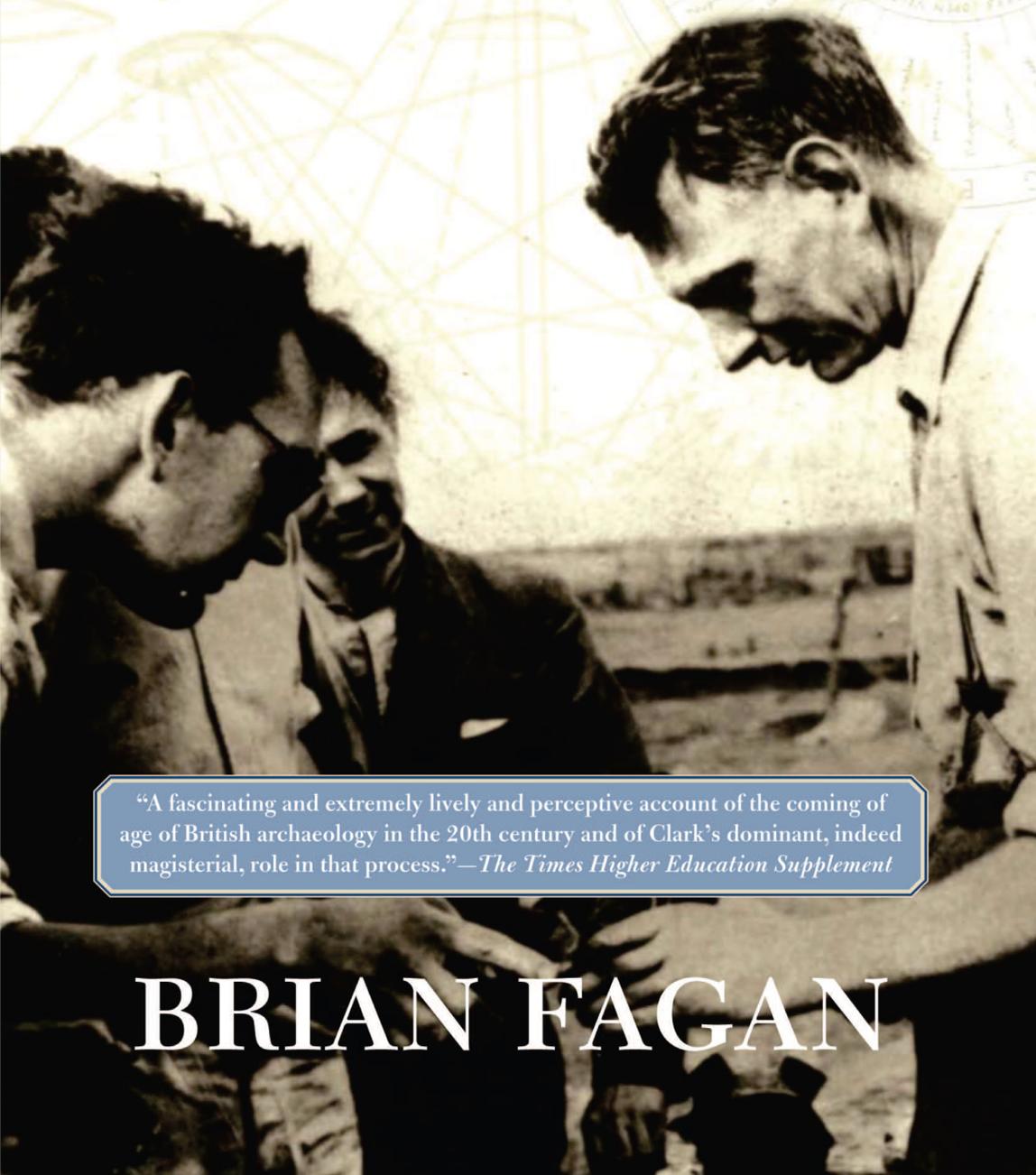


Grahame Clark

An INTELLECTUAL Biography
of an **ARCHAEOLOGIST**



“A fascinating and extremely lively and perceptive account of the coming of age of British archaeology in the 20th century and of Clark’s dominant, indeed magisterial, role in that process.”—*The Times Higher Education Supplement*

BRIAN FAGAN

GRAHAME CLARK





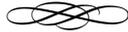
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GRAHAME
CLARK

