# Human Origins

# the ape-ancestry myth

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***Part 1 of 3***

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## 1. Darwinian claims and controversies

According to mainstream science, humans are evolved apes who, as a result of random genetic mutations and environmental pressures, happened to acquire the unique power of selfconsciousness. However, the loud publicity and slick propaganda for the ape-ancestry theory cannot alter the fact that the evidence is scanty and contradictory and open to other interpretations.

Anthropologist Richard Leakey has said that 'If someone went to the trouble of collecting together in one room all the fossil remains so far discovered of our ancestors (and their biological relatives) who lived, say, between five and one million years ago, he would need only a couple of large trestle tables on which to spread them out.'[1] Most hominid fossils are fragments of jaws and scraps of skulls but, as palaeontologist Stephen J. Gould once said, 'they serve as a basis for endless speculation and elaborate storytelling'.[2]

Beliefs, expectations, and prejudices inevitably play a role in the interpretation of fossils, as do

personal rivalries and the desire for fame. More than one palaeoanthropologist has become famous overnight by announcing sensational and extravagant claims after finding some fragmentary remains of a creature he or she believes to be related to man's origin. But such claims have a habit of being undermined or invalidated by further research and discoveries. The details of our supposed descent from the apes remain obscure and are the subject of heated debate among evolutionists.

A number of blunders in the interpretation of fossils have been made over the years. In 1922 a tooth was discovered in western Nebraska (USA), which was declared by several scientists to combine the characteristics of the chimpanzee, *Pithecanthropus* (a postulated apeman), and man. He became popularly known as Nebraska man and was regarded by some as a potential human ancestor. Five years later, it was announced that the tooth actually belonged to a pig. Creationist scientist Duane Gish remarks: 'This is a case in which a scientist made a man out of a pig, and the pig made a monkey out of the scientist!'[3]

**Fig. 1.1.** Nebraska man – according to an artist's wild imagination.[4]

The first skeleton of Neanderthal man was unearthed in 1856. He was originally depicted as an ugly, brutish half-monster with short bow-legs and a shuffling, stooping gait, and regarded as intermediate between man and apes. A century later, a close examination of the skeleton revealed that it was that of an old man crippled with osteoarthritis and rickets! It is now recognized that Neanderthal man walked upright as we do. In fact, '[i]f we were to put a cardigan sweater on a Neanderthal and stick a pipe in his mouth and then were to have him walk across the campus of one of our major universities he could quite easily be mistaken for a professor of paleontology.'[5]

In 1983 palaeoanthropologist Tim White accused another scientist, Noel Boaz, of having mistaken a dolphin's rib for a clavicle (shoulder bone) of a pygmy chimpanzee, and jested that the fossil should be designated *Flipperpithecus*! Boaz had even suggested that the curve of the

bone might indicate habitual bipedalism. Anthropologists have also erroneously described the femur (thighbone) of an alligator and the toe of a 3-toed horse as clavicles. In May 1984 it was announced that a skull fragment found in Spain a year earlier and hailed by experts as the oldest human fossil ever found in Europe may have come from a 4-month-old donkey! A symposium organized to discuss the fossil was hastily cancelled.[6]

Even outright fraud is not unknown in the minefield of human origins. In 1912 a jawbone and part of a skull were discovered in a gravel pit near Piltdown, England. The jawbone appeared very simianlike except for the teeth, which showed the type of wear expected for humans. The skull was very humanlike. The specimens were combined into a single individual, who became known as Piltdown man. He was judged to be about half a million years old, and regarded as an authentic link in the evolution of man. In 1950 a new test revealed that the jawbone contained practically no fluoride, suggesting it was very recent. The skull did have a significant amount of fluoride, but was estimated to be only a few thousand years old. It was then discovered that the bones had been treated with iron salts to make them look old, and scratch marks were detected on the teeth, indicating that they had been filed. In other words, Piltdown man was a fraud. A modern ape's jaw and a human skull had been doctored to resemble an apeman, and the forgery had fooled most of the world's greatest experts. Debate on who was responsible for the fraud continues to this day.

## *Primates and hominoids*

Modern man, *Homo sapiens* ('wise man'), is placed in the order Primates, one of the 24 orders of mammals. Living primates include the prosimians (lemurs, lorises, tarsiers), the monkeys, and the great apes (gibbons, orangutans, chimpanzees, gorillas). All primates share certain characteristics, such as highly developed binocular vision, mobile fingers and toes with flat nails instead of claws, a shortened snout with a reduced sense of smell, and large brains relative to body size. Most evolutionists interpret these similarities as evidence that all primates have descended from a common ancestor.

The earliest primate fossils date to the Early Eocene or perhaps to the Late Palaeocene, but the origin of the primates is shrouded in mystery. They supposedly evolved from a primitive insect-eating mammal, but there are no transitional forms connecting primates to insectivores. The ancestor was thought to be the tree shrew, but there is now abundant evidence that tree shrews are unrelated to primates. The fossil record fails to produce any evidence for transitional forms between prosimians, the earliest primates, and the New World and Old World monkeys, and there are also no identifiable transitional forms between monkeys and apes – only a large gap.[1]

| | **Science** Began (years BP) | **Theosophy** Began (years BP) |
|---|---|---|
| **Phanerozoic eon** | | |
| Cenozoic era | | |
| Quaternary period: | | |
| Holocene epoch | 10,000 | |
| Pleistocene | 1,600,000 | 870,000 |
| Tertiary period: | | |
| Pliocene epoch | 5,300,000 | 1,870,000 |
| Miocene | 23,700,000 | 3,670,000 |
| Oligocene | 36,600,000 | 5,280,000 |
| Eocene | 57,800,000 | 7,140,000 |
| Palaeocene | 66,400,000 | 7,870,000 |
| Mesozoic era | | |
| Cretaceous | 144,000,000 | 16,000,000 |
| Jurassic | 208,000,000 | 28,000,000 |
| Triassic | 245,000,000 | 44,000,000 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Palaeozoic era | | |
| Permian | 286,000,000 | 74,000,000 |
| Carboniferous | 360,000,000 | 110,000,000 |
| Devonian | 408,000,000 | 148,000,000 |
| Silurian | 438,000,000 | 179,000,000 |
| Ordovician | 505,000,000 | 214,000,000 |
| Cambrian | 540,000,000 | 250,000,000 |
| **Proterozoic eon** | | |
| (Laurentian) | (640,000,000) | 320,000,000 (start of 4th round) |
| Late | 900,000,000 | |
| Middle | 1,600,000,000 | 720,000,000 (start of 3rd round?) |
| Early | 2,500,000,000 | |
| **Archean eon** | | |
| Late | 3,000,000,000 | 1,300,000,000 (start of 2nd round?) |
| Middle | 3,400,000,000 | |
| Early | 3,960,000,000 | |
| **Hadean eon** | 4,600,000,000 | 1,973,000,000 (start of 1st round) |

**Fig. 1.2.** Chronology of the geological ages. All the dates given in this article are official 'scientific' dates unless indicated otherwise. According to theosophy, the scientific time-periods are too long by a factor of between about 2 and 9, due to the false assumptions on which radiometric dating is based.[2]

Within the order Primates, humans, apes, and their ancestors are classified within the superfamily Hominoidea (hominoids), which includes the 2 families known as pongids (anthropoid apes) and hominids (upright-walking primates with relatively large brains). The ape-ancestry theory does not propose that man descended directly from the living apes, but that both modern apes and man descended from a common *apelike* ancestor. The first apelike creatures appeared in the Oligocene, while the first apes thought to be on the line to humans appeared in the Miocene. These are believed to include *Dryopithecus*, but this has been challenged on the grounds that although the dryopithecines had a far less specialized anatomy than modern apes, they were still too specialized to have given rise to either the hominids or the great apes.[3]

Contrary to the impression created by the fanciful illustrations that decorate popular science publications, a smooth series of fossils leading from an apelike common ancestor to man on the one hand and present-day apes on the other has not been found. For nearly 50 years, based on jaw fragments and a few teeth, palaeoanthropologists insisted that *Ramapithecus*, which lived between 16.7 and 5.3 million years ago, was an intermediate between ape and man, but it is now generally believed to be an ancestor of the orangutan, rather than a hominid. Another creature that was once proposed as a 'missing link' is *Oreopithecus*, which lived from 11.2 to 3.4 million years ago, but it has since been demoted. Palaeontologist David Pilbeam has commented: '*Oreopithecus* has had quite a checkered history and has been described as a monkey, ape, hominid and even pig!'[4]

Before the rise of the new science of evolutionary genetics, estimates for the date of the split between hominids and apes ranged from 4 to 30 million years ago, with most fossil experts choosing a date somewhere in the middle. However, since the early 1960s, various molecular techniques have been developed for determining when 2 species shared a common ancestor. They involve quantifying the amount of difference between particular molecules or proteins in the 2 species, together with the rate of evolution in the molecule concerned (which is assumed to be constant). The various 'molecular clocks' are often calibrated on the basis of a date of 30 million years for the alleged split between Old World monkeys and hominoids, a date based on 'fossil evidence' and radiometric dating.[5]

These studies led to the conclusion that African apes and humans diverged between about 6 and 8 million years ago, with some giving a date as low as 5 million years or as high as 10 million years. One of the researchers involved even declared that 'one no longer has the option of considering a fossil older than about eight million years as a hominid *no matter what it looks like*'! [6] After much contentious debate, palaeoanthropologists have accepted this shortened timescale for human evolution.

## *Australopithecus and other 'ancestors'*

Physical characteristics distinguishing hominids from pongids include erect posture, bipedal locomotion, rounded skulls, larger brains, and small teeth (including unspecialized canines). The hominid family includes not only our own species, *Homo sapiens*, but also more primitive human forms belonging to the genus *Homo*, and partially bipedal apes belonging mostly to the genus *Australopithecus* ('southern ape'). All hominid species except our own are now thought to be extinct.

Arranging the various species into an evolutionary sequence has become increasingly difficult as more fossils have been found. Anthropologists Donald Johanson and Blake Edgar write:

> Paleoanthropological discoveries make it clear that the human family tree is not a single lineage in which one species succeeded another, leading relentlessly to the appearance of modern humans. Instead, the hominid fossil record suggests that our ancestry is better thought of as a bush, with the branches representing a number of bipedal species that evolved along different evolutionary lines.[1]

In 2002 the Toumai skull, 6 to 7 million years old, was found in Chad, in the southern Sahara desert, and given the name *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*. It shares chimpanzee and australopithecine anatomical features, and it is not known whether it walked upright. It was hyped in the media as a potential human ancestor, but some anthropologists say the latest 'apeman' may be no more than an early female gorilla or chimpanzee.[2] Palaeoanthropologist Bernard Wood remarked: 'If the new find has taught us anything it is that, paradoxically, the more we discover about our origins, the less we know.'[3]

In 2000, bones of a creature named *Orrorin tugenensis* (also known as Millennium Man), dated at about 6 million years, were found in Kenya by a French and Kenyan research team. They argued that it was ancestral to *Homo* through *Praeanthropus* (a name used to refer to *Australopithecus afarensis* by those who do not consider it ancestral to later australopithecines). Their dismissal of the australopithecines as a whole as a dead-end side-branch is very controversial, and their claim that *Orrorin* was bipedal is widely regarded as premature.[4] Some researchers have pointed out that primates with skeletal remains indicating bipedalism should not automatically be considered human ancestors.

In 1994 researchers uncovered bones attributed to *Ardipithecus ramidus*, who lived in Ethiopia 4.4 million years ago (some researchers refer to it as *Australopithecus ramidus*). More *Ardipithecus* bones, 5.8 million years old, were discovered in 2001. *Ardipithecus* had roughly the same size and body structure as a chimpanzee, but its foramen magnum (the hole at the base of a skull through which the spinal cord passes) indicates that it walked upright, as does a toe bone with a humanlike structure found 15 km away that is also attributed to *ramidus*. Some researchers have proposed that the line of human origins went through the older *Ardipithecus* to the younger one to *Australopithecus afarensis* at 3.2 million years and then to the first members of *Homo* at around 2.5 million years ago.

Other scientists reject *Ardipithecus* as a human ancestor. Its foramen magnum is situated farther forward than in any other hominid, and Ian Tattersall and Jeffrey Schwartz argue that such a position 'is so uniquely derived compared with every one of its presumed descendants that it couldn't have been ancestral to any of them'.[5] The discoverers of *Orrorin tugenensis* believe that *Ardipithecus* was a descendant of *Orrorin* but was ancestral to chimpanzees rather than humans.

The australopithecines lived from about 4½ million to roughly 1 million years ago. The modern consensus is that they possessed an upright posture and bipedal gait, but some species show features such as relatively long arms and curved finger and toe bones reminiscent of an arboreal way of life. These 'apemen' stood between 1 and 1.5 m tall and had a small braincase ranging from 410 to 600 cc, not very different from those of living apes, but their teeth were more similar to those of humans. *Homo* is distinguished from the australopithecines by a larger cranial capacity, ranging from roughly 530 cc in earlier species to over 2000 cc in modern humans. The official view is that the australopithecines lived only in Africa, but some scientists have reported australopithecines from China, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia.[6]

The 'robust' australopithecines (which include the species: *robustus*, *boisei*, and *aethiopicus*) are not thought to be on a direct line of descent to modern humans, and some palaeoanthropologists assign them to a separate genus, *Paranthropus*. The 'gracile' australopithecines are widely thought to have given rise to the earliest *Homo* species around 2.5 million years ago, in the Late Pliocene.


**Fig. 1.3.** *Australopithecus africanus* (left) and *Australopithecus robustus*.[7]

There is vigorous debate on the status of the various species of *Australopithecus*. For instance, some scientists believe that the fossils assigned to *afarensis* and those assigned to *anamensis* really belong to several species. Some see *africanus* as a regional variation or subspecies of *afarensis*, some consider it to be a descendant of *afarensis*, and some believe the *africanus* fossil material should be assigned to 2 completely different species.

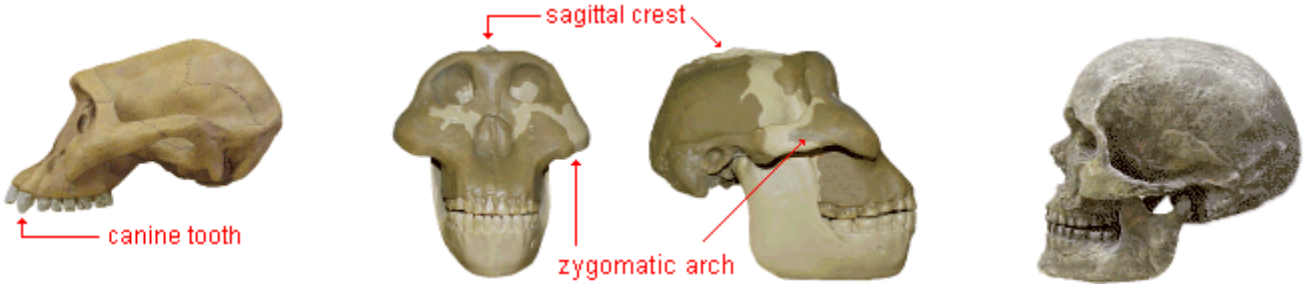



**Fig. 1.4.** Left: *Australopithecus afarensis*. Centre: *Australopithecus boisei*. Right: A modern human skull.[8]

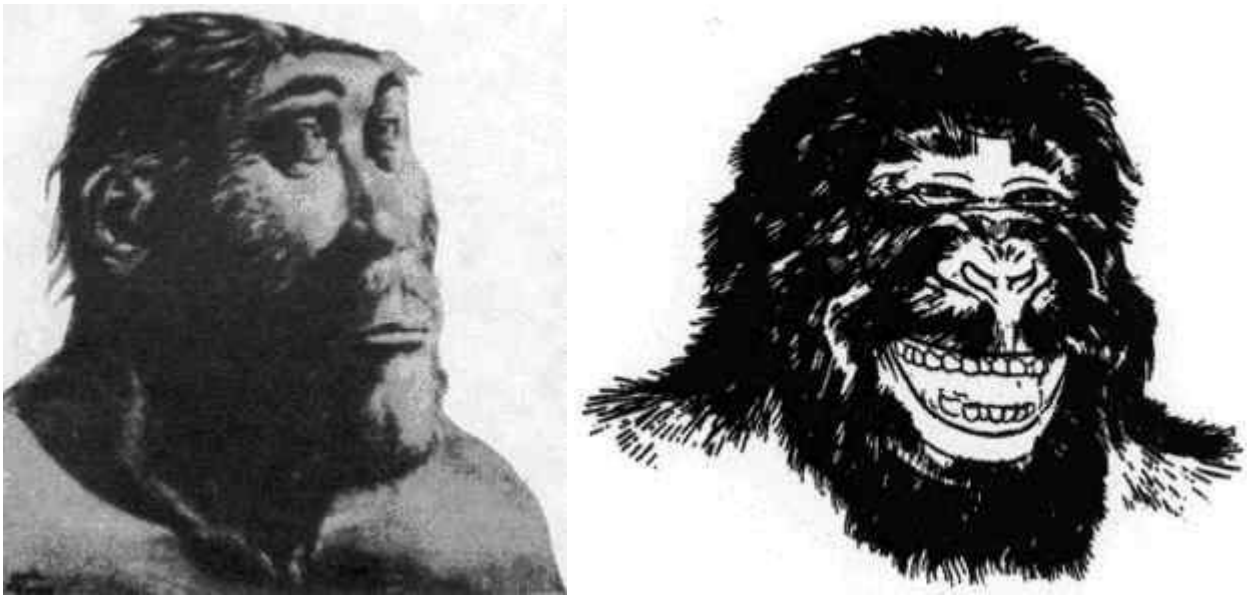


**Fig. 1.5.** Two contrasting views by evolutionists of *Zinjanthropus boisei* (now known as *Australopithecus boisei*).[9]

Interestingly, the oldest hominids, such as *Sahelanthropus*, *Orrorin*, *Ardipithecus*, and *Australopithecus afarensis*, lived in a woodland environment, whereas darwinists always used to argue that bipedalism developed when our ancestors moved into a grassland environment, as it enabled them to see farther when hunting for game or watching for predators. This scenario was never very convincing. Humans, as bipeds, are notably slower than quadrupeds – a serious problem for a tree-dweller that supposedly moved out onto the predator-rich savannas. Moreover, prairie dogs and bears are very good at surveying their surroundings but have not adopted full bipedalism.

On the basis of fragments of the pelvis, limb, and foot bones it is widely believed that the australopithecines walked habitually upright. But there is 'increasing evidence from studies of the limb bones of the australopithecines that the skeletal adaptations for climbing and bipedal walking are similar', and that some of the australopithecines 'may well have spent more time resting and feeding in trees than has hitherto been believed'.[10]

Some dissenting scientists have challenged the australopithecines' status as hominids and/or as our direct ancestors. Louis Leakey held that the australopithecines were not in the main line of human evolution, but an early offshoot from it. Anatomist Sir Solly Zuckerman took the view that the teeth, skull, jaws, brain, and limbs of *Australopithecus* were essentially apelike, and concluded that it was in no way related to the origin of man. Charles Oxnard held that, although the australopithecines were bipedal, they were also at home in the trees, and did not have a place in the direct human lineage.

Some modern researchers are continuing to raise objections to overly humanlike portrayals of *Australopithecus*.[11] Tattersall and Schwartz point out that because palaeoanthropology focuses heavily on discovering ancestors, the uniqueness of the australopithecines has been downplayed, and that it is debatable whether 'we really can point to any australopith as an early but direct human ancestor'. They add that neither *afarensis*, *africanus*, *aethiopicus*, *robustus*, nor *boisei* can be ancestral to the *Homo* lineage because in certain features, e.g. the femur, they are more 'evolved', i.e. specialized, whereas 'an ancestor should be more primitive, not more derived, than its presumed descendants'.[12]

According to mainstream anthropology, the australopithecines were transitional between early

quadrupedal apes and fully bipedal modern humans. However, some scientists, including supporters of the theory of initial bipedalism (see section 5), have turned the orthodox position on its head, and argue that the australopithecines are actually offshoots of *bipedal* hominids and were evolving towards *quadrupedalism*. Fossil evidence provides some support for this.

*Australopithecus anamensis*, discovered in Kenya in 1995, appears to have been perfectly bipedal 4 million years ago. 'Lucy' (*A. afarensis*), dated at 3.2 million years old, discovered at Hadar, Ethiopia, in 1974, has bipedal characteristics, but she also has divergent big toes like those used by the apes of today to climb trees. *Afarensis* also had an upward-pointing shoulder joint indicating that the arm was used for suspensory behaviour, and a hand with a powerful wrist and curved fingers, suitable for climbing. 'Little Foot', an australopithecine skeleton found at the Sterkfontein caves in South Africa in 1998, and dated at around 3.3 million years old, had an ankle joint that shows it was already bipedal but was also able to climb trees thanks to its divergent big toes. As palaeontologist Yvette Deloison points out, this means we have a 4-million-year-old australopithecine that was perfectly bipedal, and two more recent skeletons that are *less* bipedal and more arboreal.[13]

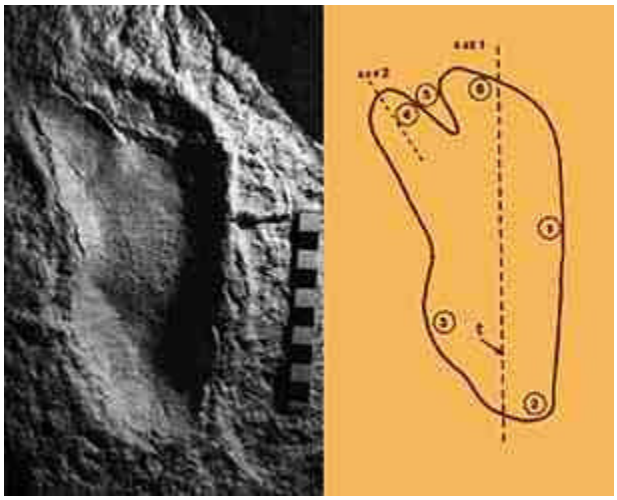


**Fig. 1.6.** The footprints found at Laetoli, Tanzania, dated at 3.6 million years, are usually attributed to *A. afarensis*. Though very similar to human footprints, they have certain apelike characteristics indicating that the creature that made them had a bipedal gait, but not entirely like that of humans.[14]

Some anthropologists argue that the robust australopithecines, which survived about 1½ million years longer than the gracile forms (such as *afarensis*), had a pelvis better adapted for climbing than for walking.[15] *A. garhi*, some 2.5 million years old, is thought to have descended from *afarensis*, yet it has *longer* forearms. Another 'intriguing puzzle' is the fact that the OH 62 skeleton, 1.8 million years old, which has been assigned to *Homo habilis*, has longer arms and shorter legs than *afarensis*, its proposed ancestor (see fig. 1.8).[16]

Taking the view that evolution never goes backwards (known as Dollo's law), Deloison argues that 'the human foot, highly specialized for bipedal use, cannot have been derived from a foot adapted to climbing trees, which is also highly specialized but in a different way'. She estimates that a primitive ape walked upright as long as 15 million years ago. She believes there were 3 species of bipedal primates: one of them developed into hominids (*Homo*), another became semi-bipedal, semi-arboreal australopithecines, and the third developed into quadrupedal orangutans, gorillas, and chimpanzees.[17] François de Sarre has argued that it was actually some of the australopithecines that eventually evolved into gorillas and chimps.

The controversy surrounding *Australopithecus* shows no signs of abating. In late 2001 Meave Leakey added to the already confused early hominid picture by announcing the discovery of a new hominid in Kenya, 3.5 million years old, roughly the same age as *Australopithecus afarensis*. Instead of identifying it as a new member of the genus *Australopithecus*, she stirred up the hominid world by creating a new genus and species for it, *Kenyanthropus platyops*, implying that the australopithecines are a side-branch unrelated to humans.[18]

However, the mainstream view that we had australopithecine ancestors is unlikely to be given up without a fight. In 1986 Pat Shipman made the following confession: 'we could assert that we have no evidence whatsoever of where *Homo* arises from and remove all members of the genus *Australopithecus* from the hominid family. ... I've such a visceral negative reaction to this idea that I suspect I am unable to evaluate it rationally. I was brought up on the notion that *Australopithecus* is a hominid.'[19]

## *The rise of Homo*

Explaining the assumed evolutionary transition from *Australopithecus* to *Homo* poses grave problems. Tattersall and Schwartz believe *A. africanus* and *A. garhi* were closest to the *Homo* line, whereas Johanson and Edgar believe it was *A. afarensis* (see fig. 1.7). The latter admit that 'there is a long gap in the fossil record between 2 and 3 million years ago where convincing intermediates between *A. afarensis* ... and earliest *Homo* are essentially absent'. They add:

> For the moment, the evolutionary roots of *Homo* are still poorly understood, but they will ultimately be found in pre-2 million-year-old deposits. Despite the widely held view that *A. africanus* makes a good candidate for ancestor to *Homo*, equally convincing arguments can be mounted to support a unique link between *africanus* and *A. robustus*. Should this be the case, then the three species of Pliocene-Pleistocene *Homo* [i.e. *rudolfensis*, *habilis*, and *ergaster*] are without an identifiable predecessor.[1]

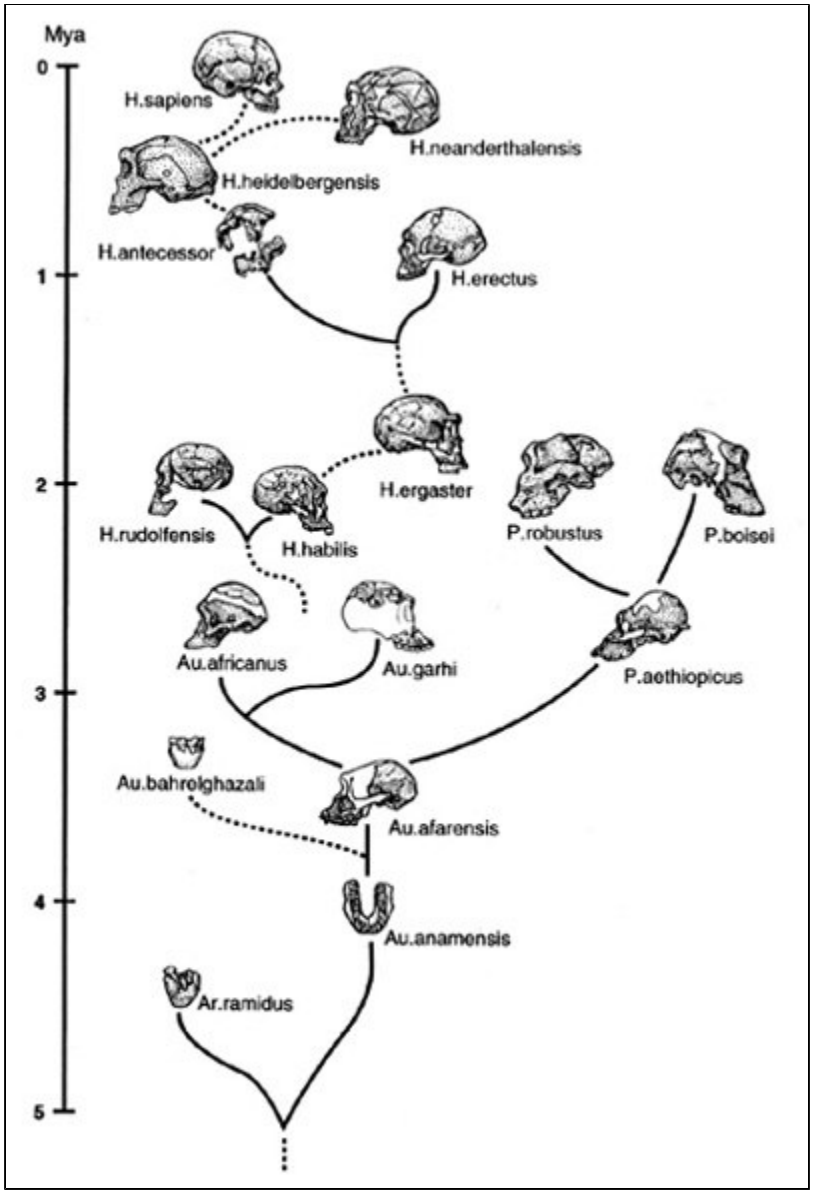
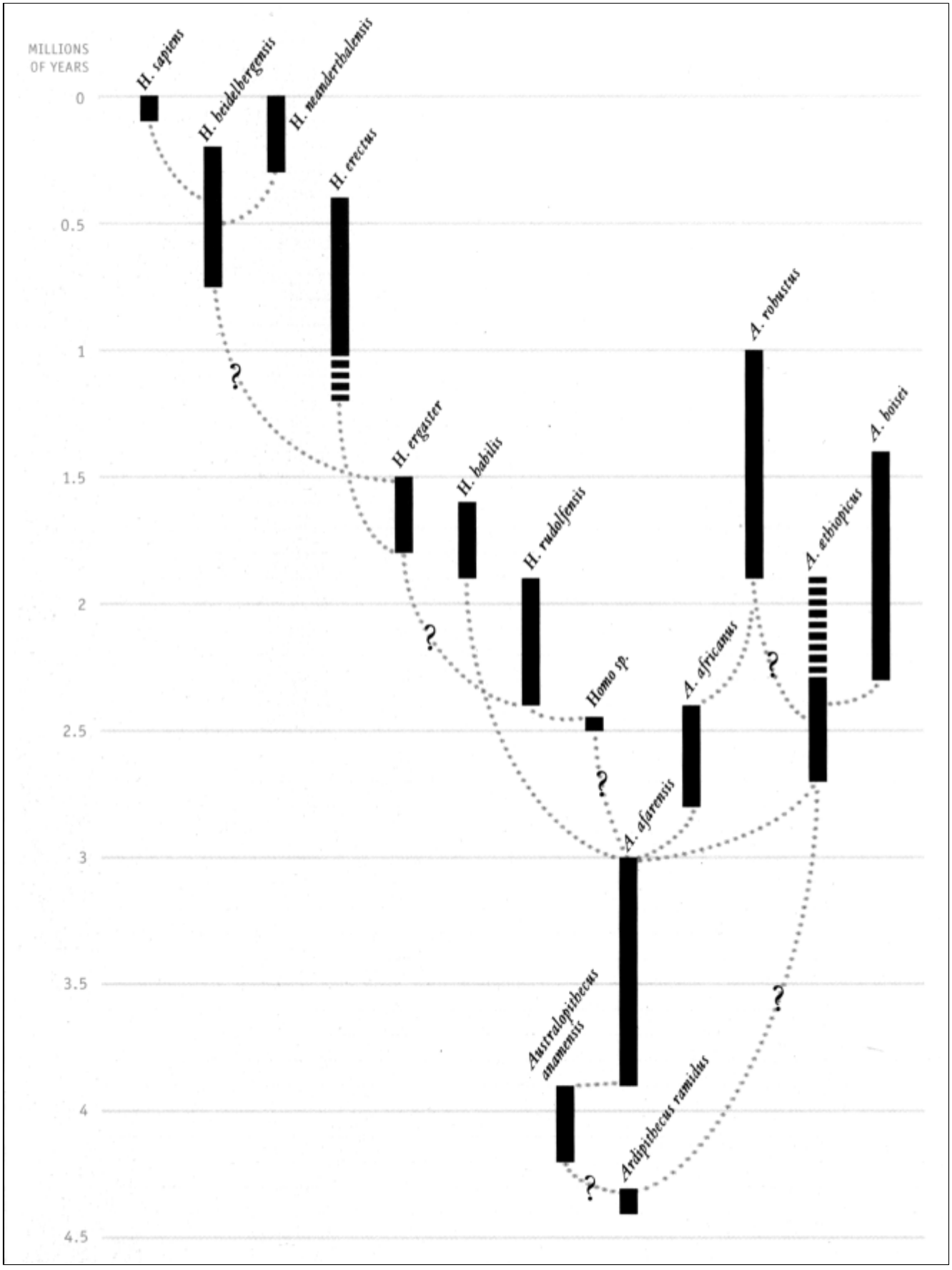



**Fig. 1.7.** Two hominid family trees: *above*, from Tattersall and Schwartz; *below*, from Johanson and Edgar. The latter write: 'The variety of human family trees now cluttering the literature makes it virtually impossible to identify the correct tree because of the forest.'[2]




There are serious disagreements about how many species of *Homo* should be recognized and how to arrange them into a family tree. The original simplistic scenario in which *Homo habilis* (‘handy man’) evolved into *Homo erectus* (‘upright man’) which then evolved into *Homo sapiens* has long since been abandoned, and several new and controversial species have been added.

