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JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute,  
OR,  
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

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SECRETARY: E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

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1915.

564TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,  
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH, 1915,  
AT 4.30 P.M.

MR. DAVID HOWARD, D.L., F.C.S., VICE-PRESIDENT,  
TOOK THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and confirmed.

The SECRETARY announced the election of Mr. William Doman as an Associate of the Institute.

The CHAIRMAN called upon the SECRETARY to read the following paper in the unavoidable absence of the Author.

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*TRACES OF A RELIGIOUS BELIEF  
OF PRIMEVAL MAN.*

By the REV. D. GATH WHITLEY.

**B**EFORE beginning this investigation, I feel it is necessary to define the sense in which I use different terms, and to explain the signification of words and phrases which will often occur in the course of this paper. There is so much loose writing and loose thinking prevalent, owing to the hasty manner of much of the modern writing, that unless clear definitions are laid down at the beginning, nothing but confusion is likely to follow.

Let me say at the very commencement, that by Primeval Man I mean Palæolithic Man who lived in the early Stone Age. I have nothing to do with the men of the Neolithic Period, nor of the ages of Bronze or Iron. With these later archæological eras I have no concern in the present paper. Next, I must explain the meaning which I attach to the term Palæolithic Age. It was invented by the late Lord Avebury to signify the time when Man used only stone weapons, which were not ground or polished, but only rudely chipped.\* This definition

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\* *Prehistoric Times*, 1st Edition, p. 3.

was felt at once to be good and proper, and has been universally retained. There has been a disposition to place an Eolithic Age before the Palæolithic Period. In this Eolithic Era men used the rudest splinters of stone, which were so rude and unformed that only "the practised eye" of the long-trained archaeologist could detect in them any traces of human origin. I reject this so-called Eolithic Age altogether. I have nothing whatever to do with it; I do not believe it ever existed; and numbers of our best geologists and archaeologists reject it entirely.

Next, I must explain the *limits* of the Palæolithic Age, or further confusion will ensue. The source of error is found in the constant practice of looking only at the form and fashioning of the stone weapons to decide the limits of the Stone Age. This has led to much confusion and to erroneous statements. The *form* of stone weapons is similar in all ages, and many stone implements from the Drift gravels, the Neolithic barrows and the mounds of the North American Indians, as well as those which lie on the surface of the ground in India, Africa, and Japan (and which may be of any age) are shaped in precisely the same manner, and are chipped in precisely the same way. This has led some geologists to reject the division between the two Stone Ages completely. Sir William Dawson in one of his earlier books was inclined to reject this division,\* and some French geologists have followed in his steps. But this is an error. The Palæolithic Age is a distinct era in the history of the Human Race, and it rests on a foundation that can never be shaken. The epoch is to be characterised not so much by *weapons* as by *animals*. Thus the Palæolithic Age in Western Europe was the time when Man lived in that region with the lion, the tiger,† the hyæna, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus. All these animals became extinct in Western Europe at the close of the Pleistocene Period, and *not a single one* of them is found in this region in later times. If, then, we find the remains of Man associated with these animals in Great Britain, or in the neighbouring countries, *no matter what kind of stone implements occur with them*, we may be quite certain that the men whose bones lie alongside the remains of these animals lived in the Palæolithic Age. There are some writers who speak of the Men of the First Stone Age as Quaternary Men. This is somewhat vague. The Quaternary Period includes every deposit and all human remains from the end of

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\* *Fossil Men*, p. 218.

† *i.e.*, The *Machairodus*.

the Tertiary Era down to the recent deposits. Thus it also includes the Neolithic Age as well as the Bronze and Iron Ages. Hence the term as applied to the men who lived with the extinct mammalia is unsatisfactory.

The best and simplest course to take is to consider the Palæolithic Age to be synonymous with the Pleistocene Period in geology, and to include in it everything between the close of the Pliocene Era and the beginning of the Neolithic Age. I know no better definition than this, and in this paper I shall consider the terms Palæolithic and Pleistocene as synonymous. Palæolithic Man, therefore, is Pleistocene Man, neither less nor more.

The problem, therefore, which lies before us for investigation is, whether the men of the Pleistocene Era possessed a religion, and if so, what was its character.

Now, it has been emphatically denied that the men of the First Stone Age possessed any religion. M. de Mortillet, the talented French archæologist, has, in one of his works,\* written an elaborate section to show that Palæolithic Man had no religion. There are, he maintains, not the slightest traces of any religious feasts, relics, or customs, anywhere to be found in the Palæolithic Age, and he draws a picture of the happiness of the earliest men who were simple admirers of the beauties of nature, and were not disturbed by any of those terrors of imagination which he declares religion is always creating! A whole series of facts and discoveries can now be laid before the student to show how utterly false is this opinion. Even if among the human relics of the Palæolithic Age no material evidences of religious belief could be discovered it does not follow that these earliest men possessed no religion. Every student of anthropology knows perfectly well that many savage races existing at the present day have neither priests, nor temples, nor vestments, nor religious implements, and yet these savages have religions and often elaborate theologies. The extinct Tasmanians are a case in point.† They possessed no temples, no organised priesthood, and no religious ceremonies. Nevertheless they believed in a Supreme God, with minor deities; they practised prayer, and sang religious hymns, and they believed in a future life. Exactly the same may be said of the Australians,

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\* *Le Préhistorique Antiquité de l'Homme*, pp. 474-476.

† The most elaborate account of the Tasmanians that I know is found in *Hommes Fossiles et Hommes Sauvages*, by M. de Quatrefages, pp. 292-400.

and of the Mincopies of the Andaman Islands.\* The case of the Bushmen in South Africa is still more striking.† These diminutive savages were formerly thought to have no religion whatever, because no traces of temples, sanctuaries, or of organised priesthood could be discovered among them. It is now known that these ideas were utterly incorrect. The Bushmen believed in supernatural deities, they prayed to these deities who were often symbolised by various animals, and they believed in a future life. They therefore possessed a religion, although it was an individual matter, and an elaborate hierarchy with temple worship did not exist among them. Natural objects, such as strikingly-formed rocks and trees are often objects of worship, because they are considered to be the abode of the deity. A great sandstone rock, standing alone on the prairies of Manitoba and called the *Roches Percées*, is, by the Indians considered the home of the gods, and offerings are made to it, and prayers said before it.‡ Thus Primitive Man might have worshipped rocks, trees, and animals, and might even have sacrificed to them, and to the lakes and rivers, without leaving a trace of this worship behind him.§ It shows an utter ignorance of the facts of modern anthropology to say that Primitive Man had no religion, merely because we do not find material evidence of it in the Pleistocene caves and gravels.

