

# Writing of Ancient India Stirs Scholars

*Archæology*

By R. V. D. MAGOFFIN

When Sir John Marshall, Director of Antiquities of India, published his discoveries at Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana district of northern Sind, and at Harappa in the southern Punjab, India at once took place alongside Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Crete as a fourth civilization, the remains of which could be dated earlier than 3500 B. C.

The spindle whorls found showed that the early inhabitants of these Indian towns understood how to spin and work in wool. Many tools and weapons of copper were also found. Statues and intaglios at Mohenjo-daro showed that the men wore a short garment like an apron with a strap over the left shoulder; at Harappa, 450 miles south, the men were nude. At both places the men wore sidewhiskers and beard, but no moustaches. They had oxen, buffaloes, sheep, pigs, dogs, and horses; they raised wheat; they knew gold, silver, copper, tin, and lead. Of the greatest interest, however, is the fact

that they could write. Inscribed seals were discovered in almost every house.

The first announcement of these finds by Sir John Marshall in 1924 brought in their wake immediate reactions. Sayce saw likenesses between the art and script on the India seals and those from lower Mesopotamia. Other scholars began to compare them with the script of ancient Sumer. Dr. Barton of Philadelphia, the well known Mesopotamian savant, has entered the lists on the opposing side. There are a very few of the seals with script which might be identified with Sumerian, says Dr. Barton, but a few remind him rather of the so-called Hittite hieroglyphics. A Chinese student, having said that some of the script resembled old Chinese, brought about a study not only of Chinese, but also comparison with Egyptian, Cretan, Elamitic and Cypriote characters as well.

It is not possible as yet to compare all the inscribed seals, for not over one-third of them have as yet been

published. Sir John Marshall's three volumes on the subject are being therefore eagerly awaited. On the evidence thus far, Dr. Barton avers that the Indian script of this time shows a long period of previous development, because of the conventionalization, and also that it was original and independent of the other script languages brought under comparison.

The original numerical system of the Sumerians was sexagesimal, but that at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa seems to be decimal. If that is proved, it would be an additional argument for the independence of the early peoples in India from the people of Sumer. The script can not be read, as yet, so it cannot be determined whether the Indian seal-script runs from left to right, right to left, or both ways, alternately. In the meantime, a mighty commotion is going on among the experts in eastern languages.

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## First False Teeth

*Archæology*

The first false teeth, so far as we know today, were worn by a woman of Sidon in Phoenicia about 300 B. C., according to Dr. Roy L. Moodie, anatomist of Santa Monica, Calif.

The Phoenician woman's jaw, with the false teeth, is now preserved in the Louvre in Paris. The two right incisors are represented by artificial teeth, held in place and bound to each other by gold wire. The wire has been drawn through careful perforations in the artificial teeth.

Although the Egyptian pioneered in treatment of many diseased conditions of the body, this sort of dental replacement apparently was never devised by Egyptian physicians. Thousands of mummies, representing seven thousand years of life in Egypt, have been examined, but no clear evidence of such repair work has ever been found. It appears that we not only owe our alphabet and numerous geographic discoveries to the restless, inquiring minds of the Phoenicians, Dr. Moodie points out, but also we are indebted to them for this entrance into prosthetics, which is a particularly valuable field of dentistry.

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An emerald the size of a man's fist is one of the items in the Turkish crown jewel collection.

## Stone Age Descendants in Africa

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Direct descendants of men of the Old Stone Age, eagerly sought for all over the world by anthropologists, are to be found in a small and dwindling race of South African natives, the Korannas. This is the opinion of Dr. Robert Broom, of Victoria College, Stellenbosch, S. A., reported to the British scientific journal, *Nature*.

The skull measurements of the present-day Korannas agree closely with those of a prehistoric skull recently found about 80 miles north of Pretoria, associated with the bones of an extinct species of buffalo, which had apparently killed the hunter and then died of its own wounds. The human skeleton was badly broken, the skull especially being crushed into small fragments. The latter, however, have been skillfully pieced together, permitting a scientific determination of the type of man it once belonged to.

The skull, which Dr. Broom has christened the "Bushveldt skull," is of modern type, with little or no suggestion of the Neandertal about it. It is not of the well-known European Cro-Magnon type, although Bushveldt man was contemporary with early Cro-Magnon man in Eu-

rope, as shown by the type of implements he used, and by the bones of the extinct buffalo. Its comparatively modern pattern is suggested, among other things, by its small teeth, its well-developed chin, and the relative thinness of its bony walls.

The character that marks Bushveldt man as a primitive type, and at the same time ties him up with the present Koranna tribe, is the relatively low temporal, or side region of the head. In all advanced races this part of the cranium is quite definitely high.

Although the Bushveldt skeleton was the first find of actual human remains to be made in the region, Dr. Broom is of the opinion that the valley of the Vaal river was once the home of tens if not hundreds of thousands of men and women of this race. He bases this conclusion on the enormous numbers of the stone implements of their workmanship which have been discovered.

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Chimborazo, a volcanic peak in Ecuador, rises almost 21,000 feet above sea level.