

The Fossil Record and the Fall of Darwin's Last Icon

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Introduction

Depictions of human evolution may be the most recognized of all Darwinian “icons,” as most people have been exposed to images such as those in Figure 1 since their youth. As recent fossil finds have transformed this icon into a complex timeline, as in Figure 2, paleoanthropologists continue to insist that the strength of the fossil evidence mandates viewing human evolution as a scientific fact.¹ Even as other Darwinian claims have been increasingly abandoned, the staunch defense of this last icon has continued and intensified.

This paper explains that Darwin's last icon has now fallen. In other words, a critical review of the fossil record using the information in the scientific literature leads to the conclusion that there is no viable evolutionary sequence leading from a common ancestor with the chimpanzee to modern humans.

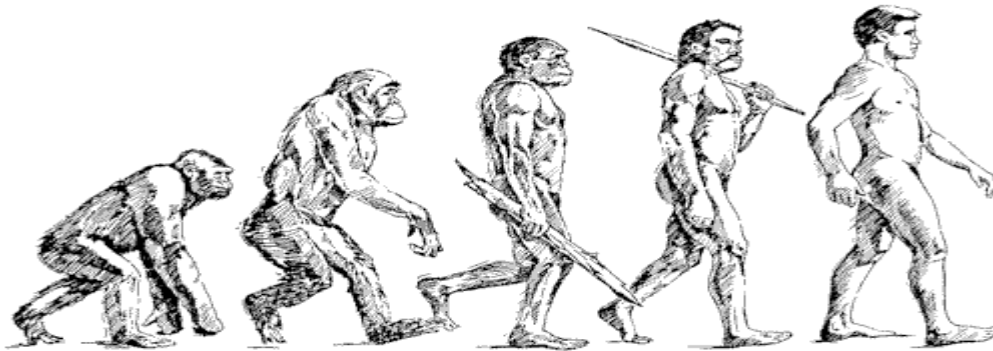


Figure 1. A Commonly Seen Icon of Human Evolution

The scientific literature refers to peer reviewed periodicals (e.g., *Nature*, *Science*, the *Journal of Human Evolution*, etc.) where fossil finds are first reported and evaluated. While these periodicals are religiously committed to the “fact” of human evolution, the validity of each claimed transitional form is openly debated therein, often with information that is screened from high school and college biology textbooks. Since there are so many claimed transitional forms, arguments among evolutionists that *any particular* transitional form is not an ancestor of *Homo sapiens* does no harm to their underlying faith in human evolution.

¹ Paleoanthropology is defined as “the study of human evolution.” See, for example, Milford H. Wolpoff's college textbook *Paleoanthropology* (2nd edition, McGraw-Hill, Boston, 1999, p. 3)

This paper repeatedly references the scientific literature to show that evolutionists now question the legitimacy of *every* claimed transitional form and that, using any reasonable standard, most of these claimed intermediates have been completely discredited. This, in turn, leads to a logical conclusion that evolutionists cannot make for philosophical and professional reasons—that there is also a *collective failure* of all claimed evolutionary sequences leading to *Homo sapiens*.

It is relatively easy to see that Darwin's last pillar of support has now crumbled, provided the reader objectively considers the evidence and reflects on problematic presuppositions that may have been held (perhaps unconsciously) since childhood. These presuppositions can include the view that: 1) empirical science is the exclusive source of truth; that 2) scientists are always objective and aren't influenced by their worldview (scientists don't lie); and that 3) truth claims about human origins must be grounded exclusively in the domain of natural science and—no matter how poor the evidence for evolution—cannot involve historical theology (i.e., Special Creation cannot be true). These presuppositions result in the mistaken view that the evolutionist's *a priori* decision to construct a wall of naturalism around origins constitutes “good science” rather than a flawed philosophical approach that forbids two very logical conclusions. These conclusions are that: 1) the claims of human evolution are not supported by the fossil record; and 2) to the degree that sound inferences can be drawn, the fossil evidence is most easily reconciled with Special Creation.

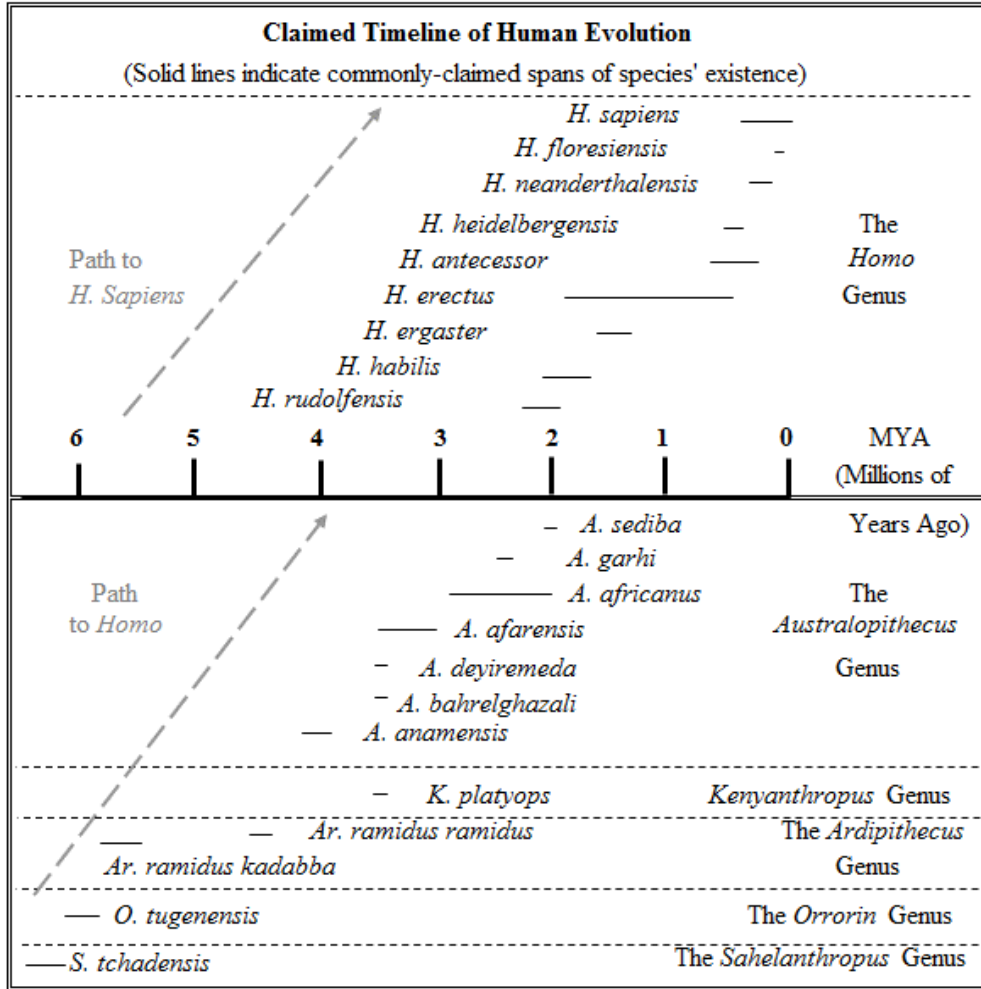


Figure 2. Sample Timeline of Human Evolution Including Recent Finds

Given the historical consequences of Darwinism—namely, its foundational role in the ideologies leading to World War I, World War II, the spread of communism, the humanist takeover of public education and the judiciary, the legalization of abortion and the on-going culture of death, as well as much confused theology and various attacks on the family—continued belief in human evolution constitutes a tragedy of immeasurable proportions and is arguably the most harmful deception in the history of the world since the Fall of Adam and Eve.²

This tragedy continues, in part, because of the permissive silence of Catholics toward a deception that could have been recognized and systematically opposed had we been obedient to the mandates of the encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950): 1) not to treat evolution as “completely certain and proved by the facts” (par. 36); 2) to study the “reasons for both opinions...those favorable and those unfavorable to evolution” (par. 36); and 3) to be aware of those who

² For more on the historical consequences of Darwinism, see *Repairing the Breach* (2008, John and Stephen Wynne) and *A Catholic Assessment of Evolution Theory* (2013, John M. Wynne).

“desirous of novelty, and fearing to be considered ignorant of recent scientific findings” are “in danger of gradually departing from revealed truth” (par. 10).

Due to the on-going consequences of Darwinism, the importance of—at last—observing the mandates of *Humani Generis* should be readily apparent to all who seek the truth and care about the future of mankind. The importance of understanding the truth about origins is strongly reaffirmed by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that states:

Catechesis on creation is of major importance. It concerns the very foundations of human and Christian life: for it makes explicit the response of the Christian faith to the basic question that men of all times have asked themselves: “Where do we come from?” “Where are we going?” “What is our origin?” “What is our end?” “Where does everything that exists come from and where is it going?” The two questions, the first about the origin and the second about the end, are inseparable. They are decisive for the meaning and orientation of our life and actions.”³

This paper critically evaluates the claimed transitional forms in Figure 2 called “hominins,” generally defined as humans and their close extinct relatives (sometimes the term “hominids” is used in the same sense). The ancient dates assigned by evolutionists to the various species shown in Figure 2 are problematic, and other evidence presented in these proceedings by Dr. John Sanford and Dr. Robert Carter demonstrates that the time-line of human history is much shorter than the evolutionary time-scale.⁴ Thus, the use of the conventional dating should not be construed as an endorsement of the now-totally-discredited evolutionary time-line for human history.⁵ Nevertheless, the evolutionists’ dates are used herein to illustrate that, even *if* the dates were valid, there would still not be a viable evolutionary sequence leading to modern man, *Homo sapiens*.

The analysis begins with the more recent supposed transitional forms and the amount of discussion for each candidate coincides with the importance of the classification. Note that going forward, *Homo* is designated as “H.”, *Australopithecus* as “A.”, and *Ardipithecus* as “Ar.”

³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, Second Edition (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana), 1994, par. 282, pp. 73-74.

⁴ Most fossils are assigned dates according to their stratigraphic location (i.e., their location in the sedimentary rocks where they are found) and according to the radiometric dating of strata immediately above, below, or parallel to the fossils. For a discussion of the unreliability of the standard geological column, see Guy Berthault, “Analysis of the Main Principles of Stratigraphy on the Basis of Experimental Data,” <http://www.sedimentology.fr/>, accessed 9/8/2015. For a detailed discussion of the unreliability of most radiometric dating methods, see Jean de Pontcharra, “Radioactive Dating Methods,” <http://www.sciencevsevolution.org/Pontcharra.htm>, accessed 9/8/2015. For evidence that C-14 dating refutes the evolutionary time-scale, see Josef Holzschuh, “Recent C-14 Dating of Fossils including Dinosaur Bone Collagen,” <http://www.sciencevsevolution.org/Holzschuh.htm>, accessed 9/8/2015.

⁵ Cf. J. C. Sanford and Robert Carter, “God, Family and Genetics: A Biblical Perspective: Part One: Genetic Evidences Supporting the Divine Origin of Man and Family,” Proceedings of the Symposium, “‘The Two Shall Become One’: The Creation of Adam and Eve as the Foundation of the Catholic Doctrine on Holy Marriage,” Rome, Italy, September 26, 2015.

H. neanderthalensis, the Current View

The first Neanderthal fossils were found in Germany's Neanderthal Valley in 1856. Although initially viewed as fully human, the Neanderthals had a relatively large cranial capacity, and their post-cranial bone size and shape (morphology) was also relatively large and differed somewhat from *H. sapiens*. An evolutionary view of the Neanderthals (sometimes Neandertals) was widely adopted after the 1911-1913 reconstructions of paleontologist Marcellin Boule, who concluded:

...the backward position of the *foramen magnum* [the opening in the skull base through which the spinal cord enters]...must have caused the body to incline forward...and the distinctly simian arrangement of the...vertebrae...[testifies] to this fact...the total extension of the knee could not have been normal.⁶

This view went unchallenged until 1957, when it was soundly rejected through a reassessment that concluded:

There is thus no valid reason for the assumption that the posture of Neanderthal man...differed significantly from that of present-day men...there is nothing...to justify the common assumption that Neanderthal man was other than a fully erect biped...if he could be reincarnated and placed in a New York subway—provided that he were bathed, shaved, and dressed in modern clothing—it is doubtful whether he would attract any more attention than some of its other [citizens].⁷

The view that the Neanderthals were fully human remains valid, in part, because the Neanderthals lived from approximately 130,000 to 30,000 years ago (ya), well within the span of *H. sapiens*, who evolutionists date to approximately 200,000 ya.⁸ The Neanderthals also lived in the same regions of Europe and Asia as *H. sapiens*, and the average cranial capacity of 1,550 cubic centimeters (cc) is well within the upper range of *H. sapiens* (2,200 cc). Further, it is now accepted that Neanderthals “may have been as handy with their tools as modern humans are.”⁹ This conclusion has been reinforced by the discovery of Neanderthal stone tools, weapons, and decorated grave sites.

There is good fossil evidence that Neanderthals could interbreed with *H. sapiens*. The so-called Hybrid Child from Portugal (25,000 ya) contains features described as a “mosaic of Neanderthal and early modern human features” that indicate the two “are members of the same species who

⁶ William L. Straus, Jr., and A.J.E. Cave, “Pathology and the Posture of Neanderthal Man,” *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, vol. 32, December 1957, p. 348, see also *Repairing the Breach*, pp. 595-596.

⁷ William L. Straus, Jr., and A.J.E. Cave, “Pathology and the Posture of Neanderthal Man,” pp. 358-359, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 596.

⁸ Michael Balter, “New Work May Complicate History of Neandertals and *H. sapiens*,” *Science*, vol. 326, 9 Oct. 2009, p. 224.

⁹ Wesley A. Niewoehner *et al.*, “Manual dexterity in Neanderthals,” *Nature*, vol. 422, 27 March 2003, p. 395, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 597.

interbred freely.”¹⁰ Likewise, a 30,000 year old fossilized skull from Romania places “key Neanderthal life history variables within those known for modern humans.”¹¹ Further, “specialists...are hard put to identify any features on the external surface of the brain (as revealed in casts of the interior of the braincase) that...suggest any major functional difference between Neanderthal and modern *sapiens* brains.”¹² Thus, the fossil evidence suggests that Neanderthals were closely related to *H. sapiens* and, indeed, were *H. sapiens*. As paleoanthropologist Fred Smith concludes, “Neandertals as organisms no longer exist.”¹³

This fossil evidence has been greatly bolstered by recent genetic analyses of recovered Neanderthal DNA. These studies conclude that between 1 and 4 percent of present day Eurasian genomes are derived from Neanderthals, and that Neanderthal DNA was at least 99.7 percent similar to modern humans.^{14,15} Since a widely used definition of a species is that it consists of individuals who can produce fertile offspring, Neanderthals are properly considered to be part of *H. sapiens* and this view now dominates the scientific literature.

