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Editorial Notes

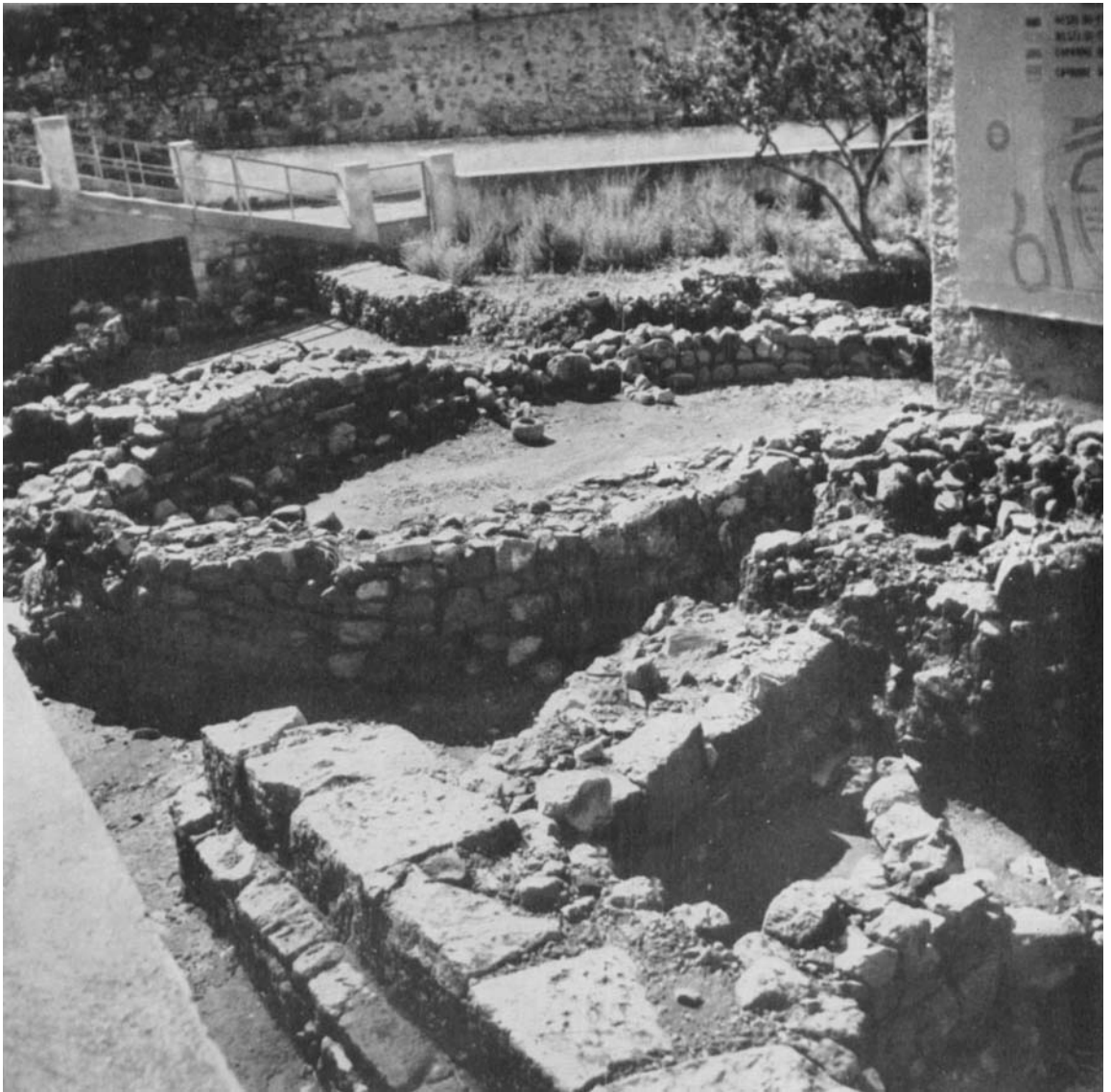
AT the end of the year the Editor becomes critical and asks himself—How far is ANTIQUITY fulfilling its purpose? Does it 'serve as a link between specialists and the general public'? Do its articles give non-technical information about important new discoveries? Is our outlook modern and our criticism constructive? We ask ourselves these questions because we know that our readers also may ask them, and because our circulation, upon which our existence depends, requires that the reply should be favourable. Obviously we cannot give an impartial reply ourselves, but we know, from the letters we receive and the steady stream of new subscribers, that ANTIQUITY does satisfy the demands of many who are interested in archaeology. That interest is varied, and we try to give in each issue something that will appeal to each section. But archaeology is world-wide; our subject is the origin of man and the roots of our culture, and important discoveries bearing on these matters may come from any part of the world.



It is quite proper that one's chief interest should be centred in the prehistory and early culture of one's own country, and since ANTIQUITY is published in Britain and has a large circulation in that country, we try to include an article on *British archaeology* in each number. During 1955 we have published five such articles dealing with the origins of our own culture. But it is possible to combine that restricted interest with a wider one covering the whole sphere of human origins. Of course the central problem is the origin of man himself, and here we may be on the verge of a solution. At the recent Pan-African Congress, described in this number by Sonia Cole, some exciting new discoveries were reported; and in our next number we shall publish a full account of them by Kenneth Oakley.



