

# Field Museum News

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## MODERN FASHIONS HAD ORIGIN IN ANCIENT TIMES

BY BERTHOLD LAUFER

Curator, Department of Anthropology

The former kaiser is not the inventor of the mustache with turned-up tips; the Medicis did not invent the collar named for them; the Paris fashion dictators did not originate the décolleté and the high-waisted gown. There is little if any originality in modern fashions. Most of these were anticipated by peoples of the Far East many centuries ago. Spend a half-hour or so studying the exhibit of ancient Chinese clay figures just reinstalled at Field Museum, and you will be convinced.

First, with regard to the kaiser—the upright mustache was anciently worn in central Asia by equestrian tribes of Iranian and Turkish extraction. It was a privilege of the military aristocracy, the outcome of a superiority complex—an ornament regarded as accentuating manliness and martial prowess, and intended to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy. The Chinese were deeply impressed by these warriors, and modeled statues of them in clay, some of which are now in the Museum. They buried these statues with their dead as guardians of the grave. Armed to the teeth and enveloped in heavy suits of sheet armor, these valiant knights were supposed to be ready to fight for their dead master. Many of them are bedecked with the mustache à la kaiser, which was foreign to the Chinese, who cultivated a mustache only after reaching the age of forty, and wore it with long, drooping whiskers at the end.

The Museum has three unique clay statuettes noteworthy for their skillful modeling and delicate painted designs. They represent a princess of the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-906), seated, with her two ladies-in-waiting standing on either side. These may be regarded as actual portraits. They show silk dresses exquisitely painted in dainty colors, with designs on the borders indicating embroidery. The princess wears a high chignon in the form of a snail, held by a golden hoop. Her wrists are adorned with golden bracelets. Her décolleté, combined with short sleeves cut off above the elbows, is a noteworthy feature accentuating the modernistic note. She wears a rose-colored silk jacket with collar, the borders of which are embroidered. The skirt with red border along the lower edge fits over the jacket (high waist-line), and is held by a girdle with a very artistic knot in front. Pointed shoes complete her ensemble. The figure is 40½ inches high.

The two ladies-in-waiting are alike, each in a firm and graceful pose. Both of these statuettes are 48 inches high. The coiffures of these ladies are arranged in serpent windings. They wear very high shoulder capes

or what we call Medici collars, evidently fashionable in China many centuries before the Medicis. Each is provided with two jackets, an inner one with tight sleeves and an outer one with long, drooping sleeves. Their girdles, artistically tied, consist of red and green silken cords. The tops of their shoes are cut out into lotus designs.

Women's feet were poetically compared by the Chinese to lotus flowers. It was said that lotuses sprout forth from the steps of beautiful women, and this thought may have inspired the fashion of shoes with lotus designs. Until the end of the Manchu dynasty it was customary in Peking to



Ladies of Fashion in Ancient China

Portrait statuettes of a princess and her ladies-in-waiting, on exhibition in George T. and Frances Gaylord Smith Hall, showing how high waistline, Medici collar, and modern décolleté were anticipated in China hundreds of years before they appeared in Europe.

embroider a lotus on shoes worn by the dead at burial. The lotus, being an emblem of purity, was intended to convince the

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## Three Noted Scientists Visit Museum

Three distinguished scientists were visitors at Field Museum last month. Dr. Alexander Wetmore, Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, in charge of the National Museum, was here on June 3. Dr. Thomas Barbour, Director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Institute for Research in Tropical America, came on June 7. Sir Henry Wellcome, founder of the Wellcome Foundation, famous research laboratories in London, visited the Museum on June 9.

## MUSEUM MAKING COLLECTION OF RARE ELEMENTS

BY HENRY W. NICHOLS

Associate Curator of Geology

The Department of Geology is assembling, with the cooperation of Herbert C. Walther, of Chicago, a collection of the rare elements. A number of these are already exhibited in Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall (Hall 37), but owing to the extreme scarcity of many of them it may take years to complete the collection.

