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The eternal question of the ownership of prehistoric or historic artifacts will probably rage until judgement day or until there are no more artifacts to acquire. Much has been written about the legal aspects of the question, and the promulgated law varies widely from state to state. An article in the PLAINS ANTHROPOLOGIST for May, 1960, by Dr. Agostino and Sally Sachs, clearly points out some of the inadequacies of state law in this respect. In summary it can be said that most laws completely miss the important moral issue of the question. Most of the laws attempt to obtain for some state institution a portion of the loot recovered from sites within the state. They completely overlook the basic aspects of the real value of the materials, namely the information they can provide.

The time has long since passed when the archaeologist need blush at the question, "What good is archaeology?" There has always been a valid answer, of course, but generally the people who ask such questions are not too receptive to moral, aesthetic, or idealistic reasoning. They seek "practical" justification. That justification is now abundantly available. For example, there is the problem of paleoclimatology which has received such impetus and support from archaeology. We can understand the climate of the past in light of its effect on man better than in any other way. The picture in climatology is one of ever shortening time spans, and a clear picture of cyclic change is apparent. It seems altogether likely that another "ice age" will come one day, and inevitably a high temperature, or altithermal, cycle. These can be of crucial importance to mankind. The extremity of the climate during the last altithermal is apparent from the scanty evidence of man in the interior of the country at this time, and from the complete extinction of a number of species of animals.

A second, and in every way more important, "practical" result of archaeological research is its interpretation in the hands of the anthropologist. Here, more than any other discipline, man takes an objective look at himself. Here, in the science of anthropology, man is examined as to his cultural behavior, his cultural growth, and his technological advances. He is examined for what he is, or has been, rather than what someone thinks he should be. Anthropology is the study of man as he is, and there is no argumentation about whether he is "good" or "bad" or whether he "should" be different. Here, then, in this objective approach, is the only real hope of understanding man and the problems he creates for himself. And it is only through such study that any hope of a solution to man's problems will come. Surely then, this is a most "practical" contribution that archaeology makes when it supplies information about man's past to the anthropologist. In some ways, at least, archaeological information is far better than a written history, for history is always seen through the eyes of an individual, and such eyes see with limited vision. Archaeological records are often less complete in some ways than historical records, but they are usually more objective, and, in themselves, never lie.

A couple of answers to the question of the "good" of archaeology have been mentioned above, but these are not the best answer. The best answer is one that could be given in regard to any investigation which is pursued in an objective, scientific manner. That answer is simply that every "practical" study is the end result of research which was originally without practical aims, and which had no promise of producing anything worthwhile. At the same time, almost every piece of "pure" research that was started sufficiently long ago has produced some practical results. It seems that knowledge has a way of paying off in unexpected ways, and that man has a flair for turning a piece of information to a useful end. When Thales, around 600 B. C., wrote that a piece of amber, when rubbed with wool, developed the power of attracting small lint fibres, he certainly didn't envision atomic energy, or electric lights, or television. Yet that observation, and its subsequent pursuit by people with no "practical" aims in sight, was the necessary and direct ancestor to our gigantic electrical and electronic industry, the largest and fastest growing of all industries in this country.

The legal question of the ownership of historical and prehistorical relics found on or in the ground has been given many interpretations. In Wyoming, the artifacts are considered natural resources and belong essentially to the landowner. In Oklahoma, artifacts are considered public property regardless of land ownership. In both cases, however, the legal interpretation is slanted toward the acquisition of such materials for museums. The whole question of the information content of a site is ignored. The moral question involved is overlooked.

The question of the ownership of artifacts is entirely secondary to the ownership of history. Artifacts, in context, are a page in history, a page that is not usable until carefully read and interpreted. The question of ownership of artifacts cannot be divorced from the fact that the removal of those artifacts destroys part of the historical record. If the record is adequately replaced, little is lost, if not, history will be incomplete. The question, then, becomes - - "Who owns history?" We scorn the dictator who burns the old history books and rewrites history to suit his ends, but where is the difference between the dictator and the collector who destroys history to suit his collection? We feel that the mere ownership of a history book or a printing press does not justify the destruction of the history in the book, or the rewriting of history in a new book. Why then, should the ownership of a piece of land determine who shall have the right to erase a few pages of history? History belongs rightly to all the people of all the world, now and forever, who may have need of its information.