H. floresiensis

A recent find that has generated much attention is *H. floresiensis*, which dates to only 12,000 ya. Dubbed “the hobbit,” these Indonesian fossils are puzzling due to the small estimated weight or body mass (16-41 kg) and small cranial capacity (417-426 cc).¹⁶ Among the theories tabled, some speculate that the species descended from an ape-like primate, some believe it to be a type of early *Homo*, while others believe that *H. floresiensis* was *H. sapiens* but suffered from a condition such as insular dwarfism related to the ‘island rule’ in which certain species may “experience a reduction in body size on islands perhaps due to energetic constraints or changes in predation rates.”¹⁷ While this intense debate will no doubt continue, given the very recent dates for *H. floresiensis*, the outcome is not crucial for the discussion of possible transitional forms leading to *H. sapiens*.

¹⁰ Eric Trinkaus and Cidália Duarte, “The Hybrid Child from Portugal,” *Scientific American*, April 2000, p. 102.

¹¹ Roberto Macchiarelli *et al.*, “How Neanderthal molar teeth grew,” *Nature*, vol. 444, 7 December 2006, p. 748, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 598.

¹² Ian Tattersall, “How we came to be Human,” Book Excerpt, *Scientific American*, December 2001, p. 58, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 597.

¹³ Fred H. Smith, “The Fate of the Neandertals,” *Scientific American*, April 2000, p. 107, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 598.

¹⁴ Richard E. Green *et al.*, “A Draft Sequence of the Neanderthal Genome,” *Science*, vol. 328, No. 5979, 7 May 2010, p. 721.

¹⁵ NIH National Human Genome Research Institute, “Complete Neanderthal Genome Sequenced,” available on-line at <http://www.genome.gov/27539119>, accessed 8/1/2015.

¹⁶ Stephen H. Montgomery, “Primate brains, the ‘island rule’ and the evolution of *Homo floresiensis*,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 65 (2013), p. 750.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 751.

H. erectus, A Reassessment

H. erectus has long been considered *H. sapiens*' immediate predecessor. *H. erectus* fossils have been found in Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The species duration is generally described as from nearly 2 million years ago (mya) to less than 100,000 ya.

H. erectus is linked to the discovery of a primitive looking skull cap and modern looking femur by Eugène Dubois in 1891-1892 on the island of Java. When viewing the primitive- and modern-looking fossils together, Dubois believed he had discovered man's ancestor. He named it *Pithecanthropus erectus* (meaning "erect ape"), but the name *H. erectus* was later adopted. However, as explained below, there are many reasons to conclude that *H. erectus* was not a transitional species and that the fossils should be absorbed into or "sunk" into the *H. Sapiens* classification.

To begin, it is increasingly clear that *H. erectus* had a morphology that generally falls within the normal range of variation seen in *H. sapiens*, and multiple studies indicate his anatomy would have functioned similar to that of *H. sapiens*. This means that—unless fossils are to be classified according to preconceived evolutionary sequences—most *H. erectus* fossils can easily be classified as *H. sapiens*. A sampling of recent findings from the scientific literature about the function of *H. erectus*' anatomy and his modern appearance follow:

- A 2015 article in the *Journal of Human Evolution* evaluating shoulder construction of *H. erectus* concluded: "all *H. erectus* fossil clavicles fall within the normal range of modern human variation...these data support reconstructing the *H. erectus* shoulder as modern human-like...and suggest that the capacity for high speed throwing dates back nearly two million years."¹⁸
- A 2015 study in the *Journal of Human Evolution* of a hand bone (the phalanx) found in Spain that dates to approximately 1.3 mya and is attributed to the *Homo* genus (but no specific species) concluded "there are no essential differences between it and comparator fossil specimens for the genus *Homo* after 1.3 [mya]...we argue that modern hand morphology is present in the genus *Homo* subsequent to *Homo habilis*."¹⁹
- A 2011 article in the *Journal of Human Evolution* concluded that "endurance running may have been possible from a thermoregulatory viewpoint for *Homo erectus*."²⁰

¹⁸ Neil T. Roach and Brian G. Richmond, "Clavicle length, throwing performance and the reconstruction of the *Homo erectus* shoulder," *Journal of Human Evolution*, 80 (2015), p. 107.

¹⁹ Lorenzo *et al.*, "Early Pleistocene human hand phalanx from the Sima del Elefante (TE) cave site in Sierra de Atapuerca (Spain)," *Journal of Human Evolution*, 78 (2105) p. 114.

²⁰ Graeme D. Ruxton and David M. Wilkinson, "Thermoregulation and endurance running in extinct hominins: Wheeler's models revisited," *Journal of Human Evolution*, 61(201), p. 169.

- In 2010, a hand bone (the third metacarpal) was found in Kenya and dated to 1.4 mya. The bone had a modern morphology that allowed precision gripping and, hence, sophisticated tool making. While “modern humans and Neandertals have this complex of traits,” paleoanthropologist Carol Ward explained in 2013 that as opposed to previous expectations, “changes in the hand seem to be occurring much earlier in time...and are associated with the evolution of *Homo erectus*.”²¹
- A 2010 report on *H. erectus* fossils found near Dmanisi, Georgia concluded “using comparative data from modern humans, chimpanzees, and gorillas...the Dmanisi hind limb was functionally similar to modern humans, with a longitudinal plantar arch, increased limb length, and human-like morphology.”²²
- In 2009, footprint trails found in Kenya and dating to 1.5 mya were discussed in *Science* magazine. The article concluded that “by 1.5 [mya], hominins had evolved an essentially modern human foot function and...bipedal locomotion.” A related study concluded in 2013 that the tracks were evidence of a large body size, one “comparable with that observed in a sample of modern humans.”²³
- An article in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* concluded that “changes in locomotor anatomy from *H. erectus* to modern man were relatively minor and by earliest *H. erectus* times body size was essentially modern...”²⁴
- In *Physical Anthropology*, Gabriel Ward Lasker writes: “*Homo erectus* is distinct from modern man...but there is a tendency to exaggerate the differences. Even if one ignores transitional or otherwise hard to classify specimens and limits consideration to the Java and Peking populations, the range of variation of most features of *Homo erectus* falls within that of modern man.”²⁵
- In 2003, an article in *Science* discussed the first-ever *H. erectus* fossil (Sm 4) enabling researchers to glimpse a *H. erectus* cranium base and concluded that *H. erectus* was “unexpectedly modern” in anatomy.²⁶

²¹ Ann Gibbons, “When Early Hominins Got a Grip,” *Science*, vol 340, 26 April 2013, p. 426.

²² Pontzer *et al.*, “Locomotor anatomy and biomechanics of the Dmanisi hominins,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 58 (2010), p. 492.

²³ Dinwall *et al.*, “Hominin stature, body mass, and walking speed estimates based on 1.5 million-year-old fossil footprints at Ileret, Kenya,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 64 (2013), p. 556.

²⁴ R.L. Susman, J.T. Stern, Jr., M.D. Rose, “Morphology of KMN-ER 3228 and O.H. 28 innominates from East Africa” (abstract), *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, vol. 60, February 1983, p. 259, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 584.

²⁵ Gabriel Ward Lasker, *Physical Anthropology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 284, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 584.

²⁶ Hisao Baba *et al.*, “*Homo erectus* Calvarium from the Pleistocene of Java,” *Science*, vol. 299, 28 February 2003, p. 1386, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 587.

- Far from justifying a view that *H. erectus* was an intermediate from a small ape-like ancestor, the species is estimated in various studies to have had an average body mass of between 51 kg and 59 kg, which is generally equal to or greater than that of present day *H. sapiens*.²⁷ Although such projections are necessarily based on many assumptions, a 2015 article in the *Journal of Human Evolution* confirmed other studies of a near complete *H. erectus* specimen (KNM-WT-15000) known as “Nariokotome Boy” that estimated this individual would have grown to between 5’9” and 5’11” in height and weighed between 176 and 183 pounds had he lived to maturity.²⁸

These descriptions of *H. erectus* begin to build a strong case that there is little justification to classify these fossils as anything other than *H. sapiens*. Support for sinking *H. erectus* grows enormously when it is realized that: a) *H. sapiens* and *H. erectus* fossils occur at the same location for extended periods of time; b) fossils displaying features of *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens* are common; c) and the scientific literature admits that non-evolutionary factors are sufficient to explain *H. erectus* vs. *H. sapiens* variation, which is why; d) even notable evolutionists have called for the sinking of *H. erectus* and acknowledge that *H. sapiens* appears in the fossil record 2 mya.

Prominent anthropologist Milford Wolpoff confirms many of the points above, explaining:

We regard the species distinction between *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens* as being problematic...[due to] the difficulty in clearly distinguishing an actual boundary between *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens*...We should either admit that the *Homo erectus/Homo sapiens* boundary is arbitrary and use nonmorphological...criteria for determining it...or *Homo erectus* should be sunk...sinking *Homo erectus* would carry the advantages of explicitly recognizing the arbitrariness of the boundary...More importantly, it would eliminate the necessity of relying on dates to determine which species a number of specimens belong to.²⁹

Further:

...there is no distinct beginning for *H. sapiens* as long as *H. erectus* is recognized. The earlier species can be seen merging into the later one everywhere they both

²⁷ Various studies estimate the average body mass or weight of *H. sapiens* to be 53-58 kg. For recent estimates of body mass see Grabowski *et al.*, “Body mass estimates of hominin fossils and the evolution of human body size” in the *Journal of Human Evolution*, Vol. 85, August 2015, pages 75-93. Also see footnote xii for Chapter 3 of *Repairing the Breach* for other study estimates.

²⁸ Christopher B. Ruff, M. Loring Burgess, “How much more would KNM-WT 15000 have grown?” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 80 (2015) 74-82, p. 74.

²⁹ Milford H. Wolpoff, Wu Xin Zhi, and Alan G. Thorne, “Modern *Homo sapiens* Origins: A General Theory of Hominid Evolution Involving the Fossil Evidence From East Asia,” *The Origins of Modern Humans: A World Survey of the Fossil Evidence*, Fred H. Smith and Frank Spencer, eds. (New York: Alan R. Liss, Inc., 1984), pp. 465-467, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 583.

are found, and because each has some of the morphology of the other there is continued and unresolvable confusion about whether they overlap in time...The best solution...is to cease distinguishing the earlier specimens on the lineage as *H. erectus*, and instead include them in *H. sapiens*.³⁰

After appropriately sinking *H. erectus*, Wolpoff concludes in his leading college textbook, *Paleoanthropology*, that ***H. sapiens* appears in East Africa nearly 2 mya and precedes the earliest appearance of *H. habilis***.³¹ These relative dates would eliminate *H. erectus* and every *Homo* species in Figure 2 as human ancestors, except possibly *H. rudolfensis*.

Other scientists agree with the logic of sinking *H. erectus*. Anthropologist William Laughlin studied the variation among Aleutian populations during the last 5,000 years (i.e., all were *H. sapiens*) and documented dramatic changes in skull morphology over this short period. He also compared the Aleut skulls (*H. sapiens*) with that of Peking Man (*H. erectus*) and noted that some traits that led to Peking Man's classification as *H. erectus* are found in modern Aleut and Eskimo skulls. Due to this similarity and the change observed within *H. sapiens* skulls during the past 5,000 years Laughlin concluded:

...when we find that significant differences have developed, over a short time span, between closely related and contiguous peoples, as in Alaska and Greenland, and when we consider the vast differences that exist between remote groups such as Eskimos and Bushmen, who are known to belong within the single species of *Homo sapiens*, it seems justifiable to conclude that [Peking Man, now *H. erectus*] belongs within this same diverse species.³²

The most significant difference between *H. sapiens* and *H. erectus* is that the latter had an average cranial capacity of approximately 1,016 cc versus 1,355 cc for *H. sapiens*.³³ However, *H. sapiens* has a very large range in cranial capacity. Estimates commonly place the range for humans to be from 2,200 cc down to approximately 800-850 cc (some estimates go down to 700 cc).³⁴

By comparison, the adult range for *H. erectus* is generally from 650 cc to 1,300 cc. While not fitting entirely within the range for *H. sapiens*, there is much overlap, and the convention is to assign skulls to *Homo* when the capacity is 600 cc or larger. So the issues are whether the small cranial capacity of some *H. erectus* fossils would prevent their classification as *H. sapiens*, and

³⁰ Milford H. Wolpoff, *Paleoanthropology*, p. 397.

³¹ Milford H. Wolpoff, *Paleoanthropology* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999), p. 359, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 594.

³² William S. Laughlin, "Eskimos and Aleuts: Their Origins and Evolution," *Science*, vol. 142, 8 November 1963, p. 644, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 584.

³³ John M. Wynne and Stephen A. Wynne, *Repairing the Breach*, (Dallas, Brown Books), 2008, p. 52.

³⁴ Marvin L. Lubenow, *Bones of Contention* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), p. 83.

whether the small relative size of some fossils can be explained by nutritional issues or other non-evolutionary factors.

Wolpoff and others who have observed small *H. erectus* skulls have continued to propose the sinking of the species. In 2002 and after the Dmanisi finds had produced *H. erectus* fossils suggesting very small cranial capacities, Wolpoff suggested scrapping “the idea of *Homo erectus* entirely” and reclassifying “everything after *Homo habilis*...[as] *Homo sapiens*.” The report in *National Geographic*, referencing Wolpoff’s views concluded that:

The remarkable variability of the specimens found at Dmanisi may support this radical revision...perhaps our ancestors were as variable in size as humans are today. Why not? After all, Shaquille O’Neal and Danny DeVito are members of the same species. Is it possible that the scientists who have given new species names to every early *Homo* find with significant differences have made our family tree more complicated than it really is?³⁵

It should also be kept in mind that a smaller cranial capacity in humans does not correspond to lower intelligence, and *H. erectus* is widely accepted to have used fire and is even thought to have constructed sea-worthy craft.³⁶

The final related point involves the *H. erectus* fossils discovered at Kow Swamp, Australia. Due to the recent fossil dates (discussed below), the fossils did not fit expectations and prompted the evolutionary establishment to explain that the fossils, while *appearing* to be *H. erectus*, were really *H. sapiens*. In fact, a *Nature* editorial discussed many non-evolutionary factors that can give *H. sapiens* fossils a *H. erectus* appearance or otherwise result in misclassification. These factors include: 1) inbred communities, 2) natural variation in bone thickness that provides a better chance of being preserved, leading to the false conclusion that the whole population was thick-boned and of a different species; 3) the result of nutritional problems; 4) low-grade anemia; 5) genetic factors; 6) endocrinal factors; 7) a pathological condition; 8) the failure of paleoanthropology to clearly define what separates one *Homo* species from another; and 9) the tendency to “tailor the measurement to fit the skeletal investigation...”³⁷

Based on this admission, the question becomes: a) since *H. erectus* morphology and function generally falls within the normal variation seen in *H. sapiens*, and since b) non-evolutionary factors can cause *H. sapiens* fossils to appear as if they were *H. erectus*, why is a *H. erectus* classification necessary?

