war-torn country like Iraq, is part of the world's heritage, then some mechanism ought to be found whereby the world can help with finances. How can we say to the government of Bolivia that they ought to earmark some resources for museums, when there are so many other desperate needs?

These reflections are penned amidst what little remains of ancient Carthage. Scipio Africanus' '*Carthago delenda est*' and many successors certainly did their best, and all too effectively. But in Tunis there is one of the greatest collections of the world — the mosaics in the Bardo museum. My desire to come to Tunisia was ignited by two visits, the first in 1990, and the second in March 2001, when I led the first Inter-Parliamentary Union visit to Sabatha, in Libya, and what is surely the greatest of all sites of Ancient Rome — Leptis Magna — a view shared by John Wilkes, Professor of the History of the Roman Provinces in the University of London, and a delightful travelling companion, when I went as a 'paying spouse' on the annual visitations of the Ancient Monuments Board in Scotland, of which Wilkes was a Member.

I was told by Colonel Gaddaffi and his ministers that Libya had neither the need nor the desire to open up the largest single coastline in the Mediterranean to mass tourism. They were unashamedly interested in specialist tourism. I suspect that the greatest challenge in world archaeology may lie in co-operation with the Libyans, in the restoration of their many world-class sites. To find oneself almost alone in Leptis Magna, with noise emanating mainly from the resident bird population was selfishly wonderful.

Whither archaeology?

As a discipline, archaeology lies between the arts and the sciences, and is perhaps the best discipline of all to engender flexibility of the mind. What could be more valuable in the 21st century?

Anyone for writing?

PETER KEMMIS BETTY*

'The universal interest in the past is perfectly natural. It is the interest in life itself. There was a time when archaeology was voted a dull subject, fit only for dry-as-dusts; yet it was not the subject that was dull, but its exponents. Those days are over.'

Thus O.G.S. Crawford in his Editorial Notes for the very first number of ANTIQUITY 75 years ago. However admirable, this missionary zeal is far from universal among present-day archaeologists; moreover, the present-day funding of archaeology, though lavish compared with Crawford's day, is in danger of quenching the missionary flame even when it exists. Crawford was, of course, thinking primarily of journal articles as the medium for accessible communication; to these could be added not only books and newspapers but, today, TV and the internet. However, it is the success or otherwise of the book in making archaeology exciting on which I wish to concentrate, as it is only through book publishing that I have had serious contact with the world of archaeology. To be even more specific, since I have been involved, one way or another, in publishing archaeological books for 30 years, I shall be confining myself to my own direct experience of the opportunities and difficulties involved.

It is only in the last 15 years of this period that I have become increasingly convinced of the need for more widely accessible books — and correspondingly concerned about the difficulty in commissioning appropriate authors. So what follows is, from one perspective, a shameless appeal to archaeologists who share Crawford's vision to make my life as a publisher easier. However, at the same time I do believe that a response to this appeal would be in the interest of British archaeology as a whole.

To explain this self-serving assertion I fear I need to indulge in a little ancient history. Despite reading Classics at Cambridge my interest in archaeology did not begin until some 10 years later. At that time I was employed as an editor at B.T. Batsford, largely working on a

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ANTIQUITY 76 (2002): 1054–8

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00091870 Published online by Cambridge University Press

series of British Battles. The (chronologically) first volume in this series, *The Roman Conquest of Britain*, was authored by two academics from the University of Birmingham — one of them Graham Webster. A few years later Graham, like Crawford a natural enthusiast, somehow managed to convince me that there was room in the market for another archaeology publisher.

As a result Graham was appointed as our Archaeology Adviser, with a brief to locate authors who could produce works of major importance, whether monographs or textbooks, and by the mid 1970s we were publishing such titles as *Roman towns in Britain* and *Techniques of archaeological excavation* by Philip Barker. Additionally we were soon publishing titles aimed primarily at the extramural student or amateur, such as Graham Webster's own book *Boudica*. In 1990 Graham Webster was succeeded by Professor Michael Fulford and by the time I left Batsford some five years later (when this list was sold to Routledge) about 100 titles had been published.

The *raison d'être* of these books was first and foremost to give a platform to professional archaeologists, in support of their teaching activities. However, in 1988 the perspective of the list was to change significantly. Stephen Johnson, then the Publisher at English Heritage, was searching for a commercial partner to produce a series of more popular archaeology titles (having failed to persuade his own organization to rise to the challenge). The idea was that authors would incorporate the latest research, much of it funded by English Heritage, but would write for a market that would encompass a typical English Heritage or National Trust member.

