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978-0-521-10956-7 - Prehistory and Pleistocene Geology in Cyrenaican Libya

C. B. M. McBurney and R. W. Hey

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IV

PREHISTORY AND
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PREHISTORY AND
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A RECORD OF TWO SEASONS' GEOLOGICAL AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK IN THE GEBEL AKHDAR
HILLS, WITH A SUMMARY OF PREHISTORIC FINDS
FROM NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES

BY

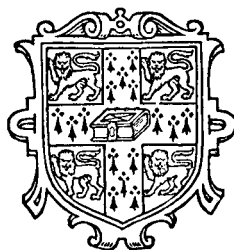
C. B. M. McBURNEY

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PREFACE

During the late war, one of the joint authors of this memoir (C. B. M. McB.) had an opportunity of travelling through the Gebel Akhdar range of Northern Cyrenaica, and of forming some idea of the potentialities of this region as a field for Quaternary research. Both the observations made at this time and subsequent consideration of data from other sources suggested that conditions here might be favourable for the investigation of a number of general problems affecting the prehistory and Pleistocene chronology of North Africa as a whole. A combined archaeological and geological reconnaissance was accordingly organized, during the summer vacation of 1947, under the auspices of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology of Cambridge University. The party consisted of C. B. M. McBurney, from the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, W. Watson, from the Department of British Antiquities of the British Museum, and R. W. Hey.

The results of this first season were sufficiently encouraging to justify the organization of a second expedition on a somewhat larger scale during the summer of 1948, comprising C. B. M. McBurney, R. W. Hey, and three undergraduate members, C. H. Houlder, G. de G. Sieveking, and T. B. Bagenal. Further geological observations were also made by R. W. Hey in 1952.

The main financial support for the first two expeditions was provided by grants from the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund, while further grants were received from the Society of Antiquaries of London, and the Worts Fund of the University of Cambridge. Help towards the expenses of individual members was received from King's College, Cambridge, the Trustees of the British Museum, the Lake Fund of Cambridge University and various other sources. During much of the time in which this work was in preparation, one of us (R. W. H.) was in receipt of a maintenance grant from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Grants towards the cost of publication were received from the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, King's College, and Trinity College. We should like to express our gratitude for all these forms of financial assistance.

Surveying instruments were kindly lent by the Royal Geographical Society, and help and services of the most varied and essential kinds were constantly provided by the authorities of the British Military Administration in Cyrenaica.

We are most grateful to Miss K. M. Kenyon, Dr C. R. Metcalfe, Professor F. Zeuner and the late Miss D. M. A. Bate, not only for having contributed reports on various specialized subjects, but also for having given much useful

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information and advice. Among many others who have helped and advised us, we would especially like to thank the following: Dr P. Allen, Dr W. J. Arkell, Dr M. Black, Mr M. C. Burkitt, Dr C. Chiesa, Miss E. W. Gardner, Miss D. A. E. Garrod, Dr E. Gobert, Dr H. Godwin, Monsieur J. Haller, Dr H. Hamshaw Thomas, Professor W. B. R. King, Dr K. S. Sandford and Dr H. Whitehouse.

To Major P. Sandison, Mr K. S. R. Robinson and Dr C. Willett-Cunnington we are greatly indebted for permission to publish notes and material on the prehistory of neighbouring territories which have helped to put our own finds in their correct context; also, to Signor C. Petrocchi, for kindly discussing his own work in the cave of Hagfet et Tera and allowing us to examine his material in Tripoli.

Finally, we cannot close this list of acknowledgments without recalling with appreciation the assistance and faithful service of many Cyrenaican friends and acquaintances, who contributed greatly to our comfort and security while in the field.

C. B. M. McB.

R. W. H.

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DISPOSAL OF SPECIMENS

The archaeological specimens collected during the two expeditions were distributed as follows. All surface material and all closed finds from beach conglomerates at Ras Aamer were given to the British Museum. A representative series from all the more important closed finds was sent to the Antiquities Officer of the United Kingdom of Libya, and is housed in the Museums of Tripoli and Cyrene. All the remainder was donated to the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, where are also the collections of Mr K. S. R. Robinson, Major P. Sandison, and Dr C. Willett-Cunnington. The small series of objects from the Wadi Bei el Kebir site are in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Of the geological specimens, the invertebrate fossils and most of the Wadi Derna plant-remains have been deposited in the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge; the registration numbers of these are given in the text. A representative selection of the plant-remains has been presented to the Museo di Storia Naturale, Tripoli. Of the vertebrate remains those of greatest palaeontological interest have been presented to the British Museum (Natural History) and a typical series has also been sent to the Museo di Storia Naturale, Tripoli; the bulk of the bone fragments, which are largely of archaeological interest, have been given to the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.