

Homo erectus 'to' Modern Man: Evolution or Human Variability?

A. W. (BILL) MEHLERT

ABSTRACT

*An interesting change is taking place in creationist circles in respect of the status of the taxon *Homo erectus* and its relationship to *Homo sapiens sapiens*. This development is paralleled by a similar change of direction in evolutionary thinking, and in both cases it seems likely that the impetus is being largely propelled by the discovery of the *erectus* specimen KNM-WT 15000 in Africa in 1984. This attitudinal shift has connotations for the whole topic of alleged evolution of human beings. In this brief paper it is proposed to track these amended attitudes and the implications for the creation-evolution controversy.*

INTRODUCTION

With the discovery of Java and Peking *Homo erectus* fossils (the former was previously called *Pithecanthropus erectus*, and Peking Man was originally named *Sinanthropus pekinensis*), in 1891–1893 and 1927–1937 respectively, evolutionary theory received a considerable and much-needed boost. Until Dubois' Java discoveries, the only alleged link between man and the apes had been a few Neanderthal specimens. The Piltdown hoax of 1912–1914 was not uncovered until 1953, by which time it had played a considerable part in the early scepticism by most authorities toward the Taung-child australopithecine discovery in South Africa in 1924.

With the appearance of the Javan and Peking fossils it seemed that evolutionary theory had been vindicated to a sizeable degree, and *Pithecanthropus* (ape-man) became a common term in public as well as in palaeoanthropological circles.

After the Piltdown fraud was exposed, the australopithecines came into favour as a transitional form linking an ape-like common-ancestor to human beings, and this link was further strengthened by later finds of both *erectus* and australopithecine fossils, mainly in East and South Africa. By the early 1970s, more finds including australopithecus-like material classified as *Homo habilis*, made it appear that there was now a fairly substantial chain of progressive evolution from a bipedal chimp-like ancestor right through to modern man — *A. afarensis*, *H. habilis*, *H. erectus*, archaic *H. sapiens*, Neanderthal man and finally Cro-Magnon or modern man. With the rise of the

post-World War II creationist movement, largely sparked by the epic work of Whitcomb and Morris in 1961,¹ one of the most urgent tasks involved was how to respond to this apparent chain of evolutionary progression. In the intervening years since then, creation-oriented scientists have made a number of attacks on the validity of most of these forms, some of them being of high technical quality, others a little less well-informed.

The central feature of this paper mostly involves the so-called *erectus* section of the chain, where a quite noticeable change of direction is well underway, both in the creationist and the evolutionist camps. Far from dismissing *erectus* forms as being only large extinct apes or frauds, the pendulum is now swinging to the view that most, if not all *erectus* specimens are indeed full members of the human race. With the discovery of the Turkana 'Boy' WT 15000 in 1984 in Kenya, it is no longer possible to hold to the position that *Homo erectus* was only a large-brained pongid.

In evolutionary circles it is becoming increasingly common to argue that although *H. erectus* forms are still on the 'road' from ape to human, the morphological distinctions between all human-type forms are insufficient to justify a separate species classification for *erectus* — that is, that **all** post-habiline forms (*erectus*, archaic and modern *sapiens* plus the Neanderthals), could be subsumed into a single species — *H. sapiens*, with a subspecific distinction at most.

(The times and ages mentioned here are those commonly used in evolutionary scientific literature and are used for ease of identification only. I do not accept an earth

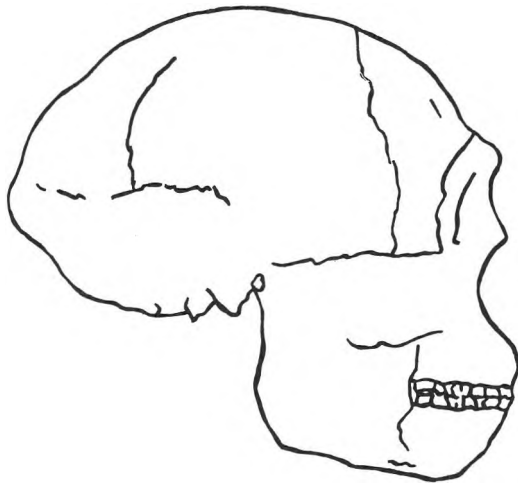


Figure 1. Skull profile of Peking man. Note the brow ridges, sloping forehead, and prognathous face. These features are also in evidence in Neanderthal, archaic *Homo sapiens* and in some modern skulls such as Kow Swamp. (See also Figure 5.)

history of millions of years.

Australopithecines and habilines

In a recent paper I argued at length that neither of these forms are human ancestors but are simply extinct varieties of extremely chimp-like pongids,² and much the same view is taken by Gish,³ by Lubenow,⁴ and by Beasley,⁵ although Lubenow regards *Homo habilis* as an invalid taxon, being represented by a mixture of *Homo sapiens* fossils and ape-like fossils.⁶ A strong creationist case exists in respect of the australopithecines and the so-called habilines, and the weight of evidence now seems to point away from any connection with humans and towards the strong likelihood that they were nothing more than extinct apes. Indeed evolution authorities Chérif and Gribbin believe that a strong case can be made that the gracile forms are little more than varieties of extinct pygmy chimpanzees, while the robust forms are varieties of gorillas.⁷

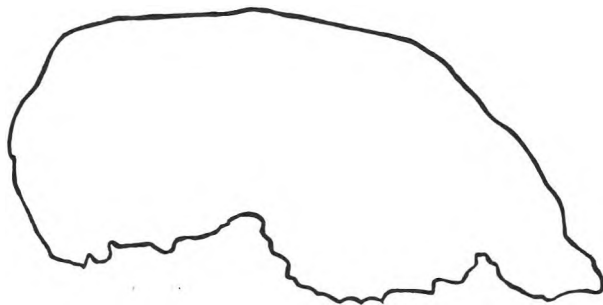


Figure 2. Skull-cap profile of Java Man found by Dubois in 1891–1893. Note the general similarity to Peking Man of Figure 1.

HOMO ERECTUS — MAN, APE OR APE-MAN?

The Javan and Peking forms of *erectus* in particular came under considerable attack by creationists in the 1970s and 1980s.^{8–10} The thrust of these critiques was that all *erectus* forms were extremely ape-like and even possibly fraudulent. A great deal was made of the fact that almost every Peking fossil mysteriously disappeared in 1941, leaving students nothing to work on but casts (see Figure 1).¹¹ Java Man was also regarded as suspect, on account of its discoverer Dubois having allegedly hidden two fully human Javan skulls for many years in order to strengthen his claims for the '*Pithecanthropus*' or *erectus* specimen known as Java Man (see Figure 2).¹² These so-called Wadjak skulls are variously reported as from nearby river gravels or from cave deposits many kilometres away. In any case, evolutionist Loring Brace claims that Dubois **did** make some preliminary reports about these skulls.¹³ Further doubt was raised because the fully modern femur of Dubois' Java Man was found in the following year 15 metres away from where the skull cap was located.¹⁴ Brace and Montagu in 1977 state that '*Curiously, Dubois waited until the 1920s to also reveal he had found **four more human** thigh bones in the area where his *Pithecanthropus* material had been discovered.*' (Emphasis added.)¹⁵

(Actually the Wadjak skulls were discovered in river gravels nearby, but their age has always been a matter of some dispute.)

