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Editorial

THE British Museum—*le British*, as our friends on the other side of the English Channel affectionately call it—is always news. But in the last few months it has become top news: the plan of the Trustees to develop the site in Bloomsbury has been turned down by the British Government, which has set up a Committee to report on the Library in relation to national library facilities in general. However affectionately we all regard the old lady of Bloomsbury, she is a thing of the past. There will never be museums again like the present British Museum, the Louvre and the Metropolitan. They belong to a Victorian era of progress and universality, and have all outgrown themselves. Few people now believe that the British Museum should remain as one unit controlling its six million books and its famous and priceless collections. The Museum/Library divorce is necessary and certain. How is this separation to be effected? Many have said, move the Library away, and it has been suggested, in Government circles, that at the same time the Library might be fragmented. Professor Martin Robertson suggested in a letter in *The Times* on 27th November that the Library should stay where it is and take over the Museum. We supported this view and argued that the collections should gradually move to new and separate museums (*The Times*, 13th December 1967). Miss Jennie Lee has already announced that the Ethnographical Collections are moving to Burlington Gardens. We suggested that what was required was a phased dismemberment of the Museum: first the creation of a Museum

of British and Northern Antiquities, using as a base the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities, and then, later, as the Library takes over the building, the creation of a Museum of Oriental Antiquities based on the Department of Oriental Antiquities, and, finally, that the remaining departments be put in a new Museum of Near Eastern and Mediterranean Antiquities. This final stage would be many years away: for a long time the Western part of the Museum with the Duveen Gallery must stay where it is.

Dr Kathleen Kenyon, the youngest of the three archaeologists who are Trustees of the British Museum (and it is a matter of general comment that of the 23 people who are the Trustees of this great national institution with the richest archaeological collections in the world, only three are archaeologists!), described the suggestion of breaking up the collections of the Museum into four smaller museums as 'absolute nonsense', which would bring 'alarm and despondency . . . to the readers of ANTIQUITY'. But we must live in the world as it is, and not as we thought it was 60 years ago, or would wish it were now. We cannot have all the antiquities we want to see and study under one roof; we cannot ask any one man to direct successfully all the collections that now exist in the British Museum. The second half of the 20th century must see many and smaller museums in London, and the sooner we all realize this, the better.

But the British Museum has problems other than its Trustees and the Government. Eight acres of the basement of the Museum have been

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settled by a race of wild cats. They live in the heating and ventilation system; there are over 150 of them, and many are diseased. An official of the RSPCA is reported as saying: 'The cats are constantly dying from undernourishment and the smell from the rotting carcasses and filth is unbearable. . . . Those that live there are just travesties of what cats should be.' We must have good and healthy cats in the four Museums that will grow out of the present collections. A Museum that cannot look after its cats cannot look after anything.



Who would have thought, when they read Rainbird Clarke's article on 'The Flint-knapping Industry at Brandon' (ANTIQUITY, 1935, 38), that the modern exemplars of this most ancient British industry would one day fall foul of the present-day administration? But this is what has happened: the flint-knappers of Brandon have fallen foul of the arms embargo to South Africa. The last Brandon knapper is Herbert Edwards; he is now 75 years old and has been knapping flints since he was 8 years old as part of a business founded by his family over 200 years ago. He works in Bury Road, Brandon, Suffolk, and exports flints to musket enthusiasts all over the world—including countries behind the Iron Curtain such as Czechoslovakia. He wrote to the Board of Trade for permission to export flints to South Africa and was told by the Board that 'Gun flints are classified as arms, but we might be able to issue an export licence if we feel there are special circumstances.' Mr Edwards said, 'This ban is absurd. . . . It takes two minutes to load the musket with powder, shot and wadding. If you are in a war you are dead before you have even loaded. I don't see that sending my flints to South Africa is going to cause a blood-bath there.'

It is amusing to look back at the end of Rainbird Clarke's article written over 30 years ago. Having surveyed the Brandon flint-knapping industry of the day he asked, 'What of the morrow?' and replied:

We fear that the manufacture of these munitions of war can only look forward to a peaceful

death in the near future. With the more general use of breech-loaders and the perfection of cartridges for the tropics, the demand for gun-flints will cease and with that the supply. This unique domestic industry is already languishing into decay. Soon it will perish and be numbered among the bygone handicrafts of rural England, leaving only the tradition of the age-long secrets.

