

# Congress of Archaeological Societies<sup>1</sup>

## FIRST REPORT OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE<sup>2</sup>

THE Committee was appointed to consider the co-ordination of research. In the present report we indicate the outstanding archaeological problems in each of the periods into which prehistory is, for convenience, divided, suggesting the types of site the excavation of which should provide the evidence required for their solution. The problems are those for which further evidence is required, and we think that if the available resources in this country were devoted to them, we should be able to make a very real advance towards a synthesis of our archaeological knowledge. We recognize that threats of destruction and other reasons must, in many cases, be the determining factor in the choice of a site for excavation, but we hope that where these do not operate sites related to the problems suggested may be chosen.

The co-ordination of research must cover not only excavation, which is the subject of this report, but also other branches of field work, the study of material already found and the interchange of information. But while realizing the importance of all these, we feel that co-ordination in the field of excavation is the most pressing need of British archæology. In certain cases this involves the excavation of a type of site the distribution of which is imperfectly known, and we wish to emphasize the importance of field work directed to the discovery of these. Chance finds, often under circumstances involving the destruction of the site, may necessitate swift action, and we urge that these cases be at once reported to the Secretary of the Congress.

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<sup>2</sup> The Research Committee consists of about thirty members, from whom an Executive sub-Committee was appointed consisting of the Officers of the Congress (Mr. C. R. Peers, *President*, Dr. T. Davies Pryce, *Treasurer*, and Mr. H. S. Kingsford, *Secretary*), Mr. J. P. Bushe-Fox, Mr. A. W. Clapham, Mr. R. G. Collingwood, Dr. Cyril Fox, Mr. H. St. George Gray, Mr. E. Thurlow Leeds, Mr. Parker Brewis, Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, and Mr. C. A. Ralegh Radford (*Secretary of the Research Committee*).

We recommend (1) that a concerted campaign be undertaken throughout the country with a view to the solution of one or more of the problems indicated in this report, and (2) that an annual report on the lines of that of the Earthworks Committee but covering both the Roman and Medieval periods be published by the Congress.

#### SITES NOT ATTRIBUTED TO ANY ONE PERIOD

Before proceeding to a more detailed examination of the several prehistoric periods, it is necessary to discuss certain types of site which should yield evidence of value, but which cannot be attributed to any definite period or which cover more than one period. The importance of sites which have been continuously occupied cannot be too strongly emphasized.

##### (1) CAVES

The exploration of caves of which Wookey Hole (Baleh, *Wookey Hole*) and Chelm's Combe (*Somerset Archæological Society*, lxxii, 97) may be taken as typical examples, has shown that their chief value is in connection with palæolithic remains. But in the upper levels, neolithic and later deposits often occur. In such cases the scientific investigation of selected examples in various parts of the country, and the establishment of the periods at which they were occupied, should throw light on the general sequence of cultures and the transitional phases.

##### (2) EARTHWORKS

The following are the principal considerations which should govern the selection of an example for excavation :—(a) Earthworks which show structural evidence of development, e.g. Hod Hill (*Arch. Journ.* lvii, 52); (b) Earthworks which have an apparent or possible relationship with settlements of known date, especially those near Romano-British towns of which they may well have been the predecessors, e.g. Lexden (*Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Essex*, iii, 73); (c) Earthworks which can be shown to have some relationship to lynchets or other systems of early agriculture, e.g. South Lodge Camp (*Dorset Field Club*, xlvi, 94); (d) Earthworks remarkable for their size, for the complexity of their defences or their unusual form, e.g. Maiden Castle (Allcroft, *Earthwork of England*, 101; St. George Gray, *Somerset Arch. Soc.*, lxxvi, p. xlv). The size of some earthworks, and the large expense involved, have in many cases deterred exploration. But it should be pointed out that the complete excavation of the larger examples is neither necessary nor desirable, and that only partial investigation, on a scale sufficiently extensive to test the whole area, is required. The recent work at St. Catherine's Hill (C. Hawkes and J. N. L. Myres, *St. Catherine's Hill*) is an example of this method. When one

of the principal camps in any area has been excavated in this manner, the trial investigation of similar sites, on a smaller scale, is both justifiable and desirable.

### (3) HARBOUR SITES

Hengistbury Head (J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Hengistbury Head Report*), and Harlyn Bay (*Antiquaries Journal*, i, 283), are examples of the value of this type of site in illustrating the prehistory of Britain. These harbours were the points of entry for both invaders and traders, and it is from similar settlements that one may hope to obtain evidence establishing the quarter from which invaders started, and the trading connections during each period.

