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CASTLES OF MAITREYA.

## NICHOLAS ROERICH AND SCIENCE

By M. M. LICHTMANN

*Illustrated with paintings by Professor Roerich. Courtesy of the Roerich Museum*

A VAST amount of literature has been dedicated to Nicholas Roerich, describing his work from the point of view of his artistic achievements, his special style, brilliant color and the conception of his paintings. In view of the fact that Professor Roerich was recently elected a vice-president of the Archaeological Institute of America, we must give heed to the achievements of this world-renowned artist in the field of science and archaeology. His discoveries in this field were known in Russia as early as 1896, when he was elected member of the Imperial Archaeological Society, a distinction conferred only for acknowledged work in archaeology.

It is interesting to follow the archaeological activities of Professor Roerich, which so frequently coordinated with his artistic achievements. When only a boy of ten, he noticed some ancient *kurgans* in the vicinity of Iswara, his father's estate in the St. Petersburg district. Because of religious scruples, the elders of this village forbade the boy to excavate these fields; but, with remarkable perseverance, which asserted itself even then, the lad one early dawn excavated one small *kurgan* and was happy to find therein some exquisite bronze ornaments of the Xth century. This beginning encouraged the striving of the school boy, and the next year he presented a whole collection of such

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objects to his school. In his sixteenth year he presented to the Imperial Archaeological Committee an important collection of *kurgan* antiquities of the XIIth century. While still in college, Roerich read several papers before the Imperial Archaeological Society in St. Petersburg, and was at once elected a corresponding member, an unusual distinction for so young a man. Three years later, he was elected active fellow of the same Society and still later, life member.

After graduating from the University of St. Petersburg, Roerich was invited to lecture in the Imperial Archaeological Institute of St. Petersburg. During this time he conducted several archaeological expeditions into the St. Petersburg and Pscov districts, presenting many important reports to the Archaeological Society and publishing several scientific papers discussing the Slavonic and Finnish archaeology of the period between the IXth and XIVth centuries. Considerable attention was drawn to the following articles, published by Professor Roerich at that time: Art and Archaeology; Kurgans of the District of Pscov; Shelon District of Ancient Novgorod; Stone Age on Lake Piros (Novgorod District); Finnish Tumuli (St. Petersburg District) and many others. At the same time, the Imperial Archaeological Committee entrusted him with a few commissions, and in carrying them out he excavated many hundreds of ancient tumuli. Among these early discoveries, that of the Stone Age *kurgans* in the Tver district caused a great sensation. Through the beautiful amber ornaments found in these *kurgans*, the connection between Tver and Koenigsberg on the Baltic Sea was established, as that was the only place where such amber existed. The Archaeological Society of

Prussia praised the young scientist highly for this discovery.

From 1902 to 1906 the attention of Professor Roerich was attracted by important discoveries of Stone Age implements in the Novgorod district, where for several years he worked on a collection which finally contained 100,000 pieces, one of the most important collections of Stone Age implements.

In referring to Professor Roerich's article on the Stone Age, published in ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY in 1921, we find a remarkable comparison between the primitive tribes and those of the Stone Age. He compares the harassed aborigines to the men living in the Stone Age as an idiot to a sage, very aptly. There remained a few inter-relative gestures, but they are far from the real meaning. The Stone Age inhabitants gave birth to culture, but the aborigine did not have the power to lay foundations of beauty upon which other nations and other peoples could build.

Professor Roerich found great habitations of the Stone Age in the Novgorod and Tversk Districts. It is interesting to note that the famous canals dug by Peter the Great formed large lakes in these districts which covered the ancient habitations of these primitive people. However, when water was let into these artificial reservoirs, wonderful examples of Stone Age implements were washed out on their shores. The period of these habitations is being determined by an early neolith, and throughout all the subsequent stages they approach those of the Swiss pile-dwellers. The images with human likenesses attract particular attention among the various Stone Age findings, because they are probably traces of some cult.

Professor Roerich's collection is

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unique in its varied comparative forms of all periods of the Stone Age; it ranges from the crudest samples to the most subtle, proving that the Stone Age of Northern Russia was quite as exquisite as that of the South of France and Egypt. An interesting addition to the collection was a pattern of subtle form embellished with an intricate design.