Ironically, the careless collector robs himself as well as his children and neighbors. When he loots a site, he robs himself of a small niche in history as the discoverer of a site, and trades that bit of immortality for a collection of materials which has lost most of its meaning. When the collection, without an adequate record, passes on to the collector's heirs, it is of even

less value, and is soon dissipated to other collectors, to whom it is still less meaningful. Soon it is absorbed and gone, and nothing remains to show the original owner's part in history or the fad of collection.

Many collectors say that they are admirers of art and workmanship, and these values have existence apart from the historical significance of the materials. This might well be true, but it is only necessary to look at their collections to see that they do not appreciate their items for their artistry. Such collections are almost never displayed as art or handicraft objects. They are often thrown together in boxes or arranged in large numbers in picture frames. None of them is displayed as would be a properly appreciated object of art. In stead they are displayed in numbers as though they derived their value from quantity rather than quality.

However much we may criticize the pot-hunter for his meaningless collecting, the archaeologist must not be allowed to rest on his laurels. The records are full of reports of bungled investigations, inadequate research, and pointless procedure. Too often the archaeologist has ignored the wants of the other professions in the same way that the collector has ignored the archaeologist's needs. Often, the important palynological, paleontological, geological, and other fields are ignored, and the site is worked only for its immediate cultural content and implications. Such operations are no more excusable than those of the pothunter.

The archaeologist, as well as the collector, must be always aware that history is the property of everybody, and that all forms of information are valuable, and may not be wantonly destroyed for some narrow purpose. Most of man's troubles are self-created, and it is probably not too sweeping a generalization to say that a vast majority of his wars, crimes, and conflicts stem from simple disregard for the feelings and needs of the other people who share this world. Could we do better than make a conscious effort to aid this most important research? Could have any higher aspiration than to add a fragment of information to the fund of knowledge of the anthropologist who may one day discover a fundamental concept in human relations?

18TH ANNUAL PLAINS CONFERENCE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

The 18th annual session of the always-interesting conference will be held in Norman, Oklahoma, this year on the dates November 24 through 26. The Thursday session will comprise a registration, pre-business meeting, and field report session. The field reports will be followed by a Thanksgiving dinner. Friday's session will deal with southern plains archaeology. There will be an open house at the Museum Friday night. On Saturday there will be sessions on the French and Spanish entradas, plains ethnohistory, volunteer papers and a business session. Dr. Robert E. Bell is in charge of program, and Dr. Shaeffer will handle arrangements for on-campus sleeping facilities.

At the second annual banquet of the Wyoming Archaeological Society in Casper, the organization was presented an award given by the American Association of State and Local History. The award, given for the undertaking of major archaeological projects and the maintenance of professional standards, was decided upon at the Iowa City, Iowa, meeting of the national historical organization, on September 2, 1960.

The members of the society are to be congratulated on their efforts to maintain these standards, and for their work in making worthwhile contributions to the study of archaeological research. Let us all resolve to continue to merit the award which we have received, and to grow and improve in the future.

SEARCH FOR THE OLDEST CIVILIZATION NARROWS

It is generally well known that the civilizations of Europe had their origins in the Near East, and in searching through the ruins of these old cities, archaeologists were led backward in time to the valley of the Tigris-Euphrates river systems, the home of the old Mesopotamian cultures. But the trail did not end here. Evidences of still older links with civilization were found. In ancient Sumer, oldest of the cities in the Mesopotamian sequence, there were references to trade with other cities. The kings of Babylon, Sumer, and Assyria received tribute from lands of the lower sea, that is, from countries south along the Persian Gulf.

Among the accounts are mentioned predominately three countries---Dilmun, Makan, and Meluhha. They are generally named in that order, indicating their relative distances from Mesopotamia. Dilmun produced dates and pearls, and served as a port-of-call for trades ships from Makan, bearing copper and diorite, and from Meluhha bearing gold and ivory and precious woods. From the trade lists, it appears that Meluhha might well be in India. It would follow, then, that Makan must be between Dilmun and India. Dilmun was described as being two days' sail south of Mesopotamia and located on an island of good water.

One of the first clues to the location of these three countries showed up a century ago when the British scholar Henry Rawlinson, who first deciphered cuneiform, translated a tablet found on the island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf and found the name of the god Inzak, who is listed in the Mesopotamian god-lists as the chief god of Dilmun. For many years now, Bahrain has been known to archaeologists and grave-robbers alike as a vast cemetery. An estimated 100,000 burial mounds occupy the island. Until recently, no evidence of cities had been found however. In 1953 an expedition sent by the Prehistoric Museum of Aarhus in Denmark found living sites on the island, and subsequent work has developed whole sequences of civilizations, among which is the storied Dilmun.