The Turkana 'Boy', KNM-WT 15000

However, with the Leakey/Walker 1984 find of the above specimen, it became clear that there was more to *Homo erectus* than Java and Peking Man. WT 15000 consists of almost a complete skeleton (see Figure 3).¹⁶ Only the hands and feet are missing.

The resemblances between WT 15000 and the two controversial Asian *erectus* forms are clear and decisive. The Turkana Boy possessed the same heavy supraorbital ridges, the same type of receding forehead, and other cranial features as Java and Peking. With an estimated age of about 11 years old at death, and a cranial capacity (Endocranial Volume) of about 900cc, WT 15000 is plainly a human being — even in the post-cranial features. Radiodated at about 1.6 mya (million years ago), this lad stood and walked as fully erect as do humans today.^{17,18} Although the brain capacity is rather small, it is still larger than some juvenile and adult humans of today.

As most of the adult cranial capacity is reached by age 10 or 11, it is likely that the adult ECV of WT 15000 would be no more than about 1000–1050cc, which is still well within the modern human range of about 800–2000cc.¹⁹ On the same page Jue points out that a brain capacity of 1400cc applies to the Vertesszöllos *erectus* specimen which is dated at around 350kya (kiloyears ago = thousands of years). Beasley cites Broderick who re-



Figure 3. Skeleton of the Turkana 'Boy' — WT 15000, a *Homo erectus* specimen dating from 1.6 mya. This skeleton is fully human with only very minor differences from some modern humans.

ported a measurement as low as 830cc for a modern Wedda pygmy in Sri Lanka.²⁰

At a height of five feet four inches or 1.6 metres, it is likely that WT 15000 was getting close to full adult height at the time of his death — this could be anywhere between



Figure 4. Skull profile of *erectus* specimen KNM-ER 3733. This fossil human is of similar geological age to WT 15000.

five feet five inches to maybe six feet; there is no possible way to establish final height with certainty, although a figure closer to six feet is more probable. In my high school days, I had a friend of age 15 who was short — around five feet two inches, yet by age 19 he had mushroomed to six feet. At the same age, another of my school friends was about five feet five inches yet in adulthood he had gained only another two inches. One cannot always successfully extrapolate in these matters. In all vital respects WT 15000 was as human as you or I.

Another interesting *erectus* specimen is skull KNM-ER 3733 dating from about 1.7 mya. It also possesses, along with other 'ancient' *erectus* forms, much the same type of cranial morphology as did Java, Peking and WT 15000, and has an ECV of approximately 850–900cc.^{21,22} (See Figure 4.)²³ ER 3733's cranium is dolichocephalic, a feature also found in many Neanderthals, and it is thick, as are most *erectus* and Neanderthal specimens. The four *erectus* specimens so far mentioned are the main subject of this paper. According to Lubenow, the entire ECV range of known *erectus* forms runs from 700cc for a Javan infant to 1200cc — the largest Peking skull.²⁴ However, the capacity of the previously-mentioned Vertesszöllos fragment from Hungary and dated at about 350,000ya, is estimated at about 1400cc, which is high for an *erectus* specimen.²⁵

The finding of ER 3733 and WT 15000 therefore appears to strongly reinforce the validity of Java and Peking Man. The clear similarities shared by all four (where skeletal and cranial material is available), render untenable any claims that the two Asian specimens are nothing more than exceptionally large apes. Further, their affinities with both archaic *sapiens* and Neanderthal *sapiens* are so strong that it can hardly be denied that all are closely related human beings.

The question of course is — are *erectus* forms proof

of an evolutionary progression from the apes, or are they simply temporal, regional, climatic, dietary or pathological variants of human beings?

DISCUSSION

Naturally, one of the most important questions is that of time. If the standard geological time-scale is correct, then the very slight changes in *erectus* morphology over a period of 1.3 million years of existence may carry a little more weight. Yet we must also remember that this type had displayed a remarkable degree of structural stasis over the whole period from c. 1.7mya to about 350kya. The morphology of the earliest specimens such as WT 15000 differs insignificantly from the much later specimens such as the Peking and Javan examples, the only significant difference being restricted to the endocranial volume. At full adulthood, the Turkana Boy would have possessed a capacity of about 1000–1050cc, compared to later Chinese examples which were as high as 1200cc.²⁶

According to Molnar, the modern human range runs from about 700cc to 2200cc,²⁷ and this puts **every adult** *erectus* specimen comfortably into the range of modern humans, and this range also covers every adult example of archaic *sapiens*, Neanderthal, and Cro-Magnon Man.

Writing in 1985, Pellegrino conceded that the differences between *H. erectus* and modern man are merely superficial.²⁸ On the same page he even discusses the probability that *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens* are **one and the same species**.

Now obviously if the distinctions between *erectus* and modern humans are merely superficial as Pellegrino admitted, then the differences between the earliest and the latest *erectus* specimens, and between *erectus* and archaic and Neanderthal *sapiens* are **even more superficial**; that is, there is a great probability that all *erectus*, Neanderthal and *H. sapiens* are closely related, with genetic, dietary, climatic, and other environmental diversity in evidence.

As Beasley²⁹ and Lubenow³⁰ have recently published excellent papers on the question of the archaic *H. sapiens*, it is not my intention to go into that question in any great detail.

There are literally thousands of hominid fossils in existence and of these, over 300 are classified as either Neanderthal or *erectus*.³¹ We have a large enough sample to be certain about the accuracy of the diagnostic features of all groups. Admittedly taxonomic names count for less than the actual morphological structures of the various human races, past and present; but from an evolutionary viewpoint the small degree of change in *erectus* populations over an alleged period of one and a quarter million years must be disappointing, especially if the cranial capacities of the earliest and latest examples all lie **within** the modern range of humans. Pellegrino wrote in 1985 — '(Between the first and the last *erectus* specimens), there are



Figure 5. Outline of a Kow Swamp skull dating from very recent time — less than 15,000 years ago. The affinities with very early *erectus* specimens are obvious — only in brain capacity is there any significant distinction.

no major morphological excursions; merely a thicker brow ridge here, a subtle variation of tooth structure there, and not much else. It looks as if a substantial stretch of human evolution was characterized not by change, but by stasis.' (Emphasis added).³²

In actual fact, there are some examples of *erectus* which display quite a large ECV, such as Vertesszöllos.³³ To make matters even more interesting, there are human skulls in Australia, dated as modern, which exhibit clear and unambiguous *erectus* features. Found in Victoria (Kow Swamp), and New South Wales (Willandra Lakes, Mungo), several of these Australian aboriginal remains have fully modern human-sized brains of around 1250cc, yet they all possess the heavy supraorbital tori, flattish receding foreheads, prognathic faces, and large jaws so typical of the earliest and the latest *erectus* specimens.