³⁵ Rick Gore, “New Find,” *National Geographic*, August 2002.

³⁶ Steve Weiner *et al.*, “Evidence for the Use of Fire at Zhoukoudian, China,” *Science*, vol. 281, 10 July 1998, pp. 251-253; Ann Gibbons, “Ancient Island Tools Suggest *Homo erectus* Was a Seafarer,” *Science*, vol. 279, 13 March 1998, pp. 1635-1637.

³⁷ From “A Correspondent,” “Late Pleistocene Man at Kow Swamp,” *Nature*, vol. 238, 11 August 1972, p. 308, see also *Repairing the Breach*, pp. 586-587.

H. erectus and Dating Issues

There is a final and powerful argument for sinking *H. erectus* that involves three dating issues. First, fossils having *H. erectus* morphology date to very recent times. This has been known since the 1972 announcement in *Nature* that "...human remains from Kow Swamp...suggest the survival of *Homo erectus* in Australia until as recently as 10,000 years ago."³⁸ Similarly, a more recent re-dating of a number of Javan fossils announced in *Science* concluded:

H. erectus, was still alive in Java, Indonesia, as recently as 27,000 to 53,000 years ago...If so...*H. erectus*, a species that first appeared...about 2 million years ago, would have been alive when modern humans and Neandertals roamed the earth...³⁹

This is problematic because it raises questions of how *H. erectus* survived so recently if it was locked in the struggle for survival with a superior species, *H. sapiens*. Very likely, the two classifications are not necessary and *H. erectus* fossils can be placed into *H. sapiens*.

A much more problematic dating issue is introduced by returning to a discussion of Java Man and the evolutionary claim that *H. sapiens* arose from *H. erectus* only 200,000 ya (see Figure 2). It turns out that, from the start, there was doubt that the Java Man femur and skull were both from an intermediate species because the femur was recognized as indistinguishable from *H. sapiens*. Anatomist and anthropologist Émile Houzé examined the fossils and he immediately challenged Dubois' classification of the femur as anything but *H. sapiens* simply because of the estimated age. He explained:

I refuse to let myself be influenced by considerations concerning the sediment or age...a bone which shows all the characteristics of a human [bone] must be considered as such. When after determining this, it is said that...the bone could have belonged to an intermediate species, one is abandoning the domain of facts without any plausible reason.⁴⁰

More recent analyses confirm that the femur is completely modern and should be classified as *H. sapiens*. A study in *Nature* concluded that "no feature or combination of features...justify Dubois' assertion of its distinctiveness from modern man..."⁴¹

But if the femur is properly classified as *H. sapiens* and dates to approximately 1.5 mya, the fossil creates a contemporary status problem. Namely, how can one claim that *H. erectus*

³⁸ A.G. Thorne, P.G. Macumber, "Discoveries of Late Pleistocene Man at Kow Swamp, Australia," *Nature*, vol. 238, August 11, 1972, p. 316, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 582.

³⁹ Ann Gibbons, "*Homo erectus* in Java: A 250,000-Year Anachronism," *Science*, vol. 274, 13 December 1996, p. 1841, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 582.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁴¹ M.H. Day and T.I. Molleson, "The Trinil Femora," in *Symposia of the Society for the Study of Human Biology, Vol. XI, Human Evolution*, M.H. Day, ed. (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1973), p. 135, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 580.

gradually evolved into *H. sapiens* 200,000 ya, when *H. sapiens* lived alongside *H. erectus* more than 1 mya? The most logical solution would be to recognize that *H. sapiens* dates well before 200,000 ya and varies widely enough to include fossils currently classified as *H. erectus*.

This solution is better than other alternatives that could include: a) proposing that Dubois just happened to find a location that preserved the *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens* transition, b) claiming that the date for the femur is off by 1.3 million years, or c) reciting the misplaced mantra that “claiming *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens* cannot co-exist is like saying modern humans and chimpanzees cannot not co-exist” (note: this argument is misplaced because it does not address the ancient fossil date for *H. sapiens*; because no one suggests that chimpanzees evolved into and were replaced by *H. sapiens*; and because of the dating issue explained immediately below).

The proposed solution of sinking *H. erectus* is clearly better than the alternatives when it is realized that fossils described as indistinguishable from *H. sapiens* (and artifacts best assigned to *H. sapiens*) are not only contemporary with *H. erectus*, they actually predate *H. erectus* by a very long time. Some examples follow and illustrate that *H. erectus* did not evolve into *H. sapiens*.

In 1965, Harvard’s Bryan Patterson discovered a partial humerus (upper arm bone) fossil, now designated KP-271, which dates to 4.4 mya. He described it as “a well-preserved distal end of a left humerus.”⁴² Following comparative tests between human and chimpanzee humeri, Patterson concluded, “In these diagnostic measurements [KP-271] is strikingly close to the means of the human sample.”⁴³ William Howells studied the fossil with Patterson and reported:

The humeral fragment...with a date of about 4.4 million, could not be distinguished from *Homo sapiens* morphologically or by multivariate analysis by Patterson and myself in 1967 (or by much more analysis by others since then). We suggested that it might represent *Australopithecus* because at that time allocation to *Homo* seemed preposterous, although it would be the correct one without the time element.”⁴⁴

Likewise, anthropologist Henry McHenry concluded: “the Kanapoi specimen, which is 4 to 4.5 million years old, is indistinguishable from modern *Homo sapiens*...”⁴⁵ Anatomist Charles Oxnard found that KP-271, “a fragment of arm bone perhaps four or more million years old...

⁴² Bryan Patterson, W.W. Howells, “Hominid Humeral Fragment from Early Pleistocene of Northwestern Kenya,” *Science*, vol. 156, 7 April 1967, p. 64, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 572.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 65, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 573.

⁴⁴ W.W. Howells, “*Homo erectus* in human descent: ideas and problems,” *Homo erectus: Papers in Honor of Davidson Black*, Becky A. Sigmon and Jerome S. Cybulski, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 79-80, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 573.

⁴⁵ Henry M. McHenry, “Fossils and the Mosaic Nature of Human Evolution,” *Science*, vol. 190, 31 October 1975, p. 428, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 573.

has already been shown to be very similar to that of modern man, and some of our demonstrations clearly support that contention.”⁴⁶

Why then, was KP-271 not classified as *Homo*, and even *Homo sapiens*? Because the fossil did not fit expected evolutionary sequences, and so it was classified as australopithecine and studies arguing for this classification were soon forthcoming. Even so, such an approach does not address the fundamental question of how *H. erectus* could have evolved into *H. sapiens* when fossils indistinguishable from *H. sapiens* appear 4.4 mya according to many prominent evolutionists. This problem is resolved if *H. erectus* is sunk into *H. sapiens* and if it is acknowledged that *H. sapiens* dates to much earlier than 200,000 ya.

Another evidence for the ancient presence of *H. sapiens* involves the Laetoli footprints. In 1979, Mary Leakey reported on three footprint trails found in Tanzania that date to 3.6 mya. She stated: “we have found hominid footprints that are remarkably similar to those of modern man... the form of his foot was exactly the same as ours.”⁴⁷ Further descriptions stated that “the longitudinal arch of the foot is well developed and resembles that of modern man, and the great toe is parallel to the other toes...it is immediately evident that the Pliocene hominids at Laetoli had achieved a fully upright, bipedal and free-striding gait...”⁴⁸ Others on the team explained:

Make no mistake...They are like modern human foot prints...The external morphology is the same. There is a well-shaped modern heel with a strong arch and a good ball of the foot in front of it. The big toe is straight in line. It doesn't stick out to the side like an ape toe, or like the big toe in so many drawings you see of australopithecines in books.⁴⁹

At Leakey's request, specialist Russell Tuttle conducted a detailed comparison of the footprints with those of Peruvian Machiguenga Indians, who live barefoot. He reported: “In discernible features, the Laetoli G prints are indistinguishable from those of habitually barefoot *Homo sapiens*.”⁵⁰ Evolutionists dismissed such findings, because they could not accept that *Homo* was so ancient. Instead, they attributed the trails to “Lucy” (*A. afarensis*). Objecting to this assignment, Tuttle responded:

⁴⁶ Charles E. Oxnard, “The place of the australopithecines in human evolution: grounds for doubt?” *Nature*, vol. 258, December 4, 1975, p. 394, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 573.

⁴⁷ Mary D. Leakey, “Footprints in the Ashes of Time,” *National Geographic*, April 1979, pp. 446, 453, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 574.

⁴⁸ From M.D. Leakey and R.L. Hay, “Pliocene footprints in the Laetoli Beds at Laetoli, northern Tanzania,” *Nature*, vol. 278, 22 March 1979, pp. 320, 323, see also *Repairing the Breach*, pp. 574-575.

⁴⁹ Donald C. Johanson and Maitland A. Edey, *Lucy, The Beginnings of Humankind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), p. 250, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 575.

⁵⁰ R.H. Tuttle, D.M. Webb, and M. Baksh, “The pattern of little feet,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, vol. 78, February 1989, p. 316, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 575.

...the trails...were portrayed as remarkably human. Yet they were presumed to have been created by *Australopithecus afarensis*...My problem in accepting this was that the Hadar beasts had apelike features (notably, down-curved toes)...The proportions of Laetoli G-1 and G-3 prints are well within the range found among the Machiguenga...[both] exhibit strong heel, ball, and first toe impressions and a well-developed medial longitudinal arch, which is the hallmark of human feet...the 3.5-million-year-old footprint trails...resemble those of habitually unshod modern humans. None of their features suggest that the Laetoli hominids were less capable bipeds than we are.⁵¹

Elsewhere, he commented on the: “remarkable humanness of Laetoli hominid feet in all detectable morphological features. Per contra, the toes of... *Australopithecus afarensis*, are intermediate in length between those of humans and apes...and, they are curved, like those of apes.”⁵² In sum, *A. afarensis* is a very questionable candidate for the Laetoli footprints. The most logical assignment of the footprints is to *H. sapiens* unless classifications are to be made based on preconceived evolutionary sequences (which happens repeatedly). But, again, if artifacts dated to 3.6 mya are best assigned to *H. sapiens*, how could *H. erectus* have been our predecessor?

Further, even though *H. erectus* is dated only to approximately 2 mya, there is increasing evidence that an adept tool-maker was present between 2 and 3 mya. For example, the Gona site in Ethiopia has produced some 3,000 sophisticated artifacts made by “a species that was technologically adept...most scientists doubt that *Australopithecus* had the mental acuity or manual dexterity to create tools for cutting and chopping.”⁵³ More recently, a 2015 article in *Nature* reported on “flints...hammers, and anvils in Kenya” dating to 3.3 mya. *H. sapiens* is a viable candidate to have made these tools since fossils and artifacts indistinguishable from, or best attributable to, *H. sapiens* predate this time period.⁵⁴

The third dating puzzle that causes one to look differently at *H. erectus* involves the recent determination that *H. erectus* dates to at least 1.85 mya in Eastern Europe and “reveals that Eurasia was probably occupied before *Homo erectus* appears in the East African fossil record.”⁵⁵ This a further challenge to the view that a primitive *H. erectus* was evolving from an ape-like ancestor for millions of years before venturing out of Africa.

⁵¹ Russell H. Tuttle, “The Pitted Pattern of Laetoli Feet,” *Natural History*, March 1990, pp. 63-64, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 575.

⁵² R.H. Tuttle, D.M. Webb, and M. Baksh, “Did *Australopithecus afarensis* make the Laetoli G footprint trails?” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 1991 Supplement, p. 175, *Repairing the Breach*, p. 576.

⁵³ From “Old Mysteries Solved – Sort of” *Insight on the News*, March 10, 1997, p. 41, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 579.

⁵⁴ Erella Hovers, “Archaeology: Tools go back in time,” *Nature*, News & Views, 521, 21 May 2015, p. 294.

⁵⁵ Ferring *et al.*, “Earliest human occupations at Dmanisi (Georgian Caucasus) dated to 1.85-1.78 Ma,” *PNAS*, June 28, 2011, vol. 108, no. 26, p. 10432.

Given these three dating issues, it is apparent why some prominent evolutionists are calling for the sinking of *H. erectus*, and why leading evolutionist Curtis Stringer explained regarding *H. erectus*, “everything now is in flux...It’s all a mess”⁵⁶ and “We don’t have a clue”⁵⁷ as to what migrated from Africa, when it emerged, or even where *H. erectus* itself originated. The mess begins to clear with the elimination of *H. erectus*.

***H. ergaster*, *H. heidelbergensis*, and *H. antecessor*, Another View**

Three claimed transitional forms shown in Figure 2 resemble *H. erectus* but are sometimes identified as separate species. These include *H. ergaster*, a group of fossils found in east Africa (dating to approximately 1.5 mya); *H. heidelbergensis* (600,000 ya); and *H. antecessor* (800,000 ya to 200,000 ya). Since *H. erectus* preceded *H. ergaster*, *H. heidelbergensis*, and *H. antecessor*, these so-called transitional forms did not transition into *H. erectus*, nor into *H. sapiens* when *H. erectus* is properly sunk. As explained below, there is support in the scientific literature for eliminating all three classifications.

Many evolutionists reject *H. ergaster* and classify these African fossils as *H. erectus*. David Dean and Eric Delson, for example, state in *Nature* that “We do not consider that the African Pleistocene fossils sometimes termed *H. ergaster* represent a distinct biological species, given the known ranges of variation...”⁵⁸ Similarly, Alan Walker notes that when establishing the species, the originators “did not attempt to make a differential diagnosis between this specimen and those attributed to *H. erectus*.”⁵⁹ Such views have become widely held due to the announcement of the Daka fossils, which are *H. erectus* fossils that share certain characteristics with Asian and African samples. Tim White, who co-authored the Daka announcement explained, “This African fossil is so similar to its Asian contemporaries that it’s clear *H. erectus* was a truly successful, widespread species...” and concluded that recognition of a “lineage with the separate species name ‘*H. ergaster*’ is therefore doubtfully necessary or useful.”⁶⁰

H. heidelbergensis is also called archaic *H. sapiens* and is thought by some to be the predecessor of the Neanderthals.⁶¹ As its second name suggests, the species displays many *H. sapiens* traits

⁵⁶ James Shreeve, “*Erectus* Rising,” *Discover*, September 1994, p. 82, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 582.

