Archaeology

The discovery of material remains from the recent or the ancient past has always been a source of fascination, but the development of archaeology as an academic discipline which interpreted such finds is relatively recent. It was the work of Winckelmann at Pompeii in the 1760s which first revealed the potential of systematic excavation to scholars and the wider public. Pioneering figures of the nineteenth century such as Schliemann, Layard and Petrie transformed archaeology from a search for ancient artifacts, by means as crude as using gunpowder to break into a tomb, to a science which drew from a wide range of disciplines - ancient languages and literature, geology, chemistry, social history - to increase our understanding of human life and society in the remote past.

Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos

As a young man, French naturalist Henri Mouhot (1826–61) taught languages in Russia and travelled widely in Europe with his brother Charles, sketching people and landscapes, and taking photographs. The brothers both married descendants of the explorer Mungo Park (whose journals are also reissued). Not long afterwards, possibly inspired by Bowring's 1857 book on Siam (also reissued), Mouhot decided to explore South-East Asia. He travelled independently for three years in Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, where he eventually died of a fever. This engaging two-volume account of his experiences was compiled by his brother from his papers, and published in 1864 with many illustrations based on Mouhot's sketches. Volume 1 focuses mainly on Thailand and Cambodia, where Mouhot met several kings, travelled by elephant through difficult terrain, and visited the ruins of Ayuthia and Angkor. Mouhot's enthusiasm for the region's wildlife, landscapes and people rarely wavers, despite the challenging conditions.
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TRAVELS

IN THE

CENTRAL PARTS OF INDO-CHINA
(SIAM),

CAMBODIA, AND LAOS.

VOL. I.
THE KING AND QUEEN OF SIAM.

Drawn by M. Rocourt, from a Photograph.
TRAVELS

IN THE

CENTRAL PARTS OF INDO-CHINA
(SIAM),

CAMBODIA, AND LAOS,

DURING THE YEARS 1858, 1859, AND 1860.

BY THE LATE

M. HENRI MOUHOT,
FRENCH NATURALIST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—Vol. I.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET,
1864.
DEDICATION.

TO THE LEARNED SOCIETIES OF ENGLAND, WHO HAVE FAVOURED WITH THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT THE JOURNEY OF M. HENRI MOUHOT TO THE REMOTE LANDS OF SIAM, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA.

I trust that the members of those scientific societies who kindly supported and encouraged my brother in his travels and labours, will receive favourably the documents collected by the family of the intrepid traveller, whom death carried off in the flower of his age, in the midst of his discoveries.

Had he been able to accomplish fully the end at which he aimed, it would certainly have been to you that he would have offered the fruits of his travels: he would have felt it his first duty to testify his gratitude and esteem to the worthy representatives of science in that great, free, and generous English nation who adopted him. Half English by his marriage, M. Mouhot still preserved his love for his own country: there, however, for various reasons he did not receive the encouragement he anticipated, and it was on the hospitable soil of England that he met with that aid and support, which not only her scientific men, but the whole nation, delight in affording to explorations in unknown countries, ever attended by perils and hardships. The journal of the unfortunate traveller shows his feelings of affection for the two countries which he loved equally, and his devotion to science, art, and the progress of civilization.

I therefore feel it an imperative duty to express to you and to
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DEDICATION.

the whole English nation the sentiments of gratitude to which this good and loyal Frenchman so often gave utterance, while engaged in the work to which he spontaneously devoted himself, and in which he was sustained by your counsels and assistance.

Receive therefore from Madame Mouhot and myself, as a legacy left by her dear husband and my affectionate brother, the expression of our gratitude; and accept the work, left imperfect, it is true, but which we hope will prove how much has been lost by the death of a brave man, who, allied to the family of Mungo Park, met the same fate in the East that that illustrious explorer did in Africa. M. Mouhot's premature end did not permit him to correct and arrange his journal, which is an additional reason for claiming indulgence from you, whose enlightened minds and generous benevolence will know how to appreciate the circumstances under which this posthumous work sees the light.

CHARLES MOUHOT.

