

DISCOVERIES AND DISPUTATIONS

Archaeological discoveries, unless of unusual beauty, are generally of less inherent interest than the conclusions to which they point. Not that they are merely evidence in the court-room sense of the word; they certainly spur the imagination, and provide tangible links with those vast, unknown areas of human knowledge which scholarship seeks to restore to us. The public interest in recovered documents of the past, however, seems mainly in the discovery of the objects themselves rather than in the interpretation of those objects. It is as if proving there was a past at a given date is of more interest than the life which made up that past.

It is evident, for example, that public interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls is fading, now that publication of some of the new texts contained in them allows a preliminary assessment of their significance. Contact with the minds of men who composed them seems to be of lesser moment to many than the physical existence of manuscripts written and made use of two thousand years ago.

Often in the past there has been good reason for interest to decline between the time of discovery and the eventual interpretation, for an

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interval of fifteen to fifty years might elapse between the two events, so that a document was not available to other than those editing it until long after its novelty had worn off. But publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, at least of those submitted to the American schools of oriental research, has already taken place. No doubt, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which once led the field with the publication of excerpts from its scrolls of psalms and of *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness*, will not be far behind. The Archaeological Museum of Palestine (Rockefeller Foundation) which possesses the original of one of the works published in America (*The Manual of Discipline*) will do its best to shorten the interval that it recently indicated would elapse before publication. In falling behind, both institutions have the excuse that the American scholars have indeed acted with unusual speed. Their achievement is no doubt partly due to the decision to publish the text without an *apparatus criticus*, which is being prepared by Professor Leonhard Rost of Berlin and will appear later.

It was thus only about two years after Dr. John C. Trever had first set eyes on the Isaiah scroll and identified it as such, that this manuscript and the Commentary of Habakkuk were available for every scholar, and only a year later, that the greater part of the *Manual of Discipline* (which had been entrusted to the Americans) was also available. Only the scroll containing what is believed to be a 'Revelation to the Patriarch Lamech' is still unpublished because of the physical difficulty in unrolling it—a difficulty which will soon be overcome.

This rapid publication can scarcely be considered as normal. Consider some examples: The text already known, which is generally considered to have most in common with those contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls, is that called by its original editor, S. Schechter, *Fragment of a Zadokite Work*, but more generally known on the European continent as the *Damaskusschrift*, or *Ecrit de Damas*. This was found in Cairo in 1896 when the demolition of some old houses revealed the long-forgotten Geniza of a Karaite Synagogue, that is to say, the depository for worn manuscripts which could not be thrown away because they contained the name of God. This document was first published in 1910! In 1931 numerous and lengthy Manichaean documents, casting a flood of new light on the least known of the important religions, was found at Medinet Madi in the Egyptian Fayoum. Writing in 1949 in his book *Le Manichéisme*, M. Henri-Charles Puech refers to them as still in the process of publication! The still unpublished works include Mani's own epistles and an

historical work of 250 pages describing the history of the Manichaean church from the death of its founder until the beginning of the fourth century A.D. This last work could already be summarised by Professor Carl Schmidt in 1933 in a communication to the Berlin Academy. It has therefore been deciphered by at least one man, and could surely have been reproduced. Delays prior to 1939 were followed by further delays as a result of the war; and, what was worse, this gravely endangered the still unpublished papyri.

In a similar vein may be mentioned a papyrus containing three gnostic works found in 1896 and still published only in part. These three works are likely now to appear only on the basis of the great mass of the gnostic scriptures contained in the thousand pages of coptic papyri found at Nag-Hammadi in Egypt in 1947. The study of one of the two dialects of Tokharian (like Hittite, a hitherto unknown Indo-European language recovered in this century) was delayed by the fact that for twenty years the documents in which it had survived were only available to the two learned men who were reconstituting its grammar.

All these cases are surely reasons for being grateful to Professor Millar Burrows, Dr. John C. Trever, and Professor William H. Brownlee. Perhaps they also indicate the opportunity for investigating the conditions which delay publication of such documents, in order that we may seek a remedy.

