



B. ASHMOLE

*Bassano Limited*

## BERNARD ASHMOLE

1894-1988

WHEN Bernard Ashmole died on 25 February, 1988, he was in his ninety-fourth year, but one of the strongest of the abiding impressions he leaves is of how little effect the years had. In his eighties, and indeed to the end, he was as quick and as gentle, as sweet (and sharp) as when I first got to know him well, forty years earlier: always himself, and it was a very good self to be.

Ashmole had been elected to the Academy fifty years before his death, and he was the doyen of archaeologists and art historians working in the classical field. He was not an excavator, but neither was he a pure academic. His longest held post was the chair at London, his last the chair at Oxford, but in between he had been for a long time Keeper of the Department in the British Museum, and earlier he was Director of the British School at Rome. Both these posts he took over at moments of crisis for the institution, and in both cases Ashmole was notably successful in defusing tensions and setting things back on a better footing. The qualities which allowed him to achieve these successes proved no less valuable in his services in two wars; but let us look at his life.

Bernard Ashmole was born on 22 June 1894, at Ilford, Essex (not yet part of London), the youngest of five children of William Ashmole, auctioneer and estate agent, and his wife, Sarah Caroline Wharton Tiver. Both his parents had strong religious convictions. Sunday was strictly observed, and there were family prayers every day before breakfast. In his autobiography Bernard remarks that his mother's 'clear and simple reading every day at that time of a passage from the Authorized Version of the Gospels, had a deep influence, I hope on my character and certainly on my writing of English'. William Ashmole had also strong literary and antiquarian interests, and ran a small literary society the meetings of which Bernard was allowed to attend.

The family moved out of Ilford into the neighbouring countryside, first to Seven Kings, then in 1903 to a larger house at Wanstead, and from there Bernard attended Forest School on the edge of Epping Forest. In 1911 he left school and was sent to live with a private tutor in Oxford to work for a scholarship; and in March, 1913 he was awarded the Essex Scholarship in Classics at Hertford College, Oxford.

Ashmole went up in October of that year. He already had a leaning towards the material remains of antiquity; and his tutor, J. D. Denniston, felt that he was unlikely to do very well in Honour Mods. After consultation with Percy Gardner, Lincoln Professor, who had been largely responsible for introducing the study of Greek art in Oxford, Denniston advised Ashmole to take Pass Mods. in two terms with the aim of leaving time, after Greats, to take the diploma in Classical Archaeology. Ashmole spent that Christmas in Gloucestershire with the de Peyers, a family of Swiss origin connected with his mother's family. During Eights Week, Pass Mods. duly behind him, he invited Mrs de Peyer and two of her daughters to watch the races from the Hertford barge. One of the daughters was Dorothy, who was to become Bernard's wife. On August 4th war was declared.

Ashmole volunteered, after consulting the College. He was commissioned in the 11th Royal Fusiliers in October, and sent to France in the summer of 1915. After nineteen months of trench warfare he was wounded, first slightly, then severely, while leading his men in an attack. He was invalided home, and when fit again for service was posted to a training unit in England with which he remained until his demobilization in January 1919. He was awarded the Military Cross.

Back at Oxford, Ashmole did not start again on the road to Greats but, rather than the special War Degree took an ordinary Pass Degree, and then went on to study for the Diploma in Classical Archaeology. His teachers for this were Percy Gardner and the young lecturer on Greek vases, J. D. Beazley, with whom Bernard established a firm friendship. One of the subjects he chose was Greek coins, which remained an abiding special interest. He was introduced to the Medal Room at the British Museum, and its Keeper, George Hill, became another lifelong friend, as did a member of his staff, Stanley Robinson. In April 1919 Bernard and Dorothy de Peyer became engaged, and they were married eighteen months later. Anyone who knew the couple finds it hard to think of them apart.

