

Museum News

HASANLU, IRAN

Mr. Dyson's expedition has made important discoveries. He writes that in the course of work on the city wall of the late 9th century "one fine morning while the Director was crouching in a hole laboriously picking out tiny pieces of egg-shell inlay Cuyler [Young] appeared over the edge from another room with a big grin on his face. 'What do you think of this?' he asked, handing me a tall dirty-looking object. Its seven inches height indicated something unusual—then it dawned! A silver cup, conical in shape with a flat bottom—and covered with two rows of small figures applied in electrum! . . . Closer inspection shows . . . the scenes obviously symbolize a battle and a victory of some sort but with people of a type not heretofore seen in representational art in Iran.

"Two days after this happy discovery one of the workmen called the Director over to the small room which was later dubbed the 'Bone Room' because of all the ash and bones found in it. Here he had come upon the arm of a man leaning against the wall and crushed under the collapsed roof. Along the arm lay a sheet of yellow dust to which had been attached rows of round copper buttons—as a kind of protective armour. Intent upon recording as much detail of the clothing as might be preserved the Director took over the job of clearing. After working for about an hour a small gold piece appeared unexpectedly next to the wall . . . Imagine the surprise when instead of a bracelet [as we had first supposed] an edge of gold began running down into the soil for eight inches! Cuyler was working late in another room clearing a Parthian Cist burial and only Charles Burney was watching. 'Is it decorated?' he asked. A sweep of the brush indicated that it was indeed decorated. Excitement mounted. We now visualized a small decorated cup of some sort. But no. Out of the soil emerged a large bucket-shaped vessel, pressed flat by the weight of the earth, eight inches high and two feet in diameter! And shining in golden splendor as only gold—the one non-corroding metal—can do. What a fabulous treasure—covered with mythological figures in detail and composition completely new to us.

"Upon arrival at the house the men set up a cheer and our Inspector Assefi's eyes were like two sunbursts. Everyone stared with disbelief.

Then came the problems. How to ensure security of the priceless object? The news swept the country—the next day in Nagadeh they were telling that we had found a solid gold throne—and two days later in Khaneh it was reported that we had found the king's solid gold desk! Before we could even return to the mound children from the village were there poking around. Cuyler was dispatched immediately to the gendarme post for guards and we settled down to ten days of night and day patrol with a tent on the mound and two armed guards walking about discouraging visitors. The story is now told in the next village that a great serpent lives in the mound and that it is unsafe at night—also that we have gone to Tehran for a bomber to kill it! The 'Baby' as the treasure soon was called resided in a small overnight case which we toted from room to room depending on where and who was doing what. Mr. Assefi and Mr. Burney both began a marathon drawing competition to record the details as accurately as possible in order to free the Baby for deposit in the bank vault at Rezaiyeh—where it now resides in lonely splendor."

TIKAL, GUATEMALA

Mr. Aubrey S. Trik is now engaged on the preliminary work of drawing up plans and assembling equipment for the restoration of selected buildings at Tikal. These will include the Temple of the Red Stela. Mr. Trik's previous experience in the restoration of Maya sites includes Copan, under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution, and Zacaleu for the United Fruit Company.

GORDION, TURKEY

Dr. Edwards has been clearing the upper levels of the city mound, preparatory to deeper digging next year. His most interesting discovery has been pottery kilns of the Hellenistic period, with some moulded terracotta figurines which had not been baked. Miss Mellink has done further work on the minor mound, clearing more of the fortifications of the Lydian period (seventh-sixth century B.C.). These prove to be as extensive as had been anticipated, and in a fair state of preservation. The Turkish authorities have not yet solved the problem of the preservation of the wooden tomb cleared last year but they continue to work on it, and steps will be taken in the near future to prevent any further deterioration or collapse.

The decree granting the loan of Gordion objects for temporary showing in the United

States has been passed by the Turkish Government and ways and means of getting them here expeditiously have been considered. We hope to have them in the Museum in late October.

ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND

Mr. Robert Ackerman with a crew of two Eskimos and a skin boat is making an archaeological reconnaissance along the south coast of St. Lawrence Island in the northern Bering Sea. This continues the University Museum's archaeological research in the Arctic and is primarily concerned with the discovery of Paleo-Eskimo sites which have been dated by the Museum's C-14 laboratories at about A.D. 300. There are no Eskimo living on the south coast of St. Lawrence Island today and the area has never been thoroughly explored. St. Lawrence is geographically and ethnographically Siberia; hence, our research there relates to that now being carried out by the Russian scientists in eastern Siberia.

HOW IS YOUR MUSEUM I.Q.?

Answers to quiz on page 14:

1, c; 2, b; 3, d; 4, a; 5, a.

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 2)

thousands of generations and as a part of the organic world, can lead to that intellectual integrity so necessary in contemporary society.

Just as new nations seek out and recover an historical tradition to give political cohesion and meaning to a specific society so, I hope, mankind as a whole may find a common tradition and a common meaning in the great epic of humanity. I like to believe that there is some unconscious feeling in the flesh and the minds of my contemporaries which now impels them to seek a meaning in the whole history of man, not alone in historical tradition of their own particular society. I also like to think that this is the reason for the current enthusiasm for knowledge of man's ancient past.

Physical scientists may be unintelligible to the public and yet produce results which are concrete and understandable. In archaeology and anthropology, as in all the humanities, results are only in the minds of men. To have significance these studies must now be intelligible to millions. It is our problem to find a way of speaking to these millions.

FROELICH RAINEY



7 November - 24 December 1958

ART OF THE ANCIENT MAYA

A loan exhibition from the Government of Guatemala, supplemented with selected Maya pieces from museums and private collections in America.

THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
Philadelphia