*An Intellectual Life of
an Archaeologist*



BRIAN FAGAN

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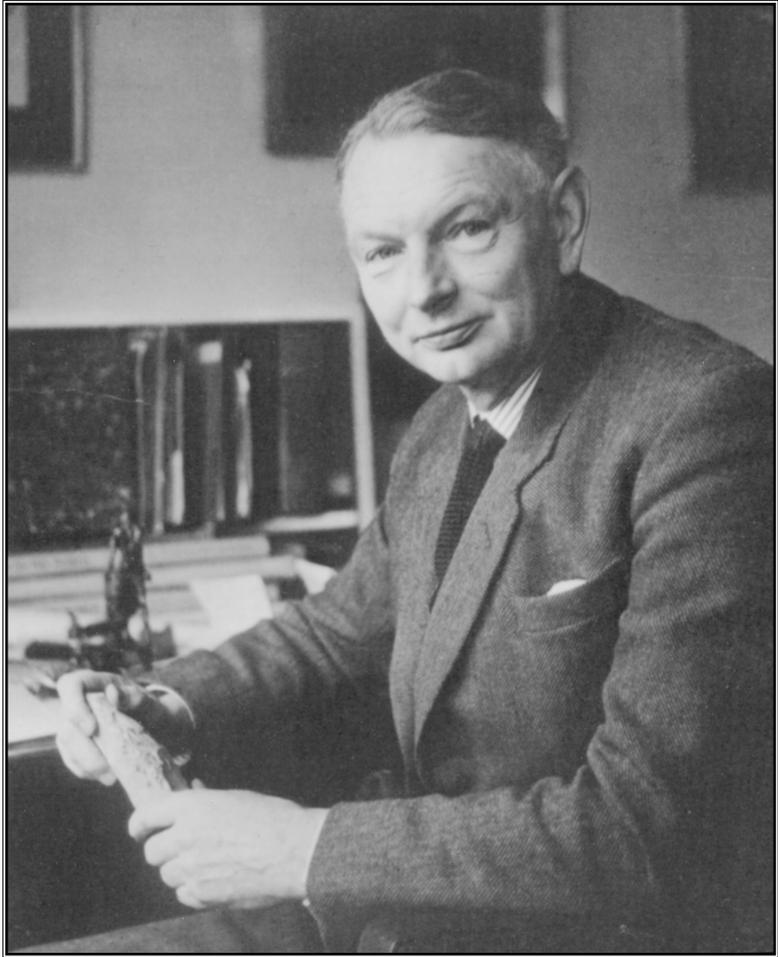
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for

MOLLIE CLARK



Honoris causa



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Preface

If man has indeed made himself, he has only been able to do so by means of his economies.

Grahame Clark, *Economic Prehistory*¹

If, forty years ago, someone had predicted that I would write a biography of Grahame Clark, I would have laughed at such a ludicrous thought. Although I studied under him as an undergraduate and he supervised my graduate research, we never enjoyed much sustained conversation. In fact, I was terrified of him, confusing shyness for austerity. It was only when I started fieldwork on Iron Age villages in what was then Northern Rhodesia in 1960 that I realized the enormous influence he had exercised on my thinking. This intellectual mentorship continued during my doctoral research, much of it conducted far from Cambridge, and some of his ideas became part of my own thinking about the prehistoric past.

Many years have passed since I submitted the final draft of my dissertation into Grahame's formidable hands, and he was friendliness itself on the rare occasions that we met in later years. He had mellowed, and so had I, and it was deeply satisfying to encounter him in Cambridge when I delivered the first Geoffrey Bushnell Memorial Lecture in 1992 and had a chance to tell him in his old age just how much I had learned from him. Even then, the thought of my writing his biography would have strained the bounds of credibility.

Time and chance brought me to the role of biographer, the passage of time honing my writing skills and chance taking me to the Grahame Clark

Memorial Conference at the British Academy in London in November 1997. At the end of the meeting, I was cornered by Professor John Coles, one of Clark's literary executors, who invited me to become his biographer. After considerable soul searching, I accepted. This book, written at the formal invitation of Lady Clark and the literary executors, is the result.

I undertook the task with considerable trepidation but soon found myself engrossed in a complex, multifaceted life and in a journey that took me back to the nearly forgotten bucolic world of prehistoric archaeology in the 1930s, then to the Cambridge of the 1940s and 1950s and of my own undergraduate days. To chronicle Grahame Clark's intellectual life is to participate in the history of a discipline that he transformed, at first almost single-handedly, from something that was little more than artifact classification into a sophisticated study of the human past based on collaboration with scientists from many disciplines.

Grahame Clark was a very private man, with an austere, sometimes forbidding exterior. The public Grahame was a very different person from the private one. His archaeological friendships were relatively few, his acquaintances legion. He hid his emotions and preferred to talk about archaeology rather than exchange small talk. Stories of his awkwardness with students and others abound, but they are irrelevant to the biographer of a man whose intellectual influence on archaeology was enormous. Grahame Clark is one of the few archaeologists about whom the comment that Sir Christopher Wren's son made on his monument in Saint Paul's Cathedral is apposite: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice" ("If you seek his monument, look around you"). His books and papers on archaeology, as well as the students he trained, many of them now gray-haired, surround one on every side. Clark's legacy to prehistory will endure for generations.

The history of archaeology has become a vigorous specialty within the discipline in recent years at three levels. The first is at a general level, that of anecdotal histories. Then there are intellectual assessments, such as the Canadian archaeologist Bruce Trigger's *History of Archaeological Thought*, which is on the reading list of every serious student.² Research at the third level is far more detailed and can be classified as formal historiography, in which the researcher goes back to the archive files of learned societies and academic departments, to the very often arcane trivia of academic politics of a half century ago or even earlier. This kind of research can be absorbing, and occasionally fascinating. It is also extremely time-consuming,

especially for a researcher with many commitments, limited field time, and a base over 5,000 miles from the archives. In the case of Grahame Clark, I sensed that there was little to be gained from such research, for the main outlines, and indeed details, of his intellectual life are available in the public eye, and also in his own prolific writings. My concern with this book is to provide an assessment of his life's work for working scholars with a general interest in the development of archaeology, not for historians of archaeology. I think more detailed historiography, if appropriate, is best left for a future generation.

