

of an earlier australopithecine into *Homo erectus*, states: "Disproof could be accomplished . . . by showing that *Homo erectus* could be found earlier than the first appearance of the proposed ancestral species. . . ."18 Wolpoff is absolutely right. That is the way paleoanthropology should work.

There is a scientific principle behind Wolpoff's statement. It is this: "An evolutionary sequence is falsified when a specific form in that sequence turns up woefully outside its proper evolutionary time-frame." This is what the Solo (Ngandong) people have done.

Endnotes

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7. Rightmire 14, p. 192.
8. Geoffrey G. Pope, "Ngandong (Solo River)," *Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory*, Ian Tattersall, Eric Delson, and John Van Couvering, editors (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988) p. 383.
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11. Carleton S. Coon, *The Origin of Races* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) p. 390.
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13. Ann Gibbons, "*Homo erectus* in Java: A 250,000-Year Anachronism," *Science* 274 (13 December 1996) p. 1841.
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...If you call out for Insight...

You will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.
Based on Proverbs 2:3-5

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Alleged Evolutionary Ancestors Coexisted with Modern Humans

by Marvin L. Lubenow, M.S., Th.M.*

Shock waves are reverberating through the halls of evolution at the recent redating of the Java Solo (Ngandong Beds) *Homo erectus* fossil skulls. These alleged evolutionary ancestors of modern humans were assumed to be old. The new data—a maximum of 46,000 years before the present (YBP) with a probable date of 27,000 YBP—strongly suggests that *Homo erectus* coexisted with anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) long after *Homo erectus* was supposed to have become extinct. These finds conflict with the concept of human evolution.

The discovery was reported in *Science*, 13 December 1996, by a team headed by Carl Swisher III and G. H. Curtis of the Berkeley Geochronology Center. They dated two fossil sites in central Java, the Solo (Ngandong) site and the Sambungmacan site using two different dating methods, electron spin resonance and mass spectrometric U-series. Through this project, Swisher and his group were seeking new evidence for one of the most vexing problems in anthropology—the origin of modern humans.

Since their discovery over 60 years ago, the Solo fossil skulls have troubled evolutionists. The problem is that they have a clear *Homo erectus* morphology (shape) but their geological context seemed to demand a very late date. Evolution cannot tolerate this combination. Although this same combination of *erectus*-like fossils with a very late date exists in Australia, evolutionists solved the problem there by arbitrarily calling those *erectus*-like fossils *Homo sapiens*. This semantic solution could not be applied to the Java Solo fossils because most paleoanthropologists had already agreed upon their *Homo erectus* status before the very recent date was determined.

Between 1931 and 1933, a Dutch team found human cranial remains of 12 individuals in a 1/2-meter-thick sandstone deposit by the Solo River. Two human leg bones were also found. Although the site was only 50 by 100 meters square, over 25,000 vertebrate fossil fragments were also found. Between 1976 and 1980, Gadjah Mada University (Java) excavated an adjacent 25 by 14 meter area recovering human cranial remains of two more individuals some human pelvis

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fragments, various human artifacts, and an additional 1200 vertebrate fossils. The human fossils recovered are not complete skulls, but are called calvaria, calottes, and cranial fragments. (A calvarium is a skull without the bones of the face or lower jaw. A calotte is just the top of the skull.)

Since their initial discovery, every aspect of the interpretation of these Solo fossils has been controversial. Early on, it was obvious that the Mesolithic cultural assemblage found in association with the fossils (which Kenneth Oakley called the "bone industry of Azilian facies") would allow a date of 10,000 YBP or less, since Australian aborigines continued to live at an essentially Mesolithic cultural level until recently.¹

Evolutionists, seeing how awkward such a late date would be for the theory of human evolution, responded to the cultural evidence by claiming that the human fossils and the artifacts were not in association and were not from the same stratigraphic levels. This "after the fact" charge flies in the face of direct eye-witness testimony. While it is true that the fossils were found before many modern excavation techniques were in place, the Dutch Geological Survey was in charge of the entire operation. The famed paleoanthropologist, G. H. R. von Koenigswald, was on hand many times, saw Skull VI (Ngandong 7) and Skull VIII (Ngandong 11) in situ, excavated both of them, and described the cultural items found with the skulls.²

The history of the dating of the Solo skulls is colorful. Since the original finds occurred well before the advent of radiometric dating, almost all of the dating was based upon the fauna (animal fossils) found with the skulls. The most recent age ascribed to the fossils was about 150,000 to 100,000 YBP. These dating estimates were in spite of the fact that all records regarding the association of the human fossils and the fauna were lost during World War II³ and "... most of the 25,000 fossils from the original Dutch excavations appear to be lost."⁴ The thought that these erectus-like human fossils could possibly be only 100,000 years old made evolutionists uncomfortable, so some suggested that the fossils and the fauna were not the same age, the human fossils being much older. However, unpublished photographs of the site taken by von Koenigswald clearly show that the human fossils and the vertebrate fauna were in the same geological context.⁵

