



## History of Anthropology Newsletter

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Volume 10  
Issue 1 *June 1983*

Article 7

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1-1-1983

# How Fares the History of Physical Anthropology?

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F. W. P. Dougherty (1206 Robie Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia) is working on an intellectual biography of the famous naturalist, philosopher of science, and anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840). His immediate project (supported by the Niedersächsische Staats-und Universitäts-bibliothek, Gottingen), is to edit the complete Blumenbach correspondence.

E. F. Konrad Koerner, editor of Historiographia Linguistica (University of Ottawa) is involved in planning for an Edward Sapir Centennial Conference to be held at the Museum of Man in Ottawa in October 1984.

Ian Langham (History, University of Sydney) is working on a book on the Piltown forgery.

Ladislov P. Novak (Anthropology, Southern Methodist University) is organizing a cooperative project on the "World History of Physical Anthropology."

Paul O'Higgins (Christ's College, University of Cambridge) is organizing a series of essays on the work and significance of Robert Briffault, author of The Mothers (1927).

Leonard Plotnicov (Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh) is working on the question of when anthropologists became involved with ethnic research in their own society.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICA ARCANA

##### I. HOW FARES THE HISTORY OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

Paul Erickson  
Saint Mary's University

HAN readers know that cultural anthropology appears to predominate in the history of anthropology. There appear to be few histories of archaeology, linguistics and physical anthropology. But are appearances deceiving? Quantitatively, how fares the history of physical anthropology?

Eleven percent of professional anthropologists are physical anthropologists. This number derives from the Guide to Departments of Anthropology 1981-82 of the American Anthropological Association. Three hundred and twenty-seven of the 2948 full-time university and museum anthropologists listed in the Guide are physical anthropologists. Sixty-five of these 2948 anthropologists specify history of anthropology as a research interest, and seven of the sixty-five, or 11 percent, specify the history of physical anthropology. The proportion of those anthropologists interested in the history of anthropology who specify physical anthropology is the same as the proportion of all anthropologists who are physical anthropologists. These numbers suggest that the interest in the history of their discipline is the same for physical anthropologists as for anthropologists in general.

Two long history of anthropology bibliographies are available to measure scholarship. One is a 1977 book by Kemper and Phinney. The second is a 1982 monograph by Erickson. The latter is culled from different sources, is restricted to English-language publications, is arranged differently and is oriented toward internal more than external history of anthropology. While overlapping, the two bibliographies provide ample data for analysis. Kemper and Phinney cite 2439 publications. Two hundred and ninety-one of them, or 12 percent, concern physical anthropology. In Erickson's shorter bibliography, 323 of the 1774 citations, or 18 percent, concern physical anthropology. Compared to the 11 percent figure above, these 12 percent and 18 percent figures show that the history of physical anthropology is adequately represented in history of anthropology scholarship. The rest of this paper is devoted to an analysis only of the 291 citations in Kemper and Phinney and the 323 in Erickson dealing with the history of physical anthropology. While it would be interesting to compare the resulting figures to those for the total bibliographies, or those for other subdisciplines, limitations of time and space have made it necessary to postpone such a comparative study to a future occasion.

The physical anthropology bibliographic citations are of five kinds: books (including anthologies); dissertations (both doctoral and masters); monographs; book articles and chapters; and journal articles. The number and percent of publications of each kind for both bibliographies are as follows:

	<u>Book</u>	<u>Dissertation</u>	<u>Mono-Graph</u>	<u>Book Portion</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kemper/Phinney	46(16%)	7(2%)	5(2%)	45(15%)	188(65%)	291(100%)
Erickson	90(28%)	14(4%)	7(2%)	37(12%)	175(54%)	323(100%)

Kemper and Phinney cite seventy-five different journals, seventeen of them more than once; and Erickson cites sixty-five different journals, twenty of them more than once. The five most popular journals and the number of citations of each are as follows:

Kemper/Phinney

American Journal of Physical Anthropology 45

Isis 22

Current Anthropology 9

Journal of the History of Ideas 9

Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 7

Erickson

American Journal of Physical Anthropology 38

Isis 18

Man 13

American Philosophical Society Proceedings 9

Journal of the History of Ideas 7

Of the seventeen journals cited more than once by Kemper and Phinney, eight are anthropology journals, six history journals, and three general science journals. The numbers for Erickson are similar: eight anthropology journals, six history journals, and six general science journals. The number and percent of articles published in these three kinds of journals are as follows:

	<u>Anthropology</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>General Science</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kemper/Phinney	79 (61%)	39 (30%)	12 ( 9%)	130 (100%)
Erickson	71 (55%)	33 (25%)	26 (20%)	130 (100%)