In the meantime Ashmole had been awarded the Diploma, a

studentship at the British School at Athens, and the Craven Fellowship which allows for two years travel abroad. Immediately after their marriage the Ashmoles set out for Greece by way of Italy. They stopped a few days in Rome, later to be their home for some years, and in Naples. At that time married students at the School at Athens (then a small city with no traffic problem and clear air), were expected to live out, and the Ashmoles took lodgings on the coast at Phaleron. However, about a month after their arrival an outbreak of street fighting between Venizelists and Royalists led the British Minister to order all students into the School Hostel, and the practice of married students residing was established. Among the students then resident were several from other countries which had no Institute of their own, and Axel Boethius from Sweden became another close friend.

The official fruit of Ashmole's studentship in Greece was an article in the *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 24 (1919-21), 'The so-called Sardanapalus': an excellent piece of work which shows him already concentrating on the study of sculpture; but the stay was of much wider importance. He and Dorothy travelled a great deal, both on the mainland and in the islands, getting to know the country really well, its ruins, its museums and its still unspoilt beauty. They carried with them Bernard's plate camera with tripod and plates, and he began to develop his great skill as a photographer, especially of sculpture.

In the summer of 1921 the Ashmoles returned to England, stopping a few weeks in Rome where they visited the British School. The Assistant Director, the celebrated Mrs Strong, asked Bernard if he would take in hand the manuscript of a catalogue of the sculptures in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitol. He agreed, and they returned to Rome next year to work on it. The volume was to be a companion to the *Catalogue of the Sculptures in the Museo del Capitolino (1912)*, edited by H. Stuart Jones (afterwards Sir Henry Stuart-Jones) who had been Director of the School. Stuart Jones had undertaken the editing of the second book also, but the interruption of the war and his election to the Camden chair at Oxford had distracted him. The volume appeared under his name in 1926, but five years earlier in 'the great mass of typescript' handed to Ashmole 'some of the descriptions ... were perfect or needed only a little retouching; some needed re-writing and bringing up to date; and there were some sculptures of which no description had been written'.

Ashmole enjoyed this task and learned a lot from it. The collection spanned a thousand years, from archaic Etruscan (the

bronze wolf) to late Roman, and extended his interest and his knowledge. The problem of how to distinguish different kinds of ancient marble, which first forced itself on his attention here, remained a permanent interest. What he learned from getting to know this collection so well and from the problems inherent in preparing the catalogue bore further fruit later, not only in his first book, the *Catalogue of the Ancient Sculptures at Ince Blundell* (1929), but in the interest it kindled in him in the question of the proper display of objects. This was to find expression later, notably in the British Museum after the second war.

Two notes by Ashmole appeared in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1922. One, 'Notes on the sculptures in the Palazzo dei Conservatori' arose from his work on the Catalogue. The other, 'Locri Epizephyrii and the Ludovisi Throne', marks the beginning of a special interest in western Greek sculpture.

Before the end of 1922 Bernard and Dorothy (who had worked with him on the catalogue) returned to Oxford so that he could study for his B.Litt. In February of 1923 their first child, Stella, was born, and later the same year Bernard took the B.Litt. and was appointed Assistant Curator of Coins in the newly formed Coin Room at the Ashmolean Museum, an institution with which he was to have further links later. He was not a lineal descendant of Elias Ashmole, but did stem from Elias's uncle.

Much of Ashmole's work in the Coin Room consisted in identifying worn and corroded Greek bronzes of the Roman period. The Keeper of antiquities in the museum, E. T. Leeds, showed him how, by returning day after day to a coin one could finally make out traces of letters or designs that at first had been invisible to one. This skill came to its own many years later when Ashmole was able to read on a small bronze bust bought by J. Paul Getty the name of Menander, thus settling a long controversy.

While he held this post the Ashmoles became friends with the Printer to the University, John Johnson, and Bernard worked with him on improving the appeal of school text-books by illustrating them with photographs of coins, vase-paintings, sculptures, buildings and sites. 'These would no doubt look fairly primitive now, but they were genuine pioneers.' Such readiness to look outside his own specialisms and view the world in a more general light is a very important trait in Ashmole's approach and achievement.

During the same period he began work on the Ince Blundell catalogue, for which he took all the photographs himself. He photographed also some of the sculptures in the Melchett collection,

for a proposed catalogue afterwards published by Mrs Strong. All these projects, however, were put aside by an unexpected development.

