

REPORT
OF THE
SUB-COMMITTEE
ON A
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY
OF
ENGLAND AND WALES.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE CONGRESS OF
ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETIES IN UNION WITH THE
SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

1895

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CONGRESS OF ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETIES, 1894.

Report of the Sub-Committee on the Photographic Survey of England and Wales.

The Sub-Committee has considered the subject referred to it by the Congress, as to the best method of promoting a general Photographic Record of the Country on the lines adopted by the Society for the Photographic Survey of the County of Warwick.

The Sub-Committee is of opinion that the establishment of such a general Photographic Record of all works of antiquity is of the highest importance, and that the Societies in Union should use their best efforts to establish, for their particular counties, associations on the basis of that so successfully initiated by the Warwickshire Society, and followed by the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

It may be expected that Societies organized on these lines, besides being of the greatest value to antiquaries, will be readily supported by the many interested in photography, who will be glad to feel that their efforts are incorporated and preserved for ever in what will eventually become a national collection. A more intelligent interest will be created in what is often at present a desultory and useless amusement, and the Archæological Societies will doubtless be strengthened by the addition of many intelligent members.

The following Regulations are suggested for adoption :—

1. That all photographs be as large as possible, whole plate being preferred, but in no case less than $\frac{1}{4}$ plate.
2. That they be printed in permanent process.
3. That while artistic effect is a valuable addition to a picture, it should not be achieved at the sacrifice of the work illustrated, but the point of view should be chosen to show as clearly as possible the details of the subject.

This is especially important in the case of tombs, effigies, and various architectural details, where it will often be impossible to combine picturesque effect and valuable record. While, therefore, it will be necessary to keep up a certain standard of artistic skill, plates should be preferred which clearly show architectural or other facts that can only be adequately recorded by the deliberate sacrifice of picturesque effect.

4. That some arrangement should be made to supply a scale in all illustrations, since without this many are practically valueless.

Particulars of size can be added in the accompanying description, but it is far better that an actual scale should be given by the inclusion in the picture of a graduated staff or a 3 ft. rod or walking stick, which may generally be unobtrusively introduced. In a series of photographs of Roman masonry now in preparation for the Society of Antiquaries a graduated scale,* marked clearly with English and French measures, is in all cases included. The scale must, of course, be placed in the same plane as the object to be photographed.

The Congress most strongly recommends the adoption of the double scale, which will render the photographs of European value, and materially assist English scholars in the work of comparison.

5. That a description in all cases accompany the photograph, giving the size, general condition, and as many particulars as possible of the object illustrated.

6. That all particulars as to history, date, etc., be carefully edited by competent authorities, as otherwise much false and often ridiculous information may be spread and perpetuated.

7. That the copies of the photographs for the collection be mounted by the curator on stout cards, uniform with those of the Warwickshire Survey, and the descriptive particulars legibly written or printed on the back, and the title on the front.

The plan adopted in Warwickshire of selecting a Hundred for the work of each year, and committing one square of the 6-inch Ordnance Map to individual or associated workers, provides for a systematic and exhaustive record that will be much more valuable than desultory or haphazard contributions. The jealousies that might arise in the selection of examples of prominent interest will also be avoided.

Where a county is divided amongst several Photographic Societies, the number of localities to be illustrated can be increased accordingly.

The following Rules are copied from those of the Warwickshire Survey Section of the Birmingham Photographic Society:

“ That the 6-inch Ordnance Map be adopted as the basis of the Survey.

“ That the work be conducted, as far as may be convenient, on the lines of the Hundreds.

* Printed copies of this scale (Price 6d., post free, or 5s. per dozen), can be obtained on application to the Assistant-Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, London, W.

“That in order to systematise the work it is desirable that members shall confine their work, as far as possible, to the Hundred selected for the ensuing year.

“That each square of the Ordnance Map (containing, roughly, six square miles) shall be considered a distinct field for work, and that any member may have allotted to him such square as he may select, unless such square has been previously allotted.”

Another and perhaps better way, which has been adopted by the Guildford Society, is to divide the 6-inch Ordnance Map into distinct blocks, with natural boundaries, and to furnish the members to whom a block is allotted with a corresponding plan cut from the 1-inch Ordnance Map, and mounted on card.

To facilitate access to objects to be illustrated, cards of introduction should be provided, and issued to those who undertake work. It is suggested that the cards be made to run for one year only, and be not re-issued except to those who are doing satisfactory work.

It is desirable that a Committee should prepare a schedule of the principal objects of which it is desired to obtain records, but such a list should not be regarded as in any way exhaustive, and may be supplemented by individual observation.

The photographing of portraits, already begun by the Warwickshire Society, is also of great value where it can be effected.

Besides objects of archaeological interest, photographs should be welcomed that give types of natives and groups of school children. These will be of the highest value to ethnological students. The ethnological photographs should, if possible, be taken in accordance with the directions laid down by Mr. Francis Galton. These may be obtained from the British Association, at Burlington House.

Photographs of objects of natural history, and of landscapes or geological features, should be encouraged and accepted, as they may be ultimately gathered into a separate collection.

Many of the County Societies are for the study of natural history as well as of archaeology, and where this is not the case proper custodians can eventually be found for the various collections.

It is desirable, to avoid risk of loss by fire, that at least three sets of Prints should be preserved by way of record: one by the County Society; a second by the British Museum; and a third, of archaeological plates, by the Society of Antiquaries. The third prints from those plates which illustrate science might be deposited with the societies representing the various subjects, such as the Anthropological Institute or the Geological and Linnæan Societies.

