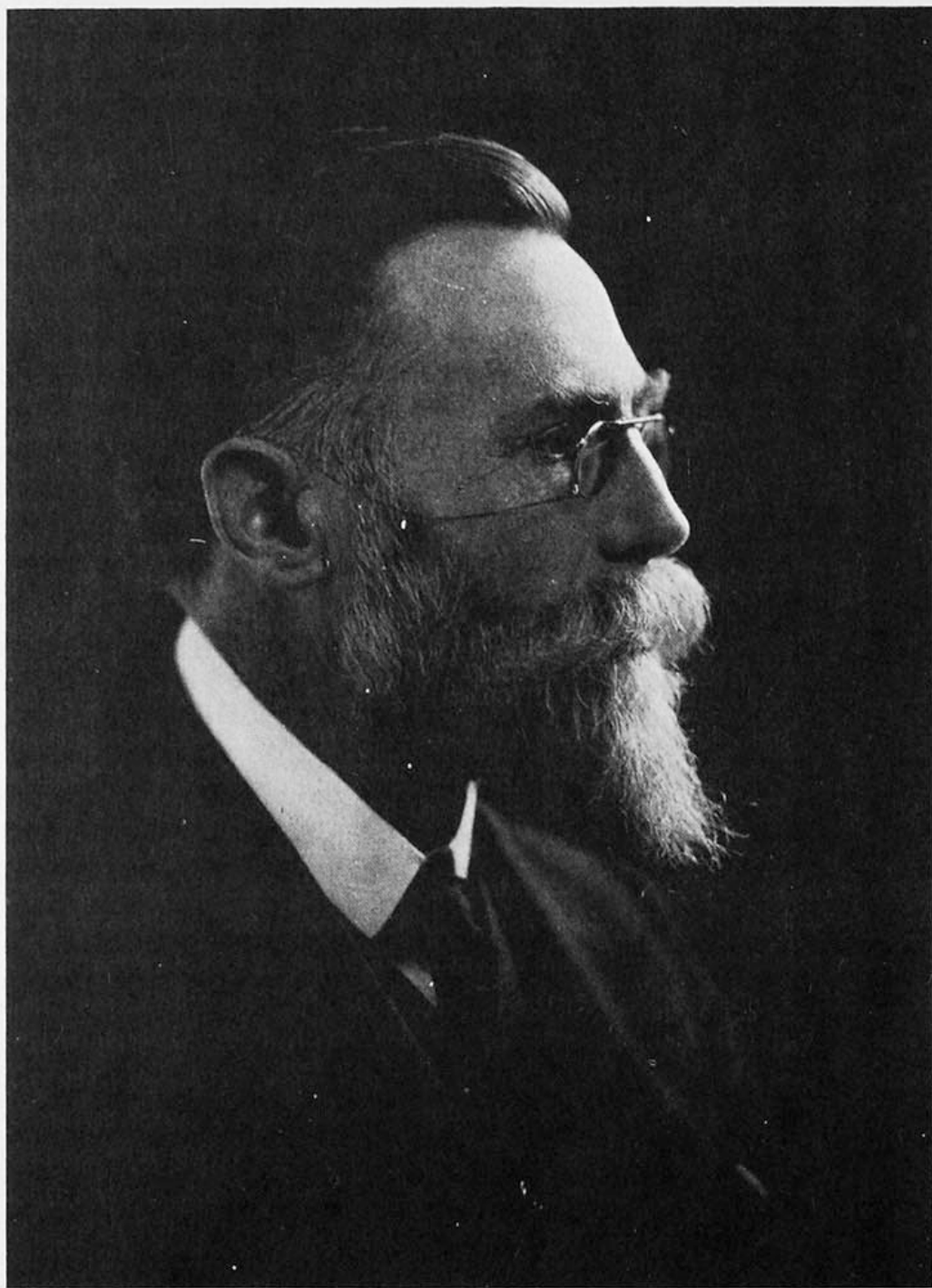


PLATE IX



Photograph by Lafayette

SIR JOHN L. MYRES, O.B.E., 1929

SIR JOHN MYRES¹

1869-1954

JOHN LINTON MYRES was born at Preston on 3 July 1869, the only son of the Reverend William Miles Myres, then vicar of St Paul's, Preston, by his first wife, Jane Linton, who died eighteen months later at the birth of his sister. His father's second wife died at the birth of her only son in 1874, and this double tragedy clouded the early years of all three children. The family was long established in this part of Lancashire. His grandfather, John James Myres (1811-81), and his great-uncle, Miles Myres (1808-73), were men of weight in local affairs; between 1867 and 1874 Miles was Mayor of Preston three times and John James twice. At the Preston Guild of 1882 Myres accordingly became a hereditary Guild Burgess of Preston, and always retained an affection for the county and ancient borough of his birth.

