

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-63536-4 - The Prehistoric Cultures of the Horn of Africa: An analysis of the Stone Age Cultural and Climatic Succession in the Somalilands and Eastern Parts of Abyssinia  
J. D. Clark and M. C. Burkitt  
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OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

II  
THE PREHISTORIC CULTURES OF  
THE HORN OF AFRICA

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in South-west Ecuador  
By G. H. S. BUSHNELL
- II The Prehistoric Cultures of the Horn of Africa  
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Frontmatter  
[More information](#)



PRESENT-DAY TROGLODYTES AND 'ICHTHYOPHAGI' OF THE SOMALI COAST (see pp. 286-7)

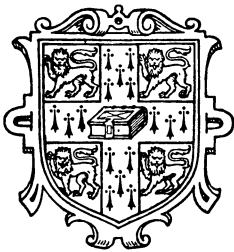
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THE  
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*An analysis of the  
Stone Age Cultural and Climatic Succession  
in the  
Somalilands and Eastern Parts of Abyssinia*

BY  
J. D. CLARK

*With a foreword by*  
M. C. BURKITT



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CONTENTS

List of Plates page ix  
List of Text-figures xi  
Foreword by M. C. BURKITT xiii  
Preface xv

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 Physical geography 3  
I. Physiographical features 3  
II. Solid geology 8  
III. Population, rainfall, water supply and vegetation 12  
Chapter 2 The work of previous investigators 16  
I. Somalia (Italian Somaliland) 16  
II. British Somaliland 22  
III. French Somaliland and the Southern Danakil Rift 26  
IV. Collections made by British military personnel, 1941-46 32

PART II

THE GENERAL GEOLOGY OF THE SPECIAL AREAS  
AND STRATIGRAPHY

Chapter 3 Introduction. Western British Somaliland and the Nogal Valley 45  
Western British Somaliland 45  
I. High-level 'plateau beds' 45  
II. River valley and other alluvial deposits 47  
The Nogal valley 63  
I. The Upper Nogal and Mijertein 63  
II. The Lower Nogal 71

CONTENTS

Chapter 4 The Webi Shebeli and its tributaries page 78
I. The upper valley 78
II. The middle valley 80
III. The lower valley and the 'Bur Country' 100
Chapter 5 The Danakil Rift 107
I. The earlier volcanic series 107
II. The earlier sedimentary series 109
III. The later volcanic series and rift movements 110
IV. The later sedimentary series 111
Chapter 6 The North and East Coasts 122
The North Coast 122
I. Marine and terrestrial deposits 122
II. The Bab-el-Mandeb land-bridge 129
The East Coast 131
Chapter 7 Correlation of geological deposits, events and cultures within the Horn 144

PART III

THE PREHISTORY OF THE SPECIAL AREAS

Chapter 8 Terminology 155
Chapter 9 The Acheulio-Levalloisian Culture 160
The Levalloisian Culture 170
Chapter 10 The Somaliland Stillbay Culture 190
The Somaliland Magosian Culture and the Magosio/Doian transitional industries 203
The Hargeisan Culture and derivative industries 218
Chapter 11 The Doian Culture 226
I. Introduction 226
II. The type Doian industries 230
III. The strandlooping variant 252
IV. The 'Neolithic' variant 254



CONTENTS

<i>Chapter 12</i>	The Somaliland Wilton Culture and its variants.	
	Conclusions.	<i>page</i> 260
	The Somaliland Wilton Culture	260
	I. The type Somaliland Wilton	260
	II. The Ogaden variant and derivatives	270
	III. The ‘Neolithic’ variant	277
	IV. The strandlooping variant	282
	V. Mining and factory sites	290
	Conclusions. The end of the Stone Age sequence	292
<i>Chapter 13</i>	Prehistoric art in the Horn of Africa	295