The Commentary on Habakkuk was no sooner available for study than an instrument invented in the Renaissance for the rapid communication of discoveries and ideas, to wit, an academy, was being used to get discussion started. Within a month of publication, Professor Dupont-Sommer was proposing to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres at Paris interpretations of the Commentary of Habakkuk which have since been disputed in some quarters and warmly welcomed in others; but which have had the indisputable merit of setting an example of courageous challenge and of prodding the reluctant opposition.

It seems to have been originally assumed by a large part of the general public that because the first scroll identified was a manuscript of Isaiah, it would shed a good deal of light on the Old Testament. But unless one sides with the small group of scholars who persist in attributing the manuscripts and the original works they contain to a post-Islamic period (non-specialists can of course never presume that a minority of scholars is wrong because it is only a minority), it seems the period which the new documents are destined to illuminate is that of the New Testament.

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Professor Dupont-Sommer's interpretation involves three main points: (1) that the commentator on Habakkuk is identifying the Chaldeans mentioned by the prophet with the Romans of the last years of the Republic and is referring in particular to the capture of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.; (2) that the sect that owned the library hidden in the cave of Ain-Feshka and of which the 'Rule' is contained in the *Manual of Discipline* were the Essenes; and (3) that the Commentary on Habakkuk contains evidence that the founder of the Essenes, persecuted and martyred by the High Priest shortly before the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, claimed to be the Messiah.

There is now widespread acceptance of the proposition that the commentator on Habakkuk was referring to the Romans—a people whose soldiers worshipped their standards (not a Macedonian custom) and who appeared under successive commanders, not under a king or emperor. Professor Kahle, for instance, seems to be in general agreement with Professor Dupont-Sommer. So is Professor Henri Gregoire of Brussels. Professor Segal of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem agrees that the commentator is referring to the Romans but thinks he may have had the foresight to describe them, utilising the experience of other nations, before they had actually reached Palestine, and therefore may have composed his commentary a few years later than 100 B.C. Mr. J. L. Teicher agrees that the Romans are indicated, but would have the author of the commentary a Judeo-Christian, that is Ebionite, writing about the time of the Jewish War (A.D. 66–70) in violent polemic with the followers of St. Paul. On this point, therefore, the differences between the scholars are being narrowed down.

On the other two points differences seem to persist; there is an increasing tendency to accept the identification with the Essenes, but some hesitation remains, notably among Catholic scholars, in accepting the interpretation of the text as referring to a founder hailed as a spiritual Messiah. What clearly emerges, however, from the debate is that for the majority of scholars the documents spring from a religious movement amongst the Jews shortly before or (a rarer contention) shortly after the life of Jesus. They are therefore by far the most important documents illustrating the religious life of Palestine at that time, with the exception of the canonical works of the New Testament.

Professor Kahle makes the following comment:

I have already pointed out how misleading it is to describe as sectarian the documents found in the cave and the closely connected

'Damascus Document'. There is certainly in many respects a divergence between the rules and the various presuppositions contained in these documents, and those which Judaism had established and accepted as orthodox on the basis of the Mishna and the Talmud. But the documents in the cave make it certain that this literature was at least composed long before the destruction of the Temple. There is no reason to judge such ancient texts by norms established centuries later. These texts must be judged as evidence of the broad fulness of the potentialities of religious development in the Jewish spirit at the period in question, and not as products of a hole and corner sect.¹

Here we have, according to Professor Kahle, examples of the Jewish religious literature that was rejected when a Jewry that no longer had a capital or a native land had, in the course of the second century, to draw tight the strings of orthodoxy so as to maintain its cohesion. The discoveries from the cave allow us to suppose that at the time of the great Jewish *auto-da-fé*, one of the greatest in world history, there were groups of Jews at great pains to preserve the literature rejected by official Jewry. Whether or not Professor Kahle is right in supposing that the manuscripts in their late Hellenistic urns were only concealed at the end of the second century from the eyes of the orthodox Rabbis, there can be no doubt of the capacity of this literature to split Jewry. Indeed, as recorded in a letter of the Nestorian Patriarch Timotheos, part of these writings were found in a cave (Ain-Feshka or another) towards the end of the nineteenth century, were copied, as the manuscript of the Damascus document proves, and became at least a powerfully contributing factor in the great Karaite schism.