The School at Rome had fallen into a state of crisis. The maintenance and day-to-day running of the School were unsatisfactory, and morale among the students was low. In 1924 the Managing Committee in London decided to make a clean sweep, and the post of Director was now offered to Ashmole. After considerable hesitation he and Dorothy made up their minds that it was the right thing. He accepted, and the family moved there in the autumn of 1925. It was a situation of some awkwardness, since former officials of the School were still resident in Rome, and there was some hostility to the new regime. There was, however, another body of opinion which recognized the unsatisfactory state that affairs had reached and was supportive of attempts to put them right, and this included many of the heads and members of other foreign schools.

More important, and requiring continuous attention and energy, was the task for which Ashmole had been appointed: the restoration of order, efficiency and comfort within the School. This the Ashmoles achieved with striking success well within the three years in which they remained there. They were relatively young and had no comparable administrative experience; but one constantly sees Bernard grappling with new challenges, learning from them and mastering them. Among the students at the time, who benefited from these improvements, were some who were later of great distinction, notably the sculptors Barbara Hepworth and John Skeaping.

In spite of the problems this was a happy time and the Ashmoles made new friends in Rome as well as finding old ones. Axel Boethius was there, setting up a Swedish Institute; and they saw a lot of John Marshall, connoisseur and dealer, the friend of E. P. Warren. It was Marshall who organized a conference in Munich on a supposedly archaic Greek group in marble which had been offered to the Glyptothek. Franz Stuniczka, with the support of a sculptor friend, believed it genuine. Ashmole and Marshall were convinced that it was false. Beazley disliked it but was not prepared to condemn it for certain. Later Ashmole was able to demonstrate in an article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1930 that it was a forgery. Later he could name the celebrated Alceo Dossena, who late in life turned for inspiration from the Middle Ages and Renaissance to antiquity.

Another scholarly fruit of this sojourn in Rome was an important

article in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 10 (1927), 'Hygieia on Acropolis and Palatine'.

In 1927 Ashmole was urged by several friends to allow his name to go forward as candidate for the Keepership of the Ashmolean, vacant by the death of D. G. Hogarth, but he declined as he did not wish to stand against the internal candidate, E. T. Leeds, who was appointed. A little later Ashmole was offered the post of Yates Professor of Archaeology at University College London, in succession to Ernest Gardner (Percy's brother) who wanted to retire. Ashmole was not eager to leave the School, but this position was made particularly attractive by the proximity of the British Museum with its sculpture collections and Library. In the end he accepted, with the proviso that Gardner should stay on for a year as the Ashmoles wanted to travel, chiefly to see the sculpture collections of the continent. They did this on a tour with George Hill in 1928. They left the children (a second daughter, Silvia had been born in 1926) with Dorothy's mother, and visited Athens, Istanbul, Budapest, Vienna and Berlin.

In Athens they were guests at the American School of the Director, Rhys Carpenter. Ashmole was taking the photographs for Carpenter's publication, *The Sculpture of the Nike Temple Parapet*, a most important book which appeared the next year. Carpenter was a great scholar and teacher, a fascinating mixture, in his scholarship, of genius and *enfant terrible*. The mode was very different from Ashmole's, but they shared a freshness of vision, an exceptional keenness of eye in scrutinizing objects, and a disinclination to accept any truth without subjecting it to critical examination. They became and remained very good friends who constantly disagreed with each other but never lost respect for one another's opinions. A good example is Carpenter's revolutionary theory, cleverly argued, that the Demeter of Cnidus and the 'Mausolus' and 'Artemisia' from the Mausoleum are works of the full Hellenistic age. In an article in *Festchrift for Frank Brommer* (1977), '*Solvitur Disputando*', Ashmole conclusively demonstrates their fourth-century character.