While some anthropologists hail *H. habilis* as the most likely ancestor of our lineage, others argue that it was a dead-end side-branch. It is widely recognized that *habilis* has become an all-embracing 'wastebasket' species into which a variety of fossils have been conveniently swept. Some anthropologists believe that the 'real' *habilis* should be assigned to the genus *Australopithecus* rather than *Homo*.

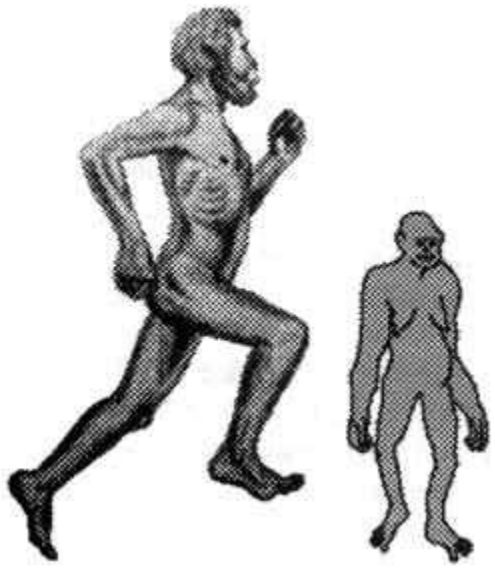


**Fig. 1.8.** *Left: Homo habilis* as generally depicted before 1987. Below the head, the anatomy is essentially human. *Right:* After the femur OH 62 was found at Olduvai Gorge in 1987, a new picture of *H. habilis* emerged, far smaller and more apelike than before.[3]

*Habilis* won majority acceptance in the late 1970s, especially after the discovery of the ER 1470 skull. However, some scientists have now assigned this skull to a second species of early *Homo* known as *rudolfensis*, while others argue that it belongs to a larger-brained gracile australopithecine.[4] Some researchers believe *rudolfensis* rivals *habilis* for the status of our earliest *Homo* ancestor, but others argue that *rudolfensis* had certain specializations which make it less likely than smaller-brained and more primitive-limbed *habilis* to have given rise to later humans. Some see *rudolfensis* as the ancestor of *habilis*, others see the two on completely different evolutionary lines, and yet others reject the existence of *rudolfensis* altogether.

*Homo erectus* stood between 1.5 and 1.8 m tall and had a brain size of between 700 and 1300 cc. Most palaeoanthropologists now believe that from the neck down, *Homo erectus* was almost the same as modern humans. The forehead, however, sloped back from behind massive brow ridges, the jaws and teeth were large, and the lower jaw lacked a chin. He is generally regarded as being incapable of anything but the most rudimentary speech. Although most palaeoanthropologists still regard *erectus* as a direct ancestor to modern humans, some now suggest that it is too specialized. Tattersall says that *erectus* was made the ancestor of *H. sapiens* 'not on any compelling morphological grounds, but because it simply happened to occur at the right *time* to be that ancestor'.[5]

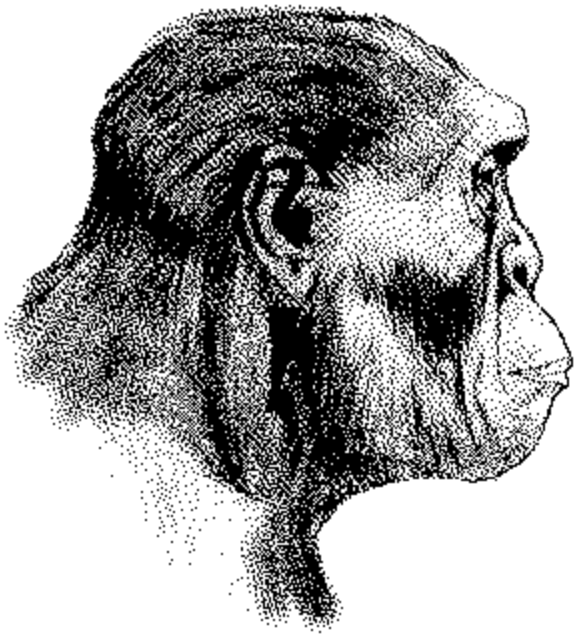


**Fig. 1.9.** An artist's impression of *Homo erectus*.[6]

Dates for *erectus* have become earlier and earlier, while *habilis* remains have been found in later and later deposits, making a lineage in which *habilis* evolves into *erectus* increasingly unlikely. The oldest *erectus* fossils are dated at 1.8 million years and it persisted until about 300,000 years ago in Africa and Europe, but perhaps as recently as 40,000 years ago in Java.[7] (There is evidence that *erectus*-like creatures may still exist today in isolated wilderness regions, including China; see section 4.) *Erectus* is supposed to have evolved in Africa, but *erectus* fossils have been found in Java which are just as old as the oldest African fossils.[8] Stone tools and a few hominid fossil fragments dated at 2.25 million years have been discovered in eastern China, and many Chinese scientists believe that *erectus* evolved independently in Asia.[9]

The validity of the *erectus* species has been challenged. Some anthropologists have assigned African *erectus* fossils to *Homo ergaster*, while others fossils have been assigned to *Homo sapiens*. However, researchers who see *ergaster* as a valid species tend to assign different specimens to it. They generally regard it as a direct ancestor of modern humans with *erectus* being an evolutionary dead-end. Many scientists reject the validity of *ergaster* as it is too similar to *erectus*. Some palaeoanthropologists, such as Milford Wolpoff, propose that *erectus*, too, should be abolished as it is insufficiently distinct from *sapiens*.[10] While some researchers recognize 7 or 8 *Homo* species, Wolpoff and his colleagues recognize only 2: *sapiens* and *habilis*, with *ergaster*, *erectus*, and *heidelbergensis* being subsumed within *sapiens*, who would therefore extend back some 2.5 million years.

Our own species, *Homo sapiens*, is generally thought to have arisen in Africa some 200,000 to 250,000 years ago; the oldest generally accepted fossils to date are 160,000 years old, and were found in Ethiopia in 2003. (Candidate *Homo sapiens* fossils up to 300,000 years old have been found in eastern and southern Africa but are usually fragmentary and hard to date.)[11] *Sapiens* then proceeded to spread out over the world. According to the currently dominant out-of-Africa replacement theory, which is based mainly on mitochondrial DNA evidence, *sapiens* largely replaced the native hominid populations that it encountered (which allegedly originated in a far earlier migration of *Homo erectus* or *ergaster* out of Africa). Advocates of the rival multiregional continuity theory, such as Wolpoff and Alan Thorne, on the other hand, argue on the basis of fossil and archaeological evidence that *sapiens* interbred with other hominid populations after leaving Africa.

The Neanderthals lived from about 230,000 to 30,000 years ago. They are sometimes classed as a separate species, *Homo neanderthalensis*, but other anthropologists classify them as *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*, i.e. a subspecies of *H. sapiens*. The modern form of our species is exemplified by Cro-Magnon man (*H. sapiens sapiens*), who started to arrive in Europe about 40,000 years ago and whose origins have been called 'a complete mystery'.* His arrival coincides with the disappearance of the Neanderthals. In Western Europe, the Neanderthals were replaced by modern humans rather suddenly, but in Central Europe there is abundant evidence of genetic admixture and interbreeding. In the Middle East, one group of anthropologists sees 2 distinct species, *H. neanderthalensis* and *H. sapiens*, coexisting for 60,000 years, with no significant interbreeding or transformation. Another faction holds that all Middle East skeletons are variants of a single species, *H. sapiens*, and interbreeding was common, and that even the European Neanderthals are merely a variant of *H. sapiens*.[12]

*One (nonmainstream!) theory is that Cro-Magnon originated on Poseidonis (Plato's 'Atlantis') and other islands in the Atlantic, and migrated to Europe in several waves as the islands showed increasingly signs of geological instability, culminating in the submergence of Poseidonis 11½ thousand years ago. Certain blood-group and genetic findings are consistent with a series of migrations of different groups of Atlanteans both eastward and westward.[13]

## *Evolutionary interpretations*

The theory that one species gradually evolves into another species through the slow accumulation of minute changes over extremely long periods of time is contradicted by the fossil record, including the hominid fossil record. Stephen J. Gould points out that 'we still have no firm evidence for any progressive change within any hominid species'.[1] Instead, species persist unchanged for millions of years, and these periods are followed by the sudden appearance of several new species. This has prompted the development of the modified darwinian theory of punctuated equilibrium, first proposed by Gould and Niles Eldredge in 1972, which says that new species split off from ancestral species so rapidly that there is little chance of a smooth series of transitional fossils being preserved.

However, the probability of the right *random* genetic variations (amidst all the unfavourable ones) occurring and being 'selected for' within a very short space of time, leading to the appearance of a new species, is even more remote than the prospect of such changes occurring over a very long period. 99.9% of all genetic mutations are harmful or even lethal. In the 1950s geneticist J.B.S. Haldane showed that, even under very favourable assumptions, only one new, beneficial mutation could be completely substituted in a population every 300 generations. So in 10 million years – far longer than the time that has elapsed since the alleged chimp/human split from a common ancestor – only 1667 substitutions of beneficial genes could occur.[2] This amounts to three ten-millionths of the human genome – which is hardly likely to turn an ape into a human!

Moreover, recent studies have found that the human mutation rate is so high that each breeding couple would have to produce at least 10 offspring, and more likely 40 or even 60 offspring, merely to prevent the population suffering genetic deterioration.[3] To get round this problem, darwinists invoke 'truncation selection' or 'synergistic epistasis', whereby harmful mutations are eliminated 'in bunches' – a purely speculative idea, despite its imposing name. It is any rate clear that unconventional factors must come into play to generate and guide evolutionary change.

This has been recognized by various evolutionists. For instance, in the 19th century, Alfred Russell Wallace, the codeveloper of the theory of natural selection, argued that humans could not have evolved without the intervention of higher intelligences. In the 20th century, palaeoanthropologist Franz Weidenreich accepted the principle of orthogenesis – the idea that evolution is directed by an inner drive towards a particular goal. Anthropologist Robert Broom believed that evolution was guided and controlled by a variety of spiritual and psychic agencies, some of them being benevolent and some malignant.[4] All three scientists nevertheless believed

that man had descended from the apes.

Modern darwinists have assigned a major role to 'regulatory genes' in order to explain why we so often find innovations appearing abruptly in the fossil record, rather than being slowly fine-tuned over the ages by natural selection. Regulatory genes control major developmental patterns, and seemingly minor changes in these genes can apparently have major consequences for the individuals and populations carrying them. Each individual possesses 2 copies of each gene, which may be the same or different. If they are different, one copy will be dominant and the other recessive or unexpressed. Nonlethal genetic mutations are usually recessive to start with. It is thought that at some point, regulatory genes, 'by a mechanism that remains unclear', activate the recessive mutated genes and deactivate certain other genes, leading to the abrupt appearance of a new organ, or perhaps a new species.[5]

In other words, just the right genes mutate *randomly* in just the right way, and then at just the right time exactly the right genes are *randomly* switched on or off to produce an evolutionary novelty! Yet darwinists insist that they don't believe in miracles! Furthermore, contrary to the impression darwinists like to give, genes do not carry the 'blueprint' for the construction of an organism; they merely code for the production of proteins. The proteins specified by structural genes provide the raw materials used in building the body, while the proteins specified by regulatory genes can carry signals that turn other genes on or off. But no genes are known to carry instructions for moulding proteins into tissues, organs, and complex living organisms, nor do they explain instinctual and learned behaviour, and the workings of the mind. Great chunks of reality are therefore missing from the materialistic darwinist theory.

For new species to arise through a series of rapid genetic changes, those changes would have to be *directed* and *coordinated* in some way. Even then, the belief that humans descended from australopithecines and ultimately from some Miocene ape remains no more than an unproven hypothesis. Theosophy argues that it is actually the apes which are partially descended from man (see section 6). Some scientists have recognized that even the earliest apelike creatures had anatomical specializations that make them unlikely ancestors of humans, who have a simpler, more generalized anatomy (see section 5). As already explained, a few scientists argue that far from being our ancestors, the australopithecines descended from a *bipedal* hominid and were evolving towards *quadrupedalism*. However, many evolutionists take the view that there is no objection to anatomical specializations being gained and later lost in the course of evolution – if this is what it takes to save the ape-ancestry theory from collapse!

It is often said that extraordinary claims demand extraordinary evidence. The idea that humans, with their unique mental powers, developed from an ape through random mutations and natural selection certainly ranks as an extraordinary claim. But the only extraordinary thing about the 'evidence' cited in support of the theory is its *extraordinary weakness*! What would really demolish the present claims that *Homo* evolved from *Australopithecus* would be if fossils or other evidence of humans similar to ourselves were found in strata more than one or two million years old. Although conspicuously absent from modern textbooks, such evidence has in fact been found and will be reviewed in section 3.

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# 2. Genetic tales: Adam and Eve

## *Human-ape similarities*

For years, the genetic similarity between humans and chimpanzees was put at 98.5%. The figure was then revised down to less than 95%. The latest figure is 99.4%, suggesting that chimps are closer to humans than they are to gorillas.[1] Some scientists have argued that chimps should therefore have the same legal rights as humans!

The different figures derive from different ways of comparing DNA. The 95% figure was obtained by searching corresponding human and chimp chromosomes for 'missing' or 'extra' pieces of DNA, whereas the latest figure is based on searching corresponding genes for single-letter DNA base changes. The 98.5% figure was derived from the DNA hybridization technique, which is widely considered to be crude and unreliable. Strands of DNA from the 2 species being compared are allowed to combine (or hybridize), and are then heated; the higher the temperature required to force them apart the more related the 2 species are assumed to be.

The human genome has only recently been sequenced, revealing the order of the 3 billion or so nucleotide bases in the DNA molecules. This is like knowing the sequence of letters in a book without knowing anything about how they combine into meaningful words and sentences. Moreover, 97% of the bases in the human genome are currently believed not to make up genes and are labelled 'pseudogenes' or 'junk' DNA; sorting out the sequences that represent actual genes could take decades. Since the chimp genome has not even been sequenced, no one knows how similar humans and chimps really are on the genetic level.

The claim that humans and chimpanzees are genetically 99.4% alike does seem hard to believe given that the chimp genome is 10% larger than a human's, and humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes compared to 24 for the chimps (a difference of over 4%). Other discrepancies are that chromosomes 4, 9, and 12 are markedly different in humans and chimps, and human and chimp Y chromosomes are of different sizes with many markers that do not line up at all.[2] To explain why chimps and humans have different numbers of chromosomes, darwinists argue that chimp chromosomes 12 and 13 have combined into human chromosome 2. But François de Sarre, for example, who rejects the ape-ancestry theory, argues that the *exact opposite* has occurred: human chromosome 2 has *split* into chimp chromosomes 12 and 13; chromosome 13 has also acquired additional genetic material.[3] This is consistent with the theosophical position that apes have partially descended from humans and have developed a more specialized anatomy.

Although the chimp-human connection receives by far the most publicity, different kinds of genetic studies yield conflicting results regarding the evolutionary relationship between humans, chimpanzees, and gorillas. In the case of nuclear DNA, the Y chromosome evidence makes chimps closest to humans, but the X chromosome evidence makes chimps closest to gorillas, as does involucrin-gene analysis and chromosome banding analysis. Some studies of mitochondrial DNA suggest that humans, chimps, and gorillas are equally close to each other. But one analysis indicated that human mitochondria seem to represent a radical departure from previously examined organisms, and do not originate from recognizable relatives of present-day organisms.[4]

Jeffrey Schwartz points out that of 26 unique traits that humans share with the living hominoids, they share all 26 with the orangutan, only 9 with the chimpanzee and gorilla, and only 5 with the gibbon. He therefore maintains that man is more closely related to the orangutan than he is to the African apes and challenges the use of molecular and biochemical data to establish evolutionary relationships between man and apes.[5] Jonathan Marks says that, as far as skeletal evidence is concerned, the cranium links humans and chimps, but the rest of the skeleton links chimps and gorillas. Like Schwartz, he questions the prevailing belief that genetic evidence is superior to other kinds of evidence, saying it has been used to make 'rash generalizations' and draw 'belligerent conclusions' on the basis of questionable assumptions.[6]

As already noted, genes are vastly overrated by materialistic biologists. Genes merely specify what amino acids should be strung together to form protein molecules, and it is hardly surprising that the bodies of humans and apes are composed of similar molecular ingredients. The real problem is the arrangement of those ingredients into complex structures. It seems that there must be other factors which explain why the average human brain is three times the size of the ape brain and why humans have selfconscious minds whereas all the apes do not.

## *African Eve*

According to the overhyped 'African Eve' hypothesis, all living humans can trace part of their genetic inheritance to a female who lived in Africa about 200,000 years ago. This theory is based on studies of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), which we inherit only from our mothers. It is assumed that the only changes that mtDNA undergoes are those that accumulate by random mutations, and that by working out the rate of mutation mtDNA can be used as a kind of clock. On the basis of mtDNA data from different human populations, computer programs identify which population group has the most variation (i.e. the most mutations) in its mtDNA; this group is assumed to be the oldest group and therefore the parent group. It is also computed how far back in time we have to go for the observed mtDNA diversity in today's human populations to coalesce into a single past mtDNA sequence, and this is assumed to provide the date of the last common ancestor.

All the assumptions underlying this method are false.[1] Mitochondrial DNA supposedly undergoes random mutations at a fixed rate and is not subject to natural selection. However, the rate of mutation is actually stochastic, or probabilistic, which renders perfect calibration of the molecular clock impossible. Moreover, there is increasing evidence that natural selection does in fact affect mtDNA, which means that the molecular clock will run at different rates in different populations. For example, if in one population natural selection is eliminating some of the mutations, this will make that population appear younger than it really is. Some scientists have also challenged the belief that mtDNA is inherited solely from the mother and does not randomly recombine with male DNA during sexual reproduction.

The fact that African populations may show a higher level of mtDNA diversity than Asian and European populations does not necessarily mean that African populations are the oldest. If the population increases more rapidly in one region than in another, this can cause greater diversity in that population. Conversely, population bottlenecks (where the population dwindles to just a few mating couples) lead to a loss of variation. Genetic variation within and among groups can also arise from low but consistent levels of interbreeding combined with buildup in regional groups of random genetic changes. As geneticist Alan Templeton says: 'The diversity in a region does not necessarily reflect the age of the regional population but rather could reflect the age since the last favourable mutation arose in the population, the demographic history of population size expansion, the extent of gene flow with other populations, and so on.'[2]

Our last common ancestor is frequently said to have lived 200,000 years ago, but different mtDNA studies have in fact produced widely divergent dates. A 1986 study, using intraspecific

calculations to calibrate the molecular clock (i.e. rates of mutation in human populations only), obtained an age range for Eve of 140,000 to 290,000 years. However, Templeton calculated that, taking account of probabilistic effects and of the mtDNA divergence level of 1.4 to 9.3% found by some researchers, the date for Eve would range from 33,000 years to 675,000 years.[3] It has recently been found that mtDNA appears to be mutating much faster than expected, and if this were also true in the past, 'mitochondrial Eve' would be a mere 6000 years old![4]

A 1991 study obtained an age range of 166,000 to 249,000 years, by using interspecific calculations to calibrate the mutation rate; it assumed that humans diverged from the chimpanzees either 4 or 6 million years ago. However, P. Gingerich estimated that the human-chimp split took place 9.2 million years ago, which gives a date for Eve of 554,000 years. Moreover, Lovejoy et al. found that the researchers had made a mathematical error, which when corrected gives an age for Eve of at least 1.3 million years![5]

Some mtDNA studies have contradicted the African Eve hypothesis and suggest that modern humans have Asian or African-Asian roots. In terms of anatomy, Asians and Europeans are more closely related to one another than either are to Africans.[6] If Africa is the home of modern humans, it is hard to explain why human chromosomes lack a protective gene sequence called the 'baboon marker'; all nonhuman primates known to carry this gene sequence are African, such as the gorilla and chimpanzee.[7]

## *African Adam*

The male counterpart of mtDNA is the Y chromosome, which is inherited only from the father. Many scientists believe that just as we can trace our mtDNA back to an African Eve, so we can trace our Y chromosomes back to an African Adam, or 'Y-guy', though other researchers view him as 'a statistical apparition generated by dubious evolutionary assumptions'.[1] As in the case of mtDNA, various factors interfere with the Y-chromosome molecular clock: the greater diversity in Y chromosomes among Africa populations could be because Africa was more heavily populated; and the diversity outside Africa could have been reduced by the spreading of particularly favourable genes through those populations. In other words, humans could be millions of years old, and the genetic diversity we see today could simply reflect recent genetic events in that long history.

A study published in 1995 concluded that humans had a common ancestor 270,000 years ago. But the researchers acknowledged that this conclusion is based on many background assumptions – e.g. that the human line separated from the chimp line about 5 million years ago – and that the findings are open to other interpretations. A 1995 issue of *Nature* contained 2 articles on the time of origin of extant Y chromosomes. One of them gave an age of 37,000 to 49,000 years, while the other gave an estimate of 188,000 years, with a possible range of 51,000 to 411,000 years. A later study gave a date of 150,000 years, and found that the root of the statistical tree was in Africa but that, in addition to a movement out of Africa into the Old World, there might have been a movement back into Africa from Asia.[2]

A 2001 study concluded that 3 mutations in the Y chromosomes among populations from East Africa can be traced to a mutation that arose in Africa between 35,000 and 89,000 years ago. The authors admitted that archaic Y chromosomes of modern humans could be erased by natural selection ('selection sweep') and also by random processes such as genetic drift. They noted that the age of a common ancestor estimated using autosome (nonsex chromosome)/X chromosome genes ranged from 535,000 to 1,860,000 years – much older than the favoured mtDNA and Y-chromosome dates. To explain this, they speculated that in the course of population 'bottlenecks' during a supposed migration out of Africa, there may have been 3 or 4 times as many men as women, leading to greater diversity in the autosome/X chromosome DNA.[3] This demonstrates how auxiliary hypotheses can always be wheeled in to bring

'anomalous' results more into line with current orthodoxy.

Studies of nuclear DNA (nDNA) have also led to divergent findings regarding our human ancestors. In a study that supported the African Eve hypothesis, the 2 gene markers examined suggested that the human race is split into 3 distinct populations: Subsaharan Africans, northeastern Africans, and everyone else in the world! Another study indicated that Africans and Eurasians are separated by a large genetic distance, thereby contradicting the out-of-Africa theory.[4] A 1990 study concluded that Caucasoid populations (located from North Africa to India), rather than sub-Saharan Africans, were closest to the ancestral genetic stock. An analysis of alleles (different forms of the same gene) that code for the globin molecule pointed to an age much greater than 200,000 years for modern human populations – and possibly as old as 3 million years.[5]

## *Genetics and archaeology*

The latest version of the multiregional theory agrees with the out-of-Africa theory that modern *Homo sapiens* probably originated in Africa around 200,000 years ago, but differs in suggesting that, after they left Africa, significant interbreeding took place with pre-*sapiens* hominids in other parts of the world, such as Neanderthals in Europe and *erectus* in Asia, leading to the evolution of modern humans. There is abundant fossil and archaeological evidence pointing to interbreeding between different human populations,[1] and genetic evidence does not rule it out. The point at issue is exactly what degree of interbreeding has taken place. As the *New Scientist* commented: 'Some disputes seem to end up being arguments over almost nothing.'[2] Both theories are probably wrong as the oldest modern human fossils are many millions of years old – but nowadays this evidence has virtually no chance of receiving a fair hearing (see next section).

Meanwhile, the current debate continues. Whereas most genetic analyses focus on just one DNA region, and produce widely varying results, Alan Templeton has carried out a study based on 10. On the assumption that humans and chimps diverged 6 million years ago, he concludes that, after *Homo erectus* left Africa 1.7 million years ago, there was a second major human migration 420,000 to 840,000 years ago, and a more recent one 80,000 to 150,000 years ago. He also sees signs of a more recent movement back into Africa from Asia, and huge amounts of genetic interchange between groups, thereby falsifying the hypothesis of complete replacement.[3]

Mitochondrial DNA studies indicate that modern humans and Neanderthals had a common ancestor 450,000 to 850,000 years ago, and have been used to bolster the orthodox view that there has been virtually no interbreeding between Neanderthals and modern humans (implying that they are separate species). Sceptics point out that these studies are so plagued with practical and theoretical problems that their conclusions are highly dubious. Anthropologist Erik Trinkhaus says that there is a lot of subjectivity in judging what amount of difference in DNA amounts to a difference in species. He argues that fossil evidence shows signs of considerable interbreeding between Neanderthals and modern humans, and that genetic evidence for such interbreeding may have become so diluted as to escape detection by crude DNA hybridization techniques.[4] Moreover, mtDNA retrieved from a 62,000-year-old Australian *H. sapiens* fossil differs more from the DNA of living people than does the mtDNA of Neanderthals. Therefore, even if Neanderthal DNA is quite different from modern human DNA, this does not necessarily mean that Neanderthals did not interbreed with anatomically modern humans.[5]

The limitations and unreliability of genetic analysis are clearly exposed by the contradictory results produced by different studies. David Frayer comments:

> Unlike genetic data derived from living humans, fossils can be used to test predictions of theories about the past without relying on a long list of assumptions about the neutrality of genetic markers, mutational rates, or other requirements necessary to

> retrodict the past from current genetic variation ... [G]enetic information, at best, provides a theory of how modern human origins *might have happened* if the assumptions used in interpreting the genetic data are correct.