The crust of the earth is composed of ninety-two known elements. Eight of these account for more than 98.5 per cent of the crust. Only iron and aluminum among the heavy metals are included in these eight. Of the other eighty-four elements, only five are present in quantities greater than one-tenth of one per cent. The remaining seventy-nine elements together comprise less than one-half of one per cent of the mass of the earth's crust. Most of the useful metals such as copper, zinc, and silver, are included in this half per cent, and most of them in quantities of less than one one-hundredth of one per cent. If these metals remained uniformly distributed they would be so difficult to procure that mankind would be deprived of their use. It is only because geological agencies cause these useful elements to segregate in ore bodies that their use becomes possible.

The quantity of gold present in the crust of the earth has been estimated as one-half of one millionth of one per cent, yet gold is not included among the really rare elements being assembled in this collection. These exist in even smaller quantities. Deposits containing them are few and the content of a rare element in a deposit is often low.

The rare elements not so long ago were mere curiosities and of scientific interest only. But some of them have such remarkable properties that in spite of their rarity and necessarily high price they have come into regular use. Radium and helium are examples. Some, as for example tantalum, are used whenever a supply can be obtained, in spite of their price, because of qualities which, while present in lesser degree in other elements, are so exceptionally developed.

The present and probable future utilization of these elements is the reason for beginning this collection. Besides the rare elements proper, a number of what may be called semi-rare elements are included. Also whenever the elemental form, either from lack of use or from use restricted to certain industries, is likely to be unfamiliar to most people, the common elements are displayed.

The collection of fossil and amber-like resins at Field Museum ranks among the finest of its kind in the world.

## Field Museum of Natural History

Founded by Marshall Field, 1893

Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan, Chicago

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Field Museum is open every day of the year during the hours indicated below:

November, December, January	9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
February, March, April, October	9 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
May, June, July, August, September	9 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Admission is free to Members on all days. Other adults are admitted free on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays; non-members pay 25 cents on other days. Children are admitted free on all days. Students and faculty members of educational institutions are admitted free any day upon presentation of credentials.

The Library of the Museum, containing some 92,000 volumes on natural history subjects, is open for reference daily except Sunday.

Traveling exhibits are circulated in the schools of Chicago by the Museum's Department of the N. W. Harris Public School Extension.

Lectures for school classrooms and assemblies, and special entertainments and lecture tours for children at the Museum, are provided by the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures.

Announcements of courses of free illustrated lectures on science and travel for the public, and special lectures for Members of the Museum, will appear in FIELD MUSEUM NEWS.

There is a cafeteria in the Museum where luncheon is served for visitors. Other rooms are provided for those bringing their lunches.

Busses of the Chicago Motor Coach Company (Jackson Boulevard Line, No. 26) provide service direct to the Museum. Free transfers are available to and from other lines of the company.

Members are requested to inform the Museum promptly of changes of address.

### PRAISE FROM EDUCATORS

Too often are the benefits made possible by philanthropists taken for granted by a public which, if appreciative, at least seldom expresses its appreciation. A philanthropic enterprise which does elicit voluntary commendation from a large number of individuals, therefore, may be regarded as unusually successful in performing the service for which it was established.

For this reason it is very gratifying to note the response which has been made to the activities of two separately endowed units of Field Museum—the Department of the N. W. Harris Public School Extension, founded by the late Norman W. Harris and further endowed by surviving members of his family; and the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures, founded by Mrs. James Nelson Raymond in memory of her late husband.

Shortly before the closing of Chicago's

schools last month for the summer holidays, Field Museum received more than 100 letters from principals and teachers of Chicago schools expressing appreciation for the services rendered to education by the Harris Extension and the Raymond Foundation. The writers emphasized that the traveling exhibition cases of the Harris Extension, and the lectures and entertainments provided by the Raymond Foundation, perform functions of the greatest importance in the general educational activities, and that they are a boon to teachers and pupils alike.

Many of the writers remarked their gratification over the fact that it had been possible for the Museum to maintain these services in spite of the difficulties imposed by present economic conditions, and indicated their strong desire for continuance of the work when the schools reopen next autumn.

Frequently the letters had praise for the efficiency and courtesy of the Museum representatives sent to their schools in connection with these activities. A number cited specific advantages which their schools had derived from the service. Some mentioned the fact that the children themselves had often expressed their appreciation of the exhibits and lectures.

At the Museum every effort is constantly made to improve and expand the value of these services, and the inspiration derived from these letters will strengthen continuance of these efforts.