These skulls are dated from less than 15,000 years to around 35,000 years BP.³⁴ Attwood and Edwards found it — '*... a conundrum*' that the Kow Swamp people with their *more-erectus* features lived **later** than the Lake Mungo people of New South Wales which were more 'modern' in appearance, and which date from around 35,000 BP.³⁵ (See Figure 5.)³⁶

Evolutionists Groves and Thorne have had a heated argument about the Kow Swamp puzzle,³⁷ but neither seems to come up with a real answer as to how an *erectus* form persisted so late in time, and according to Chris Stringer, the presence of *erectus* forms in Australia — '*... is especially perplexing, because it seems to contradict the global trend toward a more gracile skull*'.³⁸ This therefore contradicts the standard paradigm because very 'modern' human fossils are well known back to and beyond c. 100,000 BP.³⁹ The Australian Cossack skull, mandible and limb fragments which are dated at only 13,000 years or less, is another example of a *sapiens/erectus* of modern

day. The widely distributed Australian fossils include an extremely robust individual, Willandra Lakes hominid 50, which is so 'primitive' that Thorne says, '. . . this skull is so robust it makes the Kow Swamp ones look gracile!'⁴⁰ On the same page Flood acknowledges that all of these robust or 'primitive' people are definitely *Homo sapiens*, despite their possession of so many archaic features. (See also Lubenow.⁴¹)

How do evolutionist authorities reconcile the presence in Australia of both modern *sapiens* types and *erectus* types all within the last 35,000 years? One explanation given is that the *erectus* fossils are only late-surviving relicts of *H. erectus*, but this seems very doubtful seeing that *erectus* elsewhere in the world is supposed to have died out around 300kya. That is a long time in which no change was evident except for the larger brain size of Kow Swamp and Cossack. Rhys-Jones believes that this '. . . extraordinary situation' is due to Kow Swamp people being a — '. . . relict group of the original occupants of Australia . . .'⁴² Thorne believes the two distinct Australian groups ('modern' Mungo and 'primitive' Kow Swamp) had separate ancestries — one from Java and the other from ancient China.⁴³

Whatever explanation is offered, the stubborn fact remains that these *erectus* traits have persisted so long, which seems to conflict with the alleged global tendency to more gracile forms. In addition, Lubenow points out that there are 106 fossil individuals with *erectus* morphology which are dated by authorities **more recently** than 300kya, and of these at least 62 date as recent as 12,000 BP, including Cossack, Kow Swamp and Solo Man from Java.⁴⁴

Because of the alleged time factor, all these *erectus*-like individuals are obviously classified as *Homo sapiens*. Lubenow lists 16 *erectus* characteristics, and almost all, including brain size, are found in the above individuals. As he says, '... (erectus) is truly a man for all seasons.'⁴⁵ If these fossils dated from say 300kya, they would undoubtedly be assigned to the taxon *Homo erectus*.

On the other hand, if creationists are right in believing that earth has only a short history (measured in millennia, rather than millions of years), then there would be no argument — all forms of *Homo* (except the phantom-like *H. habilis*), would form just a single contemporary species.

The growing creationist (and evolutionist) view is gathering strength — that *H. erectus* and **all** *H. sapiens* forms should be considered not as separate species but as a single human species encompassing a range of genetic and phenotypic diversity. In the creationist view there was no evolution from the apes,⁴⁶⁻⁴⁸ nor was there any phylogenetic 'ascent' from an inferior type of human to a more advanced type.

There are a number of possible, even probable, non-evolutionary explanations for this diversity in the human species, and these are succinctly outlined in the works of Lubenow and Beasley.^{49,50}

Also, Custance has argued convincingly that the so-

called 'primitive' *erectus* and Neanderthal features are almost entirely due to the functioning of the jaw mechanism which would affect the size and shape of brow ridges, the forehead and the zygomatic arch.⁵¹ On page 183 Custance finds that the 'primitive' facial and skull features have nothing to do with evolution, but are due to the eating of uncooked or partially-cooked foods, especially in childhood, thus strengthening the jaw mechanism, causing it to become more massive in structure, and this process deforms the skull by depressing the forehead, making the brow ridges more prominent, and forces outwards the zygomatic arch, thus accentuating the cheek bones. If these people also chewed hides and skins of animals for softening, this would also have had a similar effect. This effect is increased by the tugging of flesh from the bones, and might be particularly pronounced when the diet, especially of juveniles, is lacking in bone-hardening substances such as calcium. By mid-adolescence these features then would become 'set in concrete' as adult characters.

Custance cites known examples, and points out that such authorities as Hooten, Howells, Hrdlicka and others were well aware of this.⁵² Thus, such a process, occurring in individuals, could well account for many *erectus* and Neanderthal features. Custance's works should be compulsory reading for all anthropologists, whether creationist or evolutionist.

ORIGINS

Over the years it has been generally assumed that *A. afarensis* gave rise to *A. africanus* and/or *Homo habilis*, which in turn evolved into *H. erectus*. About 300–400kya it is then believed that archaic *sapiens* forms arose from an *erectus* population (see Figure 6).⁵³

All 'archaic' forms display varying degrees of facial prognathism, brow ridges and brain capacity. The three best-known examples are Swanscombe (England), Steinheim (Germany) and Broken Hill (Rhodesian Man, Africa). All three also possessed flattish foreheads and ECV's in the 1200–1300cc range. This raises questions about the origin of Neanderthals and modern man which evolutionist authorities have so far been unable to satisfactorily solve. The matter of the origin of the archaic *sapiens* themselves is also unresolved. The modern Omo specimens were found close together and have identical ages; yet Omo II has noticeable *erectus* features, while Omo I is as modern as people of today. Wood says that if the two were found in separate locations they would have been put in different groups. This demonstrates the large range of variability in a contemporary human population.⁵⁴

The fact that these forms arose well before the first Neanderthals, although many of them were allegedly more 'progressive' than these, is a widely-debated problem, as is the fact that the more 'progressive' Neanderthals with a steeper forehead appear in the evolutionary fossil record before the classic or more 'primitive' European Neander-