As Rosalind Harding says: 'There's no clear genetic test. We're going to have to let the fossil people answer this one.'[6]

Theosophical literature indicates that surprisingly ancient human fossils could turn up in Central Asia, since that is where our own fifth humanity (or root-race) developed into a distinct human stock some one million years ago. The region is said to have been the home of a series of flourishing civilizations during the last 4 or 5 million years, since the midpoint of the Atlantean era.[7]*

> *4 to 5 million years ago on the theosophical timescale corresponds to about 26 to 34 million years ago on the scientific timescale, i.e. to the Oligocene epoch.

Future archaeological discoveries are bound to bring many surprises – and to meet with intense resistance. Since 1982, archaeologist Yuri Mochanov and his team have found several thousand extremely ancient stone tools at Diring Yuryakh and other sites along the Lena River in Siberia. Various dating techniques suggest that the strata in which the tools are found are between 1.8 and 3.2 million years old. Such a date is unacceptable to traditional anthropologists, who prefer a more conservative figure of about 300,000 years. Mochanov says that the discoveries force us to reexamine 'the forgotten concept that North and Central Asia was the original homeland of humanity'.[8]

In the Pabbi Hills in northern Pakistan, 2-million-year-old artifacts have been dug up which 'bring into question the whole chronology of the evolution and dispersal of hominids both in Africa and Asia'. Most scientists consider the artifacts too old to have been made by *Homo erectus*, but the dating in this case is difficult to challenge.[9] At the Renzidong fossil site in eastern China, animal bones showing signs of being butchered are mixed with stone tools dated as early as 2.25 million years. A jaw fragment with teeth resembling those of earliest *Homo* in East Africa has also been found, and many Chinese scientists believe *H. erectus* evolved independently in Asia.[10] An even older hominid date in Asia comes from Yenangyaung in central Myanmar (Burma), where, in the 1890s, simple flint artifacts and a human femur (thighbone) or humerus (upper arm bone) were found in strata 3 to 4 million years old.[11] The latter discovery seems to have long since been forgotten and, as the next section shows, this applies to a great many other paradigm-shattering finds.

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***Human-ape similarities***

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**The Ape-Ancestry Myth: Part 2**

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**Homepage**

# Human Origins

# the ape-ancestry myth

**David Pratt**

**February 2004**

***Part 3 of 3***

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## 5. Anatomy and origins

### *Specialization and gracilization*

A comparison of the skeletal and muscular features of living apes and humans shows that apes have developed a more complex and specialized anatomy, while humans have preserved a primitive mammalian simplicity, with only the cerebrospinal system, necessary for the manifestation of selfconscious intelligence, being highly developed. If apes and humans descended from a common ancestor, that ancestor must have had a more generalized anatomical structure than modern apes. It is widely recognized that the hypothetical common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees must have been more humanlike than chimplike.[1] Fossil apes predating this ancestor also tend to display simpler, more hominid-like features, while still possessing certain ape specializations to varying degrees.

*Ramapithecus* is a fossil primate about 1.2 m (4 ft) tall, dating from the Middle and Late Miocene (about 16.6 to 5.3 million years ago). For a time it was thought to be the first direct ancestor of modern humans, as its jaw and dentition seemed to be transitional between those of apes and humans (i.e. more humanlike than those of modern apes). The age of the first fossils found fitted well with the then-prevailing notion that the ape-human split had occurred at least 15 million years ago. However, the final split is now believed to have taken place only 6 to 8 million years ago. Following further fossil finds, including a complete jaw, the theory that *Ramapithecus* was a human ancestor was largely abandoned by the early 1980s. Its fossils were found to resemble those of the fossil primate genus *Sivapithecus*, which is now regarded as ancestral to the orangutan.

Fossils of the primate *Oreopithecus* are found in Late Miocene deposits in East Africa and Early Pliocene deposits in southern Europe (11.2 to 3.4 million years ago). A complete skeleton of this 1.2-m-tall creature was discovered in 1958 and was found to have a number of curiously humanlike traits in its teeth, jaws, skull, and hipbone. It is no longer seen as belonging to the human line of descent; some scientists have relegated it to the ape family, and others insist that it *is* a hominid, and a partial biped, but that its exact status is unclear.[2] *Gigantopithecus*, too, displays several humanlike traits, including reduced canine teeth, and as noted in section 4, a few scientists have concluded that it was bipedal.

The tree-living, fruit-eating dryopithecine apes from the Miocene are widely believed to be close to the origin of the hominid line of descent. But even the earliest dryopithecines have the specialized dentition characteristic of apes, and some scientists think it unlikely that such a specialization could be lost by a reversal to the primitive condition.[3] Like modern humans, the dryopithecines did however have small brow ridges. Yet *Australopithecus*, *Homo erectus*, and the Neanderthals, along with the modern apes, have large brow ridges. Louis Leakey thought it unlikely that Miocene apes with no brow ridges could give rise to early hominids with heavy brow ridges, who in turn gave rise to modern humans with virtually nonexistent brow ridges.

Furthermore, in *H. sapiens* the brow ridge is made up of 2 components, while in *Australopithecus*, *H. erectus*, and the Neanderthals the large brow ridges are most often composed of a single barlike mass of bone running horizontally over the eye sockets. To Leakey, the presence of such barlike brow ridges 'suggested not an ancestral stage in human evolution but a side branch that has become more specialized, in this respect, than any *Homo sapiens* type'. In addition, Miocene apes tend to have thin skulls, while the australopithecines, *H. erectus*, and the Neanderthals have relatively thick skulls. Modern humans have thin skulls, which would require another evolutionary reversal. Leakey felt that the specializations displayed by the australopithecines and *H. erectus* ruled them out as ancestors leading to modern humans.[4] As indicated in section 1, Tattersall and Schwartz are inclined to take a similar view.

A trend towards lighter and more delicate skeletons is known as 'gracilization'. Scientists, like Leakey, who see gracilization as implausible have responded by placing *H. erectus* and the Neanderthals, and in some cases the australopithecines, on different branches of the evolutionary tree to that of modern humans. However, other darwinists do not see evolutionary reversals as particularly anomalous. The idea that random genetic mutations (even after harmful ones have been eliminated by natural selection) will produce progressive evolutionary change is improbable enough, and the idea that a particular sequence of mutations will later be repeated but in reverse order is even more improbable, but darwinists simply reply that improbable does not mean impossible. Some scientists have linked gracilization to neoteny, the biological condition in which juvenile anatomical traits are retained in adults (see below). But giving a problem a newfangled name is not the same as explaining it!

Björn Kurtén was another anthropologist who believed that more specialized anatomical characteristics must develop from less specialized features. In *Not from the Apes* (1972), he argued that the contrasts between apes and humans in anatomy were so great that the two lineages must have diverged over 35 million years ago. He held that the earliest ancestor of modern man was undoubtedly apelike and tree-living but was never what could properly be called an ape. He thought that the cat-sized Oligocene primate, *Propliopithecus*, with its striking humanlike traits, might be ancestral to *Ramapithecus* (which at the time he was writing was widely considered to be a hominid) and to all later hominids, including the australopithecines, while other apelike primates from the Oligocene gave rise to *Dryopithecus* and to the later monkeys and apes. He concluded that 'the most logical answer suggested by the fossil evidence is this: hominids are not descended from apes, but apes may be descended from hominids'. By this he meant that the *living* apes evolved from early ancestors of man, i.e. ape*like* hominids, who in turn evolved from an earlier primitive ape*like* primate.[5]

In an article written in 1981, John Gribbin and Jeremy Cherfas asked: 'What if, instead of man being descended from the apes, the apes are descended from man?'[6] However, as in the case of Kurtén's book, their theory turns out to be far less radical than the title might suggest. They accept that 'man' (*Homo*) descended from a branch of the australopithecines, but argue that instead of becoming extinct a million years ago, the remaining australopithecines evolved into the modern chimpanzee and gorilla, whose ancestors are currently unknown. This means that our supposed apelike ancestors evolved into bipedal hominids (*Australopithecus*), some of whom later reverted to life in the trees. Gribbin and Cherfas comment: 'Whatever the small genetic changes needed to accomplish the anatomical reshufflings that produced an upright ape, they could surely have been equally easily reversed.' They admit that their proposal 'may seem like a wild flight of fancy, the over-vivid imaginings of two armchair anthropologists'.

There is a widespread tendency to overemphasize the bodily resemblances between humans and apes while playing down the significant host of dissimilarities. In the early 20th century, anatomist Frederick Wood Jones cited various anatomical facts as evidence that man could not have evolved from the apes or their direct ancestors. He argued that it was difficult to imagine that in a whole series of uncorrelated features man could have passed from a primitive condition to the specialized pithecoid condition, and subsequently have reverted to the primitive condition. He believed that man originated in the early Tertiary from a small arboreal creature, closely resembling the monkeylike tarsier of today, and that the australopithecines are not part of our ancestry.

The evidence pointing to the primitiveness of the human stock is summarized by G. de Purucker in his book *Man in Evolution*, and includes the following:[7]

1. In many respects the human skull is built on primitive mammalian lines, which have been departed from in some degree in all monkeys and apes. For example, the bones of the human skull articulate both at the base of the skull and on the sides of the braincase in a manner characteristic of primitive mammals (e.g. lemurs), thus forming a marked contrast with the articulations found in the monkeys and anthropoid apes.
2. The human skeleton, especially in its variations, shows the same condition of primitive mammalian simplicity.
3. The human muscular system, too, retains many primitive features which have been lost in the rest of the primates. For instance, in humans and certain other extremely primitive animals, the pectoralis minor muscle is attached to the coracoid process of the shoulder girdle. In the anthropoids it is attached partly to the coracoid and partly to a ligament passing downward to the humerus (upper arm). In the monkeys, it is attached still farther down the same ligament, but also to the humerus, while in many quadrupeds it is attached to the humerus altogether.
4. The human nasal bones, human tongue, and human foot are extremely primitive compared with those of the anthropoid and other simian stocks. The ape's foot, for example, is actually more like the human hand than its own hand is – that is why the apes are sometimes called quadrumanal (4-handed) rather than quadrupedal (4-footed).
5. The muscles, bones, and joints of the human hand and forearm are extremely primitive and could not have evolved at a late date in man's evolutionary history. Some of the extinct reptiles from the Mesozoic have paws and forelimbs that bear a striking resemblance to the human hand and forearm. There are no indications that man's arm and hand were ever used to support his body when he was supposedly a quadrupedal mammal.
6. The human vermiform appendix is curiously like that of some of the marsupials of Australia. It is very different in monkeys and apes.
7. The great arteries arising from the arch of the aorta in man have the same number, are of the same kind, and are arranged in the same order as in the primitive duck-billed platypus of Australia. The apes and monkeys have quite a different arrangement.

## *Neoteny and embryonic recapitulation*

Neoteny (literally 'holding youth') means the retention of the juvenile features of an ancestral species in the adult form of a descendant species. It results from a slowdown in the rate of physical maturation, so that the individual is frozen in a physically juvenile state upon reaching sexual maturity. As noted above, humans have several physical features that seem to be more juvenile or primitive than the same features in other primates. Many external characteristics of apes differ from those of humans, but these differences tend to become less pronounced as we retrace the bodily development of apes backward to the juvenile and embryonic stages. This suggests that, as far as anatomy is concerned, apes are more specialized and further evolved than humans, and that many human features are 'retarded' in their development. In the 1920s anatomist Louis Bolk went so far as to proclaim that humans are actually reproductively mature fetuses, or upright-walking embryos – a theory he called 'fetalization'.

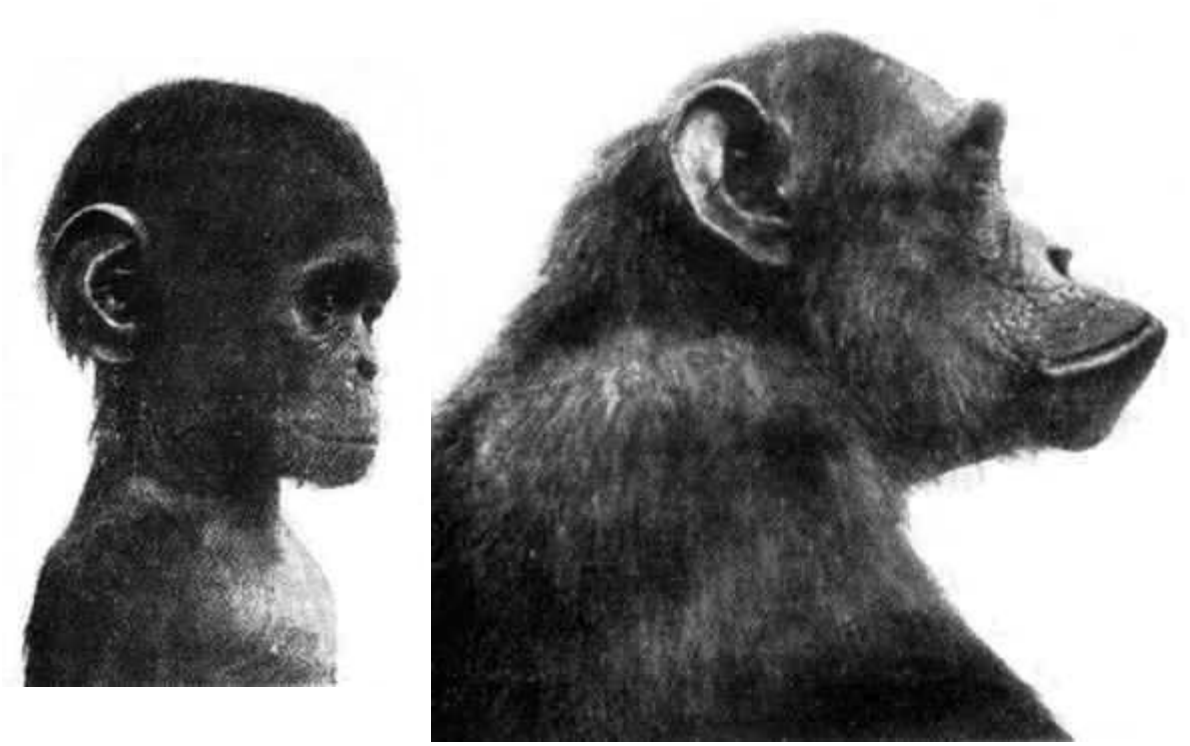

**Fig. 5.1.** A young chimpanzee has a very humanlike face, but adults develop a prominent muzzle.[1]

In 1866 arch-darwinist Ernst Haeckel formulated the 'biogenetic law', which states that the development of the embryo (ontogeny) recapitulates the evolutionary ancestry of the stock in question (phylogeny). He argued that as an organism passes through embryonic development it retraces every *adult* stage of its evolutionary ancestry, because an organism evolves by tacking on new stages to its process of embryonic development. Biologists soon discarded this idea, recognizing that embryology is not a strict replay of ancestry as evolution can affect *all* phases of development, removing developmental steps as well as adding them. Nevertheless, it is still accepted that many of the stages that embryos pass through can be understood as remnants of their evolutionary past. Theosophy agrees with this,[2] though it rejects the darwinian theory that new stocks of creatures emerge through the continuous transformation of one physical form into another as a result of random mutations and natural selection.

The darwinian interpretation of neoteny is that humans evolved by retaining the youthful (more humanlike) features of our supposedly apelike ancestors. From a theosophical perspective, the

humanlike features of embryonic and juvenile apes are a sign of their semi-human ancestry (see next section); apes are humans that have evolved physically and devolved mentally.

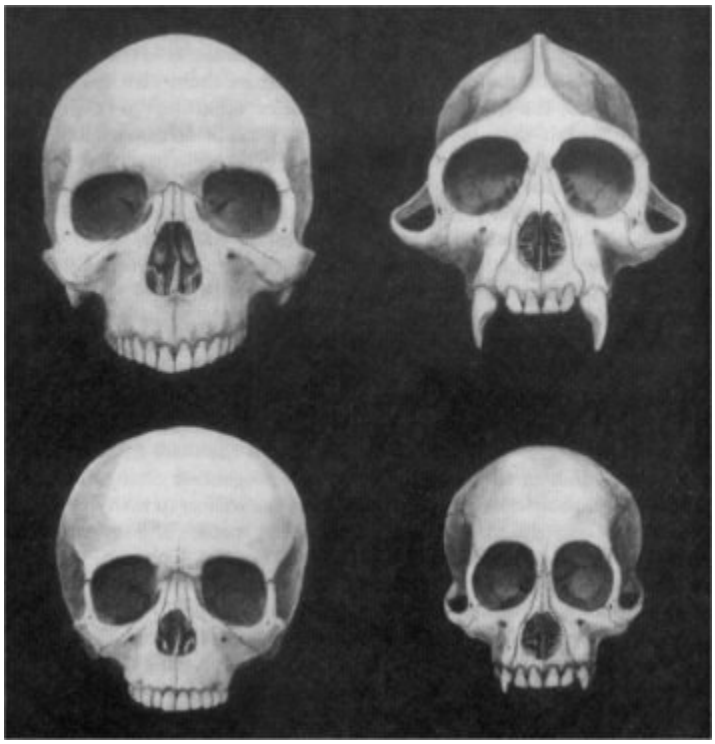

**Fig. 5.2.** Comparison of the skulls of a human (left column) and the capuchin monkey (right column), representing most anthropoid primates. The juveniles of the human and the monkey (bottom) are similar in that both have a large rounded head, a relatively unprojecting snout, large eyes, weak brow ridges, and small jaws and teeth. The adult human typically retains these juvenile features, while the adults of monkeys and other mammals tend to develop larger and more projecting lower faces and brow ridges.[3]

The suture (or junction) between the premaxilla (the front part of the upper jawbone carrying the incisor teeth) and the maxillary bones fuses at an early stage in the development of the human embryo. Wood Jones argued that this precludes an origin from monkeys, apes, and even from the australopithecines, in which the suture closes later and the suture lines remain visible on their faces. Human and ape teeth are similar in many ways, but differences do exist and are more pronounced in the second dentition (permanent teeth) than in the milk teeth. Juvenile characteristics are retained in humans, while the apes go on to develop large canines, thin enamels, and the dental geometry that gives them their 'canine profile'.[4]

Adult monkeys and gorillas are hairy all over, but monkeys are born with hair only on their heads and backs, and gorillas with hair only on their heads. Newborn humans also have hair only on their heads, and – compared with adult monkeys and apes – adult humans are not much hairier. From a darwinian perspective, the rate at which hair spreads to cover the body has become significantly retarded in humans. Theosophically, the rate at which hair spreads has *accelerated* in apes.

At a certain stage of its development the human fetus is covered with a downy layer of hair that sometimes lingers on the skin of newborn babies. Darwinists interpret this to mean that the human fetus passes through an 'ape stage'. However, this fetal hair has nothing to do with animal hair; it is entirely human hair. In reality, the hair of animals grows onto the first layer of the human-type hair – another indication that apes have evolved beyond humans.[5]

Recognizing that many features of man's anatomy were 'retarded' while our mental development has undergone accelerated development, E.D. Cope wrote:

> [I]n the structure of his extremities and dentition, he agrees with the type of Mammalia prevalent during the Eocene period. Hence in these respects he resembles the immature stages of those mammals which have undergone special modifications of

> limbs and extremities ... [I]n the shape of his head man resembles the embryos of all Vertebrata, in the protuberant forehead, and vertical face and jaws. In this part of the structure most Vertebrata have grown further from the embryonic type than has man, so that the human face may be truly said to be the result of retardation. Nevertheless, in the structure of his nervous, circulatory, and for the most part, of his reproductive system, man stands at the summit of the Vertebrata. It is in those parts of his structure that are necessary to supremacy by force of body only, that man is retarded and embryonic.[6]

## *Initial bipedalism*


The theory of initial bipedalism, as championed by François de Sarre of the Study and Research Centre for Initial Bipedalism (CERBI), states that instead of being a fairly recent evolutionary transformation of an apelike ancestor, man is an extremely ancient stock and has remained morphologically and anatomically closest to the original vertebrate from which all others descend. In De Sarre's view, this prototype was a hypothetical tiny marine creature that lived some 60 million years ago.

He describes the mainstream evolutionary history of man as 'a gigantic farce, based on erroneous observations and old prejudices', and says that since the palaeontological record is so incomplete we have to rely mainly on embryology and comparative anatomy to discover our real origins. Rather than interpreting man's primitive ('juvenile') structure to mean that humans are fetal apes that have matured, De Sarre argues, as does theosophy, that apes descend from man and have evolved anatomically beyond the point where human development ceased.

Humans are the only known mammals that are habitually bipedal. Significantly, in the embryos of humans, other primates, and many other mammals, the foramen magnum (the opening in the skull through which the spinal column passes) is positioned centrally. In adult humans it retains this position – which is required for bipedalism – whereas in other animals, including apes, the opening migrates backward, as growth proceeds, to the position needed by a quadruped.[1]

A related fact is that in all mammal embryos, including humans and apes, the angle between the plane of the face and the plane of the base of the skull, through which the spinal cord passes, is extremely flexed – essentially 90°. This angle remains well flexed in adult humans (120°), this being connected with our bipedal mode of locomotion. In adult animals, on the other hand, the angle opens up, rising to 140° in apes, and up to 180° in fully quadrupedal mammals.

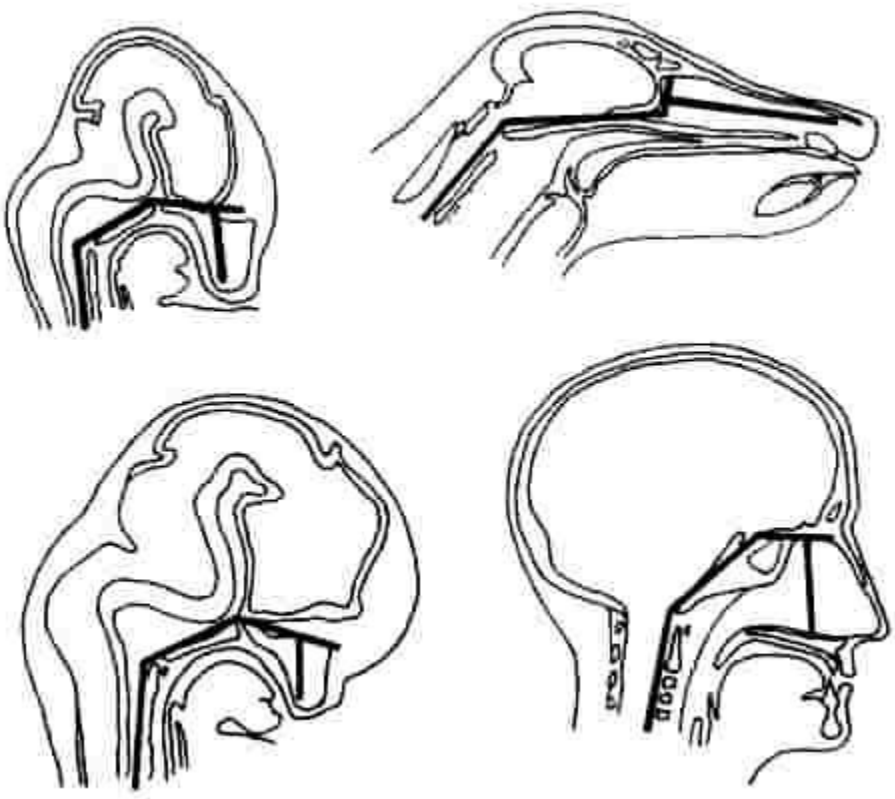

**Fig. 5.3.** Representation of the angle between the facial skeleton and the skull base in a dog (above) and a human (below), showing the fetal stage (left column) and the adult stage (right column).[2]

An analysis of man's hands and feet show that he has never been a quadruped. Apes and monkeys have prehensile feet (i.e. an opposable big toe) that are like lower hands and permit the grasping of branches, etc. In addition, the third digit of their feet is the longest of the five. The human foot, geared to bipedalism, is quite different, and typically human from the time of its first appearance early in the embryo's development. Significantly, in the embryo all primate feet begin as humanlike feet, implying that the foot of apes and monkeys is a human foot that has become prehensile through adaptation to life in the trees. In addition, the third peroneal muscle of the leg – one of the important muscles which aid humans to stand upright and to walk bipedally – is found in no other mammal whatsoever. It is found in the human embryo early in its development, suggesting that man must have had an upright posture perhaps from the very origin of the human stock.[3]

The human hand, with its 5 fingers, has remained very primitive, and cannot have developed from an animal's paw. The structure of the human arm and hand has served as a starting point for various evolutionary transformations, such as the forelimbs of quadrupedal mammals, the wings of bats, and the pectoral fins of cetaceans. Whereas humans have a well-developed opposable thumb, the thumb of nonhuman primates is short, often emaciated, or entirely missing as a result of disuse. In some monkey species, specialization in tree-climbing has resulted in their thumb being reduced to a stump, while at the same time their arms have lengthened. Apes have retained hands that are anatomically very similar to man's, but they often employ them for knuckle-walking.[4]

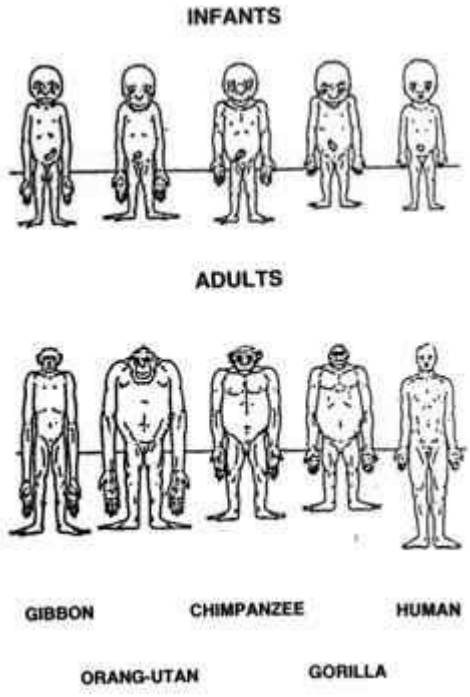


**Fig. 5.4.** Changes in body proportion in humans and apes. Max Westenhöfer argued that if we don't hold any preformed opinion, this diagram rules out a simian ancestry for man.[5] Apes' forelimbs are longer than their hindlimbs as a result of specialization to life in the trees.

Palaeontologist Yvette Deloison cites the primitive structure of the human hand as evidence that the common ancestor of the australopithecines, the great apes, and man, could not have been either arboreal or quadrupedal. The human foot, on the other hand, is specialized for bipedal locomotion. On the assumption that evolution never goes backward, she argues that our earliest primate ancestor must have had unspecialized hands and feet, and that humans and australopithecines had a common *bipedal* ancestor who appeared about 15 million years ago. Rather than evolving towards human bipedalism, the semi-bipedal australopithecines were therefore adapting to a new way of life in the trees.[6]

De Sarre adopts a similar position. Like Gribbin and Cherfas, he believes that the present anthropoid apes could be related to the australopithecines. But instead of arguing that the australopithecines were bipeds which evolved from quadrupedal ancestors but later regressed and turned into quadrupedal apes, he argues that the australopithecines had *bipedal* ancestors and were actually in the process of *losing* their bipedalism and evolving towards quadrupedalism, as part of a process of dehumanization. He regards wildmen such as Bigfoot and the Yeti as relict dehumanized hominoids.[7]

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# 6. Theosophy: fallen angels, fallen apes

The theosophical teachings on evolution given out since the formation of the Theosophical Society in 1875 are merely a general outline of the information in the possession of the Brotherhood of Adepts.[1] This information is said to have been compiled and repeatedly verified by countless generations of sages and seers, whose occult powers grant them access to the inner realms of nature and enable them to read the records of the earth's history clairvoyantly. The adepts are also said to possess written records, fossils, technological inventions, and other artifacts from bygone ages. They disseminate their knowledge in proportion to people's ability to respond to it intelligently.

## *Evolution from within*

Darwinism is rooted in the materialistic assumption that the universe consists essentially of physical matter and energy, and that mind and consciousness are merely byproducts of the brain. According to the theosophic tradition, on the other hand, the physical world is the outer shell of inner worlds – astral, mental, and spiritual. Likewise, every physical organism is animated by inner, subtler 'bodies' or souls, including an astral model-body (the template for the physical body), an instinctive or selfconscious mind, of widely varying degrees of development, and a spiritual-divine self or monad. Evolution involves the unfolding of latent powers and capacities in response to impulses from within and stimuli from without, and the development of suitable physical forms through which they can be expressed.

Theosophy rejects the darwinian theory of common descent, i.e. the notion that the first unicellular organisms have undergone successive bodily transformations, leading eventually to all the present creatures, including man. The enormous gaps in the fossil record prove that there has been no continuous, gradual transformation of one species into a higher species. Darwinists of the 'punctuationist' school recognize this and argue that new species arise relatively suddenly in small, isolated populations, and that such episodes of speciation are separated by long

periods of stasis, in which species undergo little change. However, their insistence that these sudden spurts of evolutionary creativity are ultimately based on blind chance places great strains on our credulity.