In 1879 he began to attend Preston Grammar School, having already some Latin and a little Greek. He won a form prize in his first term but in the same year his father, whose health had suffered from his domestic misfortunes, left Preston for a country living at Swanbourne in Buckinghamshire, and he was sent to boarding-school at Thorpe Mandeville near Banbury. In due course he sat for the scholarship examination at Winchester, and was elected third on the roll of 1882.

At Winchester the breadth of his later interests began to show itself. This generation saw the introduction of the sciences into the Winchester curriculum, and he studied chemistry, physics, and geology, offering these subjects as well as classics for his New College scholarship. He took charge of the school museum, and catalogued the fossils of the Hampshire chalk; the museum also included a small collection of antiquities, mainly from Cyprus. His eyesight troubled him from early days, and he was not a games player; he read a great deal of what he later called 'fine confused feeding' in Moberly Library, and dabbled in schoolboy journalism; he also joined in the activity of the Corps. The art of war long remained one of his interests, in both his reading and writing, and, at Oxford, in the Kriegspiel Club.

¹ This memoir was substantially complete at the time of Mr. T. J. Dunbabin's death in April 1955, but the Academy is greatly indebted to Dr. J. N. L. Myres for checking its facts and for preparing it for the press.

His headmaster in his later years at Winchester was Dr. Fearon, from whom he learnt how an historian works, as he learnt from W. C. Griffith and W. Bleadon Croft of scientific method. Archaeology had appealed to him since in his nursery days he saw his father's copies of the Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund, with the picture on its cover of excavation in progress. At Winchester he read Schliemann's *Troy* and was fired by Schliemann's example. In the New College election, he was asked by D. S. Margoliouth, 'In classics, was it the languages or the peoples that interested me,' and answered, in a prophetic flash, 'The peoples.' In recording this incident a few months before his death he wrote: 'I have never repented of this answer.'

He came up to New College at the head of the Winchester Scholars of 1888, and duly took his Firsts in Honour Moderations and Greats. But the languages did not greatly interest him, and he took none of the University prizes, until the year of his graduation. He records that 'at first, Oxford was frankly a disappointment. Honour Moderations were little more than a continuation of Scholarships' at Winchester. But his tutors included the young Gilbert Murray, and he heard Gladstone address the Union on Homer and was 'fascinated by the great eagle's head, seen from below, the sonorous voice, and the clever pleading'. He kept up his scientific interests in the University Museum, went to lectures on geology, and joined in excursions; he was a member of the Junior Scientific Club, and of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society. The latter, of which he was later Secretary and President, took him to the Ashmolean, which Arthur Evans was then building up as the centre of archaeological study which it has since remained. He did not meet Evans until 1892, but heard Percy Gardner's lectures on Greek sculpture, vases, and coins. Coins played a large part also in tutorials from Charles Oman, to whom he went for Greek history; and David Hogarth was lecturing on Prehistoric Greece. Greats made more appeal to him than Mods. This was the year of the discovery of the *Athenaion Politeia*, and Oxford historians were very vigorous—R. W. Macan, E. M. Walker, F. Haverfield, and H. F. Pelham, whose lectures on Roman Institutions were 'the best lectures I ever heard'.

His earliest publications, as an undergraduate, were notes on parish history in the *Records of Buckinghamshire*, work done in his father's rural deanery. He organized a museum of local history in Aylesbury, almost single-handed, and began collections for

the systematic publication of the county's church plate. His first digging was with Percy Manning at Alchester in Oxfordshire, a small Roman market-town at a cross-roads on the Akeman Street.

He first visited Greece in 1891, travelling out from Marseilles with the crew of a Greek torpedo boat, and learning some modern Greek on the voyage. His round was the usual one of undergraduate students, and included Mégalopolis, where the British School was excavating. He was kindly received by Ernest Gardner, then Director of the British School; and spent a good deal of time with the Schliemann collection, though there was no one in Athens who could help him with it. He enjoyed the incidents of travel in the Greek countryside, the encounters with dogs and old-time brigands now earning an honest living by letting lodgings; and took a liking to the resined wine of Greece; those who like it will return to Greece all their lives. He says of this visit: 'This short journey changed my whole outlook on ancient history, and especially on Greece and Greek lands. Here was a real country, exceptionally constituted, and inhabited still by a people who retained much of their ancient habit and outlook. I reread my Greats texts with fresh eyes and a new sense of their meaning for us.' Many have felt this on their first visit to Greece in their early twenties; few can look back, as he did in the evening of his days, on a life spent in such whole-hearted pursuit of this early vision.

