



THE ST NINIAN'S ISLE HOARD

(Top) Penannular brooch with zoomorphic terminals, Inventory No 28 (see also Pl. xxxiii (d)). (Bottom) External view of Hanging Bowl, Inventory No. 8 (this bowl has a repoussé basal disc, shown in place in Pl. xxx (b)).

cf. pp. 253-8 and 262-8]

[Photos: Alexander Cain

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Editorial

ALL readers of ANTIQUITY will join us in sending our congratulations to Dr L. S. B. Leakey and his wife on their discovery of the skull of an early Pleistocene hominid at Olduvai in July of this year. The first news of this discovery was given to the fourth Pan African Congress on Prehistory at Leopoldville on 23 August, and made public on 3 September. Mr Inskeep reports briefly on the Leopoldville Congress below (p. 287). Dr Leakey has given the scientific name of *Zinjanthropus boisei* to this hominid (coined from Zinj, an ancient name for East Africa, and Mr Charles Boise of London who has helped to finance Dr Leakey's researches), and nicknamed him 'Nutcracker Man' because of his immensely powerful molar teeth. Dr Leakey lectured on what has been described as a 'stupendous discovery' to the British Academy in London on 7 October, and claimed Nutcracker Man as 'the oldest well-established stone tool-maker ever found'. We print below (p. 285) a note of this lecture with a comment by Dr Kenneth Oakley.

We also print in this number an account of what has been described as one of the most remarkable discoveries made in the archaeology of the British Isles since the war, namely, the St Ninian's Isle Hoard. This was found on 4 July, 1958, on the now uninhabited Isle of St Ninian in the Shetlands during excavations directed by Professor A. C. O'Dell of the University of Aberdeen. Professor O'Dell has elsewhere written of this hoard that it was 'the greatest single find of native Celtic art in Scotland, which in its significance was comparable with the Anglo-Saxon hoard of Sutton Hoo found in 1939'. ANTIQUITY devoted a whole number—the 53rd number—to a preliminary description of Sutton Hoo. We are pleased to be able to present now the preliminary description of the St Ninian's Isle Hoard and are grateful for the co-operation of the various scholars that has made this possible. That we have been able to illustrate the hoard fully, and with a colour plate—the first time ANTIQUITY has had a coloured illustration—is due to a generous grant for this specific purpose from the Russell Trust, which we are glad to acknowledge with appreciation and thanks.

In the 129th number of ANTIQUITY we published a preliminary report of the Morley St Peter Hoard of Saxon silver coins found near Norwich in January 1958. It is now reported that a total sum of £2,700, believed by the British Museum to be the largest reward ever paid for a coin Treasure Trove, has been given to the two workmen, Frederick Bird and

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Alfred Harvey, who dug up the find. In December 1958 they shared a sum of £1,500, the full market value of 718 coins bought from the British Museum by the Norwich Castle Museum; now they share a further £1,200 for the remaining 163 coins of which 157 are retained in the British Museum and six were sold to Wymondham College, in the grounds of which the find was made. These payments are free of tax.

The September editorial was written by the shores of the Rice Lake in Ontario after visiting the Serpent Mounds site being excavated by Richard B. Johnston for the Division of Art and Archaeology of the Royal Ontario Museum. A sample of the carbonized remains of two small logs found in direct association with a partially cremated burial encountered near the eastern end of the Serpent Mound was submitted to the University of Michigan Memorial-Phoenix Project Radiocarbon Laboratory, and gave a date of 1830 ± 200 years B.P. or a date of A.D. 128. By the way, Dr Douglas Tushingham, Head of the Department of Art and Archaeology of the Royal Ontario Museum, has promised to comment on this site and the general problems of Canadian archaeology in a future number of ANTIQUITY.

The present editorial is being written in the Chateau of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences at Liblice near Melnik, where there was held in October an international conference on the problems of the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic in Europe (ANTIQUITY, 1959, 158). From Ontario to Bohemia and far beyond discussion is increasingly centred on radiocarbon dates. But there is this great difference between dates in the New World and in the Old. In America dates are being produced for cultures and events which were at one time thought to be undateable, except by a rough and ready guesswork calculation back from dendrochronological dates. In Europe and the Near East the problem is quite a different one; it is that the radiocarbon dates are in many instances producing a chronology which, to put it mildly, seems at variance with archaeological dating. The early dates of Jericho surprised us all, and now many of us are being surprised by the radiocarbon dates for the Neolithic in Europe. We shall publish in March 1960 a summary of these Neolithic dates with comments from Professor Waterbolk. His date of 4175 ± 60 B.C. for a very early *Bandkeramik* site in the Netherlands is practically the oldest date for a Neolithic in Europe so far.

