

MAN

in the  
Primitive  
World

HOEBEL

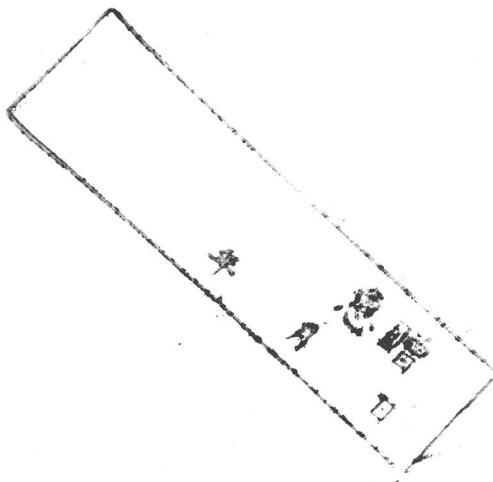
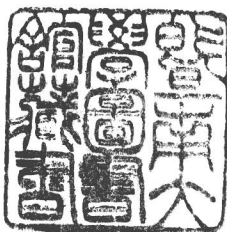
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# Man in the Primitive World



## MAN IN THE PRIMITIVE WORLD

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# MAN

## AN INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY



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# in the Primitive World

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



### TO FRAN AND BART

A partner on my earliest field trips was my wife, Frances Gore Hoebel. Later we were joined in our investigations by our son, Bart. Seventeen years ago, at the age of five, he eyed a group of Indian girls picnicking in Yosemite Park. "Dad, aren't those girls Indians?" he asked. "Well, why don't you talk to them? You might learn something." I offer this as evidence that he, like his mother, has nourished an active interest in anthropology that has been a sustaining stimulus through the years. At large and specifically, in their aid in the preparation of this volume as well as its predecessor, they have more than earned the right to have this book dedicated to them.

. . . the time must come—if we can survive  
our own misuse of the physical sciences—  
when the discoveries of cultural anthropology  
will be recognized as the most significant  
contributions of modern science.

*Paul B. Sears*, BIOLOGIST.

PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

# Preface

As an introduction to general anthropology this book endeavors to present the fundamentals of most aspects of the subject matter of anthropology. It also undertakes to state the more important problems of the science as they have been formulated in the present stage of anthropological knowledge.

It has been written primarily for the student, the worker in other sciences, and the lay reader who desires an orientation in the science of anthropology. The data have been selected with this goal in mind.

An attempt has thus been made to provide enough descriptive and factual materials to give substance to the work and reality to the patterns of conduct described herein. It is easily possible to gag the novice in anthropology with a surfeit of strange tribal names and minuscule customs to such a degree that digestion of the essential principles to be derived from the study of anthropology is made impossible. Therefore we have tried constantly for the best balance between overfeeding and underfeeding of facts.

Facts, however, are not enough. All phenomena have their meanings, but they never speak for themselves. Science is as much interpretation as it is observation, and a good introduction to anthropology must balance valid fact with sound interpretation.

Anthropology has traditionally concentrated its attention on prehistoric and primitive man. As the science of man it may, however, properly include man on any level of culture, primitive and civilized, within its scope; it may properly include man on any time plane, prehistoric, historic, and contemporary, within its purview. Anthropology must bring its conclusions to bear upon the problems of modern society; it must place its methods at the disposal of all other sciences.

Nevertheless, its great contribution to knowledge has been derived from its special quality as a comparative science. By means of anthropological study of societies unlike our own, we have been able to break through the mental crust formed of our own cake of custom. It is still



best to keep anthropology firmly rooted in the data of primitive society. In keeping with this conviction, this book is primarily a study of man in the primitive world.

It is nevertheless desirable and necessary to relate new facts to the preexisting knowledge of the student. Furthermore, in times like these, the ultimate justification for anthropology is the contribution it can make to the solution of the problems of man. Anthropology should be studied with reference to the modern world. Consequently, in addition to providing lucid descriptive fact we have striven continuously to create a fresh and comprehensive integration of fact and interpretation through the formulation of significant principles relative to the interests of the intelligent person in the modern world of science.