His career was, perhaps, determined in this visit. In an earlier vacation he had tried his hand at school teaching, and decided it was not for him. In 1892 he was awarded the Craven Fellowship and the Burdett Coutts Geological Scholarship, and in the same year was elected to a prize fellowship at Magdalen—Hogarth's college. The subject which he proposed to study for the Craven Fellowship was 'Oriental Influences in Prehistoric Greece', 'which', he wrote in the last year of his life, 'I confess that I am studying still'. The travelling which is a condition of this fellowship was done, naturally, in Greece and Greek lands. In the autumn of 1892 he returned to Greece as a student of the British School at Athens. His interests lay now mainly in the islands. He travelled in the Cyclades, noting early sites, and joined W. R. Paton in exploring the Dodecanese and the coasts of south-western Anatolia. Paton had married the beautiful daughter of the Greek mayor of Kalymnos, and lived on an estate of his father-in-law on the mainland opposite; and Myres was in a sense adopted into the family. His intimate knowledge

of these waters and of the lands on the mainland farmed by the islanders was put to good use later.

Caria was, however, an interlude in his programme of work on prehistoric Greece, and he returned to join Arthur Evans in Crete. This began a lifelong association. While still in Athens, they had worked through the Schliemann collection and had gone 'grubbing below the "Pelasgian" wall of the Akropolis and picking out fragments of prae-Mykenaeon vases which nobody here seems to have heeded before'.¹ In Crete, Myres travelled through the rougher western parts of the island, disturbed at this time by perennial revolution, collecting coins and copying inscriptions. A conclusive step in the discovery of the Minoan civilization was taken when he identified the beautiful and delicate pottery known as Kamares ware, from the Kamares cave high on the southern slopes of Mt. Ida, as the same with sherds from Flinders Petrie's excavations at Kahun in Egypt; he returned home at once from Crete in order to compare the fabric of the sherds in Crete with those found in Egypt, and announced his discovery to the British Association at Nottingham (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, xv, 1895, pp. 351-6). This made it possible to link Aegean prehistory with the relatively firm chronology of dynastic Egypt. He travelled again in Crete with Evans in 1895, and with Evans and Hogarth in 1898, on the morrow of the successful revolution, but was not able to dig with them at Knossos during the fruitful years which followed. But he took part in the British School's excavations at Palai-kastro in East Crete in 1903, being responsible for the outlying Minoan sanctuary at Petsofà, with its interesting dedications of clay figurines. His report of this dig was published with exemplary promptness; rumour runs that it was written in a single night, without books but with catalogue numbers and references to periodicals correctly inserted.

He did more field-work in Cyprus than in Crete. In 1894 he carried out a number of small excavations for the Cyprus Excavation Fund, the most important being at and near the ancient Kition. He now prepared the catalogue of the Cyprus Museum, in association with M. Ohnefalsch-Richter. The printing of the book was delayed by disagreements between the two scholars; when it appeared in 1899, it was for that date a model museum catalogue, fuller and more exact than anything of the sort done previously, and included a history of excavation in Cyprus under British occupation and a general account of

¹ Joan Evans, *Time and Chance*, p. 304.

Cypriot archaeology. The detailed work was almost all Myres's. He was now established as one of the leading authorities on Cyprus in all its aspects; he wrote the article on Cyprus in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910) and in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible* and other encyclopaedias, and also the section on Cyprus in *The Oxford Survey of the British Empire* (1914). In 1909 he was invited to publish the Cesnola collection of antiquities from Cyprus in New York. The *Handbook* of the collection appeared in 1914, and a sumptuous publication of some of its most handsome objects, the painted stone sarcophagi, in *Antike Denkmäler* in 1912. In 1913 he returned to Cyprus to excavate with his pupil Menelaos Makrides, at that time Director of the Cyprus Museum. But the outbreak of war, and Makrides's untimely death, interrupted the work, which remained unpublished until, during the Second World War, Myres had the opportunity to complete the excavation reports. Cypriot studies run through his later work; an important paper is the study in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1933, of the Amathus Bowl, one of the pieces of the Cesnola collection which was separated from the main body of the collection, passed through the hands of John Ruskin, and is now in the British Museum; one of his last articles (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 1954) is on a Cypriot vase from the Cesnola collection in New York.

The years of travel ended in 1895, when Myres was appointed Lecturer in Ancient History at Christ Church, and in the same year he married Sophia Ballance (who survives him, together with their younger son and daughter). Haverfield was his colleague for Roman history; he lectured on Herodotus, on constitutions, and on the historical geography of the eastern Mediterranean, and also on prehistoric Greece, in the Ashmolean. He was a pioneer in the use of lantern slides, and visual aids to teaching occupied him much at this period; he spent some time in organizing the Hellenic Society's collection of lantern slides and photographs. He also helped Evans with the installation of the new galleries of the Ashmolean.

