

Antiquity

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Editorial

THE VIIth *Congrès International des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques* was held in Prague from the 21st to the 27th of August this year, under the presidency of Professor Jan Filip, who also edited the volume *Investigations Archéologiques en Tchécoslovaquie: Etat actuel des recherches et leur organisation*, which was presented to all Congressists and can be obtained direct from Academia (Maison d'Éditions de l'Académie Tchécoslovaque des Sciences) in Prague. The Congress was very well organized and the Czech Organizing Committee deserve our praise, especially the four members of the bureau—Professor Filip, the two vice-presidents, Dr Jiří Neustupný of the National Museum, and Dr Anton Točík of Nitra, and the Secretary-General, Professor Josef Poulík of Brno. The next and VIIIth Congress of the new series will be in five years' time, not four as has been the interval between the previous five conferences since Zurich in 1948. The venue of the 1971 conference is not yet fixed; what has been fixed is the new Secretary-General: Professor Ole Klindt-Jensen succeeds Professor Siegfried De Laet who has discharged his duties as Secretary-General for so long and so well. We wish the new Secretary-General all success and also congratulate him on his new Institute of Archaeology at Moesgaard, which was officially opened on the 10th of September.

Some 1,300 people attended the Prague Congress—about 2,000 subscribed; the largest delegation was from Germany—over 300—but the Czech Committee did not distinguish

between West Germany and East Germany. Over 500 papers were listed to be given, and indeed most of them were given—far far too many for four days. The rules insisted that papers should not exceed 15 minutes; some speakers outrageously flouted this instruction: we left one 15-minute talk after it had been going on monotonously and relentlessly for 50 minutes. It seems beyond the wits of some lecturers to understand that a fairly quick rate of speaking is 120 words to the minute, and that in 15 minutes they cannot hope to utter more than between 1,500 and 1,800 words. But not only too many papers, but too much parochialism, and we did not go to Prague to listen to people cultivating their private cabbage-patches. The Rome Congress was better in that it had major commissioned papers and themes, and the 1969 conference should think in these terms, and also in terms of restricting the membership, and the number of papers.

But perhaps after all it is not the papers and the planning of the sections that matter at such a Congress but the social contacts at the parties in the *U Flecku* beer-cellar, the National Museum, and the Černinský Palace, the unofficial contacts during the Congress and on the excursions before, during and after the Congress. The main excursion during the week of the Congress was to Bylany, and it is good to know that its excavator, Dr Bohumil Soudský, has produced a short summary guide to this very important site. *Bylany* is in Czech with a good summary in French and was again published by the Editions Academia (Prague,

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1966; 84 pp., 20 pls., 22 figs. and maps. Kčs. 7.50). It is no. 4 in a series of small handbooks entitled *Památníky naší minulosti* produced by the Czech Academy. The first was by Hrubý on Staré-Město, the second by Borovský on Hradec, and the third by Jansová on Hrazany: among future titles planned are Klima on Dolní Věstonice and Točík on Nitrianský Hrádok. The material from these and many another site were seen by the Congressists in the special exhibitions in the National Museum and National Gallery in Prague, at Nitra and elsewhere.

To most of us one of the great excitements was the Anthropos Museum in Brno, surely one of the most thrilling and splendidly displayed museums anywhere. Its history is intriguing. In 1919 the Moravian Museum at Brno founded a Diluvial Department and preparations were made for the excavations of the Pekárna cave and the newly discovered site of Dolní Věstonice. The success of these investigations was such that Professor Absolon thought of establishing a special exhibition on the 'Origin and Evolution of Man'. A chance arose when the first Brno exhibition was held in 1928, and this exhibition was from 1929 to 1937 staged in various pavilions of what is now the Brno Trade Fair Ground. Absolon's ambition was to establish a special Anthropos Institute and a Museum Anthropos in the Moravian Museum which would be both a museum and research centre. In 1938 the excavations at Dolní Věstonice stopped because South Moravia had been added to the German Third Reich. The next year, after Nazi Germany had occupied the whole country, Professor Absolon had to retire, and the Moravian Museum was run by Germans who in 1944 ordered the removal of some of the collections to the Mikulov Castle in south Moravia. Their subsequent history is part of the history of archaeological collections in the war—and someone must write this one day and tell us what happened to *Sinanthropus*, and Queen Nefertiti, and the Schliemann treasures in Berlin. The retreating Nazi army set fire to the whole Mikulov Castle and blew up most of the collections, including the common grave of mammoth hunters from Předmostí.

