

ANTHROPOLOGY

Pollen Shows Climate

Pollen found with Neanderthal man in Shanidar cave shows that the climate changed from cold to sub-tropical over a period of 15,000 years, Tove Neville reports.

► POLLEN OF DATE palms and fir trees are giving new clues to the climate in which primitive Neanderthal man lived.

Dr. Ralph S. Solecki of Columbia University told the American Anthropological Association meeting in Philadelphia that warm and cold weather alternated when Neanderthal man lived in Shanidar cave, Iraq.

Pollen of fir trees found with Shanidar man revealed that he lived in a cold climate about 60,000 years ago. Date palm pollen found with other Shanidar remains indicates that the Neanderthal population, living about 45,000 years ago, enjoyed much warmer weather.

Dr. Solecki, who worked on the excavations in Iraq, said one individual living during this time had had an arm amputated and was also probably blind.

The Shanidar man of 50,000 years ago, living in a cool climate, also met with a sad fate. He had been wounded by a spear thrust in his chest, and the wound had healed only about a week when the roof of the cave fell in and killed him.

Neanderthal man was a hunter who probably clothed himself in skins during the cool periods. The remains of a child dated at 70,000 years ago is the oldest known evidence of the Shanidar people, Dr.

Solecki said. No pollen clues to the climate at that time were found with the child.

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Mixed Human Population

► A HUMAN POPULATION made up of a mixture of many different types has tended to increase the lifespan and fertility in man over the ages.

This is the conclusion of Dr. Lawrence Angel of Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, who has studied groups of men from about 10,000 B.C. to modern times.

Dr. Angel told SCIENCE SERVICE that he compared studies of Stone Age man in North Africa, the remains of men from Greece and Cyprus and modern man from Peru and Melanesia. He found by studying body and head shapes that differences in persons within a group in early human populations was higher than once believed.

He said he had expected isolated groups would be similar in body build and head shape because of intermarriage. If some groups did inbreed they did not survive, because great variety was found within groups.

Surviving groups must have found ways to pick mates from other groups, account-

ing for the physical differences from person to person, he reported to the American Anthropological Association meeting in Philadelphia.

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Evolution in Blood Seen

► NEW EVIDENCE indicates that hemoglobin has changed continuously during the course of evolution to accommodate the increasingly complex brain, culminating in man.

This at least seems to be true from studies made on primates by Dr. John Buettner-Janusch of Yale University. He told the American Anthropological Association meeting in Philadelphia that hemoglobin of prosimians, such as lemurs, gives up oxygen faster than the hemoglobin of anthropoidea, such as monkeys, apes and man.

This quick oxygen expulsion may be important for many prosimians that live unusually active lives in tree tops. They need to have a source of oxygen available in moments of stress as they "fly" through the trees.

The hemoglobin of anthropoidea carries more oxygen that is given off more slowly to accommodate the more complex brain, experiments so far indicate, Dr. Buettner-Janusch said.

Hemoglobin is the chemical that gives blood its red color.

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Incest Taboos Are Social

► THE BELIEF that the reason for the existence of incest taboos was to protect the human race from genetic consequences of marriage of close biological relatives is nonsense, eminent anthropologist Margaret Mead reported. She said there is no biological evidence to support this.

Dr. Mead, associate curator of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, told SCIENCE SERVICE that incest taboos are social products created by society to protect the household.

Therefore it is a mistake to consider only blood relations as being incestuous, as is commonly done in Western civilization. She said incest taboos must be re-examined to include foster children, foster brothers and sisters as well as blood relations.

This is practiced to some extent by Roman Catholics who see an impediment to marriage between persons reared in the same family.

Incest taboos vary from one society to another and from time to time. It is necessary to re-examine these taboos continuously, Dr. Mead said.

She spoke at a session on sex and culture at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Philadelphia.

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Negroes Not Inferior

► THE AMERICAN Anthropological Association repudiated statements now appear-



COMET SEKI—Expected to vie with Halley's comet in brightness, Comet Seki has been observed as only fifth magnitude. Dr. Elizabeth Roemer of U. S. Naval Observatory, Flagstaff, Ariz., photographed Seki when it had a tail several degrees long. (See stories SNL, 80:304, Nov. 4, 1961, and 80:351, Nov. 25, 1961.)