While Professor Dupont-Sommer has noted in the documents the possibility of a Neo-Pythagorean influence, Professor Kuhn of Göttingen insists on the indications of Jewish contact with Zoroastrians, producing a strongly marked dualistic conception of battle between good and evil. At the same time he notes an insistence on salvation by knowledge that foreshadows gnosticism, just as other elements in these new works appear as stepping-stones in the direction of Christianity.

It is the gnostic conception of knowledge that we have here, without the specific gnostic mythology. We have a first mould of gnostic thinking, centuries before the gnostic texts; but this *gnosis*—and this is the decisive element from the point of view of the New Testament—

¹P. Kahle, *Die hebräischen Handschriften aus der Höhle*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammerverlag, 1951, p. 61.

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is rooted in the Jewish religion of the law and in late Jewish Apocalyptic.²

As to the light that the new documents cast on the New Testament itself, Professor Kuhn makes two points. First, 'in these texts we come upon the soil in which St. John's Gospel grew, and this soil is Jewish-Palestinian. It is not the pharisaic-rabbinical Jewry, but a Palestinian-Jewish pietism of gnostic structure.' Second, Professor Kuhn has attempted to examine the light that the consecrated monastic meals described in the *Manual of Discipline* may be thought to cast on the presuppositions in the minds of those amongst whom the rite of communion was instituted.³

Finally, Professor Marcel Simon of Strasbourg University has the following statement:

To explain ancient Christology, much use has been made of Hellenistic religious feeling and theology. No doubt they should not be eliminated entirely. But it is more and more apparent that Jewish monotheism at the time was not as rigid as has been supposed, at least not in circles that escaped the control and domination of Jerusalem and of the official teachers there. Though Paulinism is still in vigorous contrast with the Christology of the first Palestinian disciples, it no longer represents such a radical departure from Judaism taken as a whole as might be supposed. It appears more and more that primitive Christianity in all its shades is an authentic product of Judaism, but of a Judaism varied in form as well as colour.⁴

Note.—A communication to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres by Father de Vaux has cast important light on the probable origin and date of concealment of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Father de Vaux, of the French School of Archaeology at Jerusalem, and M. L. Harding, of the Jordan Antiquities Service, have investigated the ruin at Kirbet Qumran less than a mile from the cave where the scrolls were found. This building (30 × 37m) seems to have been inhabited from the last years of Augustus till the first Jewish War (A.D. 66–70) and not much before or at all after. The evidence consists of coins as well as of pottery. Sunk in the floor was an urn of the same type as those that contained the scrolls, but this time clearly a household storage-jar. The building was of roughly squared stones with wattle partition walls and with a central room surrounded by benches. It had been abandoned in a hurry. The neighbouring cemetery was too large to have served any normal local population and suggested that men were brought there to die or be buried. There was no funeral furniture and, with one exception, all were buried six feet deep with their heads to the South. Father de Vaux withdraws categorically his earlier conclusion that the jars in the cave

²K. G. Kuhn, 'Über den ursprünglichen Sinn des Abendmahls', *Evangelische Theologie* 50/51 Heft 11/12, 1951.

³Kuhn, *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, Heft 2, 1950.

⁴*Revue Historique*, Vol. CCIV, Oct.–Dec., 1950.

were not made after 100 B.C. and were made specially for the manuscripts. He also withdraws his conclusion that the scraps of Roman crockery in the cave were evidence of an intruder. He inclines to the hypothesis that the manuscripts were part of the library of a group of Essenes established at Kirbet Qumran and that this community may have been that mentioned in a famous passage by Pliny the Elder. There is thus no longer any archaeological opposition to the composition of at least the Commentary on Habakkuk after the Roman conquest of Palestine, as first proposed by Professor Dupont-Sommer, and considering the whole body of new works as evidence on religious movements in Palestine before, during, and after the life of Jesus rather than on those during the age of the Maccabees.