Other Neolithic dates, this time from France, were published recently by M. Giot (*Bulletin de la Société Préhistorique Française*, 1959, 292), and need repeating briefly here for the benefit of readers who do not regularly see that *Bulletin*, now so well edited by M. Guy Gaudron. The Passage Grave of Île Carn, Ploudalmezeau, is older than 3000 B.C.; a Neolithic settlement site in the same vicinity in northern Finistère is older than 3100 B.C. and in a palynological sequence in central Finistère, Neolithic influence on vegetation is attested at 3210 ± 60 B.C. And we publish here the radiocarbon dates for the Nutbane Long Barrow of 2721 ± 150 B.C. (p. 289) and for Durrington Walls of 2620–2630 B.C. (p. 289). In this connexion readers should be reminded of the dates published by Godwin, Walker, and Willis in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, B, Volume 147 (1957), 364 of 2975 ± 134 B.C. for the transition between Zone VIIa and VIIb, i.e. the moment when, if the botanical evidence is correctly interpreted, the effect of Neolithic cultivation in Britain was felt.

Let us not pretend that these radiocarbon dates for the Neolithic in the Netherlands, in Brittany and in Britain are other than shaking. Professor Piggott's provisional chronological table in his *Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1954), gave no Neolithic culture in Britain before 2000 B.C., though admittedly Gordon Childe in the tables at the end of the seventh and last edition of his *Dawn of European Civilization* (London, 1957),

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has the beginning of Windmill Hill getting back towards ' ? 2700 B.C.', Danubian I well before this and even has ' ? Dolmens ' well before ' ? 2700 B.C. '

The real question is: how far must we shake ourselves ? Giot's view is that the chronology of Piggott is far too short and that Childe was only half way to realizing the true dates. In his paper and discussions at the Czech conference and in many discussions and correspondence with the writer of these words he expresses firmly and forcibly the view that we must consider the Western Neolithic of Western Europe as established by 4000 B.C., the Passage Graves of Iberia in existence by 3500 B.C., and those of Brittany by at least 3250 B.C. Is this really the new chronological look of the beginnings of food-production in Western Europe that the Carbon 14 laboratories are forcing on us ? Readers will admire the courage of Professor Piggott's trenchant criticism of the Durrington Walls date of 2630–2620 B.C. ' This date,' he writes (p. 289 below) in words which will long be quoted in Honours Examinations in Archaeology, ' is archaeologically unacceptable ' ; and gives his reasons—very cogent ones they are, too.

They are good reasons because they mean laughing off a yawning millennium. We feel at this moment the same unhappiness. If Ile Carn is really 3000 B.C. and Iberian Passage Graves 3500 B.C., why are there no Pan European Bell Beaker dates before 2200 B.C. and no Los Millares date before 2340 B.C. ? The Breton Passage Graves are characteristically equipped with Bell-Beakers and on archaeological criteria their floruit might well be from a little before 2000 B.C. to 1400 B.C. Where are we, when on the one hand we are asked to accept a date of 3000 B.C. for the Ile Carn Passage Grave, and on the other to accept dates of the 1st century B.C./1st century A.D. for the Gallery Grave at Tressé and the Passage Grave of Lochcrew H (shortly to be published in full by Dr Raftery) ? Can we, should we, shall we, escape by saying that the Ile Carn, Tressé and Lochcrew dates are ' archaeologically unacceptable ' ?