His first review was of Macan's *Herodotus IV-VI* in 1895, and in the following year he published 'An Attempt to Reconstruct the Maps used by Herodotus'; the maps reappear in *Herodotus: Father of History* (1953). His prehistoric studies were forwarded in a series of articles in *Science Progress* for 1896-8, setting out a summary of the present situation and a programme of work, and two important and controversial reviews, of W. Helbig's *La question mycénienne* and C. Torr's *Memphis and Mycenae*, asserted

the true age and nature of the Mycenaean civilization. In 1899 he won the Arnold Essay Prize with an essay on 'The Place of the Greek Islands in the Early History of Greek Civilization'. Throughout these years he suffered from the after-effects of a severe attack of malaria caught in Cyprus in 1894, and in 1897 he was ordered to a warm climate. He travelled with Evans in North Africa, noted Aegean analogies, such as oil presses of the form that he had seen in Kalymnos with Paton, and observed the technique of modern Kabyle potters producing 'geometric' vases. He also studied the geography of the country, in spite of the suspicions of Turkish officials, to such effect that he was asked to write the chapter on Tripoli in the *International Geography*, edited by H. R. Mill.

His interest in the British Association for the Advancement of Science goes back to 1890, when he attended its meeting at Leeds. In 1893 he was a secretary of the Anthropological Section at the Nottingham meeting, and in 1895, and for many succeeding years, he was recorder of this section. In 1897 the Association met at Toronto. He took the opportunity of travelling in the United States as well as eastern Canada, worked in New York on the Cesnola collection, and met General di Cesnola. This was followed by many visits to America, both for work on the Cesnola collection and to lecture and travel. He revisited Canada in 1909, when the British Association met at Winnipeg and he presided over Section H. Some striking analogies from New World geographical history to illuminate the conditions of Greek colonization appear in his 'Geographical Aspect of Greek Colonization' in 1911, where he calls the corn-lands of the Black Sea colonies 'a Manitoba and Alberta of inexhaustible grass-land fertility'. After his visit to Australia in 1914 comparisons from farther afield appear; Cyrene, for example, is called 'the Darling Downs of antiquity'.

In 1900 he became Honorary Secretary of the Royal Anthropological Institute, an office which worked in closely with the recordership of the Anthropological Section of the British Association. The President of the Institute in 1901 spoke of 'the restless energy and resource of our talented Secretary, Mr. Myres'. He persuaded the council of the Institute to begin the publication of a new monthly periodical, in addition to its *Journal*. The first number of *Man* appeared on the first day of the new century, and it continued as 'a monthly record of anthropological science', edited by Myres, and with many contributions of notes and reviews from his pen, for the first three

years. In 1903 he resigned from the editorship and the secretaryship of the Institute, in circumstances which he recorded briefly in the Jubilee number of *Man*, in a note entitled 'The Origin of *Man*'—a typically ambiguous title, for he might well have omitted the italics. *Man* continued on the course that he had laid down for it, and after more than fifty years has still the same format and contents of the same nature. He became honorary editor again, at a moment of crisis, in 1931 and continued until 1946.

In 1902 he entered the field of Roman history with *A History of Rome*, intended for middle and upper forms of schools, written during a summer holiday, primarily, as he confessed later, to help pay for his growing family. His younger son was born the same year: the book still sells. The early civilizations of Italy were always among his interests, and he was as enlightening on the geographical conditions of early Italy as on those of Greece; but he did no other work in Roman history. At this time university business at Oxford took an increasing part of his time, and he was Proctor in 1904–5; years later he congratulated a younger colleague on his election to the proctorship with the words: 'I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did.' He was on the side of reform and was active in promoting schemes for graduate degrees, B.Litt., B.Sc., and D.Phil., and for new Honours Schools, especially Geography and Anthropology. Oxford still has no Honours School of Anthropology; but the establishment of the Geography School (1932) was very near to his heart; he served two periods as examiner in it, and was always interested in practical aspects of geographical teaching. He also supported Evans in the long negotiations which set up uniform control for the Ashmolean under a Board of Visitors; his inside knowledge of university politics was here of decisive importance.

In 1907 he was tempted away from Oxford to become the first Gladstone Professor of Greek in Liverpool, combining this with a related interest, for he was also Lecturer in Ancient Geography. He moved to Liverpool with a lively concern for the problems of a young non-residential university, and an awareness of the possibilities of innovation in a curriculum less set than that of *Literae Humaniores* at Oxford. He threw himself with energy into the life of Liverpool and the university, formed a branch of the Classical Association, lectured to all sorts of people on all sorts of subjects connected with classical antiquity—such as 'Ancient Groceries', read to the Grocers' Assistants (eventually published in *Greece and Rome*, 1953). He liked being

in a seaport city, but his wife's health suffered there, and when the opportunity to return to Oxford came in 1910 he took it gladly.

This was the foundation of the Wykeham Chair of Ancient History, a new chair attached to New College, and intended especially for Greek history. It seemed to be made for Myres. Two of his lectures of 1910—'The Value of Ancient History', delivered to men beginning Greats in the summer term before he took up the chair, and 'Greek Lands and the Greek People', his inaugural lecture—contain in characteristically brilliant form many of the guiding ideas of his life's work. The former began with an analysis of the preface or 'title-page' to Herodotus, which was taken up again in his book on Herodotus published in 1953. In the latter he asked, not for the first time, the question, 'Who were the Greeks?' which was more fully stated in his biggest book. The following year saw the first edition of a book whose importance is far beyond its length—*The Dawn of History*, in the Home University Library—a brilliantly clear piece of writing, done straight off in three weeks of the long vacation. Looking round for a large work to organize with the aid of a team of classical scholars at Oxford, he proposed a commentary on Strabo; but the war cut short these plans. Other proposals for the reorganization of Honours Schools at Oxford, combining philosophy with natural science, were also shelved in 1914.