In 1950 Dr J. Jelinek, the new anthropologist in the Moravian Museum, took up Absolon's idea, and it has been achieved with a working part near to the Moravian Museum and a new display pavilion in the Pisárky Park with its remarkable exposition of the origin and evolution of man. This building was constructed in the course of a do-it-yourself campaign, entirely dependent on voluntary labour from the citizens of Brno. As the official account of this unusual method of constructing a public museum says, with pardonable understatement:

Many initial difficulties were encountered, for it was not an easy task to secure a constant number of workers so that the construction could be carried on without interruption. Besides it was necessary to find skilled workmen and draughtsmen from time to time, as most of the volunteers were unskilled . . . Voluntary workers put in altogether 147,800 working hours. The value of the work done represents more than twice the amount of money invested. The whole matter is a good example of co-operation between the public authorities and the public.

It is indeed; could it happen in the freedom of western democracies? One has a vision of hundreds of sub-Churchill amateur bricklayers being thwarted by restrictive practices and trade union rules if they started building museums on their own among the dark Satanic mills of this green and pleasant England.



These words are being written in the High Tatras, where, exhausted by conferencing, we took refuge in this delicious National Park on the frontiers of Czechoslovakia and Poland, and in the intervals between failing to find any of the 25 grumbling bears and the 740 whistling marmots which are supposed to live here, we remembered, as few people seem to have done in Prague, that the Congress was a great occasion not only in the sense that it was the first of the new series of international archaeological conferences to be held behind the so-called *rideau de fer*, but that it was the centenary of the very first such Congress of the old series which was held in Neuchâtel from the 22nd to the 25th of August 1866. It was then called the

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Congrès international Paléoethnologique and had been founded in 1865 at Spezzia at a meeting of the Italian Society of Natural Sciences, on the initiative of Gabriel de Mortillet. The 1866 Neuchâtel meeting, coinciding as it did, and was meant to do, with the annual meeting of the *Société Helvétique des Sciences naturelles*, was full of incident:

collations et soirées, avec illuminations et feux d'artifice . . . vin d'honneur bu à la lumière des flammes de Bengale, dans les souterrains qui doivent approvisionner d'eau de la ville de Neuchâtel, rafraîchissements offerts dans les bois, sous un gigantesque bloc erratique . . . aussi la plus franche gaieté n'a cessé de régner, et le souvenir de l'hospitalité neuchâteloise restera certainement gravé à jamais dans la mémoire de tous.

The President at Neuchâtel was E. Desor, author of *Palafittes ou constructions lacustres du lac de Neuchâtel*; the meetings began at 8.15 in the morning. Gabriel de Mortillet was Secretary and the Vice-President was Alexandre Bertrand, first head of the Musée des Antiquités Nationales at St-Germain which Napoleon III had founded three years before. Desor's presidential address referred to the 'passé antéhistorique de notre suisse' and to 'la période antéhistoriques' or 'la période qui a immédiatement précédé les temps historiques'. In the very previous year John Lubbock had published his *Prehistoric Times* in which he had decided after much thought to abandon the word 'antehistoric' and popularize the terms 'prehistory' and 'prehistoric'.

At the Neuchâtel meeting 24 papers were read varying from an account of Schmerling's work in Belgium, Bronze Age finds from Morges and Plouharnel, to G. de Mortillet on the sign of the cross before Christianity. Bertrand circulated the first sheets of his *Dictionnaire de l'époque celtique*. M. Letourneux referred to the discoveries made in the dolmens of Palestine by M. le Duc de Luyne and affirmed his view that all megaliths began in Algeria. M. Desor himself said there was too much talk of migrations from the north of Europe to the south; he wanted migrations from the south to the north including M. Letourneux's dolmen builders from Algeria. M. Troyon protested against the use of the

word *celtique* in exact archaeological connotations, and was especially cross with people who called stone and bronze axeheads 'celts'. The term 'Celtic', he said, was 'un terme vague, qui ne dit rien'—alas the wise M. Troyon was dead five weeks after he said this, struck down while digging his Merovingian cemetery at Bel-Air.

On August the 25th there was a 'pêche lacustre à Auvernier' and afterwards it was decided to hold the next conference in Paris in 1867 during the time of the *Exposition Universelle*. Edouard Lartet was elected President and de Mortillet was again Secretary. By the time it met in Paris it was called the *Congrès International d'Anthropologie et d'Archéologie Préhistoriques*; and its *compte rendu* was published by Reinwald, 15 rue des Saints-Pères, Paris, in 1868. Incidentally the Neuchâtel Congress had no separate *compte rendu*, but it was printed in Vol. II of *Matériaux pour l'Histoire de l'Homme* (pp. 469–528), and we are grateful to the Librarian of the Victoria and Albert Museum for making this point clear to us.