Quite apart from the issue of historiography, the writing of this biography presented unusual challenges. Clark's executors gave me unlimited access to his archives, which are deposited in the Cambridge University Library, including the manuscript of his last, incomplete book, *A Path to Prehistory*, which he ultimately intended to call *Man the Spiritual Primate*. In the event, the archives contained almost nothing of historical value, for Clark tended to destroy correspondence after dealing with it. The few letters that survive are not particularly illuminating. Much of his archive consists of notes on long outdated academic papers and research materials for his many books and papers, all of which are on public record. Fortunately for a biographer, Clark was a compulsive writer who published not only every piece of fieldwork and analysis he completed (which makes him almost unique among archaeologists) but also several almost hidden autobiographical sketches, the most important of which appears in his *Archaeology at Cambridge and Beyond* (1989).³ His ideas and syntheses are fully published too, facilitating the task of an intellectual biographer. Accordingly, this biography is written in large part off Clark's own publications, a task that has involved reading virtually everything that he ever wrote, from his days as a Marlborough College schoolboy to his old age—I must be the only scholar ever to do so!

When I began the research, I anticipated that interviews with his former colleagues and students would prove to be a rich lode of informal material. The numerous interviews that I conducted, although enjoyable and informative (and sometimes reunions with archaeologists I had not seen in over forty years), proved disappointingly uninformative as far as Grahame Clark the person was concerned. To most of his colleagues, Clark was a strictly professional acquaintance who talked about little more than archaeology and occasionally reminisced. His former students were usual-

ly somewhat afraid of him, until they got to know him in later life. Consequently, this biography focuses almost entirely on Clark's academic contributions, while the man tends to stand in the background. Yet it matters little, for the Clark you encountered was the Clark you also met on paper. He was fundamentally a simple and direct thinker, with a brilliant gift for getting at the nub of a problem and a breadth of vision that could be astounding. Grahame Clark was conservative, sometimes magisterial, even rude, but his archaeology was sometimes tinged with genius—which is why he is worth a biography.

Few people would disagree with the assessment that Clark was one of the most important prehistorians of the twentieth century. He began his career in a world of artifact collectors, pioneered environmental archaeology and systems-ecological approaches, dug Star Carr, one of the most famous Stone Age hunter-gatherer sites in the world, and developed the first global synthesis of human prehistory. Several generations of students sat under him, with his proactive encouragement, and colonized the archaeological world. Yet he remains surprisingly invisible outside the narrow coterie of Mesolithic archaeologists and former Cambridge graduates. His personality was not one that invited celebrity; his lecturing style was dry rather than entertaining. He lacked the urbane sophistication of a Glyn Daniel or the self-aware flamboyance of a Mortimer Wheeler. Clark was a single-minded archaeologist who was most comfortable interacting with fellow specialists or writing in his study. He was not a gregarious man, which meant that his archaeological light was hidden under a bushel, especially in the United States, where his work was little known, except to a minority of practitioners, and was submerged in the 1960s by the loud rhetoric of processual archaeology.

The generations pass rapidly and I was surprised at how many archaeologists of the up-and-coming generation have never heard of Grahame Clark, and how little his work now figures in day-to-day research discussions. From the point of view of advancing research, one knows that Clark would be pleased, for his concern was with the progress of science. But the neglect is a pity, for there is much to be learned from his writings, even more than a generation later: his insistence that there are many forms of prehistory and history, his broad vision of the past, which overrode petty specialties, and his insistence on close teamwork with natural scientists—to mention only a few. Above all, his is a life illuminated by an intense pas-

sion for archaeology, for the achievements of humanity, a fire in the belly if you will, which often eludes us in these days of ardent specialization and papers on increasingly arcane topics of little interest except to those who write them. Grahame Clark was very much a renaissance archaeologist, rare in his day and even rarer in our own. There is much to learn from his long career of relevance to an archaeology that faces a difficult and uncertain future in the twenty-first century.

It is always difficult to write a biography of an acquaintance, no matter how slight. Inevitably, with the passage of years, scholars of high achievement like Grahame Clark tend to assume a more mythical stature than reality suggests. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of hagiography, which I have tried to avoid at all costs. Inevitably, there will be some readers who knew Grahame Clark better than I did. They are certain to disagree with some of the assessments in these pages. But I think that my appraisal of John Grahame Douglas Clark is an accurate one. He was one of the greatest archaeologists of a century that produced a remarkable number of gifted ones—and I wager that most people who knew him would agree with me.



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Acknowledgments

This biography was written at the invitation of Lady Clark and Sir Grahame's literary executors. I am deeply grateful to Mollie Clark, both for many kindnesses and insights into the more personal aspects of Grahame's life and for reading the draft manuscript. Her advice and suggestions have been invaluable. She has, of course, made no attempt to change my intellectual assessments. The executors—Professor John Coles, Professor Paul Mellars, and Dr. Peter Rowley-Conwy—have encouraged me at every turn, commented on the manuscript, and corrected many errors of fact and perception. So have Professors Norman Hammond and Charles Higham. John Coles's memorial of Grahame Clark in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* for 1997 was an invaluable source, for he knew Clark far better than I.⁴

I owe a major debt to Pamela Jane Smith, whose research into Grahame Clark and the history of the Cambridge Department is the subject of her doctoral dissertation. I eagerly await the publication of the book, *Morning Coffee, Afternoon Tea*, resulting from her dissertation. She willingly gave me access to unpublished papers, helped me with sources, and read the manuscript. Without her assistance, this book would not have been written.

