

NOTICES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

LA NEUVIEME CAMPAGNE DE FOUILLES A RAS SHAMRA—UGARIT. By CLAUDE F. A. SCHAEFFER. Reprinted from *Syria*, 1938. Price 125 frs.

The outstanding importance of the tablets found at Ras Shamra has perhaps tended to take attention away from the other aspects of the finds at the ancient capital of Ugarit. In point of fact, however, these finds are all of almost equal importance in their own field. The thorough excavation of this large town, whose position involved contacts with Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Palestine, Egypt and the Aegean, is gradually doing much to satisfy one of the outstanding needs of the archaeology of the Near East, the synthesis of the history and archaeology of these regions.

It is obvious that the excavation of this enormous tell must be an extremely lengthy business. Archaeologists, therefore, owe M. Schaeffer a great debt for the admirably detailed interim reports published yearly in *Syria*. It is very much to be wished that other excavators would follow his example. A number of excavations have been carried out of recent years, of which the results are known to be important, but which have been published, if at all, only in the most popular way, without plans or drawings of pottery and objects. At the same time, one hopes that the moment is approaching when one may look for a definite report on some aspect of the excavations at Ras Shamra. It does complicate the researches of students considerably to have to search through the reports of nine seasons' work in the hope of finding parallels to a particular object. It is to be presumed that M. Schaeffer does not intend to excavate the whole tell, and that, therefore, the main excavations on the later levels are by now completed. Would it not be possible for the history of his Level I (Late Bronze Age) soon to be collected into a single report?

The present report deals mainly with a quarter of the town which originated in the Hyksos Period (eighteenth century B.C.) and lasted down to the fourteenth century. The orderly lay-out of the houses, opening on to intersecting streets, and the substantial and elaborate plan of the houses, indicate the prosperity of the country at a time when both the Egyptian Middle Empire and the first Hittite Empire had succumbed to hostile forces. Associated with each house was a subterranean tomb, and a number of these produced important ceramic evidence for the whole period from the eighteenth to the fourteenth centuries. There is a sharp contrast between the Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age groups. In the period after 1600 B.C., an increasing proportion of the vessels are imported from Cyprus, with, in the fourteenth century, much Mycenaean ware. In the Middle Bronze Age, the types are entirely mainland, in close connection with Palestine, though with definite local idiosyncrasies, and owing little to the Aegean. It might, therefore, appear that M. Schaeffer over-emphasises the connection of Ugarit with the Aegean at this period. One sherd of Kamares ware was

found in Tomb XXXVI, while in LVI-LVII were found two red-on-black Cypriot vessels, as noticeable for their rarity here as the solitary example from Tell Fara in Palestine, one vessel copied from a Middle Minoan II prototype, and a few others with possibly Aegean affinities. From the fact that these were copies of Aegean originals, M. Schaeffer suggests that Cretan traders, cut off from their home in the seventeenth century by the Hyksos invasions, were forced to make local substitutes. Before one can feel that this is proved, one would like to see more evidence of actual contacts in the Middle Minoan times, though, of course, there may be more than has yet been published. But in any case, as M. Schaeffer points out, the Aegean element is small when compared to the evidence of a homogeneous culture stretching from N. Syria to S. Palestine. The elucidation of the origins of this so-called Hyksos period is one of the many problems on which the excavators of Ugarit may throw much light.

K. M. K.

WHITE HORSE HILL AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY. By L. V. GRINSELL. St. Catherine Press Ltd., 1939. Pp. xii + 65; 7 illustrations and folding map. Price 3s. 6d. in paper covers; in cloth 4s. 6d.

The most distinctive feature of southern English geography is its domination by the great massif of the chalk land. A stranger landing at Weymouth from the sea might travel northwards for eighty miles and more, through Cranborne Chase, across Salisbury Plain and over the Marlborough Downs, and find himself for ever in a landscape which, while presenting wide variety, from the elm-flanked water-meadows of the valleys to the bare bald summits of the hills, yet has a basic similarity all the way, and is the varying expression of a single subsoil. This (he might well think) has lasted eighty miles and may well last another eighty, until, on the Berkshire Downs, he finds himself on the finite and dramatic northern boundary of the Wessex chalk.

