

Stone Age "Moderns" Were Snail-Eaters

Anthropology

Another chapter in the story of modern man's prehistoric ancestry, indicating that a mixed people who lived for thousands of years in North Africa are the ancestors of modern Europeans, has been revealed by Prof. Fay-Cooper Cole, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, who reported his analysis of finds made in Algeria last spring.

Four skeletons, one of them the most complete frame of an old-stone-age human ever discovered, and thousands of bone and flint implements were submitted to Dr. Cole by Paul Nesbitt, graduate student at the University of Chicago, who headed the Beloit-Logan expedition to Mechta-El-Arab and Tebessa, Algeria, near the borders of Tunisia and just north of the Sahara desert.

The bones unearthed by the expedition were dug out of huge mounds of snail shells. This hitherto unknown pre-modern race evidently lived on snails, and their sites are covered with the discarded shells in "escarogotiére" 5 to 12 feet deep and as much as 300 feet in diameter. Undisturbed relics of the people responsible for the mounds were sealed in by a thick crust made by the weathering of the surface shells. Nothing in the mounds is less than 10,000 to 15,000 years old.

Dr. Cole has put the age of these ancestral people at approximately 25,000 years, at the time the Crô-Magnon type of man was then occupying Europe. The mound people moved into Europe about 12,000 years ago, according to Dr. Cole's belief, over the land-bridges which then existed at Gibraltar and Sicily, and the Crô-Magnons, now held to be "collateral cousins of modern man," were either obliterated by natural causes or destroyed by these incomers, who thus became the ancestors of the south European races, and consequently the ancestors of most Americans.

Though the north African people were more modern in physique than the Crô-Magnons, the primitive cultures of the two races were almost identical, as evidenced by the similarity of their crude, unpolished hand-axes and prongs.

After intensive measurements of the skeletons in all possible features Dr. Cole concludes that they resem-

ble modern Europeans far more than they do any other race, primitive or modern. The anthropological measurements also indicate that these pre-moderns intermarried with other races, which would in turn indicate that none of the present south European races are technically "pure." He believes that the skeletal evidence of that race shows intermixture with ancient, brutish Neanderthal men, Crô-Magnon men and with the Negroids.

Dr. Cole suggests that these mound people originally came into Africa from the region between the Nile and Turkestan, which he believes to be the first cradle of mankind. They came between 50,000 and 25,000 years ago and stayed in Africa as nomads till about 12,000 years ago.

The skeletons of this important linking race, all of which were found three to six feet under the calcium carbonate crusts of the deserted

camp-sites, show a combination of features not hitherto found. On the whole, they had well-developed brain cases, though with very slightly retreating foreheads, slightly projecting mouths and strong chins, with only slight development of the ridges over the eyes. Neanderthal men and the anthropoids had weak chins, much prognathous projection and heavy supra-orbital ridges.

The mound people evidently had a heavy musculature and erect stature, though in one was found some indication of the stooped bone-structure which characterized the anthropoids and Neanderthals. Most of the skeletons showed abscessed teeth.

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New excavations at the prehistoric ruins at Zimbabwe are to be made in connection with the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in South Africa this year.

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