PART IV

A TENTATIVE CORRELATION OF CULTURES AND CLIMATES

<i>Chapter 14</i>	A tentative correlation of cultures and climates in the Horn with other areas of the African continent and with Southern Arabia	319
<i>Appendix A.</i>	Details of collections (not previously described) made by civil and military personnel in the Somalilands and Abyssinia	333
<i>B.</i>	Tool lists for additional Somaliland Magosian Culture sites	356
<i>C.</i>	Tool lists for additional Hargeisan Culture sites	357
<i>D.</i>	Tool lists for additional Doian Culture sites	358
<i>E.</i>	Tool lists for additional Somaliland Wilton Culture sites	360
<i>F.</i>	Report on the faunal remains collected by J. D. Clark from sites in the Somalilands. By D. M. A. Bate	362
<i>G.</i>	List of marine molluscs collected by J. D. Clark from raised beaches and other sites in the Somalilands. By L. R. Cox	366
<i>H.</i>	List of charcoals collected by J. D. Clark from prehistoric sites in the Somalilands. By Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	367
<i>Bibliography</i>		369
<i>Maps</i>		xvii, and Pl. 29
<i>Index</i>		374

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-63536-4 - The Prehistoric Cultures of the Horn of Africa: An analysis of the Stone Age Cultural and Climatic Succession in the Somalilands and Eastern Parts of Abyssinia  
J. D. Clark and M. C. Burkitt  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

LIST OF PLATES

FRONTISPIECE: Present-day troglodytes and ‘ichthyophagi’ of the Somali coast (see pp. 286–7)

AT THE END OF THE BOOK

1. Lower Acheulio-Levalloisian tools from Hargeisa
2. Lower Acheulio-Levalloisian tools from Hargeisa
3. Acheulio-Levalloisian (undifferentiated) hand-axes from Sheik
4. Acheulio-Levalloisian (undifferentiated) cleaver and hand-axe from Sheik
5. Upper Acheulio-Levalloisian tools from Hargeisa
6. Upper Acheulio-Levalloisian tools from Hargeisa
7. Upper Acheulio-Levalloisian tools from Hargeisa
8. Acheulio-Levalloisian (undifferentiated) tools from Eil
9. Acheulio-Levalloisian (undifferentiated) prepared core from Eil
10. Acheulio-Levalloisian (undifferentiated) from Dubar
11. Lower Levalloisian tools from Garoe Tug
12. Lower and undifferentiated Levalloisian tools from 50–100 ft. terrace of the Webi Shebeli at Sheik Gure and Cura Ba’ad, from Jesomma and Kabahan
13. Upper Levalloisian tools from Garoe and Donkukoq, Nogal
14. Upper Levalloisian tools from Jesomma
15. Undifferentiated Levalloisian tools from Dubar and Garasleh Tug
16. Undifferentiated Levalloisian tools from Las Anod
17. Lower Somaliland Stillbay tools from Hargeisa
18. Undifferentiated Somaliland Stillbay tools from Bur Eibe, Jesomma and Ohole, and Upper Somaliland Stillbay from Hargeisa
19. Upper Somaliland Stillbay tools from Hargeisa and undifferentiated Somaliland Stillbay tools from Eil
20. Hargeisan Culture tools from Hargeisa and Mandera North and Hargeisan derivative tools from Hargeisa and Eil. Also tools from above the  $\pm$  12 m. beach at Biede
21. Magosio/Doian transitional tools from Alablah Balleh and Hargeisan tools from Hormo and Hobat
22. Magosio/Doian transitional tools from Jesomma and Magosian tools from Bur Eibe
23. Doian, Magosio/Doian and Magosian Culture tools from Gure Warbei, Bur Eibe