The South African embargo might turn this prophecy into fact. But before that let us hope some ignorant official in the Board of Trade who has classified musket flints as arms will change his mind. We suspect he will because there will be, twitching over his In and Out and LBW trays, a disturbing influence. We would not like to meet an East Anglian flint-knapophile in a dark Suffolk lane or a darker Board of Trade office. In death, as in life, Rainbird Clarke was a firm friend but a fierce and relentless opponent; that ghostly figure with his flintlock gun that comes round your office door in Victoria Street, SW1, should be ignored at your peril.



And who would have thought, so many years after the publication of Wahlgren's masterly book *The Kensington Stone, a Mystery Solved* (ANTIQUITY, 1958, 264), that the issue (or should one say myth-issue?) of the Minnesota petroglyph would come up again? But it has.

The Kensington Stone, the Minnesota petroglyph—call it what you will—walks again. Dr O. G. Landsverk and Mr Alfred Monge have recently published a book entitled *Norse Mediaeval Cryptography in Runic Carvings*; startling title, and an engaging book when one learns that one of the authors—Mr Monge—was a former British Army cryptographer and was awarded the OBE for his work in helping to break Japanese codes in World War II. These authors claim that the mistakes or mis-spellings which occur in the Kensington Stone and which caused scholars to doubt its authenticity, were really not mistakes at all but part of a code which not only gave the date of the runestone, namely 1362, but also the names of the author (Harrek) and the carver (Tollik). Here we go! The Kensington Stone is authentic and so are

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other runestones in America! There is apparently one near Byfield in Massachusetts and here the date is 24th November 1009—483 years before Columbus discovered America. But the main burden of the Landsverk-Monge argument rests on three runestones discovered in the state of Oklahoma which were dated, they aver, 1012, 1015 and 1022. Minnesota always seemed an odd place to find proofs of the Vikings in America, especially in the midst of modern Scandinavian settlers. Oklahoma sounds odder still, but not to Landsverk and Monge. According to them Leif Eiriksson, having settled in Massachusetts/Vinland, 'accompanied by Benedictine priests . . . sailed south around Florida then north again up the Mississippi River into the heart of the continent'. So much for those who think American runes fakes!

Mr Monge says that the Vinland map (ANTIQUITY, 1966, 3) is also a 'crypto-puzzle' which he has decoded. He claims that his decoding shows that the contours of Vinland and Greenland on the map were actually drawn by Henricus, Bishop of Greenland, and that the map has, written into it for those with cryptographic spectacles, the secret date of 23rd August 1122.

And in thinking of these Massachusetts and Oklahoma query runestones we remember the curious affair of the discovery in North Wales early in 1964 of an alleged runic inscription. It was found by a schoolboy called Michael Blake not far from his home near Caernarvon. It seemed at first sight to be a Danish rune of about AD 900 and to say BIORN SET THIS STONE UP AFTER AB If true it was a most exciting find: of the 90 or so runic inscriptions in the British Isles and Ireland the majority are from Orkney—there are a few in Ireland and in Man, as well as in northern England and Scotland, but before 1964 there was none known in Wales. And alas, after 1964 there is still none known from Wales. Dr Erik Moltke of the National Museum at Copenhagen and Professor Sven Jansson of the University of Stockholm were able to show that the inscription was recent, perhaps, as Jansson said, 'cut for fun not so many decades ago by someone interested in runes.'

It will be interesting to know what Moltke and Jansson think of the Massachusetts and Oklahoma runes: whether they too were cut for fun not so many decades ago, and what they think of Harrek and Tollik in relation to Olof Ohman who found the Kensington Stone in 1898. We suspect Jarrek and Tollik are learned forms of Joe Doakes who went East in 1953 (ANTIQUITY, 1958, 267). Holy smoke, indeed!