The first International Congress of Pyreneists, organised by the Instituto de Estudios Pirenaicos of Saragossa and held in San Sebastian in September, 1950, was not only of importance to local historians and folklorists. Papers presented were on various themes: geographical, geological, climatic, archaeological, anthropological, ethnological, historical, and linguistic; while the countries represented by scholars included not only Spain and France but also Portugal, Brazil, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, England, and Scotland. Subjects varied from the prospects of finding petrol in Gascony, place names, rites on St. John's Eve, and megaliths, to Basque philology. It is in the western Pyrenees that the only pre-Indo-European language of western Europe has survived. Round the eastern end of the range, Islam once thrust into France. In the valleys of the southern foothills the strength of half-barbarian little principalities was nursed for the reconquest of Spain for Christendom, with enormous consequences for the New World and for North Africa, caught now in a long blind alley and unable to fulfil its earlier promise. It was to a great extent round the ends or through the passes of the Pyrenees that the civilisation of Moslem Spain filtered into Christian Europe, fertilising literature, art, science, and philosophy and contributing thus to the creation of the force that provoked its doom.

For the moment perhaps it is most pertinent to note the papers dealing with Basque linguistic studies, since these have made such remarkable progress in recent years and raise issues that extend literally from one end of the Old World to the other.

The main achievement of the last quarter century has been to establish a now generally admitted connexion between the Basque and the Caucasian languages. Research led in two directions: the Hamitic languages of North Africa, and those of the Caucasus. In the former direction, studies suggest that there may indeed have been some infiltration of

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Semitico-Hamitic vocabulary into Basque, presumably through Iberian, which is known by a hundred and fifty inscriptions containing a thousand words to which no satisfactory clue has been found. But the attempt to interpret Iberian in the light of Basque has failed. Señor Antonio Tovar of Salamanca observed at the Pyreneists' Congress that in his opinion, 'Iberian appears to be a preponderantly Hamitic language with Caucasian elements of Hamitic vocabulary'. Professor Lafon of Bordeaux had reservations about going even this far with regard to Iberian, so long as the inscriptions remain meaningless to us; but comparative research in Basque and Caucasian has been offering a growing series of confirmatory indications of kinship.

Since there are eight or nine Basque dialects, some quite insufficiently recorded (Professor Gavel of Toulouse called, at the Congress, for a last-minute effort to record the Roncalais dialect before it disappears) and forty Caucasian languages of which several, especially those of Daghestan, are very little known, the task of comparison is a very difficult one—the more so since the Caucasian languages are surprisingly divergent. Only recently has it been satisfactorily established that the North Caucasian and South Caucasian languages form a single family. The northern group is phonetically unstable due to a strong tonic accent, but archaic in grammar owing to the lack of outside contacts. (One village was often unable to speak with the next until Russian was introduced as a common language.) The southern group is phonetically more stable but has been strongly influenced by Indo-European languages for over two thousand years. Thus, as Professor Georges Dumézil explained in a lecture delivered to the Institut de Linguistique of Paris University in 1934, it is natural that the kinship of Basque with North Caucasian languages should be perceptible in grammatical forms and conceptions, while with the South Caucasian group, it is mainly a matter of vocabulary. The kinship of North and South Caucasian languages with Basque is thus a final proof of their kinship with one another. Corresponding roots and grammatical forms corresponding to those in Basque are sometimes found in several Caucasian languages, sometimes in only one.

While the Basque-Caucasian hypothesis is being steadily strengthened by research, another hypothesis (put forward principally by Professor Karl Bouda who was not at the San Sebastian Conference) is still very much uncharted. This would link the Basque-Caucasian group with an otherwise isolated language group in the extreme north-east of Siberia, including Tcouktche, Koryak, and Kamchadal.

