

which they were erected, has effectually disposed of the possibility of profitable excavation. Here, however, a find of vessels of copper and implements of bronze and iron has afforded instructive evidence of agricultural practice in Syria in the Byzantine age. At Sheikh Yusuf al Gharib further evidence was afforded of the activity of the port in the second half of the fourth century B.C., in the form of merchants' magazines, which had been burned, but had preserved a detailed picture of trade. A lamp store was stocked with lamps of both the imported and the locally made varieties, lamp fillers and Syrian oil bottles copying Greek models, while the stock of painted Attic *aryballi* bore witness to a common origin in common characteristics which made it possible to trace a definite shipment by a single firm and to date it within a few years. Gold and silver beads and silver coins of Athens, copper ingots and loose quicksilver marked a jeweller's shop. Back to the ninth century this is the most important Greek colony so far excavated. The absence of evidence from the earlier Mycenaean age is to be attributed to the forces of Nature, which have washed away the earlier portions of the site. Yet there is a link in a local copy of a Mycenaean vase and a single sherd of fine hand-made burnished black ware, which alone would suggest an earlier date. Though no inscription has been found, it is suggested that this is the ancient Posidium, mentioned by Herodotus as founded before the Mycenaean age.

Bronze Age Burials in Scotland

A NUMBER of bronze age burials with some remarkable and unusual features, recently disclosed by building operations at Doonfoot, Ayr, and at Riccarton, Ferniegair, Lanarkshire, are described by Mr. Ludovic Mann in *The Scotsman* of July 20. At Doonfoot, no evidence of a cairn was discovered, but at Ferniegair, a structure of stone, of which the over-ground portion had been demolished, had covered a group of burials. Some eighty tons of loose stones, some water-rolled, formed an understructure in which horizontal layers of turf had filled the interstices and survived in the form of black carbonized matter. Both cemeteries have yielded pottery vessels of various types, assignable to successive phases of the bronze age and, therefore, pointing to an occupation covering a considerable period of time. The earliest form is a small squat hand-made food-vessel, with incised and impressed zonal ornament. Traces of carbonized cereal adhere to the interior. The bodies had been placed in the contracted position, looking toward the rising, or, in one instance, the setting sun, at Midsummer. Over one body at Ferniegair was sheeting made from the twisted and plaited stems of the Scottish moss, *Polytrichum commune*. Other examples of this textile material have been found at Mount Vernon, Glasgow, in a bronze age cairn near Stranraer, and a few weeks ago at Craignish, Argyll. Mr. Mann states that the dimensions of the stones of the tomb structures conform with an ancient linear measure, as do the interior dimensions of the chamber; and also that the position of the urn-fields, and other remains,

ancient roads and tracks, conform, in a geometrical convention, also based on a common unit. Both at Doonfoot and Riccarton, adjoining burials contained large cinerary urns, with cremated remains, inverted over squared stone slabs. These overlie burials of the earlier inhumation period. At Doonfoot three burials were superimposed. A further find recorded is at Catacol, Lochranza, Arran, where a six-foot skeleton was found in the extended position in a long narrow chamber, constructed of small side slabs and heavy roofing stones. An iron object was found with the body.

The National Central Library

THE twelfth annual report of the National Central Library refers to anxiety regarding the financial position of the Library due to inability to replace from any other source the £4,000 previously received as an annual grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. Fortunately, the Treasury grant-in-aid has been increased from £3,000 to £5,000 for a period of five years from April 1, 1936, and as a result the Carnegie Trustees have renewed their previous annual grant for a similar period. The continuance of both grants is conditional upon an increase in annual subscriptions from libraries by at least £2,000 by March 31, 1938. In consequence of the financial situation, expenditure on books has been only £2,338 but in addition to 3,110 volumes purchased, 5,451 volumes have been presented. The total number of volumes lent during the year was 118,288 and there are now 158 outlier libraries containing 6,303,000 volumes from which 10,002 volumes were borrowed. Reference is also made in the report to the extension of the regional system to cover the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucester, Hampshire, Oxford, Somerset and Wiltshire. When this system is established, the whole of England and Wales will be covered in eight regional systems, in addition to the London Borough libraries inter-lending system. Volumes lent to university libraries increased by 97 to 2,506. The system was used by 53 university libraries and 1,201 of the volumes were supplied by the National Central Library, 77 by foreign libraries and 1,228 by other university libraries, 80.52 per cent of the inquiries being supplied. The books supplied consist mainly of highly specialized and expensive books, books out of print, foreign books, back numbers of periodicals, or unpublished university theses.

National Research Council of Canada

THE eighteenth annual report of the National Research Council, Dominion of Canada, covers the activities of the Council in 1934-35. During the year, the Associate Committees on Aeronautical Research and on Trail Smelter Smoke were re-organized and three important conferences were held, one on problems of the honey industry, another to formulate a programme of cold-storage investigations, and the third to investigate the potato situation and the utilization of a surplus. The work at the laboratory for laundry research conducted by the Council since 1930 has now led to the formation of a Canadian