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978-1-108-00467-1 - Catalogue of the Osteological Portions of Specimens Contained in the Anatomical Museum of the University of Cambridge

William Clark

Frontmatter

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Catalogue of the Osteological Portions of Specimens Contained in the Anatomical Museum of the University of Cambridge

William Clark was Professor of Anatomy at Cambridge for nearly 50 years, collecting many specimens of bones for use in the study of comparative anatomy, physiology and osteology. These formed a principal part of the collection that eventually became the university’s Museum of Zoology. He wished to support students of natural sciences in acquiring knowledge from direct observation of well arranged and accurately identified specimens. The 1289 items, catalogued in 1862, include 128 from humans of varying races and dates. These include masks of the faces of Isaac Newton, William Pitt and Benjamin Franklin. This focus reflects, in part, the nineteenth-century fascination with phrenology. A regular participant in the influential Cambridge Philosophical Society, in May 1860 William Clark made there what Darwin perceived to be a “savage onslaught” on his recently published Origin of Species. This book reveals Clark’s very different approach to studying the tree of life.

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[More information](#)

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[More information](#)

PREFACE.



THIS Catalogue records the Osteological Specimens in the possession of the University. I have also included in it some Birds and Mammals stuffed, and some Fishes and Reptiles in spirit, because I think that it may frequently be advantageous to students, for whom this collection is chiefly designed, to have an opportunity of comparing the external characters of any groups in which they may be interested with the osteological. This is a plan which has been followed with success in several Continental Museums, especially in that of the University of Pavia.

As the value of such a collection as this depends in a great measure on the accuracy with which the specimens are named, I have never appended a specific name without due authority for it, and have preferred, in doubtful cases, to append the generic name alone. Whenever I found a difficulty in determining a specimen from descriptions, I took it to the British Museum, for comparison with a series of great extent and of different ages. I take this opportunity of thanking Professor Owen and Mr Gerrard for their great kindness in devoting many hours of their valuable time to the identification of the specimens shown to them.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

A few remarks on the history of the Osteological Collection will not be inappropriate.

It originated in the private Museum of Sir Busick Harwood, Professor of Anatomy from 1785 to 1814, which the University purchased on his death. His specimens are not numerous, for his lectures were principally physiological. They are marked "Harwood collection."

In 1830 the University purchased a considerable part of the Museum of Joshua Brookes, Esq. Of this the osteological specimens are marked "Brookes collection."

In 1832 the collections were removed to the present buildings, and in 1836 the University purchased the whole of the valuable collection of Dr Macartney, Professor of Anatomy in Trinity College, Dublin. His specimens are marked "Macartney collection."

In 1853 I purchased in Paris of M. Dumoutier, who had accompanied the naturalists MM. Quoy and Gaimard on board the French frigate *Astrolabe*, which was absent in the Antarctic Seas on a scientific expedition from 1826—1829, a number of specimens, chiefly of the Seal tribe, collected by himself. These are marked [French Exp.].

In 1856 I had the pleasure of increasing the Collection by adding to it the osteological collection of Professor Bell, F.R.S., etc., etc., by which every order of Vertebrata is more adequately represented, and especially that of the Reptiles, amongst which is that valuable collection he had formed for the illustration of his work on the "Testudinata." His specimens are marked "Bell collection."

During the last two years the Collection has been entirely rearranged, the specimens already forming part of it cleaned, and in many cases rearticulated, numerous additions made, and the whole disposed in such a manner as to render it as

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

vii

accessible as our limited space will allow, for purposes of study. This it is hoped will be further facilitated by the publication of the Catalogue, which will also serve as a guide to persons desirous of adding to the collection by their own exertions or by purchase. It is worthy of remark, that as long as the very limited collection was deposited in the small dark room opposite Queens' College, where it remained till 1832, there was little inducement for either the Professor or any one else to add to it, as the specimens could not be exhibited. From the time of its removal to the present building until now it has steadily increased in the way above recorded, and by private donations. Now, however, a time has come when the old state of things is renewed, upon a larger scale it is true, and in a way less likely to attract notice, but still equally pernicious to the interests of Science. The space has become so inadequate that no further additions can be made, nor can several large skeletons, at present stowed in boxes, be exhibited at all. The University, for instance, possesses at the present time a Whale, purchased by subscription in 1850, an Eland, a Zebu Bull, a Red Deer, and a large species of *Delphinus*, not to mention a vast number of separate bones and smaller skeletons, which cannot be displayed even in fragments. Nor, supposing us willing to forego the display of these, and the acquisition of desiderata to fill up the *lacunæ* in the collection (for many orders, especially the Fish, are very inadequately represented), should we be blind to the fact that the Museum is now so crowded that it is difficult to have access to the skeletons; and that those persons who proceed to their degree in the Natural Sciences Tripos are thereby discouraged, and acquire the barely requisite amount of knowledge to enable them to satisfy the Examiners at second-hand from books, instead of from the actual specimens.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

PREFACE.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without tendering my thanks to Dr Drosier of Caius College, for his great kindness in assisting me in my lectures, when prevented by ill health from delivering them myself, and for the very beautiful skeletons of Birds, articulated by himself with great skill, with which he has enriched the Museum.

The Catalogue has been made, under my direction, by my son, who has also arranged the Collection, and articulated most of the recent additions.

It is hoped that the Catalogue of the Physiological Series of Specimens will shortly follow.

WILLIAM CLARK.

TRUMPINGTON STREET,

August, 1862.