⁵⁷ Robert C. Cowen, “Java Man ‘Ages’ a Million Years, Upsets Theories,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 25, 1994, p. 3, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 582.

⁵⁸ David Dean and Eric Delson, “*Homo* at the gates of Europe,” *Nature*, vol. 373, 9 February 1995, p. 473, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 587.

⁵⁹ Alan Walker, “Perspectives on the Nariokotome Discovery,” *The Nariokotome Homo Erectus Skeleton*, Alan Walker and Richard Leakey, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 421, see also *Repairing the Breach*, pp. 587-588.

⁶⁰ Ann Gibbons, “African Skull Points to One Human Ancestor,” *Science*, vol. 295, 22 March 2002, p. 2193; and Berhane Asfaw *et al.*, “Remains of *Homo erectus* from Bouri, Middle Awash, Ethiopia,” *Nature*, vol. 416, 21 March 2002, p. 318, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 588.

⁶¹ Michael Balter, “New Work May Complicate History of Neandertals and *H. sapiens*,” *Science*, vol. 326, 9 Oct. 2009, pp. 224, 225.

and can easily be so classified based on morphology and a cranial capacity of approximately 1,230 cc, which is between that of *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens*.⁶² As stated in *Science*, the species is “something of a ‘wastebasket taxa’ that includes widely varying African and European fossils...”⁶³

H. antecessor, which is linked to the Gran Dolina site in Spain, is also a questionable classification. As one evolutionist stated, “This hominid had the face of a *sapiens*, a mandible approaching *heidelbergensis*, and premolars like *ergaster*. What to call such an *hombre*? If you say it’s not *heidelbergensis*, it has to be a new species...and if you don’t name it, someone else will.” Considering that the species is described as having “a totally modern face,” and that the classifications he resembles can be placed into *H. sapiens*, *H. antecessor* can also be so assigned.⁶⁴

***H. Habilis* and *H. Rudolfensis*, Another View**

The final members of the *Homo* genus to be discussed are *H. habilis* and *H. rudolfensis*, sometimes jointly called “early *Homo*.” These two classifications are very important because they are often regarded as the earliest *Homo* species, with *H. rudolfensis* dating to more than 2 mya.

The discovery leading to *H. habilis* was a mandible (jaw bone) with embedded teeth, found in 1960 at Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania, by Louis Leakey. Leakey subsequently announced in *Nature* (1964) that the fossils were a “distinct type of early hominid.”⁶⁵

Louis Leakey’s announcement, which was based on craniodental fossils from strata called Bed I and Bed II, generated immediate criticism for a lack of detail, errant measurements, and because the fossils appeared to be a mix of australopithecine and *H. erectus* fossils, which would make *H. habilis* an invalid taxon. Writing in *Nature*, anthropologist J.T. Robinson stated in 1965: “The endocranial capacity of *H. ‘habilis’* appears, on the scanty and indirect evidence available, to have differed little from that of the australopithecines with a range overlapping that of the latter substantially.” Further:

...it must be remembered that two groups of specimens are involved: one from Bed I and the other from Bed II...It is therefore by no means clear that the Bed I and Bed II groups of specimens necessarily belong to the same species...it would seem that there is more reason for associating the Bed I group of specimens with

⁶² G. Philip Rightmire, “Homo erectus and Middle Pleistocene hominins: Brain size, skull form, and species recognition,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 65 (2013), p. 249.

⁶³ Ann Gibbons, “A New Face for Human Ancestors,” *Science*, vol. 276, 30 May 1997, p. 1332, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 588.

⁶⁴ Robert Kunzig, “The Face of an Ancestral Child,” *Discover*, December 1997, pp. 97-98, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 588.

⁶⁵ L.S.B. Leakey, “New Finds at Olduvai Gorge,” *Nature*, vol. 189, February 25, 1961, p. 649, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 589.

Australopithecus and the Bed II group with *Homo erectus* than there is for associating the Bed I and II groups with each other.⁶⁶

A difficulty with *H. habilis* was that post-cranial material in clear association with a skull would be lacking for another 20 years. Meanwhile, evolutionists theorized that as an intermediate link between *A. afarensis* and *H. erectus*, *H. habilis* would have been intermediate in height, weight, and morphology. However, in 1986, it was revealed that *H. habilis* fossil OH 62 resembled *A. afarensis* in morphology and was just over three feet tall, even smaller than Lucy. This constituted an enormous evolutionary “U-turn,” which usually suggests that fossils are being illegitimately forced into an evolutionary sequence. Further, it was explained that there were “striking anatomical and proportional similarities between the OH 62 postcranial skeleton and small *Australopithecus* individuals (especially A.L. 288-1 [Lucy]).”⁶⁷

Rather than propose sinking *H. habilis* into *Australopithecus*, however, Tim White and Donald Johanson suggested that between 3 mya and 1.8 mya, *H. habilis* underwent no evolutionary progression; then by 1.6 mya, there came an “abrupt transition,” in which the three-foot-tall *H. habilis* evolved into the modern sized *H. erectus* over the span of only 200,000 years.⁶⁸ This “growth spurt” theory has since been completely invalidated, as *H. erectus* is now widely dated to nearly 2 mya and, as Wolpoff explains, even *H. sapiens* predates *H. habilis* when *H. erectus* is properly sunk.

Further evidence against the *H. habilis* classification emerged in 2007, when it was announced in *Nature* that, due to a prolonged contemporary status at a single site, *H. habilis* likely did not give rise to *H. erectus* (in other words, even evolutionists now concede that a prolonged contemporary status dooms long-held evolutionary sequences):

Anthropologists have tended to see the evolution of *Homo* species as a linear progression, beginning with *H. habilis* and passing through *H. erectus* before ending up with modern humans. But it seems the path through time was broad enough for more than one species to walk abreast, with *H. erectus* and *H. habilis* living in the same place at the same time for as much as half a million years. Spoor and his colleagues argue that this makes it less likely that *H. erectus* was a direct descendant of *H. habilis*...⁶⁹

⁶⁶ J.T. Robinson, “*Homo ‘habilis’* and the Australopithecines,” *Nature*, vol. 205, January 9, 1965, pp. 122-123, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 590.

⁶⁷ Donald C. Johanson *et al.*, “New partial skeleton of *Homo habilis* from Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania,” p. 208, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 592.

⁶⁸ Bruce Bower, “Early Human Skeleton Apes Its Ancestors,” *Science News*, vol. 131, May 30, 1987, p. 340, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 592.

⁶⁹ Michael Hopkin, “Twin fossil find adds twist to human evolution.” Taken from www.nature.com on 08/08/07, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 594.

Well before this announcement, *Science* published an article calling for the elimination of *H. habilis* based on its small brain size (552 cc).⁷⁰ Further, the article noted that 1) *H. habilis* cannot “be assumed with any degree of reliability to be more closely related to *H. sapiens* than to the australopiths” 2) the estimated body mass of 34 kg, is well below that of *H. sapiens* (53 kg) and *H. erectus* (57 kg); and 3) the hand bones of the type specimen and long arms of other fossils “suggest that *H. habilis* was capable of proficient climbing.” Other problems were also cited to support the conclusion that *H. habilis* “should be removed from *Homo*” and “transferred to the genus *Australopithecus*.”⁷¹

A 2003 *Science* article similarly concluded that “the smaller brained, small-toothed hominids that have been placed in *H. habilis* do not appear to belong to that species...they may be thought of as a...form of australopithecine...”⁷² More recently, a 2011 article in *Science* concluded:

...in the past decade, the handyman’s status has been undermined. Newer analytical methods suggested that *H. habilis* matured and moved less like a human and more like an australopithecine...now a report in...the *Journal of Human Evolution* finds that *H. habilis*’s dietary range was also more like Lucy’s than that of *H. erectus*...In a separate commentary this week in the ...PNAS, paleoanthropologist Bernard Wood...writes that today, if one considers all the evidence, “There are grounds for excluding *H. habilis* from *Homo*.”⁷³

When the *H. habilis* fossils are properly divided into *Australopithecus* or *H. erectus* (which can be sunk into *H. sapiens*), it leaves only *H. rudolfensis* to be addressed.

H. rudolfensis dates to approximately 2.3 mya and is linked to Richard Leakey, the son of Louis. While digging at Lake Rudolf (Kenya) in 1972, Richard found the famous KNM-ER 1470 and KNM-ER 1590 skulls, the KNM-ER 1481 leg bones, and the KNM-ER 1472 femur.

The fossils have been described as resembling *H. sapiens* in morphology and size. The KNM-ER 1470 skull was 752 cc and described by Leakey as “remarkably reminiscent of modern man, lacking the heavy and protruding eyebrow ridges and thick bone characteristics of *Homo erectus*.”⁷⁴ KNM-ER 1590 was similar in size even though the individual died at approximately age eight.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Bernard Wood and Mark Collard, “The Human Genus,” *Science*, vol. 284, 2 April 1999, pp. 66-70, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 594.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷² Robert J. Blumenshine *et al.*, “Late Pliocene *Homo* and Hominid Land Use from Western Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania,” *Science*, vol. 299, 21 February 2003, p. 1220, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 594.

⁷³ Ann Gibbons, “Who Was *Homo habilis*—And Was it Really *Homo*?” *Science*, vol. 332, 17 June 2011, p. 1370.

⁷⁴ From “Leakey’s new skull changes our pedigree and lengthens our past,” *Science News*, November 18, 1972, p. 324, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 591.

⁷⁵ Wolpoff, *Paleoanthropology*, p. 368, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 591.

In another study involving an endocast (a mold of the cranium interior) of 1470, Dean Falk observed: “The frontal lobe...lacks a fronto-orbital sulcus that characterizes all extant ape brains...as well as australopithecines from South Africa...the sulcal pattern appears completely human-like in the crucial caudal portion of the orbitofrontal cortex in the left hemisphere.”⁷⁶ Citing a drawing, Falk stated “If Fig. 1 illustrated an endocast of an extant human skull rather than that from KNM-ER 1470, one would conclude that the external gross morphology near and partially in Broca’s area appeared normal and that the human in question had probably been capable of speech...”⁷⁷

Descriptions of other *H. rudolfensis* fossils confirm the modern morphology and function. According to Henry McHenry:

... proportions of the ilium (KNM-ER 3228) are much like those of later homo and unlike all known australopithecine hips...The proportions of the femora (KNM-ER 1472 and 1481) are more like *H. erectus* than any species of *Australopithecus*...The proportions of the talus (KNM-ER 813) are much more like *H. sapiens* than are other Plio-Pleistocene hominid tali (Wood 1974).⁷⁸

Likewise, Bernard Wood concluded about the KNM-ER 1472 and 1481A femora:

...there are at Koobi Fora leg fossils whose later homo-like morphology contrasts with that of the more australopithecine-like morphology of the Olduvai remains. These relatively derived remains...are found alongside a specimen such as KNM-ER 3735, which is judged to resemble the more primitive OH 62 skeleton.

An analysis of estimated stature/body weight relationships also shows these two Koobi Fora femora to be consistent with modern human and archaic *H. sapiens* relationships, while the australopithecine-like Olduvai *H. habilis* remains are more consistent with those of the living African apes.⁷⁹

This evidence suggests that *H. rudolfensis* can be sunk into *H. sapiens*, and it also demonstrates the unworkable evolutionary U-turn for those proposing a *H. rudolfensis* to *H. habilis* to *H. erectus* sequence.

Due to considerations such as age and the limited number of fossils, some have questioned the legitimacy of *H. rudolfensis*. Some evolutionists classify the fossils as a type of *Australopithecus*, or claim that the *H. rudolfensis* fossils are a variety of *A. africanus*. Yet, such assignments are made primarily because key *H. rudolfensis* fossils are often left out when

⁷⁶ Dean Falk, “Cerebral Cortices of East African Early Hominids,” *Science*, vol. 221, 9 September 1983, pp. 1072-1073, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 592.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1073.

⁷⁸ Henry M. McHenry, “Early Hominid Postcrania: Phylogeny and Function,” p. 260, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 593.

⁷⁹ Bernard Wood, “Origin and evolution of the genus *Homo*,” *Nature*, vol. 355, 27 February 1992, p. 786, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 593.

comparative studies are performed (a common approach when arguing for a favored species or fossil assignment), and because *A. africanus* happens to date to the same general period. When one considers the primitive nature of *A. africanus*, discussed below, such an assignment is seen as completely unsatisfactory.

Further, new fossils (primarily KNM-ER 62000) found near Koobi Fora, Kenya and dating between 1.78 and 1.95 mya were announced by a Meave Leakey team in August, 2012. Based on various fossil characteristics including a flat face that was suggested in previous *H. rudolfensis* fossils, the Leakey team confirmed the appropriateness of the classification and the fossils also confirmed “the presence of two contemporary species of early *Homo*, in addition to *Homo erectus*.”⁸⁰ Yet, the finds also raise the question of how three different *Homo* species (*rudolfensis*, *erectus*, and *habilis*) co-existed in the same area and at the same time if they occupied the same ecological niche and were locked in a struggle for survival. The confusion dissipates if *H. habilis* is properly sunk and if *H. rudolfensis* and *H. erectus* are viewed as part of the same diverse species, *H. sapiens*.

To recap, it is appropriate to sink all claimed *Homo* transitional species into *H. sapiens*, with the exception of *H. habilis*, which appears to consist of australopithecine and *H. erectus* fossils that should be reassigned. When this is done, it leaves *H. sapiens* alone in the *Homo* genus, and the revised figure looks suspiciously like Special Creation. Figure 3 illustrates this reassignment process.

⁸⁰ Meave G. Leakey *et al.*, “New fossils from Koobi For a in northern Kenya confirm taxonomic diversity in early *Homo*,” *Nature*, 488, 2001-2004, 9 August 2012, 201-2004.

