



HOMO SOLOENSIS

PALEONTOLOGY

New-Found Java Skull Hints Of Tropical Origin of Man

Location of Famous Pithecanthropus Bones Yields Latest Evidence That Man Has Lived in Java Since Ice Age

MANKIND may have originated in the tropics after all, despite the present wide acceptance of the theory of a Central Asian birthplace of the race.

This suggestion is advanced by W. F. F. Oppenoorth, who with his fellow-engineer and geologist C. Ter Haar recently found the upper half of a primitive human skull and fragments of a second skull at Ngandong on the Solo River in Java. It was on this same river that the famous Pithecanthropus bones were found over forty years ago.

Mr. Oppenoorth bases his suggestion on the decidedly Neanderthaloid shape of the newly found skull-top, which places this Java man on a decidedly higher plane than that occupied by Pithecanthropus, and practically on a par with the Neanderthal men who lived in Europe and Asia at the same time.

The skull of this "Solo man" has a slightly flatter forehead than that of the typical Neanderthaler, and its back portion is cut off much more squarely and sharply. But it has the same generally massive construction, and especially the same beetling eyebrow ridges. What the brain cavity is like has not yet been determined, for only the outside of the

skull has been cleared of the stony mass in which it was embedded when found.

Together with Pithecanthropus, dating from a considerably earlier time, and the so-called Homo wadjakensis, of much more recent time, the new-found Solo man builds up a series of human remains indicating that the island of Java has had human or pre-human inhabitants since at least the middle of the Ice Age, and possibly even considerably earlier than that.

The new find also renders improbable, in Mr. Oppenoorth's opinion, the theory that Pithecanthropus was a backward or degenerate race, advanced by Prof. Henry Fairfield Osborn. On this point, Mr. Oppenoorth says:

"Further it is evident that the idea of Osborn, that the Trinil race of Java 'which sought the more genial life in southern tropical forests and plateaus, remained stationary' is not supported by the new find."

The name "Javanthropus" first given to the race represented by the new skull, is reduced to subgeneric rank in Mr. Oppenoorth's preliminary publication, and the skull classified in the same genus with both Neanderthalers and modern

men: Homo. The second, or specific, name is derived from that of the River Solo. The full name of "Solo man" who was probably a great-uncle rather than a grandfather of our own race, thus becomes Homo soloensis, or Homo (Javanthropus) soloensis, if one insists on all aliases.

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ASTRONOMY

Auroral Green Light Found In Flaring Stars

DISCOVERY of light in new stars that flash out in the heavens that is like the aurora borealis was announced by Dr. Paul W. Merrill of the Mount Wilson Observatory, Pasadena, speaking as chairman of the astronomical section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at its Syracuse meeting.

A characteristic green line found in the spectrum of earthly northern lights was found by Mount Wilson astronomers in light from several novae, as the mysterious stars that suddenly increase in brilliance are called. This is the first time that the green line has been discovered outside the atmosphere of the earth.

Dr. Merrill concluded that the gases surrounding the new stars are at higher pressures than those in the gas clouds or gaseous nebulae of the sky, but at lower pressures than the upper atmosphere of the earth, where polar lights are born.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1932

RADIO

New Apparatus Measures Kennelly-Heaviside Signals

THE CONSTRUCTION of two new pieces of apparatus for measuring the height of the Kennelly-Heaviside layer, the ionized atmosphere high above the earth with which static and radio escape into interstellar space are thought to be linked, was reported to the meeting of the American Physical Society at New Haven, Conn., by Harry R. Mimno and P. H. Wang of Harvard University.

One will record a complete history of reflections from the Kennelly-Heaviside layer produced by 2,000 successive pulses, it was said. The apparatus, a high speed chronograph, makes its records on a compact strip of photographic paper and may be operated over an extended period of time from five minutes to 24