### (4) UNFORTIFIED SETTLEMENTS

In many districts the absence of surface indications has been a serious obstacle to the investigation of unfortified settlements. In these regions the accidental discovery of habitation sites is all the more important, and such finds should at once be reported. In other districts the following principles should govern the selection of an example for excavation. (a) Settlements producing surface finds of more than one period, e.g. Park Brow (*Archæologia*, lxxvi, 1); (b) Settlements which have an apparent or possible relationship with sites of known date, e.g. Bosulow, the village below Chun (*Victoria County History, Cornwall*, i, 370); (c) Settlements which can be shown to have some relationship to lynchets or other early systems of agriculture, e.g. Foale's Arrishes on Dartmoor (*Antiquity*, i, 283).

We may now proceed to deal with the outstanding problems in each period, beginning with the Late Neolithic.

## LATE NEOLITHIC

The evidence from Windmill Hill shows that the plainer types of neolithic pottery connected with the causewayed camps preceded a more ornate variety (Peterborough type), which both on this site and elsewhere is found in association with beakers (*Antiquity*, iv, 26). The distribution and connections of the two types have already been tentatively studied (*Antiquaries Journal*, vii, 456), but further information is required on the following problems:—

(1) What are the geographical relations between the types of pottery for which a chronological sequence has been established at Windmill Hill?

(2) How far and in what areas did the Windmill Hill types survive and fuse with the cultures which supplanted them?

(3) Is the encroachment of the Peterborough type confined to a certain area beyond which the beaker overran it and succeeded directly to the Windmill Hill types?

The discovery and excavation of occupation sites in the known

centres of neolithic concentration, the Yorkshire Wolds, the Cotswolds, the Wiltshire Downs, and Wales, should provide the required information. The makers of the plainer pottery are known to have constructed the causewayed camps, such as Windmill Hill (*Antiquity*, iv, 22). Characteristic pottery has also been found in caves (e.g. Chelm's Combe, *Somerset Arch. Soc.*, lxxii, 110), and the numerous fragments found in the ditches of Wor Barrow and the neighbouring round barrows, suggest that there was an open settlement in the neighbourhood (Pitt-Rivers, *Cranborne Chase*, iv, 58). The finds of the other type of neolithic pottery come principally from open settlements, of which Fengate, by Peterborough, is a typical example (*Archæologia*, lxii, 333).

The vital importance of neolithic burials, both those in long barrows (e.g. Wor Barrow, Pitt-Rivers, *Cranborne Chase*, iv, 58), and those associated with megalithic structures (e.g. Capel Garmon, *Arch. Camb.*, lxxxii, 1), and the small number of surviving examples make it necessary to ensure that no excavation of these shall be undertaken unless it is certain that all possible information will be recovered. The complexity of the ritual revealed by the recent work at Bryn Celli Ddu, and the serious engineering problems involved in many of these monuments, emphasize the necessity for careful preparation. For the present it would probably be wiser to reserve the remaining examples until the excavation of neolithic living sites has provided a wider general knowledge of this period.

### BRONZE AGE

Our knowledge of the barrow burials and flat cemeteries of the Bronze Age is perhaps greater than that of any other prehistoric period, and apart from regions where definite lacunae exist, further excavations should not be undertaken. The principal desideratum is the identification and examination of the occupation sites of this period. With the exception of the small rectangular enclosures of the late Bronze Age (e.g. South Lodge Camp, Pitt-Rivers, *Cranborne Chase*, iv, 1, and *Antiquaries Journal*, ii, 27), it is not possible to ascribe any earthwork to this date on purely typological grounds, but the collection of surface finds from camps in various districts may enable this to be done, and any type of earthwork so identified should be investigated. The discovery of unfortified settlements such as Park Brow (*Archæologia*, lxxvi, 1) will, in many cases, be fortuitous, but when they are reported every effort should be made to secure their investigation.

### LATE BRONZE AND EARLY IRON AGE

The general considerations adduced with regard to harbour sites and earthworks apply with especial force to this period. The

importance of earthworks which have produced surface finds of both the Hallstatt and La Tène or the La Tène and Roman periods must be emphasized. The large hill-top camps, which are found in the south west, in Wales, and in the north (e.g. Ham Hill, *Somerset Arch. Soc.* lxxi, 57, and lxxii, 55, and Dinorben, *Arch. Camb.* lxxxii, 232), have been investigated in some regions. Devon, Dorset, the North Oxfordshire district, and the Marches are areas where the number of these sites is large, but where little work has yet been undertaken. In North Wales the excavations already undertaken show that many of these camps belong to the Roman period (*Arch. Camb.* lxxxii, 221), but in Mid and South Wales the work has only been recently begun. The earthworks of northern England also need examination, and in this region the relationship of the hill forts to the Roman Wall will have to be considered, as the great majority lie between the Walls of Hadrian and Antonine (*Proc. Soc. Ant. Newcastle*, ser. iv, i, 81).