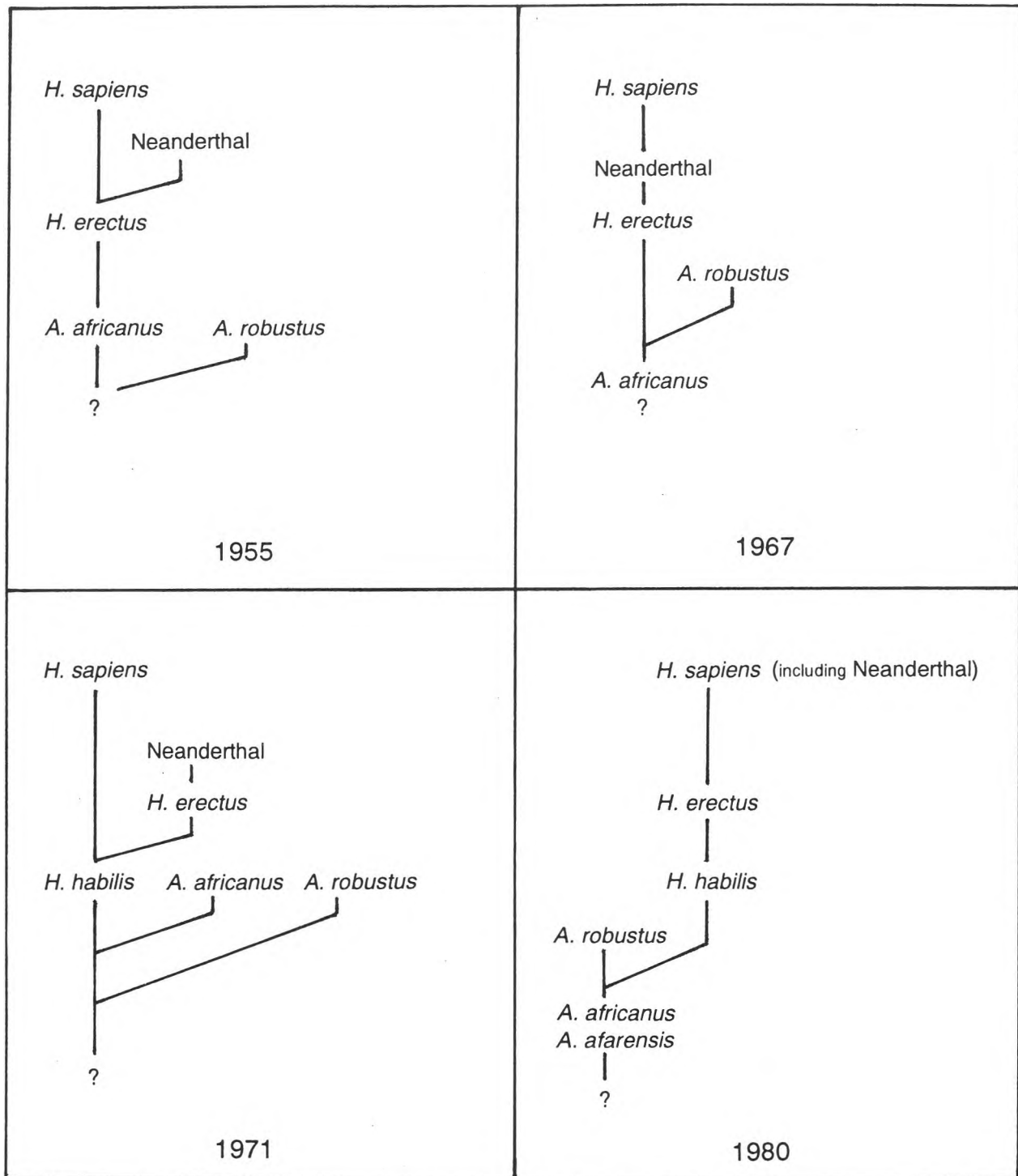


Figure 6. The evolution of human phylogeny since 1955. The 1980 model is far from being unanimously approved by various authorities. The Black Skull and OH 62 discoveries in the mid-1980s have further confused the alleged human line — see text.

thal forms, thus indicating that the former did not evolve from the latter as the morphology might otherwise suggest.

The patterns differ according to continent. The earliest archaic sapiens appear in Europe (Germany and Greece)

around 600–700kya (Petralona and Mauer, Heidelberg), and around 350kya in France (Arago 21) and Germany (Steinheim). The earliest African archaic forms are Ndufu, Tanzania (at about 450kya) and Saldanha, South Africa (at about 300kya). The Swanscombe female archaic skull

from England dates from about 300 kya. All of these bear *erectus*-type as well as more modern-type cranial features.

There are no unambiguous archaic *sapiens* in Asia but two recently-discovered skulls from China seem to have the flattened *erectus*-type foreheads, yet their ECV's are apparently close to the modern human average and their faces are flatter than the usual *erectus* specimens. The dating is a little uncertain but the generally agreed date is around 250–300kya. This date and the dolichocephalic configuration (narrow and oblong viewed from the top) of the skulls has led researchers to classify them both as *H. erectus*.^{55–57}

Bunney reported in 1986 that a human skeleton dating from c.280kya in China antedates an *erectus* skull from Zhoukoudian (the Peking Man site) near Beijing by 50,000 years. The earlier skull is typical *erectus* in its morphology, yet has a rounded occiput and a brain case of about 1390cc. Authorities are thus in a fix — the date says *H. erectus*, but the brain size is modern *Homo sapiens*.⁵⁸ The Vertesszöllos *erectus* from Hungary is a very similar case.

Lubenow gives a pen-picture of the main archaic *sapiens* diagnostics:—

- (a) Low, sloping forehead,
- (b) Cranial capacity from 1100–1300c,
- (c) Heavy supraorbital ridges,
- (d) Facial prognathism, and
- (e) Modern post-cranial skeleton.⁵⁹

He considers that by 'making up' this category called 'archaic *sapiens*', evolutionists wish to portray them as transitionals between *erectus* and Neanderthals and modern man. It is not my belief that they intend to deceive at all; this taxon could be said to represent a convenient clas-

sification for the purposes of discussion and reference, even though the overall differences are so slight. These specimens do certainly pose problems for evolutionary theory but the mix of modern and *erectus* characters is real enough. The main conundrum appears to be how and why so many advanced or derived characters are present so long before either Neanderthals or modern humans appear in the fossil record, and Lubenow is correct in attacking the picture by referring to the dates.⁶⁰ Also, why should Neanderthal forms of less than 100,000 years ago display so many 'primitive' features if it was merely a matter of straightforward progression from *erectus* to archaics and Neanderthal?