LIST OF PLATES

- 24. Magosian and Doian tools from Rifle Range site, Bur Hakaba, Ogaden Wilton tools from Gabredarre and Ogaden Wilton derivative tools from sites near Gigei
- 25. Somaliland Wilton tools from Gumbur Todoballa, Mandera and from Afgudut Wells and Somaliland Wilton of 'Neolithic' facies from Rakon Wells, Mudugh. Also Doian 'Neolithic' variant from Mirsale Wells, Mudugh
- 26. Strandloping industry from Biede, Eil
- 27. Engravings from a rock-shelter at Bur Dahir, Ogaden
- 28. Engravings from a rock-shelter at El Goran, Somalia
- 29. Distribution map of prehistoric sites in the Horn of Africa available for download from [www.cambridge.org/9781107635364](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107635364)
- 30. General view of the Marodijeh valley at Hargeisa. View of site H.2 at Hargeisa
- 31. Views of sites H.12 and H.8 at Hargeisa
- 32. Views of the Gumbur Todoballa and excavation, Mandera, of site H.7 at Hargeisa and of erosion gully at Mandera
- 33. Views of the Nogal valley at Donkukoq, Callis, Garoe Tug and Eil
- 34. Views of sections in the lower Nogal Gorge
- 35. Views of the scarp at Isha Baidoa and of the Webi Shebeli valley between Belet Wein and Bullo Burti
- 36. Terrace gravels of the Webi Shebeli at Cura Ba'ad and Sheikh Gure
- 37. Section of the upper gravels of the Tug Fafan at Gabredarre and general view of Bur Eibe
- 38. Views of Bur Eibe from Bur Degis and part of the Bur Yassin site at Bur Eibe
- 39. Garasleh Tug section and general view of the alluvial fan deposits of the Aisha plain
- 40. Views across the Aisha plain and of the faulted area at Adele
- 41. General views of the Berbera coastal plain and of the 8 m. raised beach
- 42. Views of coastal deposits at Biede, Eil and Obbia, east coast
- 43. Views and sections of coastal deposits, southern Somalia
- 44. Excavations at the Gure Warbei, Bur Eibe
- 45. View and section of the Rifle Range site, Bur Hakaba
- 46. View and sections of excavation at Biede rock-shelter, Eil
- 47. View at Rakon and section at Mirsale Wells and rock engravings in rock-shelter at Bur Dahir, Ogaden
- 48. Engravings at El Goran and paintings at Bur Dauleh, Bur Eibe
- 49. Engravings in the Pass at Jid Banan
- 50. Paintings at Saka Sharifa, Harar
- 51. Paintings at Saka Sharifa and Errer Kimiet shelter I
- 52. Paintings at Errer Kimiet shelters I and II

LIST OF TEXT-FIGURES

1. Modified geological map of the Horn	<i>page</i> 9
2. Distribution map of raw materials used during the Stone Age in the Horn	11
3. Section through Marodijeh Tug, Hargeisa	48
4. Map and sections, Marodijeh Tug, Hargeisa	51
5. Sections, Mandera North and Borama	57
6. Profile sections, Nogal valley	65
7. Sections, Garoe and Garasleh Tugs	67
8. Section through Nogal Gorge at Eil	72
9. Sections across Webi Shebeli valley	84
10. Profile graph, middle Webi Shebeli	88
11. Sections, Webi Shebeli at Melka Taka, Darchaua Tug junction and Ohole	90
12. Sections, Webi Shebeli at Jesomma and Bulo Burti and Tug Fafan at Gabredarre	94
13. Sections, Kaptinag, Kabahan and God'dere Tugs	96
14. Sections, east coast of Somalia	133
15. Section across coastal dunes at Mogadishu	139
16. Diagrammatic sections illustrating stages of the Pleistocene and Recent succession in the Webi Shebeli and Marodijeh Tug	150
17. Distribution of Acheulio-Levalloisian industries	161
18. Distribution of Levalloisian industries	170
19. Distribution of Somaliland Stillbay industries	192
20. Sketch-map of sites at Bur Eibe	198
21. Distribution of Magosian and Hargeisan industries	204
22. Distribution of Doian industries	227
23. Plan and section, Gure Warbei, Bur Eibe	231
24. Sections, Gure Warbei, Bur Eibe	235
25. Sketch and ground-plans and section, Rifle Range site, Bur Hakaba	237
26. Sections, Rifle Range site, Bur Hakaba	238
27. Plan and sections, Mirsale Wells, Mudugh	255
28. Distribution of Somaliland Wilton industries	261
29. Plan and sections, Gumbur Todoballa, Mandera	263

