations should be borrowed from it. (Owing to the war the reproduction is poor but that was inevitable in the difficult circumstances of the time). We have ourselves often preached the same sermon; we now venture to go further and say that, unless the methods of Syrian research, together with other modern techniques, are adopted in the metropolitan country, French archaeology will remain in its present backward state. The days of 'cher-maitrism' are past, and a fresh approach is needed. We congratulate Monsieur Vaufrey on his courage and hope that he will win the support that his enlightenment deserves.



We have not much space left to comment on another journal from the opposite end of the World—*The South African Archaeological Bulletin*, published at Cape Town (price 2s 6d) by the South African Archaeological Society. The first number (December 1945) is slim (are we not all nowadays?) but vigorous and full of life. In many ways it reminds us of the first 'Proceedings' of our own archaeological Societies a century ago—rather amateurish and all-embracing, but they stayed the course and can now look back on a long and well spent life. The Bulletin begins, as all such should, with Editorial Notes recording amongst other things the 'amazing reaction of the general public of the Cape Province' to the recent foundation of the Cape Archaeological Society. This is the best possible guarantee that the infant will grow up—will there be any comparable reaction in India? Further evidence that our South African colleagues mean business is given by the handbook on 'Method in Prehistory' by A. J. H. Goodwin. We hope to review this in a later number; meanwhile those interested can obtain it and further information from the Hon. General Secretary (Mr Goodwin), Sherwood, Sherwood Avenue, Kenilworth, Cape Town.