In 1914 he was the first professor appointed on the Sather Foundation at the University of California. The seaside life and wide horizons of Berkeley and San Francisco made him feel at home, and his term's visit was followed by an invitation to stay as Professor of Ancient History. He was sorely tempted by this offer and might well have accepted it but for the domestic responsibilities of his growing family in Oxford. In the summer of this year he set out for Australia for the meeting of the British Association at Adelaide. Accompanied by his elder son, who at fourteen had outgrown his strength at school, he arrived in Australia on the morning of 4 August; the meeting took place as planned, the German and Austrian visitors giving their parole, but the shadow of the war hung over all the proceedings and the journey, which was completed by returning across the Pacific and the American continent, thus circling the world.

Oxford in October 1914 was at first little changed, except for a shortage of undergraduates, and a corps of middle-aged civilians, known from the G.R. on their armlets as the Gorgeous Wrecks, who drilled and got fit before a nine o'clock lecture.

But in July 1915 he was called to the Admiralty and asked if he would go to Budrum—in hostile Turkey. He promptly accepted and travelled out to Athens with Hogarth, also on a special mission, and on to Samos, where he learnt intelligence duties with a motor-caïque engaged on patrolling the Turkish coast and landing agents on it. His sphere of action was the Dodecanese; Italy was still neutral, and he had some difficulty in explaining his mission to Italian officers, but with the acquaintance gained in his travels with Paton he was able to organize look-outs and shipping reports. The Greeks of Kalymnos, where he made his headquarters, hoped for more active participation in the war. After some months here he received command of the tug *Syra*, as Lieutenant-Commander R.N.V.R., with a warrant-officer navigator and light armament. He transferred to the little island of Gaidaro south of Samos, inhabited only by a few fishermen and shepherds, and recruited a force of islanders whose chief operations were raids on the Turkish mainland for cattle—as many of them owned farms on the mainland, they were only taking their own. These activities and continuous close-in reconnaissances of the coast were designed to hold substantial Turkish forces in this area in anticipation of large-scale landings. Although these never occurred, the most elaborate raid succeeded, with covering support from more regular naval units, in taking temporary possession of the Cnidian peninsula. Myres went up with a seaplane to direct the bombing of Yeronda, the ancient Didyma, where the German excavators' house was believed to be used by the enemy, and to ensure the safety of the Temple of Apollo. He says, 'What distracted me all the time was the unexpected view of the villas and gardens of Roman Branchidae. I would never willingly dig again without air reconnaissance.' *Syra* was ubiquitous in the Aegean, and occasionally an embarrassment to friend as well as foe; her commander frankly enjoyed buccaneering and took every sort of risk whether authorized or not: he often needed his quick wit to thread the consequent complexities of service and inter-allied misunderstandings and jealousies. It was a hard life on board; but he thrived on it and was better in health than he had been for years. It amused him to record that he qualified for 'hard-lying allowance' only when he enjoyed the relative comfort of a destroyer. There were excitements over submarines, and reports of submarine bases among the islands; and near-shipwrecks on the unlighted and ill-charted islets of the Archipelago. These adventures were eventually too much for *Syra*,

which had to retire to refit. Reorganization of intelligence work led to Myres temporarily forming part of Compton Mackenzie's staff on the island of Syra, but he soon had another ship, the former royal yacht *Avlis*, with a Greek crew and a roving commission.

Towards the end of 1917 he came home on leave, and on his return was stationed in Athens, to take charge of Information and Passport Control, with instructions to report direct to London. This led to strained relations with some of the many and various intelligence officers at work in Greece, and the divided state of Greece itself, and of allied feeling towards parties there added to the difficulties. Myres formed good relations with Eleutherios Venizelos, the power in Greece at this time, whom he had met in Crete in 1898. But he was less happy in Athens than on his own ship with a roving commission. At the end of the war, and now Commander R.N.V.R., he was awarded the O.B.E. and the Greek Order of George I.

The geographical results of some of his cruising in the Aegean were embodied in an important paper on the Dodecanese read to the Royal Geographical Society in 1920. After this paper, M. Venizelos moved a vote of thanks, and announced an agreement with Italy which would permit the realization of the national aspirations of the islanders—not in fact effected until 1945.

