

Field Museum News

Published Monthly by Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

Vol. 4

OCTOBER, 1933

No. 10

SOLUTREAN EPOCH DEPICTED IN HALL OF STONE AGE

BY HENRY FIELD

Assistant Curator of Physical Anthropology

The fourth group* in the recently opened Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C) represents a scene of the Solutrean epoch. In this period, estimated at about 22,000 years ago, the climate was growing colder, and the horse and reindeer were the chief sources of food. Along the banks of the Danube, then swinging westward into southwestern France and northern Spain, came a race of invaders who, in appearance, were almost identical with the modern Eskimo and may have been the Eskimo's ancestors. Anthropologists have named these people Solutreans after the type station containing their artifacts in the commune of Solutré, Saône-et-Loire, France. They were probably inferior in physique to their predecessors, the Aurignacians. They left for posterity some sculptures of an imposing character, and they developed a peculiar technique for fashioning flint spearheads and lances which gave their product a degree of perfection not found again until advanced neolithic times, thousands of years later.

In the Museum group there is reproduced the famous Solutrean frieze of Le Roc in the Charente district of France. This reproduction was made possible by the courtesy of Dr. Henri Martin, discoverer of the frieze, who furnished the Museum with casts of the original sculptures. The five blocks have been arranged in the position in which they were placed by the Solutrean artists. On the left is a path leading to a cave, and on the right, sheltered behind large trees, can be seen the entrance to another cave. The vegetation of the time is represented in the background of the group. In the foreground a Solutrean sculptor of Mongoloid type is shown at work, carving the outline of a horse on a block of stone. Flint chips and flakes collected at Le Roc are scattered on the ground.

The five sculptures of Le Roc, reproduced in this group, represent: (1) a masked human being, dancing; (2) two small horses,

and an animal with elongated muzzle and raised tail; (3) a musk-ox charging a man who is fleeing; (4) more horses and an ox; and (5) a small horse following a fantastic animal with a head like that of a boar or carnivore, an elliptical eye, elongated muzzle, pointed ears, and no horns.

In a case opposite the group are exhibited Solutrean artifacts from Le Roc and other sites, including the type series from Solutré.

The group is the work of sculptor Frederick Blaschke, executed on plans made by the writer, who visited Le Roc to obtain data



Copyright Field Museum of Natural History

A Solutrean Sculptor

Group in the Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World showing a man of about 22,000 years ago. The famous Solutrean frieze of Le Roc in the Charente region of France is reproduced in this exhibit.

for the group. Staff Artist Charles A. Corwin prepared the painted background.

Gaekwar of Baroda Visits Museum

His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar Sir Savaji Rao III, ruling monarch of Baroda, was a visitor at Field Museum on August 29, and made a tour of some of the principal exhibits, accompanied by Director Stephen C. Simms.

Among other distinguished visitors received at the Museum during the past month were Sir Arthur Smith-Woodward, former curator of paleontology of the British Museum; Dr. Victor Van Straelen, Director of the Musée Royale d'Histoire Naturelle de Belgique, Brussels; Dr. A. W. Grabau, professor of paleontology at the National University of China and chief paleontologist of the Chinese Geological Survey, Peiping; and Professor Richard Willstätter of Munich, winner of the 1918 Nobel prize in chemistry.

LIMBLESS LIZARDS AND SNAKES WITH LEGS

BY KARL P. SCHMIDT

Assistant Curator of Reptiles

Lizards have a familiar typical form—that of a scaly quadruped with a long tail. It is accordingly remarkable to find that many lizards whose four-footed relatives are easily recognizable have wholly lost their limbs and, with elongation of body and tail, have become snake-like in body form. Every continent exhibits this type of lizard evolution, which has evidently taken place inde-

pendently from a great variety of four-limbed ancestors. Every stage in the loss of limbs and elongation of body is exhibited in the skink family, which includes species with five, four, three, and two toes, and with limbs reduced to mere stumps or entirely absent.

This mode of evolution is frequent among lizards with burrowing habits and is, in such species, frequently accompanied by loss of eyes and ear openings. Such lizards, except to the technically trained students, may be indistinguishable from similarly blind burrowing snakes. Others, however, retain the active senses of their ancestors and are readily distinguishable from snakes by their movable eyelids and ear-openings,

structures which are absent in snakes. The common "glass snake" of North America, which reaches the vicinity of Chicago, is a limbless lizard of this class.

These creatures exhibit plainly enough the mode of derivation of snakes from a lizard ancestry. The relation of the snake tribe to lizards is made evident by the presence of vestiges of hind limbs in the pythons and boa constrictors, which include a series of bones within the body, at each side of the vent, with a large external claw. None of our Chicago snakes belong to this primitive group, whose only representatives in North America are two small snakes, the rosy boa and the rubber boa, found in California.

Limbless lizards are more abundant and varied in Africa than in any other region. A small collection of reptiles and amphibians recently received by Field Museum from Port Nolloth, South Africa, includes four species of these remarkable forms. One of these has vestiges of hind limbs, while three are entirely without external sign of limbs or eyes.

*The first three groups, Chellean, Neanderthal, and Aurignacian, have been pictured and described in the July, August, and September issues of FIELD MUSEUM NEWS.



Field, Henry. 1933. "Solutrean Epoch Depicted in Hall of Stone Age." *Field Museum news* 4(10), 1-1.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/25716>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/350833>

Holding Institution

Field Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

Rights Holder: Field Museum of Natural History

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.