Dozens of colleagues and friends agreed to be interviewed, provided me with detailed materials, or supplied reminiscences in correspondence. It is impossible to name them all, but I owe special thanks to Leena Ahtola-Moorhouse of the Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki, Paul Ashbee, Leslie Cram, Christopher Evans, John Evans, Peter Gathercole, Norman Hammond, Charles Higham, John Hurst, Ray Inskeep, Michael Jochim,

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The staff of the Davidson Library at the University of California–Santa Barbara were helpful far beyond the call of duty, as were the librarians providing me access to the Clark archive at the Cambridge University Library. I am also grateful to all those who provided permission to reproduce the illustrations in this book. The credits are listed in the captions. Photographs without credits either were taken by Grahame Clark or are in the possession of his family. Every reasonable effort was made to obtain permissions from copyright holders. Any questions in this matter should be directed to the author. The maps are the skillful work of Jack Scott.

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Brian Fagan
Santa Barbara, California

Author's Note

Unless otherwise stated, all radiocarbon dates cited in these pages are uncalibrated, since they are usually quoted in the context of the time they were released.

Site names and geographical locations are spelled, and used, as they were when Grahame Clark visited or referred to them.

Technical terms, such as Cambridge University nomenclature for degrees, are defined in the notes, which provide references for the text.

In the interests of more varied style, and with the concurrence of Lady Clark, I have used both “Grahame” and “Clark” to refer to Professor Sir Grahame in the text.

Given the comprehensive notes at the end of this book, it has been decided not to publish a complete listing of Grahame Clark's writings. An incomplete bibliography can be found in his edited *Economic Prehistory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), with additions in Peter Rowley-Conwy, “Sir Grahame Clark,” in Tim Murray, ed., *Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, vol. 2, *The Great Archaeologists* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1999), pp. 507–529.



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1



A Passionate Connoisseur of Flints

As an undergraduate I had already been a passionate connoisseur [of flints] for more than a decade.

If anyone were to ask me why I have spent my life studying Prehistory, I would only say that I have remained under the spell of a subject which seeks to discover how we became human beings endowed with minds and souls before we had learned to write.¹

“A Path to Prehistory”

A colleague once described him as “mattock faced,” after one of the elk antler implements he once discovered.² John Grahame Douglas Clark was an imposing, remote man who hid his feelings behind a mask. Tall, thin, and seemingly austere, he brought a high moral imperative and a complete single-mindedness to archaeology. His devotion to, and absorption in, prehistory was so complete as to be intimidating, but scholars like him are the foundation of many academic disciplines. Grahame Clark’s long career from the 1930s to the 1970s spanned an extraordinary transition in which archaeology developed from a largely amateur pastime into a highly specialized scientific discipline. Working with minimal resources, he was one of a handful of men and women who turned prehistoric archaeology from a

basically amateur pursuit into a multidisciplinary enterprise. He was a pioneer in ecological archaeology, was the first archaeologist to write a global prehistory of humankind, and encouraged an entire generation of young prehistorians to work abroad, far from the comfortable classrooms and laboratories of his beloved Cambridge.³ Devout, hardworking, and not necessarily universally beloved, Grahame Clark was one of the greatest archaeologists of the twentieth century. He kept company with a small group of distinguished European contemporaries, among them the great synthesizer Vere Gordon Childe, Stone Age archaeologist Dorothy Garrod, and British specialist Stuart Piggott. He was in touch with American colleagues too, notably Gordon Willey of Harvard University and Richard MacNeish of Tehuacán Valley fame. His intellectual influence on archaeology will endure well into the twenty-first century.

John Grahame Douglas Clark was born on July 28, 1907, the elder son of Charles Douglas Clark and Maude Ethel Grahame Clark (née Shaw). His family was solidly upper middle class and moderately prosperous, his father a stockbroker and reserve army officer.⁴ The family lived comfortably at Shortlands near Bromley in Kent, in southeastern England. By all accounts, Grahame's early childhood was a happy one. In 1914 his father sailed for service with the West Kent Regiment in France, Mesopotamia, and then India. The seven-year-old Grahame never saw his father again. Lieutenant Colonel Clark survived the Great War but succumbed to the virulent influenza pandemic that swept the world at the close of hostilities, dying just as his ship entered Plymouth Sound in 1919. He was buried with full military honors, which gave his son a lifelong distaste for funerals. Grahame Clark grew up without a father, a circumstance that had a lasting effect on his life. Brought up by his mother and a guardian uncle named Hugh Shaw, for whom he had deep affection, he became an intensely driven and emotionally self-sufficient boy, characteristics that endured throughout his life. His financial affairs were in the hands of trustees who paid for his public school and university education.

The family moved to Seaford on the edge of the Sussex Downs, where archaeological sites abounded. Grahame fell under the lure of flint collecting when a Mr. Bird, a retired Public Records Office official, showed him his collection of flint implements from Yorkshire. (The same gentleman taught him piquet, a card game Grahame played his entire life.) Some leaf-shaped arrowheads attracted Grahame's eye at once, kindling a lifetime

interest in stone tools. He promptly started his own collection, riding far and wide on his pony over the chalk country of the Sussex Downs, where stone artifacts were plentiful. Then, as later, he became oblivious to everything when archaeology beckoned. On one occasion, his pony returned riderless. Grahame had spotted some flints and dismounted to collect them, promptly forgetting about his mount.