Bibliographic citations may be considered in three categories: biographies and autobiographies; biographically-oriented works; and issue- or era-oriented works. The number and percent of publications of each type for both bibliographies are as follows:

	<u>Biography</u>	<u>Biographically-Oriented</u>	<u>Issue-Oriented</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kemper/Phinney	25 (9%)	72 (25%)	194 (66%)	291 (100%)
Erickson	23 (7%)	121 (38%)	179 (55%)	323 (100%)

Altogether, Kemper and Phinney cite 210 different authors, citing 47 of them more than once and 10 of them more than three times, for an average of 1.4 publications per author. Erickson cites 206 different authors, citing 50 of them more than once and 12 of them more than three times, for an average of 1.6 publications per author. The five most-often-cited authors and the number of citations of each are as follows:

Kemper/Phinney

A. Krdlicka 7  
L. Eiseley 6  
\*J. Haller 5  
A. Keith 5  
L. Leakey 5

Erickson

\*P. Erickson 11  
A. Keith 9  
L. Eiseley 7  
T. Stewart 6  
\*G. Stocking 6

Five of these eight authors are physical anthropologists and three (\*) are historians.

Whom are historians of physical anthropology writing about? Forty-two different physical anthropologists are the subjects of the ninety-seven biographical, autobiographical and biographically-oriented publications cited by Kemper and Phinney. Fifteen were subjects of more than one publication, and five were subjects of more than three publications. Sixty-one different physical anthropologists were the subjects of the 144 publications cited by Erickson. Twenty-eight were subjects of more than three publications. The five most written-about anthropologists and the number of publications about each are as follows:

Kemper/Phinney

C. Darwin 26  
R. Virchow 5  
G. Buffon 5  
J. Blumenbach 4  
T. Huxley 4

Erickson

C. Darwin 29  
A. Hrdlicka 8  
P. Broca 7  
C. Linnaeus 6  
F. Boas 5

Most of these individuals predate the twentieth century and, like Darwin, were scientists of broad accomplishment outside anthropology.

What are historians of physical anthropology writing about? Categories can be imposed on the issue- and era-oriented publications. The following distribution results:

	<u>Kemper/Phinney</u>	<u>Erickson</u>
Paleanthropology	43(22%)	47(26%)
General and Indeterminate	39(20%)	25(14%)
Race and Racism	32(16%)	31(17%)
Darwinism	25(13%)	27(15%)
Anatomy and Physiology	10( 5%)	4( 2%)
Institutions, Societies, Journals	10( 5%)	2( 1%)
Non-Darwinian Evolution	7( 4%)	12( 7%)
Methodology and Instrumentation	7( 4%)	2( 1%)
Primatology	4( 2%)	4( 2%)
Craniology	4( 2%)	2( 1%)
Biological Theory	2( 1%)	5( 3%)
Missing Links	2( 1%)	1(<1%)
Genetics	2( 1%)	2( 1%)
Man's Place in Nature	2( 1%)	4( 1%)
Anthropology and Medicine	2( 1%)	0( 0%)
Ethology	1(<1%)	1(<1%)
Biosocial Anthropology	1(<1%)	2( 1%)
Criminology	1(<1%)	1(<1%)
Growth	0( 0%)	2( 1%)
Somatology	0( 0%)	2( 1%)
Plasticity	0( 0%)	1(<1%)
Eugenics	0( 0%)	1(<1%)
Paleopathology	0( 0%)	1(<1%)
	<u>194(100%)</u>	<u>169(100%)</u>

Finally, a trend of increasing publication emerges from the following decade-by-decade tabulation of the number and percent of publications:

	<u>Kemper/Phinney</u>	<u>Erickson</u>
1980		32(10%)
1970-1979	99(34%)	102(32%)
1960-1969	63(22%)	67(21%)
1950-1959	55(19%)	63(19%)
1940-1949	29(10%)	27( 8%)
1930-1939	14( 5%)	11( 3%)
1920-1929	10( 3%)	5( 2%)
1910-1919	8( 3%)	6( 2%)
1900-1909	2(<1%)	2(<1%)
-1900	11( 4%)	8( 2%)
	<u>291(100%)</u>	<u>323(100%)</u>

More than half of the histories have been published since 1960 and more than one third since 1970.

In sum, considering both scholars and scholarship, the history of physical anthropology is at least as well represented in the history of anthropology as physical anthropologists are represented among all anthropologists. There are some deficiencies in the literature, notably

too little publication about genetics and the lack of a history of physical anthropology textbook, but these deficiencies are likely to be remedied in the near future because at least fourteen scholars have begun their careers with dissertations about the history of physical anthropology. The future is promising. The history of physical anthropology is faring well.

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