



**BEST PRESERVED SKULL**

*Prof. Sergio Sergi indicates opening at base of head which makes him think Neandertal man walked upright.*

ANTHROPOLOGY

## Most Perfect Neandertal Skull Is Being Studied In Rome

### Particularly Well Preserved Occipital Opening Makes Professor Sergi Conclude Neandertaler Walked Upright

**F**OLLOWING its discovery in a cave at Monte Circeo, a promontory on the Tyrrhenian sea, fifty miles south of Rome, the world's most perfectly preserved specimen of a Neandertal skull is being studied by Prof. Sergio Sergi, head of the Institute of Anthropology at the Royal University of Rome, in an effort to uncover new racial characteristics of this early man.

Both Prof. Sergi, and Prof. Alberto Carlo Blanc, who first identified the skull on the scene of discovery, say it is in an almost perfect state of preservation except for a fracture in the right temporal area. This was caused by a series of blows on the head, probably during a battle with clubs, and caused death between 70,000 and 80,000 years ago.

In addition to the anthropological importance of the skull, which is the third of its type found in Italy, fossilized bones of animals discovered in the cave give

evidence of Neandertal man's mode of life. The bones include fragments of those of prehistoric elephants, rhinoceri, and giant horses, all showing evidence of fractures. The floor of the cave was literally paved with these bones.

Discovery of the cave was made by accident on the property of Antonio Guattari, owner of a small resort hotel at Monte Circeo. While digging foundations for enlarging the hotel, workmen found the entrance which had been sealed as the result of a landslip, believed to have occurred during the last glacial period, about 80,000 years ago. The skull was found in a large open space at the end of a passage in a crude circle of stones. It had lain there untouched for all these thousands of years. Guattari notified Prof. Blanc, who completed the investigation, and brought the skull to Rome. Failure to find any bones of the skeleton leads to the belief that the skull

may have been brought to the cave and possibly used in a sacrificial ritual. Other bones found on the floor of the cave have been identified as those of bears, deer, panthers, goats, and hyenas.

According to Prof. Blanc, scores of caves and grottoes in the Monte Circeo area were formed when the sea was thirty to forty feet above the present level, and its action scooped out hollows in the soft rock. At the beginning of the last glacial period, formation of ice fields caused the sea level to drop. It was then prehistoric man found the dry grottoes and began living in them. Slowly a new change of climate took place causing sudden rises and drops in temperature. Alternating periods of freezing caused splitting of rocks and landslips, burying the caves under masses of stone and earth. In the post glacial period, melting of ice caused the sea to rise again, washing away the earth in many of the grottoes, but failing to reach the height of the cave of the Neandertal skull, leaving it sealed until the accidental discovery.

Following the finding of the skull, the cave was closed by the Italian Paleontological Society, but exploration will be continued in the fall after assembling and cataloguing the bones taken out during first excavations. Two other Neandertal skulls have been found in Italy, one in 1929 and the other in 1935, both in the Sacopastore region, near Rome, but neither is as well preserved as the new discovery. However, the occipital opening at the base of one of the skulls was particularly well preserved, enabling Prof. Sergi of the Royal University to conclude for the first time that Neandertal man walked erect, and not with an ape-like posture with head thrust forward as previously believed. The horizontal plane of the opening in the skull shows, he believes, that the bones of the neck fit perpendicularly onto the opening causing posture to be erect, as in present day man.

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PSYCHOLOGY

### It Is Not Kind to Child To Keep Reality From Him

**P**UTTING a child in a sort of pink and white padded cell of protection where he has no contact with the world's sorrows and cruelties may be a satisfaction to adults but is really no kindness to the child.

The great importance for the mental health of the child of leading him gently but firmly into contact with reality is stressed by Dr. Lili E. Peller, child psy-