Special section
A celebration of 1848

EDITED BY SIMON STODDART

The year 1848 is remembered by historians as a year of Revolution. Less well known is the fact that it was the year of publication, or at least gestation (before desktop publishing), of a number of significant archaeological works. Our predecessor-but-one as editor of ANTIQUITY cites seven books (and the discovery of the Gibraltar skull) from 1848 (Daniel 1975: 387). We commemorate three of these works and — in the next issue of ANTIQUITY — the skull. In addition, we have co-opted the *Communist manifesto* of 1848 which contains no archaeological detail (!), but which can be regarded as a book of major influence on branches of archaeological theory. Firstly, we have invited one of the best-known Marxist archaeologists, **Antonio Gilman**, to comment on Marx & Engels. Secondly, we have asked two keepers of the British Museum to comment on two figures who have directly and indirectly contributed to the collections of the museum. **Julian Reade** writes about Layard and *Nineveh and its remains*, which reported on excavations that have helped fill many a museum gallery. **Tim Potter** writes about *Cities and cemeteries of Etruria* by Dennis, a travelling archaeologist who recruited an artist, Ainsley, whose works are now principally held in the Prints & Drawings department of the British Museum. Finally, we have invited **Paul Welch** to anticipate the reprinting of the important work of Squier & Davis on *Ancient monuments of the Mississippi valley*, some 150 years after its original publication.

These archaeological books were some of the first products of the true birth of archaeology that was taking place in the middle of the last century. In 1847, Boucher de Perthes had published the first results of his evidence of the antiquity of man from the Somme river gravels. In 1848, we have the presentation of the development of regional civilizations: Mesopotamia, Etruria and the Mississippi valley. The three archaeological books from 1848 reviewed here all deal with a new systematic presentation of evidence (even if we may disagree with the interpretations based on that evidence). Layard presented scaled plans of his excavations and drawings of the reliefs he uncovered. Dennis reproduced a sample of the evocative drawings by Ainsley of the landscapes that he traversed. Above all, Squier & Davis, or more particularly the engineering skills of Squier financed by the medical income of Davis, produced the irreplaceable plans and sections of the mounds they studied.

All these books form part of an investigation and characterization of past identities, including, one could argue, the *Communist manifesto* which added a prediction of the future. Two of the archaeological works reviewed were, however, views by outsiders, Englishmen in Etruria and Mesopotamia. Dennis was concerned to show that 'Rome, before her intercourse with Greece, was indebted to ETRURIA for whatever tended to elevate and humanise her for her chief lessons in art and science, for many of her political and most of her religious and social institutions . . . for almost everything in short that tended to exalt her as a nation . . .' (Dennis 1848: xxi). Layard was concerned to understand the link between East and West: 'Discoveries in Assyria . . . Through them may be traced the origins of many arts, of many myths and symbols, and of many traditions afterwards perfected, and made familiar to us by the Genius of the Greeks' (Layard 1848: 155). Both these authors, Dennis and Layard, realized the inadequacy of written texts and proposed an archaeological solution. In many senses, the analysis of Squier & Davis was also an outside view, similarly lacking written texts, which failed to accept that the mounds of the Mississippi could have been constructed by the ancestors of the modern indigenous inhabitants. In this way, the works reviewed here are not totally repre-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X0008755X Published online by Cambridge University Press

sentative of what was happening archaeologically in 1848 in the English-speaking world.