Since evolutionists questioned the age of the fauna in the original excavation, some of them toyed with "morphological dating" by computing regression estimates of brain size on time. The result obtained for the Solo people was between 463,000 and 790,000 YBP.⁶ Later, magnetic polarity determinations seemed to confirm a Middle Pleistocene date of between 350,000 and 700,000 YBP.⁷ The newer 1976 to 1980 excavations produced 1,200 vertebrate fossils. Based upon this fauna, G. G. Pope estimated that the Solo humans could possibly be as old as one million years.⁸ It is understandable why a date of 27,000 YBP for the Ngandong Solo people is a shock. Another human fossil site 40 km upstream at Sambungmacan, thought possibly to be as old as 1.3 million years, also gave a new date of 27,000 YBP.⁹

Classifying the Solo fossils has been as great a problem as dating them. When they were first discovered, von Koenigswald believed them to be "tropical Neanderthals." In 1963, Bernard Campbell classified them as *Homo sapiens soloensis*. Santa Luca, in 1980, classified them as *Homo erectus erectus*, with Milford Wolpoff declaring that they were not *Homo erectus*. Still others called them "archaic *Homo*

sapiens." Because of their obvious similarity to the other Javanese and Chinese "classic" *Homo erectus* material, most investigators today recognize them as *Homo erectus*. The Solo fossils do, however, have a larger cranial capacity than does the average *Homo erectus* skull. For this reason, many evolutionists could not resist the temptation to consider the Solo people as "transitional" between *Homo erectus* and modern humans. Unfortunately, since evolutionists believe that modern humans arrived on the scene by 100,000 YBP, transitional fossils at 27,000 YBP will not fit.

The condition of the human skulls and the vertebrate fauna argues against their being washed in from upstream. Beals and Hoijer write: "The skulls were all found lying base upward without signs of wear or movement."¹⁰ Carleton Coon echoes these facts: "The skulls were all lying base upward and were in perfect condition. They had not been moved or rolled."¹¹ Swisher et al. state that the nearest upstream mammalian fossil-bearing exposures are 30 km away. He goes on to say that at the Solo site there are "... a few articulated vertebrae and a few crania with associated mandibles ..." and that "... both hominid and nonhominid crania show little evidence of abrasion because fragile processes such as the pterygoid plates are preserved."¹² Further, human fossils at Sambungmacan, 40 km upstream, are of the same young age. All of this indicates that the fossils were found in their original location.

While at one point in the Science article there is equivocation regarding the human fossils being washed in, elsewhere in the same issue of Science Ann Gibbons writes: "As for the flooding theory, Swisher's team points out that it's hard to imagine how 12 crania and other human remains could have moved to the same level and at two sites (Ngandong and Sambungmacan)."¹³ Referring to the possibility that the fossils might have washed into younger beds, Time magazine says: "Swisher disagrees, arguing that the remains are too well preserved—its fragile structures are generally intact—to have been bumped around in a flood."¹⁴

Many later researchers agree with the interpretation of the site by von Koenigswald. The Solo (Ngandong) people were the victims of cannibalism. He writes: "A vast number of different bones of all the animal types were unearthed, but of human remains only a very particular selection whose incidence was certainly not natural."¹⁵ All of the skulls had their faces smashed, and all but two had the bottom of the skulls broken open. Von Koenigswald calls them "skull-trophies," and likens them to the practice of modern head-hunters, such as the Kyaks, who eat the brains to acquire the wisdom and skill of the defeated foe. The skulls were placed there to mark the area. "It seems that even today various tribes in New Guinea demarcate their dwelling-or hunting-grounds in a similar manner. They evidently suppose that the spirit dwelling in the skull can help them defend a particular area against invaders."¹⁶

Past evolutionist attempts to deny the Solo (Ngandong) people a late date and coexistence with modern humans have been rather successful. Now, the evidence for such coexistence is strong. Chris Stringer (Natural History Museum, London), who holds (wrongly) that the Neanderthals are also a separate species, says: "If the dates are right, we have three different species coexisting at the same time."¹⁷ There is more bad news ahead. Evolutionists must now face the fact that there are many late-date Australian fossils almost identical to the Solo (Ngandong) people.

Milford Wolpoff (University of Michigan), commenting on the alleged evolution