But the progress of discovery is rapid, and evidence can be now produced from the cavern deposits of the Palæolithic Period, to show that Palæolithic Man not only possessed a religion, but had probably a recognised priesthood. Let me give one striking instance before I pass on :—

The cavern of Brassempouy in the Landes in Southern France,|| has lately been explored by MM. Piette and Laporterie, assisted by members of the *Association Française*. A Palæolithic deposit was discovered in the cavern, and in this deposit were

\* See the accounts of Messrs. Man, Temple and Lane Fox, and in particular De Quatrefages in his work *Les Pygmées*, pp. 133-210.

† For accounts of the Bushmen I refer the reader to *The Native Races of South Africa*, by G. W. Stow, pp. 1-232. There is also an excellent account of the Bushmen given by Professor Sollas in his *Ancient Hunters and their Modern Representatives*, pp. 271-306.

‡ See *Fossil Man*, by Sir J. W. Dawson, p. 270, who also gives in the frontispiece of the book a drawing of the rock.

§ In his *Dolmens of Ireland* Mr. W. C. Borlase also gives many instances of rocks being worshipped by the ancient Irish heathens.

|| This cave is in the neighbourhood of Pau.

the bones of the mammoth, the rhinoceros,\* the horse, the reindeer, and the hyæna. The Palæolithic age of this deposit is therefore certain. In this deposit, lying by the side of the bones of the extinct animals, were seven small statuettes in ivory, all of which were elaborately carved, but not one was quite perfect, as all were more or less broken. The most important represents a human figure completely clothed, and *kneeling* in the attitude of prayer. The head and shoulders are wanting, but the attitude is unmistakable. The figure is dressed in a long skirt, with a tippet or short cloak—resembling the tippet of a clerical cassock—over the upper part of the body. The upper part of the tippet, which reaches to the waist, is ornamented. The knees are bent, so that the sculpture represents a man kneeling, and the arms are folded upon the breast: the whole attitude of the statuette is therefore that of a man in peaceful prayer and rapt devotion. In the same deposit near this statuette was found a head and neck in ivory, which probably belonged to the former figure. The neck was long, the face calm, the nose prominent, and the countenance strongly Mongolian. The head was covered with a thick cloth wig which hung down in heavy plaited lappets upon the shoulders, and resembled an Egyptian peruke. Here, then, was a man of the Palæolithic Age kneeling in prayer: what better proof could be desired of the existence of religion in the Earliest Stone Age?†

There are some theorists who maintain that Primeval Man had no religion, because, according to the theory of Evolution, *he ought not to have any!* Religion is—we are told—only possible at a certain stage of civilisation, so that the earliest men *must* have had no religion. If, therefore, we find traces of religious belief amongst the relics left by the earliest men that science reveals to us, either these so-called traces are false, or some still earlier men *must have existed* who had no religion!

This is one of those unhappy statements which we so often meet with in modern scientific discussion. A thing *ought to be* according to the theory of Evolution, therefore *it really did occur*, no matter if no evidence can be produced in its favour, and no matter what amount of facts can be brought forward against it! Imaginary pedigrees are invented, and fictitious

\* *i.e.*, the woolly rhinoceros.

† These statuettes are figured and described in *Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, No. 9. November–December, 1894.

ancestors are *supposed* to have existed, because, according to the theory, *they ought to have existed!* Such a method is to put darkness for light, and ignorance in the place of knowledge. If our theories are opposed to facts they must be given up. I really feel I ought to apologise for noticing such childishness. In these days of knowledge and progress men are permitted to dream dreams, but they are *not permitted* to call their dreams by the name of science.\*

Let me now pass to some of the proofs that the progress of discovery has brought forward to show that Palæolithic Man possessed a religion. First of all I place those facts which are connected with the *Burial of the Dead* during the Earliest Stone Age.

It was not so very long ago that writers such as De Mortillet† maintained that the burial of the dead was a rite absolutely unknown during the Palæolithic Period, and in many elementary works on Primitive Man the same opinion was expressed, apparently with the intention of degrading Primitive Man and making him as near the lower animals as possible. The progress of discovery has shown that this opinion is entirely false, and a whole army of facts can be produced against it. So completely has the tide of opinion turned that so eminent an archaeologist as M. Cartailhac writes a lengthy chapter in one of his recent works‡ on *The Ritual of the Dead* as shown in the burials of the Palæolithic Age. Since the time this chapter was written many further discoveries have been made, the principal of which I shall notice.

Before enumerating them, however, let me say that it is absolutely necessary that we should make ourselves familiar with the forms of burial which now exist among savage nations. To do this we must carefully study the accounts given by travellers themselves. Books of travel are not read in the present day as much as they should be, and popular treatises are often brief and sketchy. It is also desirable that we read the *earliest* travellers' books. Two hundred years ago (or more) travellers were not possessed with theoretical predilections, and did not see savage life through the spectacles of Evolution. In those early times also the savage races retained their primitive

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\* I refer chiefly to those visionary writers of the school of Haeckel, who are always *inventing* evidence to make the facts of science suit their theories.

† *Le Préhistorique Antiquité de l'Homme*, p. 501.