Ashmole took up his duties in London in 1929. His Inaugural Lecture emphasized the value for teaching of a collection of plaster casts. Soon afterwards he negotiated a take-over from the British Museum of their casts of classical sculpture. The collection is smaller than those at Oxford and Cambridge, but it is representative and useful. This gave Ashmole his first opportunity to discover the talent for the organization of space and the display of objects which he developed so effectively later. The University

had acquired Whiteley's warehouses in Malet Place, adjacent to University College. Ashmole was allotted a large stable-area, and with the help of a graduate student in his department, Father Claude Heithaus, he designed its conversion into a Cast Gallery. Incorporated in the design was a tiny lecture-theatre, a screen, three lanterns and six seats, all of which disappeared into the wall when not in use. This was designed to facilitate comparisons between Greek coins, Greek vases and Greek sculpture, a subject on which he was working with Stanley Robinson of the British Museum, and which continued to fascinate him for many years. A very interesting address he gave on the subject to the International Numismatic Congress in London in 1936 is printed in the *Transactions*.

A different application of Bernard's practical aesthetic sense was the house, High and Over, which he and Dorothy had built in the late twenties on a hill above Amersham. They had been very interested in the work of the architectural students at the Rome School, and were particularly impressed by the drawings, and the approach, of Amyas Connell. Deeply versed in the European tradition, but also in modernism, and appreciating both, he was developing a distinctive style of his own. The Ashmoles commissioned him to build the house, and Bernard was actively involved at every stage of the design. They had continuous difficulties, with the local authority and with building firms unused to the new materials; and when it was done opinion was sharply divided. Those who appreciated its quality, however, now appear wiser. It is generally regarded as one of the best as well as the first things of its kind. The Ashmoles' foresight and boldness in asking a relatively young and little known architect to build them such a house is impressive. Dorothy and Bernard's third child, Philip, was born here in January, 1934.

At this time Ashmole wrote chapters on Hellenistic art for the *Cambridge Ancient History*, which were then published, with Beazley's chapters on earlier Greek art, as *Greek Sculpture and Painting*, a perfect brief introduction to the subject.

In 1934 he delivered the Academy's Annual Lecture on Aspects of Art (Henriette Hertz Trust), 'Late Archaic and Early Classical Greek Sculpture in Sicily and South Italy', which was published in the *Proceedings* for that year. His interest in this field went back at least twelve years, to his early article on the Ludovisi Throne. In this lecture he makes constant and very effective use of comparison between coins and sculpture. At the time this important study appeared an Italian scholar, G. E. Rizzo, was on the point of



publishing a book on the coinages of the western colonies. The two were in fundamental disagreement on important issues, and Rizzo inserted an attack on Ashmole, with often inaccurate and misleading quotations, and treating him as an ill-informed intruder in the field. Ashmole, upset, eventually replied with an article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1938. 'Manners and Methods in Archaeology', correcting misrepresentations and taking issue with Rizzo's whole approach. A pamphlet by Rizzo followed and a further *JHS* note 'The Same Methods', by Ashmole. Ashmole found the affair distressing; but he had a sharp pen, and it may be doubted if Rizzo issued from it content. A happy epilogue was the award to Ashmole nearly fifty years later, by the Convegno di Studi sulla Magna Grecia at Taranto, of the Cassano Medal (1980) for his pioneering work in Western Greek studies.

Around this time Ashmole was employed as archaeological adviser on the film Alexander Korda was producing on Graves's *I, Claudius*. It starred Charles Laughton and other big names, but was never completed. Bernard made a wonderful story of it, but this is not the place to repeat it.

In 1938 Ashmole travelled in Greece on the Florence Bursary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, awarded him the year before. Soon after his return he was approached by the Director of the British Museum, John (later Sir John) Forsdyke. A crisis had deprived the Greek and Roman Department of its senior staff, leaving only one junior Assistant Keeper, and Forsdyke wanted Ashmole to accept the position of Honorary Keeper and hold the fort. This, like the Directorship of the School at Rome thirteen years before, was an awkward assignment, but Ashmole felt that he had to accept, and did so with the College's permission. As finally arranged it was a half-time post, the salary shared between the Museum and the College, and a second junior Assistant Keeper was transferred from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

