

# Editorial

☞ 1990 was a busy summer in the sale-rooms, where the season's high point in antiquities was the Sotheby's (New York) auction of the Nelson Bunker Hunt collection of Greek vases, 16 items, and the William Herbert Hunt collection of Classical bronzes, 37 items. Together, they made US\$11,398,200, a world record for an auction sale of antiquities, and an average \$300,000 each. Top price, and a world record for a Greek vase at auction, was lot 5, at \$1,760,000. But where did the Hunts find these highly important things? Where were they excavated, when, by whom? In which older collections were they once held? The catalogue\* offers some intelligence, but not much:

Lot 1 Corinthian Black-figure Column Krater, attributed to near the Painter of Vatican 88, circa 600 BC, provenance unstated

Lot 2 Attic Black-figure Panel Amphora, attributed to the Painter of Berlin 1686, circa 550–540 BC, provenance unstated

Lot 3 Attic Black-figure Kylix, attributed to near the Kallis Painter, circa 540–530 BC, provenance Summa Galleries Auction, Los Angeles, 1981

Lot 4 Attic Black-figure Neck Amphora, attributed to the Three Line Group, circa 530–520 BC, provenance unstated

Lot 5 Fragmentary Attic Red-figure Calyx Krater, signed by Euphronios, circa 510 BC, provenance unstated

And so on. For 43 of the 53 lots, no provenance is offered in the Hunt sales catalogue; three have a stated provenance of Summa Galleries 1979, five of Summa Galleries 1981, one of a Sotheby's sale 1982, one of the Brummer collection 1922. By looking back at those sale catalogues, and at the book from the Hunt collection's tour in 1983,\*\* one can recover a little history, but not much. Item 43, a Roman bronze balsamarium, comes from an old European collection, that of Ernest Brummer (sold at auction 1979). Items 21 and 37 are recorded in the 1960s. This leaves 50 of the 53 lots with no declared history, or with a history that goes back as far as the 1970s only.

\* *The Nelson Bunker Hunt Collection, Highly Important Greek Vases, The William Herbert Hunt Collection, Highly Important Greek, Roman and Etruscan Bronzes: Auction*. Tuesday, June 19, 1990. New York: Sotheby's, 1990.

And those histories refer only to earlier owners; they say nothing about where, when and in what archaeological context they were found.

Neither the Hunts nor Sotheby's are of course obliged in any way to state the history of what they offer for sale. Nor were the Hunts or any other collectors obliged to make enquiries about history at the time they made their purchases. In its reticence, the sale does not materially differ from those of other collections; and it is not suggested that the Hunt collection was improperly acquired.

☞ Where do these kind of objects, newly brought into the sale-room, come from when Italy, Greece and other nations where fine Classical antiquities can be unearthed have severe laws to protect their archaeological sites? One could imagine that they might have come from old European or American collections, formed before clandestine excavation and export became illegal. One becomes accustomed to hearing, when asking about any particular piece, that it comes from a 'private collection'. Sometimes Italy or Switzerland is indicated. A certain number indeed have histories that can be traced back from sale to previous sale. A certain number just 'surface'. The years pass; national legislations to prevent the removal of antiquities become more stringent; yet the surfacing continues. Is Switzerland so dotted with the crumbling villas of once-prosperous bankers, and Italy so filled with the decaying *palazzi* of merchant families fallen on hard times, who are now obliged quietly to sell the collection of antiquities – a collection assembled by some ancient ancestor so long ago that all other memory of them is quite forgotten? Are there quite so many private transactions that such remarkable finds should pass from hand to hand for decades without ever touching public notice? If three in the Hunt sale did come from pre-1970 collections, did all the other 50 also come from old collections, more discreet or indirect in their manner of dispersal? Obviously

\*\* *Wealth of the ancient world: the Nelson Bunker Hunt and William Herbert Hunt collections*. Fort Worth (TX): Kimbell Art Museum in association with Summa Publications.



We could fill an *ANTIQUITY* editorial each issue with notices of stolen and looted antiquities. Here is just one of stand for the thousands, the sheela-na-gig from Kiltinan Church, Co. Tipperary, Ireland, that was removed in the early hours of 9 January. We reported this theft in the June issue (p. 207). Where is the carving now? Has anyone seen it? Tipperary County Museum and the people of Fethard would like to know. Not one in a hundred of these things are recovered.

