

Appendix from Hicks, “Four-Field Anthropology” (Current Anthropology, vol. 54, no. 6, p. 753)

Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, “Criticism on Anthropological Schedule,” 1882, transcribed by Malgosia Nowak-Kemp¹

4, Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. 10 May 1882.

Sir,

I am much obliged to you for sending me the proposed schedules of study for Honours in Anthropology. I have read them carefully and I think them admirable as far as they go. I see nothing that I should be inclined to omit.

As you invite me to criticise them freely, I venture to offer a few suggestions more in the direction of nomenclature, arrangement, and details of study, than with the view of altering the excellent programme which has been drawn up. In regard to nomenclature it appears to me desirable to employ as far as possible the terms which have come into use for designating the several sections and subjects included under the general head of Anthropology. General Anthropologists will no doubt become more numerous when the present programme is carried out. Meanwhile, Anthropology groups itself naturally under various classes of subjects and workers for which terms have been employed, and which, in Education especially, it seems necessary to make use of, both for the sake of brevity, and in recognition of the value of specialists in the division of labour, which so comprehensive a Science demands.

PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY. All that is included under Section I of the Schedule appears to come under the head of ‘Physical Anthropology’—which includes human and comparative physiology, human and comparative osteology, Biology of the Anthropoids, anthropometry including craniometry, for which latter it seems perhaps hardly necessary to have special division. But anthropometry divides itself into two branches, namely, measurements of the skeleton, and measurements of the living body. M: Topinard has lately affirmed and it has been accepted by Professor Flower, and other Physical Anthropologists that the measurements of the living body (the most important because the most easily obtained) cannot be reduced to uniformity with those of the bones, and, although they should approach as closely as possible, distinct measurements are necessary for the several limbs. That is to say, the measurements of the ulna cannot be compared with the measurements of the living forearm, or the humerus with of that the living arm, and, as this distinction seems likely to be permanent, a distinct set of measurements should be established at once in any scheme of anthropological study.

I venture also to think that Section IV of the Schedule might be brought under Physical Anthropology as subsection of Section I, and that if possible, some other term than Morphology of the Anthropomorpha should be applied to it. The term Anthropomorpha, strictly correct no doubt, is liable to be mistaken by the general public for Anthropomorphism and Anthropomorphite which have got into the Dictionary as implying the human form and personality of the Deity. If some other term equally correct, such perhaps Zoology of Man and the Anthropoid apes could be used it might avoid confusion. Under this head might also be included the theory of instinct in men and animals, reflex action, the hereditary transmission of peculiarities, physical and mental (vide Galton), the tendency of acquired functions to become congenital in the races, the influence of food, climate and other external causes on the development of and survival of physical peculiarities, and the relative persistence of physical peculiarities such as colour, bony structure, stature, functions &c. (see Huxley). I would suggest that deformations of the body, skull &c. being customs rather than physical peculiarities, should be transferred to Sociology. In regard to Broca’s tables of colour, skin and hair. It seems desirable that these tints, being established, though not perhaps the best, should be adhered to, but the patches are too small for practical purposes. The apparent colour of the hair of any given head varies so much by light and shade that the same head includes the tints of several patches according as the latter may be held. By making the patches larger, say 2 inches by 4 the comparison can be made at such a distance that shades of the head are merged into one.

The Schedule appears to recognise the confusion which at present exists in Anthropometry consequent on the employment of different measurements by physical anthropologists. Many of these differences are purely arbitrary and personal. Strenuous efforts are being made to bring about uniformity, and when this is accomplished, of which there are some hopes, it will no longer be necessary to inflict upon the student a comparison of the merits of those systems which have been abandoned. By this means the study of this branch of the subject will be greatly simplified.

1. Augustus Pitt-Rivers to William Hatchett-Hackson (Secretary, Board of Natural Science Studies, Oxford), May 10, 1882 (Bodleian Library, MS Acland d.92; folios 79–89). The title that we have given this letter is taken from a later pencil note on the back of the drawing accompanying the letter, which reads: “Oxford Nat. Science, May 10, 1882. Preserve. Gen. Pitt Rivers Criticism on Anthropological Schedule.”

CULTURE. Under the section “culture” should be included as subsections 1. Philology, 2. Sociology, 3. Arts and appliances. The term Sociology has sometimes been used in a wider sense to include the arts, but in my judgment it ought to be confined to customs, ceremonies, laws, institutions, myths, folk-lore, marriage customs, burial customs, religions, singing, dancing, land tenure, property, political institutions, relationships, study of names of people and places, animism, pathology, commerce, barter, cannibalism, initiatory ceremonies, use of stimulants, parasites of man, all that relates to the organisation of mankind in societies, and their intercourse with one another. The distinction between Sociology and the arts is broad enough in most cases but must be arbitrary in others, the latter including the history and development of tools, ships, pottery, substitutes for pottery, basket making, weaving, clothing, games, personal ornament, ornamentation, drawing and sculpture, painting, writing, agriculture and agricultural implements, hunting and hunting implements, modes of warfare and weapons of war, music and musical instruments, wheel carriages and modes of conveyance, bridges, roads, food &c. All those emanations of the human mind which take a material form and can be studied by means of objects arranged in Museums. I would suggest that a practical knowledge of primitive arts such as smelting, casting, tanning, pottery &c., should be inculcated under this head and that the whole should be studied with the view of tracing the succession of ideas by which the mind has been led on from simple to complex conceptions.

ARCHAEOLOGY. This branch I think ought to form a section apart, as it relates exclusively to early times, and otherwise overlaps or embraces other sections such as arts and appliances, sociology, physical anthropology. Although Prehistoric Archaeology chiefly occupies the attention of anthropologists, it should not be strictly confined to that branch but should also include non-historic, Roman and Mediaeval archaeology. I should define it as the method of inquiring into and determining the age or place in sequence of the monuments of antiquity in their relation to the development of culture. Either under this head or under arts should be included—a practical knowledge of the manufacture of flint implements, flaking, secondary chipping, boring holes, the study of natural fractures caused by frost and fire, the denudation of earthworks and silting, knowledge of British, Roman, Saxon and Danish coins, growth of vegetable soil, formation of stalactite and stalagmite. The student should be able to identify the various kinds of wood microscopically, as well as ores, slag, &c. He should understand the patination of antiquities and be able to identify forgeries both in stone and metal. Also he should have a practical knowledge of the mode of preserving bone in various stages of decomposition, as well as iron, and soft wet wooden objects so as to prevent their cracking in the process of drying. He should be instructed in the best method and materials for writing on stone and labelling &c., and of preserving and repairing pottery, and be able to identify the materials of which ancient pottery is composed, mica, quartz, shell &c. A general knowledge of surveying may not be necessary but the student should be able to make a plan of a piece of ground, take levels, contouring, and the shading of hills without which the descriptions of prehistoric investigations are simply unintelligible. A knowledge of the proper method of opening of tumuli and earthworks should be taught. He should also have a knowledge of freehand and geometric drawing and taking casts, and be able to use the camera lucida.

In regard to the preliminary studies necessary for the student in Anthropology. I may be mistaken but I do not perceive that Geology is mentioned. The student, however, before commencing Anthropological studies should be acquainted with all that part of the subject which is included in Lyell’s *Antiquity of Man*. Osteology is, of course, of the greatest importance and a knowledge of recent shells both freshwater and marine.

I trust these observations may not be considered too long. No doubt there are many important points which I have omitted. I append hereto a table of the various sections and sub-sections of Anthropological science according to my view of the matter. [Signed] A. Pitt Rivers. Maj. Gen.