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-63536-4 - The Prehistoric Cultures of the Horn of Africa: An analysis of the Stone Age Cultural and Climatic Succession in the Somalilands and Eastern Parts of Abyssinia  
J. D. Clark and M. C. Burkitt  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

LIST OF TEXT-FIGURES

30. Plan and sections, occupation dune, Durdur Heime	<i>page</i> 274
31. Plan and sections, Rakon Wells, Mudugh	278
32. Plan and section, Biede rock-shelter, Eil	283
33. Sections, Biede rock-shelter, Eil	285
34. Herdsmen and cattle, Genda-Biftou, Sourré	296
35. To show the degeneration in style and technique of cattle paintings in the Horn	305
36. Distribution of painted and engraved sites in the Horn	309

LIST OF ONLINE RESOURCES

available for download from [www.cambridge.org/9781107635364](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107635364)

Distribution Map of Prehistoric Sites in the Horn of Africa  
Provisional Correlation of Climatic Changes, Deposits and Associated Cultures in the Horn of Africa  
Tentative Correlation of Climates, Strand-lines and Material Cultures in the Horn, North and East Africa

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J. D. Clark and M. C. Burkitt

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## FOREWORD

Only those who have trained distinguished students know what a source of pride and satisfaction these become to their former teachers. I cannot therefore over-stress what a pleasure it is to me to write this preface for Dr Desmond Clark.

Dr Clark is the Curator of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum of Northern Rhodesia and he has already written a valuable work on the Zambesi gravels in the vicinity of Livingstone, so important indeed that, presented as the major part of his thesis it largely gained for him the Ph.D. degree of the University of Cambridge last year. And now, again, here he is producing another equally valuable monograph. During the recent war Clark was sent overland to Somaliland where he was stationed for more than two years. He had to travel up and down the country and thus had a unique opportunity to study the prehistory of this part of the world. Lying in the so-called Horn of Africa, Somaliland borders Kenya to the north. The latter region was already fairly well understood from the point of view of its prehistory thanks to the work of another old pupil of the Cambridge School, Dr L. S. B. Leakey. But while rich stone industries were known to occur in Somaliland little or no systematic excavation or study had been undertaken. Dr Clark thus brought to bear a trained mind experienced in field-work on an almost virgin area and the present volume is the result. All too seldom did the hazards of war bring people and places so fortuitously together!

I do not imagine that Dr Clark would claim that the final word with regard to the details of his subject has been said. But I think one can, without any fear of contradiction, suggest that the present volume goes far to elucidate the early story of the area and will form the indispensable basis for all further studies. The prehistory of the world is becoming ever more complicated as fresh regions are explored and new evidence has to be fitted into the jig-saw picture of the whole. Indeed, the problem is even more troublesome than a jig-saw which at least is all in one plane. It is more like trying to put together one of those Chinese puzzles in which pieces of wood fretted out in all directions ultimately fit together to form, say, a solid cube. The simple cultural sequence invented by Gabriel de Mortillet is now seen to have only a local application. It is becoming

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Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

FOREWORD

more and more difficult to form even the most generalized theories—and Africa is one of the most ‘problemiferous’ of continents. But this is a challenge to all prehistorians and the sort of work Dr Desmond Clark has done both in Northern Rhodesia and now in Somaliland supplies us with precious and reliable evidence about the industrial and cultural successions in these regions. It will be for our successors to fit the pieces into their proper places and, drawing the final generalized conclusions, to set out clearly the history of the whole great world during the fascinating period of the Stone Ages.