The history of this period seems to consist of a number of invasions, some of which can be isolated by the distribution of intrusive pottery. The study of this distribution must be undertaken, and the following notes indicate the more important gaps in our knowledge :—

Rimbury-Deverel Cemeteries. The distribution of these has been recorded (*Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xliii, 323, and *Antiquaries Journal*, vii, 465), but the settlements belonging to this people are not known. The possibility that the small rectangular camps of the type excavated by Pitt-Rivers at South Lodge and elsewhere belong to them should be investigated (Pitt-Rivers, *Cranborne Chase*, iv, 1).

All Cannings Cross. A fairly homogeneous distribution of this culture is known from living sites in south-central England, but no type of burial can be ascribed with certainty to this people (Cunnington, *All Cannings Cross*, 39).

Glastonbury Lake Village. The type of pottery in use on this site has been recorded from a large area in south-west England, approximately coterminous with that of the currency-bars. The evidence from Devon and Cornwall suggests that the funeral rite was crouched burial in extensive cemeteries, but this needs confirmation from the rest of the area (Bulleid and Gray, *Glastonbury Lake Village*, ii, 505, and *Archæologia*, lxxvi, 205).

Aylesford-Swarling cemeteries. These cover a homogeneous area in south-east England, but very little is known about the habitation sites of this people. The same sites often seem to have been occupied after the Roman Conquest (Bushe-Fox, *Swarling Report*, 17).

Pre-Roman Silchester. The type of native pottery found on this site is related to the last, and seems to have spread over south-central England just before the Roman Conquest (May, *Silchester Pottery*). Several settlements are known but no burials have been recorded (Bushe-Fox, *Hengistbury Head*, 47, Class J).

Apart from these culturally homogeneous groups, there is evidence for a series of sporadic and more or less isolated settlements all along the south and east coasts of the island. The distribution of these, the extent to which they penetrated inland, especially in the Lower Thames, East Anglia, and Yorkshire, and their burial rites, require investigation (Fox, *Archæology of the Cambridge Region*, 90, and *Archæologia*, lxxvii, 179). The possibility that all these groups together with the Rimbury-Deverel and All Cannings Cross sites belong to a single culture, with many local variations, has already been advanced (Hawkes and Myres, *St. Catherine's Hill*, 140). The excavation of sites where more than one variety of this pottery is found should provide the required evidence.

The barrow burial of Lexden raises the question of the extent of the custom in this period (*Archæologia*, lxxvi, 241). Iron Age barrows cannot at present be distinguished from those of the preceding period, but the discovery of pottery of this date on the surface would provide an indication worth investigating.

The scarcity or absence of proven pre-Roman Iron Age sites in Wales, the north, and the northern Midlands, suggests that native sites of the earliest Roman period should be investigated in order to discover whether the inhabitants had already attained an Iron Age culture.

## ROMAN BRITAIN

### MILITARY

The work already in progress on the Roman Wall, on the site of the three legionary fortresses and elsewhere, is covering the necessary ground. Special attention is needed for the pre-Flavian period, and the end of the Roman occupation. In the former the excavation of a camp of the invasion period, and of a camp along the line of the Fosseway, should be undertaken.

### CIVIL

Accurate chronological data, of which we have abundance, for military sites, owing to the scientific work of northern excavators, and more recently in Wales, are almost wholly lacking in towns and villas. Recently, this very serious reproach has been mitigated by work done at four or five sites, and we are beginning to know something about Romano-British towns from an historical point of view, but about villas, in this sense, we know nothing. We shall know something about the history of villas when we can answer the following questions about a reasonable number of sites:—

(a) Whether there was a pre-Roman building there and what its general character was.

(b) When the first Romanized building was put up, and what its plan was.

(c) At what time and in what ways it was added to or otherwise altered.

(d) When it ceased to be inhabited and what was the cause of that cessation.

The study of villas ought to be concentrated on three main problems, the relation of Roman to pre-Roman history, the economic changes occurring in the course of the Roman period, and the relation of Roman to post-Roman history. These problems have been, broadly speaking, ignored by all explorers of villa sites, with the result that their work has been deprived of almost all its value, and has merely given us a collection of undated ground plans.