*Guided* and *directed* macromutations *could* result in evolutionary jumps and allow a member of one species to give birth to a more advanced species, but this certainly does not mean that one great stock of animals evolves into another in the darwinian sense. For instance, a species of reptile did not give birth to the first mammal. As H.P. Blavatsky says, 'the admitted chasm between the systems of reproduction of the oviparous vertebrates and mammalia, constitutes a hopeless crux to those who, with the Evolutionists, seek to link all existing organic forms in a continuous line of descent.' She adds:

> The 'Unity of Type' common, in a sense, to all the animal and human kingdoms, is not ... a proof of the consanguinity of *all* organic forms, but a witness to the essential unity of the 'ground plan' Nature has followed in fashioning her creatures.[1]

New types of creatures 'evolve' first on the ethereal or astral plane, with use being made of past evolutionary forms stored in the memory of nature. Instead of an evolutionary process 'guided' by blind chance, as in the darwinist scheme, and instead of new kinds of creatures being created out of nothing by a single supreme being or 'God', as in the creationist scheme, theosophy postulates an all-pervasive instinctive intelligence, arising from the workings of a hierarchy of agencies, from higher intelligences to elemental nature-forces, including soul-impulses from within each organism, reflecting its own evolutionary needs.

Theosophy says that the present earth is the reembodiment of a former earth, and the different classes or kingdoms of monads now evolving on it and forming it – from submineral (elemental) to superhuman – are pursuing an evolutionary journey that has no absolute beginning and will have no absolute end. The present earth and its lifeforms originated in a highly ethereal condition and gradually materialized and condensed during the 'descending arc' of the earth's evolution, which lasted until the midpoint of the earth's lifespan, some 4.5 million years ago, in the middle of the current, fourth round of evolutionary activity. Since then the ascending arc of etherealization and spiritualization has begun.

During each of the 7 rounds, the various kingdoms of monads, or lifewaves, pass successively through the 12 globes of the earth's planetary chain; our own globe is the lowest and densest, while the others are located on higher, more ethereal planes. The first root-race, or humanity, in the current round began to develop in the mid-Palaeozoic; these early protohuman forms were huge, ovoid, semi-astral, nonselfconscious beings, which slowly materialized, declined in size, and assumed the present human shape during the ensuring millions of years.

In the late second and early third root-races, reproduction took place by budding or gemmation; vital cells were thrown off from the ethereal bodies of the time and developed either into other humans or into the beginnings of the mammals, according to their inherent evolutionary tendencies. This accounts for the general resemblance between their embryonic stages and those of man. Sexual reproduction in the human kingdom is said to have originated in the second half of the third, Lemurian root-race, some 18½ million years ago. On the theosophical timescale, this was in the Late Jurassic of the Mesozoic era, or age of reptiles. By this time the outer human body was becoming distinctly physical, and also sufficiently developed for the emergence of selfconsciousness to begin.[2]

## *Descent of the apes*

H.P. Blavatsky and G. de Purucker cited various pieces of evidence contradicting the ape-ancestry theory, including finds of human remains, footprints, and stone tools, such as those

presented in section 3, showing that humans of one type or another existed in much earlier geologic periods than orthodox evolutionary theory allows,[1] and evidence such as that mentioned in the previous section, showing that the modern human anatomy is simpler and less specialized than that of our supposed ancestors.[2] They also mentioned several contemporary scientists who believed that apes had evolved from man, while man had evolved from other types of animals.[3] Blavatsky called the ape-ancestry hypothesis 'self-degrading' and 'the most extravagant theory of the ages'.[4]

Theosophy teaches that the lower simians, the monkeys, arose from interbreeding between a 'mindless' or unselfconscious stock of the third root-race (who were apelike in appearance*) and a high animal stock, while the anthropoid apes resulted from interbreeding between a less progressed stock among the fourth, Atlantean, root-race and the descendants of the earlier interbreeding. 'Thus,' says G. de Purucker, 'the apes and the monkeys have traces of human blood in their veins; the monkeys a single dose, so to say, of the nobler strain, and the apes a double dose of the same. But *no man* has one drop of either simian or anthropoid blood in his veins.'[5]

> *Human embryos develop by the 4th week a well-defined tail. It reaches its maximum length in the 6th week when it may have as many as 12 vertebrae, after which it begins to regress, becoming the coccyx (tailbone). The coccyx in humans and apes therefore represents a vestigial tail. However, this does not require a belief in a simian ancestry, for theosophy says that the ethereal human forms in the third round were apelike and had a short tail (the 6th week of embryonic development also corresponds to the mid-second and early third root-races of the present round). The loss of a tail has actually reached a more advanced stage in the gorilla than in man, because the gorilla's coccyx consists of only 3 caudal vertebrae whereas in humans it generally consists of 4 or 5.[6]

The 'humans' involved in producing the ancestors of the monkeys were devoid of selfconsciousness and acted instinctually, and hence the interbreeding was not a crime. The animals involved, like all mammals, had originally sprung from 'man', and the interbreeding led to fertile offspring because the distance between the humans and animals concerned was not yet very great. The Atlanteans who later repeated the act were aware of what they were doing and therefore committed deliberate bestiality. Even then, these humans and animals were not far enough apart to prevent fertile mating.

In far past geological times both these simian stocks resembled their respective human half-parents in much fuller measure than do their present-day descendants, the living monkeys and apes. The earlier stocks were far nearer in time to the dominant human influence in their heredity, while the living simians show the effects of specialization away from that influence over the intervening millions of years.

Referring to the Lemurian episode of interbreeding, the Stanzas of Dzyan[7] state that 'those who had no spark' (i.e. nonselfconscious humans) 'took huge she-animals unto them',* which belonged to several species and were quite different from any known today, and 'begat upon them dumb races'. The offspring are described as a 'race of crooked, red-hair-covered monsters, going on all fours', 'a truly pithecoid species, now extinct', and a Commentary mentions: 'Red-haired, swarthy men going on all-fours, who bend and unbend (stand erect and fall on their hands again) who speak as their forefathers, and run on their hands as their giant fore-mothers.'[8]

> *Although reference is usually made to *male* Lemurians or Atlanteans mating with *female* animals,[9] it's hard to believe that no human females ever succumbed to the same vice!

Another stanza says that early Lemuro-Atlanteans also mated with a lower race of still mindless *humans*, who were very dissimilar physically and mentally from the more perfect races. The semi-humans, or 'so-called animals', are described by a Commentary as a biped of human shape, but covered with hair below the waist.[10] We are also told that the egg-like shells in which

humans gestated during the early third root-race were often tampered with by huge animals resulting in semi-human monsters, and that certain Lemurians later interbred with some of these giant creatures.[11]

As regards the period in which the events in question took place, Blavatsky says that occultism 'traces some of the most anthropoid species to the third race man of the early Atlantean period'. The later third race overlaps with the early Atlantean race, and the events could have taken place in the Cretaceous,* after most humans had already acquired selfconscious minds, though De Purucker says they might have happened in the preceding Jurassic period.[12]

> *The Cretaceous began about 16 million years ago according to theosophy, and 144 million years ago according to science.

We are told that the descendants of the huge humanlike monsters produced by certain Lemurians 'were modified by external conditions, until the breed, dwindling in size, culminated in the lower apes of the Miocene period. With these the later Atlanteans renewed the sin of the "Mindless" – this time with full responsibility. The resultants of their crime were the species of apes now known as Anthropoid.'[13] Mating has presumably taken place with various animal or semi-animal stocks over the course of time, as the end result was not only the present monkeys and apes but also semi-human tribes which have now largely died out.[14]

The original apes were reportedly looked upon askance by the more evolved humans of that time but were tolerated because they had glimmerings of our active minds. They were virtually thinking entities of a lower type, and had distinct languages of their own.

> The most human of these apes died out, partly because the Atlanteans, realizing the sin of their own less evolved men, made vigorous war upon them, wars of extermination; and also because the milieu, the surroundings, were not conducive to the continuance of this partly-human partly-animal race. Only the least progressed of the apes were allowed to live by the Atlanteans; and the apes today are the descendants of those who were allowed to continue to live.[15]

In the epic Hindu poem the Ramayana, the apes are depicted as far more humanlike than they are today; they even talk and have their own governments and laws. Led by Hanuman, the monkey god, they fight on the side of Rama against the Rakshasas of Lanka in the great epic war of India. Viewed theosophically, the depiction of the apes in the Hindu legend is not entirely fictional.

The souls that incarnated in the original monkeys and apes had not quite reached the human stage. We are told that the apes are destined to become humans of a low grade in the last two root-races of the present round and in the next or fifth round. This does not mean that ape bodies will metamorphose into human bodies, but that the souls currently inhabiting ape bodies will take on bodies among the lowest human stocks.

## *The fossil record*

The earliest humans, or rather protohumans, in the present round were semi-astral beings of titanic size, and have gradually diminished in stature ever since. The Lemurians were around 7.5 m (25 ft) tall at the time of Lemuria's destruction, as were the Atlanteans in their heyday. By about half a million years ago, man's height had declined to about 3.5 m, and has continued to decline to about half that size today.[1]

The late second and early third races could conceivably have left fossils, and this is even more

true of the more solidified bodies of the later third race and the fourth race.[2] However, the fossil record is extremely fragmentary; for instance, it is estimated that it provides us with evidence for only about 3% of all the primate species that have ever existed.[3] There are various reasons for this. First, fossilization can occur only under exceptional conditions. Second, erosion and geological cataclysms have destroyed 90 to 99% of the fossil record. Third, many fossils are buried in inaccessible places, including deep below the present ocean floors (the Lemurian continental system was centred in the Pacific Ocean, and the Atlantean continental system in the Atlantic Ocean[4]). Finally, cremation is said to have been widespread among humans until about 100,000 years ago.

As already shown, many remains of giant humans *have* in fact been found. None are displayed in any museums, and we can only speculate on what might be stored in museum basements. Given that the prevailing orthodoxy affects how scientists perceive the world, there is no guarantee that fossil fragments of giant humans would be recognized as such; after all, 'everyone knows' that races of human giants exist only in fairytales! In the past, bones of large extinct animals were sometimes mistaken for remains of giant humans – but the opposite could just as easily occur.

The first mammals appear in the fossil record in the early Mesozoic, but most of the known mammals of that era were not much larger than mice. None of the fossil mammals from the later Mesozoic seem to be suitable candidates for the huge creatures with which certain Lemurians interbred or for their offspring, the ancestors of the present monkeys. Fossils of primitive monkeys and anthropoid apes first appear in the Oligocene epoch. Oligocene deposits at Fayum, Egypt, for example, contain a variety of small fossil apes, such as *Aeolopithecus*, *Aegyptopithecus*, and *Propliopithecus* (which some scientists speculate was one of our distant ancestors). *Aegyptopithecus* evolved to become about the size of a large house cat.

The Miocene saw the abrupt appearance of an incredible variety of tailless apes; some 24 species roamed Europe, Africa, and Asia during that epoch, the three main groups being *Dryopithecus*, *Proconsul*, and *Sivapithecus*. Nearly all the species went extinct, leaving only 6 to thrive: 2 types of gorilla, 2 types of chimp, and 1 type of gibbon and orangutan. Today's great apes are therefore 'members of a group that's been steadily declining since the later Miocene'.[5]

The size of the known Miocene apes ranged from 0.6 m (2 ft) tall to around 3.1 m (10 ft) or more in the case of *Gigantopithecus*. Not much is known about the bodies of Miocene apes; most of the categories have been classified solely by skulls, skull parts, and teeth. Quadrupeds have arms that are distinctly longer than their legs while humans have arms that are distinctly shorter than their legs. Although some Miocene apes have arms equal in length to their legs, most scientists automatically assume that every Miocene ape was a quadruped. However, it is quite possible that at least some of them, such as *Gigantopithecus* and *Oreopithecus*, were bipedal or semi-bipedal, and that some of the wildmen from around the world are their descendants.[6]

As in the case of the Lemurian interbreeding, no details are given in theosophical literature about the sizes of the humans and animal species involved in the later Atlantean interbreeding and of their semi-human, semi-animal offspring. Some of the known fossil apes from the Miocene could certainly have been involved, but some simian species are said to be the product of the ordinary evolutionary process.[7]

The seeds of our fifth (Aryan or Indo-European) root-race began to emerge in earliest Tertiary times, 7 or 8 million years ago by theosophical reckoning. The fifth race's satya-yuga, or golden age of innocence, began about 4.5 million years ago, in the Oligocene, when the fourth race was finishing its kali-yuga, or dark age. We are not told how tall the earliest members of our humanity were, but if some of the fossil evidence documented by Cremo and Thompson is valid, humans of approximately our own size could have existed in the Pliocene, Miocene, and even earlier;

they would therefore have been pygmies compared to most of the Atlanteans of the day. The fifth race became a distinct racial stock in Central Asia in the Late Pliocene, about 1 million years ago.[8]

Since the early Miocene many apelike and semi-human species have appeared and disappeared, and many civilizations have come and gone. Mainstream anthropology ignores much of the 'anomalous' evidence already presented regarding the antiquity of humanity, the existence of giants, and the survival of bipedal hominoids in remote areas of the world until the present day. The fossils of primitive humans and bipedal apes that have been discovered were not our own direct ancestors but dehumanized offshoots from the main stream of human evolution, some of them being products of various episodes of human-animal crossbreeding. They could have existed alongside advanced civilizations, just as hunter-gatherer societies coexist with more advanced cultures today.

## *Awakening of mind*

Of all the creatures on earth, only humans are known to have selfconscious minds – the ability to remember the past and plan for the future, and to express their thoughts in a variety of creative ways. The human brain, with its 12 billion brain cells and 120 trillion connections, is the most complex arrangement of matter known. According to mainstream science, brain activity somehow gives rise to self-awareness and the power of thought. But materialists are forced to admit that they 'have as yet no idea whatever about how a mass of electrical and chemical discharges within the brain is converted into what we individually and subjectively experience as consciousness'.[1] In addition to random mutations, another 'driving force' behind the evolution of apes into humans is claimed to be the development of drier and cooler climatic conditions – in other words, selfconscious intelligence emerged due to a change in the weather!

Some scientists have recognized that mind 'defies explanation in terms of evolutionary theory' and is 'impossible to explain in purely material terms'.[2] Astrophysicist Freeman Dyson has said:

> The prevailing view among biologists seems to be that the mind arose accidentally out of molecules of DNA or something. I find that very unlikely. It seems more reasonable to think that mind was a primary part of nature from the beginning and we are simply manifestations of it at the present stage of history. It's not so much that mind has a life of its own, as that the mind is inherent in the way the universe is built, and life is nature's way to give mind opportunities it wouldn't otherwise have.[3]

Neuroscientist and Nobel Prize winner Sir John Eccles has said that the materialistic theory of mind is 'impoverished and empty' and fails to account for 'the wonder and mystery of the human self with its spiritual values, with its creativity, and with its uniqueness for each of us'.[4] Eccles believes that there is a mental world separate from the physical world, that the mind and brain interact, and that 'each Soul is a new Divine creation which is implanted into the growing foetus at some time between conception and birth'.[5]

Theosophy, too, recognizes that 'it requires more than a mere interplay between certain material aggregates and their environment, to call to life a *fully conscious man*'.[6] It assigns humans a spiritual ancestry, but rejects the belief that they were created by a supernatural, extracosmic, anthropomorphic God. If nature is infinite, divinity cannot be outside nature but must be all-nature itself; and nature is synonymous with boundless consciousness-life-substance, manifesting in infinitely diverse forms. The spiritual monad at the heart of every entity embodies in an endless variety of forms in an endless variety of worlds in the course of its cyclic evolutionary development. The earth is merely the latest station on its unending evolutionary journey.

The earliest ethereal human races in the present round did not have selfconscious minds. After their outer forms had become more physical and attained the necessary degree of complexity and refinement, the gradual awakening and unfoldment of our latent intellectual and spiritual powers could begin, under the influence of a higher part of our constitution; this process is referred to allegorically as the incarnation of the manasaputras (a Sanskrit word meaning 'sons of mind').[7]

This teaching is echoed in many myths and religious allegories. In the story of Prometheus, for instance, Prometheus steals the spiritual fire of the gods (intelligence) and brings it to mankind. In punishment he is chained to a rock (our human bodies) on a mountainside, where he will remain throughout the ages until mankind rises to his level and liberates him.

In the Book of Genesis, the Garden of Eden represents the innocent, mindless, childlike state of infant humanity. The eating of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil signifies the awakening of selfconsciousness, when man becomes 'as the gods', endowed with free will. The serpent which tempts Eve is a symbol of wisdom – hence the injunction to be 'wise as serpents' (*Matthew* 10:16). Adam and Eve, representing early humanity, are then expelled from Paradise, and 'fall' from their peaceful state of blissful unselfconsciousness into one of struggle, temptation, and ethical responsibility in the material world. They put on 'coats of skin', meaning that it was in the same period as the arousing of our minds that the semi-astral bodies of early humanity became densely physical.

The awakening of mind in the present round began during the fifth subrace of the third root-race, around 18½ million years ago. However, not all humans began to gain selfconsciousness at the same time or at the same pace, as they were not all at exactly the same stage of development. Even now our mental powers are still developing and will reach their full efflorescence in the following round, millions of years hence.

In a sense, theosophy agrees with science that humans and apes had a common ancestor – but that common ancestor was man himself, in his earlier, more primitive form. In the remote past – at the end of the third round and at the end of the third root-race of the present round – the human body was apelike in appearance. However, it did not evolve from animal bodies but from astral prototypes. Humans could be called 'fallen angels' rather than risen apes. Our spiritual monad, the 'angel' in us, does not literally descend into matter; it remains on its own plane and works through a series of lower vehicles. When the densest of them, the physical body, was ready, man's latent selfconscious intelligence could begin to be unfolded and expressed. The physical and spiritual lines of evolution meet in the third stream of evolution – the mental. Humanity therefore forms a separate kingdom, poised midway between the animals and the superhuman kingdoms or 'gods'.

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**The ape-ancestry myth: contents**

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# Human Origins

# the ape-ancestry myth

**David Pratt**

**February 2004**

***Part 2 of 3***

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## 3. Suppressed evidence of human antiquity

1993 saw the publication of a scholarly and controversial 900-page work *Forbidden Archeology*, coauthored by Michael Cremo and Richard Thompson.[1] It presents abundant evidence – in the form of stone tools, incised bones, and skeletal remains – suggesting that humans of the modern type existed in the Pliocene, the Miocene, and even in early Tertiary times, millions of years *before* our supposed apelike ancestors are thought to have appeared. Most of this evidence was discovered by reputable scientists in the 19th and early 20th centuries, before the modern truncated timescale of human evolution became firmly established. Cremo and Thompson write:

> These discoveries are not well known, having been forgotten by science over the course of many decades or in many cases eliminated by a biased process of knowledge filtration. The result is that modern students of paleoanthropology are not in possession of the complete range of scientific evidence concerning human origins and antiquity. Rather most people, including professional scientists, are exposed to only a carefully edited selection of evidence supporting the currently accepted theory that protohuman hominids evolved from apelike predecessors in Africa during the Late Pliocene and Early Pleistocene, and that modern humans subsequently evolved from the protohuman hominids in the Late Pleistocene, in Africa or elsewhere.[2]

The authors also scrutinize more recent fossil finds, and show how theoretical preconceptions still govern the acceptance or rejection of evidence and the way it is interpreted. They conclude that various types of humanlike and apelike beings have coexisted for tens of millions of years into the past.

The scientific establishment responded angrily to Cremo and Thompson's challenge to their deeply held beliefs. Richard Leakey called their book 'pure humbug'. *The American Journal of Physical Anthropology* labelled it 'Hindu-oid creationist drivel', 'goofy popular anthropology', 'a veritable cornucopia of dreck'.[3] The authors openly state their affiliation to the Bhaktivedanta Institute, a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and many critics attacked the book on the grounds that its authors' beliefs precluded unbiased handling of the subject mater. This is unjust, as all authors – including darwinists – have a philosophical stance which might affect their objectivity. All evidence and arguments must stand or fall on their own merits.

Responses from professional scientists were not entirely negative. Some mainstream scholars acknowledged the quality of the research that went into the book. David Heppell, of the Department of Natural History of the Royal Museum of Scotland, wrote: 'A very comprehensive and scholarly compilation. ... Whether one accepts the evidence presented or not, it certainly looks as if there will no longer be any excuse for ignoring it.'[4] There has been one book-length attempt by an orthodox darwinist to refute *Forbidden Archeology*, but it merely tries to pick holes in a handful of cases, leaving most of the evidence untouched.[5]

Much of the evidence presented by Cremo and Thompson came to light soon after Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859. At that time, there had been no notable fossil finds except Neanderthal man, and there was no clearly established story of human descent to be defended. As a result, professional scientists reported many discoveries that nowadays would never make it into the pages of any respectable academic journal. Most of the 'anomalous' fossils and artifacts were unearthed before the discovery by Eugene Dubois of Java man in 1891/92. Dubois labelled Java man *Pithecanthropus erectus*, believing it to be intermediate between the apes and the genus *Homo*, but nowadays it is classed as *Homo erectus.*

> Java Man was found in Middle Pleistocene deposits generally given an age of 800,000 years. The discovery became a benchmark. Henceforth, scientists would not expect to find fossils or artifacts of anatomically modern humans in deposits of equal or greater age. If they did, they (or someone wiser) concluded that this was impossible and found some way to discredit the find as a mistake, an illusion, or a hoax.[6]

In 1884 anthropologist Armand de Quatrefages wrote: 'The objections made to the existence of man in the Pliocene and Miocene seem to habitually be more related to theoretical considerations than direct observation.'[7] Alfred Wallace expressed dismay that evidence for anatomically modern humans existing in the Tertiary tended to be 'attacked with all the weapons of doubt, accusation, and ridicule'.[8] Of course, none of the hundreds of cases documented by Cremo and Thompson are necessarily valid. Most aroused controversy at the time. But the opposing arguments were not so overwhelming and conclusive as to justify the virtual absence of any serious consideration of this anomalous evidence in modern accounts of human evolution.

In the latter half of the 19th century, numerous scientists discovered incised and broken bones and shells indicating a human presence in the Pliocene, Miocene, and even earlier. Opponents suggested that the marks and breaks observed on the fossil bones were caused by the action of carnivores, sharks, or geological pressure, but supporters of the discoveries offered detailed counterarguments. Scientists also turned up large quantities of what they presumed to be stone tools and weapons. These discoveries were reported in well-established journals and were thoroughly discussed at scientific congresses, but today hardly anyone has heard of them. The current view is that the hominids of the Late and Middle Pliocene were very primitive australopithecines, who are generally regarded as incapable of making stone tools.

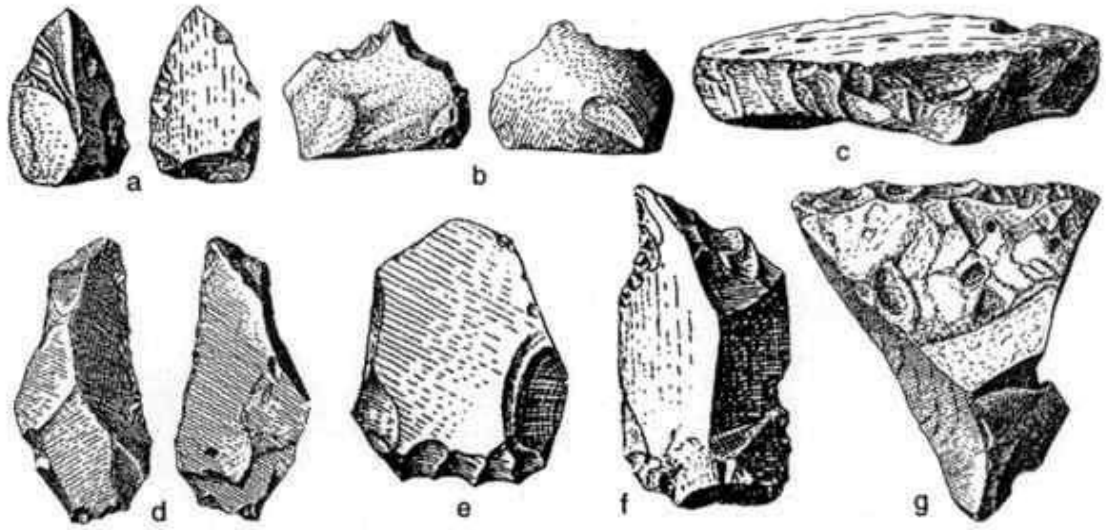
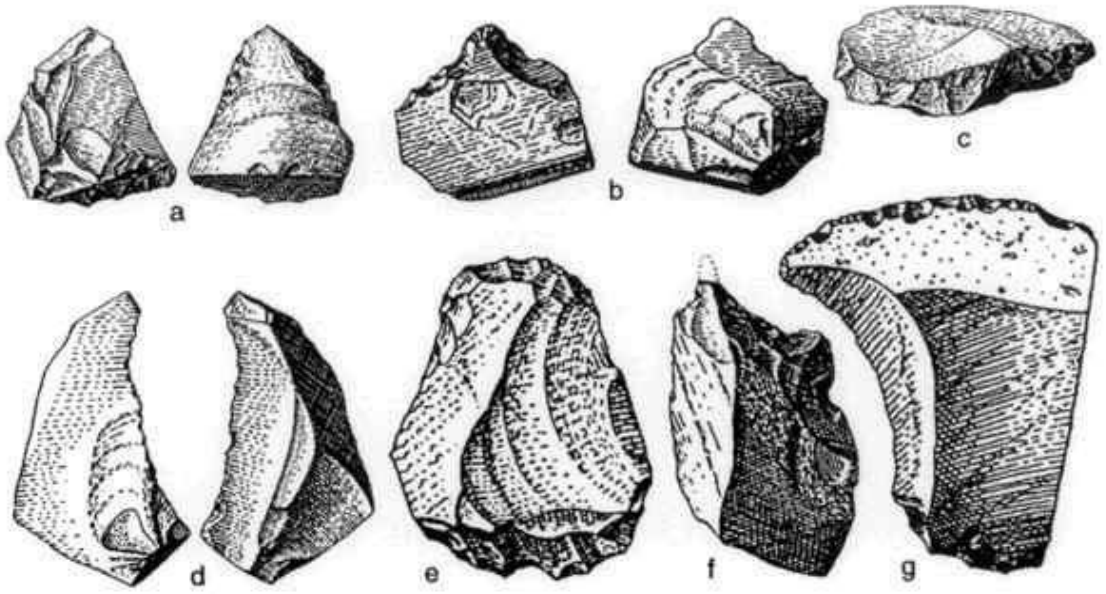



**Fig. 3.1.** *Above:* Stone tools found by A. Rutot below Late Oligocene sands at Boncelles, Belgium, in 1907. *Below:* Implements manufactured by native Tasmanians in recent historical times. They resemble almost exactly the tools shown above.[9]




In 1881, a shell displaying a crude yet recognizably human face carved on its outer surface was found in the Late Pliocene Red Crag formation in England. It was dated at over 2 million years old, whereas according to standard views, humans capable of such artistry did not arrive in Europe until about 30 to 40 thousand years ago. In the early 20th century, geologist J. Reid Moir found rudimentary stone tools (eoliths) and more advanced stone tools (palaeoliths) in and beneath the Red Crag formation; they could be anything from 2 to 55 million years old. The finds won support from Henri Breuil, one of the most vocal critics of eoliths. In 1923 an international commission of scientists travelled to England to investigate Moir's principal discoveries and pronounced them genuine.

**Fig. 3.2.** Carved shell from the English Red Crag formation.[10]

From 1912 to 1914 Carlos Ameghino found a series of stone implements, including bolas (throwing balls), and signs of fire in Late Pliocene strata 3 to 5 million years old at Miramar, on the Argentine coast. He also found a stone arrowhead firmly embedded in the femur of a Pliocene species of *Toxodon*, an extinct mammal. In 1913 his coworker Lorenzo Parodi found a bola stone in a Pliocene cliff at Miramar. He left it in place and invited several scientists, including ethnographer Eric Boman, an ardent critic of the finds, to witness the implement's extraction. A second stone ball was then found at the same location, followed by another implement 200 metres away. Confounded, Boman could only hint in his report that Parodi had planted the implements! In 1921 a fully human fossil jaw fragment was discovered in the same formation at Miramar.[11] The prevailing belief today is that humans did not enter the Americas much earlier than about 25,000 years ago!

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, several discoveries of modern-looking human skeletal remains were made in Middle Pleistocene formations in Europe. These discoveries include those made at Galley Hill, Moulin Quingnon, Clichy, La Denise, and Ipswich. They could be attributed to recent intrusive burial or fraud, but there are reasons for thinking the skeletons might actually be of Middle Pleistocene age, i.e. older than the age of 200,000 years or so currently assigned to *Homo sapiens*. For instance, the 330,000-year-old skeleton found at Galley Hill, near London, in 1888, was discovered in undisturbed strata, and anthropologist Sir Arthur Keith concluded that 'there was no possibility of denying the authenticity of the discovery without doing an injury to truth'[12] – yet the standard opinion today is that it *must* have been buried recently.

In 1863, J. Boucher de Perthes discovered an anatomically modern human jaw in the Moulin Quingnon gravel pit at Abbeville, France. He removed it from a layer of black sand and gravel 5 m deep, which also contained stone implements of the Acheulean type, some 400,000 years old. A commission of British and French geologists and archaeologists came out in favour of the authenticity of the jaw, but 2 of the British members had reservations and eventually won most of the scientists to their side. Boucher de Perthes conducted further excavations at the site, under very strict controls and in the presence of trained scientific observers. He discovered many more anatomically modern human bones, bone fragments, and teeth, but they received almost no attention in the English-speaking world.