Photograph by courtesy of Joe Kenny, Fethard.

there is a 'pool', for most classes of antiquities, consisting of those pieces that have long been in circulation between the collectors and dealers. They went into that pool when excavation was largely treasure-hunting and when national legislations allowed the movement of antiquities without permit.

But one knows also that clandestine excavation is a busy trade in Mediterranean lands. Where does the pipe lead that illicit finds flow into? There clearly is some enduring route which runs finds from the *clandestini* of the Mediterranean and delivers them into that 'pool' of items available for sale, the open pool

in which the fishing connoisseurs may inadvertently hook prizes whose history involves not a 'Swiss private collection' of respectable age but recent illicit excavation and illicit export.

When so much continues to surface in the pool without previous history, it is no longer possible to believe that the pool is filled with legitimate fish, and corrupted only by a few rogues. In my view, the time is nearing, or has already passed, when the entrance to that 'pool' should be closed. Items that have a known history before, say, 1970 – the date of the first Archaeological Institute of America resolution on the acquisition of antiquities –

may be treated as respectable for the rest, the burden of proof needs to be shifted to the proprietor, who should be prepared to demonstrate that the treasure in question has indeed a documented history in which no unlawful acts figure.

Whatever happens to the pool of supply, we must recognize how strong will be the hooks of demand. A New York press release tells ANTIQUITY of the entry on the market of a new company, Hesperia Arts Auction. Partner Jonathan Rosen explains:

We are reaching out to expand the market for antiquities. . . . The success of the auction of the Hunt Collection of ancient bronzes and Greek vases indicates that the market has begun to value and accept the ancient art form as worthy of note, especially in comparison with contemporary and modern art

His colleague Bruce McNall – ‘Long a player in the antiquities and ancient coin market’ and ‘Dubbed by the press as having the Midas touch’ – adds:

The international art market is experiencing a period of flux in which we may have seen the summit of prices reached in collecting areas such as contemporary and modern art. This augurs well for the international collecting community to turn its attention to alternative markets such as antiquities which, in comparison to the contemporary market, is in its infancy

It was a busy summer also for the obstacles that stand in the way of a fully free international market in antiquities.

An appeal against the Illinois court ruling that awarded the Kanakaria mosaics to Cyprus (ANTIQUITY 63 (1989): 651–4) was dismissed. A fine television film on BBC’s *Omnibus* gave first-hand stories of several principals. Michael van Rijn, the gentleman who made about \$800,000 on the deal, said of the looting in northern Cyprus after the Turkish occupation, ‘You can’t take 3000 pieces out of Cyprus without having the major players on the payroll.’ (The astute are now waiting for antiquities newly on the market that may relate to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.) The parish priest of the church where the saintly figures belong made a plain and moving statement of different values: it is a ‘very serious sin’ that these things should be sold just for commerce. ‘Their place is in the church. They are our spiritual treasures.’

The Sevso treasure, the group of Roman silver vessels put on the market by Sotheby’s (June editorial: 204–7), remains in custody of a New York court, where Lebanon and now also Yugoslavia lay claim to it. In July Sotheby’s, who had incautiously taken the stuff out of Swiss jurisdiction and into New York, petitioned to be released from the case, on the grounds they ‘had no ownership interest’ and should therefore be ‘dismissed as defendants’.

In August the Greek Government secured an injunction from the High Court in London to prevent Sotheby’s selling Cycladic figurines, said to be from the Keros hoard. The parties came to an out-of-court settlement, under which some figurines were returned to Greece.

My well-meant campaign to save the Berlin Wall, launched (if that is the word) in an editorial paragraph earlier in the year, made it to the small screen in November, as an item in Channel 4’s TV series on archaeology, *Down to earth*. We went to Berlin to film, and I was pleased to find two large chunks of the Wall were still standing and fenced off to protect them against the ‘Wall-peckers’, the souvenir traders whose livelihood is in hammering little chunks off the surface. The Wall offers a remarkable study in the contemporary preservation of a historical monument, and we expect to have in the March 1991 issue an informed report. Meanwhile I offer here some first-hand observations.

To begin, why preserve the Wall, when all Europe celebrates the end of the Cold War? Because it is the supreme monument of the 20th century as that has been experienced in Europe. The Cold War ran 1945–90, nearly half the years of the century, and its tensions focussed on Berlin. The city was divided between suspicious Allies in 1945. The western zones were isolated by the Berlin Blockade in 1948–9, and kept in play by the Berlin Airlift. Berlin was divided more concretely by the building of *die Mauer*, the Wall, in August 1961. The fall of *die Mauer* in November 1989 was the key event in the breaking of the Iron Curtain across Europe, and the moving step towards the re-uniting of Germany that took place this October.

