

face, and the remains of a bank apparently built against the encroachment of water depositing the aforementioned silts. Below the clay bank was the remains of an alleyway with side ditch and bank. Beneath this bank were two features containing prehistoric pottery and the complete skeleton of a cow, dated to the late Iron Age. Pottery and flint tools recovered within the Roman levels date back to the Neolithic and one assumes that close to the site there is evidence of prehistoric occupation.

At present processing is in progress and first assessment shows important groups of fine and coarse wares, plus quantities of vessel and window glass, mosaic fragments, wall plaster and numerous small

finds. Because of the importance of the finds and features, excavations will commence again in the spring.

Summary

From the evidence found so far, it would seem that Staines had some form of occupation at least as far back as the Iron Age and perhaps even earlier. During the first two centuries of the Roman period the settlement expanded and prospered. A decline occurred in the 3rd century with expansion again in the 4th century and a final collapse in the 5th century, the town not regaining its importance and prosperity until the 12th/13th century.

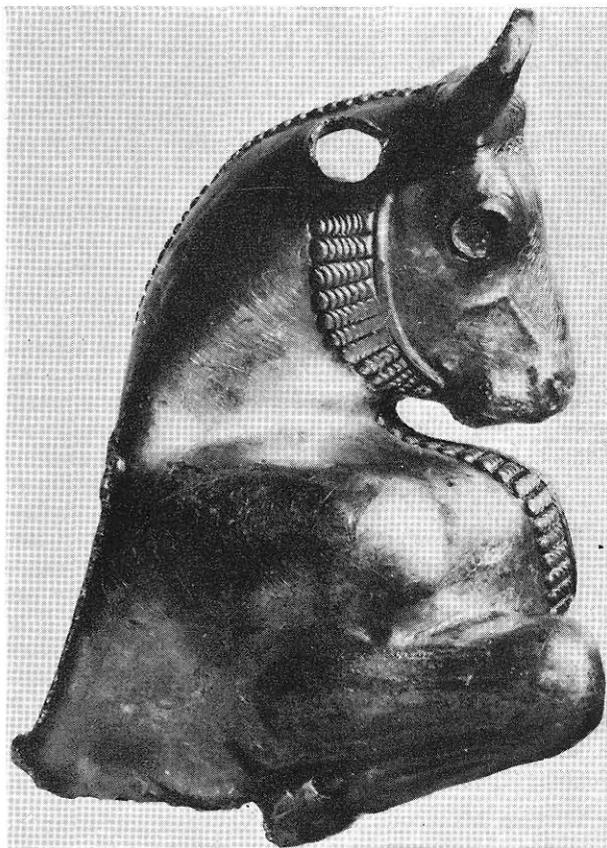
Treasures from Thrace at the British Museum

BARBARIC splendour, extravagance and masses of gold are the main features of the current very successful exhibition 'Thracian Treasures from Bulgaria' (until 28th March—see Diary for times, etc.). Over a thousand objects, many of them vessels and ornaments of pure gold, illustrate the art of the ancient Thracians from the Copper Age to the Roman period.

The development of the metal working is shown from its beginnings, with the simple gold ornaments from the Varna necropolis to the Late Iron Age flamboyant and extravagant chieftain's treasure of Panagurishte, a hybrid of Classicism and barbaric magnificence. This latter treasure, famous for its sheer weight in gold (6.1 kg or 13.2 lbs.) is one of the centre pieces of the exhibition.

The Thracians were tribes living in the northern parts of the Balkans who were known for their warlike character as described by various classical authors. They were conquered by the Persians, Macedonians and Romans. Little is known of their previous history, except from excavations. Recent work such as the excavations of the Varna necropolis (1973) or the painted tomb of Kazanluk (1974) and of various burial mounds give insight into the burial customs of these people.

This is the exhibition of gold, gold and more gold, combined with an exciting art, as well as archaeologically excavated material.



Part of silver vessel ending in a forepart of a bull — from Rousse (4th century B.C.)