‡ *La France Préhistorique*, Chap. VI.



customs unaltered, and had not been corrupted by the evil influences of white men, nor had they abandoned their ancient habits through the pressure of European civilisation. A knowledge of the burial customs which are held now, and were held formerly by savage races, is absolutely necessary in discussing this question. Particularly the customs of the North American Indians in former days should be studied. The works of such writers as Catlin, Carver, and Hearne, as well as a host of later writers, are at hand for our assistance, and the *Transactions of the Smithsonian Institute* form a library full of valuable information. Let the student also consult the valuable accounts of the North American Indians given by the Jesuit missionaries in Canada in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In enumerating those burials of the Palæolithic Age which seem to indicate some kind of religious belief, I shall arrange them in the following manner:—

*First*, burials in caverns of single or of several bodies (*i.e.*, skeletons now).

*Secondly*, burials in the open air of single or of many bodies.

*Thirdly*, burials of many bodies in separate caverns, *i.e.*, ossuaries.

1. *Le Moustier*. The valley of the Vezère in the department in Central France is classic ground for the archæologist, and was thoroughly explored by Messrs. Christy and Lartet fifty years ago, and since that time it has been again and again examined by zealous investigators. Here, in the famous cavern of Le Moustier, a skeleton was found in 1909. It lay on its side, and belonged to a young man. Flint implements lay around, and a flint hatchet was placed close to one hand. Remains of food had also been laid close to the corpse when buried, and smaller implements were arranged beneath the body, around which also lay a number of shells which were evidently ornaments of the deceased. The body had been buried in a grave, which had been sunk in a deposit of the Mousterian era of the Palæolithic Age.

2. *La Chappelle-aux-Saints*. This cave is also in the district of the Dordogne, near Brive, in the Department of La Correze, and the animal remains found in it include the horse, bison, reindeer and rhinoceros. A pit had been dug in a Palæolithic deposit in this cavern, in which the body had been placed, and traces of food, and bones which had formed portions of the food, lay around. Nodules of oxide of iron, used as a paint

(a common custom in the Palæolithic Age), were placed close to the side of the corpse. Either the body was painted when it was placed in the grave, or the paint was laid by the side of the corpse so that when the man entered the other world he might paint himself and shine in all his coloured splendour among his disembodied companions. The skull was large and long,\* and it contained a brain as large, or even larger, than that of an average European. So far as brains were concerned, the oldest men were no nearer the apes than are the Englishmen of the present day.† The left arm was extended, and a flint hatchet—to be used as a weapon in the other world—was placed close to the left hand.

Three skeletons were found in 1909 and 1910 by M. Peyrony, at Sarlat, and La Ferrassie, in the Dordogne. They were probably buried, and are now in the Paris Museum of Natural History. Flint implements lay by the side of the skeletons.‡

3. *Paviland*. This is the only cave that contains a Palæolithic burial in Great Britain. It was thoroughly explored by Dr. Buckland, who has given a most valuable account of it, as well as pictures and sections of it.§ The cavern opens in the cliff some fifteen miles west of Swansea, and is popularly known as the Goat's Hole. A breccia in it contained bones of the horse, bear, hyæna and elephant, as well as those of animals now living. Some ivory rods lay by a mammoth's tusk, the date of the formation of which is doubtful. Amidst the cave-earth lay a human skeleton, the bones of which were stained red with oxide of iron. A mammoth's skull and bones were found near the human remains, and a number of shells for a necklace, and ivory rods which were evidently ornaments of the deceased, lay close by the human bones. There were also discovered in the cavern the bones of the bear, horse, hyæna, and rhinoceros. The age of this skeleton, which has been called "The Red Lady of Paviland" has been much disputed. There are the remains of a British camp on the hill above, and Dr. Buckland connected the skeleton with this entrenchment.|| Professor Boyd Dawkins, grounding his opinion on the presence of the bones of recent animals such as the sheep and goat in the cave, also thinks that

\* *i.e.*, Dolichocephalic.

† Cranial capacity of this skull, 1800 c.c.

‡ *Records of the Past*, Vol. X, Part VI, p. 328.

§ *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*, pp. 82-99.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 90.

the skeleton is not of Palæolithic antiquity.\* On the other hand Professor Martin Duncan has declared that the skeleton of Paviland is certainly of Palæolithic Age,† and Professor Sollas has recently expressed the same opinion.‡ It is difficult therefore to come to a definite conclusion, but the painting of the corpse is in thorough harmony with the Palæolithic custom. Before an opinion is pronounced I would strongly advise that all should do as I have done and read Dr. Buckland's *own account* of the discovery, and not trust to modern brief summaries.

4. *Mentone*. The caves in the Baoussés-Roussés near Mentone have yielded many skeletons, and they probably contain interments of different ages. I shall only notice one. This was found by M. Riviere in 1872, and has been described by him at length. The skeleton is now in the Museum of the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris. It lay on its side with the knees bent, and was buried at a depth of twenty feet. Like all the others it was stained red with oxide of iron, flint implements were close by its hand, and a number of shells formed a necklace round its head. Shells also lay round the arms and legs which evidently had formed bracelets: the corpse therefore had been carefully dressed and painted before burial. From the quantity of hair found beneath the skeleton it appears that the body had been laid on or wrapped in a burial robe, which was probably the skin of a bear. Of this warrior of primeval days it may well be said—

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,  
Nor in sheet nor in shroud they wound him.  
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,  
With his martial cloak around him.

The usual controversy has been carried on as to the antiquity of this skeleton. Its Palæolithic age has been strongly maintained by Mr. Pengelly, § Sir William Dawson, || Sir Charles Lyell, and the majority of French archæologists. On the other hand M. de Mortillet and Professor Boyd Dawkins, ¶ consider that the skeleton is of Neolithic Age. The view of the former authorities seems more likely to be correct.

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\* *Cave-Hunting*, p. 234.

† *The Student*, Vol. IV, p. 252.

‡ *Ancient Hunters and their Modern Representatives*, p. 215.

§ *Trans. Devon Assoc.*, 1873.

|| *Fossil Men*, p. 299.

¶ *Cave Hunting*, p. 258.