Many other works published in 1848 were descriptions of local archaeology by writers from the same cultural tradition, if greatly removed in time from their subject matter. Wakeman's *Archaeologia Hibernica* explictly aimed to open the eyes of the Irish to the richness of their past: 'most of our travelled countrymen are better acquainted with . . . the windings of the Thames than those of the Boyne' (Wakeman 1848: v). He goes on to emphasize the wealth of Irish archaeology: 'The cairn of Newgrange in the county of Meath is perhaps the most wonderful monument of its class in any part of Western Europe . . .' (Wakeman 1848: 21). Neville, a noble landowner, was inspired by Colt Hoare's work earlier in the century to report on his excavations in the Audley End area south of Cambridge (Neville 1848). The attitude revealed by Neville is greatly removed from the more scientific approaches practised by Squier & Davis: 'In the month of July 1846, I directed the steps of my excavations westwards, the state of my health being such as to preclude the possibility of my taking part in any violent exercise, and amused myself, in default of any better occupation, by the examination of several British barrows, of which I had ascertained the existence, in the course of hunting with my beagles in the preceding spring . . .' (Neville 1848: 11). In a more serious spirit, but similar circumstances, Bateman, the grandson of a rich industrialist, had the leisure to provide a rather more systematic overview of the Derbyshire area with a range of drawings (Bateman 1848). Bateman managed to dig over 200 barrows, and inspired the excavation of at least 200 more, in his short life of 39 years. Furthermore, these were published with some plans and descriptions a few days before his untimely death (Bateman 1861; Marsden 1978).

Even though these works preceded the development of widespread public education, there was a climate of increased public interest and intellectual mass behind these publications. When Charles Dickens released the first instalment of *Dombey and Son* (eventually published in its entirety in 1848), it was rapidly produced as a total edition of 30,000 copies. Archaeology did not have the same involvement, but there was a general increase in the numbers involved in full-time intellectual activities in Europe. By 1848, Hobsbawn (1962: 167–9) estimates that there were 40,000 students in the continent of Europe who, although limited in numbers, had an impact out of proportion to their numbers on the general political and intellectual climate. An important threshold was reached where many books where published in local languages (not the trans-European languages of past intellectual élites), accompanied by a major expansion of publishing output. In spite of this, the major revolutions of literacy were yet to come and these books were written for a literate minority.

1848 was in many ways an archaeological watershed from where, in retrospect, we look backwards and forwards. We can look backwards into an antiquarian tradition of wealthy landowners curious about their estates, and to speculative explanations. We can look forward to the systematic presentation of the past and to the birth of more soundly based interpretations. We can also see the first evident popularization of archaeology that has gripped all those interested in their various pasts ever since.

References

BATEMAN, T. 1848. *Vestiges of the antiquities of Derbyshire: and the sepulchral usages of its inhabitants from the most remote ages to the reformation.* London: J.R. Smith.

1861. *Ten years' diggings in Celtic and Saxon Grave Hills in the counties of Derby, Stafford, and York from 1848 to 1858, with some notices of some former discoveries, hitherto unpublished and remarks on the crania and pottery from the mounds.* Derby: Bemrose & Sons.

DANIEL, G. 1975. *A hundred and fifty years of archaeology.* London: Duckworth.

DENNIS, G. 1848. *Cities and cemeteries of Etruria.* London: J. Murray.

DICKENS, C. 1848. *Dealings with the firm Dombey and Son. Wholesale, retail and for exportation.* London: Bradbury & Evans.

HOBSBAWM, E.J. 1962. *The age of revolution.* New York (NY): Mentor.

LAYARD, A.H. 1849. *Nineveh and its remains.* London: J. Murray.

MARSDEN, B.M. 1978. Thomas Bateman. 1821–1861. in T. Bateman (1861), *Ten years' diggings in Celtic and Saxon Grave Hills . . . .* Buxton: Moorland Reprints.

MARX, K. & F. ENGELS. 1848. *Manifest der Kommunistlichen Partei: veroffentlicht im Februar 1848.* London: Gedruckt in der Office der Bildungs-Gesellschaft für arbeiter von J.E. Burghard.

NEVILLE, R.C. 1848. Sepulchra exposita, *or an account of the opening of some barrows: with remarks upon miscellaneous antiquities, discovered in the neighbourhood of Audley End, Essex.* Saffron Walden: G. Youngman.

SQUIER, E.G. & E.H. DAVIS. 1848. *Ancient monuments of the Mississippi valley: comprising the results of extensive original surveys and explorations.* Washington (DC): Smithsonian Institution.

WAKEMAN, W.F. 1848. *Archaeologia Hibernica.* Dublin: James McGlashan.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X0008755X Published online by Cambridge University Press