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978-0-521-10622-1 - Pitt Rivers: The Life and Archaeological Work of Lieutenant-General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, DCL, FRS, FSA

Mark Bowden

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A flamboyant polymath, General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers (1827–1900) was influential in four fields during his lifetime: military training, anthropology, archaeology and public education. Yet very little is known about his career, character, or motivation.

Mark Bowden has written an entertaining and thoroughly researched biography of the General which describes his stormy relationships with his wife, children, colleagues, tenants and dependants; his military career; his activities in public education; and his contributions to anthropology and archaeology. In particular he assesses his impact as excavator, field archaeologist, theoretician and first Inspector of Ancient Monuments on the development of British archaeology.

This is the most complete biography of a controversial man whose methods and ideals have been much quoted but frequently misunderstood and misrepresented.

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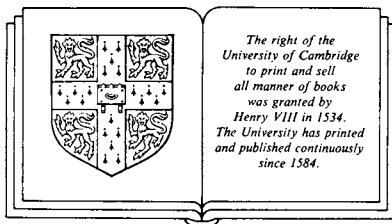
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# Pitt Rivers

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Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, DCL, FRS, FSA

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*Field Officer, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England*



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For my parents

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## Preface

The subject of this biography changed his surname in mid-career from Lane Fox to Pitt Rivers. Before 1880 I refer to him by his Christian names or as 'Fox', and after 1880 as 'Pitt Rivers'. In the Bibliography all his works are brought together under the name Pitt Rivers. It is perhaps appropriate to explain at the outset why he changed his name. When Horace Pitt, sixth Baron Rivers, died childless in 1880, his property would normally have descended to his senior surviving cousin, George Lane Fox. However, the will of George Pitt, second Baron Rivers, had specified that his estates and the estates of the late Lord Bingley should never be the property of a single person as long as there were two descendants of his sister, Marcia Lucy Fox, between whom they could be divided. As George Lane Fox was already the owner of the Bingley estates at Bramham near Wetherby, West Riding, the Rivers property devolved upon the next surviving cousin, Augustus Henry Lane Fox. According to Horace, the sixth Baron's will, Augustus Lane Fox could inherit the property only on condition that he took the surname Pitt Rivers and the arms of the Pitt family within one year of taking possession of the estate. Change of surname at the moment of inheritance was a common occurrence amongst the English aristocracy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Stone and Stone 1986, 88–9).

The wide range of the General's activities, especially his parallel careers in anthropology, archaeology and public education, make a straightforward narrative difficult to achieve. I have followed a similar pattern to that adopted by Thompson (1977), a thematic rather than a strictly chronological approach, despite the problems in this scheme, notably the tendency to make artificial divisions between the General's interests, identified by Bradley (1983, 2–3).

The primary sources for a life of Augustus Pitt Rivers are not extensive. He never kept a diary or journal and rarely retained copies of his own letters. The Papers now kept at the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum consist of a fortuitous selection of letters received, notes for papers, lectures and addresses, documents relating to the Ancient Monuments Act, newspaper cuttings and other miscellaneous items. Other letters, notebooks and papers are scattered amongst various other institutions. The General claimed that his mother was addicted to destroying documents (Constanduros 1953 unpublished) and this seems to have been a family trait. Much that was left at Rushmore and Farn-

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ham at his death was subsequently destroyed or lost. Other unpublished sources consist of the reminiscences of his archaeological assistants, members of his family and local inhabitants of Cranborne Chase. Aside from these sources we have to rely on the General's own published works and those of his contemporaries. There is, however, a rich harvest of secondary material beginning with the paper by Hawkes *et al.* (1947). All the sources I have used are listed in the Bibliography which is divided into separate sections for unpublished and published material. I have not included a complete bibliography of the General's published works; this is available in Gray (1905, xxxvii–xliii).

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