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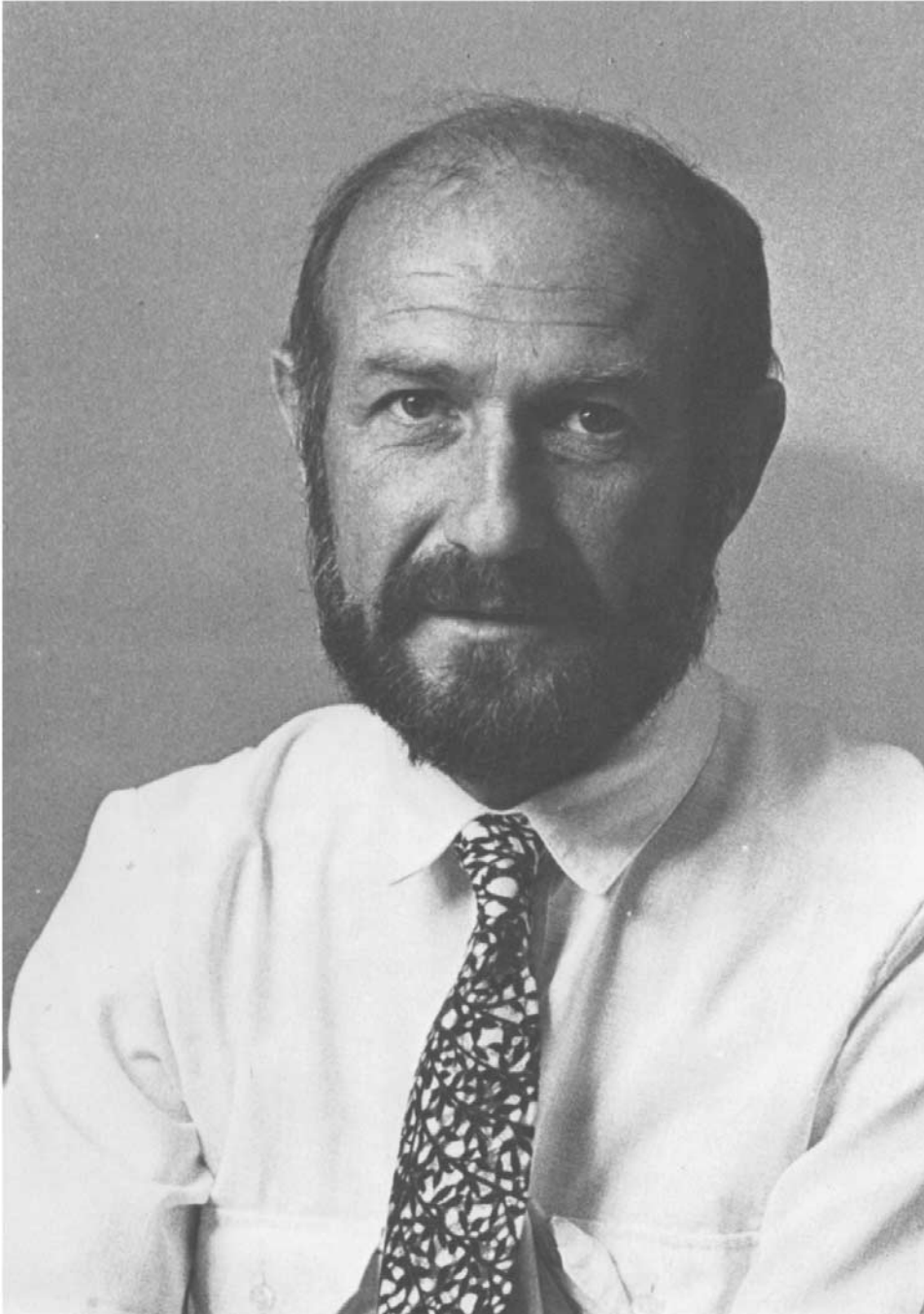
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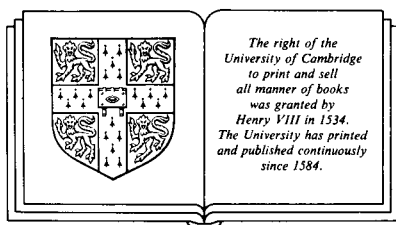
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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF HUMAN ORIGINS

Papers by Glynn Isaac

EDITED BY
BARBARA ISAAC



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Foreword

MARY LEAKEY

In his introduction John Gowlett has paid tribute to the many aspects of Glynn's tragically short career. My contribution in this brief foreword is on a more personal basis, of shared experiences and enjoyable discussions on problems arising from interpretation of Acheulean sites and other related topics. A number of long-held fallacious beliefs were swept away in the course of our conversations. Glynn's presence in the field of East African prehistory was a source of inspiration and an incentive to approach issues with a greater clarity of mind.

It was always stimulating and interesting to visit Glynn when he and Barbara were excavating at Olorgesailie, Peninj or East Turkana. This was particularly true at the time I was digging at Olduvai Gorge myself, since the sites often presented similar problems requiring the same techniques of excavation and recording, and shared ideas helped towards interpreting the evidence.

Glynn maintained a cheerful optimism about his work on the Acheulean, believing that, in spite of the paucity of information we were usually able to extract, a time would come when the puzzles would be resolved. Chief among these, of course, was the riverine context of so many East African Acheulean sites. His optimistic attitude was in marked contrast to my despondency when I began to dig the Acheulean sites at Olduvai after the splendid undisturbed stratigraphy of the Oldowan sites in Bed I. I remember him telling me emphatically that I must learn to live with the Acheulean if I hoped to complete my programme of excavation at Olduvai. He was right and I did eventually.

There are many reminiscences I can recall of experiences and expeditions shared with Glynn and Barbara; for example, a visit we made to Ethiopia to see the site of Melka Kunturé shortly after it had been discovered by Gerard Dekker. There were occasions, too, when Glynn visited Olduvai and I had the benefit of his advice and critical examination of the sites I was working.

Glynn was a prolific writer and one tends to forget the number of important and thought-provoking papers he wrote over the years. To collect the most significant and reprint them in this volume under one cover is most valuable and also provides an important record of the changing attitudes, over the years, to the study of early man, his environment, his lifestyle and his tools.

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The writings of Glynn Isaac, 1937–85

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