Meanwhile, that distinguished historian and authority on America and France, Sir Denis Brogan, himself an interested archaeologist and the husband of a distinguished archaeologist, has recently used the Oklahoma runestones as a text for an article entitled 'Myth America' published in *The Spectator*. The Editor of *The Spectator* and Sir Denis have readily agreed to allow us to reproduce his article for our enjoyment (pp. 17-19).



And if Myth America, why not Myth Anywhere, and particularly Myth Turkey? The publication of the book *The Dorak Affair* by Kenneth Pearson and Patricia Connor (London, Michael Joseph, 1967; 191 pp., 13 plates, 1 map. 30s.) adds nothing to the articles which these authors wrote for *The Sunday Times* (6th and 13th November 1966). It incapsulates their story between hard covers and so brings the Dorak affair to the library reading public, and to the permanency of copyright library shelves, and we are forced to write about it all so that historians of archaeology in a quarter of a century from now should not be able to say 'How curious that ANTIQUITY never reviewed or commented on *The Dorak Affair*! Does this not mean that there was something very fishy?'

We address ourselves to the Editor of ANTIQUITY in 1984, and we say, certainly, there is something fishy but we do not know what it is. We invited James Mellaart himself to review the Pearson-Connor book in these pages, but, to our great regret, he declined to do so, saying that he would prefer the Editor of ANTIQUITY to undertake this task. The story of the discovery of the Dorak Treasure by Mellaart is set out in the Pearson-Connor book: Mellaart

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has never denied these facts. We are then left with the choice of these solutions to this fascinating problem: Is it all a lie? Is it all true? Is it true but was Mellaart being used to identify objects which others were whisking out of Turkey for sale in Europe and America, or is he the victim of his own fantasies, a scholar who sincerely believed that all this happened to him, but may have been deluded? *The Dorak Affair* has not been widely reviewed: the book is a damp squib. Jacquetta Hawkes reviewed the book in *The Sunday Times* with her customary fairness and acute good sense: she belongs to the few who think 'the discovery of the treasure may have been not so much a hoax as a wishful dream', and deplores the opening of old Turkish wounds in no good cause.

Like so many strange affairs in archaeology (Piltown is the most well known and Rouffignac the most discussed), Dorak must not be assumed to be true until it has been proved to be so. Before the Dorak Treasure is accepted as a fact, it must be proved to have existed. So much of archaeology is detective-story work. How difficult to prove a murder without a body. How difficult to prove a great archaeological find without the artifactual remains of the treasure. In the law of most countries it is difficult to assume murder without a body. It would be wise, we feel, to suspend judgement on the Dorak Treasure until we have its body. Most archaeologists were alarmed and embarrassed when Professor Seton Lloyd included the alleged Dorak finds in his article in that very fine volume entitled *The Dawn of Civilization* edited by Professor Stuart Piggott (*Thames and Hudson*, 1961). The chapters in that large book have now been reissued as separate books, and in the hard-back version of his chapter, published under the title of *Early Highland Peoples of Anatolia* (London, *Thames and Hudson*, 1967; 144 pp., 146 photographs and diagrams. 30s.), Seton Lloyd devotes five well-illustrated pages to the Dorak Treasure and says 'the tombs are dated, not only by domestic vessels of gold and silver but, *almost miraculously* (italics ours—Ed.), by a fragment of gold overlay from a wooden throne, bearing an

inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphs which includes the name of Sahure, the second king of the Fifth Dynasty of Old Kingdom Egypt'.

In his preface to *Early Highland Peoples of Anatolia* Professor Piggott sounds a word of caution about what he refers to as 'the now vanished objects allegedly from tombs at Dorak' and says, 'some of us would prefer to suspend judgement on these, since the numerous and extraordinary pieces cannot be regarded as a valid, closed find established under archaeological control'. Here he very wisely says what Professor Machteld Mellink wrote in (ed. Ehrlich) *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, 114, where she says, 'The material from the so-called Dorak treasure is left out of consideration. Whatever it consists of is inaccessible to scholarly and critical analysis.' ANTIQUITY will continue to take this view: until it appears and a satisfactory memoir can be written about it, it must be left out of consideration. It would be nice, Mr Editor of 1984, to know what fine large books you will have on your shelves that are denied to us in the sixties. The definitive report on Sutton Hoo, without any doubt—and we are pleased to be able to include in this number a note by Dr Bruce-Mitford on his recent work there: but the definitive report on the Dorak Treasure? We wonder.



