

then optimizing the population of a country like Britain may even exacerbate the pollution problem. The question of food production is essentially a political one. The value of theoretically extrapolating the carrying capacity of the land, as in the paper by G. W. Cooke, is limited, if one does not accept that the countries which import net food will suffer severe reversals of the terms of trade or physical embargoes on food importing.

The impression given by the papers of the social scientists is one not of irresponsible *laissez-faire* but of cautious optimism, for as D. E. C. Eversley's paper shows, in those fields where population management is feasible—the national distribution of people and the provision of family planning facilities—Britain's record is probably the best in the world.

The most remarkable paper is that by P. R. Ehrlich. He updates the classic Malthusian checks; for war, read "thermo-nuclear war", for famine, "eco-catastrophe", for disease, "world-wide plague", and adds the sinister "downward spiral" against net food and resource importers. He correctly sees that the population trends that are crucial for Britain are occurring a long way from Britain's shores and, as the only solution to his doom-ridden prognosis, he emphasizes the need for a worldwide effort to end the current conflict of powers and to divert attention instead to world food problems.

The Institute of Biology should soon hold another symposium covering the world situation. Biologists and social scientists have much to learn from each other. As a social scientist, one winced at some of the statements of biologists. Not since the late middle ages has the British population been "struggling against the incubus of maximum reproduction", if by that is meant reproduction to the limits of subsistence. I am sure that similar criticisms could be made from the "other side".

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## EUROPE BEFORE THE GREEKS

### Prehistoric Europe

From Stone Age Man to the Early Greeks. By Philip Van Doren Stern. Pp. 383. (Allen and Unwin: London, April 1970.) 63s.

ANY author who sets out to write a general book on prehistoric Europe for the non-specialist reader is embarking on a most difficult task which few professional archaeologists have attempted and very few have achieved—Stuart Piggott's *Ancient Europe* is the major achievement which comes immediately to mind. Such an effort demands a thorough knowledge and understanding of a very great deal of literature in many languages—much of it in obscure learned journals—and the ability to master and dominate this material, to make a synthesis of thousands of archaeological reports, and to set out the result clearly, cogently, and in an interesting and readable fashion. Mr Van Doren Stern, who is described in the blurb of this book as a professional author with many books, and on honorary DLitt of Rutgers University to his credit, has been unable to meet these demands. He has travelled widely, particularly in France; and he has read widely; but his travels and his reading have not been wide enough and have not been accompanied by critical archaeological knowledge. His book cannot be recommended to anybody looking for an authoritative and readable guide to pre-Roman Europe. He relies almost entirely on secondary sources—even for many of his illustrations—and it comes as a surprise to find that a book published in England in 1970 should have a large number of its illustrations taken from books by Lartet, Lubbock, Joly, Keller and Dawkins, all published well before 1900.

Mr Stern is not up to date: surely everybody interested in prehistory must know by now that carbon-14 years are not calendar years: there is no mention anywhere in

his book of bristlecone pine calibration. Even before calibration, the carbon-14 dates for the west European megaliths demand a denial of their East Mediterranean origin, so frequently argued by archaeologists from Montelius and Childe to the present reviewer. His book is full of errors and confusions: why is there a nineteenth-century thumbnail sketch of a Sardinian nuraghe cheek by jowl with New Grange and Filitosa in an account of prehistoric religious centres? And what mis-reading has persuaded him that remains of Neanderthal man were found "in south-east Wales in 1823"? or is this a fresh insult to the adolescent man described for so long as "the Red Lady of Paviland"? We forgive Stern for turning David Waterston into a professor of anatomy at Cambridge, but not for failing to emphasize that all who wrote about Piltown in the old days were working on casts, nor for forgetting that Moulin Quignon was the first great human palaeontological hoax.

The title does say "to the early Greeks", but how ill-advised to write a prehistory of Europe which deliberately excludes the Early Iron Age and tells us nothing about the Celts, Iberians, Ligurians and Etruscans—those splendid barbarians on the edge of the classical world whose achievements were among the finest in the whole of prehistoric Europe. They could have occupied the pages devoted in this book to the origins of civilization in the Near East and the origins of man in America: interesting themes which have no place in this book.

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## MAN'S ANCESTRY

### The Evolution of Man

By David Pilbeam. (World of Science Library.) Pp. 216. (Thames and Hudson: London, April 1970.) 42s boards; 21s paper.

STUDENTS of human evolution will not be disappointed in David Pilbeam's book, although they may well wish that it was twice as long and twice as detailed, and, perhaps, more fully documented with scientific citations: but, as the jacket notes make clear, this book was written for the layman and the non-specialist. Pilbeam has been in the forefront of recent advances in palaeoprimatology and human palaeontology and his text bears the convincing stamp of personal experience. Although the material is presented in a "popular" form, it is none the worse for this; what it lacks in detail it gains in lucidity. There is nothing more taxing for the scientist than to eschew jargon and to translate his views and opinions into plain English; and nothing is more rewarding for the reader than a book in which this has been well executed. It seems to me that Pilbeam has succeeded in this and readers at all levels of scientific knowledge will benefit.

The book is comprehensive for its level and length. With a short introduction on the principles and principals of evolutionary theory, there follows a brief but good section on the nonhuman primates, both fossil and living, that provides *inter alia* an account of basic primate characters, the bedrock on which the human organism is built. A chapter on the "unique" features of man follows with, perhaps, less emphasis than is called for on the structural continuities between man and the higher primates. With our steadily increasing knowledge of the structure, function and behaviour of chimpanzees, for instance, the differences between man and apes are revealed for what they are, simply a matter of degree. The story of man's evolution forms the last half of the book in which the scientific controversies that, inevitably, have accompanied (and illuminated) the saga every inch of the way are fairly and reasonably put.

A notice of another scientist's book should not be an excuse for a reviewer to ride his own hobby-horse, but these days, all too frequently, reviews are treated as