Until recently there has been little sign of Neanderthals much before about 120kya in evolutionary time, yet during the alleged period from 90,000–35,000 years BP, they undoubtedly were contemporaneous with modern men and women. The two sub-species are both found in Würm glacial deposits of the Upper Pleistocene coexisting in caves in Palestine (Skh I, Qafzeh, Tabun, Kebara), for up to 40,000 years of geological time.⁶¹ Late reports have been published which alter the picture. Richards reports from Madrid that a cave in Spain (Sierra de Atapuerca) has yielded a number of Neanderthal finds. He notes that despite these skulls being much older than any previous finds, they are indisputably Neanderthals. The finds date from well beyond 300,000 years ago — a time when Neanderthals were simply not thought to have existed — and the degree of variability in this single group of fossils, is a surprise to palaeontologists. The presence of modern features in this cave group so early, and so long before the classic type appeared only adds to the puzzle.⁶²

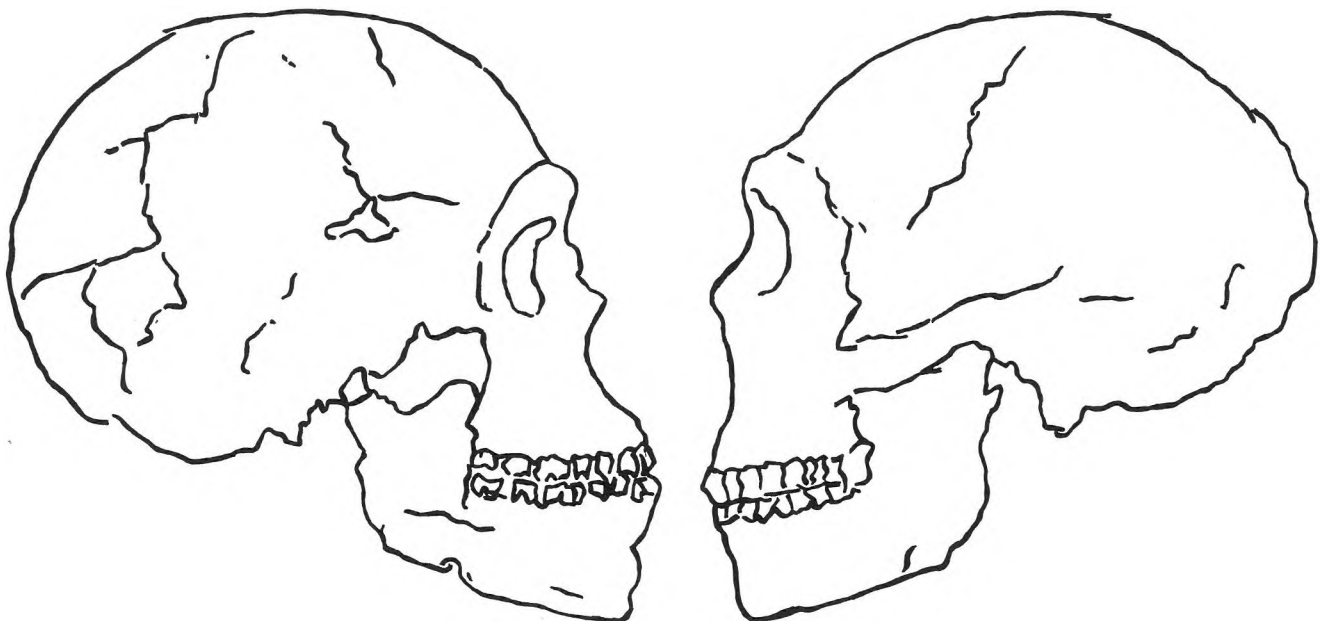


Figure 7. Human specimens from Qafzeh (left) and Tabun. These examples lived contemporaneously less than 100kya, yet the robust Tabun skull (right) features typical Neanderthal characters such as the occipital 'bun'. Both had brains as large as those of people alive today.

Another report is by Dorozynski in *Science*, where it is stated that some of the skeletal features at Altamura in Italy vary enough to argue they must have belonged to at least two species, one of which led to Neanderthals, while the other led to *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Yet because they all belong to one group, others claim that these variations are relatively insignificant, and the hominids all belong to one lineage.⁶³

A skull from Tabun is classic Neanderthal, yet in nearby Skh I a number of skulls are intermediate between classic Neanderthals and modern humans. According to Waechter, the Skh I population may be the hybrids of Neanderthals and true modern *sapiens* who were already in existence.⁶⁴ A gracile Qafzeh skull is quite modern with a high forehead and short braincase, whereas a Tabun skull nearby is classic Neanderthal with occipital bun; yet both had the brain capacity of fully modern humans.⁶⁵ (See Figure 7.)⁶⁶ While these questions pose problems for strict evolutionary progression, much of the difficulty lies in the assumption of evolution in the first place.

Lubenow's book is the best general creationist expose of human evolution so far published, although I disagree strongly with his willingness to accept the KNM-ER 1470 skull (classified as *Homo habilis*) as probably human. This skull has far too many australopithecine features to be anything else than a large-brained *africanus*. In addition, a new reconstruction has recently been made, and an examination of the meatus angle (the pitch of the face onto the cranium) for example, shows the following: common chimpanzee 49°, *A. africanus* 47–53°, *P. boisei* 53°, and *H. habilis* (including KNM-ER 1470) 52–53°. The *erectus* skull ER 3733 shows a marked jump up to 66°, indicating that all the previous ancestors had ape-faces and no progression is seen through the australopithecines and 'habilis'. The angle of two habiline specimens is **exactly the same** as that of *africanus* and *boisei*. The craniofacial index (facial area versus cranial area) of all 'habilines', including 1470 falls within the australopithecine range and outside the human range including *erectus*.^{67,68}

As for our putative ape-man 'ancestor' *A. afarensis*, Peter Schmid of Zurich's Anthropological Institute recently revealed his surprise when he first examined Lucy's skeleton (as cited by Leakey and Lewin in **Origins Reconsidered**). In addition to all her other ape features, it now turns out that even her rib-cage is pure ape. Schmid then turned his attention to Lucy's entire upper body — *'The shoulders were high, and, combined with the funnel-shaped chest would have made arm swinging improbable in the human sense The abdomen was potbellied, and there was no waist In other words, Lucy and other australopithecines were bipedal, but they weren't humans, at least in their ability to run.'*⁶⁹ On pages 194–196 of **Origins Reconsidered** we find that Aiello in London also found discrepancies — *'No doubt about it,'* she states. *'Australopithecines are like apes, and the Homo group are like humans. Something major*

occurred when Homo evolved ...' On page 195 a diagram shows clearly some of the major differences between australopithecines and humans. The reference to bipedality can be taken with a grain of salt because some previous studies have shown that it is highly likely that if Lucy did walk upright on occasions it was in the same manner as modern-day chimpanzees.⁷⁰ Incidentally, computerized tomography carried out by Conroy and Vannier of the University of Washington confirms that the teeth of the Taung child (*A. africanus*) were developing in a distinctly ape-like manner.⁷¹

Bromage points out that the first reconstruction of ER 1470 was erroneous by giving it a flat face, but — *'... recent studies of anatomical relationships show that in life the face must have jutted out considerably, creating an ape-like aspect, rather like the faces of Australopithecus.'*⁷² This finding is one of a number which suggest that the species *Homo habilis* never existed. In reality all 'habiline' forms display unmistakable australopithecine traits.

