



We are preparing a paper to show this rigorously.

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## Hofmeyr man—another African ‘missing link’?

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While some journalists are calling it a ‘missing link’, from the point of view of trying to establish man’s ancestry from apes, Hofmeyr man (figure 1) is hardly an object of enthusiasm for evolutionists. That’s because the discoverers themselves are saying it’s fully human; in fact, it’s essentially of the modern type. Dr Alan Morris of the University of Cape Town is part of the international team (headed by Frederick Grine of New York’s Stony Brook University) studying the fossil. He says, ‘The skull is probably male and is completely modern. If he sat down next to you on the Sea Point bus you would not react, apart from wondering where he came from. He would not look like modern Africans or like modern Europeans, or like modern Khoisan people, but he is definitely a modern human being.’<sup>1</sup>

But it’s worth commenting on, not just because it so clearly is not a ‘missing link’ (i.e. supposedly between the first modern humans who arose in Africa and modern humans of today) in the normal sense of the term, but because it gives an opportunity to discuss a related issue.

The fossil, known as the Hofmeyr skull, after the town in the Karoo region of South Africa where it was

discovered, was actually found decades ago in the 1950s. It is only after some ‘dating’ by a new technique that researchers got excited.

The skull could not be dated geologically because it was found in an erosion gully. The ‘date’ by this new technique (a ‘combination of optically stimulated luminescence and uranium-series dating methods, coupled through a radiation-field model’<sup>2</sup>) is 36,000 years, which puts it in the so-called Pleistocene era in evolutionary dating terms. The authors of the *Science* paper on the skull state that it ‘lacked sufficient collagen for an accurate age determination’ by the normally very sensitive AMS radiocarbon procedure.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1.** The Hofmeyr skull, which is regarded as totally ‘modern’, is therefore not what most evolutionists would call a ‘missing link’, as the newspapers did. The apparent difference in appearance between the two dates shown is due to handling damage after 1968 and subsequent reconstruction. Consider that in this case, they would have known what the original looked like, so imagine the difficulty in getting an accurate picture from any fragmentary fossil skull for which one does not have this advantage. (From Grine *et al.*<sup>2</sup>).