In 1903 Professor Roerich made an

Russia. The majestic spectacle of rare national antiquities was impressed upon the canvas with a broad and fresh brush, expressively generalized and subtle in the interpretation of that benevolent repose and light which constitutes the strength of all the monuments of ancient art. It would be fitting to call this series: 'Pantheon of our former glory' or 'Russian Elysian Fields . . . .'



MENHIRS IN MONGOLIA.

extensive study of forty ancient cities and temples in Russia. (A group of sketches, the result of this expedition, is at present in the Oakland Museum.) Serge Ernst, in his monograph on Roerich, says: "After reviewing the works of this period, one must speak of the principal achievement of the years 1903 and 1904—the tremendous series of architectural sketches, painted by the artist during his sojourn in

At this time, Professor Roerich was elected member of the board of the Architectural Society, an unusual honor for an artist and archaeologist, and he delivered several lectures on architecture before that society. In 1912 he won first prize in the architectural contest for a church in the summer residence of the late Emperor Nicholas. In the same year, Professor Roerich gave a series of lectures on the





THE GUARDIAN OF THE CHALICE.

Stone Age in the palace of Prince You-souff, in which he threw light upon the first attempts toward human culture. He put before the public for the first time the problem of whether the men living at the time of the Stone Age had the same primitive culture as our rapidly vanishing aborigines. He also pointed out that by their utensils we may learn to understand that far-off period. Professor Roerich lectured on "Animal Stylization", connecting it with traces of great migrations. In his latest book, *Heart of Asia*, he says: "This problem has always been of especial interest to me. In the latest discoveries of the Kosloff expedition, in the works of Professor Rostovtzeff, Borovka, Makarenko, Toll and many others is displayed a great interest in Scythian, Mongolian and Gothic antiques. The ancient discoveries in Siberia, the traces of the great migra-

tions in Asia-Minor, Altai, Ural add an extraordinary amount of richly artistic and historical material to the Pan-European Romanesque and early Gothic styles. And how these themes approach contemporary artistic creations—many of these animal and floral stylizations might have come from the best modern workshops."

Professor Roerich's remarkable foresight was again manifested in his early study of "Animal Stylization," as this subject has recently come into prominence. He showed the same foresight when, while studying the Russian ikon, he insisted that these ikons would soon be considered masterpieces. In the article entitled "Antiquities" he says that "Even the most blind, even the most ignorant, will soon understand the great importance of our primitives in the significance of Russian iconography. They will understand and

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begin to cry out and wonder. And let them cry out. Let us prophesy that cry. Soon will end the dead attitude toward the historical and national creative power and the culture of art shall blossom still richer. Through the art of the East we shall look differently upon much of our own. Let us look with the warm eye of love and exaltation."

At this time, eminent French scientists of the International Archaeological Congress in Périgueux praised the discoveries of the Russian scientist, and compared his collection with the best specimens of the Egyptian Stone Age. In 1906 Professor Roerich made an extensive trip through France and Italy, everywhere studying ancient art and relics of the Stone Age. During that time he wrote an article on the famous "Verona fakes", in which he proved that these relics were not actually fakes but implements belong-

ing to a much more recent mountain shepherd tribe.

In 1907 he made a study of the labyrinths and ancient temples of Finland, which he wrote up in a paper under the same title. On Lake Piroos, Professor Roerich found human images carved out of flint, which caused a great deal of controversy. In view of their uniqueness, many archaeologists labeled them imitations. However, Professor Veselovsky confirmed them as genuine in the next year. In that same year Professor Roerich conducted excavations in Smolensk and the Tver district, and in Gorodistche were found remarkable enameled ornaments of the Gothic period.

Professor Roerich accomplished one of the most important excavations in the Kremlin of Novgorod in 1910. This district, one of the oldest inhabited sites in Russia, was connected with the name of the first Varenagian Prince.



MAITREYA ON THE ROAD.