The Cold War itself grew out of the previous struggle between Germany and other European powers that ran from 1914 to 1945 through two world wars and an uneasy peace: the treaty that



united Germany in October of this year was also the peace treaty that concluded the Second World War.

Dividing walls, built in concrete, steel and barbed wire, hedged with mine-fields and machine guns, are characteristic of the century as a class of monuments: first elaborated in the Great War of 1914–18, they were built in Asia as well as Europe. The cities of Belfast and Beirut now have the 'peace wall' and the 'green line' to keep their hostile communities apart.

So the Berlin Wall is a monument of our century that encapsulates the European experience for the 77 years from 1914 to 1990. This is why knowledge of it is important to all Europe and must be preserved. And knowledge requires that the standing object be preserved, not just documents and photographs, or isolated fragments in museums. The essence of the Wall is in the object, in this monstrous ugly thing, chopping through the city with no regard for people or buildings, and stretching out of sight in each direction. More telling than the face of the Wall to the West, which was covered in free spray-painted pictures, is the Wall as the East saw it: a white-painted outer wall with West Berlin beyond; and before it a 'death-ground' of bare ground with lights and guard-towers; a second inner wall, white-painted each side; and before that even, a security zone that was out of bounds to common access.

What historical understanding requires, then, is the saving of a stretch in the city centre for the full width of the whole complex – the double wall, dead ground and security zone. It must be abrupt and offensive, which is why a length out in the woods of the Berlin outer suburbs will not serve. The stretch must be long enough to give a real feeling of its going on for ever – which is what, for the people of East and of West Berlin, the Wall did.

The length south from the Reichstag would do well. It begins on the river Spree, where white crosses by its site commemorate 29 people who died in trying to cross the Wall by this place. These begin with Inge Krüger, born 31.1.1949, died 10.12.1961, and among them are several *Unbekannt* – figures seen to have been shot and dragged away, but not identified by western watchers. It passes within a few metres of the Reichstag, the parliament building of the old united Germany, then immediately by the Brandenburg gate, ceremonial entrance to



*The Berlin Wall as visible in October 1990: two irregular lines separated by a 2-metre strip where the concrete castings stood. Beyond, all trace has already gone.*

the City, and across a huge wasteland that was once the Potsdamer Platz, Berlin's busiest public place. Beyond, it turns and runs down to Checkpoint Charlie, the celebrated crossing-place where the tanks of East and of West would come to growl at each other.

It is already too late. From the Spree to the south of the Potsdamer Platz the Wall has gone completely, and it takes the techniques of a field archaeologist to detect its course. The Wall was built of concrete castings, each section about a metre wide, and had no dug foundations. The sections were simply placed on the ground, cemented on each side and bolted together at the top. When the sections are lifted away, they reveal the old street surfaces, sometimes complete with tramlines. Only a pair of parallel lines 2 metres apart show where the Wall was. Where the ground was built up a little, there is a slight ledge of concrete. Where the street was tarmacked, the weight of the castings made

them sink in, and a faint step in the surface, just a centimetre or two high, remains. Where the concrete sat direct on cobbles or kerbstones, it has left no trace at all. The famous little hut that was the West border-post at Checkpoint Charlie has gone. The larger, steel East border-post was due to go the week after we filmed it. In tourist haunts along its course, little bits of Wall are for sale for a few marks, invariably spray-painted and variably authentic. Larger fragments are available at a London gallery, where you are talking of £12,000 plus.

At Checkpoint Charlie, where there is now a first museum of the Wall, I was able to meet a remarkable gentleman, Herr Hagen Koch, whose career has followed the Wall. First as an East German army officer, he was responsible for maintaining its efficiency for its planned task. Then, in the dying days of the DDR, he was commissioned to make a complete record and photographic survey of the Wall. Now, he is involved with the demolition of the Wall, with the rescue of representative items for the Haus am Checkpoint Charlie museum, and with the sale of the larger pieces to galleries outside Berlin.

