

Rhodesian Man Stooped

Anthropology

Rhodesian Man, that strange prehistoric human being with a man's brain but almost a gorilla's eyebrows, walked with a permanent stoop, keeping his eyes almost perpetually fixed on the ground. This picture of an unassuming great-great-uncle of our race has been drawn by a well-known English scientist, W. P. Pycraft, as the result of new studies on the skeletal remains found seven years ago in Africa.

The base of the skull, Mr. Pycraft found, has a remarkably large area for the attachment of massive neck muscles. He believes those were needed to support the head in its downward-looking position, and especially to pull it up quickly in order to gaze around when a suspicious sound hinted the presence of an enemy.

Further evidence of an habitual stooping posture was found in the size of the spinal cord canal in the base of the vertebral column. This is much smaller than in modern man, intermediate between the human and gorilline conditions. The constantly stooping gorilla has weak rear limb muscles, and only a small nerve trunk to supply them; man has powerful muscles to hold him erect and a correspondingly large nerve group to run them. The argument therefore is that Rhodesian Man stooped; not as much as a gorilla, perhaps, but a great deal more than a modern man.

The most striking evidence, however, was found in the hip-joint itself. The socket in the pelvis, or hip-girdle, of the fragmentary skeleton is set in such a position that bent and shambling-gaited legs were as natural to Rhodesian Man as they are inconvenient and tiring to us.

In recognition of the bent posture of this early side-branch of the human race, Mr. Pycraft has proposed a new generic name, *Scyphanthropus*, which means "stooping man."

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The cover illustration of this week's SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER is taken from a painting of the giant prehistoric Moas of New Zealand. The generic name of these huge creatures, *Dinornis*, means "Terrible Bird"; and the Moa must have indeed looked terrible to the ancestors of the Maoris who found it living in the islands when they first arrived there. The painting is by Charles R. Knight, and was presented to the Field Museum of Natural History by Ernest R. Graham.

Greeks Buttoned on Armor

Archæology

The old Greeks and Romans used buttons instead of buckles on their armor to fasten the shoulder straps to the cuirass, claims Kate McK. Elderkin of Princeton, N. J., in a report to the Archæological Institute of America.

Cords or leather thongs, wrapped around the buttons and tied, were often substituted for buttonholes. The buttons themselves had a central hole and were held in place by knotted string or cord. This was the case both on armor and on articles of clothing on which buttons appear.

Figures on vases, statuettes and friezes are cited by Miss Elderkin as examples of the ancient Greek and Roman use of buttons in this way.

No Greek word for button is known, the word for pin or fastening occurring instead. Miss Elderkin argues that this does not prove that the

Greeks had no buttons, and describes many small, decorated and perforated disks which have been found, and which, from their close resemblance to the modern variety and also to the fastenings shown on paintings and statues of ancient Greece, must have been buttons.

Miss Elderkin cites particularly a dancing girl in a bronze group from Herculaneum, now in the Naples Museum. She is shown fastening the right button of her chiton or tunic. She holds the button in her left hand and with her right draws the fold of material over a shoulder from behind, preparatory to fastening it over the button. If it were a pin, she would hold the back and front folds of the chiton in one hand while she inserted the pin with the other.

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