HISTORY/FRANCE

"Alice L. Conklin traces the conflicts, tensions, paradoxes, and debates on anthropology's centurylong path from a science that accepted racial differences as a fact of nature in the age of European imperialism to the repudiation of 'race' and the study of a unified humanity in the aftermath of World War II. Deeply researched and authoritatively written, Conklin's book will influence debates about race, human rights, and their intellectual history in the twentieth century."

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"This is a riveting study of French anthropology from the heyday of cranial measurement under the leadership of Paul Broca (d. 1880) to the rise of structural anthropology fashioned by Claude Lévi-Strauss after World War II. Alice L. Conklin takes in institutional, museological, and intellectual evidence, leading to a fascinating reconstruction and critique of the exhibits of the Musée de I'Homme in the 1930s and an insightful discussion of the Vichy interlude and its aftermath."

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"Alice L. Conklin's book is a history of the key institutions in which the study of mankind took place, of the discipline of anthropology, of the thinking of social scientists, and of a concept that has played an important and often nefarious role in European history. She demonstrates that rather than there being a 'colonial' or a 'French' conception of race, there was no consensus but heated and unresolved arguments about what, if anything, race meant."

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"In the Museum of Man is a masterful synthesis of the emergence of the new field of anthropology in France. Alice L. Conklin provides a fascinating glimpse into the way in which social thought was shaped in response to historical circumstances. The political stakes in the debate over race were high, especially during World War II, when some scholars who favored the biological interpretation of race ended up collaborating with the Nazis. Others who favored a cultural and historical interpretation either supported the resistance or were murdered by the Nazis because of their Jewish background. Conklin's pathbreaking book will be of value to students and scholars of French, European, and even American intellectual, cultural, and political history."

—VICKI CARON, Diann G. and Thomas A. Mann Professor of Modern Jewish Studies, Cornell University

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