In 1880 geologist Giuseppe Ragazzoni excavated bones of a woman, a man, and 2 children from a Middle Pliocene formation (3 or 4 million years old) at Castenedolo in northern Italy.[13] The woman's cranial capacity was 1340 cc, well within the modern range. He carefully inspected the overlying layers of sediment and found them to be undisturbed, thereby ruling out recent burial. A

skeleton of similar age was found by other researchers at Savona, Italy. In 1883, anatomist Giuseppe Sergi examined the human remains and the site, fully confirming Ragazzoni's findings. He absolutely ruled out intrusive burial, noting that 'clay from the upper surface layers, recognizable by its intense red color, would have been mixed in'.

However, many influential scientists were committed to the fairly recent evolution of the modern human type from primitive apelike creatures, and they opposed such discoveries on theoretical grounds. Sergi protested: 'By means of a despotic scientific prejudice, ... every discovery of human remains in the Pliocene has been discredited.' Archaeologist R.A.S. Macalister provides a good example of such prejudice. In 1921 he stated that if the Castenedolo bones really belonged to the stratum in which they were found, this would imply 'an extraordinarily long standstill for evolution' and would create 'many insoluble problems'. He therefore concluded, 'It is much more likely that there is something amiss with the observations.'

Scientists have used chemical and radiometric tests to deny a Pliocene age to the Castenedolo bones. In 1980 it was reported that the bones had a nitrogen content similar to bones from Late Pleistocene and Holocene sites. However, the degree of nitrogen preservation in bone can vary widely from site to site, making such comparisons unreliable as age indicators. The bones were found in clay, a substance known to preserve nitrogen-containing bone proteins. The bones were also found to have a fluorine content relatively high for recent bones, and an unexpectedly high uranium concentration, consistent with great age. A carbon-14 test yielded an age of 958 years for some of the bones, but the bones had lain in a museum for nearly 90 years and could have become contaminated with recent carbon, giving a falsely young age.

During the days of the California Gold Rush, starting in the 1850s, miners discovered many anatomically modern human bones and advanced stone implements in mine shafts sunk deeply into deposits of gold-bearing gravels capped by thick lava flows.[14] The gravels beneath the lava are from 9 to 55 million years old. In 1880 J.D. Whitney, the state geologist of California, published a lengthy review of advanced stone tools found in California gold mines. All the evidence gathered by Whitney indicated that the objects could not have entered from other levels; the implements, including spear points, stone mortars, and pestles, were found deep in mine shafts, beneath thick, undisturbed layers of lava. Whitney concluded that humans like those of the present had existed in very ancient times in North America. To this W.H. Homes of the Smithsonian Institution replied: 'Perhaps if Professor Whitney had fully appreciated the story of human evolution as it is understood today, he would have hesitated to announce the conclusions formulated, notwithstanding the imposing array of testimony with which he was confronted.' In other words, if the facts do not agree with the favoured theory, then such facts, even an 'imposing array' of them, must be thrown out of the window.

**Fig. 3.3.** Pestle and mortar found in a mine tunnel penetrating Tertiary deposits under Table Mountain, Tuolumne County, California.

In 1866, in Calaveras County, in the same Sierra Nevada mountains of California, a mine owner found a highly fossilized human skull in a pre-Pliocene layer of gravel 40 m below the surface.[15] Opinions on its authenticity varied, but some scientists said that careful examination showed it was incrusted with sand and gravel from the site and its cavities were filled with the same material. As mentioned above, large numbers of stone implements were found in nearby deposits of similar age. And additional human skeletal remains were uncovered in the same region, dating from 9 to 55 million years old. Sir Arthur Keith stated that the Calaveras skull 'cannot be passed over. It is the "bogey" which haunts the student of early man ... taxing the powers of belief of every expert almost to breaking point.'

*Forbidden Archeology* contains other reports of anatomically modern humans being found in early Tertiary and even pre-Tertiary (e.g. Cretaceous and Carboniferous) strata. These reports are more difficult to assess because far fewer details are available.

Cremo and Thompson demonstrate that present-day palaeoanthropologists apply double standards to fossil evidence. If a find conforms to standard theory, it is readily accepted, whereas anomalous evidence is subjected to such rigorous scrutiny that no find is likely to be admitted. If scientists applied equal standards to both anomalous and nonanomalous fossils, both would be either accepted or rejected.

Not all the evidence for human origins found in current textbooks meets high standards. For instance, most African hominid fossils, including those of Lucy (*Australopithecus afarensis*), were discovered on the surface and were assigned specific dates because of their loose association with certain exposed strata. Likewise, none of the Java man discoveries, ranging from the original ones made by Dubois in the 1890s to those of the late 20th century, were made in controlled excavations, photographed in situ, etc. Although they were surface finds, they have been assigned an age of 800,000 or more years, on the assumption that the bones eroded from Middle Pleistocene formations. The finds were made by unsupervised paid native collectors, who later brought them or sent them to scientists for study. By contrast, nearly all the discoveries of anomalously old human bones occurred in situ, in well-defined strata. In this respect, these discoveries, largely forgotten, are superior to many now fully accepted.

Dubois originally created Java man from a couple of teeth, an apelike skullcap, and a humanlike femur found 15 m away. However, it is now universally accepted that the femur does not differ significantly from that of a modern human and does not belong with the skullcap. But instead of concluding that modern-looking humans were living 800,000 yeas ago, it was assumed that the femur (and similar femurs later found in the same deposits) must have been mixed in from higher, more recent levels. Of course the same could equally apply to the skullcap, which would demolish the original Java man entirely. Yet some museum exhibits continue to portray both the skullcap and the original femur as belonging to a Middle Pleistocene *Homo erectus* individual.[16]

Paleoanthropological evidence is frequently subject to multiple, contradictory interpretations, and partisan considerations often determine which view prevails at any given time. As the case of the Java man femur shows, even some of the evidence that has been fitted into the orthodox theory of human evolution is potentially anomalous. In 1965 a fragment of a humerus (upper arm bone), 4 to 4.5 million years old, was found at Kanapoi, Kenya. Some experts stated that it was different from those of the australopithecines and almost exactly like that of a modern human, but others stated the exact opposite! Over the years, the OH 8 foot, found at Olduvai Gorge and dated at 1.7 million years, has been described as humanlike, apelike, intermediate between humans and ape, distinct from both human and ape, and orangutanlike. The Kanam jaw, 1.7 to 2.0 million years old, has been attributed to *Australopithecus boisei*, *Homo habilis*, Neanderthal-like humans, early *Homo sapiens*, and modern *Homo sapiens*.[17]

The Gombore humerus, 1.5 million years old, found in Ethiopia in 1977, has been attributed in the past to *Australopithecus boisei*, but is currently attributed to *Homo ergaster*. It is described as very like that of a modern human. The ER 813 talus (ankle bone), 1.5 to 1.9 million years old, is

attributed to *Homo ergaster*, but has also been described as not significantly different from that of a modern bushman. The ER 1481 and 1472 femurs from Kenya, about 2 million years old, are currently attributed to *Homo rudolfensis*, but both have been described as resembling that of modern humans.[18] The possibility that such fossils did in fact belong to anatomically modern humans is of course ruled out in advance on theoretical grounds.

Cremo and Thompson draw attention to the dubious and dishonest practice of morphological dating. This means that if an apelike hominid and a more humanlike hominid are found at 2 different sites in association with the same Middle Pleistocene fauna, for example, the site with the more humanlike hominid is given a later date than the other. The 2 fossil hominids are then cited in textbooks as evidence of an evolutionary progression! This practice substantially distorts the hominid fossil record.

An appendix to *Forbidden Archeology* is devoted to discoveries of artifacts suggestive of more developed cultural and technological achievements in geological formations dating back to the Precambrian. The evidence includes a nail found in Devonian sandstone, metallic tubes found in Cretaceous chalk, a gold thread found in Carboniferous stone, a small Carboniferous gold chain found in a lump of coal, a Carboniferous iron cup from a chunk of coal, a Cambrian 'shoe print', a metallic vase from Precambrian rock, and Precambrian grooved metallic spheres from South Africa. The reports emanate from both scientific and nonscientific sources, but most of the artifacts have not been preserved in museums and are impossible to locate. Although such evidence is often weak, it still deserves proper study and should not be dismissed on purely ideological grounds.

In 1937 a Wyoming woman discovered a 6-inch-long spoon in a large chunk of Pennsylvania soft coal. It was sent to the Smithsonian Institution, which replied that human artifacts could *never* be found in coal.[19] And the Smithsonian is never wrong – is it?

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# 4. Giants and wildmen

## *Giant animals*

Almost every form of life that has existed on earth appears to have gone through a ‘giant’ phase. There have been giant plants, giant insects, giant reptiles, giant birds, giant fish, and giant mammals.

In the Palaeozoic era, the largest land animals were herbivorous pelycosaurs (mammal-like reptiles) from the Permian, 4 to 5 metres long. Some of the Palaeozoic invertebrates were also impressive: they include dragonflies with 76 cm wingspans and spiders measuring nearly 60 cm across their legs. Giant vegetation existed as well: the ferns of today, for example, are the descendants of the colossal ferns of the Carboniferous; some skeletonless plants attained a height of 12 m.

The largest land animals that have ever lived were the dinosaurs, which roamed the earth in the Mesozoic era, the age of reptiles. Not all the dinosaurs were giants – some were the size of a chicken. But *Brachiosaurus*, for example, stood up to 6.4 m at the shoulder, the head on its long neck could tower 12 m in the air, it attained a length of at least 23 m, and it weighed up to 80 tonnes. The tallest dinosaur, *Sauroposeidon* (shown left), stood at a height of 18 m and weighed some 60 tonnes. *Apatosaurus* (formerly *Brontosaurus*) weighed up to 30 tonnes and was as much as 21 m long, including its long neck and tail. *Seismosaurus* grew up to 50 m long, half the length of a football pitch. The largest dinosaurs exceeded 100 tonnes, about the size of a blue whale; the ultrasaur attained an incredible weight of 160 tonnes. Some researchers believe that the earth’s gravity must have been weaker during the age of reptiles to allow such gigantic lifeforms to exist.*[1] The present-day descendants of these prehistoric monsters are miniature by comparison. The sphenodon of New Zealand – the only type of land animal with a third eye (or pineal eye) on top of its head – grows to a length of 71 cm, and the Australian spine-covered lizard of the desert measures 20 cm.

*According to theosophy, the earth originated in an ethereal state and was still on its ‘descending arc’ of materialization and densification in the Mesozoic; it reached its densest stage around the Late Oligocene/Early Miocene. The weaker gravity has nothing to do with the earth being only half the size it is today, as expanding-earth theorists claim.

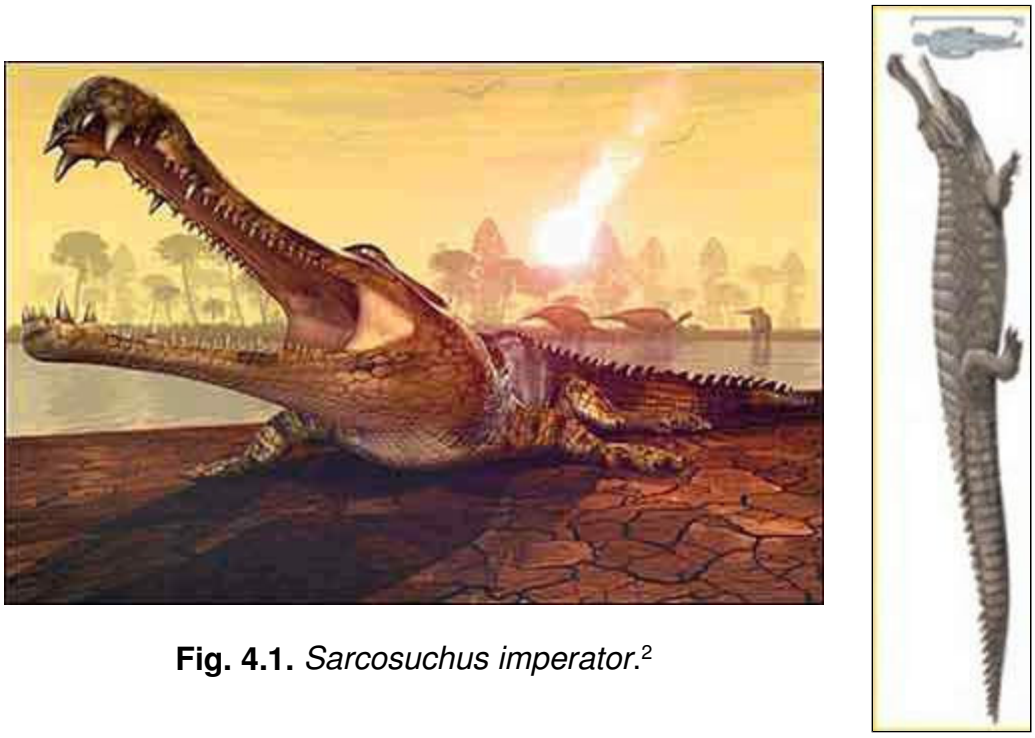


**Fig. 4.1.** *Sarcosuchus imperator*.[2]

Mesozoic rocks contain a variety of other large extinct reptiles. They include the giant crocodile *Sarcosuchus imperator*, which lived in Africa in the Cretaceous. It was 12 to 15 m long, weighed almost 10 tonnes, and probably dined on small dinosaurs. In the marine environment there were long-necked plesiosaurs up to 15 m long and fishlike ichthyosaurs up to 14 m long. In the skies above them, flying reptiles called pterodactyls ranged from creatures the size of a pigeon, with a wingspan of 46 cm, to *Quetzalcoatlus* ('feathered serpent') with an estimated wingspan of 11 to 12 m – the largest flying creature ever; original estimates put its wingspan at 20 m, but aeronautical engineers protested that this was absolutely impossible, so the figure was revised down!

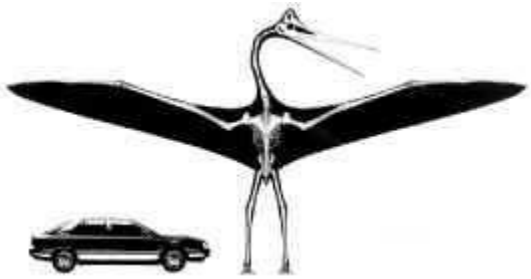


**Fig. 4.2.** *Quetzalcoatlus*.[3]

The Cenozoic era is known as the age of mammals, and the last 2 epochs of the Cenozoic – the Miocene and Pliocene – have been called the age of giant mammals. The first mammals appeared in the Triassic of the Mesozoic, and then spent nearly 150 million years as shrew-sized creatures living primarily in the underbrush, many coming out only at night to search for food. During the early Palaeocene, following the demise of the dinosaurs, mammals began an explosive evolutionary radiation, diversifying and adapting to many different ecological niches.

Pantodonts, uintatheres, and xenungulates were the first known mammals to evolve to a large size. Two of the largest known Palaeocene pantodonts are *Coryphodon*, weighing up to 300 kg, and *Barylambda*, weighing about 650 kg. By the Eocene, some mammals had reached the size

of a rhinoceros or elephant, others were small rodent-like creatures, and most looked very different from those living today. The rhinoceros-like *Uintatherium* from the Eocene was the first really gigantic mammal, and weighed up to 4.5 tonnes.

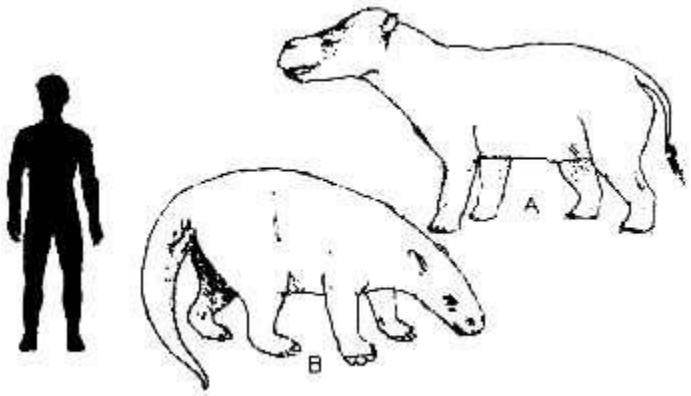
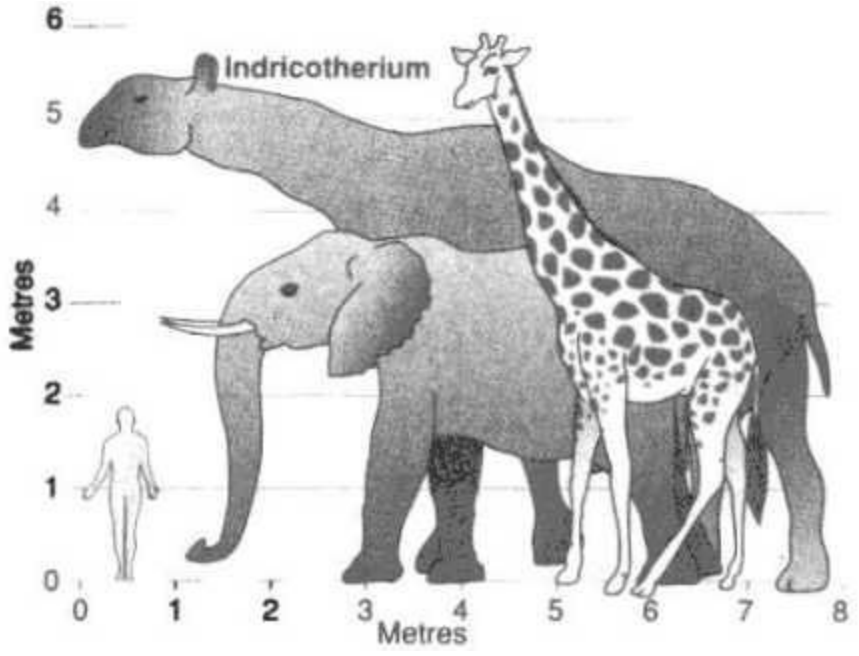



**Fig. 4.3.** Above: A. *Coryphodon*. B. *Barylambda*.
Below: *Indricotherium*.[4]

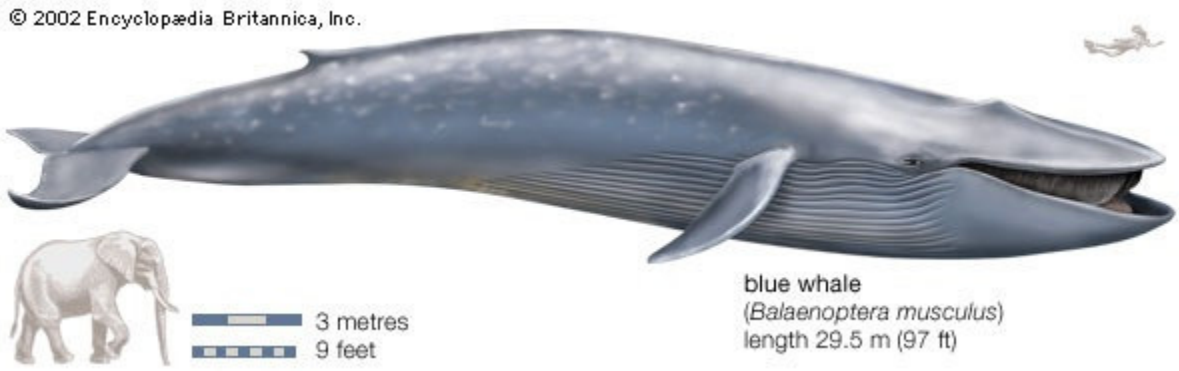



The rhinoceroses eventually evolved into giants like the Oligocene/Miocene hornless rhino *Indricotherium* – the largest known land mammal that has ever existed. It stood 5.5 m at the shoulder, carried the top of its head 8.2 m above the ground, was 8 m long, and weighed an estimated 30 tonnes, more than 4 times the weight of a modern elephant. The second largest land mammal ever to walk the earth was *Deinotherium giganteum*, which ranged across Europe, Eurasia, and Africa during the Miocene to the Pleistocene. It stood 4.5 m tall and sported tusks that arched down and back rather than up and forwards.

The *Diatryma*, a large terrestrial flightless bird from the Eocene, grew to a height of about 2.1 m (7 ft). The tallest bird that has ever existed was the giant moa of New Zealand, which originated in the Late Miocene; it attained a height of up to 4 m. The largest flying birds known were the Teratorns. Teratorns living in South America during the Miocene had a wingspan of up to 8 m (25 ft). The largest prehistoric fish is the great white shark *Carcharodon megalodon*, which abounded in the Miocene. It may have grown as long as 15 m (over twice the length of a modern shark), with a mouth extension spanning nearly 1.8 m, and weighed up to 25 tonnes.

Fossils of mammoths are found in Pleistocene deposits over every continent except Australia and South America. Most were about as large as modern elephants, but the colossal steppe mammoth of Eurasia, *Mammuthus trogontherii*, towered over 4.3 m at the shoulder. Many other megafauna went extinct during the Pleistocene ice age. They include *Megatherium*, the largest of the ground-sloths, about 6 m long; *Megalania*, a goanna-like carnivore at least 7 m long; *Toxodon*, which resembled a short rhinoceros, about 2.7 m long and 1.5 m high at the shoulder; *Diprotodon*, a wombat-like marsupial the size of a rhinoceros, 3.5 m long and 2 m high at the shoulder; *Glyptodon*, a giant armadillo, some 2.7 m long; a land turtle 4.3 m long; and a bear-sized beaver some 2 m long.

The largest of all living land animals is the African elephant; the average adult male elephant is 3.2 m tall at the shoulder and weighs 5.1 tonnes. Extinct elephants with heights of up to 4.8 m have been reported. The only land animal that stands taller than the African elephant is the giraffe; the tallest ever measured was about 5.8 m tall. The largest animals now living are the various species of whales, and the largest of all, living or extinct, is the blue whale. The largest blue whale female ever measured was 33.3 m long and weighed over 135 tonnes.




## *Giant humans*

The races of humanity are highly diversified in stature. They range from pygmies some 1 m (3 ft) in height to the tall, slender Watusi of Ruanda-Urundi, whose adult males commonly grow to heights of over 2.1 m (7 ft). About one in a million people suffer from giantism or the growth disorder acromegaly, which causes various infirmities in additional to exceptional height. The tallest man ever reliably measured was 8 feet 6 inches by the time he was 8 years old, and 8 ft 11.1 in (2.72 m) when he died in 1940 at the age of 22. The shortest person was a Dutch woman who was only 23.2 inches (58.9 cm) tall at the age of 19.

Modern ‘experts’ firmly reject the idea that there have ever been entire races of giants, and are adamant that our distant ancestors were primitive apelike creatures much smaller than ourselves. Worldwide legends and traditions, on the other hand, assert that there *were* races of giants in days of old. Theosophy agrees, and says that just as many modern animal and plant species had giant ancestors, so did modern humans.[1] Over the past few hundred years, humans have grown slightly taller, but the long-term trend, measured over millions of years, is towards a reduction in stature, with relative ‘dwarves’ and ‘giants’ probably existing in every age.

A surprising number of giant human skeletons have in fact been discovered, some of them reaching heights of 4.6 m (15 ft) or more. In many cases, the present whereabouts of the remains is unknown, and many details about the skeletons and the circumstances of their discovery are lacking, including indications as to their possible age. But to dismiss every such find out of hand as a delusion or hoax would seem to owe more to rank prejudice than to healthy scepticism.

During the exploration of North American mounds in the 19th and early 20th centuries, hundreds of bones were recovered, including remains of human giants, mostly 2.1 to 2.4 m (7 to 8 ft) tall, but sometimes as tall as 3.1 m (10 ft).[2] The official view is that they were just isolated cases of giantism among the Indians, but some of the skeletons seem to have belonged to an extinct, non-Indian race, and many Indian tribes have traditions of giants once occupying the land. In the case of some burials, the skeletal remains appeared to be uncommonly old and crumbled to dust when exposed to the atmosphere. Scientists from the Smithsonian Institution were involved in some of these finds; many of the bones were shipped off to its huge museum and have never been seen again! Only a small proportion of over a million artifacts in their collection are on public view – but no giants are among them.

A stone mound over 21 m in diameter was excavated near Brewersville, Indiana, in 1879; it contained several skeletons, at least one of which was over 2.9 m (9 ft 8 in) tall. The artifacts were kept in a basket near a grain mill on the property where they were found, but in 1937 a flood swept the mill away and with it the contents of the basket.[3] In 1925 a group of amateur investigators dug into an Indian mound at Walkerton, Indiana, and unearthed the skeletons of 8 prehistoric humans, ranging from 2.4 to almost 2.7 m tall, all wearing substantial copper armour. Unfortunately the evidence was scattered and lost.[4]

In 1833 soldiers digging a pit for a powder magazine at Lompock Rancho, California, hacked their way through a layer of cemented gravel and found the skeleton of a man about 3.7 m (12 ft) tall, surrounded by carved shells, huge stone axes, and blocks of porphyry covered with unintelligible symbols. The giant had double rows of upper and lower teeth – a commonly reported feature that is also mentioned in ancient traditions. When local Indians began to attach religious significance to the skeleton and artifacts, the authorities ordered them to be secretly reburied. The remains of a giant man with double rows of teeth were also dug up on Santa Rosa Island, off the California coast.[5]

A decayed human skeleton claimed by eyewitnesses to measure around 3.3 m (10 ft 9 in) was unearthed by labourers while ploughing a vineyard in East Wheeling, West Virginia, in November 1856.[6] In 1891 workmen digging a basement for a building near Crittenden, Arizona, discovered a large stone sarcophagus 2.4 m below the surface. When opened, a granite mummy case was found which, judging from its size, once held the body of a human over 3.7 m tall. According to the carving on the mummy case, it was designed for a person with 6 toes – reports of 6-toed giants are by no means rare.* Near Brayton, on the headwaters of the Tennessee River, scores of six-toed footprints were found, impressed in what is now solid rock. One of the tracks is 40 cm (16 in) long and 33 cm (13 in) across at the toes, and nearby are giant hoofprints measuring 20 by 25 cm.[7]

*Cases of humans with 6 fingers or 6 toes still occur today, as do minor cases of double teeth.[8]

**Fig. 4.4.** *Giant ancestors vs. giant hoaxes*

*Above*: The Cardiff Giant, 10 ft 4½ in (3.16 m) tall and weighing 1.4 tonnes, was dug up on a farm near Cardiff, New York, in 1869. The 'petrified giant' was put on display and crowds of people 50 cents each to see it. Scientists, however, denounced it as 'of very recent origin and a decided humbug'. Within 3 months it was exposed as a hoax. The giant was the brainchild of George Hull, who had it carved from a huge block of gypsum, treated it to make it look old, and buried it on the farm of an accomplice. S.J. Gould describes the hoax as preposterous: 'How could a man turn to solid gypsum, while preserving all his soft anatomy, from cheeks to toes to penis?'[9] The fake fossil is now on display as 'America's greatest hoax' at the Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown, New York.

*Below*: This photo of a 'fossilized Irish giant' was taken at a London rail depot, and appeared in the December 1895 issue of *Strand Magazine*. The giant was allegedly dug up by a Mr Dyer while prospecting for iron ore in County Antrim (Ireland). It was 12 ft 2 in (3.71 m) tall, weighed 2 tonnes, and had 6 toes on its right foot. After being exhibited in Dublin, it was brought to England and exhibited in Liverpool and Manchester at sixpence a head, 'attracting scientific men as well as gaping sightseers'.[10] After a legal dispute over ownership, nothing more appears to have been heard or seen of the exhibit.