In the decade that has elapsed since the first appearance of this book, many new advances have been recorded in anthropology. Important discoveries made in the 1930s had been delayed in publication because of World War II. The war itself had given impetus to anthropological interests, and a new crop of ideas springing from the wave of cross-fertilization of the sciences in prior decades had become ready for fruition. New discoveries relating to the antiquity of man have now been made in Africa, Asia, and the Americas; the problem of Neandertal man is now viewed in a new light; Piltdown man has been banished from the scene. The prehistoric archaeology of Old World cultures has been given a much broader base. New World archaeology has undergone a veritable revolution of interests and approach. Carbon-14 dating and related techniques have been added to the resources of the prehistorian. The infusion of the genetic point of view has truly revolutionized much of physical anthropology. New ethnological field studies are legion. Exciting new prospects in linguistics and in the effects of language upon culture and human thought processes have been opened. The basic problems of cultural evolution are at long last receiving serious reexamination, and anthropologists have finally decided that their science may legitimately undertake the objective examination of the nature of values in human affairs. A specific event of great worth in separating fact from impression in anthropology has been the publication, in 1950, of Professor G. P. Murdock's *Social Structure*, which sets forth the results of his quantitative testing of a large number of anthropological hypotheses with data from the Yale Cross Cultural Survey.

All these vital new developments have made the revision of this book a responsibility not to be postponed. As a result, Part II, "Ancient Man and Prehistoric Culture," has been completely rewritten and expanded. The treatment of race has been thoroughly redone in terms of the genetic approach. Culture theory has been made more explicit. Greater reliance has been placed on recent reports on African societies. The treatment of

kinship has been sharpened, that of religion enlarged. A chapter on language and culture has been added. All other parts of the book have been carefully reworked to incorporate the most recent data as well as suggestions for improvement that have come from colleagues and students. For these I am particularly grateful. Brief summaries and basic selected readings on the subject have been added to each chapter as aids to the student. An expanded selection of illustrations has also been incorporated. For help in obtaining many of these I am indebted to Robert Gardner, Director of the Film Study Center at the Harvard University Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

Anyone who is familiar with the first edition of *Man in the Primitive World* will surely, I trust, find that this revision has entailed a good deal more than a change in format. I hope the reader will find the result to be a genuine improvement in all respects.

E. Adamson Hoebel

# Acknowledgments

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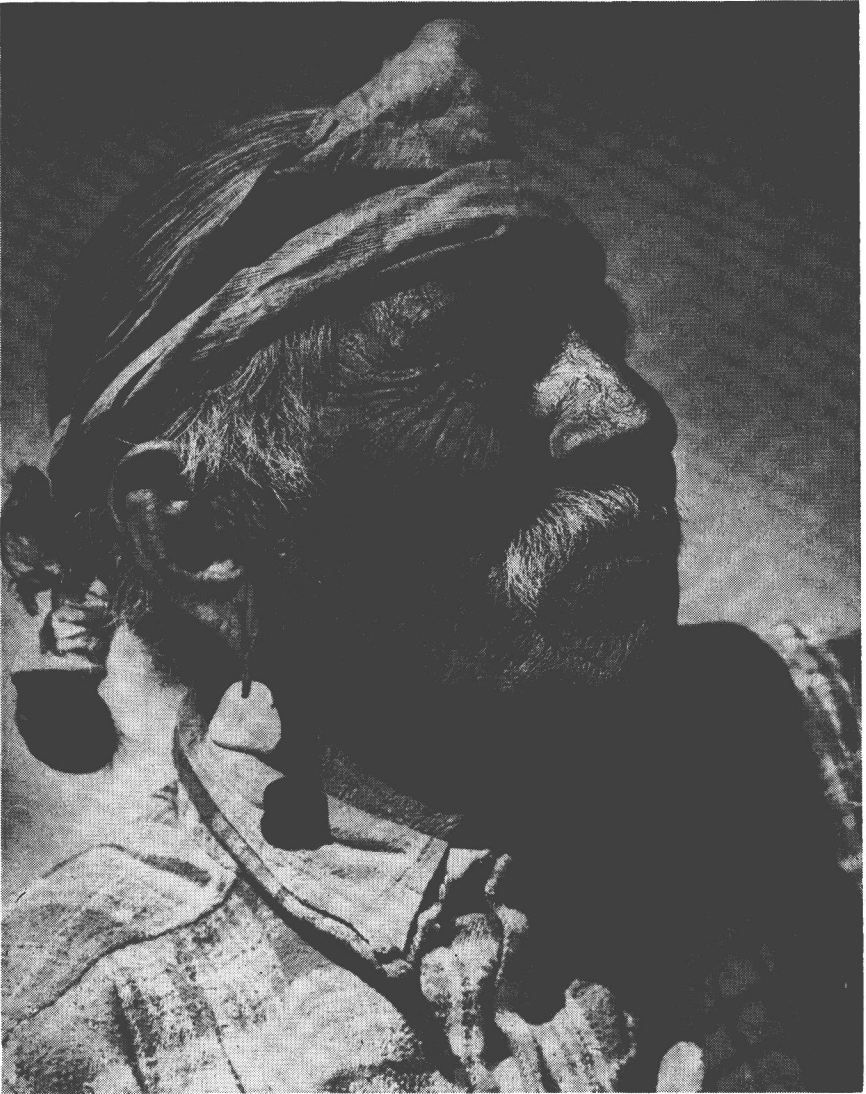
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*Part One*

INTRODUCTION



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Navaho medicine man.