5. *Lauzerie-Basse, &c.* In the rock-shelter of Lauzerie-Basse in the valley of the Vézère in the Dordogne, another ancient skeleton was found by M. Massenat in 1872. The bones and skull were examined by M. Hamy, and a full description of them has been given in the great work of Christy and Lartet.\* The skeleton lay on its side with the arms and legs folded upwards. It was adorned around the neck, arms, and legs, with shells which had formed bracelets and necklaces. Flint implements lay around, and also the bones of the reindeer. As this skeleton is admitted by nearly all authorities, even by M. de Mortillet,† to be of Palæolithic antiquity,† it forms a typical case with which we can compare all the other. I need notice no further Palæolithic burials such as those of Duruthy, Raymondon, and Cro-Magnon. They are all of the same character, and present the same details.

Let us now sum up most of the characteristics of the burials, with which these caverns have furnished us.

The body was carefully dressed, covered with ornaments and bracelets, and carefully painted. Weapons were placed in the hand of the corpse, food was also laid by the side, and all arrangements were made for the comfort of the individual when he entered the spirit world. Here we clearly see that a belief in the immortality of the soul was strongly held in the earliest ages of the Human Race. Possibly it was only the great chiefs who were buried in caves with such elaborate funeral ritual. The bodies of the common people may have been disposed of in a simpler manner. Let us now proceed to another kind of burial in the Palæolithic Age.

#### *Burials in Grave-Yards in the open air.*

*Solutré.* We have hitherto been examining only single burials in caverns, and we have now to consider burials in grave-yards in the open air. The chief of these is at Solutré.

Here we have a genuine *Palæolithic village*, which for a long time was the home of Primitive Man, and here were held feasts, funerals, and all the operations of domestic economy.

Near Maçon in Eastern France is the village of Solutré, which is overhung by a towering hill. Beneath this crag lies an uncultivated hillock and barren slope called *Le Clos du Charnier*. The earth here is full of bones of men and animals. At the

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\* *Reliquiæ Aquitanicæ*, pp. 255-272.

† *Formation de la Nation Française*, pp. 295-297.

surface are burials of recent date, and of Gallo-Roman antiquity. Deeper down are beds of ashes and the remains of ancient hearths and fires. Mingled with these are flint implements of Palæolithic type, many of which are beautifully fashioned. All through the deposit are the bones of the bear, horse, reindeer, lion, wolf, hyæna, and elephant, many of which have been split to extract the marrow, and also burnt, showing that these animals were eaten by the primitive hunters. Most remarkable of all were the remains of the horse. These form an enormous deposit *by themselves*, and it has been estimated that at this spot there are *at least* the remains of 40,000 horses! Human skeletons were buried all through this deposit, and the age of these skeletons has given rise to endless controversy.

At the top of these deposits were skeletons buried in stone cists, or "box-tombs." These are admitted to be of Neolithic or of Gallo-Roman antiquity. But the skeletons which lie deeper down, and are extended on the hearths and fire-places are of greater antiquity. These latter skeletons are found close to the bones of the lion, hyæna, horse, and elephant, and Palæolithic weapons and carvings surround them. In fact there can be no doubt that at Solutré we have the remains of a *Palæolithic village*, and also burials of the earliest Stone Age. This is certain. Here then we have a crucial case of primeval habits and religious rites.

Such a complete and startling revelation of the advanced social and religious state of Palæolithic Man has of course been vehemently opposed by the advocates of the primitive barbarity of Man. But the evidence in favour of the view I have stated is unanswerable. So far as the *lower* skeletons are concerned the *fauna* associated with them is Palæolithic, the *implements* with them are Palæolithic, and the very *carvings* which are laid by these skeletons are Palæolithic also. It is strange also that very little is said in England about Solutré, and it is very difficult to get a thoroughly good account of this wonderful discovery in English. The best account I know is that given by Dr. Southall,\* who is an American. But no one ought to enter into the discussion about Solutré who has not read the account given by the *first discoverers*, MM. Arcehin and Ferry.† Short summaries are of no use, and too frequently abstract theories prevent the facts from being properly understood. In

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\* *The Epoch of the Mammoth*, Chap. VII.

† *International Congress of Prehistoric Archæology*, 1868, pp. 319-351.

1873 M. l'Abbé Ducrost found at Solutré in the *lowest levels* a perfect skeleton surrounded by a ring of great stones. A Palæolithic weapon lay close to its right hand, and an image of a reindeer in ivory—probably the family Totem—was placed in the grave close by the skeleton. The proof therefore of the Palæolithic Age of the burial is complete. The latest account of the discoveries at Solutré that I have read is by M. Ernest Chantre.\* He declares that at least *twelve* of the burials are Palæolithic, and the skulls of these are both dolichocephalic and brachycephalic. The enormous number of the bones of the horse may be explained by considering that they were offered in sacrifice at the funeral feasts held at the death of great chiefs. We know from Herodotus that the Scythians sacrificed many horses at the funeral of a chief, so that these animals might be useful to the deceased in the next world. The Khirghiz Tartars follow the same custom now. Mr. T. W. Atkinson was present at the funeral solemnities of a great Tartar chief, at which one hundred horses, and one thousand sheep were sacrificed in honour of the deceased;† and in the Caucasus M. Meyendorff assisted at the funeral feasts of the Tartars in which from two hundred to three hundred horses were sacrificed.‡ Clearly, therefore, the Palæolithic burials at Solutré prove that the men of the earliest Stone Age believed in the immortality of the soul, and held funeral feasts to give the deceased his passport to another world.

#### *Ossuaries.*

By this term I understand the burials of *many skeletons* in one cavern. In the Neolithic Age we find many such cases especially in France and Belgium. The caverns of Baumes-Chaudres are the chief of these in France§ where three hundred skeletons were buried in disorder. We have now to describe such burials in the Palæolithic Period.

*Frontal.* This celebrated burial place, which is a cavern on the banks of the River Lesse in Belgium was discovered by M. Dupont in 1864 and 1865, and has been described by him

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\* *L'Homme Quaternaire dans le Bassin du Rhone*, 1901, pp. 143-155.

† *Travels in the Region of the Amoor*, pp. 63-65.

‡ See Southall's *Age of the Mammoth*, p. 112.