The Paris Conference was a much bigger and more impressive affair with over 363 members (217 from France, 31 Italy, 18 Great Britain, and 13 from Switzerland). The papers were built round six questions of which the fourth, as an example, was: 'L'apparition du bronze dans l'Occident est-elle le produit de l'industrie indigène, le résultat d'une conquête violente ou le fait de nouvelles relations commerciales?'

It is good to see that the idea of themes with a whole day to discuss each one of them was being used in 1867. Perhaps the 1971 Congress could compromise: of its eight sessions, four might be devoted to themes, with prepared and pre-circulated papers, and the rest to the cabbage-patch ragbag of what I dug up in East Staffordshire, or some curious things I observed in Galicia (without telling us which Galicia).



One of the best-attended lectures at Prague was that of Professor Gerald Hawkins on Stonehenge and Callanish, when he propounded his now well-known thesis that these monuments were observatories and eclipse calculators. He said that 'archaeologists should learn as

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much astronomy as prehistoric people seemed to know', and so we should—and Hawkins and his fellows who call themselves 'astro-archaeologists' should learn as much archaeology as first-year undergraduates seem to know in those universities who wisely have archaeology as a degree course. It is going to be difficult, this mutual understanding of astronomy and archaeology, but it is certainly an effort we all have to make, and have to make right now, if we are to understand Professor Fred Hoyle's article in the present number of ANTIQUITY (pp. 262–76).

Dr D. H. Sadler of the Royal Greenwich Observatory, in an article on the 'Prediction of Eclipses' (*Nature*, 211, 1966, 1119), the main object of which was to review the *Canon of Solar Eclipses* by J. Meeus and his co-workers, uses the occasion to discuss the views of Hawkins and Hoyle. Of Hawkins's views he says 'although the evidence is far from conclusive, this suggestion is astronomically acceptable', and after a discussion of the work of Hawkins and Hoyle (not including, naturally, the paper we publish here) he writes:

Clearly no definite answer can be given as to whether Stonehenge was designed and used as suggested; it appears that it could have been so used, but it is strange that so complicated a procedure should have been used when apparently simpler methods were available.



'Today', said *The Daily Telegraph* on the 12th of September, breaking new ground in its birthday notices, 'is the anniversary of the discovery of the painted caves of Lascaux in 1940.' *The Times* included M. Maurice Chevalier among its birthdays, but not Lascaux; but it summarized a written parliamentary answer given by M. André Malraux in which he said Lascaux must remain closed for the moment. *The Times* reports:

The specialists at work in the cave found that it was not only the green growth which was threatening the paintings. There was also the formation of calcite which was in danger of covering them over entirely with a white layer. . . . In his statement M. Malraux said that the cave

was now saved, but it was not known how delicate it was. It could not therefore be opened to the public as it once was. It was hoped that the cave would now go through a period of 'convalescence', but it was still necessary to take the greatest precautions.

Mysterious, disquieting; the whole Lascaux affair has been very unhappy. Let us hope it is happier by the time *The Daily Telegraph* next puts its discovery in its birthdays alongside Maurice Chevalier.



Mr Frank Colliesson, whose careful, cheerful and scholarly help in the Editorial Offices of our Publishers means so much lightening of the burden of the Editor and Assistant Editor (and who tells us that, in preparation for printing Fred Hoyle's 'Speculations on Stonehenge', he is rereading *Teach Yourself Trigonometry*), has sent us two quotations. The first relates to the discussion in our previous Editorial of the present world and the half-age of time. He notes the following passage in James Morris's *Oxford*, page 238 (from which we had already quoted in June, in another context):

in 1964 somebody else looked at a satirical essay about Burke, published in 1791, and found the couplet

*Ensigns armoured, pedigrees sublime,
And wax and parchment half as old as time.*

. . . William Plomer carried the line a caustic stage further, and described some ageing exquisite as a 'rose-red cissy half as old as Time'. And the second quotation is the caption to the Rotary Querns in the Museum at Wakefield:

Querns were generally in use during the whole of the Neolithic Period which began in Britain about ten thousand years ago and continued down to the early nineteenth century.

We shall be interested in any comparable museum labels that readers of ANTIQUITY may have noticed. Are there still any labels bearing the phrase 'Ancient British', we wonder? If any survive we should welcome photographs for our cabinet of curiosities.