It is very important to realize that doubts about the archaeological acceptability of radio-carbon dates is not obscurantism nor another chapter in the battle of Science versus the Arts. It is an attempt to evaluate all the available evidence, physical and non-physical. Readers are particularly referred to Professor Piggott's ' Stonehenge, Science and Archaeology ' in *The New Scientist* for 30 July, 1959. Here he shows the relevance of the new radio-carbon date for Stonehenge, of which the national British Press made such fuss when it was first published. This is a date from broken deer antlers found in 1958 contemporary with the first phase of the final period of Stonehenge. The British Museum Research Laboratory date for these was 3670 ± 150 B.P., which meant that there was ' the two to one chance of the real date lying anywhere between 1860 and 1560 B.C. ' (Piggott, *The New Scientist*, 30 July, 1959, p. 133). Piggott goes on to say in words that must be quoted in full, ' since statistically any date within this bracket is acceptable, we must interpret the figures in terms of the archaeological evidence. In this instance, if our equation between the building of the first phase of Stonehenge III and the rich Wessex Bronze Age culture . . . is accepted, we must take a date as near 1560 as possible, *for only by so doing can the dates obtained by the two methods—that of archaeology and that of physical science—be made consonant* '. (Our italics.)

Shake, Laugh Off, Refuse to Accept, Make Consonant: where are we ? We are at a moment when some of us at least are uncertain how to answer this question: when is a Carbon 14 reading an archaeological fact ? We certainly need reassurance beyond all reasonable doubt at the present moment that scientists know all about the variables involved, that Elsasser, Ney and Winckler are wrong in supposing that there was variation in the intensity of cosmic-ray formation and that others are wrong in supposing that there were fluctuations in the original C 14 content. And, when all is certain, we must have clusters of dates. It is

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too soon as yet to rewrite our Western European prehistory of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic because of these new dates, but we will return to the significance of these dates in a future number of *ANTIQUITY*.

That was one of the great values of the Czech Academy conference—its detailed discussion of Neolithic and Chalcolithic chronology and the mutual relevance of archaeological and physical dates to this problem of prehistorical dating. The other value was, as we foresaw in the September editorial, the contact with people from all over Europe interested in the same archaeological problems. The barrier of language is one which affects archaeology more than most subjects; the student of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic in Western Europe, for example, is expected to be able to read, in addition to English, French, German, Spanish and Italian, and it is increasingly impossible to get far in the study of Eastern European prehistory without a knowledge of Russian. But there is a limit to the polyglottous nature and ability of archaeologists, and it would be idle to pretend that many archaeologists of this present generation are going to be good readers of Russian. Some are; they are favoured and diligent. For the majority of us it is a delightful relief to find that the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard, under the energetic direction of Dr J. O. Brew, has decided to issue a series of translations from the Russian language 'of selected important books and articles dealing with prehistoric archaeology and physical anthropology'. The first of the Russian Translation Series is *Ancient Population of Siberia and its Cultures*, by A. P. Okladnikov, and we welcome it, and the scheme of which it is the pioneer, most warmly. (It can be obtained at the Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts, U.S.A., price \$3.50. It is pp. 95, including 25 pages of plates and 3 maps.)

Dr Brew tells us that the idea of this Russian Translation service was first put forward by Dr Henry Field, who himself published between 1935 and 1947 101 translations and abstracts of miscellaneous papers on the archaeology of the Soviet Union. Dr Field is now the general editor of the Translation series and was assisted in the preparation of Okladnikov's book by Professor Hallam L. Movius. 'The Russian Translation Series,' says Dr Brew with pardonable pride 'is presented by Dr Field and the staff of the Peabody Museum of Harvard University as a service to the scholars of the Western world'. Let us gratefully acknowledge our thanks for this newly inaugurated service.

We hear that the Spanish Institute is sponsoring an exhibition of full-sized water-colour copies of Spanish prehistoric rock paintings in the province of Castellon to be held in London from 2 February, 1960, in the St George's Gallery, 7 Cork Street, London, W.1. These copies were made by Sr Juan Porcar, and come from two sites in the Valltorto and Gasulla gorges.

We are pleased to report that the year 1959 has seen a further increase in the number of subscribers to *ANTIQUITY*. During 1960 we hope to include an account by Professor Werner Krämer of his work on the Celtic *oppidum* of Manching, Professor Christopher Hawkes's scheme for the British Bronze Age, a fresh comment on the St Ninian's Isle inscriptions (see pp. 250-55 below) by Professor Kenneth Jackson, an account of the Occurrence of Fired Bricks in Pre-Conquest Mexico, a study of cremation in Anglo-Saxon times by Dr Calvin Wells, and a report on Pisdeli Tepe and the archaeology of the Solduz Valley in Iran by Robert H. Dyson, Jr, and T. Cuyler Young, Jr.