§ M. Cartailhac describes these burials in *La France Préhistorique*, pp. 149, 150.

at length.\* The inner extremity of the cavern had been closed by a large slab of limestone, thus forming a small sepulchral chamber. In this cavity lay the remains of sixteen skeletons in great disorder. With the bones were found the fragments of an urn of coarse pottery which had been hung from the roof of the cave, and which had evidently contained food for the dead. Various ornaments and colours for paints lay around, and outside were the remains of fires and the bones of animals which had been eaten at funeral feasts. The whole of these human and animal relics were overlaid by an immense deposit of Palæolithic yellow clay, which had entered the cave and had been deposited after the bodies had been buried in the cavern. Here, then, was a perfect cast of the burial of the dead in Palæolithic times.

Such a complete instance of burial during the Palæolithic Age, with a belief in a future life, has of course been strongly denied. Professor Boyd Dawkins† and Mr. James Geikie‡ consider that the burial place in the cave of Frontal is of Neolithic Age, and they are followed in this opinion by M. de Mortillet,§ and by M. Fraipont in a valuable work which was not long ago published|| But these talented writers are in error, and they do not seem to have read Dupont's own account of his discovery, nor to have seen Dupont's sections and diagrams. It is now perfectly well known that the yellow clay which overlay the human skeletons in the caves is a genuine Palæolithic deposit which is found in many caves and valleys in this part of Belgium. It is also known now that this yellow clay was deposited *after* the burials in the cavern, so that the Palæolithic Age of the interments in the cave of Frontal cannot be denied. The presence of the fragments of an urn made of coarse pottery has been thought to show that the skeletons in this cavern are of Neolithic Age, because it has been maintained that Palæolithic Man was ignorant of pottery.¶ This is now known to be

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\* Dupont's account of the discovery of this cavern is found in his *Étude sur l'Ethnographie de l'Homme de l'Age du Renne*, and in his *Étude sur les Cavernes des bords de la Lesse et de la Meuse, explorées jusqu'au mois d'Octobre, 1865*.

† *Cave Hunting*, p. 238.

‡ *Prehistoric Europe*, p. 110.

§ *Le Préhistorique Antiquité de l'Homme*, p. 472.

|| *Les Cavernes et leurs habitants*, pp. 230, 231.

¶ This opinion has been held by M. de Mortillet in *Le Préhistorique Antiquité de l'Homme*, p. 558. Also by Lord Avebury, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1872, p. 383, and by others.

an error, since numerous discoveries of Palæolithic pottery have taken place in France, Belgium, and Germany. MM. Fraipont and Tihon have found pottery in undoubted Palæolithic deposits in the caves of Engis, Spy, and Petit Modave in Belgium, and they have proved by an unanswerable series of geological arguments that this pottery is certainly Palæolithic.\* The list of Palæolithic pottery is continually increasing, and it is necessary to be acquainted with the *latest discoveries*, and not to pin one's faith to abstract theories. If anyone is still inclined to dispute the Palæolithic Age of the burial place in the cave of Frontal, I can only say in reply—"Have you read Dupont's account of the discovery of this burial place—as I have read it? If you have not done so, I do not think you are qualified to give an opinion on this question."†

Before proceeding to another branch of the subject, I may now sum up the evidence to be derived from the burial customs of the earliest men, as to the existence of Religious Beliefs among the men of the Palæolithic Age.

The placing of food and weapons close to the deceased shows that the dead man was supposed to be living in another world, and that those who buried him believed in a future life. But we generally find in dealing with savage tribes that a belief in a future life is accompanied by a belief in rewards and punishments in another world. This implies the holding of a Moral Law however rudimentary the belief may be, and in addition to this the further belief of a personal judge who will apportion future rewards and punishments. The care shown also in *dressing and painting* the body of the deceased in these Palæolithic burials, shows that the dead man was expected to appear at the Court or Judgment Hall of some Mighty Being to whom he was responsible for his conduct on Earth, so that the deceased had to be arrayed in his best robes for this solemn appearance. All this implies the possession of a genuine religious belief.

#### *Totemism and Belief in Subordinate Deities.*

Everyone acquainted with the relics of Palæolithic Man knows how frequently the figures of animals are carved on slabs of slate or pieces of ivory. Sometimes *pictures* are engraved,

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\* See *Les Cavernes et leur Habitants*, by M. Fraipont, pp. 102-104. Also *La Poterie en Belgique*, by MM. Fraipont and Braconier in *Revue d'Anthropologie*, Juillet, 1887.

† A further list of the discoveries of Palæolithic pottery is given in Southall's *Age of the Mammoth*, pp. 72-77.



but generally figures of animals are carved alone. Dupont thought that the cave-dwellers on the banks of the Lesse were fetish worshippers because he found a solitary mammoth's bone in the cave of Chaleux.\* But this was probably a part of a repast. The numerous carvings, however, on the *Batons du Command* (or sceptres) of the chiefs in Palæolithic times must be interpreted in a different manner. It has been conjectured with great probability that the horses, reindeer, and elephants carved on Palæolithic relics represent the Totems of the different tribes, and that these animals were worshipped as the guardian spirits of the tribe. Of course there are not only *tribal* Totems, but *family* and *individual* Totems also.† Totemism is widely distributed among the savage tribes of Africa, Australia, and North America, but I cannot discuss its present character and distribution.

As to the opinion that the carvings of animals on the sceptres and ornaments of Palæolithic Man represent guardian spirits I cannot do better than quote the words of Sir William Dawson, who says—"I have already stated that the carvings on ivory and bone found in the caves of the Dordogne, in France, might be regarded as the Totems of their possessors, the emblems of their guardian manitous. This has a bearing on the significance which we are to attach to the carving supposed to represent the mammoth, found in one of these caves, and which has so often been figured and described as an evidence that Man existed before the disappearance of this animal. That some great warrior or chief of the Palæolithic Age had the mammoth for his armorial bearing, and for the emblem of his guardian genius. . . . The fishes, reindeer, and mammoths carved on the bone implements of Palæolithic Man were not merely works of art, undertaken to amuse idle hours. As interpreted by American analogies, they were the sacred Totems of Primeval Hunters and warriors, and some of the rows of dots and scratches, which have been called "tallies," may be the records of offerings made to these guardian spirits, or of successes achieved under their influence.‡ Mr. W. C. Borlase also declares that the roving tribes of Northern Europe in prehistoric times worshipped animals, and, like the American Indians carried their figures.§

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\* *Étude sur les Cavernes des bords de la Lesse et de la Meuse*, p. 21.

