

and some newer perspectives. The book is very sensibly divided into chunks of narrative neatly arranged chronologically. Part I: Lost Kingdoms and Biblical lands; II: Consuls and cuneiform; III: Palaces of kings; IV: Tablets and tells, and V: Science and nationalism. The story unfolds gently and we see the central theme of the work – the growth of scientific archaeology from the activities of enthusiasts, tomb-robbers and adventurers to an archaeology conducted scientifically and for the interests of the Iraqi. While we still have very little discussion of post World War II archaeology – especially of the work of such giants as Braidwood and Adams (nor indeed of the fierce debates about agricultural origins or the origins of empires), we now have a very significant discussion concerning the recent fate of archaeological remains (both in the field and in the National Museum) in contemporary Iraq. This is an important statement from Fagan about what he rightly calls a catastrophe – the looting of the National Museum and other sites around the country, and the dispersal of many of their most important treasures into the shadowy world of the illegal antiquities trade. Fagan’s analysis is direct and uncompromising – this is a catastrophe that was avoidable. The fact of the looting is something that diminishes us all. Fagan perfectly captures the enormity of our loss in the closing paragraph:

Does archaeology have a future in a world obsessed with celebrity, profits and immediate gratification? In Mesopotamia, the scene of so many scientific triumphs, we are witnessing the past vanishing as if it had never been. Essentially, we have returned to the freewheeling days of the nineteenth century. Will this scenario of destruction and virtually uncontrolled looting be allowed to continue? Will there ever be a new generation of archaeological research that builds on the solid accomplishments of earlier scholars? (p. 342).

VI. Forthcoming publications

Oxford University Press has agreed to publish a reader on the history of archaeology (edited by Tim Murray and Chris Evans) during 2008.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/bha.17212>

VII. Announcements

La Tène, 1857–2007: a reevaluation

Funded by the Swiss National Foundation, this new, collective research project aims at an exhaustive reevaluation of the documentary corpus of the site of La Tène (Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland). As a matter of fact, the celebrity of this emblematic site and the current practices of exchange in the nineteenth century led to a considerable dispersion of the archaeological material, as well as the pertaining documentation (drawings, photographs, etc.). Under those circumstances, *we shall be looking for all possible information in various museums and archaeological institutions*, in Europe and on the American Continent. In a second step, we shall analyze the specific role of the weapons represented in La Tène, in the context of Celtic Europe of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.

This will provide the necessary basis for a reinterpretation of La Tène and its function. Actually, the project is in response to the reiterated requests from all specialists of Celtic archaeology, providing opportunities for future studies. All colleagues ready to contribute to the constitution of the database will be given access to it.

The project fits into studies of the second Iron Age. It takes advantage of the results of preventive excavations made at La Tène in 2003, as well as of overall knowledge gathered during over the last twenty years, as a result of the highway excavations in the Trois-Lacs area.

Several PhD theses dedicated to the regional second Iron Age are underway.

In collaboration with the Laténium Museum, the European Archaeological Center of Bibracte (Mont Beuvray in Bourgogne) will contribute to an international conference in Neuchâtel, in November 2007.

Last but not least, this year we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the discovery of the site. Starting in June 2007, numerous events, exhibitions, etc. will take place in the Museum Schwab (Biel/Bienne), in the Laténium (Hauterive/Neuchâtel), and in the Swiss National Museum (Zurich).

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New Research Grant

In May 2007 the Getty Foundation approved a grant to the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme of \$160,000 US for the Collaborative Research Grant Project of Irène Aghion, Tim Murray, Alain Schnapp and Lothar von Falkenhausen: "Traces, Collections, Ruins: Towards a Comparative History of Antiquarianism". The project will be completed in 2009.

VIII. Conference reports

The National Museum of Denmark 1807–2007

Report by Peter Rowley-Conwy, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham

The National Museum of Denmark dates its foundation from a royal decree issued on 22 May 1807. On 24–25 May 2007 a conference was held in the National Museum to celebrate its 200th anniversary, and was attended by some eighty people and hearing fifteen presentations on a variety of topics. The conference was a present to the National Museum from the publishing house 'Wormianum' (named after the seventeenth century antiquarian Ole Worm), which has produced the popular archaeology periodical *Skalk* since 1957, and was organized by Christian Adamsen. Presentations were in Danish, Swedish and Norwegian, and the proceedings will be published in those languages.

What was actually decreed in 1807 was the formation of the 'Kongelige Commission for Oldsagers Opbevaring', or Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities. The two leading members of this commission were Frederik Münter, Bishop of Zealand, and Rasmus Nyerup, Copenhagen University's librarian. Antiquities began to arrive in Copenhagen in 1807 as a result of the commission's activities, and for lack of anywhere better were initially housed by Nyerup in cases at one end of the library, which occupied a large room above the Trinitatis Church. C. J. Thomsen joined the commission in 1816, and subsequently initiated the rearrangement of the collection into successive eras of Stone, Bronze, and Iron. The conference explored the commission's background, context, and activities.

Karin Lundbeck-Culot discussed the situation in revolutionary France. In 1795 (and lasted until 1816) Alexandre Lenoir established a museum, where he sought to assemble statues and funerary