English Heritage committed themselves to an initial six titles and the following year we published Stephen Johnson's *Hadrian's Wall* and *Avebury* by Caroline Malone. I don't think English Heritage ever formally approved an extension of the series, but Stephen and I interpreted their commitment as 'six titles at a time' and over the next 10 years published some 50 titles. Most of the books were written by top experts (who could have been producing specialist reports or student texts) but the mix of subject matter, the clarity of writing and (no doubt) the English Heritage logo enabled us to reach readers who were not academics, students or archaeology anoraks. A wider range of bookshops was prepared to stock books in the series, with the result that (excluding a handful of high-selling textbooks like Kevin Greene's *Archaeology: an introduction*) the English Heritage books sold twice as many copies per title as the rest of the list. Accordingly this successful experiment was consolidated in 1993 by a similar arrangement (which still continues) with Historic Scotland under the editorship of their Chief Archaeologist, David Breeze.

Such was my experience of archaeology — the publication of getting on for 200 titles of a varied nature from a variety of authors — when, in 1996, just as I was finally severing contacts with Batsford following a disastrous takeover, I received a call from Alan Sutton, who was building up a new company (then called Chalford) after leaving the company he had founded 20 years earlier. At the time the company was confined to photographic local history but Alan was anxious to diversify into general history and archaeology.

The invitation could not have come at a more opportune moment. Not only had the previous 25 years given me a wide range of archaeological contacts but the ever-increasing size of publishing companies, and their concentration on the US market, provided a great opportunity for a smaller publisher who could make money from lower print runs needed for titles aimed primarily, or even exclusively, at the British market; moreover, with the near-demise of Batsford, there was no publisher who was significantly or systematically publishing on aspects of British archaeology.

I was eager therefore to commission books which would present cutting-edge research or much-needed syntheses for a wide readership. The underlying aim was to achieve the impossible — of producing books that would appeal to amateurs but would contain enough meat for students and professionals. The result was 14 books published in the second half of 1998 under the new imprint of 'Tempus', beginning with *Wroxeter* by Roger White & Philip Barker and *Hadrian's Wall* from Guy de la Bédoyère. Later in that year I had the good fortune to publish three exceptionally brilliant books — Ian Stead's *The Salisbury Hoard* (which went on to win first prize in the British Archaeological Awards), *The Land of Lettice Sweetapple* by Peter Fowler & Ian Blackwell and Charles

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00091870 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Thomas' *Christian Celts: messages & images*. Today, some four years later, we are publishing 45 archaeology titles a year.

What I have learned over these four years, even more dramatically than at Batsford, is that the wider interest in archaeology is stimulated by two factors: the first is television, the second is local involvement. As a publisher, what one can do about the first insight is limited: a book rarely reaches as wide an audience as does the television programme, and not every book published can be authored by Julian Richards or Mick Aston. But the local connection is more interesting. Of its nature, archaeology is locally based, and many local inhabitants of any area take a considerable interest, and indeed pride, in the history of where they live. So perhaps I should not have been surprised when our second bestseller (after *Mick's archaeology*) for 2000 was Martin Green's archaeological exploration of his family farm near Salisbury, which was published under the title of *A landscape revealed: 10,000 years on a chalkland farm*. Significantly, what these two authors have in common is an evident and infectious enthusiasm for their subject, in addition to knowledge. As a result, people with no prior commitment to archaeology are buying archaeology books for the first time.

The interest in all things local raises the possibility that many excavations can be presented as a saleable popular account as well as the traditional official report of doorstep proportions and at a price to match. (Indeed, it says much for the devotion to the traditional book that this art form survives at all when the alternative of a more complete archive on the internet might be more useful — for the few people who ever need to refer to the full report.) This idea of the popular excavation report has worked well in the case of *The Land of Lettice Sweetapple* and *Wroxeter* (both mentioned above) and even now Barry Cunliffe is working on a new single-volume edition of *Danebury*.