† The best account of Totemism with which I am acquainted is found in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Edition IX, Vol. XXIII, pp. 467-476.

‡ *Fossil Man*, pp. 275, 265.

§ *The Dolmens of Ireland*, Vol. III, p. 879.

It has been thought that these Palæolithic carvings of animals were allied to the fetishes of the Western African tribes. It may have been so, but many of the Negroes of West Africa who attach a superstitious reverence to these fetishes adore a supreme god also.

*Supreme Gods.*

If these figures represented minor divinities and guardian spirits, is there any evidence that Primeval Man had any higher beliefs, and adored supreme gods? Let us see what can be said on this point.

There are some theorists who hold that in Palæolithic times the worship of the sun was practised by the earliest men. On the "staffs of office" carried by these ancient men we often find a representation of the disc of the sun, with rays spreading from it on all sides. M. Girod has described a carving of the sun with diverging rays found in the cave of Laugerie-Basse in the Dordogne.\* M. Piette has found a similar representation of the sun in the cave of Gourdan in the Pyrenees, and has found the sun three times engraved on another baton which either belonged to a chief or a priest. Possibly these were Totems, but the sun must have been—as it always is—the Totem of the Supreme God. A strange theory concerning the worship of the sun in Palæolithic times has been put forward by M. Rochebrune.† He states that all the caves which he had explored in Charente, and which contained the remains of Palæolithic Man, opened to the north-east. This was—so he declares—because Palæolithic Man could, from the mouth of these caverns, worship the rising sun. I make no comment on this theory. The carvings of the sun on the sceptres of office used in Palæolithic times may indicate that the chief was the sun of his tribe for power, wisdom, and glory, and that his people were delighted to enjoy the sunshine of his favour. But besides this there are indications that the worship of the serpent, as the great deity of evil, prevailed in Palæolithic times. The evidence for this is striking: let us examine it in detail.

MM. Christy and Lartet found in the cave of La Madelaine in the Dordogne, in an undoubted Palæolithic deposit, a fragment of a reindeer horn on which was carved a remarkable picture.‡

\* *Les Invasions Paléolithiques*, Plate XX.

† *Memoirs sur les Restes d'Industrie aux Temps Primodiaux de la Race Humaine recueillis dans le Département de la Charente*, pp. 26, 27.

‡ See *Reliquiæ Aquitaniæ*, Book II, Plate II, fig. 8, p. 16.

It represents a man perfectly naked, with his right arm raised in the act of striking. By his side stands a horse, evidently domesticated, receiving the blow. Another horse stands close by. Behind the man is the sea, which is indicated by curved lines representing waves. Partly in the water and partly on the land is a gigantic serpent, which is clearly landing to make an attack upon the man, who stands helpless with his back to the monster. MM. Christy and Lartet declare that they are unable to interpret this picture. Professor Boyd Dawkins supposes\* that it represents a hunter attacking a herd of wild horses, and that the serpent is really a gigantic eel! This idea, however, is refuted by the horses standing quietly by the side of the man, with their faces turned towards him, while it entirely ignores the threatening attitude of the serpent, which is three times the size of the man. Moreover, as the eel is harmless, and it would not be drawn landing from the sea and attacking the man. Sir William Dawson thinks† that the picture portrays a man migrating with his horses from the coast to an inland district. This view cannot be accepted, for the horses stand close to the man and are approaching him, and have no burdens on their backs. Moreover, the serpent, which is the most important part of the picture, and which is attacking the man, is by this theory unexplained. The best explanation of this Palæolithic drawing is surely the following: It represents a man sacrificing horses to appease the wrath of the mighty Serpent-God, which has its abode in the sea. This explains the anger of the serpent, and the man raising his hand to kill the horses to propitiate its wrath. On this explanation every portion of the drawing is completely harmonised.

Another carving in the same cave of La Madelaine further supports this view. This represented a great serpent, which was carved on a fragment of bone. The serpent's mouth was open, and its eye and powerful teeth and its scales were strikingly depicted.‡ Around the serpent were the waves of the sea, exactly as in the former carving.

Another striking proof of serpent worship in Palæolithic times is found in the baton of Montgaudier. This is a fragment of a reindeer horn, which probably belonged to a priest, or to a

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\* *Early Man in Britain*, p. 214.

† *Fossil Man*, pp. 266, 268.

‡ *Reliquiæ Aquitanicæ*, B, Plate XXIV, Fig. 4, p. 159.

great chief.\* On one side of this baton (or sceptre) were carved two monstrous serpents. These serpents are in a threatening attitude, and their bodies, tails, and scales are engraved with beautiful exactitude. These serpents are *marine*, because on the other side of the baton were fish of the sea, one of which was dead, being transfixed by a harpoon.

Now let us ask the question, *why* were the *marine* serpents carved with such care on the sceptres of the chiefs of the Palæolithic Age? It could not be because of their size, because all the serpents of the Palæolithic Age were very small and insignificant. They could not, therefore, have been carved for their importance: there must have been *another* reason. It is certain also that there were no serpents of importance in the *sea*, and why should great *sea-serpents* be engraved on the sceptres of the chiefs of those primeval days? The only reply is, that these serpents were carved for a *religious* and *mythological* reason, and in order to represent some terrible divinity which was supposed to have its home in the sea.