Across the river Spree from the Reichstag, you see the Wall-peckers busy at their work, and hear the plink-plink-plink of their chisels as they lever the smooth surface away for the souvenir stalls. (The Wall-peckers here are not German, but Polish and Turkish *Gastarbeiter*.) They leave a ruined wall behind, with rough concrete broken back to the reinforcing bars, and with occasional holes. Already a Wall-pecker has been killed when a heavy length of the upper wall toppled over at a place where the peckers had removed all its lower support. If any of the lengths that still stand are in the end preserved, they are so bruised by the pecking that they will require much restoration or even complete replacement by replicas.

The Cold War was an experience of all Europe, which all Europe needs to remember. The people of Berlin have had a particularly rough century, and one can understand those of them who would like the Wall and all its works to be wholly swept away. But the Wall is not a domestic matter for the people of Berlin to decide for themselves. It concerns all Europe; as the people of Berlin chanced to be at the focus of the Cold War, so it must fall to the people of Berlin, please, to tolerate physical trace of that

historical event. Asking them to live with that most hideous and intrusive length from the Spree past the Brandenburg gate through to Checkpoint Charlie is what the demands of history call for. That is not tolerable – and is already not possible. But the people of Europe can ask of the people of Berlin that they tolerate some substantial lengths of it in their new single city.

¶ The Berlin Wall, emblem of a repressive State, fell two centuries to the very year after the Bastille, emblem of the *ancien régime* in France, also fell to the people. The Bastille vanished in bulk and as souvenir fragments, just as most of the Wall is vanishing, which is why in Paris today there is no standing Bastille – only a Metro station, some marks on the ground, and an irrelevant new opera house. After its fall, rights in the Bastille were sold to a Patriote Palloy, who became the entrepreneur and impresario of the greatest demolition job in history. By November 1789, the Bastille, stormed in July, was most parts demolished, and Patriote Palloy turned to the more public side of the Bastille business. ‘Apostles of Liberation’, equipped with souvenir kits of fragments and models made of its authentic stones, were despatched to the *départements* of all France to tell the revolutionary story. When Napoleon wished to commemorate the storming of the Bastille, there was left only a vacant space. He called for a vast bronze elephant to be erected there in 1813. Neither bronze nor cash were forthcoming, so in 1814 came instead a temporary plaster elephant. It sat, year by year more grubby, dark and decaying, until its rat-infested hulk was torn down in 1846.

The Berlin Wall equally deserves memory and memorial. What the 21st century should find is the real Wall, as best part of it can be saved, not the modern equivalent of a rotten plaster elephant.

¶ The Germanies have united not just as a nation-state, but as a nation-state within a European community. We are fortunate to publish in this issue Kristian Kristiansen’s timely note, ‘National archaeology in the age of European integration’ (pages 825–8 below). The nation-state is the frame of administrative; and often intellectual, reference for archaeological work. An archaeological site, in English

law, may be legally protected if it is of 'national' importance. Yet the nation-state, as that political unit which commands loyalty and defines citizenship above all other affinities, is a recent idea. Some nation-states in Europe, like Belgium and Czecho-slovakia (in which the hyphen is a new convention of the last year), have never cemented across deep cultural divisions. Others like Italy, Spain and Germany balance a central nation-state with strong regional loyalties. Few national borders chance to follow topographic and ecological fault-lines, or define geographical areas that make intelligent units of archaeological study.

A more integrated Europe, even if it stops short of a common European currency or a fully federated United States of Europe, provides a frame of overlapping loyalties – to Europe, to the nation, to the region or the cultural group within the nation. Some kind of Europe of the Regions looks a likely course over the last decade over the century, and this will mean a European archaeology of the regions.

In one respect, the idea of a united Europe already has a dreadful reputation – the mindless imposition of conformity by Brusseleaucrats on the diversity of European manners. A famous casualty has been the German law of 1516 that required beer to be brewed out of proper substances like barley. Brussels swept that away, so Germany is now open – theoretically, at least – to beer fabricated from rice starch and other improbable ingredients. The national schools of archaeology within Europe provide a great variety of intellectual manners in a small continent, and the arbitrary national boundary may make for instructive differences of research attitudes and methods when it cuts through an area that makes an archaeological unity. That diversity is valuable, as well as tiresome. A Europe of archaeological regions will be the healthier if it is also in part a Europe of archaeological regional schools.