M. C. BURKITT

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

Although the Horn of Africa was one of the first regions of the African continent outside Egypt to furnish tools of Early Man yet it has remained largely neglected until recent years and its richness has been somewhat eclipsed by the systematic discoveries in East and South Africa and Rhodesia. Collections from Somaliland have found their way into a number of European and African museums but with the exception of excavations by Teilhard de Chardin, the Abbé Breuil and P. Wernert in the cave of Porc Epic at Dire Dawa in 1930 and 1933, and by P. Graziosi at Bur Eibe and in the Nogal valley in 1935 all the data collected and described up to the present have consisted of surface finds the provenance even of which was sometimes but imperfectly known. Previous workers have therefore had to rely on typological evidence and physical condition for estimates of the age and the cultural associations of the specimens they found. While therefore typologically the framework of the cultural succession was already foreseen our own work was directed towards providing wherever possible the necessary stratigraphical evidence on which to base the cultural and chronological succession for the Stone Age cultures in the Horn.

It has been thought advisable at the risk of becoming tedious to give full typological descriptions with tool lists and stratigraphical dating evidence for each culture. In a better known region this would probably be unnecessary as these particulars can usually be found in a fairly complete literature. This is not the case with the Horn, however, where, with rare exceptions, the literature is sparse and confined usually to brief notes and often incomplete descriptions of surface collections. All the evidence has been set out in full therefore so that readers may judge for themselves whether the conclusions that have been reached are indeed justified. This book remains, however, very much of a 'pioneer' work and must not be considered as an exhaustive treatise on the prehistory of the Horn. The cultures still are but imperfectly known and much of the detail remains to be elucidated and confirmed.

The field-work on which this book is based was undertaken in the Somalilands and parts of Abyssinia between 1941 and 1946 in the course of some two and a half years spent at various times in those territories during service with the East Africa

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

Command. The time that it was possible to spend in any one area was, particularly in the north, determined essentially by military necessity so that it was not always possible to obtain from a site evidence of as conclusive a nature as we should have liked. Sometimes it was unfortunately necessary to leave some problem quite unsolved while many important areas could not be examined at all. In spite of the rather interrupted nature of our work important evidence was nevertheless recovered and has enabled us to determine with some degree of certainty the main outlines of the geological and cultural succession during a large part of the Stone Age in several areas of the Somali plateau.

In 1941 parts of western British Somaliland, the Danakil desert, and the Reserved Areas were studied, and the first area was again visited in 1943 under more congenial conditions when it was possible to check several of the results obtained from our previous field-work, as well as to undertake work on new sites. In 1944 during service with the Military Administration in Somalia the country between the Webi Shebeli and the Juba rivers was studied and time was granted in which to conduct excavations at one open station and one cave site in that area. At the end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946 the Administration agreed to a preliminary archaeological survey being undertaken in certain areas not previously worked—notably the lower Nogal valley, the Obbia hinterland, and the Ogaden, in order that the northern sites might be linked with those found in the south. The cost of this survey was borne in the main by the Somalia Administration, and my best thanks are due to not a few of the officers of this administration for their help, but in particular to the late Brigadier D. H. Wickham without whose assistance this survey could not have been undertaken.

A distribution map of recorded sites will be found at Pl. 29, and a topographical map faces this page.

All measurements of height by the writer are barometric measurements. Two sets of readings were made wherever possible and the findings were checked against known heights and compensated for temperature variation. The diurnal variation was often considerable and in the Nogal valley and in the eastern Mudugh (Mudug) it was sometimes as much as 100 ft. or more.

The spelling of proper names has presented a considerable difficulty. In some cases as many as three or four different spellings for a single place-name



General Map of the Horn of Africa

NOTE

This topographical map has been taken from a map published by the National Geographic Society, Washington, and is based upon a combination of British, French and Italian maps. For this reason not a few of the spellings of place names and topographical features differ from the spellings which have been adopted in the text and Pl. 29. This discrepancy was not considered sufficient justification, however, for completely redrawing the map, which is reproduced here to show the topographical features.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

exist according to whether the name appears in British, French or Italian publications or maps. In the case of well known place-names the British spelling most commonly used at the time that the writer was in the Horn has been employed, but where these differ from the spellings used in Hunt and Viney's *Gazetteer of British Somaliland and Grazing Areas* (1946) the latter spelling is given in brackets. In the case of sites and places of minor importance visited by the writer, and of which the positions are clearly fixed though they may not always appear on the maps, the name has been spelt according to the R.G. II System. In the case of minor sites recorded by Italian, French or German authors and which are not marked on any map, it has been found necessary to retain the spelling used in the original publication.

