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IN the past year the British Academy has not only pursued its usual activities with cheerful vigour, but has ventured on at least one new enterprise of first-class significance and large potentialities. The foundation of a British Institute of Persian Studies in Tehran is something which Oriental scholars have long desired when they considered what vast prospects Iran offers for research and how sparse are the existing opportunities for it. Last winter our Secretary, with characteristic insight, surmised that the time had come to examine the situation in Tehran at first hand and to see what the prospects were for starting an Institute. When he and I went there in December, it was at once clear that the situation was, if anything, even more favourable than we had hoped, and we were greatly encouraged and heartened by our reception. On the British side we got every assistance from the Ambassador, Sir Geoffrey Harrison, and from the British Council Representative, Mr. Charles Wilmot. They put us into easy, informal contact with leading figures in politics and education, who from the start displayed a warm interest in our hopes and suggestions and plans. We were privileged to have an audience with H.I.M. the Shah, who expressed a keen personal sympathy with the idea of such an Institute and promised his full approval and support. The Chancellor of the University saw that our first need was a building in which to start work, and, with unprompted generosity, came to our aid with the offer, on handsome terms, of a spacious house, close to the University, as a headquarters for the next two years. This munificent gesture was drawn to universal notice when, on the occasion of the British royal visit to Tehran in March, it was mentioned in speeches not only by H.I.M. the Shah but also by Her Majesty the Queen and H.R.H. the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Born under these happy auspices the new Institute showed from the start its grip on life and has not been slow to secure other advantages. The Treasury has agreed to pay through the Academy £8,000 a year for the maintenance of the Institute; the Wolfson Trustees have made the handsome gift of £10,000 for two Isaac Wolfson Fellowships over the next five years, and a similar gift has

just been made by the Iranian Oil Participants. Professor Max Mallowan, who has consented to be President of the new Institute, paid a special visit to Tehran and not only settled many urgent, immediate problems with his usual wisdom and skill, but has continued to give invaluable assistance with his knowledge alike of archaeology and of the ways of the Middle East. He will preside over a Council specially appointed to look after the affairs of the Institute, and in Tehran itself Mr. David Stronach, who in the past year has been conducting excavations in north-eastern Iran with help from the Academy, has been appointed the first Director.

Though the structure and the constitution of the new Institute are modelled on those of other existing Institutes, it differs from them in the consciously wider scope of its intended activities. When it is called an 'Institute of Persian Studies', the words mean what they say. It will not confine its official energies, as most other Institutes do, to art and archaeology, but will endeavour to provide facilities for the study of Persian civilization in all its length and breadth, from the remote past to present times, in many aspects, in different disciplines. Of course it will not be possible to cover all of these all the time, but as scholars appear who are interested in this or that part of the wide field of Persian studies, they should be able to work in their own special area with every advantage from so strategic a centre. The Institute's main activity will still be archaeological excavation. Iran, as everyone knows, presents almost unexampled prospects to the enterprising archaeologist. We are just beginning to see how far back its pre-history goes, and new discoveries may take it back even farther. In the historical period the wealth and variety of Persian culture has long been familiar as one of the glorious achievements of the human race, and its fine objects may be studied in many museums, but many of them were found before archaeology had become an exact science, and new excavations should not only provide them with a reliable chronological background, but uncover unsuspected relations between Persia and other parts of Asia and even of Europe. Persia lies on one of the immemorial land-routes between East and West and is not only the source of much that has travelled on them but the place where surprisingly different elements meet. We may confidently expect many surprises and anticipate an agreeable revision of accepted doctrines. Indeed we hope that in this coming autumn the Institute will start excavations at Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus and the centre of his empire. The project

has warm support from the University of Tehran, which has contributed generously to it, and we hope that with this and with other aid from the Academy a start will be made on what looks like a highly rewarding site.