Even the purely Basque-Caucasian hypothesis raises the question of the original centre of distribution of a language group with such widely scattered survivors. This can perhaps never be solved. It is unlikely, if only for geographical reasons, to have been the Basque country. The Basques have the unusual distinction of being a language group with a strongly marked physical homogeneity, including, as Dr. Henri V. Vallois of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris pointed out to the Congress, a distribution of blood groups that is most unusual in Europe. The survival of a particular language and particular physical characteristics in this area is more likely to be due to geography than to an original connexion between the two, so that the Basque language must be supposed to have been brought to its present area by invaders who found the homogeneous ancestors of the modern Basques already *in situ*. Professor Lafon suggests as a date worth discussing somewhere between 2500 and 2000 B.C., when the age of metals was first introduced into the region; and he raises the question whether traces of pre-Basque language can be detected in the Basque of to-day.

Professor Lafon proposed to the Congress (in a paper since published by the Instituto de Estudios Pirenaicos) the following programme of research and field work: (1) search for pre-Latin words in the romance dialects of the Pyrenees; (2) amongst these, distinguish those of (a) Celtic, (b) other Indo-European origin, and (c) those which appear not to be of Indo-European origin; and in this last class, those which refer to specifically Pyrenean things or beings; (3) apply the same analysis to Pyrenean words preserved in old authors; (4) distinguish in Basque the words of (a) Romance, (b) Latin, (c) Celtic, (d) Germanic, (e) Hamitic-Semitic origin, (f) those that can be attributed to a common Basque-Caucasian origin, (g) those common to Basque and Caucasian though, probably, of other origin, (h) Basque words with no equivalent in Caucasian languages but an equivalent in other Asiatic languages, (i) words which come into none of these categories; and amongst these, words which refer to specifically Pyrenean things or beings. The words in classes 2 (c) and 4 (i) may well derive from the pre-Basque speech of Pyrenean tribes.

This fascinating programme clearly implies collaboration between scholars of unusual attainments, and field-workers who might be schoolmasters or doctors familiar with the speech and the lives of remote valleys through their daily work. To be fully successful, there should of course be a complementary programme applied in the Caucasus and Siberia. Only twenty years ago it was still possible for a Western scholar to get

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permission to do field work in the Caucasus. It would also have been possible for a Soviet scholar to do field work in the Pyrenees. Today that seems a remote and happy age!

The news of the discovery of yet another cuneiform library at Harran by a Turco-British archaeological expedition, with, at a first estimate, some 3,000 tablets, raises the question of whether there are in the world enough scholars able to read cuneiform.

There are believed to be between 300,000 and 400,000 cuneiform tablets dug up and distributed in different libraries and museums. A very large number of these are of course business or administrative documents which, individually, are of minor interest. They are in various languages, but the great majority are in Akkadian (which used to be called Babylonian), a language used not only by Mesopotamians whose mother tongue it was, but also as a *lingua franca* by neighbouring nations, such as the Elamites. After the Akkadian tablets, the next most numerous are probably the Sumerian, followed by the Hittite (about 15,000 in all, some thousands in Elamite) as well as a few in other languages of the Hittite Empire; some in Hurrite (no big collection of Hurrite tablets has ever been found), and a much smaller number in Vannic, i.e., the language of the kingdom of Urartu around Lake Van.

From early excavations the principal museums acquired large collections, since the Turkish government was not originally interested in keeping them. Thus the British Museum has catalogued 23,000 tablets, mainly from Nineveh. The Louvre has about 10,000 of its own.

In recent years the governments of the territories where tablets have been dug up have first of all required that tablets should only be loaned—to be read and published and then returned; more recently, they have made it a condition of excavation that the tablets shall not leave the territory. The former situation has led to the practice of reading and publishing newly found tablets rather than those already in museums. Thus of the Louvre collections, about 2,000 remain to be read. These have of course been submitted to a cursory examination for cataloguing, and those of obvious interest were studied first; even so, amongst those only recently read was a remarkable poem of at least 1800 B.C. about Sargon of Akkad, on which M. Nougayrol made a communication to the Académie des Inscriptions in March 1951. Many other museums have at least as large an unread percentage as the Louvre. A huge stock of about 35,000 tablets at Stamboul has been surveyed in the last dozen years by Professor

F. R. Kraus, but little of its contents has been published. (The very vigorous young school of Turkish archaeology and epigraphy has naturally enough devoted itself mainly to the first Anatolian empire, i.e., that of the Hittites.) The number of unread tablets accumulating in Middle-Eastern museums must be considerable.