However, the unique selling point of the Tempus list as a whole is not the subject area (though it is mostly British and a lot is local) but the degree of accessibility. And this is where a substantial problem has been encountered. Tempus is only providing a platform for would-be authors. We are not in the business of writing books ourselves — so the list will only be as good as the authors who are eager, and able, to write. Given the range of professional (not to mention amateur) archaeological activity and the number of potential authors available, the outsider might imagine that archaeologists would be clamouring to write and publishers would have the luxury of selecting the very best proposals from a wide field.

However, most readers of ANTIQUITY will instantly be aware of the other pressures on present-day academics. If only half what I am told when I visit university departments about the student-teacher ratios, the burdens of departmental admin and the demands of RAE is true, then it is a wonder that anyone has the time to write at all — and this is ignoring possible digs in the long vacation and the normal demands of family life.

'I am afraid to say that my time is extremely limited at the moment because of professional commitments that are all consuming and I can only afford to undertake additional projects which either enhance my academic CV through the publication of new research, or which provide me with substantial extra income. Unfortunately the book I have contracted to write for you falls into neither of these categories.' These two sentences from a letter received a couple of days ago neatly encapsulate the problems confronting the potential academic author. Few books will sell enough copies to earn substantial royalties for an author — so inevitably he or she will be writing for other motives. But in the fight for survival university departments naturally strive for the highest possible research assessment on which their funds in part depend. So they frown upon members whose writing does not earn maximum RAE Brownie points for the department. It is true that many would-be Tempus projects could be tweaked to score, but basically it is a system within which specialist speaks unto specialist. Ever since the long-lamented closure of the old Extramural Departments, popularization does not appear to be part of the academic's brief.

Yet, despite this hurdle, some academics (see below) do succeed in producing accessible books. So perhaps the straitjacket of the RAE can, on occasions, be a convenient excuse for those who have little interest in, or ability for, wider communication. And, of course, there is no obligation on archaeologists to write books of a popular character. As archaeology has become progressively more 'professional' and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00091870 Published online by Cambridge University Press

specialized, the proportion of leading archaeologists who feel either motivated or equipped to write general or more accessible books has declined. Just because archaeological features are visible, many archaeologists do not feel that their professional discipline is, or should be, the concern of the general public — any more than are, say, nuclear physics or microbiology. Perhaps for the same reason most academics are less than enthusiastic about popularizing TV programmes such as *Time Team*. But, of course, it was Crawford's thesis that archaeology should be available to everyone as it was an 'interest in life itself'.

Apart from time, competence, inclination and the lack of significant financial return, there is another major stumbling-block to the production of archaeology books and that is the difficulty of obtaining appropriate illustrations, which are so essential to an understanding of the subject. Unless the author happens to be a skilled draughtsperson and an equally skilled photographer, the cost of adequately illustrating a book far exceeds the likely royalties — especially if they have to make use of photographs from a museum collection. Many museums and organizations (including English Heritage, which has a commitment to encouraging intellectual access to the historic environment) are, with their scale of reproduction fees, sadly pricing themselves out of the market — with the result that the objects, buildings or sites within their care will no longer be represented in publications. The raising of fees in this way, by bodies that are curating public collections, is not only a disservice to scholarship as a whole but is arguably counter-productive in itself: the likely result is that their income will fall, not increase.

Despite these roadblocks, Tempus' first four years of publishing have seen about 125 archaeology titles. But the authorship split is revealing. Of this total, 30% has been produced by authors in university posts and a further 12% by those working for other archaeology bodies. But the group that has produced most titles is that of freelance writers of one sort or another (40%), supported by retired academics who have contributed a further 18%. The reason why I think that this is an undesirable split is not that the last two categories are not both knowledgeable and talented. A recent review of *Mycenae: Agamemnon's capital* compliments Elizabeth French on 'making the extraordinary discoveries accessible to a general readership'; and Jill Eddison, who helped set up the Romney Marsh Research Trust in 1987 and more recently wrote for Tempus *Romney Marsh: survival on a frontier*, has just received the annual award from the British Association for Local History in recognition of her contribution to local history. But *prima facie* new work should preponderantly be coming from the first two groups, the active professionals— who, incidentally, are the first to complain (often in a waspish review) when an author who is seen as a non-specialist is rash enough to 'intrude' on a territory they themselves have already forsaken through default.