Lubenow's discussion of the australopithecine, habiline, *erectus* and Neanderthal specimens is an excellent exposition of the creationist view that the first are extinct chimp- or gorilla-like forms, and the 'habilines' are nothing more than variants of australopithecines, while *erectus*/Neanderthal/modern man are simply varieties of a single human species.

NEANDERTHALS — SO-CALLED

The scientific treatment of Neanderthals over most of the past century has been nothing short of scandalous. Marcellin Boule, the prominent French palaeontologist of the early 20th century, produced a very faulty reconstruction and description of a Neanderthal — an error which was to persist until after World War II.⁷³

Lubenow cites a number of authorities who finally have acknowledged the full humanity of Neanderthal people,⁷⁴ and he also claims that a Neanderthal skull has been recovered in Israel (Amud 1), which appears to date at only about 6,000 years old, although this date is controversial, as a fission-tracks test has produced an age of 28kya.⁷⁵ On pages 75–77, Lubenow cites evolutionists Klein, Geist, Angel and Wright who have all produced non-evolutionary theories which explain Neanderthal features and which are very similar to Custance's hypothesis mentioned earlier.⁷⁶ (It appears that what evolutionists see as 'primitive' or ape-like features are nothing more than climatic, dietary or other pathological effects on individuals of a population, allowing also for some degree of racial or genetic variation. These explanations can account for all four groups — *erectus*, archaic, Neanderthal and the 'modern' *erectus* forms such as Kow Swamp.)

The question of the archaic *sapiens* from a creationist viewpoint has been dealt with superbly by Beasley,⁷⁷ who offers a cogent, reasonable and well-researched case that

the archaic *sapiens* are our post-Flood ancestors with variable morphological features due to such influences as prolongation of skeletal maturation and greater longevity potential; environmental; and dietary/pathological pressures within a post-Deluge framework. Beasley's paper is a landmark in creationist research on this subject, and every Christian should possess a copy with which to question materialist-minded educators.

TRENDS IN SECULAR LITERATURE

The elevation of Neanderthal man to his rightful and proper place as a full human being was recently endorsed whole-heartedly by Rensberger. In a detailed summary, this well-known evolutionist has come to the only conclusion possible — that far from being a mixture of brute and human, Neanderthals were as human as you and I, and he is very critical of the earlier misguided and inexcusable approach which denigrated them as sub-human. Rensberger's work should be a salutary lesson for those who are inclined to accept scientific pronouncements uncritically as being gospel truth.⁷⁸

With respect to *Homo erectus*, movement in evolutionary circles to upgrade his status is also gathering momentum. Peter Andrews discusses the Middle Pleistocene specimens from Java and China, and earlier Pleistocene forms ER 3733 and 3883 from Africa, and the later European and African forms such as Arago, Heidelberg and Broken Hill (Rhodesian Man).⁷⁹ He claims the African specimens may represent different species or a separate lineage from Asian forms giving rise to separate populations of *H. sapiens* in the later Pleistocene — that is, Solo Man from Java may be directly ancestral to the controversial Kow Swamp and Cossack *erectus/sapiens* populations in Australia about 6,000–13,000 years ago. In Europe he speculates that the Neanderthal forms may be ancestral to **modern man**, and finally in Africa, a line from Ternifine through Broken Hill and Omo. (Omo I is virtually identical to modern man and dates from c.115–130kya).⁸⁰

If so, then *H. sapiens* is either polyphyletic (three independent lineages), or evolved gradually on a broad geographical front between 400–200kya. The implication is clear — ‘. . . that *H. sapiens* and *H. erectus* are **one and the same species** which is changing gradually through time.’ (Emphasis added.)⁸¹ I agree that they are one and the same species — exhibiting variability in the early centuries after the Flood.

On page 25 Andrews also discusses the possibility that *Homo sapiens* evolved only once in Africa and spread into Europe twice, once giving rise to the Neanderthals, and later via Skuhl and Qafzeh populations, to *Homo sapiens* in Europe. Yet on the same page he says — ‘. . . it has been demonstrated that the European hominid sequence could be viewed as a **single lineage** . . . culminating in the classic Neanderthals of the last ice age.’ (Emphasis

added.)

To the informed creationist, most of this is meaningless and irrelevant. The morphological differences within **all** *erectus* specimens and between *erectus*, Neanderthal, and **all** *Homo sapiens* are so small that there is not the slightest reason to doubt that every form should be classified in a single human species, as we have already seen advocated.

It is not generally known to the lay-person that there are a number of modern humans who display the same *erectus*/Neanderthal features in addition to the Kow Swamp and Cossack examples. Taylor has published a photo of an Indian woman who clearly exhibits very large supraorbital tori.⁸² On the next page he gives another example of a living human who was closely examined in the Philippines in 1908. The man had massive brow ridges, a poorly defined chin, and a large lower jaw. I personally have seen and conversed with two East European immigrants where very large brow ridges and a flattened forehead were clearly visible, yet both, who incidentally were squat and heavily built, were normal individuals.

The human skull is very plastic in early childhood and I believe Custance's theory of dietary/climatic effects may account for some *erectus*/Neanderthal features very well, while racial/genetic variability is also to be considered. Evolution from animal ancestors is not involved.

It used to be popular years ago to stress the distinctions between Neanderthal Mousterian tools and those of early modern man, but Wood⁸³ admits that recent evidence indicates that these differences are not at all clear cut. Mousterian tools are found with **modern** skulls at Jebel Irhoud and it is therefore misleading to associate Mousterian tools **solely** with Neanderthal Man.⁸⁴ It is also clear that not all *erectus*/Neanderthal specimens possessed all of these so-called primitive features, such as the Teshik-Tash 10-year-old and the Krapina 'A' juvenile. These were both youngsters but the 18 year-old youth Ehringsdorf 'H' fossil possessed both a steep forehead and a fairly high cranial vault, a moderate torus and thinner bones.⁸⁵ Two Neanderthal mandibles, Ehringsdorf 'F' and 'G', an adult and a juvenile, had well-developed chins.⁸⁶ In view of these by-no-means-rare cases, any evolutionary 'progression' simply does not fit the bill.