The same policy is followed in the Notes. Some of our readers may wonder how we reconcile with that policy the publication of rather detailed descriptions of discoveries in Southern Ethiopia? The answer is that that region was, down to quite modern times, on the fringe of civilization; it was the point of contact between the oriental civilization of the Old World, represented by Christianity and Islam, and the still barbaric culture of Africa. The penetration of that civilization, proved by the discovery of inscriptions,



CITADEL OF LIPARI

Large oval hut (about 1800-1450 B.C.); in foreground, the wall of a Hellenistic house; on right, the plan of the site (oval hut at bottom, left). Excavated by Professor Bernabo Brea
(see pp. 194-5)

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had already been recorded, but the record is buried in obscure publications and its importance has been overlooked. The civilizing influence was short-lived, but for several centuries it was a reality, as the ruined towns of Somaliland prove (see ANTIQUITY XI, 315-27). We meet with similar phenomena in Europe in the last days of the Roman Empire ; but the contacts there established were less evanescent.



We also lay claim in our last leaflet, to have 'influenced the development of archaeological method' during the nearly thirty years of our existence. That claim is justified not only by the publication of articles on method, but also by the occasional discussion of archaeological organization. That concerns the layman because, in the last resort, it is he who provides the money (and often the labour also) which alone makes archaeological research possible. The great development of State-supported archaeology in recent years is not an unmixed blessing, though it is of course, inevitable and has come to stay. Its danger lies in the creation of a bureaucracy, some of whose members may lack the disinterested enthusiasm of the true archaeologist. There is a marked difference in this respect between different nations. In some there exists a multitude of small societies composed of individuals who are to a greater or lesser extent genuinely interested. Not all of them do original research, but all may be counted upon, in an emergency, to provide a body of articulate public opinion. If used with wisdom and discretion, that opinion is a most valuable ally. Thanks to it, and to the co-operation of archaeological societies and individuals with the State, we here have been able either to avert the destruction of ancient sites or to secure their excavation before destruction, and instances could be quoted of similar successes recently achieved in other countries. Unfortunately there are also examples of failure. Government officials are apt to take a dim view of the claims of antiquity when they do not at the same time subscribe some other purpose, such as tourism. It can, however, often be shown that tourism is well served by protection and excavation ; and if sites are to be excavated accommodation must be provided for the finds in properly equipped museums which are also tourist attractions. This may not be a very high ideal, but it is a practical one that can often achieve results ; in such matters we must behave as 'children of this world', and get what we can by worldly appeals and methods.



There is a corresponding obligation to make museums as attractive as possible by means of clear legible labels, good lighting and display. There has been an immense improvement in this respect during recent years, and today the chief obstacle is expense. It is a vicious circle, because public interest, as proved by the number of visitors, does not usually become evident until after the reorganization of a museum. Our remarks apply more to other countries than to our own, where the museums are now very much better than formerly. But of course generalizations are impossible ; there are good live museums in every country. One of the best we have ever seen is in the island of Lipari, whose Professor Bernabo Brea has converted the former fascist political prison into a museum to exhibit the antiquities he has excavated on the citadel immediately outside the building, and in cemeteries round it. Thanks to its admirable arrangement and labelling one can acquire in a very short time a knowledge of the chief prehistoric cultures of the island which his sound stratigraphical excavations have made a key-site for the whole Western Mediterranean.

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It was a stroke of genius to start excavations there at all. There were no previous finds, but merely the obvious suitability of the citadel—a rocky acropolis overlooking the sea and harbour—for primitive occupation. Only a few stray potsherds found by Professor Brea at the foot of the cliff gave any indication of prehistoric occupation. Later it was a Greek fortress, and a Greek tower is still visible, embodied in the Spanish Battlements. In a paved open space between the former prison and the churches, there were revealed round stone huts of several different periods, one built above the other. These have now been put in proper order, and on the wall above them are two boards; on one is a plan in several colours showing the different periods (the oldest going back probably into the 3rd millennium); on the other is a diagrammatic exposition of the different strata (see frontispiece). The visitor can thus see at one glance both the plan of the site and the site itself, and he has only a few steps to go to see, in the museum, the objects found, arranged under strata and periods. In one room are cases in which typical potsherds are set out in layers one above the other, exactly as found and to a scale of 1 : 2.



That is the way to interest the public, and it has the advantage of also making the task of the student far easier. By thus displaying the results of his excavations Professor Brea has of course greatly strengthened his case for yet further support from his authorities. It should be added that, while the prehistoric sequence is the most striking feature of the site, there are also reconstructions of jar-burials in a couple of rooms, and last, but by no means least, a really magnificent collection of painted Greek vases of the best period and by the best artists, obtained from the local Greek cemetery.



At the invitation of the American Anthropological Association and the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, the 5th Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences will be held at Philadelphia, from 1 September to 9 September 1956. One paper will in principle be accepted from each participant, without prejudice to additional contributions requested for presentation at General Sessions. Abstracts should be in hand by 1 March 1956. No papers lasting longer than twenty minutes will be accepted for publication, and publication cannot be guaranteed. Rooms in University buildings will be available to members at \$2.50 per night. The registration fee is \$10.00; relatives of members may become Associate Members, the fee being \$3.00. Inquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, American Organizing Committee, International Congress of Anthropology, National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington 25, D.C., U.S.A. Cable address: NARECO.



Last June the Editor's autobiography was published under the title 'Said and Done', Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 7 Cork Street, London, W.1, £1 1s). Chapter 14—'The Foundation of ANTIQUITY, 1926-8'—gives the first detailed account of how this journal came into existence.