

The Modern Archaeologist

I am the very model of a modern archaeologist,
I've information critical, comparative, and analyst,
I know the flints of England and the potsherds terracottal,
La Madeleine to Windmill Hill in sequence typological;
I'm very well acquainted too with matters chronological,
I understand electrons, both the stable and fanatical;
About Potassium-Argon I am bursting with a lot to say –
With many cheerful facts about the rate of C-14 decay.
I'm very good at Dendro-Ring and Fission-Track comparisons,
I know the scientific names of Cation-Ratio pos-ions;
In short, in matters critical, comparative, and analyst,
I am the very model of a modern archaeologist.

I know our archaeologies, Sir Arthur's and Sacheverell's,
I answer those agnostics who praise not Lieutenant-Generals,
I teach in polysyllables of artefactual match-and-mix,
In comics I can floor peculiarities of Asterix;
I tell undoubted Rawlinsons from Gordon Childes and T.V. jobs,
I know the creaking corpses from the bogs of Denmark's P.V. Globbs;
Then I can hum the themes from Indiana Jones's every score,
And imitate those drums from that infernal show on Channel 4.
Then I can write my digging bills in triplicated business forms,
And tell you every detail of my lady-diggers' uniforms.
In short, in matters critical, comparative, and analyst,
I am the very model of a modern archaeologist.

In fact, when I know what is meant by 'Clovis point' and 'petroglyph',
When I can tell at sight a hafted barb right from a Megalith,
When such affairs as 'libraries' and 'documents' are not so hid,
And when I know precisely what is meant by 'Wheeler box grid';
When I have learnt just how to write and publish out a full report,
When my imagination's not committed to the last resort;
In short, when I've a smattering of C.S.E. stratigraphy,
You'll say a better archaeologist has never got a fee,
For my excavation knowledge, though I'm doctorated first degree,
Has only been brought down to the beginning of last century;
But still in matters critical, comparative, and analyst,
I am the very model of a modern archaeologist.