I am most grateful to a number of colleagues and specialists who have helped me in a number of ways with their advice and specialist reports. The late Miss D. M. A. Bate examined and reported on the faunal remains recovered from excavations in Somaliland (Appendix F) and I am deeply grateful to her for the help that she gave me. Dr L. R. Cox has kindly examined and identified the molluscan fauna from raised beaches on the east coast (Appendix G), and the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, has provided the report on the charcoals (Appendix H).

I am very greatly obliged to Dr W. A. Macfadyen for the great care that he has taken to read through the geological part of this book and for the helpful and detailed criticism and suggestions that he has made. It is indeed a privilege and a comfort to have one who knows the geology of the Somalilands as he does to check these chapters especially as I felt at times in the field the lack of geological assistance very acutely. To Professor F. E. Zeuner also for his determination of soil and rock samples and suggestions as to their value as indicators of past climatic change I am most deeply grateful. Also to Dr A. F. Hallimond for his determination of an iron slag from the Biede rock-shelter I must express my thanks.

Count Björn von Rosen most kindly made me a gift of a copy of his very fine book *Berget och Solen* with his description and photographs of the important Harar group of painted rock-shelters. I am very grateful to him for allowing me to reproduce several of his photographs and for his kindness in providing me with prints to facilitate this.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

I must also record my thanks to the Trustees of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and Museum for financial assistance towards the transport of the collections.

I am especially obliged to Mr M. C. Burkitt for his Foreword and have been very greatly helped by the constant advice and suggestions that he has so kindly given during the time that this book was being written. His kindness and help have been invaluable and without them it is likely that this work would never have been started.

I have also profited very greatly by discussions with the Abbé Breuil, Professor C. van Riet Lowe, Dr L. S. B. Leakey and Dr C. B. M. McBurney and other friends and colleagues and I wish to record my thanks to them for the help that they have given me.

The drawings of the stone implements, indispensable in a work of this nature, I owe to my wife and my most grateful thanks are due to her for these illustrations and also for the constant help that she has given me in correcting proofs, checking statistics and in many other ways.

I have been very fortunate in having been able to examine all the important collections that have been made from the Horn with the exception of those in Italy, and I am greatly obliged to the following for allowing me to examine and to make full use of the collections that they control. To Mr Harper Kelley for permission to examine the collections from Somaliland and Abyssinia in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. To the Abbé Breuil and Professors H. Vallois and R. Vaufrej for their kindness in letting me examine the collections in the Institut de Paléontologie Humaine where the material from French Somaliland and the bulk of the Porc Epic collection is housed. The collections in the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology have been examined by courtesy of Mr M. C. Burkitt and Drs T. T. Paterson and G. H. S. Bushnell. Mr E. M. M. Alexander of the British and Medieval Antiquities Department at the British Museum placed at my disposal the collections made by Mr Seton-Karr, and Dr L. S. B. Leakey made available the collections, many of them formed by British military personnel during the course of, and after, the East African Campaign, which are housed in the Coryndon Memorial Museum at Nairobi.

Captain H. B. Gilliland has also put at my disposal the collections made by him in the eastern part of British Somaliland and now housed in the

PREFACE

Archaeological Survey at Johannesburg, and I am grateful to Professor C. van Riet Lowe for permission to examine these.

The bulk of my collections have been given to the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Cambridge, but comparative collections have been given to the Institut de Paléontologie Humaine at Paris, to the Archaeological Survey at Johannesburg, South Africa, and to the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum at Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia.

J. D. C.

*September 1951*