Schoolboy Archaeologist

In 1921, Grahame entered Marlborough College, a well-known public (private) school favored by middle-class families. The school lies in the Kennet Valley at the heart of Wessex, in the chalk country where Stonehenge and Avebury beckoned and the opportunities for archaeological exploration abounded (Figure 1.1).

Marlborough under headmaster Cyril Norwood prided itself, then as now, on its strict work ethic and moral code and on its tough academic standards, an atmosphere in which Clark flourished. He joined the Natural History Society and soon acquired the nickname “Stones and Bones.” Members were excused from games at least once a week so they could participate in society activities. Grahame had ample time to indulge two enthusiasms: the pursuit of butterflies and moths and flint collecting in the countryside. Under the encouragement of the history master, Mr. Brentnall, members visited the Devizes Museum “by char-à-banc” to examine the collections of Bronze and Iron Age specimens. On another occasion, they were able to visit the Windmill Hill excavations near the famous Avebury stone circles, where the wealthy marmalade heir Alexander Keiller had started a long-term digging campaign in 1925. Windmill Hill was a Neolithic “causewayed camp,” an enigmatic structure with irregular earthworks that was thought to be a Stone Age cattle enclosure. Keiller himself showed them “sections of three concentric works, and pointed out the peculiar causeways interrupting them every few yards.”⁵ Archaeology was not Grahame’s major passion at the time. When the party climbed the nearby prehistoric earthwork known as Silbury Hill, he was more interested in the March Fritillary butterflies on the summit than in this remarkable monument.⁶

From 1923 to 1926, Grahame was a leading light of the Natural History Society. He led the way in recording the first appearances of butterflies and moths and collecting large numbers of specimens. In the end, stone tools

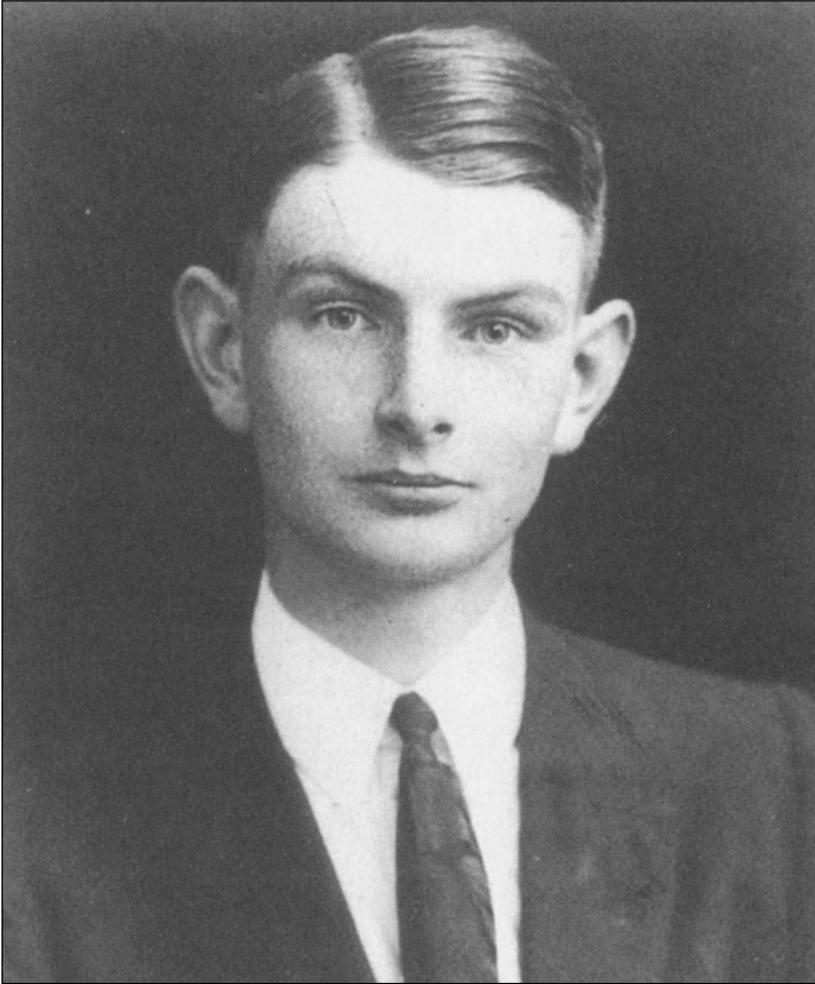


Figure 1.1 Grahame Clark, age fifteen, a student at Marlborough College.

won out over insects and engaged more and more of his time and enthusiasm. He advised other members and lectured on archaeology, while also learning how to draw in pen and ink, a skill that held him in good stead in later years. In his last year, he delivered a talk entitled “Progress in Prehistoric Times.” The secretary reported: “He knew his subject very well.”⁷ Even in his teens, Clark had developed an intense curiosity about the

ancient world that was to be the abiding passion of his life. At the same time, he absorbed ideas and values that remained with him for a lifetime.