On White Horse Hill one stands between two worlds. Southwards, the chalk downs stretch in undulating highlands to the sea, to the north the land falls like a cliff, from the foot of which stretches the flat fertile plain of the White Horse Vale, bounded on the north by the distant Cotswolds and, beyond them, the faint blue smudge of the mountains of the Welsh borderland.

It is this frontier of the Wessex chalk that is described in this little book, which is planned to attract the cyclist or hiker who is exploring this region for the first time and to convert him, before he knows it is happening, into a field archaeologist. For Mr. Grinsell obviously knows his public, and how to appeal to them, and (like Glanvil's Scholar) 'by the insinuating subtlety of his carriage' manages to make them feel that archaeology is not entirely a major mystery, but something which they can understand at least in part, and, understanding, turn to good account on their half-days or week-ends. Uffington Castle and Wayland's Smithy, the Ridgeway and the Seven Barrows, to say nothing of the Horse himself,

are explained and discussed, and with Major Allen's air-photographs the weariest traveller can for a moment take effortless wings and see the country from a novel viewpoint.

May this be the first of a series of similar guidebooks by Mr. Grinsell, for there must be a large potential public for sane archaeology attractively presented in this manner.

S. P.

LONDON TELLS HER STORY. By WALTER GEORGE BELL, F.S.A., F.R.A.S. Routledge, 1938. Crown 8vo. Pp. xii + 240; 79 illustrations and map. Price 6s.

In his dual capacity of journalist and antiquary, Mr. Bell has written and read much on the history of London, and this time he has set forth the fruits of his studies and explorations in a book designed, in his own words, 'to tell the boys and girls of London the story of their great city in a way which should appeal to them.' His illustrations, like his knowledge, are abundant and entertaining; in addition to familiar sights such as the entrance to St. James's Palace, or Gog and Magog at Guildhall, we are shown the Roman wall-bastion under the General Post Office, a Viking tombstone excavated in St. Paul's Churchyard, and the burial-ground, near the Mile End Road, of the Jews who returned to London under Oliver Cromwell. Nor is the theme of the book itself any less intriguing. We see the development of the City of London as a self-governing unit from its Roman beginnings, through the Middle Ages, with their repeated differences between City and Crown, to the days when the City Corporation refused to be responsible for the new London that was growing so rapidly outside its walls, and an Act of Parliament brought the County of London into being.

A good many beside the boys and girls for whom the book is intended will find the story an absorbing one, but here and there, in view of the special purpose of the book, Mr. Bell the journalist might have yielded, with advantage, to Mr. Bell the antiquary. The spelling of the 'Song of Canute' quoted on page 32 is neither the early English spelling of the poem as given by Thomas of Ely nor the ordinary spelling of the present day, but a rather misleading piece of sham-antiquity. The boy or girl who repeats the statement that the Black Prince's Ruby was sold for £4 under the Commonwealth may escape uncorrected, as this popular legend, based on a misreading of a valuation-list, has won wide acceptance, but to say, with page 2, that 'Richard II was the last Plantagenet king' might meet with contradiction in form, or disaster in the examination-room, since though Richard was last in the direct line from Henry II, his first cousin Henry IV, as a grandson of Edward III, could equally well claim membership of the Plantagenet house.

These may seem trivial points, but Mr. Bell writes so plausibly, and with such a wide appeal, that he is in danger of misleading the youth of the country unless he makes a few slight but advisable corrections when, as it deserves, his book becomes a text-book in our schools.

M. R. H.

GUIDE TO THE COLLECTIONS ILLUSTRATING THE PREHISTORY OF WALES IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES. By W. F. GRIMES, M.A., F.S.A. Cardiff, 1939. Pp. xv + 254; 78 text-figures and 9 plates. Price 4s.

The publication of this book marks a stage of great importance in the archaeology of Wales. In 1925 Dr. Wheeler produced his brilliant summary of the entire field as he was then able to see it, and in 1932 Mr. Grimes published in *Proc. Prehist. Soc. East Anglia* a survey of work carried out on the prehistoric phases between 1925 and that date. But the Prehistoric Guide of the National Museum of Wales is not to be considered merely as a further addendum bringing up the story to 1937, but as a completely new and original treatment of the whole mass of the material relics of prehistoric Wales contained in the national collection. Additional material in other museums is utilized to amplify the story where necessary, so that we have a work of the very first importance upon a region of peculiar interest in British prehistory.