This was Denys Haynes, and the junior already in the Department was myself. I had already met Ashmole, but it was in the years when I worked with him in the British Museum that I got to know and love him. I had been inspired to study Greek art by Humfry Payne, Beazley's best pupil, who had died in 1936 before he reached the *mezzo del cammin*; in my direction of research I have been most influenced by Beazley; but I become increasingly conscious of the debt I owe to Ashmole. He was the most self-effacing of mentors, accepting one as a person, sharing knowledge with total generosity, making one feel that he saw one as a

fellow-enquirer not (what I much rather was) a learner to be instructed, yet he did instruct me, give guidance (so gently, it seemed as though he felt he had no right to); but chiefly I feel that working beside him opened up my idea of what scholarship could be, made it less academic. I am not decrying Academe; an academic by nature and nurture, I could hardly do that. Ashmole himself was, among other things, a highly efficient academic; but somehow his scholarship seemed a less isolated part of his life than is often the case. Making the exhibition, the department, as good as possible for public and scholars seemed less a task than part of his pleasure in the objects of his study.

The difficulties of the Department when Ashmole took it over were compounded by the growing threat of war and the necessity the Museum was under of making plans for the safeguarding of its treasures. The actual operation of packing and disposing the Department's holdings, which range in scale and character from the massive marbles of the Parthenon to the most delicate gold jewellery, was begun not long before the outbreak and continued through the months of the 'phoney war'.

When this was done Ashmole spent some time working on the preparation of a map of Greece with the place names transliterated for English use, to be issued by the General Staff. After Dunkirk he joined the Local Defence Volunteers (afterwards the Home Guard). Learning that there was a demand for people with experience from the previous war to act as ground-defence officers on airfields, Ashmole volunteered and was commissioned Pilot Officer in the R.A.F.V.R. He was placed in the Administrative and Special Duties Branch and posted to a station in the West Country for training in a defence scheme organized by Geoffrey Hill, a colleague from University College and a nephew of his old friend Sir George Hill, who had been working with him on the Greek map. When trained he was posted to a station on the Shetlands, where he led an extremely strenuous life until, in December, he was sent to Greece (via Liverpool, the north Atlantic, the Gold Coast, the Belgian Congo, Khartoum and Cairo), arriving in February, 1941.

Ashmole was posted to 84 Blenheim Squadron, stationed at Menidi outside Athens, and was soon made Adjutant ('the best we ever had'). They were helping the Greek forces keep back the Italian invasion. The German invasion followed, however. On April 20 the exhausted Greek army surrendered, and on the twenty-second the general evacuation of the British and Commonwealth forces was ordered. Two days later the ground-staff of 84

Squadron was ordered to Nauplia to embark. They got safely to the Argive plain, but found Nauplia harbour unusable. With other ground-staffs they formed a body of five or six hundred, under the command of an Air Commodore. Ashmole, whose familiarity with the Peloponnese from walking it with Dorothy twenty years before had been refreshed by his work on the map, thought the best hope was to go on to Kalamata. He explained this to the Air Commodore, who sent him, with a Greek who knew the country, over the mountains to Kalamata in a truck to see if anything could be arranged. With much help from the Harbour Master and other Greeks he did make arrangements for evacuation and was able to organize the movement of the ground-staff from Nauplia. There was some bombing, but all were evacuated. Ashmole was in a convoy which, surviving dive-bombing *en route*, reached Aboukir near Alexandria on 1 May. He was later awarded the Hellenic Flying Cross.

This story illustrates well the scholar Ashmole's adaptability and practicality, as well as his courage. The rest of his war abroad, in Palestine, Iraq, the Western Desert, Sumatra (part of the last attempt to save Singapore), and India, was no less demanding and adventurous (he was twice mentioned in despatches); but we must leave it. He returned to England as a Wing Commander at the beginning of 1944, and worked under Sir Roderic Hill (another nephew of George Hill) on the defence of Britain against the flying bombs.

After demobilization in 1945 Ashmole returned to his two posts in London, at the University and the British Museum. The main building of University College had suffered extremely severe damage from bombs, but Malet Place, with the Cast Gallery and its office, had been virtually spared. It was some time before Ashmole had many students in his department there, and he was able to leave much of the daily running to his excellent secretary, Alice Lodge, a trained archaeologist, and concentrate on the Museum. There too the offices of the Greek and Roman Department had survived, but almost all the rest of its upper floors had been heavily damaged, one large room totally destroyed, by fire. On the ground floor the new Duveen Room for the Parthenon sculptures, finished just before the war and never installed, had no upper storey but a glass roof and ceiling which had been smashed. The other lower galleries of the Department were little damaged. The best preserved part of the whole building was the long Edward VII Gallery on the north, with its own entrance, and in this the Trustees decided to organize an exhibition of

masterpieces from all departments. One of Ashmole's first tasks on return was the selection of objects from his department for this wonderful show, and arranging their display in collaboration with his colleagues.