This opting-out of popularization raises a more general concern. A high proportion of archaeological activity is funded, one way or another, from taxation. In an environment when there is increasing competition for public money, it would appear to be in the interests of any group to strengthen their grassroots support. At the moment, much of this work is being done by those involved in television (usually to the derision of those in academe), but it does seem to me that there are a number of bodies who could be doing more to increase public awareness of the contribution of professional archaeology to our understanding of the past.

In this respect it is not only the universities that are open to criticism. English Heritage has almost half-a-million individual members. The organization has a statutory responsibility for education, but you would not guess it from the pages of its magazine *Heritage Today*. This lives in terror of the A-word and is in constant danger of writing down to its members. It declines to review books and the 'Off the Shelf' feature of 3–4 books per issue only runs to 20–30 words per book and is almost entirely devoted to History & Architecture. There seems little attempt to explain to members the contribution that archaeology, substantially funded by English Heritage, can make to the understanding of our past. It is perhaps not surprising that, under the section 'Increasing understanding of the historic environment' in the Annual Reports and Accounts 1999/2000, there is no mention at all of what should be their flagship magazine. Indeed, the targets listed in this report make no mention at all of any popular dissemination of research.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00091870 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Similarly archaeology would benefit from a little more commitment to education in English Heritage site shops. In some outlets one gets the impression visitors are seen primarily as providers of cash, not as interested individuals who might welcome the opportunity of further information beyond that of the introductory booklet. Books are a commercial embarrassment, taking up space that would be better occupied by gifts and souvenirs. Obviously a shop needs to make money, but equally an English Heritage shop should try to enthuse and inform visitors. However, with archaeologists for the first time simultaneously occupying the jobs of Chairman and Chief Executive, the future may be rosier.

Lest I should sound too negative, two invaluable aids (besides television) to the popularization of archaeology should be mentioned: the Ancient & Medieval History Book Club (with about 20,000 members) and the magazines/journals which publish more than once a year — in particular *Current Archaeology* (surely the modern standard bearer of Crawford's dream), *British Archaeology* and ANTIQUITY itself. It is true that the Book Club is not over-enthusiastic about dirt archaeology and has reservations about local studies, but it particularly likes books in which the archaeology can support a story. Anything Romano-British is (to judge by its purchases) music to its readers' ears. As for the journals mentioned above, if it were not for their frequent reviews the average author (not to mention the potential reader) would have to wait a couple of years before getting any public reaction to his or her efforts.

(Just occasionally, this welcome attention backfires. In a recent review from one of the above-mentioned journals the only other authority in the land reviewed one of our books on an aspect of the British Neolithic. Not only did the reviewer castigate our author for not writing a different book from the one he had, but then he went on to recommend the only readable book on the subject — written by himself. But even on this occasion we stuck to our belief that any publicity is better than none! However, this atypical abuse of the reviewer's position pales into insignificance compared with the notorious academic censorship exercised by one archaeologist, who will not stock any books by one of our best-selling authors in a bookshop for which she has responsibility. A striking example of *odium academicum*. But fortunately such occurrences are extremely rare.)

On balance, a reader might wonder why I am so wholeheartedly devoted to popular (or, at least, semi-popular) archaeology publishing. Of course, if the company did not make money out of it, we would not be doing it — so, despite my high-minded regrets at others' shortcomings, I cannot claim to be a genuine zealot. No, what has me completely hooked is (by and large) the friendliness of archaeologists (at least to publishers, if not to each other). This is so beguiling that I forget their elusiveness and reluctance to write — which is balanced only by their absurd promises of prompt delivery if/when they do sign a contract. What is sure is that, when a typescript is delivered five years late, it is essential that it should be published in five weeks. Even we, who can turn a jumble of material into a book in less than three months, occasionally fail that expectation.

In conclusion, if I can be permitted to end on an even more personal note and mention someone who is an ancient historian rather than an archaeologist: I count myself particularly privileged to have published Tony Birley's first book, *Life in Roman Britain,* in 1964, and 38 years later (after other publications from him in the 1970s and 1980s) to have followed this up with *Garrison life in Vindolanda* in 2002. A meticulous scholar, he is a shining example of someone who is happy to seize the opportunity of producing a more accessible volume when required. But then he left the British academic world (for Germany) many years ago.

I now eagerly await calls from other prospective authors who will still be writing for Tempus (if not for me) in 2040! Otherwise Crawford's proud boast of 75 years ago may seem to have made in vain: the 'dry-as-dusts' may yet win.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00091870 Published online by Cambridge University Press