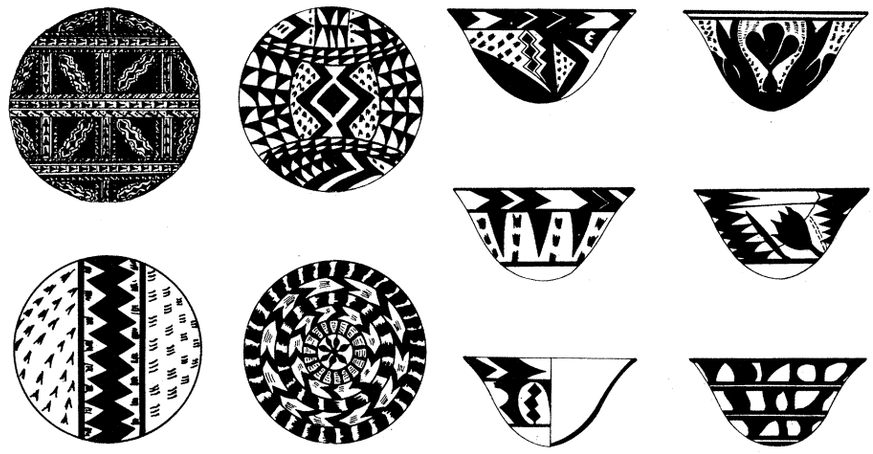
Mellaart is particularly concerned with the chronological relationship of archeological assemblages and the geographical distribution of "cultures" or traditions. He constructs a chronological framework, based on stratigraphic evidence, artifact comparisons, and radiocarbon determinations, and proceeds to outline regional sequences. For each major site in the sequence (either the best-known or the most representative example for a given time and place) he summarizes the kinds of material recovered and gives the interpretations of the material that have been offered by the excavator or analyst. Although the published accounts are generally accepted without comment, Mellaart sometimes offers his own opinions on the nature of the historical relationships between assemblages or archeological cultures. The text is illustrated with 14 maps showing site locations and the distribution of archeological cultures, as well as the location of obsidian sources and of artifacts made of material from these sources. Photographs and line drawings of the archeological remains concentrate on representational art, architecture, and pottery.



"Eggshell ware" votive cups from the Early Ubaid (Ubaid 3, about 4500 B.C.) temples of Eridu in southern Mesopotamia, tentatively restored. [Drawings from *The Neolithic of the Near East*, after S. Lloyd and F. Safar, *Sumer* **4**, 115 (1948)]

For those who have some familiarity with Near Eastern prehistory, or for those who are well grounded in general prehistory and acquainted with the jargon used in artifact description, the book is useful. It provides a framework for a more thorough investigation of specific aspects of the archeological record in the Near East or of a particular regional sequence. The relative chronology is sound and a list of the radiocarbon dates employed is appended. The published sources on which the site summaries are based are clearly indicated, and the bibliography is conveniently arranged by region and topic. If the book is to be used for more than a general grasp of the available information, reference to the original sources is strongly recommended. The site summaries do not take into account variations in the size or nature of the archeological sample and provide no means of distinguishing between inferences that have a high probability of being valid and those that are tentative or even speculative. In some cases Mellaart's paraphrasing of the original reports is misleading or inaccurate. At least two of the line drawings, taken from published photographs, have significant errors: contrary to the drawings, the human figurine from Hajji Firuz Tepe (figure 128) has a concave chest and no indication of breasts and the voluptuous female figurine from Tepe Sarab (figure 39, left) has a belt decorated with fingernail incising which rather tightly binds her stomach and buttocks. Finally, some of the maps and architectural plans are difficult to interpret because of inadequate keys or captions.

Used with caution the book is an acceptable guide to the available literature. For most American prehistorians, however, it will present serious problems on an interpretative level. Mellaart implicitly and explicitly challenges many of the concepts, methods, and interpretations employed by Near Eastern archeologists working within an anthropological framework. He is concerned with the unique aspects of human culture and states that "we cannot classify man's behaviour patterns and predict what he will do even now, far less deduce how he should have reacted in the past" (p. 10). He tells us that "one should keep an open mind and study the evidence rather than advance premature theories about how things should have developed and where and then manipulate the evidence to suit" (p. 12). So much for hypothesis testing in archeology. His rejection of "global theory," by which he presumably means any attempt to discern regularities in human cultural development as well as specific models formulated to explain observed regularities, probably explains the absence from the text of any discussion of previous theories concerning why human groups first came to manipulate the animal species in their environment. He does, however, offer his own explanation of the changes in subsistence economy and settlement pattern documented in his book. In the final chapter he suggests that the processes that are usually referred to as domestication and urbanization are really a single entity. He first offers a new definition of the term "city." He totally rejects size as a criterion for this settlement type and substitutes economic dominance and "cultural achievement" (p. 278). Disregarding the problems introduced by the nature of the archeological sample, he provides a list of sites which, by virtue of their long occupation, can be assumed to possess the requisite economic and cultural status; included are Mellaart's own site, Çatal Hüyük, as well as Jericho, Mureybit, Tepe Guran, and Ali Kosh. The last-named site has an estimated population of 100 people (p. 82). He states that "each of these [sites] may be seen as the centre of a city-state, even if it had no dependent towns and villages, for it must have controlled territory, however small, for its economic needs" (p. 278). It was in these "cities" that the first attempts to control the reproduction of plants and animals took place, and it was in such centers that major innovations continued to be made. Mellaart's reputation for controversial interpretations of archeological data is unlikely to be diminished by the ideas set forth in this book.

