

Hallam L. Movius, Jr.

1907-1987

WILLIAM W. HOWELLS AND NANCY MOVIUS

HALLAM LEONARD MOVIUS, JR. was born in Newton, Massachusetts, on 28 November 1907 and died in Cambridge on 16 May 1987. He was educated at Harvard, in undergraduate and graduate study, between 1926 and 1937, and he spent his whole career there. He began his field work in Czechoslovakia, Palestine, and Ireland and ended it with his major excavations at the Abri Pataud in Les Eyzies, France. Before he retired, he was the leading American student of the European Upper Paleolithic.

His European work was interrupted early by two things: war service as intelligence officer with the 12th Air Force in Europe and, just before that, by his important study tour of the Far East beginning in 1937. G. H. R. von Koenigswald had recently found the Pacitan stone industry in Java, Teilhard de Chardin was studying the new Zhoukoudian materials, and Hellmut De Terra (then with the Carnegie Foundation) had lately discovered the Soan stone culture in present northern Pakistan. Early man studies in Asia thus had new importance. The idea was apparently hatched, at Harvard, by Thomas Barbour of the Agassiz Museum, Donald Scott, Director of the Peabody Museum, and E. A. Hooton of the Department of Anthropology, of reconnoitering in areas intervening among those above, specifically Burma. An expedition was mounted, led by De Terra, that included Teilhard and Nancy and Hallam Movius, the latter fresh off his thesis. After some fruitless exploring in jungle and dry zone, the party found, on a terrace of the Irrawaddy, an industry made on silicified tuff and fossilized wood, which was named the Anyathian.

The Moviuses then went to Bandung to study Javanese materials with von Koenigswald. Movius was eventually able to incorporate, in his first-hand review, materials from Northwest India, North China, and also Malaya. He not only reviewed tool forms in each area but also took detailed command of Pleistocene faunas and of the geology as then known.

The result was his brilliant synthesis of 1944, certainly well known to readers of this journal. Though he finished it while in his earliest thirties, it is the kind of chef d'oeuvre usually produced by archaeologists who have lumbered well into maturity. All aspects are set out in well-organized and instructive detail. The main finding, of course, was that the East is discernible as a province quite separate from the Acheulean tradition of Africa and Europe, marked especially by choppers and chopping tools (defined by Movius) and devoid of the bifacial handaxes found (only) in northwestern India. The boundary was later christened "Movius' Line" by Carleton Coon, who saw its implications for human populations of the time.

This monograph reflects Movius's genius for organization and the rigor and judiciousness of his treatment. Fifty years later, with all that has been done since, it is still widely used as a base of understanding, with only such adjustments as refinements of

date, and so forth. However, Movius himself was more critical than others. In 1978 he viewed the structure as already inadequate and felt that trying to integrate all the assemblages into a simple integrated scheme would not succeed. This was typical of his critical clarity and honesty. He returned his interests to Europe, and a career there of further definition of problems and of major excavation addressed to them. [For a more general obituary see Howells 1988, Ed.]

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- 1958 Editor of Special Palaeolithic Issue, *AP* 2(2):1–102.
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