

ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES TRACED BY AMBER FINDS

The gradual unearthing of amber ornaments in graves and treasure hoards buried a thousand and more years before the Christian era, has enabled archaeologists to trace the trade routes of ancient Europe. J. M. de Novarro of Cambridge, in a recent talk before the Royal Geographic Society, said that amber was the one imperishable and still distinguishable object of barter exported from the north of Europe to the south in prehistoric times.

Chemical analysis, he stated, has shown that the fossilized resin of the Baltic regions contains considerable succinic acid present only in small percentages or not at all in the amber native to the south. This distinguishing characteristic of the northern amber, in addition to its comparative scarcity around the Mediterranean, has opened up an important means of tracing the prehistoric transcontinental trade routes to Italy.

The trade in amber, which was apparently very highly prized by the ancients, flourished during the bronze age, and it is considered likely that it led to the introduction of bronze into the north. During the middle bronze period Germany seems to have played a larger part in the trade than Italy, though it was probably through Italy that the amber reached the countries around the Aegean Sea. During the iron age commerce over the route through central Germany grew considerably, Italy exerting, in consequence, a more direct influence on the northern countries as their trade contacts increased. Later the eastern route came into use through Bohemia where thus far only occasional remains have been found.

Mr. Novarro believes that the amber trade reached its zenith around the seventh century B. C. After that it gradually declined until the fourth century when apparently amber went out of fashion altogether.

TESTS FOR COLOR BLINDNESS SHOULD BE MORE SEVERE

Only half of those dangerously color blind are eliminated by the usual tests used to select applicants for train, yard and engine service on railways. Dr. Archibald Chace, chief surgeon of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Lines, made this startling statement in a talk on colorblindness in industry recently before the section of the American Medical Association on diseases of the eye.

He maintained that the devices simulating a lantern were the only type suitable for such tests. The ordinary field tests, he said, were of little value because they were made under ideal conditions and not such as would arise in emergencies and result in accident. They should be made under all the circumstances of steam, rain, fog, smoke, daylight, night or dawn that would arise under natural weather conditions by methods planned in advance to cover the 288 possible ways under which signal lamps or flags may be observed, he declared.

Dr. Chace, who has had seven years of experience in supervising the examination of applicants for hazardous occupations, said that tests for color blindness require

great expertness in their administration in order to achieve their end. He urged that the stations at which such tests are made be reduced to the fewest practical number and that the work be checked periodically.

Dr. Chace also made a point of distinguishing between color blindness and color ignorance. "From the standpoint of safety", he asked, "what difference does it make if the engineer can distinguish colors clearly by comparison, if he calls a red light yellow, or a green one blue?"

LONDON ZOO HAS WHITE ELEPHANT

The only real white elephant in captivity, so far as is known, has just been received at the London Zoo from Rangoon. The royal beast has been given a new house and will be paraded daily for inspection, but, on account of the semi-sacred character invested in white elephants by Burmese tradition, English youngsters will not be allowed to ride him according to the time honored custom of the British Zoo.

The elephant is the property of Dr. Saw Durmay Po Min, president of an organization of the native Christians of Burma, who has agreed to loan the valuable animal for exhibition purposes, a proportion of the receipts going to the association he represents.

"White elephants" are usually no more than pale grey. Such a one was exhibited in the United States by the Barnum and Bailey circus about forty years ago. This animal, however, is said to be almost pure white with the yellowish pink eyes of a true albino.

The London Zoo already possesses an albino rarity in the shape of a white cobra, while large crowds are flocking to the British Museum to see the white tiger just put on exhibition. This albino was shot in the jungle by the Maharajah of Rewa and presented by him to the King, who has loaned it temporarily to the Museum. The tiger is not pure white but rather cream colored, according to report, with greyish brown stripes in place of the usual conspicuous black bands, and is smaller than the typical Bengal tiger.

SUGAR MAY HELP RESIST INFECTION OF JOINTS

The sugar we eat may have a definite bearing on the ability of our joints to resist infection.

Dr. Ralph Pemberton of Philadelphia reported recently to the section of the American Medical Association on diseases of the bones and joints that the amount of sugar digested in the body has a well defined relationship to inflammation of the joints. In more than sixty persons with disturbances of the joints he found a low tolerance for sugar. Dr. Pemberton believes that control of sugar digestion is a factor in the healing of such diseases.