👤 This British summer generated its now-annual crop of circles and other mysterious patterns made by areas of fallen or bent stalks in corn fields. An international conference at Oxford Polytechnic considered fungal disease, helicopter down-draught, localized whirlwinds, and vortices of electromagnetic energy as likely causes. A theory of mini-whirlwinds and electrically-charged pollen was presented,

and Professor Archibald Roy ('science cannot explain them') from Glasgow was to become president of a new Centre for Crop Circle Studies. The Parapsychology Discussion Forum wondered if they were the 'Ancient Field Systems used by Druidic and other early British peoples re-worked'. Bill Sallee (University of Kentucky) thought the idea of 'magnetic/gravitational burps or irregularities' had the most credence, and asked, 'Are gravitational burps documented phenomena?' An 'Operation Blackbird' was set up with elaborate sound and camera equipment to record the mysterious making of a circle, and its leaders declared the patterns to be messages from a superior intelligence ('They warn us that we are on our way to destroying our planet').

Gravitational burps aside (about which does anyone outside Kentucky know anything?), the various explanations are uncomfortable if the plans are of other than circular shape. A series of markings at Alton Barnes, in the heartland of the crop-circle zone, confounded the new experts by its strange plan, a mass of circles, lines, and rectangular outlines like a fantasia on the theme of key profiles.

The English tabloid newspapers, who take a more robust view of the world than inexplicable scientists, produced their explanations in the style that is all their own. In an EXCLUSIVE, the *People* ['Frank, Fearless and Free'] solved The Great Corn Circles Mystery, by producing crafty countryman Fred Day, a handy hoaxer who first left his mark in farmers' crops 47 YEARS AGO. Its racier rival, the *Sunday Sport*, offered more loopy theories from the BAFFLED scientists ('Mutant prehistoric tribes, which have been living in underground cities, trying to come to the surface'; 'Crumpet-crazy hedgehogs chasing mates in sex romps'), and its own STARK STARIN' MAD HOAXER:

George Vernon enraged scientists investigating Britain's mystery corn circles by confessing: 'I fooled the world with eight pints of lager and a BROOMSTICK.'

The 31-year-old inventor is in hiding after being unveiled by *Sunday Sport* as the man who had conned the BBC into announcing space aliens had touched down in a West Country cornfield.

Joker George ADMITTED being behind the massive prank when our intrepid newsmen tracked him down.

He made his amazing confession after being

RUMBLED by the bizarre calling card he left in a Wiltshire field where he FAKED an alien landing site by gouging huge circles in the corn.

Boozed-up George and a pal, who he refuses to name, sneaked past trained scientists – armed with infra-red tracking equipment – under the cover of darkness. . . .

News of George's amazing scam broke on Wednesday morning and dominated national headlines.

***His fiendish plot – slammed as inCORNsiderate by scientists – began shortly after midnight on Wednesday.***

Earlier in the evening George had guzzled eight pints of lager before his mystery accomplice drove him to Bratton Hill, Wiltshire.

Silently camped there was an army of scientists. . . .

But George sneaked past the eggheads with ease, carrying his magic broomstick.

And so it goes on. One can think of some academic papers which would benefit from translation into the language of the Sport, and some that are such hard going they would not come alive even when translated.

This is the the crop circles' third and final appearance in an ANTIQUITY editorial. Those like me who find the subject continuously entertaining and instructive must subscribe to the new *Cereologist: the Journal for Crop Circle Studies*, edited by John Michell, indefatigable chronicler of the strange and inexplicable. Its first issue, summer 1990, offers 20 pages on the summer's new sensations, explanations, and discoveries, among them a picture of a crop circle, or oval, in a broadsheet that was published in 1678. The journal is exceedingly well written and handsomely presented. Subscription is £7.50 for three issues annually; *Cereologist*, 11 Powis Gardens, London W11 1JG.

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE

### Noticeboard

#### *Archaeology in the Polish Academy of Sciences*

Prof. Romuald Schild has been elected Director General of the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences. After open, nationwide competition, he was elected by the Scientific Council of the Institute, with no votes against and only two abstentions. The Scientific Council of some 40 scientists was itself recently elected by all the Institute's members.

The Institute is made up of about 250 archaeologists, ethnologists and historians of material cul-

ture, with headquarters in Warsaw, and major branches in Kraków, Poznań, Wrocław and Łódź. Prof Schild has already begun a restructuring within the Institute which reflects recent changes in Polish society. Funds for research will be awarded on a competitive basis, and articles and reports subject to extensive peer-review before publication. There are already several research projects conducted in Poland jointly with foreigners, and the Institute now has an explicit policy of encouraging such co-operation (*Antiquity* readers, take note). Ancillary 'hard' sciences will be further developed within the Institute by setting up laboratories and the purchase of equipment. The Institute's important publication programme is to be largely privatized: a desk-top publishing system will handle the Institute's own publications, and they will also work for other bodies, both public and private.

