

works of other peoples better known they serve to establish more or less clearly national affinities. And not only do they illustrate the state of the fine and useful arts, but also to a great extent public institutions and private customs. Temples, idols, and altars reveal much of religious rites and priestly power; weapons, of warfare; implements, of household habits; ornaments, of dress; tombs and sepulchral relics, of burial ceremonies, regard for the dead, and ideas respecting another life. When, in addition to their indirect teachings respecting the arts and institutions of their builders, antique monuments bear also inscriptions in written or legible hieroglyphic characters, their value is of course greatly increased; indeed under such circumstances they become the very highest historic authority.

It is, however, in connection with the other branches of the science, written and traditional, that material relics accomplish their most satisfactory results, their corroborative evidence being even more valuable than the positive information they convey. For instance, tradition relates wondrous tales of the wealth, power, and mighty deeds of a people that long ago occupied what is now a barren desert or a dense forest. These tales are classed with other aboriginal fables, interesting but comparatively valueless; but some wandering explorer, by chance or as the result of an apparently absurd and profitless research, discovers in the shade of the tangled thicket, or lays bare under the drifting desert-sands, the ruins of a great city with magnificent palace and temple; at once the mythic fable is transformed into authentic history, especially if the traditional statements of that people's arts and institutions are confirmed by their relics.

Again, the written record of biblical tradition, unsatisfactory to some, when not supported by corroborative evidence, narrates with minute detail the history of an ancient city, including its conquest at a given date by a foreign king. The discovery in another land of that monarch's statue or triumphal arch, inscribed with his

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