
Preface

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Preface

This volume contains the proceedings of the second joint symposium sponsored by the British Academy and the Royal Society. The first of these, on 'The impact of the natural sciences on archaeology', took place on 11 and 12 December 1969, and the Royal Society–Romanian Academy binational conference on 'Mathematics in the archaeological and historical sciences' (Mamaia, 1970) might be regarded as further evidence of the strong desire of the British Academy and the Royal Society to act vigorously in concert whenever the occasion offers, for the Mamaia meeting owed a great deal to the whole-hearted support of the then Secretary of the Academy, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, F.R.S., F.B.A.

The present symposium, organized for the Academy by I. E. S. Edwards, F.B.A., and S. Piggott, F.B.A., and for the Royal Society by D. G. Kendall, F.R.S., and D. G. King-Hele, F.R.S., depended for its realization on the work of an enlarged committee including R. J. C. Atkinson, G. E. Daniel, F. R. Hodson and J. E. S. Thompson, F.B.A. An attempt has been made to examine 'the place of astronomy' in all parts of the ancient world, and the proceedings will be found to have been arranged so as first to present the evidence relating to literate societies, treated 'in geographical order', and then to present the evidence relating to non-literate societies, and to societies not known to have been literate. The actual Discussion Meeting was spread over the two days 7 and 8 December 1972, but it proved impossible to record more than a fraction of the very lively informal discussions which followed the presentation of the papers collected here.

Professor Hodson generously undertook the laborious tasks of acting both as Secretary to the Planning Committee and as Editor of the present work. To him most especially, and to all who assisted him, we wish to record our gratitude and appreciation. We also wish to thank the then Secretary of the Academy, Mr D. F. Allen, F.B.A., and the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Royal Society, Dr R. W. J. Keay and their colleagues, who encouraged us to act with the freedom such an operation requires, and who dealt with all difficulties as soon as they arose.

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