Scholars are needed, of course, not only to read, transliterate, and translate a text once, but to continue comparing and studying texts already known in the light of new knowledge. The whole study of Akkadian has been carried on, to date, without the help of anything that Greek or Latin scholars would dignify with the name of a dictionary. It is only in five or six years' time that the University of Chicago dictionary of Akkadian will be ready, with, for the first time, the use of words illustrated by quoted sentences. Hitherto Assyriologists have had to be content with provisional glossaries. This fact alone shows with what new eyes they will soon be able to examine texts, both old and new. Akkadian is necessarily a language much less thoroughly known than Latin and Greek, and yet even in these languages scholars are constantly correcting the current conception of the meaning of words. (Only the other day, for instance, M. Benveniste was able to point out that all the Latin dictionaries were wrong in defining *porcus* as a domestic pig, since the use of the word indicated clearly that it meant a suckling pig.) The other languages using cuneiform are all more imperfectly known than Akkadian, some very imperfectly indeed. Thus even when the backlog of unread cuneiform texts has been dealt with—and at any moment a new discovery might increase it by 50,000 tablets—there will still be a limitless task before the small band of scholars able to undertake it.

Is there no means of increasing their number? The available posts in which a man can earn his living by knowing cuneiform are so few, that today Assyriologists are hesitant about encouraging students to take up their own subject. It needs an apprenticeship of about five years. In the past a number of specialists in such unremunerative subjects has always been found amongst men with inherited private means and who could therefore undertake a career that provided no income. For many years, the two principal scholars of the Louvre in this domain were Thureau-Dangin, who was in the above category; and Father Scheil, O.P., who, as a member of a religious order, had renounced his claim to all but the necessary minimum of this world's goods. Today the number of wealthy young men who can count on remaining wealthy is very small. And in no science can it be safely presumed that monks will feel a call to its study.

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No doubt the interest which countries where cuneiform tablets are found are beginning to take will continue to provide valuable new recruits, as they are doing already; but they can no more be expected to provide the world with all its Hellenists and Latinists. Nor are these countries any more the only heirs of ancient Mesopotamian civilisation than are modern Greece and Italy of classical antiquity. The only solution would seem to be the increase, in all countries proud of their scholarship, of the number of university or museum posts for Assyriologists. A very small increase in each would make a great difference.

Another problem arises now that the tablets discovered remain in the country of their origin. Either the Assyriologists of other countries must go there to work, or a lending system must be created until such time as the tablets have been copied, transliterated, and published. No country is enriched by tablets that remain unread and unpublished. For convenience it is probably desirable that both processes should be facilitated. That some tablets, at least, were meant to be lent is obvious since curses have been found on them to take effect against borrowers who damaged or lost them.

When in 1946 a Kurdish shepherd boy, searching for edible roots, thrust the end of his crook into the rain-soaked side of Ziwiyé hill near Sakkiz in Persian Azerbaijan and found instead a gold ornament, he had struck, without knowing it, the course of a submerged cultural current linking the civilisations of Mesopotamia with that of China. A problem at present under discussion is the direction of the flow.

