



IN MEMORIAM

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John Desmond Clark
Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus
Berkeley
1916 — 2002

J. (John) Desmond Clark, internationally- renowned prehistoric archaeologist of Africa and elsewhere in the Old World, died February 14, 2002, at a convalescent hospital near his home in Oakland, California. He was near 86, and hitherto in decent health although afflicted with macular degeneration, but succumbed to pneumonia consequent upon a brief trip to England on family business. He had joined the University of California, Berkeley faculty in 1961, and gained emeritus status in 1986. He pursued an active life of travel, research, and writing until the very end.

Desmond Clark was born in London, raised in a hamlet in the Chiltern Hills of Buckinghamshire, and sent off to boarding school at age 6 1/2. He attended preparatory school in Buckinghamshire, and ultimately Monkton Combe School near Bath. His interest in natural history, encouraged by his father, derived from his life in a country setting, and his upper school years exposed him to history, archaeology, and the scientific life. He entered Cambridge University, via Christ's College, in 1934, initially to read history and subsequently to read the Archaeology and Anthropology Tripos under Miles Burkitt and Grahame Clark, the latter only nine years his senior. He completed his tripos (a First), and B.A. degree in 1937. It was a time of jobless circumstances until year's end, when a position was proffered and quickly accepted in overseas service in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). It was to serve both as secretary of the Rhodes- Livingstone Institute and as curator of the David Livingstone Memorial Museum in Livingstone, close by the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River. He was to remain there and to serve as director of the museum (as well as founding member and secretary of the National Monuments Commission, and secretary, Victoria Falls Conservancy) until his return to academia in the U.S.A. at the University of California, Berkeley in 1961. He was but one of only three prehistorians, all Cambridge- trained, in all of sub- Saharan Africa and between equatorial Nairobi and the Cape of Good Hope.

During World War II, Clark was on leave in military service with the East Africa Command, largely in Ethiopia and the Somalilands, and briefly Madagascar from 1941 to 1946. His wife, Betty Cable Baume Clark, served as acting curator in Livingstone during his absence. He completed his Ph.D. at Cambridge in 1950, during a home leave, based on researches into both Zambezi Valley prehistory, and his wartime investigations, as time afforded, into aspects of prehistory in the Horn of Africa.

In his over two dozen years at Livingstone, Desmond Clark produced a host of contributions to archaeology, beyond activation of the old and ultimate (1951) construction of new museum quarters, and expansion and diversification of its professional staff. There was extensive fieldwork, visits to earlier known and newly found localities, and testing and other excavation, both there and in Nyasaland (now Malawi). This included rock art, often hitherto neglected, the poorly known Later Stone Age (LSA), and the Iron Age, the last at the edge of his interests. The unique and vitally important locality of Kalambo Falls, in a small basin at the

southwestern margin of the Tanganyika rift, was serendipitously encountered (1953), and in subsequent tests (1955) and extensive excavations (1956, 1959, 1963, 1966, 1988) found to contain a long succession of Paleolithic occupations (Acheulean, Lupemban and LSA, and Iron Age as well), and some remarkably preserved macro botanical residues. Clark always considered this locality and the joint researches he and associates pursued there, as among the most lastingly important and rewarding of all his accomplishments. The Kalambo Falls locality is now extensively published in three beautiful volumes, entitled Kalambo Falls Prehistoric Site (Cambridge University Press; 1969, 1974, 2001). At the end of that decade, at the invitation of a diamond mining consortium, Clark was able to carry out researches on Paleolithic finds in northeastern Angola relevant both to the ongoing work at Kalambo Falls and also as a further stimulus to his increasing concerns with ancient human adaptations and environments in these southerly latitudes. The monographic volumes underwritten by the Companhia De Diamantes De Angola mining consortium constitute his extensive contribution to the Paleolithic prehistory of this region: Prehistoric Cultures of Northeast Angola and Their Significance in Tropical Africa (1963) and Further Palaeo- Anthropological Studies in Northern Lunda (1968). Clark participated in the Pan African Congress on Prehistory from its inception (Nairobi, 1947). Overall he took part in 10 (of 11) congresses held in various venues across Africa, and was himself responsible for the organization, logistics and ultimate publication (1957) of the third congress (held in Livingstone, 1955). This was one of five books and a half dozen guides and handbooks, in addition to innumerable serial publications produced during those years. He also initiated a Winter School of Archaeology at the museum, held in July, a splendid resource for visiting scientists, interested lay public, and students from elsewhere in Africa. His institution, and others in Africa and abroad, encouraged and participated in the various requisite field studies on peoples and environments, attendant upon the construction of the Kariba Dam in the middle Zambezi in the late 1950s and earlier 1960s. His contributions to the colonial world of future Zambia were duly recognized by the award of OBE (1956) and CBE (1960). Above all he traveled extensively, pursued fieldwork continuously and variously, gained an unparalleled knowledge of southern Africa prehistory and natural history, and initiated modern scientific research practices and perspectives, hitherto minimal or largely lacking.