The book is planned in two parts, the first a chronological treatment in which the objects are discussed in their cultural setting in the widest sense, the second forming a catalogue of the actual material in the Museum up to the end of 1937. In addition to the text, every object worthy of illustration is depicted in half-tone or line blocks, the latter entirely from Mr. Grimes's own drawings, the clarity and faithfulness of which are too well known to archaeologists to need further praise here. This corpus of drawings in a uniform technique has enormous advantages in facilitating comparison, and old finds we have long known from familiar woodcuts in early volumes of *Arch. Camb.* appear with all the novelty of unpublished objects from the latest excavation, with a consequent salutary effect on our reaction to them. Mr. Grimes has devised some striking pictorial charts of typological developments of Bronze Age tools (Fig. 24) and pottery (Fig. 30), and plans of certain excavated sites are included to illuminate the finds.

Among the many points that call for comment we may note, in the early chapters, the identification of an implement of Broom chert of Mousterian date from Paviland, and the recognition of Maglemose traits in the Nab Head mesolithic industry. The Graig Lwyd neolithic axe-factory is well presented, with an interesting series of illustrations of the axes of that stone from distant sites in Wales, in which the variety of the finished (polished) types is well brought out and can be seen to echo the rough-out forms. On Welsh megaliths Mr. Grimes is on ground peculiarly his own, and his recognition of the Carneddau Hengwm sherds (here illustrated) as from a rusticated beaker provides another piece of evidence linking the ditched stone circles and 'henges' with the A beaker folk. It is satisfactory to have a true version of the pot from the base of the Glynllifon menhir, correcting the restoration published in *Arch. Camb.* 1932, 199.

One of the most remarkable finds of the Welsh Bronze Age is the wooden bowl inlaid with gold from Caergwrle. The ornament of finely-chased concentric circles upon the gold strip round its

edge connects it unmistakably with the later phase of Irish gold-work, exemplified by the Latoun disc and the 'gorgets', when ornament in this style first appears, in the reviewer's opinion from Scandinavia, where it was extremely popular on all metal-work. Such a derivation for this style (which has no antecedents in Ireland itself) is in accord with Jacob-Friesen's views on the sun-discs, and the often quoted resemblance between the gold 'gorgets' and the bronze *haliskragen* of northern Europe, and would represent a later reflex of the Irish metal exports to Scandinavia in Early Bronze Age times.

For later periods there are fewer new finds. Mr. Lindsay Scott's views (*Proc. Prehist. Soc.* iv, 337) on the relative chronology of the encrusted urns, in which he reverses Fox's sequence, did not appear in time to receive comment in the Late Bronze Age section, but an important pot which may belong to this period is that from a stone ring-work on Marros Mountain, Carmarthenshire, acutely recognised by Mr. Grimes as comparable with a vessel from the Knockalappa crannog in Ireland. The Iron Age metal-work, most of it well known for many years, it is possible to relate to a more definite cultural background than previously, now that the extent of 'Glastonbury B' pottery is seen to embrace the coastal plain of Glamorgan. It is a delight to see that austere miracle of Celtic bronze-work, the handle of the Trawsfynydd tankard in the Liverpool Museum, illustrated here to complement the late and mediocre examples in the Seven Sisters hoard, and the appearance of one of the lost Dinas Emrys terrets is a satisfactory surprise.

It is now possible to possess the basic material of Welsh pre-history for four shillings—is it too much to hope that other museums will follow the lead of the National Museum of Wales and the London Museum in producing such guide-catalogues to those collections, often of unsuspected richness, that are scattered over Britain? Archaeologists such as those of the two institutions mentioned are not easy to come by, but the compilation of a simple catalogue of material with a full corpus of accurate outline drawings, where possible to a uniform scale, is surely not an impossible task for the many 'unpublished' museums whose material thus presented would be of inestimable value to the student. The exhibition of material in the galleries is only part of the duty of a museum, that towards the general public, and the other obligation, towards the research workers and students, can hardly be better served than in such a manner.

S. P.