In November 1926, miners discovered 2 giant human molars in strata at least 30 million years old in the Eagle coal mine at Bear Creek, Montana.[11] In 1926 an unusually large humanlike tooth

was discovered in coal deposits deep within a coal mine near a town outside Billings, Montana. The tooth was about 3 times normal size and the roots had been replaced with iron, and the enamel with carbon. The archaeologist who found it preserved the tooth and the mineral matrix around which it was encased, but the authorities showed no interest.[12]

Giant bones and artifacts have been discovered in the Lovelock-Winnemucca area. In February and June 1931, skeletons were found in the Humboldt lake bed near Lovelock Cave. The first was 2.6 m long, wrapped in gum-covered fabric. The second was almost 3.1 m long, according to the *Lovelock Review-Miner*'s article of 19 June 1931. On 29 September 1939 the *Review-Miner* reported the discovery of a 2.3 m skeleton on a ranch near the town.[13]

There are countless, often very sketchy reports of giant human skeletons being discovered in other parts of the world. A human skeleton 5.2 m (17 ft) tall was unearthed at Gargayan in the Philippines, and bones of other human creatures over 3 m tall have been found in southeastern China; one palaeontologist put their age at over 300,000 years. At Agadir in Morocco, the French captain Lafanechère discovered a complete arsenal of hunting weapons including 500 double-edged axes weighing 8 kg, of a size that would require a man some 4 m tall to wield them. Other giant stone implements have been found in Moravia and Syria, and the bones of their users were discovered close by. In Sri Lanka explorers found the remains of humans about 4 m tall, and at Tura in Assam, near the border of Bangladesh, a human skeleton measuring 3.4 m was discovered. Bones of humans from 2.6 to 3.1 m tall were found under a French dolmen.[14]

According to a 1926 press clipping dated Nayarit, Mexico, Capts. D.W. Page and F.W. Devalda discovered the bones of a race of giants averaging over 3.1 m (10 ft) in height.[15] In 1929, Dean Byron Cummings of Arizona University and a Mexican government scientist found 3 giant skeletons of 2 men and a woman at least 2.4 m tall and children 1.8 m tall. Their work was halted by local Yaquis, who battered some of the remains to pieces. Reports from Casas Grandes, Mexico, in 1923, announced the discovery of several skeletons of Indians 4.6 m (15 ft) tall, buried side by side with vases of precious stones. A report in the *New York Herald-Tribune* of 21 June 1925 stated that a mining party had found skeletons 3.1 to 3.7 m (10 to 12 ft) tall, with feet 46 to 51 cm (18 to 20 in) long, near Sisoguiche, Mexico. In 1938, a well-known traveller found the remains of giant men and women at least 2.4 m tall in Ecuador.[16]

Zoologist Ivan T. Sanderson once received a letter from an engineer stationed on the island of Shemya in the isolated Aleutian chain south of the Bering Strait during the Second World War. While bulldozing a group of hills for a future airstrip, the workmen unearthed the skeletal remains of what appeared to be extremely large humans. Most of the giant skulls measured about 56 to 61 cm (22 to 24 inches) from base to crown. The story was later confirmed by another person in the unit. The Smithsonian Institution apparently took possession of the remains, but they were never heard of again. 'Is it that these people cannot face rewriting all the textbooks?' Sanderson wondered.[17]

Remains of giant humans 4.3 to 4.9 m (14 to 16 ft) tall were reportedly found during road construction in southeastern Turkey in the late 1950s.[18] In 1958 Louis Leakey announced that he had found a giant human molar on Middle Pleistocene living floors at Olduvai in Tanzania, in association with many giant herbivores, including two giant pigs the size of a hippopotamus, with teeth like normal elephant tusks.[19] Further details about the tooth are lacking.

In old Pleistocene river gravels near Bathurst, New South Wales (Australia), amateur scientist Rex Gilroy has found huge stone artifacts – clubs, pounders, adzes, chisels, knives, and hand-axes – weighing 3.6 to 11.3 kg, scattered over a wide area. He believes that the oldest finds date back 240,000 years, and that some must have been made and used by humans over 3 m tall. He has also found what he considers to be teeth and fossilized footprints dating from the Pliocene which point to the existence of even taller giant hominids.[20] The aborigines believe that, long before their arrival, the Australian continent was inhabited by many races, including giants.

Various ancient Greek and Roman writers testify to the existence of giant human skeletons, including Herodotus, Pausanias, Philostratus, Phlegon, Pliny, Plutarch, Solinus, and Strabo.[21] The bones were often put on display and attributed to legendary heroes and other giants of classical antiquity. Adrienne Major has argued that *every* such claim stems from misinterpretation of immense and unfamiliar animal fossils such as the remains of mastodons, mammoths, giant giraffes, rhinoceroses, cave bears, and other large animals found in the eastern Mediterranean region. But she concedes that various fossilized remains *were* correctly recognized as those of huge, extinct animals. It is certainly true that not all ancient accounts of human giants are equally plausible: the reported size of the skeletons ranges from 3 m (10 ft) to an outrageous 43 m (140 ft)! Such inflated figures could refer to an entire fossil assemblage, or could simply be an exaggeration or invention.

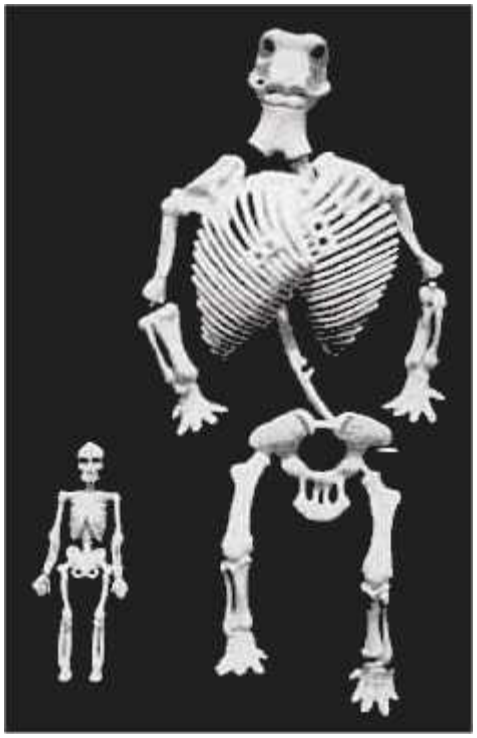


**Fig. 4.5.** Scale model of a mammoth skeleton rearranged to demonstrate how the ancient Greeks could have interpreted immense and unfamiliar animal fossils as the remains of giants.[22] (Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.)

**Fig. 4.6.** *Left:* Human femur (thighbone). *Right:* Fossil femur of Pleistocene elephant *Palaeoloxodon antiquus*.[23] (Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.)

Writing in 1880, one of the adepts behind the formation of the Theosophical Society referred to the reigning scepticism toward the idea of gigantic human ancestors, saying that 'their huge frames when found are invariably regarded as isolated freaks of nature', and added that in the Himalayas, on the territory of British India, 'we have a cave full of the skeletons of these giants'.[24] H.P. Blavatsky says that we should not laugh at the universal tradition that we had giant ancestors:

> The fact that the bones of the mammoth and the mastodon, and, in one case, those of a gigantic salamander, have been mistaken for human bones, does not make away with the difficulty that, of all the mammalians, man is the only one whom science will not allow to have dwarfed down, like all other animal frames, from the giant *homo diluvii* to the creature between 5 and 6 feet he is now.[25]

Fossils tend to be interpreted in the light of prevailing beliefs and expectations, and modern scientific preconceptions could easily prevent scientists from recognizing genuine remains of giant humans for what they are.

## *Gigantopithecus and Meganthropus*

In 1935 palaeontologist Ralph von Koenigswald came across an unusually large molar while looking through fossil teeth in a Hong Kong drugstore, where they were known as 'dragon's teeth' and sold for medicinal purposes. He realized that the tooth belonged to a new primate species, which he named *Gigantopithecus blacki*. Many hundreds of teeth have since been found, along with 4 jawbones. *Gigantopithecus* ('giant ape') is regarded as the largest primate ever to have existed.

Another species, known as *Gigantopithecus bilaspurensis*, is thought to have appeared in India between 6 and 13 million years ago, while *Gigantopithecus blacki* is thought to have lived in Southeast Asia and to have gone extinct about 300 to 400 thousand years ago. The teeth, though large, have a few similarities to human teeth, and this led some scientists to speculate that the creatures might have been giant hominid ancestors. However, the scientific consensus today is that *Gigantopithecus* was a hairy, quadrupedal, vegetarian ape.[1] It is estimated that *Gigantopithecus* would have been 2.7 to 3.7 m (9 to 12 ft) tall if it stood on its hind legs, and weighed between 270 and 545 kg (600 to 1200 pounds); the largest gorilla is 1.8 m tall and weighs 135 to 180 kg.

**Fig. 4.7.** *Left:* Model of a 3.1 m (10 ft) *Gigantopithecus*. *Right:* An adult male *Gigantopithecus* jaw compared with a human jaw.[2]

In 1941 Von Koenigswald unearthed the fragment of an enormous jawbone containing 3 teeth in Java. They were even more humanlike in appearance than those of *Gigantopithecus* but slightly smaller. He named this new find *Meganthropus palaeojavanicus*. Since then there have been similar finds in China, Southeast Asia, the Near East, and Africa. *Meganthropus* is believed to have lived 1 million years ago, and is estimated to have stood around 2.4 to 3 m tall and to have weighed 270 to 365 kg. Like *Gigantopithecus*, its remains are scant. It is generally considered to be a very robust form of *Homo erectus*, though it has also been compared to the robust australopithecines.[3]

In *Apes, Giants, and Man* (1946), palaeoanthropologist Franz Weidenreich argued that both *Gigantopithecus* and *Meganthropus* were actually giant hominids on the line leading to man; in other words, the ancestors of man were not apelike pygmies, as usually supposed, but apelike giants.[4] The conventional view is that *Gigantopithecus* walked on its knuckles like a gorilla, but anthropologist Grover Krantz believes that it was a bipedal hominid, and that Bigfoot may be a living relative. In addition to the semi-human dentition of *Gigantopithecus*, he points out that the back of its lower jaw spreads much more widely than the jaw of a gorilla, suggesting that it carried its head vertically and was capable of erect, bipedal locomotion. After examining their jaws and teeth, anthropologist Ivan Sanderson, too, concluded that the gigantopithecines were probably tool-making hominids.[5]

## *Wildmen*

The evidence summarized in section 4 suggests that modern-looking humans, primitive humans, and apelike creatures have coexisted in far more remote times than current orthodoxy allows. Over the past hundred years or so, researchers have accumulated substantial evidence that unknown creatures ranging from extremely apelike to extremely humanlike, from tiny pygmies to giants 4.5 m or more tall, roam wilderness areas of the world even today. Some may be unrecognized species of bipedal monkeys and apes, and others may be primitive humans – whereas conventional scientists assert that we humans are the only hominids now living and that bipedal apes went extinct a million years ago. Some wildmen have been seen wearing primitive clothing and carrying tools and weapons. Many sightings seem to involve flesh-and-blood creatures, but some reports are characterized by elements of 'high strangeness' and appear to involve paranormal creatures, which materialize briefly from the astral realms.[1]

Although no zoo or museum is known to have a wildman specimen in its collection, there have been countless sightings by reliable witnesses. Other evidence includes photos, footprints, handprints, excrement, hair, bits of skin, and body parts, along with native art, traditions, and folklore. Nearly all scientists dismiss such elusive creatures without examining the evidence. After all, they are not exactly eager to completely rewrite the story of human evolution! However, when a scientist makes the effort to investigate these creatures, his or her initial scepticism often fades. Despite the risk to their reputations, quite a number of scientists, including Ivan T. Sanderson, Grover Krantz, John Napier, Myra Shackley, Bernard Heuvelmans, and Boris Porshnev, have concluded that wildmen do in fact exist, or at least that the subject is worth serious study.

The lack of wildman fossils is no surprise since fossilization is rare, and even for recognized primates, fossil finds are usually meagre at best. For example, there are no known fossils of gorillas or gorilla ancestors. As for bodies of creatures that have died a natural death, we rarely find bodies of dead bears in the woods, and there are estimated to be about 100 bears for every Bigfoot. Scraps of physical evidence from mystery primates have, however, been examined. For instance, hairs from the Chinese Yeren analyzed in 1976 suggested an 'unknown primate'. Faeces of the local Ohio Bigfoot, the Grassman, apparently came from an 'unknown or human-type digestive tract'. Droppings from the Nepalese Teh-lma (Little Yeti) contained 'an unknown primate parasite'. Parts of a Yeti hand brought out of Nepal turned out to come from an 'unknown hominoid'.[2]

A Soviet lieutenant colonel reportedly examined a living wildman captured in the Dagestan autonomous republic just north of the Caucasus mountains in 1941, but the creature was shot as they retreated before the advancing German army and no one knows what happened to the body. In Mongolia 2 wildmen were reportedly shot by a patrol during border skirmishes between the Russians and Japanese in 1939, but again the bodies disappeared. The Nepalese once captured a male Yeti, but it refused to eat and when it died, the carcass was abandoned.[3]

The idea that every area of the earth has been thoroughly explored and that scientists possess a complete inventory of the earth's living animal species is a myth. The mountain gorilla, dwarf siamang, bonobo, and pygmy chimpanzee, for example, were all discovered in the 20th century. The northwestern United States has vast regions of densely forested, mountainous terrain which, although mapped from the air, is rarely penetrated by humans on the ground. 95% of the Gobi Desert, home of the Almas, and Tibet, land of the Yetis, has been little explored. The reason many of these near-human primates are so good at concealing themselves may simply be because they are more intelligent than other animals. Some of the best-known species of wildmen are briefly described below.

Bigfoot/Sasquatch is an unrecognized hominid reported mostly in the northwestern United States and British Columbia (Canada). The creatures are usually 2.1 to 2.4 m (7 to 8 ft) tall, and walk upright in a humanlike fashion. They are completely covered with short reddish-brown or black hair except for the face and around the eyes. The face is flat and apelike with a sloping forehead and heavy brow ridges. The shoulders and chest are huge, and the arms are long in proportion

to their height. The creatures often have an overpowering, putrid odour. Native Americans have legends of giant hairy humanlike creatures going back centuries. Some researchers think Bigfoot might be a descendant of *Gigantopithecus*, or related to *Australopithecus robustus/Paranthropus*.

**Fig. 4.8.** A female Bigfoot filmed by Roger Patterson in 1967. It was 2.2 m (7 ft 3.5 in) tall, and left footprints 36.8 cm (14.5 in) long and 15.2 cm (6 in) wide.[4] The authenticity of the film has been questioned, but no serious evidence of a hoax has ever come to light.

Witnesses have reported and examined hundreds of Bigfoot footprints. John Napier stated that if all of them are fakes 'then we must be prepared to accept the existence of a conspiracy of Mafia-like ramifications with cells in practically every major township from San Francisco to Vancouver'. The prints are typically 36 to 46 cm long and 13 to 23 cm wide, giving a surface roughly 3 to 4 times larger than that of an average human foot. To make a footprint of the same depth as Bigfoot, a 90 kg man would have to be carrying at least 225 kg. Moreover, the stride length of a Bigfoot is 1.2 to 1.8 m, as opposed to about 1 m for an average man. Add to this the fact that prints sometimes continue for up to several kilometres in deserted regions far from the nearest roads. A footprint machine would be difficult to manhandle over rough and mountainous terrain and could not make the impact ridges seen in Bigfoot prints. On 10 June 1982, a US Forest Service patrolman in Washington State observed a hairy biped around 2.6 m tall from a distance of about 55 metres. After 30 seconds, the animal walked away. A study of the creature's footprints showed dermal ridges, sweat pores, and other features in the proper places for large primate feet.[5]

Yeti ('yeh-teh', meaning 'that thing there') is a name given to several types of unknown primates sighted in the Himalayas. One type is the Meh-teh, which is described by witnesses as having a stocky apelike body with a distinctly human quality to it. Standing 1.7 m (5 ft 6 in) tall, it is covered with short, coarse, reddish-brown to black hair. It has a conically-shaped head with a pointed crown, and long arms reaching almost to its knees. Researchers tend to believe that this man-sized Yeti, or classic 'Abominable Snowman', is some kind of anthropoid. The creatures probably live in the warm mountain valleys of the Himalayas, using the snowy passes to move from one spot to another.

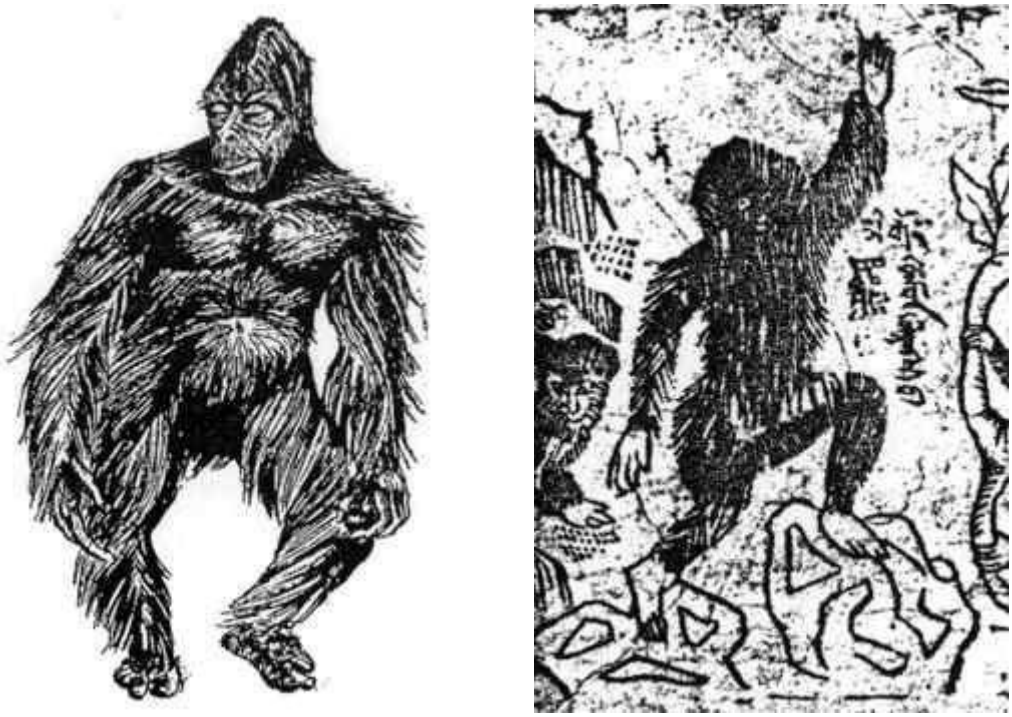


**Fig. 4.9.** *Left:* Bernard Heuvelmans' sketch of the Yeti (Meh-teh). *Right:* A wildman as portrayed in an old Tibetan book discussing local fauna.[6]

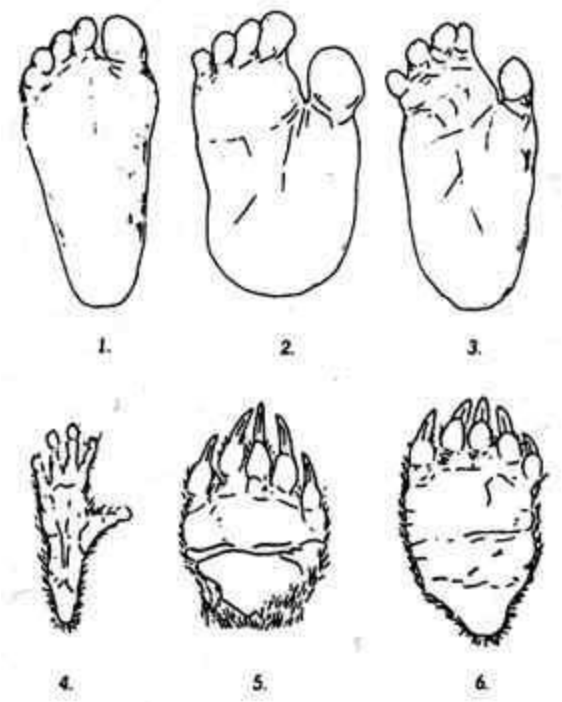



**Fig. 4.10.** (1) A human foot. (2) A Yeti foot. (3) A gorilla foot. (4) A langur foot. (5) A Himalayan black-bear forefoot. (6) A Himalayan black-bear hindfoot.[7]

Big Yetis 2.4 m (8 ft) tall are also reported. They are known as Dzu-teh and (in China) as Gin-Sung ('bear-man'). They are big, hulking animals with a long, dark, shaggy coat that are usually quadruped but can walk as a biped. Some think they may be a hitherto-uncatalogued large bear, especially as they raid small livestock holdings and leave behind clawed prints. The smallest type of Yeti is the Teh-lma. It is generally said to be 1 to 1.4 m (3 to 4.5 ft) tall, covered with thick reddish-gray hair, with hunched shoulders and a sharply pointed head that slopes back from the forehead.

Another Asian Proto-Pygmy is the small pot-bellied primate from Sumatra known as Orang Pendek (‘little man’). They stand 1 to 1.5 m tall, are covered with short dark hair, with a thick bushy mane hanging halfway or more down their back, and have a smooth, hairless brown face. Sightings have been reported for centuries.

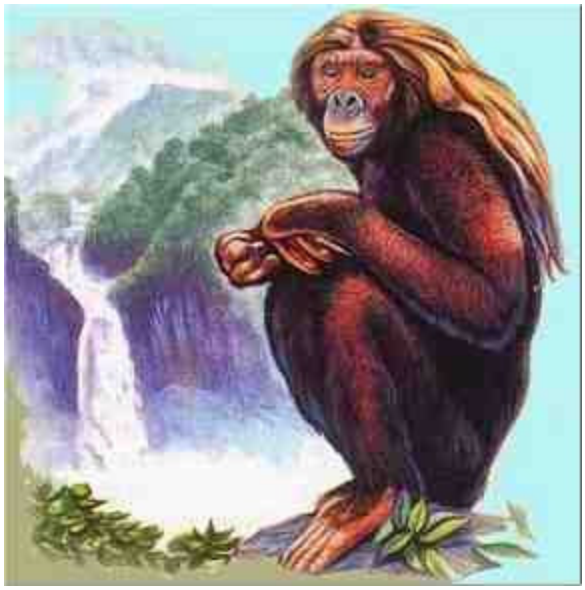


**Fig. 4.11.** Orang Pendek.[8]

The Almas (Mongolian for ‘wildman’) is reported to dwell in the Altai mountains in western Mongolia and in the Tien Shan mountains of the neighbouring Chinese province of Sinkiang. Adult Almas are 1.5 to 1.8 (5 to 6 ft) tall and covered with reddish-black hair. They have a flattened forehead, prominent brow ridges, a protruding jaw, and a cone-shaped back of the head. They have long arms and short legs, and walk with bent knees. They have been seen to use simple tools, but have not been heard to speak. Some researchers class the Almas as an Erectus Hominid. A 1.8 m Erectus Hominid is also reported in Vietnam; it is called by many names, including Nguoi Rung (‘forest people’). Another that is frequently sighted is the Kaptar or Biabin-guli that lives in the Caucasus mountains.

**Fig. 4.12.** The Almas. (Courtesy of Harry Trumbore)[9]

The Yeren, or Chinese wildman, lives in the mountainous, thickly forested regions of central and southern China. Modern reports are frequent and describe it as a hairy biped over 1.8 m (6 ft) tall, covered with a heavy coat of red-brown hair. It has an apelike muzzle, large ears, and humanlike eyes. It leaves large footprints up to 41 cm (16 in) long. Such a creature has been portrayed in Chinese folklore for millennia. In some locations, a second form of Yeren is reported: it goes about on all fours and has longer red hair.

The Australian Yowie is an apelike creature at least 1.8 m tall, covered with longish brown hair. They have a very small, humanlike face but no chin, and long canine teeth. Sightings of Yowies and their footprints continue to this day, mainly in the south and central coastal regions of New South Wales and Queensland's Gold Coast. The aborigines have a long tradition of this 'hairy man' of the mountains.

**Fig. 4.13.** The Yowie.[10]

There are occasional reports of creatures looking like Bigfoot being sighted in the South American Andes; they are called the Ucu, Ucumar, and Ukumar-zupai. In Central America, they are known, among other things, as the Sisemite and the Ulak. There are also sightings of smaller apelike creatures. The Didi, for example, is a red-haired bulky anthropoid restricted to a narrow strip of northwestern South America. The Mapinguary of Brazil is somewhat taller (1.7 m), and is described in native traditions as a mostly red-haired, sloping, bipedal, long-armed giant ape. People in Belize speak of semi-human creatures called the Dwendi, ranging in size from 1 to 1.4 m, which inhabit the jungles in the southern part of the country. From the eastern slopes of the Andes in Ecuador come reports of the Shiru, a small, fur-covered hominidlike creature, about 1.2 to 1.5 m tall.

In the African Congo there are reports of hairy apelike creatures 2.4 m tall, known as the Muhalu or Kikomba. In Kenya there are similar unknown pongids called the Ngoloko. Primitive, hair-covered Proto-Pygmies are reported in many African countries, such as the Kakundakári of Zimbabwe, the Agogwe of East Africa, and the Séhité of West Africa; the latter two are described as red-haired.* Most of the reported sightings of these creatures come from 70 or more years ago.

> *There are several known tribes of African pygmies not covered with hair. The Akkas, for example, have been described as about 1.2 m tall, with large heads, very projecting jaws, flat noses, and protruding lips. They have very long arms reaching below their knees, and their walk is vacillating, due to the abnormal size of their stomachs, as with the chimpanzee and orangutan. Blavatsky says that some scientists think – 'this time with pretty good reason' – that the Akkas are remnants of the 'missing link' between man and ape.[11]

Wildmen such as Bigfoot/Sasquatch, Ucumar, Sisemite, and the Big Yeti have been classified as Neo-Giants, ranging from 1.8 to 2.7 m (6 to 9 ft) in height. They are to be distinguished from Marked Hominids, who are more human-looking than Bigfoot, and somewhat shorter, averaging about 2.1 m tall, with firm, powerful bodies. These hairy creatures are usually seen in the wooded

mountainsides and tundra in the subpolar regions of North America, Europe, and Asia. They tend to be piebald, exhibiting either a two-toned, multicoloured hair pattern, a lighter-haired mane, a near-albino appearance, or a white patch in the midst of a field of darker hair. They have been known to approach human housing and livestock, trade with humans, and communicate with them nonverbally. Erectus Hominids and Neanderthaloids are about 1.8 m tall.

**Fig. 4.14.** The Siberian hominid named Mecheny ('the marked one'), sighted by Russian scientist Maya Bykova in 1987. It was 2 m tall and had a distinctive patch of white hair on its forearm.[12]

Another category of wildmen is labelled True Giants: extremely large, hairy hominoids, up to 6 m (20 ft) tall. Their bodies are remarkably lean, if not lanky, covered with reddish-brown or darker hair that is longer on the head and thinner on the arms. They appear to have no neck, and their facial features are flat. Their feet measure about 25 cm (10 in) wide by at least 53 cm (21 in) long, and they have 4 visible toes; if they have a fifth vestigial toe it does not show up in most prints. They are reported in wooded mountain areas around the world, mostly in temperate zones, and some researchers think they are linked to *Gigantopithecus*.[13]

A giant creature about 3.7 m (12 ft) tall was sighted at Pitt Lake in British Columbia, Canada, in June 1965. Stories of tall creatures with enormous footprints date back to 1829 and Creek Indian traditions from the Okefenokee Swamp of Georgia. Sightings of True Giants in North America come from across the country, including South Carolina in 1977 and Pennsylvania in 1993, but are concentrated in the high mountains of the west and the spruce forests of the north. Giant hairy wildmen 3 to 6 m (10 to 20 ft) tall have been reported in Tibet and Malaysia, where they are known as the Nyalmo and the Orang Dalam respectively.[14]

Around 1960 two men had an encounter with several giant creatures at Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. They saw a 2.1 m (7 ft) tall female creature that looked like a gorilla, with long breasts and dark brownish hair. Then a shorter female appeared, followed by a male who was at least 2.7 m (9 ft) tall. They found another 3.1 m (10 ft) tall 'hairy gorilla monster' at their tin hut, pulling apart the walls and roof of the flimsy structure. The aborigines later told them that this was the territory of the Jimbra, who had inhabited the land since the Dreamtime. These smelly 2.1 to 4.3 m tall hairy people with gorilla-like faces, 60-cm-long footprints with splayed big toes, and large,

clearly visible genitals have been reported throughout Australia, from the time of the earliest white settlers till the present day.[15]

Aboriginal people believe that the fabled Tjangara, or 'great hairy man', still inhabits the Nullarbor Plains of the South Australian outback. In August 1972 Steve Moncreif, a fossil hunter, was exploring a dry creek bed near Yarle Lakes on the edge of the Great Victorian Desert in South Australia when he detected a bad smell. Looking up he saw a huge hairy creature observing him from a high bank. About 6 m away stood a creature more than 3 m tall, with male genitals, and a large stone club in its right hand. It pursued Moncreif as he ran to his Land Rover, but he threw his pick at the animal's face and managed to escape. Encounters with the Tjangara and footprints measuring up to 50 cm long had been reported in the same area 2 years previously. In 1989 a 4-m-tall hairy giant, this time wielding a huge wooden club, was spotted by 2 carloads of bush-trekkers near Etadunna in South Australia.

**Fig. 4.15.** Giant seen near Yarle Lakes, South Australia. (Courtesy of Harry Trumbore)[16]

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**The Ape-Ancestry Myth: Part 3**

**The Ape-Ancestry Myth: Contents**

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**Homepage**

# Human Origins

# the ape-ancestry myth

**David Pratt**

**February 2004**

***Part 1 of 3***

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## 1. Darwinian claims and controversies

According to mainstream science, humans are evolved apes who, as a result of random genetic mutations and environmental pressures, happened to acquire the unique power of selfconsciousness. However, the loud publicity and slick propaganda for the ape-ancestry theory cannot alter the fact that the evidence is scanty and contradictory and open to other interpretations.

Anthropologist Richard Leakey has said that 'If someone went to the trouble of collecting together in one room all the fossil remains so far discovered of our ancestors (and their biological relatives) who lived, say, between five and one million years ago, he would need only a couple of large trestle tables on which to spread them out.'[1] Most hominid fossils are fragments of jaws and scraps of skulls but, as palaeontologist Stephen J. Gould once said, 'they serve as a basis for endless speculation and elaborate storytelling'.[2]

Beliefs, expectations, and prejudices inevitably play a role in the interpretation of fossils, as do

personal rivalries and the desire for fame. More than one palaeoanthropologist has become famous overnight by announcing sensational and extravagant claims after finding some fragmentary remains of a creature he or she believes to be related to man's origin. But such claims have a habit of being undermined or invalidated by further research and discoveries. The details of our supposed descent from the apes remain obscure and are the subject of heated debate among evolutionists.