Desmond Clark began a new, largely unfamiliar academic life on the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley in 1961. It involved full- time teaching, introduction of a new program into the anthropological curriculum, activation of laboratory space and facilities, interactions with colleagues and students, undergraduate and graduate, in addition to his own continuing commitments to overseas fieldwork and research. Here he was successful in initiating and elaborating a new program of training and attendant field research in African prehistory, and focused largely on the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) manifestations of Pleistocene (ice age) human antiquity. This program was expanded and much strengthened during the tenure (1966-83) of Glynn Isaac, another Africanist of South African and Cambridge University background, on the anthropology faculty. Singly and often together, they were responsible for the production of dozens of doctorates in prehistory, of students from a diversity of educational and national backgrounds, including a number from Africa, and destined to return there in professional positions. The program was highly successful and was a counterpart to other complementary faculty interests in biological anthropology, including primatology, and was similarly closely affiliated with relevant staff in earth sciences and paleontology having interests in the late Cenozoic.

The beginning of this period (July 1961) saw both Desmond and Betty Clark as central participants in the colloquium, African Ecology and Human Evolution, sponsored by the Wenner- Gren Foundation (held at Burg Wartenstein, Austria, published in 1963), a gathering of 20 mostly natural scientists of varied backgrounds and nationalities, to elucidate and pursue linkages between ecological, evolutionary and primatological perspectives, and their relevance and implication for studies in paleoanthropology. Subsequently, in 1965, Clark served as co- organizer (with W. W. Bishop and F. C. Howell) of the three- week long international colloquium, at the same venue and under the same auspices, of three dozen participants, which eventuated in the hefty volume, Background to Evolution in Africa (1967), a fundamental and now classic contribution to emergence of modern interdisciplinary paleoanthropology. The same year Clark's remarkable and visionary Atlas of African Prehistory, composed and edited solely by him, constituted a prescient perspective for the pursuit of African prehistory, in its relevant contexts however inadequately it was followed and elaborated by archeological practitioners subsequently.

Desmond Clark maintained a largely unbroken record of overseas fieldwork and associated research activities subsequent to his move to California. His work continued in central Africa (Zambia, Malawi, Angola) through the 1960s into the earlier 1970s, including visits as well to southern Africa in the mid 1980s. Other experiences included in- depth work in 1970 in Niger at the Aïr Massif (at Adrar Bous), and in the Sudan in the early 1970s in association with colleagues' studies of Mesolithic and Neolithic sites of post- Pleistocene

age. An invitation from the Antiquities and Museums Directorate of Syria led to two field seasons (1964-65) devoted to excavations at the Lower Paleolithic (Acheulean) site of Latamne, a riverside locality in the Orontes Valley. In the mid-1970s and the initial 1980s he had five occasions of fieldwork and attendant studies in Ethiopia, initially in the highlands at both cave (Porc Epic) and open-air (Gadeb) Paleolithic sites, and last in the western Afar depression before governmental restrictions shut down such overseas researches. A succession of students and scientific colleagues participated in these and all subsequent undertakings. As a response, in the earlier 1980s Clark collaborated over four seasons with Indian associates at Poona and Allahabad in archaeological field studies (Madhya Pradesh) on the Indian central subcontinent. One such occasion (1982) was also devoted to firsthand visit and examination of emerging knowledge of the Korean Paleolithic through an invitation of that government's antiquities service; he made another such study visit there in the early 1990s.

Clark served UC Berkeley for 25 years until assumption of emeritus status in 1986. At that time a five day commemorative gathering (entitled *The Longest Career: The Human Career in Africa*) was convened at UC Berkeley to celebrate the occasion and to enable over 200 attendees from over 20 countries, students, former and current, and colleagues from near and afar, to address scientific issues and to express appreciation for Clark's own long and fruitful career. Many presentations of this event ultimately appeared in dedicated volumes of relevant serials (*African Archaeological Review* 5, 1987; and the *Journal of Human Evolution* 15(8) and 16(7/8), 1987).