The objects in this exhibition were all relatively small, and the Trustees were anxious to put on show as quickly as possible some of the more monumental treasures also. It was decided to begin with the Parthenon sculptures, which were stored with the other marbles in a disused tube siding and station at Aldwych. Bringing each piece up from the tube and conveying it to the Museum was an extremely laborious and no less delicate task which occupied much of Ashmole's time and ingenuity. The replacement of the roof of the Duveen Gallery was a major long-term task which could not yet be undertaken, so the old Parthenon Gallery was made the venue for the new exhibition. Before the war all the Museum's sculptures from the Parthenon were shown in this long gallery, with a good deal of illustrative material besides. This material Ashmole now moved into an ante-room, and he took over a smaller neighbouring gallery for the metopes, leaving the main hall for the frieze on the walls and the pedimental figures on redesigned plinths. He redecorated the galleries in light blue. The exhibition was opened in 1949. Thirteen years later these sculptures were moved into the restored Duveen gallery, but they have never been shown to better advantage than in Ashmole's exhibition.

In 1948 Ashmole, having decided that it was no longer necessary or right that he should hold two posts, had given up his London chair. It is worth quoting the relevant passage of his autobiography: 'I clearly had better qualifications for a museum than for a professorship, since I was not a first class classical scholar and had little confidence in either lecturing or tuition: on the other hand I had a fairly wide knowledge, deep interest in and love for all kinds of classical antiquities, a good eye and memory for sculpture and a quick judgement of value; which is important where purchases are concerned. I also enjoyed the active and practical side of museum life, and the constant contact, through the many visitors to the Department and through correspondence, with the outside world.' He is certainly over modest about his scholarship, and of his quality as a lecturer there will be more to say; but the analysis of his qualifications as a museum man is interesting and just, if still unduly modest. A passage a few lines later is enlightening too: 'After taking up the full-time Keepership of the Greek and Roman Department I tried to make a tour daily of the whole Department: as anyone who has served in the Forces knows, this is

the only way of ensuring that everything is as it should be.' As Keeper certainly he was a signal success, but many of the qualities which made him so (and had made him a good officer) had served also to make him a good professor, and were to do so again.

Ashmole had been elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1938. In the year in which he assumed the full-time Keepership he had a letter from Sir Frederic Kenyon, who was about to give up the Secretaryship of the Academy, asking him if he would allow his name to be among those going forward for consideration as a possible successor. Ashmole regarded himself as almost wholly unsuited to the post, and was delighted when Mortimer Wheeler was appointed. It is probably true that the post would not have suited him, but the approach is an example (not the last we shall meet) of the confidence he inspired.

A few years later he was approached to take another post. Sir John Beazley, having been prolonged in the Lincoln Professorship at Oxford as far as the Statutes permitted, was due to retire in 1956, and the electors offered the succession to Ashmole. He was very reluctant to accept. The hesitation about his qualifications as a teacher expressed in the quotation above were here reinforced by the prestige added to the Oxford chair by the retiring professor's tenure, as exceptional in distinction as in length. Happily he was persuaded; and in fact one can think of no one but Ashmole (Payne being dead) who could have succeeded Beazley without giving an impression of bathos. It is true that his most important books come later. His clarity of thought and economy of language seem for long to have found expression more naturally in articles. Such an article, however, as 'Demeter of Cnidus' (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1951) has more substance than many books. In the event he was happy to have accepted the post, and his necessarily short tenure is a bright one.