At the same time the Institute will from the start pursue the study of Persian language and literature. There is no need to stress the need for this at a time when Great Britain has only one Professorship of Persian and yet there is a growing appreciation not merely of the intrinsic magnificence of Persian literature but of its extraordinary influence over enormous tracts of Asia. In this matter we are fortunate in having the assistance of Mr. B. J. Spooner, the first holder of an Oil Company Scholarship, who will assist the Director and pursue his own studies in literature. It is known that Persian mosques and private residences are rich in texts and documents, and one of the first needs is to find out what these resources are and to make them known. From the start the new Institute will treat archaeological and literary or linguistic studies as equally important and its first concern. Of course other Institutes have often done this up to a point, but almost incidentally or accidentally, and not as part of a deliberate policy. Nor do we intend that Persian studies should stop at this point. The Persian present, no less than the Persian past, affords opportunities so rich in so many directions that it would be foolish to lay down any theoretical limitations to them. As the Institute and its studies progress, new questions will force themselves on scholars and new branches of inquiry will be started. The particular direction taken at any time will depend very much on the personal tastes of scholars at the Institute, but we may be sure that new and exhilarating results will come. Nor can we doubt that the cohabitation of different subjects under one roof will bring benefits to all. All scholars have to be specialists, but their very specialities will gain from other disciplines. This is the idea behind the Institute of Persian Studies, and I have no doubt that full advantage will be taken of it.

A second point about the Institute is not indeed unique to it, but will, I trust, receive special emphasis and practical support. The Iranians have shown an imaginative generosity in helping us to begin, and we should be worse than ungrateful if we were not to show a like spirit in return. The close ties between the University of Tehran and the Institute which were displayed in its creation can and should be rapidly strengthened as the Institute expands and develops. There is much that we should like to do for our Iranian colleagues, and there is in fact much

that we can do. We shall make a practice of inviting Iranian students to take part in our excavations. They will thus be able to learn new methods and techniques from our trained excavators and are likely to prove adept at assimilating them to their own purposes and to use them later for their own attempts to unravel their country's past. Trained as they are on the fine objects of their own civilization they should in their turn help our teams with their keen observation and delicate taste. At the same time it is understood that members of the Institute, and indeed visitors to it, will be willing to give lectures or talks at the University and so to bring British and Iranian scholars and students into a closer relation through the interchange of knowledge and ideas. The more the Institute can help the Iranians, the more completely it will fulfil one of its chief functions. Though we cannot expect political conditions not to have ups and downs or indeed to lack critical or anxious moments, experience suggests that Institutes such as ours tend to survive because they are known to exist for the benefit of those countries whose civilization they study, and indeed to be where they are not that they may make propaganda for their own national wares but that they may assimilate and make more widely known the achievements of their hosts. In recent years there have been troubled times both in Greece and in Iraq, but in neither did the British Institutes close down or curtail their essential activities.

I have dwelt at some length on the British Institute of Persian Studies because I regard it as an exemplary case of what the British Academy can do to foster the needs of a complex group of subjects which are not always handled together and yet can all profit from it. Yet in so far as it makes archaeology one of its chief activities, it raises a problem which cannot but concern the Academy in its general care for learning. Unlike most other professional scholars, British archaeologists cannot usually rely on a regular career which guarantees their future or allows even that degree of security which is necessary for planned and productive work. There are of course posts for them, both in Great Britain and overseas, but we may doubt whether the number is as great as the general interest in the subject, let alone its vast possibilities, would justify. But the real trouble is that most of the posts overseas are held on a limited tenure, and even if they are not, inadequate provision is made of either time or libraries for the publishing of results. In France and Germany no such problem exists. Archaeological posts abroad are part of the national system of higher education, and, when a man has done

a round of duty in them, he may be transferred to a professorship or similar post at home, where he can not only put his discoveries into writing but give instruction to others in his methods and techniques and conclusions. The lack of such co-ordination in Great Britain may lead to unhappy results. A successful archaeologist may stay so long in the field that he cannot publish his results on the scale that he should and otherwise would. A professor of archaeology at a university may long to return to work in the field, but is prevented from doing so on any serious scale by the duties of his office at home. Worse than this, the vagaries and uncertainties of promotion, the none too generous scale of salaries, and the absence of reasonable security for the future may discourage men with a real calling from entering a profession which treats them in so casual a way. If archaeology is to expand and bring results, it needs an unbroken succession of highly qualified workers in several fields, but such are not encouraged by the present position. The demand for archaeologists is steadily growing, but the supply will surely shrink unless something is done to make their career more rewarding and less subject to incalculable chances.