As Beasley points out,⁸⁷ a lack of dietary vitamin D alone can account for some, but not necessarily all of the so-called 'primitive' features of *Homo erectus* and Neanderthal Man. Beasley also notes that some primitive features are **still** to be found in various extant racial groups.⁸⁸

Wolpoff and his colleagues of the University of Michigan, because they believe the five main human races — Negroid, Caucasoids, Mongoloids, Australian aborigines and southern African bushmen — began their evolutionary divergence well before becoming anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*, totally reject the 'out of Africa' hypothesis, whereby all modern people owe their ancestry to Africa only — the Noah's Ark theory.⁸⁹

Wolpoff is supported by Alan Thorne of the Australian National University.⁹⁰ According to Shipman, Wolpoff and others are now — ‘... proposing nothing less than the **complete abolition** of *Homo erectus* on the grounds that the species is **insufficiently distinct** from *Homo sapiens*. **All fossil specimens of *Homo erectus* and archaic *Homo sapiens* (including *Neanderthals*), ... should be reclassified into a **single species**, *Homo sapiens*, that is, subdivided only into races.’ (Emphasis added throughout.)⁹¹**

Under the Wolpoff/Thorne scheme the new definition of *Homo sapiens* would include all humans with brain sizes from 850–2000+cc. Of course this would totally exclude the australopithecines and the phantom ‘*habilis*’ — a position which creationists would thoroughly endorse. Wolpoff and Thorne argue (correctly) that *H. habilis* is too morphologically **distinct** from both *erectus* and *sapiens* and therefore should be excluded from the genus *Homo*.⁹² John Reader has also outlined many of the problems facing ‘*habilis*’, and concludes — ‘... more than twenty years of accumulating evidence and discussion have left *Homo habilis* more insecure than it ever was.’⁹³ Creationists again would agree because it seems obvious that ‘*habilis*’ is only an australopithecine ape. Wolpoff and Thorne cannot find **any** consistent anatomical markers which separate *erectus* from *sapiens*. They point to the mix of *sapiens* and *erectus* features in the two recently discovered Chinese fossil skulls which virtually proves that *erectus* and *sapiens* are members of the **same species** and the taxon *Homo erectus* should be laid to rest.⁹⁴

Other authorities such as Rightmire disagree, claiming that the minor distinctions which Wolpoff *et al.* consider as merely racial variations, are sufficient to keep sepa-

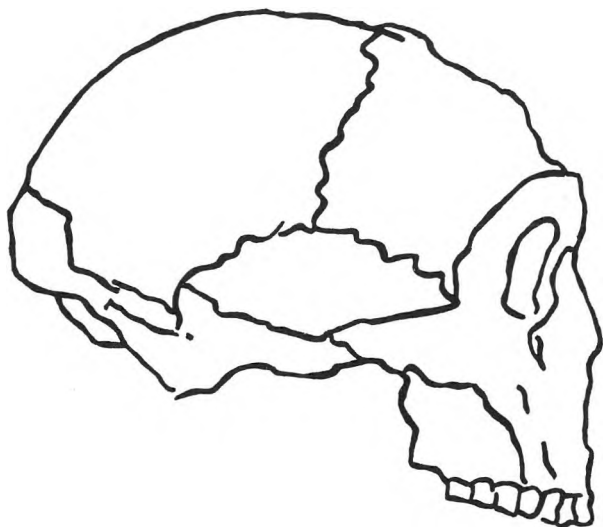


Figure 8. Skull outline of a ‘progressive’ Neanderthal. Authorities find it paradoxical that the more ‘primitive’ or classic forms appear in the fossil record before the more modern, ‘progressive’ types such as above.

rate species classifications.⁹⁵ On these same pages, Shipman points out the difficulties in identifying meaningful points for measuring skull vault thickness for example. The variation, individual to individual, is considerable and this is exactly one of the points which I am attempting to make — ‘evolution’ has nothing to do with it. The differences between the various forms of archaic *Homo sapiens* relates, at least in part, to a combination of climatic, dietary, maturational and longevity-driven factors. In a short article in 1990, Maslen cites Dr Thorne as saying —

‘... the fossil record reveals that the features possessed by the early hominids who lived in Europe, Asia and Africa, have exactly the same sort of range as those we see in modern people.’⁹⁶

I have made no attempt to enter the molecular debate and the Noah’s Ark controversy. This subject has been covered by creationist authorities.^{97,98} Michael Denton, a non-creationist, has already indicated the non-reliability of the molecular clock.⁹⁹

Dr Carl Wieland has drawn attention to articles published in Germany, and sent to Australia in November 1992. According to these reports a well preserved *erectus*-type skull has been uncovered in a gravel pit near Reilingen. Although originally discovered in 1978 its significance was only realized several years later. If the dating is correct, this *erectus* specimen must have coexisted with modern (quasi-archaic) *sapiens*; the age corresponds with that of Steinheim and Swanscombe. Another article from **Die Welt** of September 27, 1986 refers to this ‘*Homo erectus reilingensis*’ and another *erectus* fossil from Bilzingsleben allegedly dating from about 300kya, and there is evidence of stone tools and implements made out of elephant bone and antlers. The details of the Reilingen skull portions indicate a mix of *erectus* and more modern features, thus confirming the hypothesis set forth in this paper.¹⁰⁰

SUMMARY

In a previous article¹⁰¹ I demonstrated the lack of suitable primitive ancestors for the australopithecines, for ‘*habilis*’ and for *Homo erectus*. In this paper I hope to have shown that the *erectus*-archaic-Neanderthal-modern man ‘chain’ is **non-evolutionary**; that is, that all these forms are simply varieties of human beings (see Figure 8).¹⁰² The question of time is irrelevant — it makes no difference whether the time involved is millions of years or only a few thousand. The morphological distinctions are very much insufficient to warrant placing these forms in separate categories which only serves the purpose of evolution — a theory to which so many scientists are committed as dogma. Once evolution is accepted as dogma, all evidence is interpreted in a subjective, rather than objective, manner. Creationists will continue to expose the weaknesses in the theory and to encourage further research and study into the origins of man. It is not simply a matter of blind adherence to religion; the evidence is available to

all who honestly wish to study and evaluate it.

The actual facts of the fossil record, that is the fossil materials themselves as against evolutionary **interpretations** of these materials, show indisputably that contrary to expectation the 'earliest' *erectus* skeleton (WT 15000 or the Turkana 'Boy') proves by its very existence that this human being was large like modern humans, and not small and ape-like. On the other hand fossil OH 62 proves that '*habilis*', far from being Homo-like, was small and ape-like - these cases were the very opposite of what evolution theory predicted and expected.¹⁰³ Even though the brain size of WT 15000 was smaller than **most** modern humans, it was still **larger** than quite a few people living today.