The public school education of the day aimed at educating potential leaders of a global empire. Clark's Marlborough years inculcated within him an unspoken elitism typical of public schools of the day, a conviction that some were destined for prominence, wealth, and leadership, whereas most were not. With such attitudes came a commitment to empire, to the governance of less fortunate peoples, and to strong moral values based on service to God and country. An English public school education of the day, and right into the 1950s, was based on unspoken notions of class, on the principles of a society in which all people knew their place and human progress was closely tied to Britain's responsibilities as an imperial power.⁸ A half century earlier, the pioneer anthropologist Edward Tylor had arranged human societies in a simple, progressive hierarchy of savagery (hunter-gatherer groups), barbarism (simple farmers), and civilization. Tylor's simplistic scheme was soon discredited in academic circles, but it lingered in public school classrooms. Few people believed that human progress was that simple, but the idea of advancement, of varying levels of society, formed a powerful undercurrent in much of Grahame Clark's later work and stemmed in part from his highly traditional and conservative public school education. Britain's public school-educated young men became clergymen, merchant princes, soldiers, and colonial administrators. They also became academics in an era when Oxford and Cambridge Universities were considered natural institutions for public school students to obtain their undergraduate degrees.

Grahame Clark came from a classic upper-middle-class background, in which notions of unspoken elitism and service were taken as gospel. Such attitudes were not necessarily wrong, nor were they overtly racist. They provided Grahame and thousands of other upper-middle-class young men and women with the leadership skills and moral underpinning they needed to make their way in the world. The general doctrines of human progress inculcated at Marlborough were a powerful and lifelong catalyst for a fledgling archaeologist's thinking, whose own mind moved far beyond elemental notions of linear evolution.

The first items on Grahame Clark's lengthy bibliography date to these formative Marlborough years. He published four papers while still a school-boy, all of them in the Natural History Society's *Reports*. His first paper describes collections from his Downs wanderings, complete with percent-

ages of artifacts. Only 3 percent of the collection comprised “weapons of war.” The remaining 97 percent were scrapers, borers, knives, and other domestic artifacts. Thus the young author concluded that “the community must have been essentially a peaceful one.”⁹ A paper entitled “Sarsen Implements” quoted seventeenth-century antiquarian John Aubrey’s *Natural History of Wiltshire*, which described such specimens as the stones that “framed the two stupendous antiquities of Avebury and Stonehenge.” Clark classified sarsen hammerstones from Avebury, All Cannings Cross, and other locations, as well as some flaked specimens, which, he concluded, were used when flint was scarce. And “while fine sarsen was quite tractable it yet possessed a certain hardness and toughness not shared by flint.”¹⁰ The Sarsen paper shows a remarkable maturity of description for a young man not yet university trained. Plate II of the same paper is a well-executed drawing of a sarsen adze executed in the simple style that Clark was to develop to a high standard in his later articles and monographs, for he learned to draw while at Marlborough. Even as a schoolboy, Clark was determined to become a professional archaeologist. The single-minded teenage prehistorian was a mirror of the man.

A Changing Archaeological World

Grahame Clark began studying prehistory in a slowly changing archaeological world. Long-established ideas and antiquated research methods were giving way to new approaches and innovative methodologies that ranged far beyond the narrow universe of artifact classification.

The Flint Collectors

Grahame’s earliest exposure to archaeology came in the narrow world of the flint collector. Already in 1867, a French prehistorian named Gabriel de Mortillet had proclaimed that the progress of humanity was inevitable. He measured such progress by using changing stone tool types from river valleys such as the Somme and from the stratified occupation levels in rock-shelters and caves in southwest France’s Dordogne. Cultural era gave way to cultural era in a smooth near geological sequence, as if human prehistory had passed through uniform periods throughout Europe and much of the world. De Mortillet called human progress “inevitable” and arranged the Stone Age accordingly.

The notion of orderly epochs of Stone Age prehistory seems absurd today, for we know just how diverse ancient human societies were. But de Mortillet's ideas died hard, for Stone Age archaeology was firmly based on French soil, in the rich caverns of southwestern France, and little was known of the prehistory of other parts of the world. We should not be surprised, since at the time no Stone Age sites elsewhere rivaled the richness and diversity of the Dordogne caves. Half a century of excavations in caves and rockshelters since de Mortillet's time yielded an increasingly elaborate cultural sequence for western Europe, summarized in 1912 by the French prehistorian Abbé Henri Breuil in a classic paper, *Les subdivisions du paléolithique supérieur et leur signification*. This highly technical study served as a bible for all students of Stone Age societies and revealed considerably more cultural and technological diversity in the French caves than had been apparent in de Mortillet's day. But Breuil's analysis, while more elaborate than de Mortillet's, was completely artifact based. Prehistory was still a matter of stone artifacts and the occasional bone or antler tool, little more than a studied, and often minute, analysis of hundreds upon thousands of flint objects. Inevitably, in a world populated by few professional archaeologists, intellectual stagnation followed. It was not until the late 1920s, just as Grahame entered Cambridge, that convincing evidence of the diversity of Late Ice Age human culture came to light in the hands of archaeologists Gertrude Caton Thompson in Egypt's Nile Valley, Dorothy Garrod in Palestine, and Louis Leakey in Kenya. These researchers, as well as others, replaced the rigid evolution of prehistoric societies with much more flexible evolutionary schemes that took account of human diversity. Some years later, Grahame was to add an ecological dimension to these scenarios.