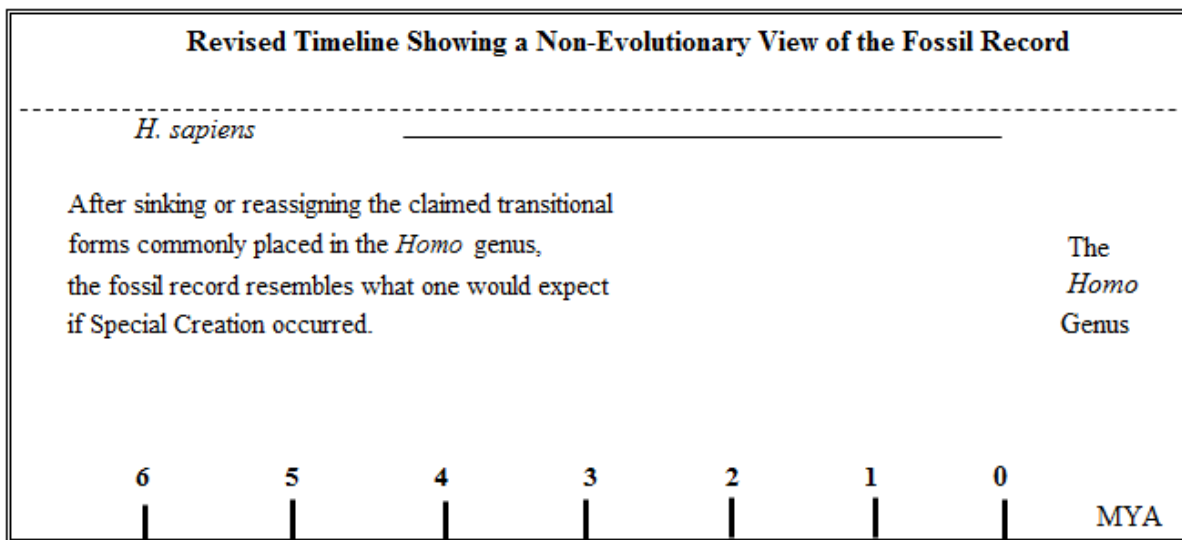
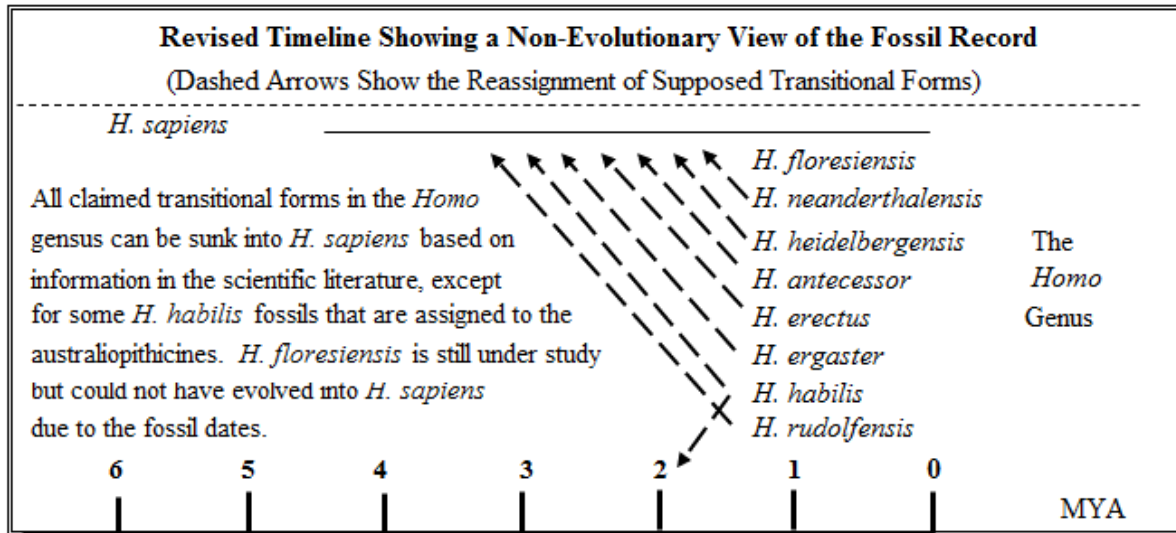


Figure 3. An Alternative View of the *Homo* Genus

Is such a drastic pruning of the human tree really plausible? Yes, and support was recently provided by the Dmanisi finds, as reported in a 2013 issue of *Science* that set “off a small bomb in the field.”⁸¹ There have now been five skulls found at the Dmanisi site; all skulls are dated to 1.8 mya and are considered to be *H. erectus*. What has puzzled the scientific community is that the five skulls vary enormously in size and morphology (even though the variation among the fossils is no greater than that observed in *H. sapiens*).⁸² Depending on the skull, the Dmanisi fossils can be described as resembling *H. habilis*, *H. erectus*, or *H. rudolfensis*.

⁸¹ Ann Gibbons, “Stunning Skull Gives a Fresh Portrait of Early Humans,” *Science*, vol. 342, 18 October, 2013, p. 297.

⁸² *Ibid.*

Those involved with the finds concluded that there is “growing evidence that...variation in... fossil hominids tends to be misinterpreted as species diversity, especially when single fossil specimens from different localities are compared...” Extending this conclusion to African fossils, the article stated “morphological diversity in the African fossil *Homo* record around 1.8 [mya] probably reflects variation between...a single evolving lineage; which is appropriate named *H. erectus*” and concluded that, most probably, “*H. habilis* and *H. rudolfensis* belong to a single evolving *Homo* lineage.”⁸³ While the article names the single lineage to be *H. erectus*, it has been explained that there is ample reason for sinking *H. erectus* into *H. sapiens* and many evolutionists support this move.

How could anyone proposing such a trimming of the human tree be considered an evolutionist? In most cases, it is because of their faith that the australopithecines are a legitimate transitional form leading to *Homo*. This possibility will now be addressed.

The Australopithecines, Can They Save the Story?

Many evolutionists believe that *Australopithecus* gave rise to *Homo* about 2.3 mya and, based on the fossil dates, back an *A. afarensis* - *A. africanus* - *H. rudolfensis* sequence. The story of the *Australopithecus* genus began in 1924 when anatomist Raymond Dart obtained a small juvenile skull found in a cave near Taung, South Africa. The “Taung Child” was initially believed to be an ape (*Australopithecus* means “southern ape”) but Dart later announced *Australopithecus africanus* as mankind’s ancestor. *A. africanus* had an estimated cranial capacity of approximately 460 cc and lived between 2 and 3 mya.

In 1974, Donald Johanson extended man’s evolutionary history with the announcement of “Lucy.” The find was classified as *Australopithecus afarensis*. This species is now claimed to have lived 3 to 3.6 mya. Lucy is believed to have been approximately 3.5 feet tall, and to have had a cranial capacity of less than 400 cc. Amazingly, Johanson’s team claimed that, based primarily on Lucy’s pelvis, *A. afarensis* was bipedal and “Lucy’s hips and the muscular arrangement of her pelvis would have made it as hard for her to climb trees as it is for modern humans.”⁸⁴ In 1979, following Mary Leakey’s announcement of the Laetoli footprints, Johanson’s team quickly attributed these to Lucy and said that the tracks ended speculation about the bipedal status of *A. afarensis*.⁸⁵

Despite efforts to portray *A. afarensis* as a *habitual* biped that made the Laetoli footprints, subsequent studies have concluded that the species had “long and curved toes” that “imply a gait

⁸³ David Lordkipanidze *et. al.* “A Complete Skull from Dmanisi, Georgia, and the Evolutionary Biology of Early Homo” *Science*, vol. 342, 19 October 2013, p. 330.

⁸⁴ Donald C. Johanson, “Face-to-Face with Lucy’s Family,” *National Geographic*, March, 1996, p. 114, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 575.

⁸⁵ M.D. Leakey and R.L. Hay, “Pliocene footprints in the Laetoli Beds at Laetoli, northern Tanzania,” *Nature*, vol. 278, 22 March 1979, pp. 317-323, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 574-578.

that is not identical to modern *H. sapiens*,”⁸⁶ that the knee of *A. afarensis* “is compatible with a significant degree of arboreal [tree] locomotion;”⁸⁷ that the animal “slept, ate, and lived primarily in the trees;”⁸⁸ that, if the creature walked on two legs “it must have looked like a modern human walking at the beach while wearing a pair of flippers;”⁸⁹ that Lucy’s wrist exhibits characteristics “seen today only in the African apes. These features are thought to be associated with knuckle-walking;”⁹⁰ that its inner ear chambers, which house “organs that help us maintain our balance while standing or moving” indicate that *A. afarensis* “still tended to clamber in trees rather than amble across the savanna;”⁹¹ and that its scapular “displays several traits characteristic of suspensory apes” suggesting that “their locomotor repertoire included a substantial amount of climbing” which is “consistent with evidence purporting that *A. afarensis* dental development was also apelike.”⁹²

It should also be understood that Johanson initially saw Lucy’s hip as chimp-like, “which meant that Lucy couldn’t possibly have walked like a modern human.” Later, however, as Johanson explains in the Nova documentary, *In Search of Human Origins*, team member Owen Lovejoy concluded that the pelvis had been deformed during fossilization and he actually reshaped the mold of Lucy’s hip with a power drill so that “after taking the kink out of the pelvis, it all fit together perfectly...As a result, the angle of the hip looks nothing like a chimps, but a lot like ours.”⁹³ Using such methods, one can imagine that any claimed hominin could be made to appear as an upright walker capable of making human-like footprints.⁹⁴

Finally, the 2006 announcement in *Nature* of *A. afarensis* fossils dubbed “Lucy’s child” or “Selam” that date to 3.3 mya revealed that *A. afarensis* had a morphology that is “archaic, in the sense that its brain case, jaws, and limb bones are much more ape-like than those of later taxa

⁸⁶ Henry M. McHenry, “Early Hominid Postcrania: Phylogeny and Function,” *Integrative Paths to the Past: Paleoanthropological Advances in Honor of F. Clark Howell*, Robert S. Corruccini and Russell L. Ciochon, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), p. 255, see also *Repairing the Breach*, pp. 578-579.

⁸⁷ Jack T. Stern, Jr. and Randall L. Susman, “The Locomotor Anatomy of *Australopithecus afarensis*,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, vol. 60 (1983), pp. 279, 298-299, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 576.

⁸⁸ Ann Gibbons, “Anthropologists Take the Measure of Humanity,” *Science*, vol. 264, 15 April 1994, p. 350, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 577.

⁸⁹ Bruce Bower, “Hominids: Down-to-earth or up a tree?” *Science News*, April 9, 1994, p. 231.

⁹⁰ Mark Collard and Leslie C. Aiello, “From forelimbs to two legs,” *Nature*, vol. 404, 23 March 2000, p. 339, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 577.

⁹¹ John Horgan, “Standing Tall,” *Scientific American*, October 1994, p. 22, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 577.

⁹² David J. Green and Zeresenay Alemseged, “*Australopithecus afarensis* Scapular Ontogeny, Function, and the Role of Climbing in Evolution,” *Science*, vol. 338, 26 October, 2012, p. 514, 517.

⁹³ From the *Nova* series, “In Search of Human Origins, Part One,” transcript available on-line at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2106hum1.html>, accessed August 1, 2015.

⁹⁴ For a detailed analysis of Lucy, see the write-up on Logos Research Associates web site at <http://www.logosra.org/#!lucy/c3wa>. The site has other very good evaluations of claimed transitional forms and other errant evolutionary claims, accessed 9/8/2015.

that are rightly included in...*Homo*.” Further, “the foot and scapula and long and curved manual phalanges raise new questions about the importance of arboreal behavior in the *A. afarensis* locomotor repertoire.”⁹⁵

It is also clear that *A. africanus* is discredited as leading to the modern looking *H. rudolfensis* because, while *A. africanus* is one of the more recent australopithecine species, it is now known to have had an extremely primitive morphology and, appearing in the fossil record until around 2 mya, it could not have transitioned into modern-looking *H. rudolfensis* who appears around 2.3 mya. Further, it is now clear that *A. africanus* is more primitive and ape-like than *A. afarensis*, even though *A. africanus* is on the order of one million years younger, thereby creating another U-turn if an *A. afarensis* – *A. africanus* – *H. rudolfensis* sequence is suggested.

This assessment of *A. africanus* is supported by a 1996 *Science* article that reported on South African *A. africanus* fossils previously unavailable during the years of apartheid. The study revealed that:

...the body proportions of *africanus* were actually more apelike—and perhaps more suited to a life in the trees—than those of *afarensis*, its presumed ancestor... the skeleton suggests that the path from the apes, toward humanlike body proportions—shortened arms and longer legs—and the terrestrial way of life that went with them, was not at all straightforward. It may have included a temporary return to a lifestyle that included more tree-time.⁹⁶

Likewise, the *Journal of Human Evolution* featured an article about an *africanus* tibia, Stw 514, and concluded:

The total morphological pattern...is certainly the most ape-like of any Pliocene or Pleistocene hominoid tibia yet recovered, being even more ape-like than those of *A. afarensis*...We, thus, question the ability of this tibia to function in the same way as in a human...*A. africanus* was extremely ape-like in its morphology, and possibly arboreally adapted...We are struck by the fact that no single feature can be used to separate this tibia unequivocally from that of a chimpanzee...[and it] begs a re-analysis of the... relationships of *A. africanus* and *A. afarensis*...it is difficult to reconcile these features with the interpretation of White et al. (1983) that *A. afarensis* was ancestral to *A. africanus*.⁹⁷

Further, a 1995 *Science* article stated: “A discovery...of four foot bones provides evidence that the australopithecine foot possessed an apelike great toe that diverged from the other toes and

⁹⁵ Bernard Wood, “A precious little bundle,” *Nature*, vol. 443, 21 September 2006, p. 278.

⁹⁶ James Shreeve, “New Skeleton Gives Path From Trees to Ground an Odd Turn,” *Science*, vol. 272, 3 May 1996, p. 654, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 600.

