

# ADAM'S ANCESTORS

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

**THE STONE AGE CULTURES OF KENYA**  
**THE STONE AGE RACES OF KENYA**

ADAM'S ANCESTORS  
*AN UP-TO-DATE OUTLINE OF WHAT IS  
KNOWN ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF MAN*

*by*

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EXPEDITIONS 1926-27; 1928-29; AND 1931-32

*with a foreword by*

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PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY

WITH 12 PLATES AND  
30 TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS



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To -

E. A. BENIANS ESQ.

DR. A. C. HADDON

SIR ARTHUR KEITH

M. C. BURKITT ESQ.

IN GRATITUDE FOR THEIR  
FRIENDSHIP AND GUIDANCE.

1922-1934

## FOREWORD

**I** HAVE read Dr. Leakey's book as an inquirer almost ignorant of the subject, though well aware of its deep interest and fully convinced of its importance to any proper appraisal of to-day's intellectual outlook.

I have indeed long wished for non-technical guidance towards an adequate understanding of the present position of prehistorical research, and here I find that wish fulfilled. There must be many who have shared this wish, and I am sure that as readers of this book they will find the satisfaction that is mine.

The author's exposition of the subject follows lines which are original. He has provided a sequence in the presentation of methods, data and interpretations which I have found to be peculiarly enlightening.

He shows first how the mind of the modern prehistorian works ; how, for instance, he obtains guidance for his choice of excavation sites by sound deductive reasoning ; how, by applying scientific methods to his labours in the field, and by using every available item of correlated knowledge in the interpretation of his findings, he increases a hundredfold the value of the evidence which the records left by primitive Man are capable of yielding. Dr. Leakey deals critically, but most understandingly, with the various concurrent lines of evidence upon which present knowledge of the subject depends, making clear to the general reader what is certain, what is less certain and the much that is lacking. By the time the reader is

led to consider the classification and sequence of primitive cultures, as understood to-day, his mind has been well prepared to appreciate the value of the evidence upon which the views of the expert depend.

I cannot, of course, in a brief foreword such as this, attempt to explain by a reference to details, why the book appeals so strongly to one whose small acquaintance with the subject has been of that superficial sort, which leads to a mingling of unquestioning faith and unjustifiable doubt when the technical literature is the only source of information. I may, however, illustrate the reason for this appeal by a particular instance, from the author's methods of treatment.

As every one knows, the prehistorian relies for his basic material upon the nature of structures which the ages have been unable to destroy; mainly of course upon flint instruments and the skeletal remains of those who made them. Most of us, I think, who lack first-hand acquaintance with his methods, find difficulty in understanding how the expert can with certainty distinguish between the least advanced efforts of primitive Man—the Chellean or Pre-Chellean implements for instance—from the artifacts of Nature. Dr. Leakey's unusually full and remarkably clear account of how the distinction is made, creates complete confidence in the evidence which is adduced; the more so since he has himself so successfully accomplished the task of imitating the handiwork of the primitive flint workers.

Finally, I would refer to the compelling interest of the story as he tells it of his own important enterprises in East Africa, which have led to the discovery of Kanjera and Kanam Man and have apparently carried back the history of *Homo sapiens* to a remote stage of which but a few years ago knowledge was lacking.

I think this fascinating book will appeal to a wide

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circle and will make clear to all its readers the increasing dignity of prehistory as a subject for study. I join with its author in his appeal to the intelligent public for sympathy with its aims, with which his last chapter closes.

F. GOWLAND HOPKINS

*April 11, 1934*



## PREFACE

**I**N this book I have tried to bring together all the latest discoveries concerning the Stone Age and to present an up-to-date account of what is at present known about our ancient ancestors and cousins. I have attempted to state the case in as simple a way as possible, so that the reader who has no special training or previous knowledge of the subject may be able to follow it.

The nature of the subject has made it inevitable that in places I should use technical phrases and words, but I have done so as little as possible. I have, in particular, tried to answer some of the very many questions that prehistorians are continually being asked to explain. How—for example—it is possible to distinguish between a piece of flint which has been chipped by Stone Age man and one which has been chipped by natural agencies? How the climatic changes of the past can be interpreted from a study of gravel-beds and other similar deposits? How it is possible to say what kind of a man is represented by a fossil skull? These and many other questions have been discussed and explained.

The subject matter of each chapter could easily have been expanded to the size of the whole book, so that it follows that I have had to omit a

very great deal. There is one aspect of Prehistory that I have not dealt with at all, namely, the art of the men of the Stone Age. This omission is deliberate. I have practically no first-hand knowledge of this subject, and it seemed wiser therefore not to discuss it.

Spectacular discoveries in China and East Africa in recent years have somewhat obscured a great deal of very detailed study of prehistory that has been going on in Europe in the last few years. In 1926 the sequence of cultures of the Old Stone Age was set out by a leading British authority as follows :

MAGDALENIAN  
SOLUTREAN  
AURIGNACIAN  
MOUSTÉRIAN  
ACHEULEAN  
CHELLEAN  
PRE-CHELLEAN

If this simple sequence is contrasted with the table of cultures given on page 158, the extent of discoveries in Europe since 1926 will be readily appreciated. I believe that this is the first time that all this new information has been brought together in book form. Although this book is primarily intended for the general reader, I hope that this and other features will make it of some use also to the specialist.

I would like to express my thanks to all those who have helped me in preparing this book, by offering suggestions, and criticisms, and by read-

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ing the chapters through as I wrote them. To Miss Mary Nicol I owe many thanks for her excellent drawings of stone tools with which this book is illustrated, and to J. Bartlett for the photographic work for the plates: with one or two exceptions all of the stone tools illustrated are in the national collection at the British Museum, and I am deeply grateful for permission to draw upon this collection for purposes of illustration. The skulls and skull casts illustrated are all in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, except for the Kanam mandible and the Kanjera skull, and for permission to photograph these I am much indebted to the authorities.

L. S. B. LEAKEY

CAMBRIDGE

*February 1934*

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