Prehistoric archaeology in the 1920s was, for the most part, in the hands of amateurs. Most professional archaeologists worked in museums poring over artifacts arranged in rows in glass cases. The amateurs were, for the most part, enthusiastic artifact typologists and collectors who haunted plowed fields, gravel quarries, and geological exposures in search of flint implements of every kind. Few of them ever conducted excavations, and those that they carried out were little more than searches for still more artifacts. Theirs was a narrow fellowship of local archaeologists—clergy, schoolteachers, solicitors, government officials, and small-town businessmen—who spent their summers collecting in the field, their winters engrossed in the minutiae of stone and pottery typologies. Many of them acquired artifacts just as they made money: by systematic, quiet applica-

tion.¹¹ These were the amateur scholars whom young Clark met on the downs or through his excursions with the Marlborough College Natural History Society. They were collectors by inclination, academically more at home with geologists than historians. Their interests were ardently provincial and they rarely strayed more than a few kilometers from home. Platoons of these worthy, tweed-suited amateurs gathered at meetings of local archaeological societies to display their finds and debate artifacts as if they were stamp collections.

By the mid-1920s, these men and women had established the broad subdivisions of British prehistory—an ill-defined Upper Palaeolithic dating to the late Ice Age, which was a pale reflection of the sophisticated Aurignacian and Magdalenian cultures of France, some ill-defined later Stone Age hunter-gatherer societies, which hung on after the retreat of the glaciers, and later Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Age farming cultures. Each period was marked by characteristic artifacts, stone tools, pottery styles, and metal objects, subdivided into endless local variations. Chronology was a matter of guesswork, little more than vague estimates developed from comparing artifact styles with better dated specimens across the Channel. The archaeology Clark first learned was that of the amateur collector, whose activities revolved around gathering artifacts in the field, doing occasional crude excavations, and endlessly cataloging arrowheads and scrapers. British Stone Age archaeology was provincial, self-satisfied, and little more than a sophisticated form of stamp collecting.

But Grahame's initial experience had its merits, limited as they were. Young Clark acquired the basics of archaeology by listening carefully to his fellow collectors and met many local archaeologists who knew their flint implements thoroughly, an essential qualification for any prehistorian to this day. His first papers are typical of an archaeological genre that filled the pages of local archaeological societies in the 1920s—page after page of descriptions of stone tools of all kinds. Clark absorbed himself in the genre, which, from the beginning, he seems to have found very limiting.

The leading figures in the field were men obsessed with stone tools, among them an Ipswich tailor named J. Reid Moir, one of the founders of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia (1908), perhaps the most active of all local archaeological societies in Britain in the 1920s. He was convinced that he had found evidence for primordial Pliocene humans in eastern England in the form of crudely chipped stone tools, which he named “eoliths” or

“dawn stones.” Over the years, Reid Moir doggedly collected thousands of eoliths from Pleistocene and Pliocene gravels and glacial deposits in East Anglia, which he proclaimed to be of human manufacture. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society for his pains. During the 1930s, geologists proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the eoliths were of natural origin and the controversy died. But Reid Moir and his allies went to their graves convinced that eoliths were indeed stone artifacts.¹² The eolith controversy was in full swing when Grahame came to archaeology, but he never succumbed to the eoliths’ seductive temptations. However, the minutiae of stone tool classification and the thrill of finding prehistoric artifacts captivated him, just as it did hundreds of other amateurs from many walks of life. He retained an interest in stone tools throughout his career.

Landscape Archaeology

The archaeology of Grahame’s youth was a pastime of the countryside—walking across plowed fields and collecting surface flints and potsherds. And therein lay a second pervasive skein of intellectual change. Some archaeologists spent a lifetime walking the land, looking at the past through a language of earthworks and burial mounds, field systems and stone circles—the imprint of ancient societies on the landscape. Their fieldwork had deep roots in a long tradition of antiquarian inquiry that went back to the days of William Camden and his immortal *Britannia*, the first systematic description of British antiquities. This was archaeology of the landscape, accomplished without expensive excavations, with notebook, pen, and camera, sometimes guided by an impressive novelty, aerial photographs. When Grahame was an undergraduate, Britain led the world in this kind of field archaeology, which grew naturally from amateur collecting, and also from the heavy imprint of the Romans on the British landscape. He soon learned of the researches of Cyril Fox, who boldly plotted distributions of archaeological sites in the Cambridge region against a background of soils and geology and made the distribution map an essential tool for all serious archaeologists.

Perhaps the most famous of these fieldworkers was O. G. S. Crawford, a genial soul who was known as everyone’s uncle.¹³ He founded the archaeological journal *Antiquity* in 1927, which aimed to bring well-written archaeology to a broader, well-read audience and is still being published. Its pages

extolled field archaeology, in Britain and further afield. Clark was an early subscriber and received constant encouragement from this influential and friendly man.

Scientific Excavation

Although field observation was a strength of British archaeology in the 1920s, excavation was most emphatically not. A half century earlier, in the 1880s, General Augustus Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers had inherited the enormous Cranborne Chase estates in southern England. The general had long nurtured an interest in ethnography and now indulged a passion for archaeological excavation on his land. He dug Roman and prehistoric sites and earthworks with a meticulous attention to stratigraphy and minor finds that left his more casual contemporaries cold. Most of their excavations were crude, hasty searches for spectacular Roman finds that were little better than treasure hunts, with only minimal attention paid to stratigraphic observation. This was hardly surprising in an era when even professionals, such as Leonard Woolley, the world-famous excavator of the biblical city of Ur in Iraq, learned the craft in hasty apprenticeships under experienced diggers before being sent out on their own.