Returning to Oxford, he sat on the General Board of Faculties, and joined in university politics, but not with the same zest as before the war. He put more of his energies into the affairs of the British Association, and at its first post-war meeting in 1919 was elected a General Secretary. The overseas meetings were revived in 1924, at Toronto, and, this time accompanied by his younger son, he crossed to the Pacific coast again. In 1926 he was back in America, delivering a course of lectures at the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, which was published as *The Political Ideas of the Greeks*. The analysis of the meaning of Greek political and social terms in this book constitutes his main contribution to Greek history in the narrow sense. Another American visit in 1927 took him to California as Sather Professor for the second time, and produced his biggest work on Greek prehistory and early history, with the formulation of the problems involved in the question, *Who were the Greeks?* As well as analysis of the evidence of geography, physical anthropology, comparative philology, archaeology, and Greek traditions about their origins, the book contains such generalizations

as: 'Round-headed people wear round hats, long-headed people long hats.' Much of the archaeology is now overtaken by further discoveries, and his belief in the reliability of Greek genealogies of heroic families is commonly regarded as too naïve. None the less, the book contains, like most of his writing, ideas which have become part of the ordinary thought of scholars, and others which may serve as the starting-point for fresh investigations.

In 1929 the British Association visited South Africa, holding its meetings at Cape Town and Johannesburg. His advice and efforts contributed to the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of South Africa and of the Classical Association of South Africa. After the meeting a party visited Rhodesia, where Gertrude Caton-Thompson and Kathleen Kenyon were at work at Zimbabwe under the auspices of the British Association. In the following year he had the main share of the organization of a Zimbabwe exhibition in the British Museum; and in her report on the excavations Miss Caton-Thompson describes him as 'the *deus ex machina* of the expedition.' His elder son was farming in Southern Rhodesia, and so there was a family reunion; this son died suddenly in Rhodesia eighteen months later, leaving a young family whose education became a major interest of Myres and his wife.

The editors of the *Cambridge Ancient History* naturally called on Myres for many chapters in their early volumes. He opened the first volume (1923) with two long chapters on 'Primitive Man in Geological Time' and 'Neolithic and Bronze Age Cultures', elaborating notions already outlined in *The Dawn of History*. Volume III (1925) contains a chapter on 'The Colonial Expansion of Greece', in which his knowledge of the Mediterranean sea-ways and his eye for a likeness were brilliantly displayed.

His chief work in the thirties was not in Oxford but in the world of learned societies. His lectures at this time were poorly attended, partly because he spoke fast and into his beard—Sir Leonard Woolley speaks with sympathy of the undergraduate who could not take down coherent notes from a man who regularly pronounced 'proto-Cycladic civilization' as if it was a word of one syllable; partly because he lectured at 9 a.m., an hour which was unpopular among undergraduates, but gave him time for a long morning's work afterwards; partly because the subjects on which he lectured were no longer those in which most college tutors encouraged their pupils to take an interest.

But those who attended his courses learnt much, not always on the announced subject of the lecture. Even more, those who studied prehistoric archaeology with him will not forget how generously he gave of himself and his time, opening the rich storehouse of his reading and experience. But, increasingly, he was drawn to London to serve those learned societies and institutions which had claimed his attention since the nineties. He was President of the Royal Anthropological Institute from 1928 to 1931. His presidential address in 1930 on 'Anthropology: National and International' was devoted largely to the organization of international congresses. In the years that followed he took a leading part in establishing the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences; the preliminary discussions may be followed in his notes in *Man*. He maintained, repeatedly, that only a peripatetic *ad hoc* gathering, not a so-called international body established in a single place, could organize a truly international congress. There was a great discussion over an 's'; whether the Congress should be devoted to 'anthropologie et archéologie préhistorique' or 'anthropologie et archéologie préhistoriques'; but in the upshot two separate but related itinerant congresses were instituted, one for the archaeologists and one for the anthropologists. In 1932 the first International Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences met in London, with Myres as one of its Secretaries; he also presided over the section devoted to the prehistoric archaeology of central and Mediterranean Europe, and reported on the sections on the Ancient East and on Palaeontology. This was followed by the Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences which had its first meeting in London in 1934. Myres was one of its Secretaries from its inception until 1947, and its affairs became one of his chief interests.

Another major preoccupation of the later thirties was the British School at Athens. Myres had served on its Managing Committee since 1895, and in 1933 became its Chairman. He had not visited Greece for some years after 1919, maintaining that his war-time duties in that bitterly divided land had made him too many enemies for comfort, but he returned more than once between 1934 and 1939, usually on cruising ships which were the reverse of luxurious: one ship, with its hold full of a mysterious cargo, was still building bathrooms and putting up partitions when it reached Piraeus. He still had a wide acquaintance in Greece, particularly in the islands and the country districts, and Greeks of all sorts were fascinated by his

