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## Foreword

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This work is the result of fruitful interdisciplinary cooperation of human biologists and archaeologists, resulting from common interest in a rich and only partly exploited material, equally important to both human biology and archaeology.

A successful long-term interdisciplinary cooperation comprises and requires more than a mere mutual juxtaposition or comparison of the research-results which were obtained within the various disciplines involved. Specifically when the same material is investigated separately by archaeologists and human biologists, the risk of overlooking the relevant points and of incorrect, or at least inaccurate interpretation of the primary facts, especially those belonging to the direct sphere of the other discipline, is quite real. This may even lead to the contradictory situation that, later, instead of reaching mutually complementary results, the archaeologist and the human biologist would have to dispute each others scientific work.

To achieve a really useful synthesis of the archaeological and human biological methods for reconstructing the past, a close cooperation is necessary, starting in the very first stage of the research-project. It is particularly important that the presentation of the primary facts on which the research in both disciplines has to be based, is relevant and interpretable for both archaeologists and human biologists. The need for the existence of such a presentation was felt by all three authors of the underlying work as their research of the western European Mesolithic period progressed.

As a result of this need Dr R. R. Newell of the Biological Archaeological Institute of the State University of Groningen and Dr T. S. Constandse-Westermann of the Institute of Human Biology of the State University at Utrecht, cooperating already for some years, and Dr C. Meiklejohn of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Winnipeg, working in the same field, each started to critically inventorize and evaluate the reported European human skeletal remains from that period. The decision of Dr C. Meiklejohn to spend his sabbatical year (1977/1978) at the Institute of Human Biology at Utrecht finally brought about the realization of the above ideas. A joining together of their private data-files resulted in the underlying evaluative catalogue. The work would, however, never have been accomplished without the cooperation of archaeologists and human biologists from all over western Europe, which were known and approached by each of them.

For any hypothesis to be framed or conclusion to be drawn concerning a specific archaeological period, pertaining to its demographical situation, its population affinities, the interdependence of the physical environment, human social and economic behaviour,

nutritional conditions etc. on the one hand, and the biological (normal and pathological) characteristics of the skeletons on the other, a catalogue as underlying is indispensable. We do hope and expect that this work, meant to be used by archaeologists as well as human biologists, will induce many new interdisciplinary research projects of the Western European Mesolithic. We also hope that this work will be an example for similar catalogues of skeletal remains from other periods or geographical areas.