Ashmole's museum experience was put to immediate use in his new post. The Lincoln Professor has his seat in the Ashmolean Museum and he is Honorary Keeper of the casts of Greek and Roman sculpture. This fine collection had hitherto been housed within the Museum, but space was urgently required and a new gallery for the casts was built alongside. As originally planned it was big enough to exhibit the whole collection well, but at a late stage the plan had been curtailed by a third. Ashmole's appointment came soon enough for him to work with the Keeper of Antiquities, Donald Harden, on a modification of the plan; and he was able to organize the display of the casts and the decoration of the Gallery in a way both excellent for scholarly study and

attractive to a wider public; something not easily achieved with plaster casts.

After the war High and Over had been sold and Bernard and Dorothy had been living in a flat in Paddington. They now bought a Victorian house splendidly set above a large garden terraced down the steep slope to the river below Iffley lock. They re-organized the garden and made it very beautiful. In the cellar was a spring which had been enclosed in a brick tank but still sometimes flooded. Ashmole siphoned the water down to the lawn, where he made a fountain with a jet twelve inches high in a charming basin cast in concrete with the help of an open umbrella. The water was then led in a stream through the orchard to form an iris-pool and finally discharged into the river. A perfect example of his aesthetic practicality. Later he helped a young friend, Anthony Snodgrass, create another such umbrella-basin in a garden outside Edinburgh.

Ashmole had been interested in the Warburg Institute since its arrival in London and served on its Managing Committee. He had been a friend of Fritz Saxl, who had published an important manuscript of Cyriac of Ancona which Ashmole had acquired. One section of this, with drawings of the Temple of Hadrian at Cyzicus, was reserved for a study by Saxl and Ashmole in collaboration. This was never carried out, but after Saxl's death Ashmole published a most interesting article on it in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* for 1956. A few years later Henri Frankfort, Saxl's successor as Director, died, and the post was offered to Ashmole. He refused, not only because he was happily settled at Oxford. He records the offer as the greatest surprise of his life, since he felt himself wholly unqualified 'to supervise a body of scholars devoted to the most meticulous research into subjects of which I knew virtually nothing'. One can accept this self-judgement as true at one level, while believing that the Managing Committee were right in thinking that he would have been a very good appointment. It is another example of the perfect confidence his personality inspired.

Ashmole reached retirement age in 1961 and relinquished the chair. He then entered on one of the most active and productive periods of his life. He and Dorothy continued to live at Iffley but travelled a good deal. Bernard was Geddes-Harrower Professor of Greek Art and Archaeology at the University of Aberdeen for 1961-3, Visiting Professor in Archaeology at the University of Yale in 1964. His first visit to the States had been in 1963, to give the Louise Taft Semple Lectures at Cincinnati, and later in the

same year he gave the Norton Lectures for the Archaeological Institute of America, touring the country. At the end Dorothy joined him in San Francisco and they went to Hawaii where their son Philip, a zoologist with a specialism in ornithology, was working on a project for Yale University. They flew on to Japan, and came home by cargo-ship.

The next year Ashmole visited Bodrum (Halicarnassus) with Donald Strong of the British Museum and the Danish scholar Kristian Jeppesen, who later re-excavated the site of the Mausoleum. They discovered in the castle part of a slab from the Amazon-frieze which joins one of the slabs in the British Museum. Ashmole had been working with Strong on a proposed publication of the Mausoleum sculptures, but after Strong's death Ashmole made over the material to younger scholars. In the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1969, he pointed out an unrecognized join between two slabs of the Amazon-frieze which radically alters our perception of the composition; and much of his thought on the monument is distilled in a chapter of the book *Architect and Sculptor in Classical Greece*.

From Bodrum they visited Cnidus and other sites, and then Ashmole went to Greece to work with Nicolas Yalouris and the great American photographer Alison Frantz on the book *Olympia: the sculptures of the Temple of Zeus*. This was published in 1967, *Architect and Sculptor* in 1972. In 1967 he also collaborated with H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort in *Art of the Ancient World*, and in 1964 he had published the Semple lectures as *The Classical Ideal in Greek Sculpture*.

In the indispensable Olympia book he shows a fine appreciation not only of aesthetic and historical aspects but of the logistical problems of building and adorning a large temple in a short time and at a great distance from the source of the marble for the sculptures. Ashmole's practical concern for how things were actually done is one of the distinctive marks of his scholarship; and these problems are most fully explored in *Architect and Sculptor*.

