

'SYMPATHETIC MAGIC' TO AID THE CROPS

A scheme to produce tears for the dead, as the first step in a roundabout process for inducing rain to fall and aid the crops, is attributed to figures painted on pottery funerary urns in which an ancient people buried their dead in northwestern Argentina. It exemplifies a device of a type that occurs in many cultures and that anthropologists call "sympathetic magic." Examples of such urns are on exhibition in Hall 9.

The people who made these urns disappeared before the Spanish invasion of South America. Little is known of them other than that the few vestiges of their culture indicate they achieved a level less elaborate than that of the Incas, who later conquered northwestern Argentina. Archaeologists have designated the culture by the name Calchaqui, after the name of the valley in which this tribe flourished.

On many of the urns tears are shown falling from the eyes of figures of people painted upon them. This may be evidence of an attempt at "sympathetic magic." It has been suggested that the Calchaqui idea was that if living people could be persuaded by these paintings to weep for the dead, or if even the painted faces themselves were depicted as streaming with tears, a principle of like producing like would be invoked—that is, the fertility gods would also weep, and their tears in the form of rain would descend upon the earth and stimulate crops.

The pottery urns are skillfully and artistically made, and the designs and pictures painted upon them are imaginatively conceived. It is believed that before burying the dead in these urns, the bodies were first exposed in branches of trees or on rocks until the flesh decomposed. The bones were then gathered and deposited in the urns.

As a rule adults were interred in the ground or in caves, and the urns were used principally for children. Whole cemeteries have been discovered containing the remains of children only, and it has been suggested that the young may have been sacrifices to the gods of fertility and rain.

U. S. Army Entomologist Becomes Museum Research Associate

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Traub, of the United States Army Medical Service Corps, was elected a Research Associate in the Museum's Division of Insects at the meeting on June 15 of the Board of Trustees.

Colonel Traub is an outstanding authority on the classification of fleas. He has published many papers on the subject, including a volume in this Museum's Memoir Series of Fieldiana, and has spent much time in preparation and study of the Museum's flea collections.

During most of World War II Colonel Traub served in the Burma-Ledo Road area as a member of the U. S. Army Typhus

Commission. Since the war he has been chief of the entomology and parasitology department of the Army Medical Graduate School, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. In this capacity he has been frequently dispatched on missions to the Far East and was sent to Korea to investigate Manchurian fever, a disease that the Army was accused of spreading among the enemy.

STAFF NOTES

Dr. Theodor Just, Chief Curator of Botany, recently lectured before the Zoology Club of the University of Chicago. His subject was "Paleobotany and Evolution." . . . **Miss Elaine Bluhm**, Assistant in Archaeology, recently lectured on archaeology as a career before the students' career council at Carl Schurz High School, Chicago. . . . **Colin Campbell Sanborn**, Curator of Mammals, visited the U. S. National Museum in Washington, D.C., to examine certain collections recently, and attended the annual meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. He was elected one of the Directors of the society and named chairman of the nomenclature committee.

NEW MEMBERS

The following persons became Museum Members from May 18 to June 15:

Honorary Member

Professor H. O. Beyer

Contributors

Leopold E. Block,* Dr. Alfred E. Emerson, J. Edward Maass,* Sterling Morton

Associate Members

J. C. Bowman, Dr. Sam S. Chrisos, Mrs. S. L. Ingersoll, J. Morris Jones, Miss Clara R. Lacey, George E. Phoenix

Annual Members

Charles E. Bobus, H. G. Clarke, Carl A. Dahlin, Harold V. Engh, Dr. Vincent C. Freda, James J. Gregory, Ralph A. Hanna, Arthur S. Hindman, Martin L. Jack, Raymond Kropp, H. Dale Long, Eugene R. McPheron, P. B. Montgomery, S. A. Montgomery, Joseph M. Mozeris, Max W. Petacque, Dr. Albert G. Peters, Mrs. C. Eugene Pfister, Mrs. A. J. Pikiel, Dr. Noah H. Sloan, Dean C. Smith, Milton J. Spitz, Charles C. Vance, Amos H. Watts, Rollin D. Wood, Mrs. W. R. Zitzewitz

* Deceased

Primitive "tooth brushes" of West African natives are shown in Hall D. They are short sticks—light colored for women, dark for men. The ends are chewed until they become fibrous, after which they are used vigorously on the teeth.

SUMMER MOVIE SERIES FREE TO CHILDREN

A chance for some summer fun and learning is here again. The series of free movies for children given by the Raymond Foundation will begin on July 9 and continue for six consecutive Thursday mornings through August 13. Two performances of each program will be given, one at 10 A.M. and one at 11 A.M., in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum. The Theatre and west entrance of the Museum will be open at 9:30 A.M. Dates and titles of the shows are:

July 9—WATER BIRDS

A Disney color-film

Also a cartoon

July 16—ELEPHANT BOY*

Kipling's great story with Sabu, the elephant boy

July 23—POCAHONTAS

The story of the Indian girl who saved the settlers at Jamestown

Also a cartoon

July 30—NATURE'S HALF ACRE

A Disney color-film showing nature's pageant in all seasons

Also a cartoon

August 6—ANIMAL STORIES

"Black Patch" and "Boy and the Eagle"

Also a cartoon

August 13—ZANZABELLE IN PARIS

A puppet-story of a giraffe in Paris and other puppet stories

Also a cartoon

*This film is longer and so the 2nd show will begin at about 11:20 A.M.

Although the above programs are selected for children, adults are welcome to attend, but adults not accompanying children are requested to give their seats to children if the Theatre is crowded. Leaders of children's groups are requested to remain with their groups and maintain order during the entire program. Large groups should arrive before the program starts in order to have all the children seated together.

Icelandic Scientist a Visitor

Dr. Finnur Gudmundsson, well-known marine biologist and director of the Museum of Natural History in Reykjavik, Iceland, was a recent visitor at Chicago Natural History Museum. He conferred with members of the staff of the Departments of Botany and Zoology.

Keep cool at the Museum. When Chicago recently sizzled in 104-degree temperature, the exhibition halls were a comfortable 76.



1953. "Icelandic Scientist a Visitor." *Bulletin* 24(7), 7-7.

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