

## On Field Methods in Archeology: Seton Lloyd

The practice of archeology, like that of any other science, is an art. As such it is an act of intelligence that combines imagination and knowledge of a tradition of technical proficiency. Such a tradition is built up through long years of experiment and experience, and its communication from generation to generation is essential to continued progress. The publication of a book which recounts the practical field experience of a senior practitioner is, therefore, always an important event. In the case of Near Eastern archeology, Seton Lloyd's new book **Mounds of the Near East** (Edinburgh University Press, 1963. 119 pp. Illus. \$6) is no exception.

From his wealth of experience on excavations in Mesopotamia and Turkey, Lloyd has selected memoirs related to the general problem of digging mounds, from the point of view that Wheeler has called "Tactics and Strategy." Lloyd leads the reader from one site to another, explains the difficulties encountered in deciding how to proceed with each, and then provides a comment on the results achieved at each. To anyone seriously concerned with archeology in the Near East, these reflections provide a very useful exposition of the intentions and logic of the excavators which gave rise to some of the major results obtained in excavations from 1930 to the present.

Beyond this aspect of reminiscences, however, the book also attempts to defend the field methods of the 1930's and the 1940's in the face of the criticisms made by Sir Mortimer Wheeler (in his *Archeology from the Earth*) and others. Wheeler's methods are now followed by a majority of the younger generation of excavators in the Near East. The rejection of these newer methods is implicit at a number of points in Lloyd's book, but the subject is dealt with obliquely most of the time and lacks sufficient specific discussion to be convincing. In fact, the general impression one has from reading Lloyd's book is that the argument is more apparent than

real. Lloyd's chief point is that no method developed in one area can be transplanted wholesale to another and work. This is certainly true, as any good field archeologist will acknowledge. Adaptation of particular methods to different sites is always necessary. The statement brings at once to mind Wheeler's major dictum—"There is no right way of digging, but there are many wrong ways." He also reminds us that the one rule in archeology is that there are no rules! Wheeler pleads for the use of systematic methods of recording, for reasoned "tactics and strategy" related to problem and to specific site, and for "an act of creative imagination" in presenting the results in terms of people rather than dead objects. With respect to such aims, Lloyd is in essential agreement.

The method of excavation in the Near East has gone through a stage of tunneling combined with arbitrary *niveau* or *levé* units, followed by a stage, between the two World Wars, when architectural levels alone were used as excavation units, and finally, since World War II, to a stage in which architectural levels are studied in conjunction with visible soil strata. With the latter method the history of soil deposition is reconstructed by the use of sections through the deposits. Wheeler has encouraged the use of sections as a working tool that allows the excavator to see the mistakes he has made in digging one area and one that he can use as a visible key in the prevention of mistakes in the next area. If this method is to be used successfully, the recorded layers must be labeled in the balk at the time of digging and the relationship of horizontal plans and vertical sections studied together periodically. The simple drawing of a section at the end of an excavation misses the entire point of its active use as a tool. Wheeler's emphasis is, however, on vertical stratigraphy and many of his students have yet to realize what he himself has pointed out—namely, that horizontal excavation is also essential if the pic-

ture of a given site is to be fleshed out. This aspect of excavation is emphasized quite naturally by Lloyd, who has a background in architecture and who also relies on sections at critical moments to clarify his problems. Lloyd's concern with the tactics of excavation relative to stratigraphy is presented in a useful although somewhat simplified discussion of types of mounds and their method of accumulation.

Other discoveries made by the younger Lloyd—for example, the obvious one of making a surface survey of sites and relating the material to stratigraphic test excavations—will hardly seem novel to American readers who have been brought up on such techniques (the plethora of shallow sites in North America has made this necessary).

In summary, Lloyd quotes Lord Acton to the effect that one should "Study problems, not periods." Wheeler, on the other hand, insists that "the archeologist is digging up not *things*, but *people*." They are in close agreement on the proposition that "Dead archeology is the driest dust that blows." They are not so far apart as the exaggerated statements used in argument would suggest, and students would be well advised to select from the experience of both to the benefit of future field work.

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## Pre-Columbian Archeology

### Prehistoric Man in the New World.

Jesse D. Jennings and Edward Norbeck, Eds. Published for Rice University by University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964. x + 633 pp. Illus. \$10.

During the month of November 1962, in celebration of its semicentennial year, Rice University sponsored an anthropological symposium on the subject of prehistoric man in the New World. The aim of the symposium was to present a review and appraisal of facts and theories concerning the prehistoric peoples and culture of North and South America. The results of the symposium are presented in this book.

To give adequate coverage and coherence to such a vast field was a task of no mean proportions. The basic