

MAN AND HIS PAST

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Man and his past by O. G. S. Crawford

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O. G. S. CRAWFORD

**MAN AND
HIS PAST**



ANCIENT EARTHWORK ON HAM HILL, WILTS.

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BY

O. G. S. CRAWFORD

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TO

JOHN LINTON MYRES

WYKEHAM PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT HISTORY, OXFORD

PREFACE

I DESIRE to express my acknowledgements to the following for permission to reproduce illustrations : to Mr. S. Hazzledine Warren for the photograph of the Palaeolithic Wooden Spear-head facing p. 16, to the President and Council of the Society of Antiquaries for the photographs of the Mortlake Bowl and Beaker facing pp. 19 and 80, to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press for plates facing p. 111, to Mr. J. Challenor Smith, F.S.A., of Silchester, for plate facing p. 164, to H.M. Stationery Office for the Sketch-map of the Ancient River Solent (reproduced from *Memoirs of the Geol. Survey*, Ringwood Sheet, 1902, p. 32) and for the map at the end of the book (reproduced from Ordnance Survey, Hants, Sheet 76, N.W.).

My most grateful thanks are due to Dr. Alfred Cox, O.B.E., for his kindness in undertaking to read the proofs.

O. G. S. CRAWFORD.

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INTRODUCTORY

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The idea of the earliest (flint) implements as 'extra-corporeal limbs'—the growth of brain through development of the sense of touch, concomitantly with the growth of power of intelligent co-ordination of hand and eye to chip a flint—a premium thus, for the first time in evolution, set upon intelligent rather than automatic response.

Incidentally there is put forward the suggestion that an important factor in man's evolution may have been a period of desiccation which ended a long forest régime, and compelled our arboreal ancestor to become at last wholly terrestrial. There his tactile proclivities had full scope in making 'coliths', a pastime which ultimately secured his survival, and *pari passu* developed his intellectual power. 'While he was chipping the blade of his stone axe, man was at the same time giving a keener edge to his own faculties.'

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The value of a study of *tools* (the *dissecta membra* of man's extra-corporeal evolution) is thus evident; and *tools* (the raw material of archaeology) logically include the aeroplane as well as the axe. What, then, is the distinction between archaeology, anthropology, and history? Marett's description of anthropology as the whole study of man. This is often lost sight of by specialists in each department, who fail to realise the unity of the trinity. This unity is of the first importance, for it is the scientific counterpart of universal brotherhood (in ethics) and of the 'parliament of man' (in politics). It broadens the specialist's outlook, and thereby raises all his work to a higher plane; it removes the danger of provincialism from the study

of local history, etc. ; and provides a justification of all ' human ' research however intricate or remote, because the raw material of education is thereby being accumulated.

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Its subject-matter is sherds, flints and earthworks. These are no longer regarded as ' curios ' to be explained by historical narratives, but as touchstones to verify or condemn them ; and as documents from which to construct our account of pre-historic times. It is the method of Sherlock Holmes. Epigraphy is a special department of archaeology, but so special that it is usually best left to specialists. It is to archaeology what palaeography is to history, but less important, because for many regions and periods no inscriptions survive. A man may be a good archaeologist without being able to decipher inscriptions, just as a man may be a good lawyer without being able to engross. Archaeologists would do better to confine their probationary years to (for example) making themselves proficient in soil-study, surveying, photography, drawing, human anatomy and the preservation of antiquities, all of which are indispensable accomplishments.

The archaeology of existing primitive peoples is an almost untouched field, but it must wait until we have studied the fast-vanishing cultures of the living. The opportunities will never recur ; and buried sites can safely be left. At the moment we want an anthropologist, whose heart is rather in European prehistory, to make a complete, geographical study of a small primitive group. For he alone will direct attention to those points upon which *archaeologists* require most enlightenment.

All the methods of archaeology and anthropology are paralleled in the work of the intelligence department of an army in the field ; the identification of units from caps and badges, the interpretation of earthworks on air-photos, the ' historical evidence ' of prisoners, critically examined.

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The aim of archaeology being to find out all possible about the men of past ages, what is its relation to history ? History as described by Myres (*The Value of Ancient History*, Oxford, 1910). Adopted, with a corollary on the value of the history of their own country to other peoples, e.g. of India, Egypt and the Sudan. This is a practical question for an imperial people.

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But how to discover the 'history' of a people (like the Sudanese) without any historical documents? By archaeological excavation. History thus written, however, falls short of true history, for it fails to 'distinguish the fool from the sage'.

Archaeology can help history by confirming or contradicting its facts; as, for example, is now being done in England with the Anglo-Saxon chronicle by Saxon archaeologists: and it can supplement it, especially by regional researches (concerned with castles, moated manors, homesteads, forest perambulations and the like). Archaeological material so used, however, is inferior in value to the material remains of prehistoric man, which remains are the only evidence we have. Hence the word 'antiquary' might be reserved for the students of 'historic' archaeology.

A paragraph to guard against a possible misunderstanding. By advocating the unifying of human history, I do not wish to propose any drastic reorganisation of the existing working arrangements (learned societies, etc.). That will come in time, but must come from within, and spring from a real desire, prompted by a change of spirit and widening of outlook. Such a change is urgently needed if we are to see the wood and not only the trees, as at present. A great deal of published research would be better unpublished, and the historical journals reserved for articles of a more general character.

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Archaeology, like history, but with the reservations above mentioned, is a department of anthropology. A confusion of thought, however, arises from a double use of the word anthropology, sometimes to denote 'the whole study of man', sometimes departments of it, such as the study of living primitive peoples, and human anatomy. It were better to invent a separate word for the whole study of man and call it 'androlology' (but this word is reluctantly suggested and not pressed into use here except where unavoidable). 'Androlology' has three main stages: (1) long prehistoric; (2) short culminating historic; (3) widely extended present.

Analysis of contents of some European anthropological journals, to discover proportion of archaeological articles. Discussion of how far the publication of archaeological and anthropological articles in the same volume is desirable.

The recognition of their position in the philosophic trinity would benefit the work of archaeologists, historians and