⁹⁷ Lee R. Berger and Phillip V. Tobias, “A chimpanzee-like tibia from Sterkfontein, South Africa and its implications for the interpretation of bipedalism in *Australopithecus africanus*,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 1996, pp. 343, 347, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 601.

was highly mobile...Its foot has departed to only a small degree from that of the chimpanzee.”⁹⁸
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Other Australopithecine Candidates

Beginning in the 1990s, a number of new australopithecine species arose, including *A. garhi*, (dating to 2.5 mya) and *A. anamensis* (4 mya). However, these australopithecines deserve little coverage. *A. garhi*, a contemporary of *affricanus*, is described in *Science* as having “a brain but a third the size of modern humans, a projecting lower face like a chimp or Lucy, and immense teeth with broad incisors and molars.”¹⁰⁰ A *Science* editorial concluded: “*A. garhi* has few traits that definitively link it to *Homo*, and like other hominids from the same period, it may simply be an evolutionary dead end...”¹⁰¹ Paleoanthropologist Fred Grine concluded, “It’s a possible candidate [for *Homo* ancestry], but no better than *affricanus*.”¹⁰²

A. anamensis is notable primarily in that, to bolster the species, the announcing team claimed that the KP-271 arm bone found by Patterson plus the Laetoli footprints, which have long been associated with *afarensis*, actually belonged to *their* new creation. Team members explained in *Scientific American*, “After careful study of the fossils...including Patterson’s fragment of an arm bone—we felt that in details of anatomy, these specimens were different enough from previously known hominids to warrant designating a new species.”¹⁰³ Indeed, Patterson’s fossil helped the team argue that *A. anamensis*, possessing a mosaic of modern and primitive features “like humans...did not walk on its knuckles.”¹⁰⁴

In April, 2010, *A. sediba* was announced in *Science*. The fossils date from 1.95 to 1.78 mya. *A. sediba* appears to have had a cranial capacity of 420 to 450 cc and may have stood just over 4 feet tall. While some evolutionists suggest it could be classified as *Homo* due to its small teeth and claimed bipedal status, this is doubtful considering that *H. sapiens* (once *H. erectus* is sunk) dates to at least 2 mya and *H. rudolfensis* dates to 2.3 mya. The announcement of *A. sediba* acknowledged this difficulty, stating it “is seemingly at odds with” older or contemporaneous *Homo* fossils but speculated that perhaps “*Au. sediba* split from *Au. Africanus* before the earliest

⁹⁸ Ronald J. Clarke and Phillip V. Tobias, “Sterkfontein Member 2 Foot Bones of the Oldest South African Hominid,” *Science*, vol. 269, 28 July 1995, pp. 521, 524, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 600.

⁹⁹ Some evolutionists have tried to salvage a role for *A. africanus* by claiming that it led to *Homo* because *A. africanus* was more similar to *H. habilis*. This argument is flawed in that *H. habilis* (absent fossils belonging to *H. rudolfensis*, *H. erectus*, or *H. sapiens*) should be assigned to the australopithecines and the admission that *H. habilis* did not lead to *H. erectus* due to the half-million year contemporary status of the two species at the same site.

¹⁰⁰ Charles W. Petit, “The hominid who ate antelope for dinner,” *U.S. News & World Report*, May 3, 1999, p. 53, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 602.

¹⁰¹ Elizabeth Culotta, “A New Human Ancestor?” *Science*, vol. 284, 23 April 1999, pp. 573, 572, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 602.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 573.

¹⁰³ Maeve Leakey and Alan Walker, “Early Hominid Fossils from Africa,” *Scientific American*, June 1997, p. 76, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 574.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

appearance of *Homo*.”¹⁰⁵ Still, many unsupported assumptions are required to work *A. sediba* into any human evolutionary sequence.

Moreover, it is increasingly likely that—as with a number of other hominins—*A. sediba* is an illegitimate mixture of australopithecine and *H. sapiens* fossils; these fossils may have been deposited in a pit along with dozens of other species due to flood waters. In 2014, *New Scientist* featured an article entitled “Human ‘missing link’ fossils may be jumble of species.” The article explained that “one of our closest long-lost relatives may never have existed. The fossils of [*A.*] *sediba*, which promised to rewrite the story of human evolution, may actually be the remains of two species...”¹⁰⁶ The article featured the work of two specialists from Tel Aviv University who had just presented findings at a paleoanthropology society meeting suggesting that the spinal column of *A. sediba* was actually a mix of *H. erectus* vertebrae and vertebrae belonging to *Australopithecus*, perhaps to an existing species. A similar conclusion applies to the lower jawbones attributed to *A. sediba*. Not surprisingly, *New Scientist* reported that discoverer Lee Berger disagrees, but the suggestion in the article that “it is possible that one *A. sediba* had an *Australopithecus*-like spine and *Homo*-like jaw, while another had a *Homo*-like spine and *Australopithecus*-like jaw” does little to provide confidence in the validity of *A. sediba*.

Other candidates include *A. aethiopicus* (2.5 mya), *A. bahrelghazali* (3.6 mya), and *A. deyiremeda* (3.5 mya) which was introduced in 2015, but nothing makes these species better contenders for the ancestor of *Homo* than the australopithecines already discussed due, in part, to the very limited number of fossils available for these categories. In fact, the entire australopithecine genus is ruled out according to Charles Oxnard, described by Stephen Jay Gould as the “leading expert on the quantitative study of skeletons.”¹⁰⁷ After extensive studies of the australopithecines, Oxnard concluded:

Multivariate studies of several anatomical regions, shoulder, pelvis, ankle foot, elbow and hand are now available for the australopithecines...the common view, that these fossils are similar to modern man or that...they resemble the African great apes, may be incorrect. Most of these fossil fragments are in fact, uniquely different from both man and man’s nearest living genetic relatives, the chimpanzee and gorilla. To the extent that resemblances exist with living forms, they tend to be with the orang-utan.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Lee R. Berger *et al.*, “*Australopithecus sediba*: A New Species of *Homo*-Like Australopith from South Africa,” *Science*, vol. 328, 9 April 2010, pp. 195-204.

¹⁰⁶ From “Human ‘missing link’ fossils may be jumble of species,” *New Scientist*, This Week, 9 April 2014, available on-line at <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22229643-200-human-missing-link-fossils-may-be-jumble-of-species>, accessed August 15, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted from Henry M. Morris, *That Their Words May Be Used Against Them* (El Cajon, Ca: Institute for Creation Research, 1997), p. 202; originally from Stephen Jay Gould, “A Short Way to Big Ends,” *Natural History*, vol. 95, January 1986, p. 28, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁸ Charles E. Oxnard, “Australopithecus vs. the computer,” *University of Chicago Magazine*, Winter 1974, pp. 11-12, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 47.

Oxnard explained that of nine key australopithecine structures (the shoulder blade, clavicle, arm bone, elbow, finger bones, pelvis, ankle bone, foot arches, and toe phalanx) commonly said to be human-like, five features actually align more closely with the African ape, and the remaining four (the arm bone, elbow, pelvis, and toe phalanx) align, not with modern humans, but as uniquely different from modern man and the African apes. He concluded:

...however able these creatures were at walking on two legs, they were also convincing quadrupeds and perhaps excellent climbers...they must have been upon some side-path that did not lead to human-like functions...the australopithecines ...are now *irrevocably removed from a place in the evolution of human bipedalism*, possibly from a place in a group any closer to humans than to African apes and *certainly from any place in the direct human lineage*.¹⁰⁹ [emphasis added]

Again:

It is now being recognized widely that the *australopithecines are not structurally closely similar to humans*, that they must have been living at least in part in arboreal environments, and that many of the later specimens were contemporaneous or almost so with the earliest members of the genus *Homo*.¹¹⁰ [emphasis added]

As the australopithecines are increasingly exposed as having nothing to do with human evolution, other candidates have emerged. One attempt to fill the void is based on a fossil cranium from Kenya (KNM-WT 4000) and the creation of the classification *Kenyanthropus platyops* (3.5 mya). Yet, the cranium size is within the range of *A. afarensis* and *A. africanus*¹¹¹ and most evolutionists have had lukewarm reactions, as the cranium was pieced together from 1,100 fragments and, warns Tim White, has “extensive deformation.” White believes it is a variant of *A. afarensis*.¹¹²

Our Distant Past, Another View

In recent years, a number of possible human ancestors that date prior to 4 mya have been announced. Given that there is no viable transition from the australopithecines (or other primate) to *Homo*, it is clear that these finds have nothing to do with human evolution. What is interesting, however, is that these finds expose many long-held assumptions about human evolution as unfounded.

¹⁰⁹ Charles E. Oxnard, *The Order of Man* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 316, 331, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 47.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. iii-iv (*Nota Bene*).

¹¹¹ Maeve G. Leakey *et al.*, “New hominin genus from eastern Africa shows diverse middle Pliocene lineages,” *Nature*, vol. 410, 22 March 2001, pp. 438-439, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 604.

¹¹² Tim White, “Early Hominids—Diversity or Distortion?” *Science*, vol. 299, 28 March 2003, p. 1995.

In 1994, certain craniodental fossils were announced and provisionally assigned to *Australopithecus*, based on ten teeth that were “far closer to that of a chimpanzee than to any known hominid,” and “centered in the chimpanzee ranges.”¹¹³ Other cranial fossils were described as having “a strikingly chimpanzee-like morphology.” Some explained that “the published fossils are so chimp-like that they may represent the long-lost ancestor of the chimp, not human lineage.”¹¹⁴ However, Tim White and other team members reasoned that, at an age of 4.4 mya, the fossils (and those of *Ar. kadabba* (5.2-5.8 mya) that were introduced in 2004) were close to the long-agreed upon date of 5 to 7 mya for the last common ancestor between the chimpanzee and humans (CLCA). Thus, it was reasoned that hominin fossils of this age would be very chimp-like and the fossils could be from a valid human ancestor.

A complete analysis was finally published in 2009, when “Ardi” and other fossils belonging to *Ardipithecus ramidus* were announced in *Science*.¹¹⁵ Ardi was described as a biped, able to walk upright but also able to maneuver well in trees. This description was based on the hip, the presence of an opposable toe, hands and long fingers that hung down past its knee, and a flexible hand likely used to support weight and to aid in tree locomotion. In 2015, the team described Ardi as “much better adapted to climbing trees than any other hominid yet found” and its limb proportions not only “differ from those of both humans and chimpanzees, they are actually closest to those of most known Miocene apes.”¹¹⁶ Ardi was said to “obviously postdate the CLCA”¹¹⁷ and was described as weighing about 50 kg, with the cranial capacity comparable to the chimpanzee. The announcement was crowned by *Science* as the “Breakthrough of the Year.”

However, many questions are associated with Ardi. First, the biped ability and classification of *Ar. ramidus* as a legitimate hominid is being questioned. Ardi’s biped status is based on the work of Owen Lovejoy, who previously determined that “it would have been as hard for Lucy to climb a tree as for us,” who claimed that the Laetoli footprints settled the question of locomotion for *A. afarensis*, and who is seen in the Nova documentary using a power drill to reshape Lucy’s pelvis. Many in the evolutionary community are skeptical of any conclusions drawn from Ardi’s crushed pelvis that required large doses of speculation to reconstruct, and many see Lovejoy’s conclusions as “framing the debate” over bipedal status. As stated in *Science*:

But not everyone agrees with the team’s interpretations about how *Ar. ramidus* walked upright and what it reveals about our ancestors...researchers are focusing intently on the lower skeleton, where some of the anatomy is so primitive that they are beginning to argue over just what it means to be “bipedal.” The pelvis,

¹¹³ Tim D. White, Gen Suwa, and Berhane Asfaw, “*Australopithecus ramidus*, a new species of early hominid from Aramis, Ethiopia,” *Nature*, vol. 371, 22 September 1994, pp. 306-307.

¹¹⁴ Ann Gibbons, “In Search of the First Hominids,” *Science*, vol. 295, 15 February 2002, p. 1215.

¹¹⁵ See *Science*, vol. 326, 2 October 2009.

¹¹⁶ Tim White *et al.*, “Neither chimpanzee nor human, *Ardipithecus* reveals the surprising ancestry of both,” *PNAS*, April 21, 2015, vol. 112, no. 16, 4878-4879.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4882.

for example, offers only “circumstantial” evidence for upright walking, says Walker.¹¹⁸

Similarly, in a *Science* technical commentary that was very critical of the White team’s conclusions, Esteban E. Sarmiento of the Human Evolution Foundation explained that “attempts to link *Ar. Ramidus* to an exclusive human lineage by pointing to suspected...bipedal characteristics in the foot are not convincing” as all the characteristics cited “also serve the mechanical requisites of quadrupedality, and in the case of *Ar. Ramidus*...find their closest functional analog to those of gorillas.”¹¹⁹

Second, if *Ar. ramidus* is put in an evolutionary sequence between *Sahelanthropus (S.) tchadensis* and *A. afarensis*, a significant evolutionary U-turn is involved with regard to cranial capacity and body mass. For example, *S. tchadensis* had a cranial capacity estimated at 360 cc, while the best estimate for *Ar. ramidus* is 300 cc (a range of 290 – 310 cc).¹²⁰ Likewise, *S. tchadensis* had an estimated body mass of 60 kg versus 50 kg for *Ar. ramidus*.¹²¹

Third, the 2009 announcement relied heavily on tooth morphology to argue that Ardi was on man’s evolutionary path. However, Sarmiento explains in *Science* that the evidence put forth “does not indicate that *Ardipithecus* is a hominid or ancestral to *Australopithecus* any more than it indicates that *Oreopithecus* and the orangutan-like females of *Sivapithecus*, both of which also share a humanlike premolar/canine complex, are hominids...”¹²²

This statement points out that fossil teeth have been very unreliable for making inferences about human evolution. This is further illustrated by the initial announcement in 1994 that, based primarily on the fossil teeth, the new species was very chimpanzee-like yet, in 2009 *Science* editor Ann Gibbons explained: “The authors repeatedly note the many ways that *Ar. ramidus* differs from chimpanzees and gorillas”¹²³ The updated view was based on the finding that while Ardi would have “moved capably in trees” it “lacked any characteristics typical of the suspension, vertical climbing, or knuckle-walking of modern gorillas and chimps.”¹²⁴ Indeed,

¹¹⁸ Ann Gibbons, “A New Kind of Ancestor: *Ardipithecus* Unveiled,” *Science*, vol. 326, 2 October 2009, p. 37.

¹¹⁹ Esteban E. Sarmiento, “Comment on the Paleobiology and Classification of *Ardipithecus ramidus*,” *Science*, vol. 38, 28 May 2010, 1105-b.

¹²⁰ From “Supporting Online Material for The *Ardipithecus ramidus* Skull and Its Implications for Hominid Origins,” 2 October 2009, *Science* 326, 68 (2009), DOI: 10.1126/science.1175825, p. 8.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Ann Gibbons, “A New Kind of Ancestor: *Ardipithecus* Unveiled, p. 40.

¹²⁴ Tim White *et al.*, “*Ardipithecus ramidus* and the Paleobiology of Early Hominids,” p. 64.

White's team explained in 2015 that "*Ardipithecus* was an early biped that lacked the derivations that chimpanzees would evolve..."¹²⁵

But this issue goes *much* deeper than being led astray by fossil teeth. Given the dates of *Ar. ramidus* and *Ar. kadabba* between 4.4 and 5.8 mya, the question arises as to why Ardi's function differs so significantly from chimpanzees, when the evolutionary establishment has, for decades, held that the CLCA lived no more than 5 to 7 mya and was very similar to the chimpanzee in form and function.