The gold and silver objects of the Ziwiyé treasure did not, unfortunately, come immediately into the hands of the Persian Antiquities Service but were shared by the peasants of the neighbouring villages who tore them to pieces and in some cases melted them down. It is due to the pertinacious efforts of M. André Godard, inspector-general of Iranian Antiquities, acting with the enlightened support of the Persian Imperial Government, that what remains has been reassembled. Some of it, alas, is sadly fragmentary—one segment only, for instance, of a silver dish originally $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide with concentric rings of animals of the Scythian style has been preserved. Fortunately, a gold pectoral about 14 inches across, that had been torn into eleven pieces, could be entirely recovered. Its two rows of figures were purely Mesopotamian in the centre, but purely Scythian in the corners. It is hard to imagine a greater contrast of style than that between the fabulous, stylised beasts, winged bulls with

human heads, cherubim and seraphim and heraldic goats on the one hand, and the Scythian lynxes and hares with every muscle aquiver on the other.

The treasure in fact contains purely Assyrian objects, purely Scythian objects, objects of local craftsmanship, and objects in which the radically different Assyrian and Scythian motifs are found side by side on the same piece of metal.

This last feature was not entirely new, since on the superb axe of Kelermes, found in a barrow in the Kuban River and now exhibited in the Hermitage Museum of Leningrad, a Mesopotamian motif is also found, though most of the animals that decorate it are Scythian. The axe of Kelermes has been dated by K. Schefold between 575 and 550 B. C. For the breastplate of Ziwiyé, M. Godard suggests, on the ground of some of the detail in the Mesopotamian motifs, the ninth or eighth century B. C.—that is to say, a date before the Scythians had moved west of the Caspian sea. If this dating were substantiated, it would be necessary to suppose that the art which has been called Scythian existed before the Scythians' arrival in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus and had been evolved on the spot, possibly (as M. Godard has suggested) on the basis of the bronze culture of Luristan. This would involve readjustment of views recently advanced with regard to cultural contacts as far as China, since Scythian art is only a western extension of the art of the steppes of which the magnificent early stages have been laid bare by Soviet archaeologists in the neighbourhood of Minussinsk in southern Siberia.

An alternative dating of the Ziwiyé finds has been proposed by M. Ramon Ghirshman in *Artibus Asiae* (1950), XIII, 3. He considers a detail of the posture of two of the figures on the breastplate (arms folded beneath the robe) an example of the influence of Egyptian art on Assyria after the Assyrian king Essarhaddon had conquered Egypt. This would date the item about 675 B. C., a time when there was a Scythian kingdom in Azerbaijan closely allied to Assyria. The treasure might well have been hidden fifty or sixty years later during the wars which brought Assyria and her allies to destruction in the last quarter of the seventh century B. C. This date would still make the Scythian objects in the Ziwiyé treasure the oldest examples of Scythian art by a century. The theory would have the advantage of not demanding a revision of views independently arrived at regarding the relation of Scythian bronzes to those of the Siberian steppe and to the bronzes of China.

The latest conclusions on this subject are usefully summarised by

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M. René Grousset in connexion with the Ziwiyé treasure in the second number of the *Revue des Musées de France*. The view that the Chinese originally derived their bronze art from Siberia has now been abandoned since the bronzes of the late Shang dynasty found at Ngan-Yang from 1300 B.C. onwards (chronology of B. Karlgén) are very far in advance of the rare bronze objects of the Andonovo culture, dated 1700–1200 B.C. by Kisselev in *Drevnaia Istoria Iuzhnoi Sibiri*, Moscow, 1949. (This leaves open the question of the Chinese bronze technique which may have been derived via Turkestan from the Near East.) The metal work of the Karasouk period (1200–700 B.C., according to Kisselev) still remains behind that of China. It is in the next two periods of Siberian art. Tagar I (700–400 B.C., bronze) and Tagar II (400–100 B.C., iron work), that the Siberian smiths developed their magnificent skill and artistic originality in the presentation of animals. Their art spread eastward into China, where it greatly influenced that of the Warring States (600–207 B.C.) and of the Han dynasty (1200 B.C.–A.D. 200), and westward in the form of Scythian art to southern Russia and, as is now apparent, Azerbaijan, where smiths seem to have existed who had been apprenticed both in the school of the steppes and in that of Mesopotamia. Here is one more case where the need for close co-operation between archaeologists and scholars from both sides of the Iron Curtain is most keenly felt.