

FOR RELEASE Saturday Afternoon or
Sunday morning, April 24 or 25, 1937

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

Professor Leo Frobenius, one of the world's greatest authorities on the art created by prehistoric peoples from ten to twenty thousand years ago, will arrive on his first visit to America, Saturday, April 24, for the opening of the Exhibition of Prehistoric Rock Pictures at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The exhibition opens Wednesday, April 28, and on Thursday evening, April 29, Dr. Frobenius will give his first lecture in America, on the subject: Rock Pictures of Africa and Europe.

Frobenius was born in Berlin, June 29, 1873. When he was thirteen he had made up his mind that he was going to be an African explorer. By the time he was fifteen he had read all the scientific books on African exploration and anthropology and was, in addition, such an expert on the American Indian that he was able to point out all sorts of technical errors in the Leather Stocking Tales--a mark of scientific perception in one so young, as even today the inaccurate characteristics of the noble red skin of Cooper's Tales are popularly regarded abroad as authentically American Indian. At this same tender age Frobenius wrote a dissertation on the ethnographic significance of Marco Polo's travels.

When he was sixteen he spent a year farming and was then apprenticed to an exporting firm in Bremen where for two and one-half years he learned the export business by day and secretly at night pursued his anthropological studies. Before he was twenty he was able to get a minor appointment in the Bremen Museum and from that point on he went forward--not without difficulties at times on account of his extreme youth--in his chosen field of exploring, interpreting and evaluating ancient cultures, particularly in Africa.

Today at the age of 64 he is constantly active, so busy that he sleeps only about three of the twenty-four hours a day. His boyhood ambition has been more than fulfilled. The Frobenius Collection in The Institute for the Study of the Morphology of Civilization, which in Frankfort-on-Main, he directs, comprises more than 3500 facsimiles of prehistoric rock paintings and engravings. He has written innumerable authoritative books on the prehistoric cultures of the world, particularly African and delivers many lectures on this and related subjects and answers correspondence on it from all over the world.

Frobenius began his brilliant career by questioning the belief current in the nineteenth century that the cultures of prehistoric

peoples perished with those peoples. This theory was held particularly in regard to the Old Stone Age culture. The academic scientists of the late 19th century believed that the early stone age culture died out when the ice receded northward. Frobenius believed that nothing so essentially alive could vanish completely. His theory was that descendants of that age and culture might have moved on to other very distant lands. Proceeding on this theory his life work eventually proved that the early stone age culture had moved on to Africa where evidence of it was discovered in widely separated areas through successive periods.

Frobenius has behind him 40 years of research including many years spent in field work in the course of his twelve expeditions to Africa, which he has not only mapped out but headed personally. These expeditions, some of them lasting two years, have taken him and his forces through remote, unexplored territories--many times almost inaccessible. His investigations have ranged from the great centers of prehistoric art on the coast of Norway, the caves of Northern Spain, the Camonica Valley in the Alps, the Libyan Desert, the Sahara-Atlas, Fezzan and Transjordan to Southern Rhodesia and the Bushman caves and rock shelters of South Africa.

Now at last he feels that he must turn his active work of exploration over to the younger men he has trained. He has just sent out, under his direction but no longer under his personal leadership, a new expedition to the Moluccas in the Dutch East Indies. He will keep this expedition continually in the field moving on to new places and new lands. From time to time the individual members of the expedition will be sent back to the base in Frankfort to evaluate their discoveries while new members of the staff replace them in the field. There will be this constant interchange of exploration and research for each of the scientists, much as Frobenius has balanced the two activities in his own life. Frobenius claims that one cannot become a real anthropologist through scholarship alone, actual field experience is also essential.

The Exhibition of Prehistoric Rock Pictures will fill three floors of the Museum of Modern Art and will include 150 of the finest facsimiles of rock paintings and engravings chosen from the huge Frobenius Collection in Frankfort. The exhibition will open to the public Wednesday, April 28, and will remain on view through Sunday, May 30. It will then go on an extensive tour throughout the country.

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45 Copies

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11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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April 22, 1937

TO SHIP NEWS REPORTERS
TO CITY EDITORS
TO NEWS PHOTO EDITORS

Dear Sir:

Arriving on the S. S. Deutschland at one o'clock Saturday afternoon, April 24, will be PROFESSOR LEO FROBENIUS, one of the most famous anthropologists in the world. He is the greatest authority on prehistoric art of twenty thousand years ago. During the past thirty years he has led twelve expeditions to remote and almost inaccessible parts of Africa. He is Director of the Institute for the Study of the Morphology of Civilization, Frankfort-on-Main, Germany.

This is Dr. Frobenius' first trip to America. He is coming to New York to attend the opening of an exhibition of Prehistoric Rock Pictures from the Frobenius Collection which will be held at the Museum of Modern Art from April 28 through May 30.

Dr. Frobenius speaks English fluently and amusingly. A man of sixty-four, he is a picturesque and extremely interesting personality.

For further information, will you please telephone me at Circle 7-7473.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer

Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director