Jersey, 1st December, 1862.
ONE OF THE SONS OF THE KING OF SIAM.
P R E F A C E.

As will be seen, this work is compiled from the private letters of M. Mouhot to his family and friends, and from his journal. I had also the benefit of the paper destined by my brother for the Archaeological Society of London, on the interesting ruins of Ongkor. Among the documents which, thanks to the active kindness of Sir R. Schomburgh, British Consul at Bangkok, of Dr. Campbell, R.N., and of M. D’Istria, French Consul, reached me as early as possible after my brother’s death, I found valuable sketches and drawings, together with various unfinished papers relative to his different scientific researches in the countries he had visited and in districts which had only recently been brought into notice by the advance
of commerce, and by the military expeditions which had been sent to the extreme East.

The family of M. Mouhot were divided in opinion as to the course to be adopted with regard to these varied materials. Should they be kept in a portfolio as a sacred but barren deposit, or should they be arranged in the best manner possible and laid before the public?

After grave consideration they yielded to the representations of friends of the deceased, and to myself was confided the painful but interesting task of superintending the arrangement of the notes, sketches, and documents for publication. I accordingly set about it at once, under the first impressions of grief at the loss I had sustained, and guided only by fraternal love, for I lay no claim to the title of author. I have simply classified the masses of papers, the fruit of four years’ travel, and added a few explanatory notes.

I have already stated the motives which induced me to dedicate this work to the Savans of England, more especially to those with whom my brother was connected through science or literature.

Let me give a short sketch of the work for
which we claim the indulgence of the public. I have first, preserving the chronological order, divided the journal into chapters, inserting in their appropriate places such portions of the private letters as served to throw light on the subject. This forms the body of the work.

In an Appendix I have inserted the Chinese tales translated by the author during his residence in Siam—some unfinished papers which are only specimens of a zoological work which my brother intended to publish—the descriptions of the principal entomological and conchological specimens discovered by him, and which are now deposited in the Museums of London and Paris—the Cambodian vocabulary, a proof of his industry, of the variety of his knowledge, and of the care with which he collected everything which might be useful to his successors in the difficult path which he opened to them.

Lastly, I have collected the letters of my brother to his family and other correspondents, together with some letters addressed to him, a few of which were never even received, while others only reached
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their destination after his death, or remained in the hands of friends who were charged to deliver them. This correspondence tends, I think, to display my brother's character, the delicacy of his mind, and the goodness of his heart, qualities which have been recognised by so many, both during his life and after his death.

The engravings from his drawings will impart interest to the descriptions of the ruins and vast buildings which he discovered in the interior of Siam and Cambodia, testifying to an advanced state of civilization in former times, and which, I venture to think, deserve to be brought into notice. They will also familiarize the reader with the manners, customs, and appearance of the country. My aim has been to be useful to those who deign to read these pages; and, if fidelity be merit in a book, I trust the reader will be satisfied.

Even should there be any errors in the numbers of the population, and similar details concerning the little-known countries which my brother traversed, I beg the reader to view them with indul-
PREFACE.

gence, bearing in mind that most of this journal was written in pencil, sent home from a long distance, and some of it half effaced;—illegible, indeed, to any one to whom his writing was not as well known as it was to Madame Mouhot and myself, and who were not as intimate with the heart and thoughts of the writer.

All these reasons induce me to reckon on the indulgence of the public.

The Memoir which follows was written by a friend in Holland. The historical notice which I have thus introduced, appeared to me useful, in order to give a clearer idea of the country which my brother has contributed to make better known, and where he sealed with his death his devotion to travel and scientific pursuits.

Let me add, in conclusion, that the family of M. Mouhot gladly embrace the opportunity of thanking publicly all those who have given aid to the traveller, and have testified their friendship for him; several are mentioned in the course of the book by my brother himself, but others, from whom he received equal kindness and support
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before embarking on his perilous journey into unknown regions, have not perhaps been noticed as they deserved. It was neither forgetfulness nor ingratitude on his part; his death is his excuse.

Charles Mouhot.

Adelaide Lodge, Jersey,
January, 1863.