The following points of economic history, which is the most important and most neglected aspect of the subject, should also be taken into consideration :—

(1) Survey of the adjacent ground to discover traces of ancient cultivation. How did the villa owners cultivate? Did they use the 'Celtic field system' of Crawford or some other? (Crawford, *Air Survey and Archæology*).

(2) Attempt to discover whether the whole personnel of the farm lived in the villa buildings or whether there were cottages in the neighbourhood. It is important to estimate, as far as possible, the number of hands employed on the villa.

(3) Search for evidence of industries on a scale larger than would satisfy the needs of the villa.

(4) Search for neighbouring villa sites, with a view to producing a map plotting the distribution of villas in a limited area. How far apart were they? What was the relation between this distance and their size?

The villa is the real centre of gravity of Romano-British civilization, and we cannot be said even to have begun the scientific study of that civilization until we begin the scientific study of villas, concentrating on their functions as documents for social and economic history.

In the north, and in Wales, beyond the limits of the settled civil province, the native sites, whether camps (e.g. Dinorben, *Arch. Camb.* lxxx, 232, and Warden Hill, Northumberland, *Arch. Aeliana*, ser. i, v, 148), fortified settlements (e.g. Din Lligwy, *Arch. Camb.* ser. vi, viii, 183, and Hugill, *Cumberland and Westmorland Ant. Soc. Trans.* xiv, 460) or open villages (Cyttiau'r Gwyddelod on Holyhead Mountain, *Arch. Journ.* xxvii, 147, and Barnscar, *V. C. H. Cumberland*, i, 250), are the economic counterpart of the villa, and their study should be undertaken on the same lines and keeping the same objects in view.

## POST ROMAN

## CELTIC

In the West of England, where a considerable period has elapsed between the break-up of the Roman organization and the Saxon Conquest, and in Wales, where Celtic civilization survived until late in the Middle Ages, archæological evidence bearing on the Dark Ages is very scanty. The native sites of the end of the Roman period offer one starting point. Another may be found in early monastic settlements, and other places connected with Celtic traditions. It is not yet possible to ascribe any particular type of earthwork to this period, but the following classes may be suggested as the slight evidence available indicates that they belong to the post-Roman period: Camps with two or more widely-separated ramparts, such as Goosehill Camp (*Sussex Arch. Coll.* lviii, 80). Small circular enclosures consisting of a single bank and ditch of no great strength, and often in indefensible positions, such as Bishopston Castle, Gower (*Arch. Camb.* ser. v, xvi, 249). Rectangular enclosures with rounded angles, and other defensive earthworks which appear superficially to have been influenced by Roman methods of fortification, such as Caer Leb in Anglesey (*Arch. Camb.* ser. iii, xii, 209), and the Castles, Hamsterley, Durham (*Proc. Soc. Ant. Newcastle*, ser. iii, i, 64).

## SAXON

Anglo-Saxon graves of the pagan period are so well known in most districts that further work in this sphere is to be deprecated, but their almost complete absence north of the Tees needs explanation. The discovery and excavation of Anglo-Saxon villages (e.g. Sutton Courtenay, *Archæologia*, lxxvi, 59) of the pagan and Christian periods, is a more urgent need. The following problems should be borne in mind:—(1) Plan of a complete village. (2) Size of the village in relation to that of the cemetery. (3) Does the size of the settlement have any chronological significance? (4) Methods of house construction. Do these vary regionally, and are these variations coterminous with tribal divisions? The probability that the villages of the later Saxon period occupied the same sites as those of the present day cannot be ignored, and the discovery of remains of this date within existing villages is an important feature which should always be investigated.

## LATE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

The chief need in the archæology of this period is an investigation of settlements with a view to the establishment of a sequence of pottery. The excavation of sites belonging to the following categories would form a basis for this study: (1) Entrenched camps and harbours of the Danish period (e.g. Withington, Wadmore, *Earthworks of Bedfordshire*, 71). (2) Burghs belonging to the period of the



Saxon Reconquest (e.g. Witham, *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Essex*, ii, 265). (3) Domestic sites which can be reasonably dated to pre-Conquest or early post-Conquest times. (4) Mound and Bailey Castles of which the date of desertion is known, and especially adulterine castles (e.g. Caesar's Camp above Folkestone, *Archæologia*, xlvii, 429).

The excavation of later medieval buildings, monastic, military or domestic, should be undertaken only in such chosen examples as are likely to fill any gaps in our knowledge, either of architectural development or of planning.