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Despite public opinion, Roerich insisted that this particular district had never before been excavated, and he was correct. The diggings disclosed seven layers of the city and were seven meters deep. By the articles found therein, the layers could be dated back from the IXth to the XVIIth centuries.

In his article "Subterranean Russia", remarkable data of the Novgorod Kremlin stratum is mentioned. After the destruction of the stone structures of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, ornamented by beautiful ceramics, began the stratum of the wooden city, which was burned several times. At that time all Novgorod was paved with heavy oak boards. In each new stratum these streets ran in different directions. The remains of these wooden structures prove how closely they were thrown together in the XIIIth and XIVth centuries, and how easily they were transformed into ruins by a fire. Under the wooden structures and various objects of the XIIIth century began the primitive stratum of the city, attributed to the IXth century, which contains characteristic Scandinavian objects. These objects prove that Novgorod was originally a habitation of the Scandinavian Varengians, who at that time constituted the ruling class of ancient Russia.

Together with his increasing archaeological findings, Professor Roerich gathered a collection of old masters and founded a museum of Pre-Petrian art. Of this collection of paintings, Serge Ernst, former Curator of the Hermitage, speaks as follows: "It is necessary to mention that in 1909 the artist began his collection of old masters, whose art was revealed to him in 1905 and 1906. The paintings of the Netherlands form a basic part of this collection, and the Roerich Collec-

tion now occupies one of the first places in private Russian galleries".

Soon after his arrival in America in 1921, Professor Roerich went to Santa Fe to study the cliff-dwellings. In 1923 began the historic Roerich Central Asiatic Expedition, which gave evidence to many scientific facts, among which was the discovery of menhirs and kromlechs in Trans-Himalaya exactly like some found at Carnac in Brittany. Ancient burial-mounds were also observed similar to the "Goth's mounds" in northern Caucasia and in the southern Russian steppes. Many animal-images were found in these districts, such as a double-eagle, a stag, a lion, etc., which made even clearer the path of the great migrations. In Little Tibet and Trans-Himalaya ancient drawings on rocks and ancient Buddhist cave temples were found. These drawings of the Stone Age, carved into rock, had long since attracted the attention of Professor Roerich. He studied them in the caves of southern France and Scandinavia, comparing them with those in the path of the great migration in Siberia and coordinating them with the conceptions of animal stylization in Asia. It was natural that he was happy when he found the same scenes of hunting, the same ritual dances, and the same sacrificial conjurations in Mongolia, Dardostan, Chinese Turkestan and Trans-Himalaya.

Throughout all his artistic and architectural work, Professor Roerich has always been greatly interested in research of the past. He has, however, combined this research with thoughts of the future, and he ends his article, "Subterranean Russia", with the significant phrase: "The one who knows not of the past cannot think of the future."





MR. SANGER EXCAVATING THE "CANNIBAL HOLE". NOTE THE WHALEBONE MONUMENTS.

## SAN NICOLAS ISLAND, TREASURE HOUSE OF THE ANCIENTS: PART II

By BRUCE BRYAN

ON the west end of the island there is a great continuous mound, stretching out for perhaps a mile to slope gracefully down into the sea, that seems to be more of a ridge than anything else. Nevertheless its entire expanse is covered with the remains of Indian feasts, and in its interior are hidden their bones. Here protruding hip-bones revealed a grave that yielded up one of the most unusual finds made on the island. The skeleton was the largest encountered, and upon closer inspection was seen to have a twisted spinal column, five of the vertebrae and the sacrum itself being ossified or grown together. A protective sheath of bone had extended over three of the vertebrae, partially joining a fourth.

The skull was extremely large, as is generally the case with hunchbacks, while the sutures were grown together, indicating that he was an old man at the time of his death. The teeth showed considerable wear, too.

It is a noteworthy fact that of the many anatomists and medical men who examined this skeleton after it was brought back to the Museum, none have agreed as to just what the affliction is, or even as to what caused it. Some inclined to the theory that the aborigine had suffered a blow which broke his back, but that he lived through it, as evidenced by the subsequent overgrowth of protective bone. One physician claimed that it was a not unusual disease, and that it was not