Navaho medicine man.

# CHAPTER 1. Anthropology:

## The Study of Man

AUGUSTINE observed that, "Man wonders over the restless sea, the flowing waters, the sight of the sky, and forgets that of all wonders man himself is the most wonderful." His wonder lies not in his fleetness of foot, nor in the strength of his arms, nor yet in his beauty, for many other creatures surpass him in all these. It lies in his ability to create: to think and bring forth new ways of living. Under the control of his facile mind he produces the tools of the craftsman. With imaginative variety he works out thousands of ways of organizing his life in multitudes of patterns to cope with the exigencies of nature, the demands of social grouping, the mysteries of the universe, and the strivings of his emotional self. Man, who is the greatest of all wonders, deserves study for his own sake, even though it were to bring no more reward than satisfaction to the probing curiosity of mind, which is in itself one of the wonders of man. Nevertheless, out of such study grows knowledge. And out of such knowledge grows power, the power to control nature and shape man's destiny. Thus anthropology, like any disciplined study of natural phenomena, leads not only to the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity; it inevitably becomes a tool in the hands of man. It is a practical undertaking through which to learn the nature of man, to the end that we may more effectively understand man's problems and how to solve them.

Man is a part of *nature*: the universe with all its phenomena. He is, therefore, a natural phenomenon, a biological genus within the animal kingdom. The study of man, called *anthropology* (Gr. *anthrōpos* man + *logia* study), when followed in accordance with the principles and methods of science, is consequently a *natural science*. Its almost unique quality, however, is that as a natural science it is simultaneously a *physical* and a *social science*.

In one of its branches anthropology is concerned with the physical



## 4 Introduction

structure and nature of man and also with his physiological processes. This is the branch known as *physical anthropology*. But anthropology is a good deal more than just the natural history of man's physical nature. It is the study of man—and of all his works. Anthropology is, therefore, also the science of culture. As such it is a major social science—and more. For in its concern with the arts it is also one of the humanities.

### PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

All living forms of humanity today belong to a single biological genus and species—*Homo sapiens*. This was not so in prehistoric times when there were a number of different species, and even genera, of men and ape men struggling for survival. Today, within the sole surviving species, there are a great number of *breeds* and *varieties* of mankind popularly called *races*. It is the concern of physical anthropology to study the greatest possible number of well-selected samples of human beings to determine the general characteristics of the family as a whole and the special characteristics of the different genera, species, breeds, and varieties. Physical anthropology is, therefore, the study of the physical characteristics of the *hominids*.

The interests of physical anthropology are by no means limited to living races or man as he is today. One of its most fascinating problems is to roll back the curtains of time to see man as he once was, to reveal the biological paths along which man has developed to become what he is. It is through physical anthropology, relying on the record of fossil man, the protohominids, the anthropoids, the lesser primates, and the entire record of historical biology, that the factual account of the evolution of man is gradually unfolding.

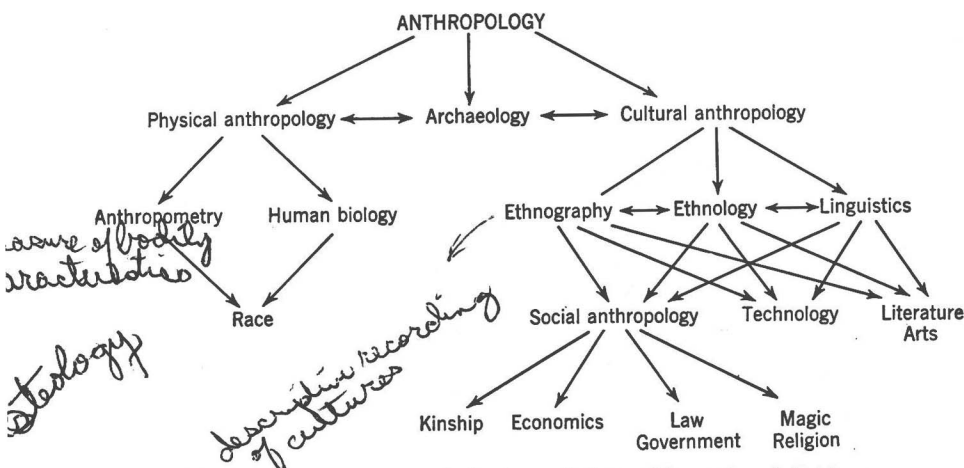


Fig. 1-1. Anthropology and the interrelations of its main subdivisions.