#### *Editing ANTIQUITY*

For the year 1992, ANTIQUITY will be edited by Henry Cleere, presently Director of the Council for British Archaeology and particularly known for his work on the management and protection of archaeological sites. Christopher Chippindale will resume the editorship for 1993.

#### *David L. Clarke memorial*

Nearly 15 years after his death, the memory and influence of David Clarke remain alive. A group of his Cambridge colleagues are creating the David L. Clarke Memorial Fund, intended to endow a biennial lecture in his memory. Details from, contributions (made payable to University of Cambridge) to: *David L. Clarke Memorial Fund, Faculty of Archaeology & Anthropology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ, England.*

#### *Conferences*

##### *The wetland revolution in prehistory*

International conference organized jointly by the Prehistoric Society and WARP, the Wetland Archaeology Research Project, 5–7 April 1991, at the University of Exeter. Details from: Bryony Coles, Department of History and Archaeology, Queens Building, The University, Exeter, England.

##### *Archaeology in Britain '91*

The annual conference of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, 15–17 April 1991 at the University of Birmingham. The programme, as usual, is diverse and strong. Details from: *Institute of Field Archaeologists, Minerals Engineering Building, University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT, England.*

##### *Mycenaean archaeology*

II Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia, in Rome



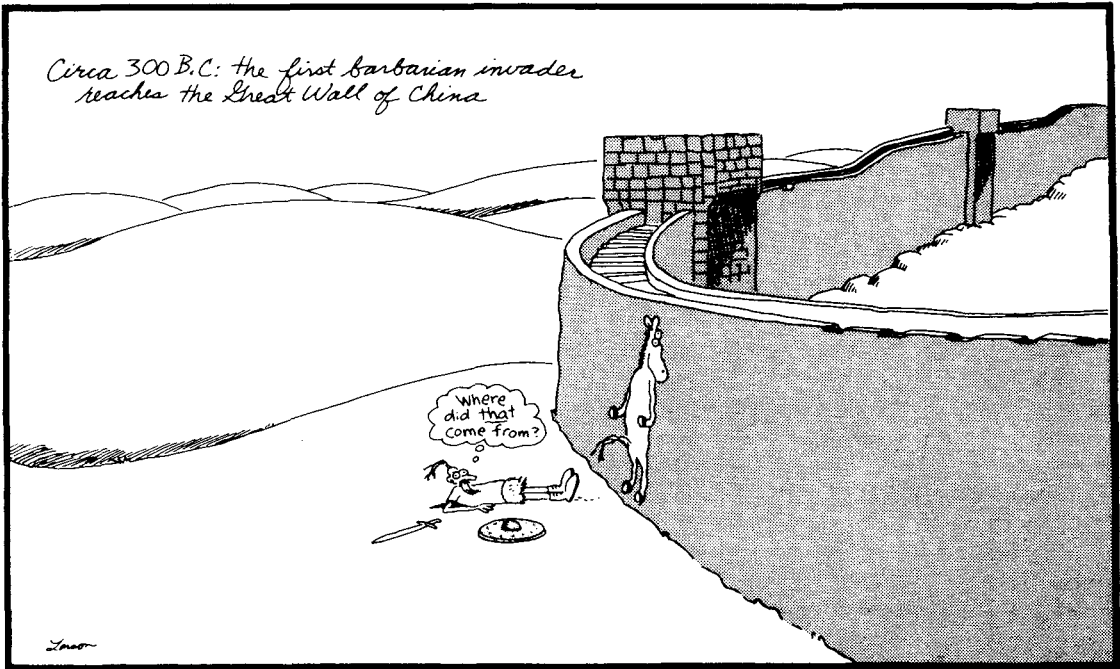
and Naples 14–20 October 1991. Details: *Segretaria del II Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia, Istituto per gli studi Miceni ed Egeo-Anatolici, Via Gianio della Bella 18, 00162 Roma, Italy.*

The history of the knowledge of animal behaviour

from earliest times to the present day

In Liège, Belgium, 11–14 March 1992. Details from abstracts to (by 1 February 1991): *Colloque 'L'histoire de la connaissance du comportement animal', c/o Service Colloques et Congrès, Université de Liège, place du 20-Août 32/6e étage, B-4000 Liège, Belgium.*

## THE FAR SIDE in ANTIQUITY



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