In almost no other branch of learning is the situation so serious as here, and it must soon be faced in all its complexities. I wish I could provide a solution that would be acceptable to everyone, but though I am aware of difficulties both real and imaginary, I will at least make a suggestion. If all universities were to create posts in archaeology which are not tied to teaching in every term of the year but allow a generous measure of absence in the field and an equally generous measure of time for writing, the whole position would be changed vastly for the better. It would be equally good if a university teacher could be seconded for quite a long period to carry out a substantial project in the confidence that he would have time to work out his results and at the end of it to return to more sedentary conditions of study and instruction. Now this can happen, and in one university at least it does. Is it too much to ask that other universities should institute a similar system? It means that they will have to increase the staffs of their archaeological departments, and we can all imagine what objections will be found against this, but it will also mean that a thriving and expanding branch of knowledge will receive its due more fully than it does at present and that a science in which this country once led the world will maintain its eminence and esteem.

This is a special, even an isolated problem, and can be tackled

on its own merits, but it is also related to a far wider set of problems—the provision for research and original work in the whole field of the Humanities. In the coming autumn the committee which was appointed by my predecessor, Sir George Clark, will issue its report on the need of financial provision for such studies, and though I have no intention of giving a preview of its contents, it may be appropriate to touch on some considerations which have affected our discussions and form in some sense a background to them. The situation in Great Britain is that while Natural Science in all its range, with all its subsidiary and ancillary subjects, whether theoretical or practical, receives handsome subsidies from the state for research, the Humanities get very little. They have indeed some generous friends, notably certain charitable foundations without whose help they would be much worse off than they are, and of course all universities regard research as a teacher's duty and expect him to conduct it. But after all the first task of universities is to provide instruction, and in their present pangs of expansion and change it is all too easy to do this at the expense of research. A teacher's first duty is to teach, and with an ever-increasing number of students and the institution of new curricula teaching calls for a greater expenditure of time and energy, especially when a staff is small and its members have to cover a wide range of complex subjects. We all know of scholars who from the pressure of other duties are unable to press on with books which they are eager to write, of young researchers suddenly, in the interests of assuring a livelihood, snatched away to a heavy load of teaching and forced to spend all their spare time in keeping up with its demands, of ambitious co-operative projects which cannot be finished in time or indeed at all because some contributors have not leisure enough for their task or because funds run out before completion is in sight. The problem raises special embarrassments when it rises at an international level before such a body as the Union Académique Internationale. This body suggests and encourages extensive projects and relies upon individual countries to carry out their share of them. In some countries this is not too difficult, because there is a central body with sufficient resources to finance them, but in Great Britain, as Fellows of the Academy will know, it is too often uncertain whether we can make any contribution at all, and even when we can, it tends to be on a small scale, unworthy both of the project itself and of the high calibre of the scholars engaged in it. In recent years several new projects have been instituted, and in all of them we should like to

play a part and have ample intellectual resources for it, but it would be idle to pretend that we have done as much as we should like, and sometimes our part has been on so small a scale that we may even feel ashamed of it. The situation grows worse as each year brings forward new proposals, usually admirable and sometimes necessary. For instance, distinguished scholars in France and Spain now wish to make a complete Corpus of the texts of the Troubadours. It is certainly needed; there are enough scholars to do it, and to do it well; once it has been done, it should be an enduring work useful to many future generations. In such a venture our own men of learning should take a part, and of course we hope that they will, but even if they do, the dark doubt remains that it may not be this country that pays for them.