Since Ardi did not fit the long-held expectations of species close to the CLCA, the White team had two options. They could have concluded that *Ar. ramidus* was not closely related to humans and chimpanzees and not on the evolutionary timeline of *H. sapiens*. However, this would have meant that Ardi would be of little importance. The alternative was to claim that the long-held consensus of the CLCA being chimp-like in appearance, plus the presumed date of 5-7 mya had been in error for decades. White's team predictably opted for the latter option, but huge problems causing on-going debates surfaced with these claims.

Since the early 1970's, evolutionists have assured us that part of the reason why such faith can be placed in the fossil record is that the 5-7 mya date suggested for the CLCA has been independently verified using molecular clock studies. These studies look at the differences in partial DNA sequences between the chimpanzee and modern humans and then, based on an assumed average mutation rate, predict when the CLCA lived (how long ago the two genomes were identical). A common claim is that molecular clocks are independent of the fossil record and are more reliable than fossils at predicting when the CLCA may have lived.

The fatal flaws in these long-held conclusions were suddenly exposed by Ardi's announcement. In order to argue that Ardi was a legitimate ancestor of modern man, White's team first cast doubt upon all molecular study results by explaining that "broad assumptions about both the regularity of molecular change and the reliability of calibration dates required to establish such rates have strong limitations."¹²⁶ Next, having argued that fossils are more reliable than the "strong limitations" of molecular clock studies, White's team concluded that previous fossil interpretations were in error with regard to predictions about the morphology and date of the CLCA. In effect, only their analysis of the Ardi fossils could be trusted, and these fossils suggested that the date of the CLCA was really 7 to 10 mya (not 5 to 7 mya). Moreover, the team explained "*Ar. ramidus* thus indicates that the last common ancestors of humans and African apes were not chimpanzee-like and that both hominids and extant African apes are each highly specialized, but through very different evolutionary pathways."¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Tim White *et al.*, "Neither chimpanzee nor human, *Ardipithecus* reveals the surprising ancestry of both," *PNAS*, April 21, 2015, vol. 112, no. 16, 4883.

¹²⁶ Tim White *et al.*, "*Ardipithecus ramidus* and the Paleobiology of Early Hominids," *Science*, vol. 326, 2 October 2009, p. 81.

¹²⁷ Tim White *et al.*, "Neither chimpanzee nor human, *Ardipithecus* reveals the surprising ancestry of both," *PNAS*, April 21, 2015, vol. 112, no. 16, 4883.

Pointing out the rashness of the White team's proposal and the likelihood that Ardi was simply an extinct primate having nothing to do with human ancestry, Sarmiento concludes in *Science*:

Human evolutionary studies are not a new science where every new find revolutionizes the interpretations of our past...A purported fossil ancestor that must overturn nearly all we know about our evolution to fit into our lineage is unlikely to be such [a human] ancestor...it is curious that in a century-old race for superlative hominid fossils on a continent currently populated with African apes, we consistently unearth nearly complete hominid ancestors and have yet to recognize even a small fragment of a bona fide chimpanzee or gorilla ancestor.¹²⁸

In reality, the Ardi team's radical proposal merely exposed more than fifty years' worth of "assured conclusions from the fossil evidence" as mere guesswork, and they brought to light the seldom acknowledged problems with molecular clock studies. These problems include: 1) the lack of a regular and known long-term mutation rate, 2) the increasing realization that some parts of the chimpanzee and human genome are "remarkably divergent in structure and in gene content"¹²⁹ meaning that, if evolution is true, different mutation rates apply to different parts of the genome and it is inaccurate to assume a single mutation rate for the entire genome; 3) the frequent approach of estimating mutation rates based on the presumed dates of common ancestors for other groups (e.g., between whales and even-toed ungulates) that are estimated from fossils, which means that molecular clocks calibrated in this manner are not independent of the fossil record and depend on the dates presumed for common ancestors that may never have existed; and 4) the tendency to treat the average mutation rate as a "plug number" that is set to the value needed to arrive at the assumed date of the last common ancestor estimated by the fossils. Some of these problems are seen in two *Science* articles, the first is from 1998 and explained:

Mitochondrial DNA [mtDNA] appears to mutate much faster than expected¹³⁰... raising troubling questions about the dating of evolutionary events...if the clock ticks faster or at different rates at different times, some of the spectacular results [that agree with the fossil dates]...may be in question...Evolutionists are most concerned about the effect of a faster mutation rate. For example, researchers have calculated that 'mitochondrial Eve'—the woman whose mtDNA was

¹²⁸ Esteban E. Sarmiento, "Comment on the Paleobiology and Classification of *Ardipithecus ramidus*," *Science*, vol. 38, 28 May 2010, 1105-b.

¹²⁹ See Hughes *et al.*, "Chimpanzee and human Y chromosomes are remarkably divergent in structure and gene content," *Nature*, vol. 463, 28 January, 2010, p. 536

¹³⁰ Many scientists believe that Mitochondrial DNA is inherited only from the mother and that there is no mixing of male and female mtDNA from generation to generation. This would mean that mtDNA differences among humans would be the result of mutations and would give scientists access to a "molecular clock." By counting the differences in mtDNA now present and by applying an assumed mutation rate, they are able to estimate when "mitochondrial Eve" may have lived.

ancestral to that in all living people—lived 100,000 to 200,000 years ago in Africa. Using the new clock, she would be a mere 6000 years old.^{131 132}

In the second article from 2012, new evidence based on measurements involving whole genome sequencing of newborn babies suggested that “mutations arise more slowly in humans than previously thought.”¹³³ The article explained that if these mutation rates are extrapolated into the past, there would be dramatic implications such as changing the human/orangutan split from the 9-13 mya estimates based on the fossils, to 34-46 mya. Since such dates are not acceptable in the eyes of most evolutionists (due to expectations based on the fossils), the article discussed that some researchers propose assuming a different rate of mutation in the past, presumably one that would fit with the fossil evidence. But if such adjustments are made, the mutation rate would essentially be a plug number to fit the fossil evidence.

Sahelanthropus tchadensis and Orrorin tugenensis

In July of 2002, a new discovery from Chad was announced by a team led by Michel Brunet and was hailed as one of the greatest fossil finds of the past 100 years. The find was a fossil cranium, TM-266, and was reported in *Nature* as being 6 to 7 million years old.¹³⁴ The fossil was given a new genus and species name, *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* and had a small cranial capacity of 320 – 380 cc. What is especially interesting about the fossil is that it has a very modern face and possesses features evolutionists have long viewed as belonging to *Homo* or very near *Homo*. As Bernard Wood explained in *Nature*: “a hominid of this age should only just be beginning to show signs of being a hominid. It certainly should not have the face of a hominid less than one-third of its geological age. Also, if it is accepted as a stem hominid...all creatures with more primitive faces (and that is a very long list) would, perforce, have to be excluded from the ancestry of modern humans.”¹³⁵

¹³¹ A recent analysis of mtDNA results for humans by Dr. Nathaniel Jeanson has further called into question the accuracy of the standard chronology of human evolution and suggests a much younger age for mankind. According to Jeanson (see Nathaniel T. Jeanson, “New Genetic-Clock Research Challenges Millions of Years” available at <http://www.icr.org/article/8017/> (accessed 7-09-14):

the published evolutionary literature puts the origin of modern humans about 180,000 years ago.... [and] the measured mitochondrial DNA mutation rate for humans is, on average, ~0.00048 mutations per year...[or] about 174 mutations after 180,000 years of existence.

Comparing these predictions to the range of actual human mitochondrial DNA diversity shows a striking result... On average, human mitochondrial DNA sequences differ at 10 positions.

¹³² Ann Gibbons, “Calibrating the Mitochondrial Clock,” *Science*, vol. 279, 2 January 1998, p. 28.

¹³³ Ann Gibbons, “Turning Back the Clock: Slowing the Pace of Prehistory,” *Science*, vol. 338, 12 October 2012, p. 189.

¹³⁴ Michael Brunet *et al.*, “A new hominid from the Upper Miocene of Chad, Central Africa,” *Nature*, vol. 418, 11 July 2002, p. 151, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 603.

¹³⁵ Bernard Wood, “Hominid revelations from Chad,” *Nature*, vol. 418, 11 July 2002, p. 134, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 603.

Other fossils dating to 6 mya and vying for the “oldest hominid” title are from Kenya and identified as *Orrorin tugenensis*. The fossils were found by a French team including Marvin Pickford and others. The fossils consist of small jaw fragments, isolated teeth, finger and arm bones, and some partial femurs. The find has caused much sparring with the TM-266 team and both teams question whether the other team’s fossils should be considered as more closely related to the chimpanzee. Speaking of TM-266, one paleoanthropologist explains, “If you define hominids by a reduction in the canines and premolars, then it’s a hominid...But if a hominid is going to be defined by walking upright on two feet, you can’t tell...”¹³⁶ Pickford and others fired back in a letter to *Nature*, “...we believe that *Sahelanthropus* was an ape.”¹³⁷ Brunet replied that other researchers were trying to promote their find at the expense of TM-266, while misrepresenting its morphology.¹³⁸ *Orrorin tugenensis* is also vulnerable to criticism as a valid ancestor of *Homo*. Owen Lovejoy believes that the femur resembles that of a chimpanzee, and that the animal spent most of its time in trees.¹³⁹ This sort of squabbling is common among competing teams and all that is accomplished is to show the weaknesses in the story tabled by each side.

Piecing It All Together

The collective failure of human evolutionary claims is evident in plots of cranial capacity and body mass as shown in figures 4 and 5.¹⁴⁰ These graphs reveal multiple evolutionary U-turns and unworkable transitions among many of the so-called transitional forms discussed in this paper. Thus, not only are students being deceived when shown drawings such as in Figure 1, but *it is increasingly clear that, counter to the most fundamental assumption in paleoanthropology, fossils are not good indicators of genetic relationships and, therefore, of man’s supposed evolutionary past.* This fundamental failure of paleoanthropology is now being discussed in the scientific literature (though it will not appear in the biology textbooks) and means, quite literally, that the field of paleoanthropology is in danger of becoming clueless.

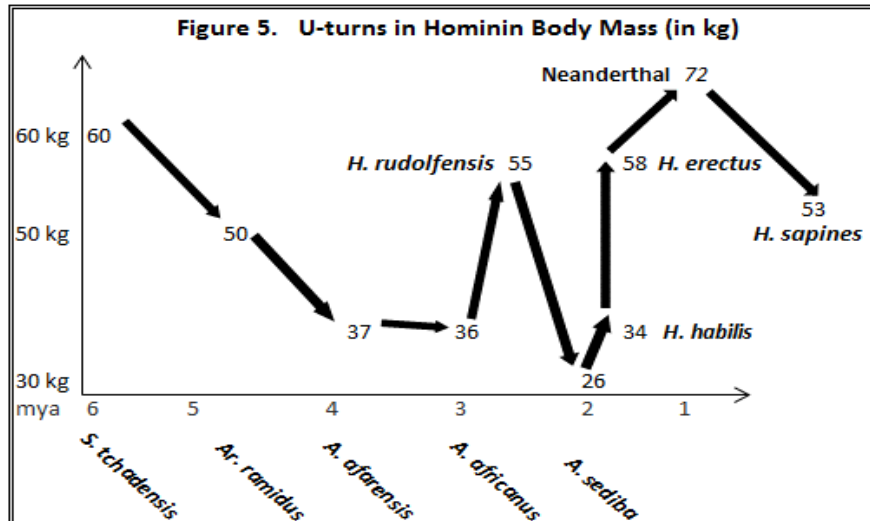
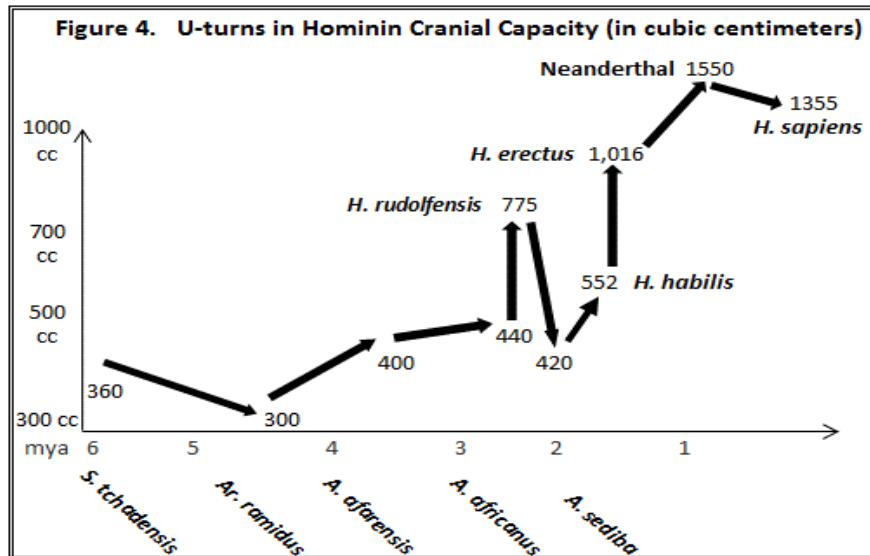
¹³⁶ Ann Gibbons, “One Scientist’s Quest for The Origin of Our Species,” *Science*, vol. 298, 29 November 2002, p. 1711, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 603.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Kate Wong, “An Ancestor to Call Our Own,” *Scientific American*, January 2003, p. 59, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 603.

¹⁴⁰ For a listing of the sources behind the numbers in these two figures, see *Repairing the Breach*, Table 3-1, p. 52. Although there have been updated studies listing body mass, it does not necessarily mean that these updates are better than the sources used in *Repairing the Breach*. For example, at 2015 study in the *Journal of Human Evolution* entitled “Body mass estimates of hominin fossils and the evolution of human body size” (vol. 85, August 2015, pp 75-93) provides body mass estimates of most claimed transitional forms. However, the study is based on the assumption that the bone size to weight relationship in hominin fossils scale to the same degree as seen in modern humans. So, for example, their estimate of the body mass of *A. ramidus* is a mere 32 kg while the estimate of White *et al.* is 50 kg using different scaling assumptions.