A number of blunders in the interpretation of fossils have been made over the years. In 1922 a tooth was discovered in western Nebraska (USA), which was declared by several scientists to combine the characteristics of the chimpanzee, *Pithecanthropus* (a postulated apeman), and man. He became popularly known as Nebraska man and was regarded by some as a potential human ancestor. Five years later, it was announced that the tooth actually belonged to a pig. Creationist scientist Duane Gish remarks: 'This is a case in which a scientist made a man out of a pig, and the pig made a monkey out of the scientist!'[3]

**Fig. 1.1.** Nebraska man – according to an artist's wild imagination.[4]

The first skeleton of Neanderthal man was unearthed in 1856. He was originally depicted as an ugly, brutish half-monster with short bow-legs and a shuffling, stooping gait, and regarded as intermediate between man and apes. A century later, a close examination of the skeleton revealed that it was that of an old man crippled with osteoarthritis and rickets! It is now recognized that Neanderthal man walked upright as we do. In fact, '[i]f we were to put a cardigan sweater on a Neanderthal and stick a pipe in his mouth and then were to have him walk across the campus of one of our major universities he could quite easily be mistaken for a professor of paleontology.'[5]

In 1983 palaeoanthropologist Tim White accused another scientist, Noel Boaz, of having mistaken a dolphin's rib for a clavicle (shoulder bone) of a pygmy chimpanzee, and jested that the fossil should be designated *Flipperpithecus*! Boaz had even suggested that the curve of the

bone might indicate habitual bipedalism. Anthropologists have also erroneously described the femur (thighbone) of an alligator and the toe of a 3-toed horse as clavicles. In May 1984 it was announced that a skull fragment found in Spain a year earlier and hailed by experts as the oldest human fossil ever found in Europe may have come from a 4-month-old donkey! A symposium organized to discuss the fossil was hastily cancelled.[6]

Even outright fraud is not unknown in the minefield of human origins. In 1912 a jawbone and part of a skull were discovered in a gravel pit near Piltdown, England. The jawbone appeared very simianlike except for the teeth, which showed the type of wear expected for humans. The skull was very humanlike. The specimens were combined into a single individual, who became known as Piltdown man. He was judged to be about half a million years old, and regarded as an authentic link in the evolution of man. In 1950 a new test revealed that the jawbone contained practically no fluoride, suggesting it was very recent. The skull did have a significant amount of fluoride, but was estimated to be only a few thousand years old. It was then discovered that the bones had been treated with iron salts to make them look old, and scratch marks were detected on the teeth, indicating that they had been filed. In other words, Piltdown man was a fraud. A modern ape's jaw and a human skull had been doctored to resemble an apeman, and the forgery had fooled most of the world's greatest experts. Debate on who was responsible for the fraud continues to this day.

## *Primates and hominoids*

Modern man, *Homo sapiens* ('wise man'), is placed in the order Primates, one of the 24 orders of mammals. Living primates include the prosimians (lemurs, lorises, tarsiers), the monkeys, and the great apes (gibbons, orangutans, chimpanzees, gorillas). All primates share certain characteristics, such as highly developed binocular vision, mobile fingers and toes with flat nails instead of claws, a shortened snout with a reduced sense of smell, and large brains relative to body size. Most evolutionists interpret these similarities as evidence that all primates have descended from a common ancestor.

The earliest primate fossils date to the Early Eocene or perhaps to the Late Palaeocene, but the origin of the primates is shrouded in mystery. They supposedly evolved from a primitive insect-eating mammal, but there are no transitional forms connecting primates to insectivores. The ancestor was thought to be the tree shrew, but there is now abundant evidence that tree shrews are unrelated to primates. The fossil record fails to produce any evidence for transitional forms between prosimians, the earliest primates, and the New World and Old World monkeys, and there are also no identifiable transitional forms between monkeys and apes – only a large gap.[1]

| | **Science** Began (years BP) | **Theosophy** Began (years BP) |
|---|---|---|
| **Phanerozoic eon** | | |
| Cenozoic era | | |
| Quaternary period: | | |
| Holocene epoch | 10,000 | |
| Pleistocene | 1,600,000 | 870,000 |
| Tertiary period: | | |
| Pliocene epoch | 5,300,000 | 1,870,000 |
| Miocene | 23,700,000 | 3,670,000 |
| Oligocene | 36,600,000 | 5,280,000 |
| Eocene | 57,800,000 | 7,140,000 |
| Palaeocene | 66,400,000 | 7,870,000 |
| Mesozoic era | | |
| Cretaceous | 144,000,000 | 16,000,000 |
| Jurassic | 208,000,000 | 28,000,000 |
| Triassic | 245,000,000 | 44,000,000 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Palaeozoic era | | |
| Permian | 286,000,000 | 74,000,000 |
| Carboniferous | 360,000,000 | 110,000,000 |
| Devonian | 408,000,000 | 148,000,000 |
| Silurian | 438,000,000 | 179,000,000 |
| Ordovician | 505,000,000 | 214,000,000 |
| Cambrian | 540,000,000 | 250,000,000 |
| **Proterozoic eon** | | |
| (Laurentian) | (640,000,000) | 320,000,000 (start of 4th round) |
| Late | 900,000,000 | |
| Middle | 1,600,000,000 | 720,000,000 (start of 3rd round?) |
| Early | 2,500,000,000 | |
| **Archean eon** | | |
| Late | 3,000,000,000 | 1,300,000,000 (start of 2nd round?) |
| Middle | 3,400,000,000 | |
| Early | 3,960,000,000 | |
| **Hadean eon** | 4,600,000,000 | 1,973,000,000 (start of 1st round) |

**Fig. 1.2.** Chronology of the geological ages. All the dates given in this article are official 'scientific' dates unless indicated otherwise. According to theosophy, the scientific time-periods are too long by a factor of between about 2 and 9, due to the false assumptions on which radiometric dating is based.[2]

Within the order Primates, humans, apes, and their ancestors are classified within the superfamily Hominoidea (hominoids), which includes the 2 families known as pongids (anthropoid apes) and hominids (upright-walking primates with relatively large brains). The ape-ancestry theory does not propose that man descended directly from the living apes, but that both modern apes and man descended from a common *apelike* ancestor. The first apelike creatures appeared in the Oligocene, while the first apes thought to be on the line to humans appeared in the Miocene. These are believed to include *Dryopithecus*, but this has been challenged on the grounds that although the dryopithecines had a far less specialized anatomy than modern apes, they were still too specialized to have given rise to either the hominids or the great apes.[3]

Contrary to the impression created by the fanciful illustrations that decorate popular science publications, a smooth series of fossils leading from an apelike common ancestor to man on the one hand and present-day apes on the other has not been found. For nearly 50 years, based on jaw fragments and a few teeth, palaeoanthropologists insisted that *Ramapithecus*, which lived between 16.7 and 5.3 million years ago, was an intermediate between ape and man, but it is now generally believed to be an ancestor of the orangutan, rather than a hominid. Another creature that was once proposed as a 'missing link' is *Oreopithecus*, which lived from 11.2 to 3.4 million years ago, but it has since been demoted. Palaeontologist David Pilbeam has commented: '*Oreopithecus* has had quite a checkered history and has been described as a monkey, ape, hominid and even pig!'[4]

Before the rise of the new science of evolutionary genetics, estimates for the date of the split between hominids and apes ranged from 4 to 30 million years ago, with most fossil experts choosing a date somewhere in the middle. However, since the early 1960s, various molecular techniques have been developed for determining when 2 species shared a common ancestor. They involve quantifying the amount of difference between particular molecules or proteins in the 2 species, together with the rate of evolution in the molecule concerned (which is assumed to be constant). The various 'molecular clocks' are often calibrated on the basis of a date of 30 million years for the alleged split between Old World monkeys and hominoids, a date based on 'fossil evidence' and radiometric dating.[5]

These studies led to the conclusion that African apes and humans diverged between about 6 and 8 million years ago, with some giving a date as low as 5 million years or as high as 10 million years. One of the researchers involved even declared that 'one no longer has the option of considering a fossil older than about eight million years as a hominid *no matter what it looks like*'! [6] After much contentious debate, palaeoanthropologists have accepted this shortened timescale for human evolution.

## *Australopithecus and other 'ancestors'*

Physical characteristics distinguishing hominids from pongids include erect posture, bipedal locomotion, rounded skulls, larger brains, and small teeth (including unspecialized canines). The hominid family includes not only our own species, *Homo sapiens*, but also more primitive human forms belonging to the genus *Homo*, and partially bipedal apes belonging mostly to the genus *Australopithecus* ('southern ape'). All hominid species except our own are now thought to be extinct.

Arranging the various species into an evolutionary sequence has become increasingly difficult as more fossils have been found. Anthropologists Donald Johanson and Blake Edgar write:

> Paleoanthropological discoveries make it clear that the human family tree is not a single lineage in which one species succeeded another, leading relentlessly to the appearance of modern humans. Instead, the hominid fossil record suggests that our ancestry is better thought of as a bush, with the branches representing a number of bipedal species that evolved along different evolutionary lines.[1]

In 2002 the Toumai skull, 6 to 7 million years old, was found in Chad, in the southern Sahara desert, and given the name *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*. It shares chimpanzee and australopithecine anatomical features, and it is not known whether it walked upright. It was hyped in the media as a potential human ancestor, but some anthropologists say the latest 'apeman' may be no more than an early female gorilla or chimpanzee.[2] Palaeoanthropologist Bernard Wood remarked: 'If the new find has taught us anything it is that, paradoxically, the more we discover about our origins, the less we know.'[3]

In 2000, bones of a creature named *Orrorin tugenensis* (also known as Millennium Man), dated at about 6 million years, were found in Kenya by a French and Kenyan research team. They argued that it was ancestral to *Homo* through *Praeanthropus* (a name used to refer to *Australopithecus afarensis* by those who do not consider it ancestral to later australopithecines). Their dismissal of the australopithecines as a whole as a dead-end side-branch is very controversial, and their claim that *Orrorin* was bipedal is widely regarded as premature.[4] Some researchers have pointed out that primates with skeletal remains indicating bipedalism should not automatically be considered human ancestors.

In 1994 researchers uncovered bones attributed to *Ardipithecus ramidus*, who lived in Ethiopia 4.4 million years ago (some researchers refer to it as *Australopithecus ramidus*). More *Ardipithecus* bones, 5.8 million years old, were discovered in 2001. *Ardipithecus* had roughly the same size and body structure as a chimpanzee, but its foramen magnum (the hole at the base of a skull through which the spinal cord passes) indicates that it walked upright, as does a toe bone with a humanlike structure found 15 km away that is also attributed to *ramidus*. Some researchers have proposed that the line of human origins went through the older *Ardipithecus* to the younger one to *Australopithecus afarensis* at 3.2 million years and then to the first members of *Homo* at around 2.5 million years ago.

Other scientists reject *Ardipithecus* as a human ancestor. Its foramen magnum is situated farther forward than in any other hominid, and Ian Tattersall and Jeffrey Schwartz argue that such a position 'is so uniquely derived compared with every one of its presumed descendants that it couldn't have been ancestral to any of them'.[5] The discoverers of *Orrorin tugenensis* believe that *Ardipithecus* was a descendant of *Orrorin* but was ancestral to chimpanzees rather than humans.

The australopithecines lived from about 4½ million to roughly 1 million years ago. The modern consensus is that they possessed an upright posture and bipedal gait, but some species show features such as relatively long arms and curved finger and toe bones reminiscent of an arboreal way of life. These 'apemen' stood between 1 and 1.5 m tall and had a small braincase ranging from 410 to 600 cc, not very different from those of living apes, but their teeth were more similar to those of humans. *Homo* is distinguished from the australopithecines by a larger cranial capacity, ranging from roughly 530 cc in earlier species to over 2000 cc in modern humans. The official view is that the australopithecines lived only in Africa, but some scientists have reported australopithecines from China, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia.[6]

The 'robust' australopithecines (which include the species: *robustus*, *boisei*, and *aethiopicus*) are not thought to be on a direct line of descent to modern humans, and some palaeoanthropologists assign them to a separate genus, *Paranthropus*. The 'gracile' australopithecines are widely thought to have given rise to the earliest *Homo* species around 2.5 million years ago, in the Late Pliocene.


**Fig. 1.3.** *Australopithecus africanus* (left) and *Australopithecus robustus*.[7]

There is vigorous debate on the status of the various species of *Australopithecus*. For instance, some scientists believe that the fossils assigned to *afarensis* and those assigned to *anamensis* really belong to several species. Some see *africanus* as a regional variation or subspecies of *afarensis*, some consider it to be a descendant of *afarensis*, and some believe the *africanus* fossil material should be assigned to 2 completely different species.

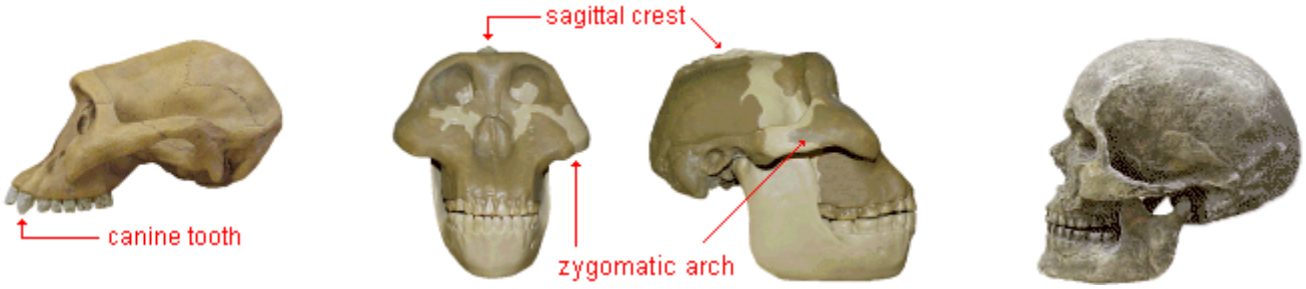



**Fig. 1.4.** Left: *Australopithecus afarensis*. Centre: *Australopithecus boisei*. Right: A modern human skull.[8]

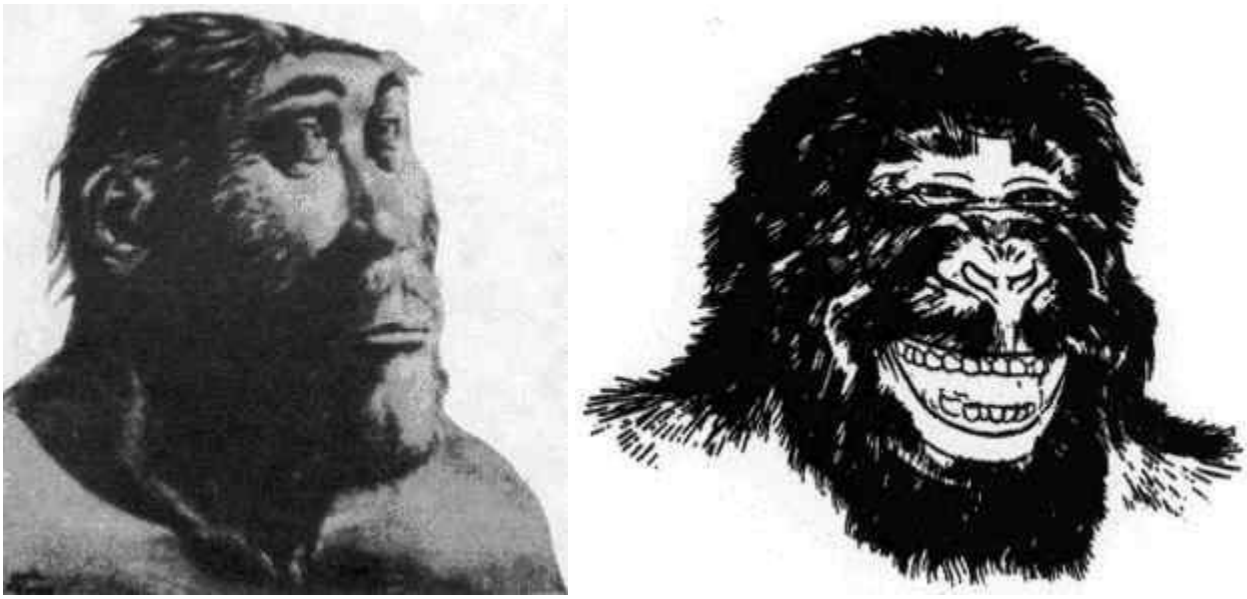


**Fig. 1.5.** Two contrasting views by evolutionists of *Zinjanthropus boisei* (now known as *Australopithecus boisei*).[9]

Interestingly, the oldest hominids, such as *Sahelanthropus*, *Orrorin*, *Ardipithecus*, and *Australopithecus afarensis*, lived in a woodland environment, whereas darwinists always used to argue that bipedalism developed when our ancestors moved into a grassland environment, as it enabled them to see farther when hunting for game or watching for predators. This scenario was never very convincing. Humans, as bipeds, are notably slower than quadrupeds – a serious problem for a tree-dweller that supposedly moved out onto the predator-rich savannas. Moreover, prairie dogs and bears are very good at surveying their surroundings but have not adopted full bipedalism.

On the basis of fragments of the pelvis, limb, and foot bones it is widely believed that the australopithecines walked habitually upright. But there is 'increasing evidence from studies of the limb bones of the australopithecines that the skeletal adaptations for climbing and bipedal walking are similar', and that some of the australopithecines 'may well have spent more time resting and feeding in trees than has hitherto been believed'.[10]

Some dissenting scientists have challenged the australopithecines' status as hominids and/or as our direct ancestors. Louis Leakey held that the australopithecines were not in the main line of human evolution, but an early offshoot from it. Anatomist Sir Solly Zuckerman took the view that the teeth, skull, jaws, brain, and limbs of *Australopithecus* were essentially apelike, and concluded that it was in no way related to the origin of man. Charles Oxnard held that, although the australopithecines were bipedal, they were also at home in the trees, and did not have a place in the direct human lineage.

Some modern researchers are continuing to raise objections to overly humanlike portrayals of *Australopithecus*.[11] Tattersall and Schwartz point out that because palaeoanthropology focuses heavily on discovering ancestors, the uniqueness of the australopithecines has been downplayed, and that it is debatable whether 'we really can point to any australopith as an early but direct human ancestor'. They add that neither *afarensis*, *africanus*, *aethiopicus*, *robustus*, nor *boisei* can be ancestral to the *Homo* lineage because in certain features, e.g. the femur, they are more 'evolved', i.e. specialized, whereas 'an ancestor should be more primitive, not more derived, than its presumed descendants'.[12]

According to mainstream anthropology, the australopithecines were transitional between early

quadrupedal apes and fully bipedal modern humans. However, some scientists, including supporters of the theory of initial bipedalism (see section 5), have turned the orthodox position on its head, and argue that the australopithecines are actually offshoots of *bipedal* hominids and were evolving towards *quadrupedalism*. Fossil evidence provides some support for this.

*Australopithecus anamensis*, discovered in Kenya in 1995, appears to have been perfectly bipedal 4 million years ago. 'Lucy' (*A. afarensis*), dated at 3.2 million years old, discovered at Hadar, Ethiopia, in 1974, has bipedal characteristics, but she also has divergent big toes like those used by the apes of today to climb trees. *Afarensis* also had an upward-pointing shoulder joint indicating that the arm was used for suspensory behaviour, and a hand with a powerful wrist and curved fingers, suitable for climbing. 'Little Foot', an australopithecine skeleton found at the Sterkfontein caves in South Africa in 1998, and dated at around 3.3 million years old, had an ankle joint that shows it was already bipedal but was also able to climb trees thanks to its divergent big toes. As palaeontologist Yvette Deloison points out, this means we have a 4-million-year-old australopithecine that was perfectly bipedal, and two more recent skeletons that are *less* bipedal and more arboreal.[13]

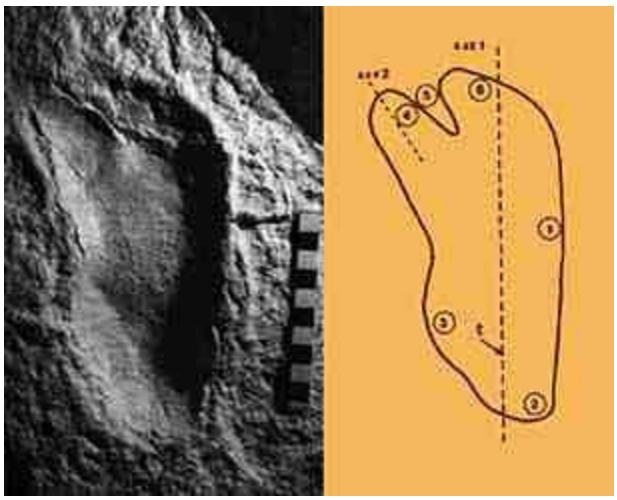


**Fig. 1.6.** The footprints found at Laetoli, Tanzania, dated at 3.6 million years, are usually attributed to *A. afarensis*. Though very similar to human footprints, they have certain apelike characteristics indicating that the creature that made them had a bipedal gait, but not entirely like that of humans.[14]

Some anthropologists argue that the robust australopithecines, which survived about 1½ million years longer than the gracile forms (such as *afarensis*), had a pelvis better adapted for climbing than for walking.[15] *A. garhi*, some 2.5 million years old, is thought to have descended from *afarensis*, yet it has *longer* forearms. Another 'intriguing puzzle' is the fact that the OH 62 skeleton, 1.8 million years old, which has been assigned to *Homo habilis*, has longer arms and shorter legs than *afarensis*, its proposed ancestor (see fig. 1.8).[16]

Taking the view that evolution never goes backwards (known as Dollo's law), Deloison argues that 'the human foot, highly specialized for bipedal use, cannot have been derived from a foot adapted to climbing trees, which is also highly specialized but in a different way'. She estimates that a primitive ape walked upright as long as 15 million years ago. She believes there were 3 species of bipedal primates: one of them developed into hominids (*Homo*), another became semi-bipedal, semi-arboreal australopithecines, and the third developed into quadrupedal orangutans, gorillas, and chimpanzees.[17] François de Sarre has argued that it was actually some of the australopithecines that eventually evolved into gorillas and chimps.

The controversy surrounding *Australopithecus* shows no signs of abating. In late 2001 Meave Leakey added to the already confused early hominid picture by announcing the discovery of a new hominid in Kenya, 3.5 million years old, roughly the same age as *Australopithecus afarensis*. Instead of identifying it as a new member of the genus *Australopithecus*, she stirred up the hominid world by creating a new genus and species for it, *Kenyanthropus platyops*, implying that the australopithecines are a side-branch unrelated to humans.[18]

However, the mainstream view that we had australopithecine ancestors is unlikely to be given up without a fight. In 1986 Pat Shipman made the following confession: 'we could assert that we have no evidence whatsoever of where *Homo* arises from and remove all members of the genus *Australopithecus* from the hominid family. ... I've such a visceral negative reaction to this idea that I suspect I am unable to evaluate it rationally. I was brought up on the notion that *Australopithecus* is a hominid.'[19]

## *The rise of Homo*

Explaining the assumed evolutionary transition from *Australopithecus* to *Homo* poses grave problems. Tattersall and Schwartz believe *A. africanus* and *A. garhi* were closest to the *Homo* line, whereas Johanson and Edgar believe it was *A. afarensis* (see fig. 1.7). The latter admit that 'there is a long gap in the fossil record between 2 and 3 million years ago where convincing intermediates between *A. afarensis* ... and earliest *Homo* are essentially absent'. They add:

> For the moment, the evolutionary roots of *Homo* are still poorly understood, but they will ultimately be found in pre-2 million-year-old deposits. Despite the widely held view that *A. africanus* makes a good candidate for ancestor to *Homo*, equally convincing arguments can be mounted to support a unique link between *africanus* and *A. robustus*. Should this be the case, then the three species of Pliocene-Pleistocene *Homo* [i.e. *rudolfensis*, *habilis*, and *ergaster*] are without an identifiable predecessor.[1]

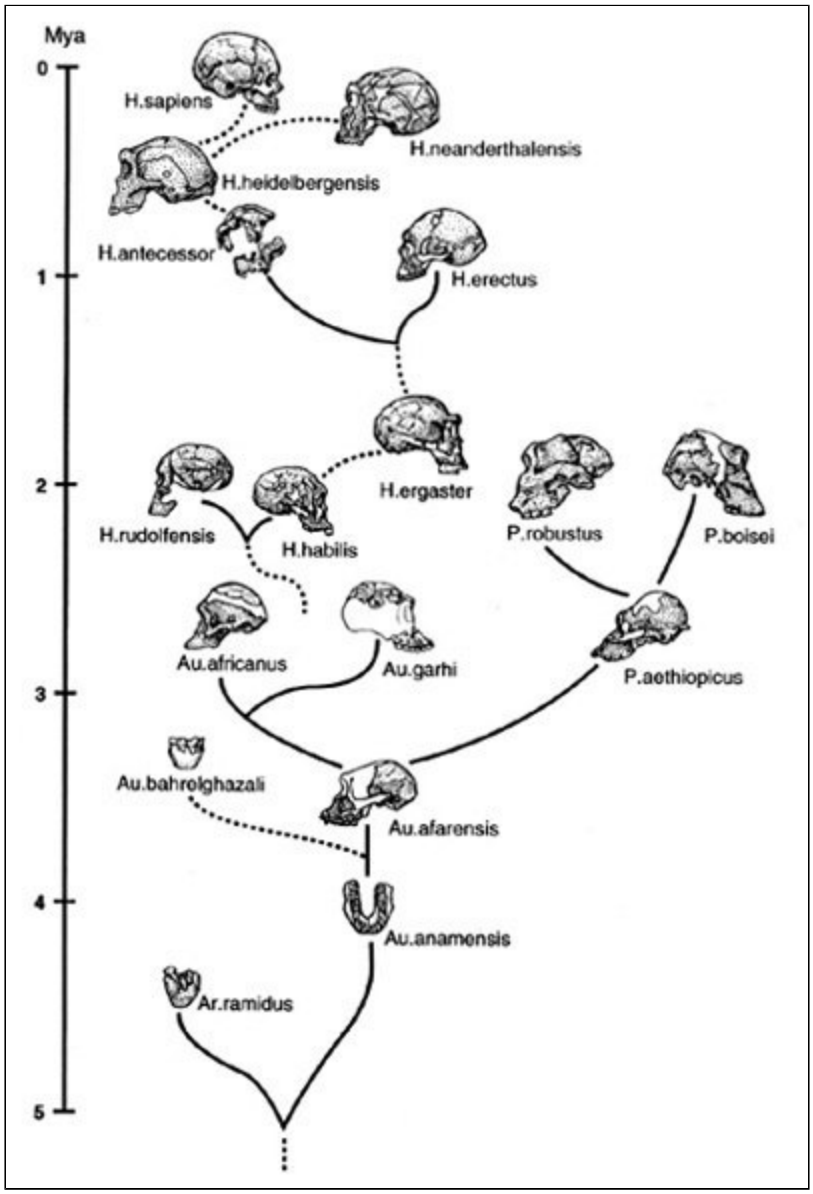
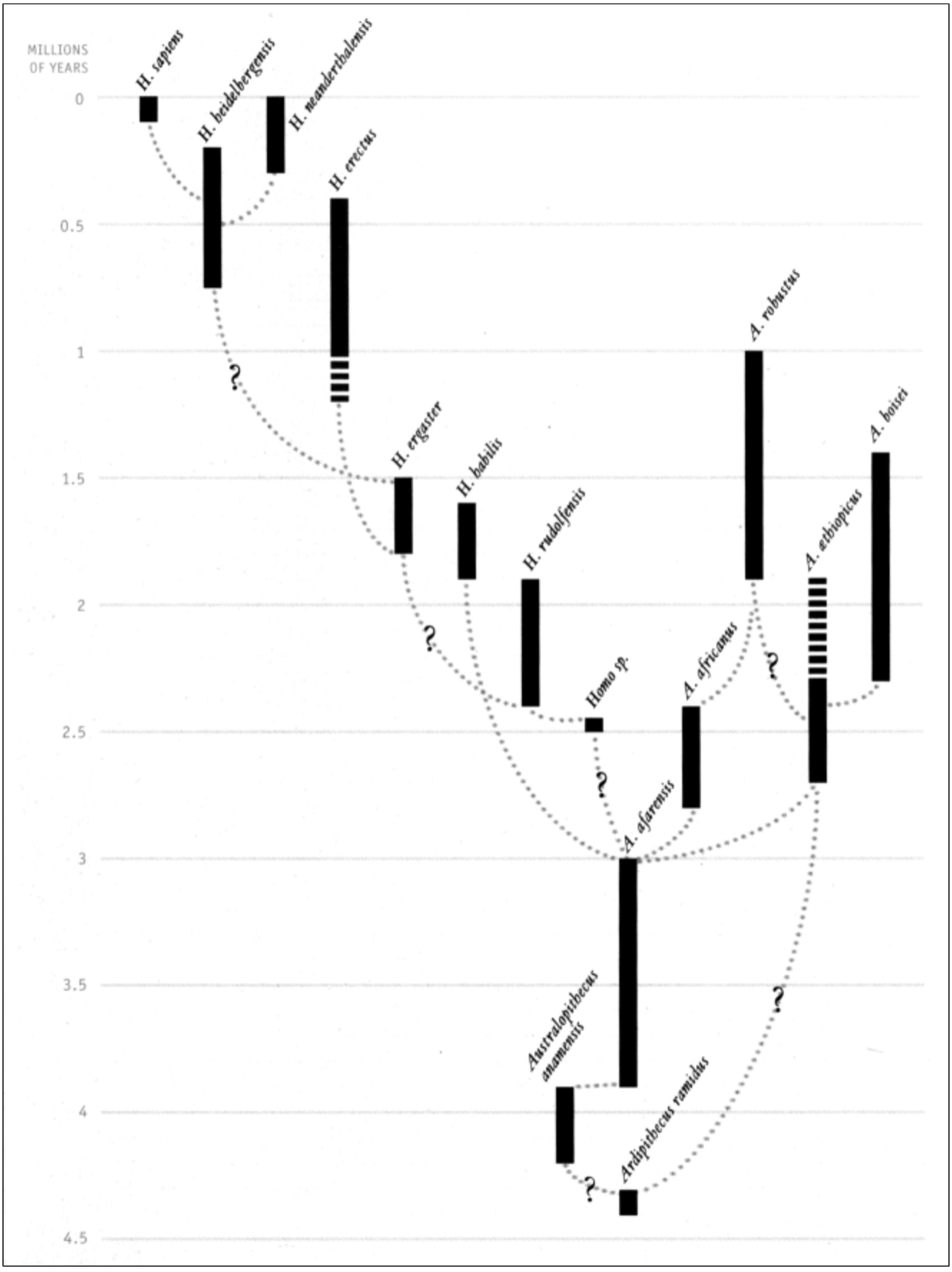



**Fig. 1.7.** Two hominid family trees: *above*, from Tattersall and Schwartz; *below*, from Johanson and Edgar. The latter write: 'The variety of human family trees now cluttering the literature makes it virtually impossible to identify the correct tree because of the forest.'[2]




There are serious disagreements about how many species of *Homo* should be recognized and how to arrange them into a family tree. The original simplistic scenario in which *Homo habilis* (‘handy man’) evolved into *Homo erectus* (‘upright man’) which then evolved into *Homo sapiens* has long since been abandoned, and several new and controversial species have been added.