The deserts of Bahrain contain evidences of much older inhabitants than those of Dilmun. Stone artifacts dating back as much as 100,000 years ago have been found. The legends of Mesopotamia tell of the ancient times before man was made, when Dilmun was the habitation of the gods, and was a paradise of immortality. Zius-udra, the sole survivor of the Deluge, went to Dilmun after the waters subsided, and was granted immortality. Gilgamesh, the great hero of Sumer went to Dilmun seeking immortality in vain. As yet, no trace of this Dilmun has been found.

With Dilmun located, the problem of finding Makar and Meluhha is becoming simpler. Explorations to the south of Bahrain have yielded evidence in Trucial Oman of another great civilization which may be that of Makan. A small island off the coast, and a site which is three days' camel ride into the interior, at Buraimi, have produced large tombs of a type different from those at Dilmun, but which have produced some Dilmun pottery, indicating contemporary existence. It also yields evidence of contact with the civilizations of the Indus valley, and it well may be the link to the yet unfound Makan.

As the search continues, it seems more and more probable that the world's oldest civilization will be traced to India. The time of the first great cities will probably be about seven or eight millennia in the past. One by one the links in the history of man's rise to his present glories are being forged, and one day we may know in some detail how man came to be civilized.

THE TREASURE OF ST. NINIAN'S

On St. Ninian's Island in the Shetland group northeast of Scotland there was an old 12th-century Christian church that was of interest to a group of archaeologists from the University of Aberdeen. As the crew worked at the site, they discovered another, older church beneath the first. In 1958, the archaeologists noted a cracked stone slab in the floor of the nave area with a cross lightly incised on its surface. Douglass Coutts, a 16-year-old schoolboy helping with the dig, was directed to lift the slab. It is likely that any future work he does in archaeology will be anticlimactic, for beneath that slab was the treasure of St. Ninian's. It was Coutts' first day on an archaeological dig.

Revealed beneath the slab was a mass of green copper corrosion. The entire contents of the cache was removed intact and taken to a laboratory for study. When revealed the mass consisted of fragile silver items which contained copper as a minor aliquot. The hoard consisted of bowls and buckles and other objects and apparently represented a church treasure hastily buried to keep it out of the hands of raiders. There may have been no survivors, for the treasure lay undisturbed since its time of concealment in about 800 A. D. The site adds another step in the history of the spread of the Christian church.

Many tools manufactured by the Indian utilized some sort of glue or cement in the assembly. Blades were often cemented into handles of wood or bone to make hafted knives. Drill points and projectile points were often held in place by adhesives. Frequent use was made of cement in combination with fibre lashings to hold stone tools in their shafts or handles. A number of very useful adhesives were developed for these purposes.

Among the cements commonly used was the pitch or resin from some type of conifer. This material when heated almost to the burning point tends to form a somewhat rubbery mass that can be used to attach almost any two materials. It slowly becomes hard, and eventually becomes brittle. Bark of the birch tree and some types of aspen when heated yields a gummy material which retains its resiliency for long periods of time, and makes an effective cement. Horns and hooves also will yield a good cement when heated, and, of course, basic glue can be made by cooking down horny material with water. This latter material tends to be too brittle for many uses, however, since it is not very shock-resistant.

It is not yet known if Indians utilized the latex-saps of certain plants such as milkweed in making cement, but it is known that good, flexible cement can be made from this material, and that this material in combination with certain of the others mentioned above will yield a more flexible, tougher cement that is shock-resistant.

Continued research on possible native cements would be an excellent project for a member of the society. Combinations of the above materials, methods of their treatment, and a search for new materials would constitute an elegant research project.

OVER THE CAMPFIRE

Dr. Forbis has sent us an item on the Cluny site east of Calgary. The site is an earthlodge village, and seems to be culturally out of place. The recovered cultural material resembles that of the Missouri basin rather than local products.

Mrs. Irene Morgan, of Lander, has a lead on a Folsom site in the Red Desert. The artifacts are the real McCoy, and we hope that she will be able to do some work at the site soon.

The Sheridan chapter has been discussing the presentation of an archaeological exhibit next spring. It is hoped that they may garner a little revenue and present the work of the archaeologist to the general public. It will be a lot of work, but should be fun.

We were sorry to see such a small turnout at the annual banquet. Part of the trouble was inadequate publicity, we feel, and perhaps your editor should share some blame here, but we didn't have final dates until after the last issue went to press.

A new chapter will soon be formed at Cheyenne through the efforts of Lou Steege, director of the state Historical Museum.

EMBERS OUT