That book too began life as a series of lectures, the Wrightsman Lectures delivered in 1967 at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Ashmole was also Rhind Lecturer. We saw that he gave the Lecture on Aspects of Art (Henriette Hertz Trust) of the British Academy in 1934. He was chosen to give it again in 1962, when he took the theme of 'Some Nameless Sculptors of the Fifth Century B.C.' He gave the British Academy Italian Lecture for 1957 on 'Cyriac of Ancona' and the first J. L. Myres Memorial

Lecture at New College, Oxford, in 1961. He was also in demand as a lecturer on less prestigious occasions, and no one who heard him will wonder why. In comparing his qualities as professor and museum curator he spoke slightly of lecturing, and again when doubting his suitability for the Oxford chair. I never heard his day-to-day lectures to students, but I very much doubt that they were other than excellent. On more formal occasions (though 'formal' is not the word that comes to mind) he was, on his day, probably the best lecturer I have ever heard. Certainly for a combination of scrupulous scholarship, originality, perfect presentation and pure entertainment I cannot think of a rival.

The Myres Memorial Lecture was called 'Forgeries of ancient sculpture: creation and detection' a subject which had interested Ashmole since his early days in Rome. He returned to it in the *Festschrift* for Bernard Schweitzer (1963) with an article 'Five forgeries in the manner of the Parthenon'. In these cases he demonstrated forgery. On the still vexed question of the three-sided relief in Boston (the 'Boston Throne') he remained a firm defender of its authenticity, bringing new evidence in its support in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston in 1966 and at greater length in 1968.

In addition to awards and distinctions already mentioned Ashmole was made CBE in 1957. He was Honorary Fellow of Hertford and Lincoln Colleges, Oxford, and University College London and Fellow of King's College, London; Hon. LL.D., Aberdeen; Hon. FRIBA; Hon. Member of the Archeological Institute of America, 1940; Hon. Fellow of the Archaeological Society of Athens, 1978. In 1979 he was awarded the Kenyon Medal of the British Academy.

In 1970 Ashmole was approached by J. Paul Getty for advice on the purchase of antiquities, and some of the finest sculptures in that remarkable collection were purchased on his recommendation. He and Dorothy were by now both past the middle eighties, and in 1972 they left Iffley for Peebles, a flat looking across the Green to the Tweed. This was chosen because Philip, now at Edinburgh University, had a house in the neighbourhood. In the course of their years at Peebles Bernard began gradually to disengage himself from scholarly work. He never lost his vivid interest in Greek art and in his friends' work in it. He was immensely helpful for instance to Donna Kurtz in her task of establishing the Beazley Archive at Oxford. He and Dorothy welcomed visits and he was always ready to discuss what one was doing and never lost his sharpness and clarity. The main focus,



though, now seemed on the family. Philip and his wife and children were at hand, and both the girls (Stella a doctor, Silvia a ballet-dancer who has inherited her parents' gift for appearing eternally young) had families too, Silvia's very large. Bernard and Dorothy's constant interest in and awareness of what was going on in this clan was warming, especially because it was in no way exclusive of interest and warmth towards oneself.

I hope it is not out of place to quote as epitaph a letter of Stella's: 'On his deathbed, even when he was in really severe discomfort, if not pain, he could wrench himself free of his body, as it were, and reproach Myrtle, Phil's wife, for visiting him instead of going to the painting classes he had given her for Christmas; and, seeing her overburdened at feeding and housing so many relatives, said: "Take them all out to dinner, Myrtle, and give them white wine (he remembered red wine made her ill) to drink: Pies Porter Michelsberger is probably your best bet", and he wrote it down—the last thing he wrote. So on the very evening of the day he died Dorothy and I and Phil and Myrtle and Silvia actually all went out to dinner and drank that wine!'

MARTIN ROBERTSON

*Note.* I have made much use in this memoir of an autobiography, *One Man In His Time*, which Ashmole wrote for his family and which they have very kindly made available to me. I am most grateful for this, as well as for constant help and kindness, to Dorothy Ashmole (who died while this was in proof) and to her and Bernard's children, especially Dr Stella Ring.