Upon assumption of emeritus status, Desmond Clark managed to maintain a university office, to continue his fieldwork and attendant research activities, travel and conference participation and an ever-growing output of scientific publication. The first of five successive trips to China occurred initially with associates to Yunnan (1988), followed up by field excursions more broadly elsewhere, and then a multiyear Sino-American research effort focused on the record of hominid occupation preserved at earlier Pleistocene aged localities of the Nihewan basin (Hebei). This was enabled by financial support from the Henry R. Luce Foundation, the first such use directed to paleoanthropological research. This cooperative effort was further enhanced by means of a series of lectures and workshops, by associated scientists, setting out new perspectives, methodologies and advanced technological developments relevant to improved practice in prehistoric archeology and attendant fields.

After a hiatus of nearly a decade, brought about by shifts in governmental attitudes and restructuring of antiquities regulations, it became possible to renew paleoanthropological studies in Ethiopia. Desmond Clark participated with T. D. White and associates in renewed field multidisciplinary studies in the Middle Awash Valley, Afar depression. His own field participation occurred in 1990, and over three subsequent seasons (1993, 1995, 1996), a major focus being Clark's particular concern with the (Earlier) Paleolithic as exemplified by evidence well preserved and exposed there on the Bouri peninsula, and which afforded datable volcanic tephra, and associated fossiliferous and artifact-bearing horizons, and even important occurrences of hominid fossils. One of his last major publications (2000) was a major coedited monograph (235 pages), *The Acheulean and the Plio-Pleistocene Deposits of the Middle Awash Valley, Ethiopia*.

Clark was honored by invitations to present a number of distinguished lectures. Among them were the Huxley Memorial Lecture, Royal Anthropological Institute (1974); 17th Raymond A. Dart Lecture (1979); Mortimer Wheeler Lecture, British Academy (1981); SKOMP Distinguished Lecture in Anthropology, Indiana University (1986); Faculty Research Lecturer, UC Berkeley (1979); and Distinguished Lecturer, American Anthropological Association (1992). Clark also of course received a long list of honors and awards. He held a D.Sc. (1975) from Cambridge University. He had been honored by a D.Sc. (hons) from both the University of Witwatersrand (1985) and the University of Cape Town (1985). He also held the Huxley Medal, Royal Anthropological Institute (1974); Gold Medal, Society of Antiquaries (1985); Gold Medal, Archeological Institute of America (1989); Grahame Clark Medal for Prehistory, British Academy (1997); Fellows' Medal, California Academy of Sciences (1990); and L. S. B. Leakey Foundation Prize (1996). In addition he had received the Gold Plate Award, American Academy of Achievement (1982); the International Gold Mercury Award, Government of Ethiopia (1982); and the Berkeley Citation (1986). He was a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences (1993), American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Royal Society of South Africa, British Academy, Royal Anthropological Institute, California Academy of Sciences and a member of a number of other learned and scientific organizations. He was a member of the L. S. B. Leakey Foundation's Scientific Executive Committee since 1980.

Desmond Clark left behind an unparalleled imprint on the face of African prehistory. This is exemplified through his own, long- term researches there, his training of students of African and the other nationalities who similarly continued such activities there in one form or another, and his efforts in the establishment and further realization of the Rhodes- Livingstone Museum. His overarching concern was the practice of African archeology, and the study of the human past from cultural and environmental perspectives. On repeated occasions he was concerned with both teaching and fieldwork activities in Asia, initially in Syria, and subsequently for longer intervals with colleagues and students in India and in China. The importance and lasting effect of their cooperative efforts have been repeated in the esteem of Indian and Chinese colleagues with whom he worked, and the younger generation with whom he so effectively interacted. He was a participant, indeed, leader in the growth and emergence of modern prehistoric archaeology, and its integration into the broader scientific enterprise of paleoanthropology. As colleague, teacher, mentor, researcher and fieldworker extraordinaire he will always be admired and esteemed, and as friend, he will be missed by the myriads encountered over the course of a productive, altogether remarkable life.

Desmond Clark is survived by his children, Elizabeth Ann Winterbottom (b. 1939, of Australia) and John W. D. Clark (b. 1941, of Kent, U.K.). Betty Clark, his wife of 64 years and partner and co- participant in travels, fieldwork and research, illustration and publication, survived him only by two months, deceased on April 14, 2002, in the England from which they came and to which he had planned their ultimate retirement together.

F. Clark Howell
Kent Lightfoot
Tim D. White