While some anthropologists hail *H. habilis* as the most likely ancestor of our lineage, others argue that it was a dead-end side-branch. It is widely recognized that *habilis* has become an all-embracing 'wastebasket' species into which a variety of fossils have been conveniently swept. Some anthropologists believe that the 'real' *habilis* should be assigned to the genus *Australopithecus* rather than *Homo*.

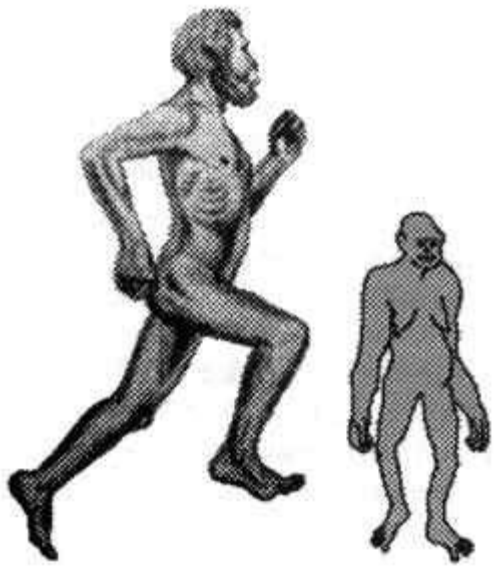


**Fig. 1.8.** *Left: Homo habilis* as generally depicted before 1987. Below the head, the anatomy is essentially human. *Right:* After the femur OH 62 was found at Olduvai Gorge in 1987, a new picture of *H. habilis* emerged, far smaller and more apelike than before.[3]

*Habilis* won majority acceptance in the late 1970s, especially after the discovery of the ER 1470 skull. However, some scientists have now assigned this skull to a second species of early *Homo* known as *rudolfensis*, while others argue that it belongs to a larger-brained gracile australopithecine.[4] Some researchers believe *rudolfensis* rivals *habilis* for the status of our earliest *Homo* ancestor, but others argue that *rudolfensis* had certain specializations which make it less likely than smaller-brained and more primitive-limbed *habilis* to have given rise to later humans. Some see *rudolfensis* as the ancestor of *habilis*, others see the two on completely different evolutionary lines, and yet others reject the existence of *rudolfensis* altogether.

*Homo erectus* stood between 1.5 and 1.8 m tall and had a brain size of between 700 and 1300 cc. Most palaeoanthropologists now believe that from the neck down, *Homo erectus* was almost the same as modern humans. The forehead, however, sloped back from behind massive brow ridges, the jaws and teeth were large, and the lower jaw lacked a chin. He is generally regarded as being incapable of anything but the most rudimentary speech. Although most palaeoanthropologists still regard *erectus* as a direct ancestor to modern humans, some now suggest that it is too specialized. Tattersall says that *erectus* was made the ancestor of *H. sapiens* 'not on any compelling morphological grounds, but because it simply happened to occur at the right *time* to be that ancestor'.[5]

**Fig. 1.9.** An artist's impression of *Homo erectus*.[6]

Dates for *erectus* have become earlier and earlier, while *habilis* remains have been found in later and later deposits, making a lineage in which *habilis* evolves into *erectus* increasingly unlikely. The oldest *erectus* fossils are dated at 1.8 million years and it persisted until about 300,000 years ago in Africa and Europe, but perhaps as recently as 40,000 years ago in Java.[7] (There is evidence that *erectus*-like creatures may still exist today in isolated wilderness regions, including China; see section 4.) *Erectus* is supposed to have evolved in Africa, but *erectus* fossils have been found in Java which are just as old as the oldest African fossils.[8] Stone tools and a few hominid fossil fragments dated at 2.25 million years have been discovered in eastern China, and many Chinese scientists believe that *erectus* evolved independently in Asia.[9]

The validity of the *erectus* species has been challenged. Some anthropologists have assigned African *erectus* fossils to *Homo ergaster*, while others fossils have been assigned to *Homo sapiens*. However, researchers who see *ergaster* as a valid species tend to assign different specimens to it. They generally regard it as a direct ancestor of modern humans with *erectus* being an evolutionary dead-end. Many scientists reject the validity of *ergaster* as it is too similar to *erectus*. Some palaeoanthropologists, such as Milford Wolpoff, propose that *erectus*, too, should be abolished as it is insufficiently distinct from *sapiens*.[10] While some researchers recognize 7 or 8 *Homo* species, Wolpoff and his colleagues recognize only 2: *sapiens* and *habilis*, with *ergaster*, *erectus*, and *heidelbergensis* being subsumed within *sapiens*, who would therefore extend back some 2.5 million years.

Our own species, *Homo sapiens*, is generally thought to have arisen in Africa some 200,000 to 250,000 years ago; the oldest generally accepted fossils to date are 160,000 years old, and were found in Ethiopia in 2003. (Candidate *Homo sapiens* fossils up to 300,000 years old have been found in eastern and southern Africa but are usually fragmentary and hard to date.)[11] *Sapiens* then proceeded to spread out over the world. According to the currently dominant out-of-Africa replacement theory, which is based mainly on mitochondrial DNA evidence, *sapiens* largely replaced the native hominid populations that it encountered (which allegedly originated in a far earlier migration of *Homo erectus* or *ergaster* out of Africa). Advocates of the rival multiregional continuity theory, such as Wolpoff and Alan Thorne, on the other hand, argue on the basis of fossil and archaeological evidence that *sapiens* interbred with other hominid populations after leaving Africa.

The Neanderthals lived from about 230,000 to 30,000 years ago. They are sometimes classed as a separate species, *Homo neanderthalensis*, but other anthropologists classify them as *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*, i.e. a subspecies of *H. sapiens*. The modern form of our species is exemplified by Cro-Magnon man (*H. sapiens sapiens*), who started to arrive in Europe about 40,000 years ago and whose origins have been called 'a complete mystery'.* His arrival coincides with the disappearance of the Neanderthals. In Western Europe, the Neanderthals were replaced by modern humans rather suddenly, but in Central Europe there is abundant evidence of genetic admixture and interbreeding. In the Middle East, one group of anthropologists sees 2 distinct species, *H. neanderthalensis* and *H. sapiens*, coexisting for 60,000 years, with no significant interbreeding or transformation. Another faction holds that all Middle East skeletons are variants of a single species, *H. sapiens*, and interbreeding was common, and that even the European Neanderthals are merely a variant of *H. sapiens*.[12]

> *One (nonmainstream!) theory is that Cro-Magnon originated on Poseidonis (Plato's 'Atlantis') and other islands in the Atlantic, and migrated to Europe in several waves as the islands showed increasingly signs of geological instability, culminating in the submergence of Poseidonis 11½ thousand years ago. Certain blood-group and genetic findings are consistent with a series of migrations of different groups of Atlanteans both eastward and westward.[13]

## *Evolutionary interpretations*

The theory that one species gradually evolves into another species through the slow accumulation of minute changes over extremely long periods of time is contradicted by the fossil record, including the hominid fossil record. Stephen J. Gould points out that 'we still have no firm evidence for any progressive change within any hominid species'.[1] Instead, species persist unchanged for millions of years, and these periods are followed by the sudden appearance of several new species. This has prompted the development of the modified darwinian theory of punctuated equilibrium, first proposed by Gould and Niles Eldredge in 1972, which says that new species split off from ancestral species so rapidly that there is little chance of a smooth series of transitional fossils being preserved.

However, the probability of the right *random* genetic variations (amidst all the unfavourable ones) occurring and being 'selected for' within a very short space of time, leading to the appearance of a new species, is even more remote than the prospect of such changes occurring over a very long period. 99.9% of all genetic mutations are harmful or even lethal. In the 1950s geneticist J.B.S. Haldane showed that, even under very favourable assumptions, only one new, beneficial mutation could be completely substituted in a population every 300 generations. So in 10 million years – far longer than the time that has elapsed since the alleged chimp/human split from a common ancestor – only 1667 substitutions of beneficial genes could occur.[2] This amounts to three ten-millionths of the human genome – which is hardly likely to turn an ape into a human!

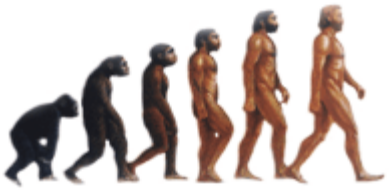
Moreover, recent studies have found that the human mutation rate is so high that each breeding couple would have to produce at least 10 offspring, and more likely 40 or even 60 offspring, merely to prevent the population suffering genetic deterioration.[3] To get round this problem, darwinists invoke 'truncation selection' or 'synergistic epistasis', whereby harmful mutations are eliminated 'in bunches' – a purely speculative idea, despite its imposing name. It is any rate clear that unconventional factors must come into play to generate and guide evolutionary change.

This has been recognized by various evolutionists. For instance, in the 19th century, Alfred Russell Wallace, the codeveloper of the theory of natural selection, argued that humans could not have evolved without the intervention of higher intelligences. In the 20th century, palaeoanthropologist Franz Weidenreich accepted the principle of orthogenesis – the idea that evolution is directed by an inner drive towards a particular goal. Anthropologist Robert Broom believed that evolution was guided and controlled by a variety of spiritual and psychic agencies, some of them being benevolent and some malignant.[4] All three scientists nevertheless believed

that man had descended from the apes.

Modern darwinists have assigned a major role to 'regulatory genes' in order to explain why we so often find innovations appearing abruptly in the fossil record, rather than being slowly fine-tuned over the ages by natural selection. Regulatory genes control major developmental patterns, and seemingly minor changes in these genes can apparently have major consequences for the individuals and populations carrying them. Each individual possesses 2 copies of each gene, which may be the same or different. If they are different, one copy will be dominant and the other recessive or unexpressed. Nonlethal genetic mutations are usually recessive to start with. It is thought that at some point, regulatory genes, 'by a mechanism that remains unclear', activate the recessive mutated genes and deactivate certain other genes, leading to the abrupt appearance of a new organ, or perhaps a new species.[5]

In other words, just the right genes mutate *randomly* in just the right way, and then at just the right time exactly the right genes are *randomly* switched on or off to produce an evolutionary novelty! Yet darwinists insist that they don't believe in miracles! Furthermore, contrary to the impression darwinists like to give, genes do not carry the 'blueprint' for the construction of an organism; they merely code for the production of proteins. The proteins specified by structural genes provide the raw materials used in building the body, while the proteins specified by regulatory genes can carry signals that turn other genes on or off. But no genes are known to carry instructions for moulding proteins into tissues, organs, and complex living organisms, nor do they explain instinctual and learned behaviour, and the workings of the mind. Great chunks of reality are therefore missing from the materialistic darwinist theory.



For new species to arise through a series of rapid genetic changes, those changes would have to be *directed* and *coordinated* in some way. Even then, the belief that humans descended from australopithecines and ultimately from some Miocene ape remains no more than an unproven hypothesis. Theosophy argues that it is actually the apes which are partially descended from man (see section 6). Some scientists have recognized that even the earliest apelike creatures had anatomical specializations that make them unlikely ancestors of humans, who have a simpler, more generalized anatomy (see section 5). As already explained, a few scientists argue that far from being our ancestors, the australopithecines descended from a *bipedal* hominid and were evolving towards *quadrupedalism*. However, many evolutionists take the view that there is no objection to anatomical specializations being gained and later lost in the course of evolution – if this is what it takes to save the ape-ancestry theory from collapse!

It is often said that extraordinary claims demand extraordinary evidence. The idea that humans, with their unique mental powers, developed from an ape through random mutations and natural selection certainly ranks as an extraordinary claim. But the only extraordinary thing about the 'evidence' cited in support of the theory is its *extraordinary weakness*! What would really demolish the present claims that *Homo* evolved from *Australopithecus* would be if fossils or other evidence of humans similar to ourselves were found in strata more than one or two million years old. Although conspicuously absent from modern textbooks, such evidence has in fact been found and will be reviewed in section 3.

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# 2. Genetic tales: Adam and Eve

## *Human-ape similarities*

For years, the genetic similarity between humans and chimpanzees was put at 98.5%. The figure was then revised down to less than 95%. The latest figure is 99.4%, suggesting that chimps are closer to humans than they are to gorillas.[1] Some scientists have argued that chimps should therefore have the same legal rights as humans!

The different figures derive from different ways of comparing DNA. The 95% figure was obtained by searching corresponding human and chimp chromosomes for 'missing' or 'extra' pieces of DNA, whereas the latest figure is based on searching corresponding genes for single-letter DNA base changes. The 98.5% figure was derived from the DNA hybridization technique, which is widely considered to be crude and unreliable. Strands of DNA from the 2 species being compared are allowed to combine (or hybridize), and are then heated; the higher the temperature required to force them apart the more related the 2 species are assumed to be.

The human genome has only recently been sequenced, revealing the order of the 3 billion or so nucleotide bases in the DNA molecules. This is like knowing the sequence of letters in a book without knowing anything about how they combine into meaningful words and sentences. Moreover, 97% of the bases in the human genome are currently believed not to make up genes and are labelled 'pseudogenes' or 'junk' DNA; sorting out the sequences that represent actual genes could take decades. Since the chimp genome has not even been sequenced, no one knows how similar humans and chimps really are on the genetic level.

The claim that humans and chimpanzees are genetically 99.4% alike does seem hard to believe given that the chimp genome is 10% larger than a human's, and humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes compared to 24 for the chimps (a difference of over 4%). Other discrepancies are that chromosomes 4, 9, and 12 are markedly different in humans and chimps, and human and chimp Y chromosomes are of different sizes with many markers that do not line up at all.[2] To explain why chimps and humans have different numbers of chromosomes, darwinists argue that chimp chromosomes 12 and 13 have combined into human chromosome 2. But François de Sarre, for example, who rejects the ape-ancestry theory, argues that the *exact opposite* has occurred: human chromosome 2 has *split* into chimp chromosomes 12 and 13; chromosome 13 has also acquired additional genetic material.[3] This is consistent with the theosophical position that apes have partially descended from humans and have developed a more specialized anatomy.

Although the chimp-human connection receives by far the most publicity, different kinds of genetic studies yield conflicting results regarding the evolutionary relationship between humans, chimpanzees, and gorillas. In the case of nuclear DNA, the Y chromosome evidence makes chimps closest to humans, but the X chromosome evidence makes chimps closest to gorillas, as does involucrin-gene analysis and chromosome banding analysis. Some studies of mitochondrial DNA suggest that humans, chimps, and gorillas are equally close to each other. But one analysis indicated that human mitochondria seem to represent a radical departure from previously examined organisms, and do not originate from recognizable relatives of present-day organisms.[4]

Jeffrey Schwartz points out that of 26 unique traits that humans share with the living hominoids, they share all 26 with the orangutan, only 9 with the chimpanzee and gorilla, and only 5 with the gibbon. He therefore maintains that man is more closely related to the orangutan than he is to the African apes and challenges the use of molecular and biochemical data to establish evolutionary relationships between man and apes.[5] Jonathan Marks says that, as far as skeletal evidence is concerned, the cranium links humans and chimps, but the rest of the skeleton links chimps and gorillas. Like Schwartz, he questions the prevailing belief that genetic evidence is superior to other kinds of evidence, saying it has been used to make 'rash generalizations' and draw 'belligerent conclusions' on the basis of questionable assumptions.[6]

As already noted, genes are vastly overrated by materialistic biologists. Genes merely specify what amino acids should be strung together to form protein molecules, and it is hardly surprising that the bodies of humans and apes are composed of similar molecular ingredients. The real problem is the arrangement of those ingredients into complex structures. It seems that there must be other factors which explain why the average human brain is three times the size of the ape brain and why humans have selfconscious minds whereas all the apes do not.

## *African Eve*

According to the overhyped 'African Eve' hypothesis, all living humans can trace part of their genetic inheritance to a female who lived in Africa about 200,000 years ago. This theory is based on studies of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), which we inherit only from our mothers. It is assumed that the only changes that mtDNA undergoes are those that accumulate by random mutations, and that by working out the rate of mutation mtDNA can be used as a kind of clock. On the basis of mtDNA data from different human populations, computer programs identify which population group has the most variation (i.e. the most mutations) in its mtDNA; this group is assumed to be the oldest group and therefore the parent group. It is also computed how far back in time we have to go for the observed mtDNA diversity in today's human populations to coalesce into a single past mtDNA sequence, and this is assumed to provide the date of the last common ancestor.

All the assumptions underlying this method are false.[1] Mitochondrial DNA supposedly undergoes random mutations at a fixed rate and is not subject to natural selection. However, the rate of mutation is actually stochastic, or probabilistic, which renders perfect calibration of the molecular clock impossible. Moreover, there is increasing evidence that natural selection does in fact affect mtDNA, which means that the molecular clock will run at different rates in different populations. For example, if in one population natural selection is eliminating some of the mutations, this will make that population appear younger than it really is. Some scientists have also challenged the belief that mtDNA is inherited solely from the mother and does not randomly recombine with male DNA during sexual reproduction.

The fact that African populations may show a higher level of mtDNA diversity than Asian and European populations does not necessarily mean that African populations are the oldest. If the population increases more rapidly in one region than in another, this can cause greater diversity in that population. Conversely, population bottlenecks (where the population dwindles to just a few mating couples) lead to a loss of variation. Genetic variation within and among groups can also arise from low but consistent levels of interbreeding combined with buildup in regional groups of random genetic changes. As geneticist Alan Templeton says: 'The diversity in a region does not necessarily reflect the age of the regional population but rather could reflect the age since the last favourable mutation arose in the population, the demographic history of population size expansion, the extent of gene flow with other populations, and so on.'[2]

Our last common ancestor is frequently said to have lived 200,000 years ago, but different mtDNA studies have in fact produced widely divergent dates. A 1986 study, using intraspecific

calculations to calibrate the molecular clock (i.e. rates of mutation in human populations only), obtained an age range for Eve of 140,000 to 290,000 years. However, Templeton calculated that, taking account of probabilistic effects and of the mtDNA divergence level of 1.4 to 9.3% found by some researchers, the date for Eve would range from 33,000 years to 675,000 years.[3] It has recently been found that mtDNA appears to be mutating much faster than expected, and if this were also true in the past, 'mitochondrial Eve' would be a mere 6000 years old![4]

A 1991 study obtained an age range of 166,000 to 249,000 years, by using interspecific calculations to calibrate the mutation rate; it assumed that humans diverged from the chimpanzees either 4 or 6 million years ago. However, P. Gingerich estimated that the human-chimp split took place 9.2 million years ago, which gives a date for Eve of 554,000 years. Moreover, Lovejoy et al. found that the researchers had made a mathematical error, which when corrected gives an age for Eve of at least 1.3 million years![5]

Some mtDNA studies have contradicted the African Eve hypothesis and suggest that modern humans have Asian or African-Asian roots. In terms of anatomy, Asians and Europeans are more closely related to one another than either are to Africans.[6] If Africa is the home of modern humans, it is hard to explain why human chromosomes lack a protective gene sequence called the 'baboon marker'; all nonhuman primates known to carry this gene sequence are African, such as the gorilla and chimpanzee.[7]

## *African Adam*

The male counterpart of mtDNA is the Y chromosome, which is inherited only from the father. Many scientists believe that just as we can trace our mtDNA back to an African Eve, so we can trace our Y chromosomes back to an African Adam, or 'Y-guy', though other researchers view him as 'a statistical apparition generated by dubious evolutionary assumptions'.[1] As in the case of mtDNA, various factors interfere with the Y-chromosome molecular clock: the greater diversity in Y chromosomes among Africa populations could be because Africa was more heavily populated; and the diversity outside Africa could have been reduced by the spreading of particularly favourable genes through those populations. In other words, humans could be millions of years old, and the genetic diversity we see today could simply reflect recent genetic events in that long history.

A study published in 1995 concluded that humans had a common ancestor 270,000 years ago. But the researchers acknowledged that this conclusion is based on many background assumptions – e.g. that the human line separated from the chimp line about 5 million years ago – and that the findings are open to other interpretations. A 1995 issue of *Nature* contained 2 articles on the time of origin of extant Y chromosomes. One of them gave an age of 37,000 to 49,000 years, while the other gave an estimate of 188,000 years, with a possible range of 51,000 to 411,000 years. A later study gave a date of 150,000 years, and found that the root of the statistical tree was in Africa but that, in addition to a movement out of Africa into the Old World, there might have been a movement back into Africa from Asia.[2]

A 2001 study concluded that 3 mutations in the Y chromosomes among populations from East Africa can be traced to a mutation that arose in Africa between 35,000 and 89,000 years ago. The authors admitted that archaic Y chromosomes of modern humans could be erased by natural selection ('selection sweep') and also by random processes such as genetic drift. They noted that the age of a common ancestor estimated using autosome (nonsex chromosome)/X chromosome genes ranged from 535,000 to 1,860,000 years – much older than the favoured mtDNA and Y-chromosome dates. To explain this, they speculated that in the course of population 'bottlenecks' during a supposed migration out of Africa, there may have been 3 or 4 times as many men as women, leading to greater diversity in the autosome/X chromosome DNA.[3] This demonstrates how auxiliary hypotheses can always be wheeled in to bring

‘anomalous’ results more into line with current orthodoxy.

Studies of nuclear DNA (nDNA) have also led to divergent findings regarding our human ancestors. In a study that supported the African Eve hypothesis, the 2 gene markers examined suggested that the human race is split into 3 distinct populations: Subsaharan Africans, northeastern Africans, and everyone else in the world! Another study indicated that Africans and Eurasians are separated by a large genetic distance, thereby contradicting the out-of-Africa theory.[4] A 1990 study concluded that Caucasoid populations (located from North Africa to India), rather than sub-Saharan Africans, were closest to the ancestral genetic stock. An analysis of alleles (different forms of the same gene) that code for the globin molecule pointed to an age much greater than 200,000 years for modern human populations – and possibly as old as 3 million years.[5]

## *Genetics and archaeology*

The latest version of the multiregional theory agrees with the out-of-Africa theory that modern *Homo sapiens* probably originated in Africa around 200,000 years ago, but differs in suggesting that, after they left Africa, significant interbreeding took place with pre-*sapiens* hominids in other parts of the world, such as Neanderthals in Europe and *erectus* in Asia, leading to the evolution of modern humans. There is abundant fossil and archaeological evidence pointing to interbreeding between different human populations,[1] and genetic evidence does not rule it out. The point at issue is exactly what degree of interbreeding has taken place. As the *New Scientist* commented: ‘Some disputes seem to end up being arguments over almost nothing.’[2] Both theories are probably wrong as the oldest modern human fossils are many millions of years old – but nowadays this evidence has virtually no chance of receiving a fair hearing (see next section).

Meanwhile, the current debate continues. Whereas most genetic analyses focus on just one DNA region, and produce widely varying results, Alan Templeton has carried out a study based on 10. On the assumption that humans and chimps diverged 6 million years ago, he concludes that, after *Homo erectus* left Africa 1.7 million years ago, there was a second major human migration 420,000 to 840,000 years ago, and a more recent one 80,000 to 150,000 years ago. He also sees signs of a more recent movement back into Africa from Asia, and huge amounts of genetic interchange between groups, thereby falsifying the hypothesis of complete replacement.[3]

Mitochondrial DNA studies indicate that modern humans and Neanderthals had a common ancestor 450,000 to 850,000 years ago, and have been used to bolster the orthodox view that there has been virtually no interbreeding between Neanderthals and modern humans (implying that they are separate species). Sceptics point out that these studies are so plagued with practical and theoretical problems that their conclusions are highly dubious. Anthropologist Erik Trinkhaus says that there is a lot of subjectivity in judging what amount of difference in DNA amounts to a difference in species. He argues that fossil evidence shows signs of considerable interbreeding between Neanderthals and modern humans, and that genetic evidence for such interbreeding may have become so diluted as to escape detection by crude DNA hybridization techniques.[4] Moreover, mtDNA retrieved from a 62,000-year-old Australian *H. sapiens* fossil differs more from the DNA of living people than does the mtDNA of Neanderthals. Therefore, even if Neanderthal DNA is quite different from modern human DNA, this does not necessarily mean that Neanderthals did not interbreed with anatomically modern humans.[5]

The limitations and unreliability of genetic analysis are clearly exposed by the contradictory results produced by different studies. David Frayer comments:

> Unlike genetic data derived from living humans, fossils can be used to test predictions of theories about the past without relying on a long list of assumptions about the neutrality of genetic markers, mutational rates, or other requirements necessary to

> retrodict the past from current genetic variation ... [G]enetic information, at best, provides a theory of how modern human origins *might have happened* if the assumptions used in interpreting the genetic data are correct.

As Rosalind Harding says: 'There's no clear genetic test. We're going to have to let the fossil people answer this one.'[6]

Theosophical literature indicates that surprisingly ancient human fossils could turn up in Central Asia, since that is where our own fifth humanity (or root-race) developed into a distinct human stock some one million years ago. The region is said to have been the home of a series of flourishing civilizations during the last 4 or 5 million years, since the midpoint of the Atlantean era.[7]*

> *4 to 5 million years ago on the theosophical timescale corresponds to about 26 to 34 million years ago on the scientific timescale, i.e. to the Oligocene epoch.

Future archaeological discoveries are bound to bring many surprises – and to meet with intense resistance. Since 1982, archaeologist Yuri Mochanov and his team have found several thousand extremely ancient stone tools at Diring Yuryakh and other sites along the Lena River in Siberia. Various dating techniques suggest that the strata in which the tools are found are between 1.8 and 3.2 million years old. Such a date is unacceptable to traditional anthropologists, who prefer a more conservative figure of about 300,000 years. Mochanov says that the discoveries force us to reexamine 'the forgotten concept that North and Central Asia was the original homeland of humanity'.[8]

In the Pabbi Hills in northern Pakistan, 2-million-year-old artifacts have been dug up which 'bring into question the whole chronology of the evolution and dispersal of hominids both in Africa and Asia'. Most scientists consider the artifacts too old to have been made by *Homo erectus*, but the dating in this case is difficult to challenge.[9] At the Renzidong fossil site in eastern China, animal bones showing signs of being butchered are mixed with stone tools dated as early as 2.25 million years. A jaw fragment with teeth resembling those of earliest *Homo* in East Africa has also been found, and many Chinese scientists believe *H. erectus* evolved independently in Asia.[10] An even older hominid date in Asia comes from Yenangyaung in central Myanmar (Burma), where, in the 1890s, simple flint artifacts and a human femur (thighbone) or humerus (upper arm bone) were found in strata 3 to 4 million years old.[11] The latter discovery seems to have long since been forgotten and, as the next section shows, this applies to a great many other paradigm-shattering finds.

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