

PREHISTORIC ANCESTORS OF MODERN TYPES OF MAN

SOMETIME toward the end of the Third Interglacial Period other types of man began to arrive in the East Indies. The succession of peoples is an old story in Java, as we have seen, and the replacement of Solo man by newcomers was apparently not marked by any unusual circumstances. There is no evidence of any important changes in culture. Like Solo man, the new arrivals were simple hunters and wild food collectors characterized by Palaeolithic culture, the specific details of which have yet to be determined. The most significant fact about the new peoples is that they were successful in crossing the various water barriers, to occupy, in due course, all the closely spaced islands, including Australia and Tasmania, and are still represented today by descendants in various parts of this region.

Theoretically, we should expect to find evidence of Pygmies in Java before the end of the Pleistocene, but as yet their former presence has not been detected. The oldest remains of living types are the ancestral Australians found at Wadjak, Java. Although these remains have not been definitely dated, they are probably late Pleistocene or early Recent. Australian evidence for a similar antiquity was claimed in the recently discovered skull at Keilor, Victoria, but subsequent investigation did not confirm the specimen as Pleistocene. About sixty years ago a skull was unearthed at Talgai, Queensland, in a site which suggested early Recent antiquity, but this matter has not been conclusively settled.

The Wadjak and Keilor skulls are essentially the same. Perhaps the most interesting feature is the very large cranial capacity, 1650 and 1500 c.c. in the two Wadjak specimens, which possibly are male and female, and 1593 c.c. in the Keilor skull. These capacities exceed by 200 c.c. the average of modern Europeans and indicate that some early Australoids probably had capacities of 2000 c.c., or somewhat in excess of the upper limit of Europeans of today. The significant comparison,

however, is with the living aborigines of Australia, for the latter are characterized by an average cranial capacity of between 1250 and 1300 c.c., the range for males being 1000-1600 c.c., that for females 950-1350 c.c. Although the decline in cranial capacity between prehistoric and modern Australians may have been the result of many factors, it is quite possible that intermarriage with some small-headed people is partially responsible.

Fragmentary skeletal evidence of Negroids has been unearthed in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and French Indo-China, associated with Late Palaeolithic and Proto-Neolithic artefacts. Chronological relationships in this area have not yet been determined, but the association of Negroids and a Late Palaeolithic horizon gives us an important clue to their general relative antiquity as compared to the earlier Australoids and the later Indonesians and Malays, the modern inhabitants of the East Indies. Little is known of the latter from archaeological sources.



Fig. 3. Head of a carved wooden club, Tonga.



Fig. 4. Head of a carved wooden club, Marquesas Islands.