Pitt-Rivers described his sites in lavish, privately published volumes, which were neglected until the 1920s, when a handful of excavators applied his principles anew.¹⁴ Among them was Mortimer Wheeler, who modeled his Romano-British excavations in the 1920s and 1930s along Pitt-Rivers's somewhat military lines. It was no coincidence that Wheeler had served with distinction as an artillery officer in World War I, an experience that made him a firm advocate of efficient organization in the field. His excavations soon attracted attention and student volunteers, who learned his methods and then applied them elsewhere. Clark never worked under Wheeler, but he visited his excavations on many occasions. In 1925, the wealthy Alexander Keillor, who owned much of the land around the Avebury stone circles in southern England, started long-term excavations at the nearby Windmill Hill Neolithic site, using scientific principles from the start. These excavations, and a few others, notably those of a German archaeologist named Gerhard Bersu, developed new standards for field archaeology. Keillor surrounded himself with young would-be archaeologists, among them the self-taught Stuart Piggott, who began to study

Neolithic pottery. Piggott became one of Clark's lifelong friends. Grahame himself never became known for his excavation skills, but he learned the new principles from the beginning.

Childe and The Dawn

Late in life, Clark wrote: "I was lucky enough to be born at a time when prehistory was at an early state of development and was still on the threshold of gaining academic recognition."¹⁵ He came into archaeology at just the right moment, in time to be influenced by new and powerful intellectual strands in the world of archaeology, which was still small. By the time he left Marlborough, Clark was probably aware of an archaeological world beyond the narrow coterie of amateur flint collectors. He certainly knew of a new generation of textbooks and popular volumes that summarized what was known of the Stone Age. The French scholar Marcellin Boule, famous for his study of the La Chapelle-aux-Saints Neanderthal fossil, had published *Les hommes fossiles* in 1921. He portrayed Neanderthals as shambling, clumsy humans. The book became a classic, still in print as recently as the 1950s. R. A. S. Macalister's *A Text-Book of European Archaeology* was published in the same year, together with Cambridge archaeologist Miles Burkitt's widely read *Prehistory*. Clark undoubtedly read Burkitt's text before he went to university, for it was readily available and was a useful primer on what happened in prehistory for complete beginners, even if its tone was overly geological and much too provincial by modern scientific standards. These texts covered familiar intellectual territory. But Grahame soon became aware of a bold new synthesis of European prehistory—Vere Gordon Childe's *The Dawn of European Civilization*, published in 1925.

Australian-born Gordon Childe was an extraordinary archaeologist in an era of remarkable archaeological pioneers. He had arrived penniless in England from his Australian homeland three years earlier.¹⁶ A committed socialist, he had begun his life in Australian politics but rapidly became disillusioned with the realities of political life. He studied some classical archaeology and philology at Oxford but was largely self-taught, except for some training in formal pottery analysis from the classical archaeologist John Beasley and "an impression" from the Minoan archaeologist Arthur Evans of the potential of potsherds as chronological markers. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Childe could speak numerous

European languages and acquire firsthand knowledge of even obscure sites in continental Europe. He immersed himself in artifact classifications and chronologies of all kinds. His very first lecture to the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1925 ended with a table boldly synchronizing the prehistoric successions in Britain, northern and central Europe, and the southern Danube between about 2500 and 1500 B.C. In the subsequent discussion, the austere and conservative Reginald Smith of the British Museum remarked on how he was “much refreshed” by the infusion of so much material from the Continent into discussion of a problem in British prehistory. Smith missed the point, but Childe had become convinced that it was possible to extract from archaeological data the kind of information to understand the “genesis of European civilization as a peculiar and individual manifestation of the human spirit.”¹⁷ His classic synthesis, *The Dawn of European Civilization*, set out to achieve that very task. This remarkable book changed archaeology forever.

Childe thought of European prehistory not just as artifacts but as a form of history distilled from archaeological data, with human cultures defined by artifacts set in time and space instead of people as the main players. He believed archaeology was a way of defining actual prehistoric communities of the past. The distribution maps of artifacts, cultures, and sites in *The Dawn* plotted cultural changes through the Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age.

The Dawn of European Civilization rippled through the provincial world of archaeology like a thunderclap and became the bible for Clark and others of his generation. Grahame himself remarked as late as 1975 that “we are working in a world, which was to a significant extent of his [Childe’s] making.”¹⁸ While Clark was an undergraduate, Childe published a second influential masterpiece. *The Most Ancient East* was a masterly synthesis that traced the origins of food production and civilization in Egypt and Mesopotamia and set ancient European society in an even broader context, as a recipient of ideas such as food production from southwestern Asia. Again, in a startling move away from provincialism, Childe wrote archaeology as a form of history, with a broad brushed canvas. In large measure, Grahame’s broad view of the past came from Childe’s work and from a lifelong friendship that endured until Childe’s death in 1957.

Grahame entered a newly restless archaeological world, where diverse intellectual strains were slowly creating a new, more sophisticated prehistoric archaeology, but one still bound by the deeply conservative traditions