It is readily admitted that a great deal of this is speculative. Still, it is hardly possible to deny the indications that exist and they ought not to be passed over. Let us take another case. In a Palæolithic deposit in the cave of Kesslerloch, in Switzerland, amid other human relics, a long fragment of a bone sceptre was found, on which was engraved by dotted lines the body of an immense serpent.† The head and tail are wanting, but the serpentine body cannot be mistaken. Any serpents that may have lived in Switzerland in the Palæolithic Period must have been diminutive indeed. A religious motive must have induced the artists to carve serpents on their wands of office. It is also very unlikely that the serpent, which was of a most diminutive character, could ever have been the Totem of a tribe in Western Europe from its importance. The python in South Africa and the rattlesnake in North America are tribal Totems. But the former is formidable because of its size, and the latter because of its deadly poison. Hence the reason for their selection and their adaptation as Totems. But neither of these reasons apply to the diminutive serpents of Western Europe. It may be that the round holes in the Palæolithic sceptres are representations of the sun, for they can hardly have been meant for ornament. It is singular that

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\* This baton is figured by Cartailhac in *La France Préhistorique* p. 82.

† *Excavations at the Kesslerloch*, by Conrad Merk, Plate VI, Fig. 23.

the worship of the sun and the worship of the serpent are constantly found united. This was the case among the Aztecs at the time of the Spanish conquest. In ancient Babylon, also, the sun was adored, and great veneration was attached to the evil deity which, as a serpent or dragon, dwelt in the ocean, and was called by the ancient Babylonians "the huge seven-headed serpent who pounds the waves of the sea."\* Even at the present day the semi-civilized Indians in New Mexico and Arizona worship the sun and pay religious homage to the rattlesnake. The great serpent-mound near Oban in Western Scotland has been well described by Miss Gordon Cumming,† and similar mounds in the form of a serpent exist in North America‡ and even in Australia. Now it is a singular fact that the Baton of Montgaudier, which is a Palæolithic sceptre, contains a round hole made in its end which might represent the sun, and on one side there are two great serpents which are admirably carved.§ Here then are the sun and the serpent together. Similar associations are found in the Palæolithic caves of La Madelaine and Kesslerloch. Among the Hottentots of South Africa in former days the same dual worship existed, mingled with the worship of sacred stones and sacred wells.|| In Ancient Britain the same kind of worship was practised.

Whatever difficulties may attach themselves to the explanation of these facts, they ought not to be entirely passed over. It will not do to say that, so far as the men of the Quaternary Period are concerned, the indications are too slight for notice. Facts are constantly accumulating, and they demand explanation, or patient accumulation before theorizing. To take one more instance only. Some of the figures portrayed on the walls and roofs of the painted caves lately discovered in France and Spain have been held to have a religious significance.¶ On this I make no comment and offer no opinion, as the subject is beset with many difficulties.

Here I close this investigation. I readily admit that the evidence I have adduced to show that the earliest Quaternary men possessed a religion is but slight. But may I ask how it is otherwise to be interpreted? If I have drawn wrong

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\* *The beginnings of History*, by François Lenormant, p. 109.

† *In the Hebrides*, pp. 46-49.

‡ *Prehistoric America*, by the Marquis of Nadaillac, p. 126.

§ *La France Préhistorique*, by E. Cartailhac, p. 82.

|| *The Supreme God of the Khoi Khoi*, by Theophilus Hahn, pp. 79-135.

¶ *Ancient Hunters*, by W. J. Sollas.

deductions from the facts, will anyone examine the facts himself, and tell me how they are to be explained? Will anyone be good enough to go over all the facts I have adduced, and to show me *where* and *why* I have been wrong, and to give the true explanation?

But if I am right in my conclusions, it follows that Primitive Man was a far higher and nobler creature than many materialistic theorists imagine. Religion, however debased it may be, is the sign of Man's nobility and special nature. The possession of religion is characteristic of Man alone. Its existence creates an impassable gulf between Man and the lower animals, and the presence of religious beliefs amongst the earliest men proves that the first races of men who inhabited the earth were no nearer to apes or ape-like creatures than are the men who live on the earth to-day.

#### DISCUSSION.

The Rev. J. J. B. COLES asked: What in the judgment of scientific men was the shortest period of time which they could assign to the Quaternary period?

Professor HULL replied that with geologists the question of time did not hold the field: the geological periods were not defined as to their duration in time; time, as we understand it in our present experience, was not for geologists and palæontologists, but there were clear indications of the presence of man in these islands before the Glacial Period, when the British Isles underwent a great refrigeration, and the country was elevated thousands of feet above the present level of the ocean. The animals which, from their remains, we saw to have been contemporary with primeval man, were driven southward into Africa by the gradual uprising of the country and the lowering of the temperature. This series of changes implied a period of enormous duration, for it was no case of a sudden volcanic outburst; the changes involved were gradual in character, and were part of a slow continual process.

Mr. M. L. ROUSE said that he believed that the relics of Palæolithic man were found only near Ipswich in this country. Professor Boyd Dawkins, at the Meeting of the British Association, held at Cambridge several years ago, regarded Palæolithic man as more recent than the Glacial Epoch. If so, we might consider that Palæolithic man represented the antediluvians. Thus Professor G.

Fredk. Wright, of Oberlin, computed from the length of the gorge of Niagara that the Falls originated some 7,000 years ago; certainly not more than 10,000 years ago. In the discussion that followed, five speakers took part, two of whom supported Professor Wright. Professor Geikie said that the human period was shorter than many writers had claimed.

Professor LANGHORNE ORCHARD said that Professor Boyd Dawkins declared that there was no evidence of man before the post-glacial river gravels, which would imply an antiquity within limits of from five to ten thousand years. He thought that the Meeting was greatly indebted to the author of this paper: he had shown that there was evidence that Palæolithic man had a religion and believed in a future state. The evidence given in the paper might be slight in detail, but its cumulative effect was great. The placing of food beside a corpse showed a distinct belief that the soul of the man continued to exist after death, so the carving of the sun and the serpent on the baton pointed to a belief in good and evil spirits, and there is much force in the argument from the praying figure (page 129). He desired to express his cordial agreement with the author in his remarks as to evolution.

Mr. W. WOODS SMYTH:—Mr. Whitley leaves us in doubt as to where he places Palæolithic man and the Pleistocene Period. Were they pre-Adamic or post-Adamic in the realm of time? To place them as post-Adamic would be opposed to all the sound evidence that we possess. And we cannot push the Adamic era back beyond seven thousand years.

