
Preface

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Preface

This volume contains the proceedings of the third Discussion Meeting organized jointly by the British Academy and the Royal Society. The first, on the impact of the natural sciences on archaeology, took place on 11 and 12 December 1969. The second, on the place of astronomy in the ancient world, was held on 7 and 8 December 1972. The third, which is here recorded, was on 9 and 10 April 1975, and in covering the early history of agriculture, continues the joint exploration of the arts and sciences in human history.

The Discussion Meeting arose from the interest generated by the British Academy Major Research Project on the Early History of Agriculture. This project, fostered by the Department of Archaeology in Cambridge, and led by E. S. Higgs, has successfully explored economic and social conditions in some of the earliest settlements in the Mediterranean and the Middle East in which agriculture was practised. The interest of these studies to biologists concerned with the evolution of crop plants and domestic animals stimulated the planning of this joint meeting for discussion.

The meeting was organized by a committee of the two bodies, Sir Joseph Hutchinson, F.R.S., and R. Riley, F.R.S., from the Royal Society and Grahame Clarke, F.B.A., and E. M. Jope, F.B.A., from the British Academy. The event was successful both in presenting the conclusions arising from recent thinking to an audience drawn from archaeology and biology, and in generating interdisciplinary discussions over a wide field of studies of ancient farming cultures. It is with pleasure and satisfaction that we present this record.

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