The Editor's visit to Lepenski Vir (ANTIQUITY, 1967, 255) was interesting and exciting. It took longer than was expected as the hydrofoil service between Belgrade and the Iron Gates which had transported Maria Gimbutas and John Nandris and others to the site was no longer in existence. The journey into eastern Serbia from Belgrade took seven and a half hours along the worst roads we have ever seen. Perhaps the best way to describe the visit is by quoting from a BBC Radio 3 talk broadcast on 27th December.

From Belgrade to Lepenski Vir took us seven and a half hours, and as, in the dark, a lantern in my hand, I stumbled up a wooden outside staircase to my bed in the house of a Serbian peasant, passing through a room where a very old lady was already fast asleep in bed—her

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boots sticking out from under the eiderdown—I began to wonder where I was. At six o'clock the next morning all became clear as I walked the short distance down to the shores of the Danube. Behind me the high mountains of the Yugoslavian Carpathians. In front of me across the Danube the high mountains of the Romanian Carpathians, and as the day went on we saw the glory of these mountains in the autumn sunshine. The leaves were turning and everywhere was a brilliant colour symphony of reds, browns, russets, gold and green. As I walked along I passed small farmhouses with piles of beet and pumpkin on the ground, pimentos hanging up to dry, maize drying in houses, and hay stacked in trees; there were large numbers of small black grunting pigs, shaggy sheep, very friendly and inquisitive cows that came close to me ringing their bells, cheerful dogs, old women already out spinning on their distaffs, and gnarled old men with tall black fur hats who insisted on giving me apples.

The site is on the plain above the banks of the Danube. Lepenski means a semicircular plain and Vir means a whirlpool. . . . When we got there the excavation season was coming to an end . . . 59 houses had already been excavated. . . . The most startling feature of the excavations is the discovery of a very large amount of art. Every house had in it a carved stone head; the best ones are about the size of a rugby football, others are smaller. Some are crudely executed but others are very fine indeed with clearly executed eyebrows, eyes, nose and mouth in high relief. The more one looks at some of these remarkable heads, the more they seem to be representations not of human beings but of fishes—and one has surely an unmistakable pattern of scales. Were these perhaps fish gods. . . ?

We can now answer the question posed by the earlier press conference and reports. This village of Lepenski Vir is not a new 'civilization'. . . it is a Mesolithic or proto-Neolithic settlement of hunters and fishers who had, it would appear, no pottery, no domesticated animals and no crops. . . . Why was it ever called a civilization and the first European civilization, and older

than the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. . . ? It is a matter of language: in English and American we restrict the term 'civilization' to urban literate communities and refer to non-urban, non-literate communities as 'cultures'. But the French translation of our word culture is *civilisation*, and it is because people spoke correctly in French of *les civilisations de Starcevo and Lepenski Vir* that all this fuss started.

We await the 1968 excavations, the carbon dates and the analysis of the animal bones. The 1968 excavations will be the last opportunity of studying this very large village of which only a part has so far been uncovered. In late 1968 and early 1969 the waters of the Danube, controlled by the Iron Gates barrage, will rise to flood the site. Already some of the houses have been bought by the National Broadcasting Corporation of America and the University of California. The full publication of this site will take some time, and in advance of this Dr Srejović has written for readers of *ANTIQUITY* a general account which will appear in the June number.



We are often asked for news of Lascaux. At the end of October it was announced from Paris that the Lascaux paintings have been preserved intact from the 'green leprosy' by which they were attacked. At Montignac on 30th October decorations were presented to M. André Dupuy, the technician who was in charge of the preservation team of experts, and also to M. Jacques Marsal, one of the discoverers of the site in 1940. M. de Segogne, president of the Lascaux Scientific Commission, said that the paintings are now less well lit than before, but artificially ventilated and kept at a constant temperature and a constant level of humidity. While it is hoped to reopen Lascaux to the public, this may not be for another five years.