The facts Mr. Whitley adduces in favour of primitive man's religion do not constitute evidence. Had Palæolithic man closed up the cave he dwelt in at the end of his age, then these facts would amount to evidence. But we know that he did not do so, and men of later times dwelt in these caves after him. Ivory is a heavy substance; and the ceaseless earth tremors and movements, and the occasional efforts of the cave-dwellers to search the floors of their dwelling, would tend to make such relics sink, and so would render the facts submitted of no value as evidence.

We know, however, that primitive man must have had a religion. His dreams, as Herbert Spencer points out, would affect his mind. The reappearance in dreams of dead ancestors and friends would lead him to regard them as still living, and reverence for them would

lead him to deify and worship them. However, the word "sacrifice" does not suit their religion. There is no evidence of it anywhere. It is singular that Mr. Whitley should mention that the great mammals of tropical zones once dwelt in lands now temperate, and yet should be quite sure there were no large serpents there also. It is singular also that he should be so emphatic about the perfections of primitive man, and yet make no reference to the formation of the skulls of the Neanderthal man and of the man of Spy, both evidently representing races less truly human than *Homo sapiens* of later times.

Mr. WALTER MAUNDER said that it was quite true, as Mr. Gath Whitley had so frankly admitted, that the evidence to show that the earliest Quaternary men possessed a religion was but slight. But that which was astonishing, was, not that the evidence was slight but, that there should be any evidence forthcoming at all. Consider, if the British race perished and ten or perhaps a hundred thousand years hence another race visited these islands, what indications would be left of our religion? Nothing but the foundations would remain of our churches. Would there be anything about the foundations of St. Paul's to indicate the religious beliefs of those who had built it?

The Rev. J. J. B. COLES said they ought not to be afraid to face the strongest arguments of scientific men. There was a great opportunity before the Victoria Institute to present a full and complete synthesis of the evidence drawn from science, from philosophy, and from revelation on this subject of the antiquity of man. He hoped that some day the Institute would set aside an afternoon for the special discussion of this question. During the dark ages much knowledge was lost; they learnt from Holy Scripture that when men did not choose to retain God in their knowledge, He gave them over to judicial blindness; thus some of this lost knowledge had never been recovered.

The Rev. M. ANSTEY said they must draw a distinction between exact sciences like Mathematics and Astronomy, and speculative sciences like Geology or Palæontology. In the exact sciences we reached certain definite positive conclusions, commanding universal assent, and to which the element of certainty was attached. But there were other sciences into which the element of speculation very largely entered. They were built up on the basis of certain presuppositions or assumptions, the truth of which had never been



verified, and they could therefore only yield highly problematical or speculative results.

Geology was a speculative science: it involved the assumption that the forces in operation to-day were identical with the forces that had been in operation throughout all past time; it involved the assumption that all geological changes took place by slow and gradual processes involving the lapse of long periods of time; it involved the assumption that the lower the type of the organism embedded in fossil remains the earlier must have been the date of its appearance. But these were mere assumptions, not ascertained scientific facts, and the inferences drawn from them were challenged by a rival school of geologists, who maintained that certain vast changes in the earth's crust took place, not gradually, but suddenly, and that the period of time claimed for the occurrence of these changes might be abridged by centuries or even by millenniums.

Similarly, it was sometimes said that a psalm which indicated a nobly spiritual conception of God could not have been written by David, but must have been the work of a later writer, because the age in which David lived was an age of primitive barbarism in which a highly spiritual conception of God could not yet have been developed. But this was only an inference drawn from an assumption and much of the work of the Higher Critics rested on a similarly insecure foundation.

Professor HULL contested Mr. Anstey's assertion. Geology was not an inexact science. The fossil-bearing strata were evidently deposited slowly, for they were deposited in water, but neither Geology nor Palæontology had anything to do with stone implements. Perhaps if Mr. Anstey would read Lyell's *Principles of Geology* he would come to the conclusion that Geology was an exact science as regarded its principles. It was only as regards details that it could be considered "inexact."

The CHAIRMAN asked the meeting to return a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Whitley for his valuable paper. It was true that the evidences he had been able to bring forward as to the religious beliefs of primitive man were but slight. Nevertheless they were very interesting. As to the antiquity of the earliest men, could they be certain that these primitive men were really contemporary with the animals whose bones were found with them? Might not the men have been later dwellers in these caves?

## LECTURER'S REPLY.

In reply to Mr. W. Woods Smyth, who revives the exploded theories of Herbert Spencer on the origin of religion, it is impossible to hold these in the light of modern research. They are pure guesses and nothing more. Mr. Smyth says that sacrifice was unknown to primeval man, but I have proved the contrary from the picture at La Madeleine, and he has not attempted to controvert my arguments. Every geologist believes in the existence of the great mammals of the Pleistocene Period in Europe, because there is conclusive evidence to prove it; but I do not believe in the existence of great land serpents in Europe at that time, since none of their remains have been discovered. As to the Neanderthal skull, it is now known that the earliest measurements of it were too small, but even so they gave it a cranial capacity greater than the skulls of the ancient cultivated Peruvians. Its antiquity is also very doubtful. Rodolph Wagner maintained that it was the skull of a modern Dutchman, and Von Mayer that it was the skull of a Cossack, killed in the war of 1814. Similar remarks apply to the Spy skulls, which are even larger than the Neanderthal skull.

In reply to Mr. Howard, the bones of men and of animals found in the caves to which I have referred must be of the same antiquity, because they lie side by side, are in the same mineral condition, and are overlaid by genuine Paleolithic deposits. Thus the human relics in the cave of Frontal were overlaid by a Paleolithic deposit of clay evidently formed after the human bones and relics were placed in the cavern.

Mr. Woods Smyth further states that the facts I adduce do not constitute evidence. I reply that he has made no attempt to refute them, and that taken together their cumulative effect is unanswerable. On another point, Nature, by introducing a deposit of clay or gravel, or by covering the relics by a thick bed of stalagmite, can close a cave, as effectually as Man could do it. While the ivory, of which some of the relics to which I have referred are made, is shown to be of paleolithic age, since it is cut into the form, or bears the images carved upon it, of animals which only lived in that period, and it is cut in a manner which was only practised then.