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Great Achievements

The Story of Archaeological Decipherment. From Egyptian Hieroglyphs to Linear B. MAURICE POPE. Scribner, New York, 1975. 216 pp., illus. Cloth, $12.50; paper, $4.95.

Of all the intellectual activities that can be comprehended under the name of archeological scholarship, the decipherment of ancient scripts has perhaps been the most often described in books for the nonspecialist. The trouble with oft-told

tales is that they tend to be told badly, and the result, of course, is that the tales themselves lose their hold on the imagination and the events pass from the realm of the understood into that of the merely remembered. All those whose happy lot in life it is to study the ancient cultures of the Near East have read of the great decipherments over and over again and cheerfully believe that they understand how these achievements came about; few of them understand why they came about or how they came about in the way they did at the time they did. It is probable that a certain amount of hindsight is inseparable from the practice of scholarship; indeed, it may rank among its chief comforts, much as it does in the equally satisfying study of military history. No Egyptologist, for example, questions for a moment the extraordinary astuteness of Champollion in deciphering the hieroglyphic script of Egypt; and it is very probable that every Egyptologist secretly believes that he would have done it himself in something less than half the time.

For such complacent post-factum pioneers, Pope's book comes as a salutary corrective; for in it for the first time each of the quantum jumps in human knowledge represented by the decipherments is placed in its proper historical setting, recounted in terms of the intellectual environment of its particular time, and (more important) in terms of the evolution of thought about language and writing in the period leading up to the event. It is a tribute to Pope's extraordinary sympathy with long-dead scholarship, and to his narrative skill, that the decipherment of Egyptian (the story of which occupies the first third of the book) emerges primarily as a coherent and integral episode in the development of man's growing interest in and curiosity about his world, but remains at the same time a remarkable intellectual feat. Champollion's achievement has, however, ceased to be the result of "inexplicable genius," to borrow Pope's words, but becomes instead the fruit of one man's brilliant ability to use the intellectual resources and insights of his age to new advantage.

Having traced the story of Western man's interest in the Egyptian scripts from Roman times until the solution, Pope turns his attention to later decipherments, from the work of Rawlinson on Old Persian to the most recent and most impressive of all, the breaking of the Linear B script by Michael Ventris. To the writer of this review it is something of a pity that Pope did not see fit to mention the work of the great British Egyptologist F. Ll. Griffith on the ancient Meroitic script of the Sudan, which culminated in 1911 in the complete decipherment of that form of writing. That the language expressed in that writing remains largely unintelligible would surely have served Pope as a useful case in point, both of the distinction between decipherment and interpretation and as an instance of successful decipherment carried out in the absence of linguistic information.

Pope has produced the finest work of its kind that has appeared, and one that is a delight to read. It belongs not only on every archeologist's shelf but on every archeological student's required reading list.

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The Laboratory versus the Forger

Authenticity in Art. The Scientific Detection of Forgery. STUART J. FLEMING. Institute of Physics, London, and Crane, Russak, New York, 1976. xii, 164 pp., illus., + plates. $14.50.

The subtitle of this interesting book tells what it is about more accurately than does the title. The authentication of works of art will always depend on the eye and judgment of an experienced curator taking into account all the cultural nuances of iconography and form as well as the knowledge of material and technique provided by historical and scientific analysis.

The final sentence in the book, quoting Princeton conservator Stephen Guglielmi, underscores the importance of critical study of art objects, for fakery is rampant and profitable: "Perhaps it will be necessary to reverse the basic premise applied in human courts of law. An art object will first have to be proved genuine, rather than accepted on dangerous optimistic assumptions." Although it is somewhat ironic that the value of an object should be determined primarily by its authenticity rather than by its intrinsic esthetic merit, the correct assignment of date and place of origin is essential for historical studies.

Stuart Fleming is a prominent member of the famed Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art at Oxford. He presents engagingly an account of the running battle between forgery and its exposure, with sophistication on both sides increasing with time. Though forgery must be unequivocally condemned on moral grounds, most scientists will share the grudging respect that physicist Samuel Goudsmit displays in his foreword for the combination of esthetic understanding, wide technical knowledge, and manipulative skill that

Detail of a portrait of Deborah Kip, wife of Sir Balthasar Gerbier, and her children, attributed to Rubens. "No doubt a few curators blanched when they learnt [the painting] had regions covered with a varnish containing synthetic ultramarine," which was not available in the 17th century. It was eventually concluded that the varnish was a late addition. [Reproduced in *Authenticity in Art*, courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Fund; catalog no. 2558]