### HERRING ARE QUEER FISH

BY ALFRED C. WEED  
Assistant Curator of Fishes

Although quite an ordinary fish in appearance, the herring has attracted fisher-folk from as far back as we have any record, and probably as far back as men have gone to sea. It was always an event of importance when fish of any kind could be caught easily and in large numbers. When such fish could be caught year after year almost as regularly as the return of the seasons it became the occasion for the founding of a great industry. Such an industry has often been founded on a herring fishery and grown until whole communities depended on it for their existence. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, would come a year when the catch was small. Next year, no herring at all. No one could tell where they had gone. No one in the region would see them again for years. The whole fishery would have to be abandoned, or else the fishermen would have to travel far out to distant seas to get the fish for their people to salt, smoke, dry or pickle.

Such has been the history of herring in Labrador. When first commercially discovered, its waters teemed with cod and herring. The herring were even more valuable than the cod. Their quality was considered the best in the world. They were large and fat, and could be caught easily. Fishermen from all parts of Europe flocked to those waters. Danish, Breton and Basque fishermen crossed the Atlantic to dispute the waters with Yankee skippers from the New England coast, while the governments of France and England argued and fought over the ownership of those stony and forbidding shores. Suddenly the herring stopped visiting these waters. For a whole generation they were not seen there. Then no one wanted the land. It was kicked back and forth like a football between Canada and Newfoundland. The cod were not valuable enough to bother with, and the wealth of salmon and trout was not considered. Finally the herring came back and the cod fishery became important. Canada and Newfound-

land both wanted Labrador. That dispute was settled about five years ago, but meanwhile the herring have come and gone twice.

The herring is a fish difficult to prepare for museum exhibition. Like so many of the fishes of the open ocean, it is delicate and fragile. Its scales fall off at a touch. It shines with a wonderful, silvery and pearly sheen that is entirely impossible to retain and almost impossible to reproduce. The celluloid reproduction in Albert W. Harris Hall (Hall 18) however, shows well the appearance of the scales, with color and brilliance almost equal to the living fish.

### Museum Methods Described

How Field Museum hardens and preserves fossil bones with their original color and texture by means of a new method of impregnating them with the material known as bakelite is described in an article by Henry W. Nichols, Associate Curator of Geology, and P. C. Orr, also of the geological staff, which appeared in the May issue of *The Museums Journal* (London). The method was first used on fossils by Dr. E. C. Case of the University of Michigan, but certain modifications and innovations have been introduced at Field Museum which make it more suitable for the special requirements here.

### Origin of Modern Fashions

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Judge of Purgatory that the wearer was a person of good moral standing. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that although the custom of artificially bound feet, also known as lotus feet, sprang up during the T'ang period, all women represented in the clay figures have naturally proportioned feet.

The woman credited with the invention of the Medici collar is Catherine de' Medici (1519-89), daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino. In 1533 she married the Duke of Orleans, who subsequently became Henry II, king of France (1547-59). Catherine is said to have brought from Italy to France the fashion of wearing the high collar still named for her. In those days, and earlier, Italy carried on a lively trade with the Orient, and Marco Polo had reported the wonders of China. It is most likely that the impetus to the Medici collar was received in Italy from the Orient long before the Medicis, and that Catherine by wearing it merely made it fashionable and lent it her illustrious name.

The reinstallation of the exhibits mentioned in this article has been made in new cases with concealed lighting and improved labels, greatly enhancing their attractiveness. The exhibits are in George T. and Frances Gaylord Smith Hall (Hall 24).

### BEQUESTS AND ENDOWMENTS

Bequests to Field Museum of Natural History may be made in securities, money, books or collections. They may, if desired, take the form of a memorial to a person or cause, named by the giver. For those desiring to make bequests, the following form is suggested:

#### FORM OF BEQUEST

I do hereby give and bequeath to Field Museum of Natural History of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois,

Cash contributions made within the taxable year to Field Museum not exceeding 15 per cent of the taxpayer's net income are allowable as deductions in computing net income under Article 251 of Regulation 69 relating to the income tax under the Revenue Act of 1926.

Endowments may be made to the Museum with the provision that an annuity be paid to the patron for life. These annuities are tax-free and are guaranteed against fluctuation in amount.



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