It is thought that, pending the general adoption of County Museums, the various County Archæological Societies would be the best custodians of the collections; but it will probably be more acceptable to those who photograph that it should be clearly understood that the custody is temporary and may be withdrawn at any time.

It will constantly be the case that photographs of a neighbourhood will be taken by strangers, but it is thought that the general adoption throughout England of such a scheme as that proposed will be sufficiently widely known to induce such photographers to communicate their work to the various centres, although they may not be personally interested in such centres.

The Sub-Committee suggests that the various Archæological Societies should take the initiative in founding local associations for the preparation of the Photographic Record.

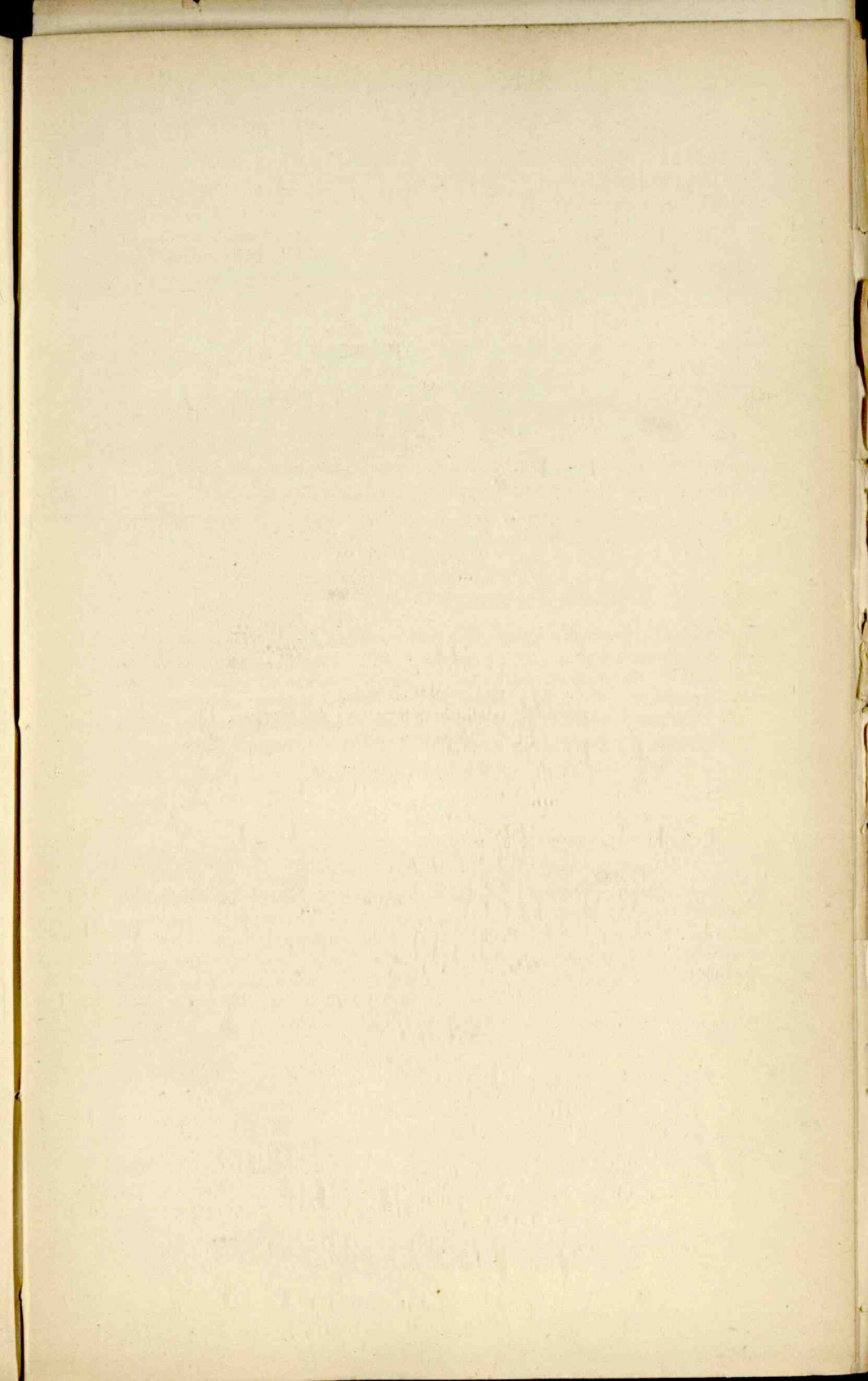
These associations should have their own executive, and the County Society should suggest the names of certain competent archæologists to serve on the councils. Where Photographic Societies already exist, efforts should be directed to bringing these into union and supplying the necessary information.

Sir J. B. Stone, who had so much to do with initiating the Birmingham scheme, strongly urges that a national society should be formed for the purpose of promoting the Photographic Record, and the Committee are of opinion that a strong central body would be of the greatest service, and they recommend the Congress to do their best to assist such a scheme, should it be put forward under good auspices.

The Sub-Committee wishes to point out that it is not necessary and, perhaps, not altogether desirable, that the County Archæological Societies should add to their work, already arduous enough, this of the Photographic Record.

It will be sufficient that they should promote local Photographic Societies, form a medium of union, and supply skilled advice on the subject of archæology.

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