The shortage of financial support for research in the Humanities must have an explanation. It might of course be argued that this is only another sign of our traditional Philistinism, that the British public is not interested in such recondite matters, so far from its ordinary interests; that historical or linguistic or literary inquiry lacks the glamour which belongs to the shooting of projectiles into the planetary system. There may be some little truth in this, and there is perhaps enough to encourage certain publicists in decrying the more specialized efforts of scholars. But in fact such an approach is based more on a notion of what the British people ought to like than any firm information on what it does like. They may not know about the finer points of research or how it is conducted or what efforts and training and judgement it demands, but they are not uninterested in its results and at times show a lively liking for them. At no time have archaeological or historical discoveries excited wider interest or been welcomed by so large a circle of readers; at no time has history, adapted sometimes to unspecialized tastes but none the less history, formed so large a proportion of publishers' output. Of course not all of this is at the highest level, and often enough the exacting scholar may complain of the purposes to which his own work is put. But that is not the point. What matters is that the Humanities are in fact held in high regard and make a popular appeal. It is therefore surprising that research into them does not get all the support that it needs, and we must ask why this is the case. Perhaps the simplest answer is that nobody in power has given proper thought to it. There is a vague idea that somehow they find support for themselves, in private fortunes, in university posts, in learned societies. Once

perhaps they did, but those spacious days have passed, and present needs cannot be met in the old way. The Humanities suffer from a legend which credits them with far richer resources than they possess, and the only way to counteract this legend and to put research on a proper footing is for the state to take over what used to be done by individuals.

Yet, someone will certainly ask, why should the tax-payer have to support this kind of thing? Can he not live without it? Is it not far less urgent than the expensive scientific research which is needed for his comfort, if not for his actual survival? Such queries are natural enough, and we often hear them, not perhaps put so brutally as this, but brutally enough to make us anxious. Yet it is easy to answer them. In the first place, to dismiss a thing merely because it is not necessary implies a very low standard of values indeed. By 'necessary' it means what is needed for mere survival, and no more, and after all, despite our precarious position in the world, we still seek for vastly more than that and would regard ourselves as dolts and cowards if we did not. Secondly, any country which claims to be civilized cannot afford to neglect the pursuit of humane learning. It is the chief means by which man learns about himself, his achievements and his failures, his powers and his limitations, and it enables him to look at himself from more than one limited angle or a single set of prepossessions. It supplements and complements the study of natural science by confining itself to man and his doings, and just for this reason both it and natural science are equally necessary in a world whose inhabitants wish to know where they stand and what their place and purpose in nature are. The intellectual strength of a civilized country is built up from many interests, nearly all of them based on special knowledge, and it is they which provide the variety of our existence. If any important section of them is discouraged or starved, our whole life will suffer. It is therefore not too much to ask that the Humanities should be treated with an understanding generosity and encouraged to develop as they know that they have the power to do.

Such issues are the special business of the Academy, and I may perhaps forecast that our Report will deal with some of them in a practical and purposive way. But they are by no means confined to the Academy. They concern all men and women who are engaged in learning and indeed all who to any degree rely upon it for relaxation or comfort or pastime or personal satisfaction. The means which the modern world has invented

for the diffusion of knowledge at all levels, and its remarkable success in making these popular, have changed the whole position of even such a body as the British Academy. We may, as we believe and hope, stand near the centre of humane learning, but from this centre lines radiate in all directions to many unsuspected ends. For all this we have some responsibility. So long as knowledge itself is pursued for its own sake in the true spirit of devotion, it is all for the good that its results should be made known and appreciated and take their place among common assumptions and exert their influence on the thinking of millions. But unless some such centre is strongly established and able to make itself felt as a source of intellectual strength, the whole apparatus of spreading knowledge will be gravely impoverished, and nothing less than a catastrophe will fall on something which has always been a part of our heritage and has in our own time shown its capacity to create and absorb and control. The British Academy has duties both national and international, and its policy shows that it knows where they lie. If it can do something effective for research in the subjects which are its domain, it will indeed deserve the gratitude of the country. Once again it has passed a busy year and expanded its activities. The strain of work does not grow less, nor does its accommodation grow larger, but fortunately the devotion of its staff is still given with selfless loyalty. For anything that has been done we are greatly indebted to them, and I still cherish a hope that before too long they may be allowed to work in greater ease and comfort as a slight recognition of all that they have done for us.