The *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* published a paper by Mark Collard and Bernard Wood that explained evolutionary histories (phylogenies) among hominins is unclear and that cladistic analysis¹⁴¹ of craniodental fossils “have so far yielded conflicting and weakly supported hypotheses...” Amazingly, only recently have evolutionists considered the possibility that “the type of qualitative and quantitative craniodental characters normally used to reconstruct the phylogenetic relationships of hominin species and genera are not reliable for this purpose...” Their studies investigated this possibility and they concluded:

the phylogenetic hypotheses based on the craniodental data were incompatible with the molecular phylogenies for the groups. Given the robustness of the molecular phylogenies, these results indicate that little confidence can be placed

¹⁴¹ Cladistics is a “statistical method for analyzing correlations between traits across species.” Two species sharing nearly all traits will be judged more closely related than species not sharing as many traits. As with the molecular clock method, the approach assumes evolution is true and, therefore, cannot be a proof of evolution.

in phylogenies generated solely from higher primate craniodental evidence. The corollary of this is that existing phylogenetic hypotheses about human evolution are unlikely to be reliable. Accordingly, new approaches are required to address the problem of hominin phylogeny.¹⁴²

Further:

...craniodental data can return impressive levels of statistical support (e.g., 97%) for...phylogenetic relationship that are most likely incorrect. In other words, cladistic analyses of higher primate craniodental morphology may yield not only “false-positive” results, but false-positive results that pass, by a substantial margin the statistical tests favored by many researchers.¹⁴³

These conclusions are staggering and mean that, counter to the most fundamental underlying assumption in paleoanthropology, craniodental fossils are not a valid indicator of genetic relationships. Yet, others agree with Wood and Collard. A 2012 paper in the *Journal of Human Evolution* reported that several studies comparing inferences made from the fossil evidence with those from genetic studies have “found that morphological data could not recover the precise genetic relationships of the primate taxa,” and acknowledged that predictions based on craniodental characteristics must be called into question.¹⁴⁴

Why is it so difficult to interpret the fossils?

To explain just one practical difficulty, fossil teeth are, far and away, the most common fossils recovered, and many new species have been launched based solely on such fossils. Yet, reliance on fossil teeth is extremely problematic. An article in the *Journal of Human Evolution* comparing the morphology of molars among six primate species found that the predicted evolutionary relationships “were in no way congruent with what is known of hominoid biomolecular affinities.” In other words, the results from the study of fossil teeth do not agree with the molecular studies; this is a specific example of the problem pointed out by Collard and Wood. Further, the article pointed out that fossil studies erroneously assume:

...that features shared by humans and orangutans (low cusps, shallow intercuspal notches, etc.) are indicative of a recent common ancestry, when in fact these are probably only signs of similar diet. In short, although study of molar morphology

¹⁴² From Mark Collard and Bernard Wood, “How reliable are human phylogenetic hypotheses?” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 97, no. 9, April 25, 2000, p. 5003, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 41.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 5005.

¹⁴⁴ From Noreen von Cramon-Taubadel and Heather F. Smith, “The relative congruence of cranial and genetic estimates of hominoid taxon relationships: Implications for the reconstruction of hominin phylogeny,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 62 (2012) p. 640.

may yield substantial insights into diets of fossil hominoid primates, there may be severe limitations to their suitability for phylogenetic inference.¹⁴⁵

Another revealing article in *Scientific American* explained that problems also arise:

...because the taxonomic position of any new fossil is determined [by] exquisitely detailed morphological studies of isolated specimens...[usually on] fossil jaws and teeth...most likely to be preserved. What this procedure tends to ignore is that among such living hominoids as chimpanzees the jaws and teeth exhibit a high degree of morphological variability. There is no reason to believe the same was not true of hominoids...¹⁴⁶

Further, while species assignments are often based on the number, position, and size of cusps on a tooth, and position of tooth crests, a study in *Nature* evaluating the influence of gene expression during tooth development found that “with increasing expression level of this one gene [ectodysplasin], the number of cusps increases, cusp shapes and positions change, longitudinal crests form, and number of teeth increases.” These differences “can be traced to a small difference in the formation of an early signalling [*sic*] centre at the onset of tooth crown formation.” The study concluded that variation caused by small differences in expression of this single gene “may, if not taken into account obscure phylogenetic history.”¹⁴⁷

Another problem is that estimating the age of a fossil specimen at death is closely linked to the size and emergence of teeth, and estimating the overall size that the specimen would have reached at maturity are then made. However, studies have shown extreme variation in the age of the emergence of teeth among primates. A study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found that “emergence of the permanent teeth in wild chimpanzees is consistently later than 90% of the captive individuals. In many cases, emergence times are completely outside the known range recorded for captive chimpanzees.”¹⁴⁸ Thus, the assumed age of fossil specimens at death and the resulting estimate of body size at adulthood may be in substantial error if the potential for variation in tooth emergence is not factored, yet there is little understanding of the factors that could affect emergence, or how to factor them into evolutionary studies.

Also, although enamel thickness has been used to project “fossil ape and human...phylogeny... over the past century,” a study in the *Journal of Human Evolution* recently found that “general characterizations of hominins as having thick enamel...oversimplify a surprisingly variable

¹⁴⁵ Steve E. Hartman, “A cladistic analysis of hominoid molars,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, vol. 17 (1988), pp. 495, 497-498, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 41.

¹⁴⁶ Robert B. Eckhardt, “Population Genetics and Human Origins,” *Scientific American*, January 1972, p. 96, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁷ Aapo T. Kangas *et al.*, “Nonindependence of mammalian dental characters,” *Nature*, vol. 432, 11 November 2004, p. 211, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁸ Adrienne Zihlman, Debra Bolter, and Christophe Boesch, “Wild chimpanzee dentition and its implications for assessing life history in immature hominin fossils,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 101, no. 29, July 20, 2004, p. 10541, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 39.

craniodental trait” and may bias evolutionary reconstructions if the variation is not taken into account.¹⁴⁹

Finally, far-ranging speculations about human evolution and social behavior arise from the study of fossil teeth. Given the difficulty with assessing these teeth, one can imagine how many errors are made when evolutionists opine on the implications. Owen Lovejoy suggests that small tooth size in hominids indicates monogamy, as males with small teeth would not need to compete effectively with other males for the control of multiple females.¹⁵⁰ For years, David Pilbeam claimed tool-making and bipedal status for the small-toothed, 10 mya *Ramapithecus* before conceding it was an extinct primate most closely related to the orangutan. He explained: “So firmly were we committed to the idea that large canines were replaced by tools or weapons and that bipedalism was promoted by and necessary for tool use, that we took the small canines of *Ramapithecus* to mean that the creature must have been an upright tool user.”¹⁵¹

The problematic reliance on fossil teeth is only one of many methodological problems plaguing the field. Add to this: 1) the failure to consider normal variation within existing species when assigning fossils and creating new classifications, 2) the practice of classifying fossils based on dates and evolutionary preconceptions rather than morphology, 3) the reoccurring pattern of mixing ape-like and human fossils to create “intermediate” species, plus 4) the tendency to view every extinct primate as part of mankind’s evolutionary timeline even if its form and function most closely resembles the orangutans or another living primate, and it is inevitable that confusion and controversy will abound. It is also inevitable that the confusion will continue to increase, not decrease, as more fossils are found, which is what has happened over the past 50 years. Perhaps this is why paleoanthropologist Bernard Wood has told his college students, “I’m sorry, but I don’t know how to distinguish the earliest hominid from the earliest chimp ancestor anymore,”¹⁵² and why *Science* has conceded:

Into the trash, in fact, may go the very definition of what it means to be a hominid, as there is now little agreement on what key traits identify an exclusively human ancestor. Nor is there agreement on which species led to Homo, or even whether the fossils represent different species or variation within a single species.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Tanya M. Smith *et al.*, “Variation in enamel thickness within the genus Homo,” *Journal of Human Evolution*, 62 (2012), p. 395.

¹⁵⁰ Donald C. Johanson, “The Dawn of Humans: Face-to-Face with Lucy’s Family,” *National Geographic*, March 1996, p. 112.

¹⁵¹ David Pilbeam, “Rearranging Our Family Tree,” *Human Nature*, June 1978, p. 42.

¹⁵² Ann Gibbons, “In Search of the First Hominids,” *Science*, vol. 295, 15 February 2002, p. 1219.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 1215.

Beyond Problems with Methodology

Add to the many methodological problems the desire for funding, fame, and status among peers, and all the ingredients are present for evolutionary biology and paleoanthropology to be dominated by rash claims, blind adherence to contradictory positions, the abuse of trust naturally given to scientists, and the deception of the masses.

All of these problems are dwarfed by and linked to the underlying commitment to philosophical materialism (in essence, atheism, the belief that nothing exists beyond the material universe) by practitioners who religiously hold that naturalistic evolution *must* be true and that the Special Creation of mankind is not even a live option. This position is held by the 95 percent of members of the biology arm of the National Academy of Sciences who, surveys reveal, are declared materialists.¹⁵⁴ This position is held even by so-called (but mislabeled) theistic evolutionists such as Kenneth Miller who states “evolution is a natural process, and natural processes are undirected. Even if God can intervene in nature, why should He when nature can do a perfectly fine job of achieving His aims all by itself?”¹⁵⁵¹⁵⁶

These individuals and others who control the content of science education are not free to follow the evidence; they are not able to acknowledge the failure of Darwinism because they are, first and foremost, committed to materialistic evolution. This is readily apparent in their writings. Harvard biologist Roger Lewinton explains, very openly, that he and his colleagues believe in evolution:

*...in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs...in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.*¹⁵⁷

These sentiments are also shared by Pontifical Academy of Science members such as Stephen Hawking who is somehow trusted to be objective as he advises the Magisterium on matters involving origins, even though his materialistic worldview is evident in statements such as: “I

¹⁵⁴ Edward J. Larson and Larry Witham, “Scientists and Religion in America,” *Scientific American*, September 1999, pp. 89-90.

¹⁵⁵ Kenneth Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, (Harper Perennial, 1999), p. 244.

¹⁵⁶ Miller is a theist, but he rejects the possibility of God-directed evolution as he has made the problematic philosophical decision to construct a fence of naturalism around origins.

¹⁵⁷ Richard Lewontin, “Billions and Billions of Demons,” *The New York Review*, January 9, 1997, p. 31, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 136.

regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark.”¹⁵⁸ A similar commitment to materialism—and often, a hatred of Christianity—has been expressed by leading evolutionists ever since and including Darwin, who explained: “I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine.”¹⁵⁹

More than forty years ago, Sir Solly Zuckerman warned:

“...students of fossil primates have not been distinguished for caution when working within the logical constraints of their subject. The record is so astonishing that it is legitimate to ask whether much science is yet to be found in this field at all.”¹⁶⁰

Zuckerman was right. When science no longer becomes a search for truth but, instead, becomes fixated on developing the best materialistic explanation that denies the possibility of Special Creation, what results is a “*presumed* biological science...where to the faithful anything is possible—and there the ardent believer is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.”¹⁶¹ It is called paleoanthropology. This “pop-science” and its close relative, evolutionary biology, can survive only by indoctrinating the young and protecting the classroom monopoly, by mocking the opposition, and by convincing or intimidating religious authorities into accepting that human origins belongs exclusively to the domain of natural science, not historical theology.

Meanwhile, the teachers, clergy, and men of good will who have not directly studied the evidence must either presume that the materialists are honest, or they can express doubt and be ridiculed as Biblical literalists who oppose science. The first option has been widely chosen, meaning that confusion cascades to students and to the laity, who are informed that natural science has apparently overturned the previous answers to the great questions of life: “Where did I come from?” and “What is my origin?”

Ibid, p. 116, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 213.

¹⁵⁸ From Stephen W. Hawking, in an interview accessed from Yahoo! News Blog *The Lookout*, http://news.yahoo.com/s/yblog_thelookout/20110516/us_yblog_thelookout/stephen-hawking-says-afterlife-is-a-fairy-story on May 16, 2011, accessed 9/8/2015.

¹⁵⁹ Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, Nora Barlow, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1958), pp.86-87, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 199.

¹⁶⁰ Sir Solly Zuckerman, *Beyond the Ivory Tower: The Frontiers of Public and Private Science* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), p. 64, see also *Repairing the Breach*, p. 33.

¹⁶¹ Sir Solly Zuckerman, *Beyond the Ivory Tower: The Frontiers of Public and Private Science* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1970) p. 19-20.

Many whose faith was once secure have pondered the implications of this new revelation that many seem to revere as the supreme source of truth. All too often, their reasoning proceeds as follows: if Jesus linked His teachings on marriage to the acceptance of Genesis and the Special Creation of Adam and Eve as real history (Mt. 19:4)¹⁶², and if evolutionists such as Kenneth Miller are right that “it is time to place Genesis alongside the geocentric myth in the basket of stories that once, in a world of intellectual naivet[é], made helpful sense,”¹⁶³ then how can any teaching about the family and marriage now be defended? More fundamentally, if the Church now defers to atheists in control of the scientific establishment for answers to the fundamental questions of life, then why bother being a Christian—what is the point? Does it not make more sense to worship at the new altar of truth and embrace the moral freedom that comes with it? Sadly, the massive exodus that has resulted from such reasoning brings to mind the prophetic words: “My people perish for want of knowledge.” (Hosea 4:6)

Looking back, the surprise is not that the enemies of truth would seek to use false science to justify their faith in materialism, for this strategy has been used since the time of Epicurus (d. 270 B.C.). The surprise is that for the past 150 years, the Church has increasingly failed to recognize this tactic.

This paper has explained that a critical evaluation of the fossil evidence leads to the conclusion that Darwin’s last icon has fallen. More specifically the evidence suggests that: 1) claims of human evolution are not supported by the fossil record; and 2) to the degree that sound inferences can be drawn, the fossil evidence is most easily reconciled with Special Creation. Unfortunately, due to the classroom and textbook monopoly held by the philosophical materialists, the Darwinian deception will continue to wreak havoc as long as good men do nothing and fail to develop an integrated strategy to restore truth.

The question that desperately needs to be answered and acted upon by each Catholic and every truth seeker is: “What will *you* do to inform others that the intellectual basis for the culture of death, much confused theology, and the attack on the family has now fallen?” If the unborn are to be protected, if souls are to be spared from the influence of false philosophy masquerading as natural science, and if Church teachings on the family and religious freedoms are to be preserved, we must—at last—be obedient to the mandates of *Humani Generis* and we must develop coordinated strategies to expose the fall of Darwin’s last icon. Let us not delay, for the hour is late and we must realize:

Truth matters and lies have consequences. Unless we diligently seek the truth, we will not find it. Unless we love and defend truth, we will not preserve it. If we depart from truth, then mankind will suffer the consequences, and we have not the foresight to see where the departure will yet lead.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Matthew 19:4. He said in reply, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female?’”

¹⁶³ Kenneth Miller, *Finding Darwin’s God*, (Harper Perennial, 1999), p. 56.

¹⁶⁴ From John M. Wynne, Stephen A. Wynne, *Repairing the Breach*, Brown Books, 2008, pp. 569-570.