high spirits and ready flow of conversation. Crete occupied much of his thought at this time—in 1933 he gave the Huxley Memorial Lecture of the Royal Anthropological Institute under the title of 'The Cretan Labyrinth', a valuable summing-up and 'retrospect of Aegean research'. The British School at Athens now owned Evans's house at Knossos, the Villa Ariadne, and Myres made himself familiar with the local topography; he could in his study in Oxford write the most detailed instructions involving land-marks and field boundaries. Throughout his life he wrote most of his letters with his own hand, generally filing carbon copies, and his output of correspondence, especially at this time, was prodigious. In 1936 the British School held its Jubilee, and he was much occupied with the organization of its exhibition at Burlington House; the sudden deaths of two successive Directors of the School in this year threw additional burdens on him as Chairman. But he visited Oslo for the second meeting of the Prehistoric and Protohistoric Congress; in 1937 he was in Turkey for a conference of the Turkish Historical Society; and in 1938 in Copenhagen for the second Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences; all this as well as annual meetings of the British Association. At the end of August 1939 he was in Berlin, for the International Congress of Classical Archaeology, and took almost the final train out of Germany before war began. It was to be the last of his many journeys abroad.

In 1939 he retired from his Chair on reaching his seventieth birthday, after an extension to the uppermost limit of age. This birthday was celebrated by the dedication to him of a volume of the *Annual of the British School at Athens*, with articles written by his pupils and friends; he replied characteristically with a set of Greek verses sent to each contributor, and a word of comment for each on the subject of his contribution.

To this period belongs a growing preoccupation with pattern in works of ancient literature. Something of this appears in *Who were the Greeks?* There is more in 'The Last Book of the Iliad' (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1932), with a detailed analysis of the symmetry of the Iliad; and in his book on Herodotus, with his diagrams of the 'pedimental composition' of Herodotus' *Histories* and of episodes within them. These and similar essays in literary criticism were not universally accepted as sound; but, as so often happened, his ideas were instructive even when not convincing; and he was right to insist on the literary art and careful composition, not only of the great poems of antiquity, but also of the prose works.

To his regret Myres was unable to spend the Second World War as he had spent the first; but he employed his knowledge of the Aegean in editing handbooks for Naval Intelligence. He did other useful though unspectacular work in assuming the editorship of the *Annual of the British School at Athens* and keeping this journal and *Man* going while younger men were on war service. He had for many years been Librarian of New College and remained so until 1946; during this time a new library was built, and he carried through a reorganization of the whole contents on the transfer of the books to the new building, handling the move with little assistance, even manual.

In 1941 Arthur Evans died, and Myres wrote in these *Proceedings* (xxvii, pp. 323 ff.) a tribute to a friend of half a century. The great work of his last years was the completion of Evans's *Scripta Minoa*, the publication of the inscriptions in Minoan writing, found mainly at Evans's excavations at Knossos. Volume I had appeared in 1909, and two more volumes were then announced. Many of the blocks were prepared by the Clarendon Press, which cast a fount of Minoan linear signs; but Evans's attention had been diverted by other aspects of his discoveries and Volumes II and III were uncompleted at his death. Myres took up the work where it had stopped some thirty years earlier, and carried it almost to conclusion in the face of countless difficulties—difficulties caused by the existence of two or more series of numbers for the inscriptions, by the need to settle an agreed sign-order to serve as alphabet, by complicated discussions with the Press about type and format, and by the appearance of partial publications, attempts at decipherment, and discovery of cognate material. Owing to the war and his increasing infirmity Myres was unable to go to Crete to check the tablets or even to the Press to discuss the complex problems that arose; when the tablets became available again in Heraklion Museum, Dr. Emmet Bennett, who was publishing those in the same script found at Pylos, checked them for him. In spite of all these difficulties, and the death of his most valued collaborator, Miss A. E. Kober, in 1948, Volume II was carried to a close and appeared in 1952; though the title-page bears Evans's name, the text is Myres's. The publication, after so many years, of the texts in photographs and facsimiles, made serious study of them possible, and in the following year appeared an article by M. Ventris and J. Chadwick establishing that their language was Greek (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1953, pp. 84 ff.). Myres did not claim to be able to read the texts (he used to say that he

knew everything about them that could be known without actually reading them), but his publication made their reading possible, and he was among the first to congratulate and encourage the young authors. Volume III of *Scripta Minoa* was in proof at his death and will appear in due course; but it is fair to say that it will not have the crucial importance of Volume II.

For some years before this time Myres had moved with difficulty, owing to increasing lameness caused by the arthritis from which he had suffered almost all his life. Already in 1946 he was unable to walk more than a few steps, and had to be driven by car to and from New College. He now had to give up an active part on the committees of learned bodies which required his attendance in London. In 1946 he invited the permanent committee of the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences to meet in New College so that he could attend it for the last time. Two of his grandsons were living in Oxford, one of them being already an undergraduate of the college: they helped him in receiving and guiding the foreign visitors. This was one of the first international bodies to resume its activity after the war, largely on Myres's initiative, but he was unable to attend its meeting in 1948 at Brussels.

After 1947 he rarely left his house in Canterbury Road. Lady Myres had herself been crippled following a serious illness in 1920, but she now gallantly undertook the increasingly arduous task of waiting on him. He continued to work at home, sitting upright at a crowded desk with books, offprints, indexes, and manuscript ready to hand, maintaining an immense correspondence and a steady output of articles and reviews, and receiving a wide circle of friends, new and old, who came to bring him news from the Aegean or to consult him on their studies. His mind was as alert as ever and he would delight these visitors with reminiscences of his travels, and those flashes of unexpected analogy which could illuminate almost any topic.

After *Scripta Minoa* was out of the way, he returned to some of his earlier loves. The list of his publications in the years since the war is as full as for any years of his life: notes on passages of classical authors, mainly on the meaning of words—his study of 'Eunomia' in the *Classical Review*, 1947, is typical—long discussions of Minoan Dress and Homeric Art, the former having as its starting-point the figurines he had excavated at Petsofà in 1903; abundant reviews in many journals, particularly *Man* (he was a brisk reviewer). In 1949 a number of *Man* was offered to him as a tribute on his eightieth birthday; it included

seven reviews from his own pen, on books of the most varied range and content.

In 1953 he gathered together a number of his essays on Greek lands and the Greek people under the title *Geographical History in Greek Lands*; for it he compiled a select bibliography of his own writings from 1891 to 1952 which fills thirty pages. In the same year appeared his *Herodotus: Father of History*, a book planned many years earlier, but largely rewritten in the year or two before its publication. The evocation on its opening page of the scene when in 480 B.C. the young Herodotus saw the remains of his city's fleet return to the quays of Halicarnassus from the battlefield of Salamis is one of his most brilliant essays in the imaginative reconstruction of history; and he was young enough at eighty-four to delight in the way it would shock dry-as-dust scholars. The book drew together many earlier studies and also contained new work, notably on the battlefields of the Persian Wars. After Herodotus, he planned a book on Homer and Homeric scholarship from Greek times to our own, and began to revise matter gathered for lectures in earlier years, including his inaugural lecture at Liverpool on Gladstone and Homer. But his eyes were now rapidly wearing out and he never read the first typescript of this work. He had been pressed for many years to write his autobiography, and his friends hoped that in it he would say more about his war service, in particular, than he was willing to do in conversation. But he had always too many things to do; and it was only in his last year, when he could no longer see to read, that he began seriously to write about himself. There thus remain, in tremulous longhand, a number of chapters of an autobiography.¹ He continued to write after his sight had entirely gone until a few weeks before his death. After a short final illness, he died on 6 March 1954.

His other interests could fill many pages. Apart from the institutions already mentioned, which had first claim on his loyalty, he was also President of the Hellenic Society from 1935 to 1938, President of the Folk-Lore Society from 1924 to 1926, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries for a few months short of sixty years, a Vice-President from 1924 to 1929, and the Society's Gold Medallist in 1942. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1923, and was knighted in 1943. The award of the Victoria Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1953 was a recognition of lifelong interest and activity. He was an

¹ This unfinished autobiography has been drawn upon freely in this obituary, and the quotations on pp. 349-51, 357 are taken from it.

hon. D.Sc. of the Universities of Wales (1920) and Manchester (1933), hon. D.Litt. of the University of Witwatersrand (1929, on the occasion of his visit to South Africa with the British Association), and hon. Ph.D. of the University of Athens (1937, on the centenary of the University). He was a Commander of the Order of George I of Greece (1918), Officer of the Order of St. Sava (1930), and Commander of the Order of the Dannebrog (1939). He enjoyed these honours and the many others which fell to him, not least for the opportunity that they afforded him of knowing many men.

As a scholar, Myres had three great gifts: his powerful visual memory, which could re-create for him in his rooms in Oxford the pattern on a Minoan vase or the waves running past the rocks in some strait among the Greek islands; his gift for seeing likenesses; and his capacity for hard work. His mastery of English prose served him well; everything that he wrote is easy to read, however intricate or technical the subject, and some of his books are as exciting and well told as any romance. He had a feeling for the meaning of words, and ability to take a well-worn metaphor literally and give it new force; and to the last he delighted in a well-turned verse in Latin or Greek, many of which he communicated to *The Oxford Magazine*. He founded no school and did not always very easily work with other scholars who were unable or unwilling to follow the ingenious workings of his mind. But he was modest about his work, willing to accept criticism, and always eager to undertake any task, however laborious or unrewarding, which could not find another man to do it. And he was generous, particularly to young men at the outset of their careers, who could come away from a long session with enough ideas for a book. The abiding value of his work is likely to lie in this ability to throw out ideas which may strike sparks in others, and in his ability to draw illuminating analogies. It is unlikely that his mastery of so many branches of study will often be rivalled; for he was a specialist in all, a classical scholar, a prehistoric archaeologist, an ethnologist, geographer, and geologist, and was at home also in the literature of other sciences. His quick wide-ranging mind could fertilize one of these disciplines from another; but all were related to one end, the study of man and his setting on the earth.

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