As for time and geology, all known facts are subject to somebody's interpretation. Some are reasonable, others are not. It is reasonable for example to interpret an inferior rock layer as having been deposited earlier in time than the layer above, but when it comes to the question of how much earlier all estimates must necessarily be based on a number of assumptions, and this also applies to all radiometric and geological dating methods. The estimates made may be correct, partially correct, or totally wrong, and therefore almost all of geology, time and fossils are exposed to subjectivity, no matter how carefully the experts tackle their tasks. Once evolution is accepted as dogma all evidence is interpreted in that light.

Nobody can be totally certain by scientific methods alone, as to the reason why fossils are often found in certain patterns — was it by natural causes of slow deposition over long time periods as life-forms evolved, or by equally natural causes over a short time-frame such as by a global flood (and/or subsequent residual catastrophes) depositing the life-forms which were biogeographically zoned? No scientist was there to observe what happened, but others (Noah and his family) were eye-witnesses and have given us an account of the Flood.^{104,105}

Lay-persons reading popular science books, magazines or newspaper articles will assume that the picture of human evolution presented therein is a depiction of established fact. This view is totally erroneous — the scientists have a scanty, but in places reasonable, selection of past life-forms — 50 or 60 pages of a book of **unknown** length, and if (as usual) they are **already** believers in evolution, these representatives of past life will inevitably **always** be interpreted in the light of the theory.

Other alternatives such as presented here and in various creationist works are equally valid, but it is emphasized that neither creation nor evolution can be scientifically proven.

After careful study of hundreds of scientific descriptions, and photographs of scores of fossil humans, it is clear to me that all shades of intergrading exist between 'ancient' *erectus* and modern humans, but the chronological patterns of appearance, even using the evolutionists' own dating methods, do not match the predictions of the theory.

In view of the clear-cut and unmistakable morphological gap between apes and humans, I believe that human fossil study provides strong circumstantial evidence in favour of the theistic view of origins as outlined in the early chapters of the book of Genesis, as against the current view that random or chance genetic accidents were responsible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The drawings on which the figures are based were prepared by my son Gary Mehlert.

REFERENCES

- Whitcomb, J. and Morris, H., 1961. The Genesis Flood, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Mehlert, A. W., 1992. A review of the present status of some alleged early hominids. CEN Tech. J., 6(1):10–41.
- Gish, D. T., 1985. Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record, Creation-Life Publishers, El Cajon, California, pp. 140–180.
- Lubenow, M., 1992. Bones of Contention, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 50–57, 157–168, 172–179.
- Beasley, G. J., 1990. Pre-Flood giantism: a key to the interpretation of fossil hominids and hominoids. EN Tech. J., 4:5–55.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 127.
- Cherfas, J. and Gribbin, J., 1981. Descent of man or ascent of ape? New Scientist, 91(1269):594–595.
- Gish, Ref. 3, pp. 180–203.
- Bowden, M., 1977. Ape-Man: Fact or Fallacy? Sovereign Publications, Bromley, Kent, pp. 78–148.
- Johnson, W., 1982. The Crumbling Theory of Evolution, Queensland Binding Service, Brisbane, pp 40–45.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 135.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 91.
- Fezer, K D., 1993. Creation's incredible witness: Duane T. Gish, Ph.D. Creation/Evolution, 33:5–21 (p. 12).
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 86.
- Brace, C. L. and Montagu, A., 1977. Human Evolution, Second Edition, Chicago University Press, pp. 204–205.
- Leakey, R. and Walker, A., 1985. *Homo erectus* unearthed. National Geographic, 168(5):624–629.
- Leakey, R. and Lewin, R., 1992. Origins Reconsidered, Abacus Books, London, pp. 58–64.
- Leakey and Walker, Ref. 16, pp. 624–629.
- Jue, D. S., 1990. Cranial capacity and endocranial casts. EN Tech. J., 4:56–65.
- Broderick, A. H., 1971. Man and His Ancestors, Hutchinson and Co., London, p. 84.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 123, 128.
- Beasley, G. J., 1992. Pre-Flood giantism: a key to the interpretation of fossil hominids and hominoids. Unpublished manuscript (original version), p. 71.
- Beasley, Ref. 22, p. 71.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 138.
- Jue, Ref. 19, p. 57.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 138.
- Molnar, S., 1975. Races, Types and Ethnic Groups, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, p. 57.
- Pellegrino, C. R., 1985. Time-Gate, Hurling Backward Through Time, TAB Books, Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, p. 120.
- Beasley, G. J., 1992. A possible creationist explanation of archaic fossil human remains. CEN Tech. J., 6(2):138–167.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 78–85.
- Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 29–30.
- Pellegrino, Ref. 28, p. 124.
- Campbell, B. G., 1988. Humankind Emerging, Fifth Edition, Time-

- Life Books, Harper Collins, New York, pp. 287–288.
34. Attwood, A., and Edwards, K., 1987. Footprints of early man. *Time Australia*, 2(13):28–41 (supplementary map).
 35. Attwood and Edwards, Ref. 34, p. 37.
 36. Wolpoff, M. and Thorne, A., 1991. The case against Eve. *New Scientist*, 130(1774):35.
 37. Groves, C. and Thorne, A., 1991. Brawl about Eve. *The Australian Magazine*, February 16–17, p. 28.
 38. Stringer, C., 1990. The emergence of modern humans. *Scientific American*, 263(6):74.
 39. Wood, B., 1976. *The Evolution of Early Man*, Cassell Australia, Sydney, pp. 98–100.
 40. Hood, J., 1990. *The Riches of Ancient Australia*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, p. 20.
 41. Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 133.
 42. Attwood and Edwards, Ref. 34, pp. 37–39.
 43. Attwood and Edwards, Ref. 34, pp. 37–39.
 44. Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 131–132.
 45. Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 132–133.
 46. Mehlert, Ref. 2, pp. 33–38.
 47. Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 134–143.
 48. Beasley, Ref. 5, pp. 31–55.
 49. Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 149–156.
 50. Beasley, Ref. 5, pp. 5–55.
 51. Custance A., 1975. *Genesis and early man. The Doorway Papers, Volume II.* Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 183–184, 208–211.
 52. Custance, Ref. 51, p. 184.
 53. Campbell, Ref. 33, pp. 200–201.
 54. Wood, Ref. 39, p. 99.
 55. Gibbons, A., 1992. An about-face for modern human origins. *Science*, 256:1521.
 56. Shipman, P., 1993. On the origin of races. *New Scientist*, 137(1856):36.
 57. Tianyuan, L., and Etlar, D.A., 1992. New Middle Pleistocene hominid crania from Yunxian in China. *Nature*, 357:404–407.
 58. Bunney, S., 1986. Chinese fossil could alter the course of evolution in China. *New Scientist*, 111(1520):25.
 59. Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 80.
 60. Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 78–85.
 61. Waechter, J., 1976. *Man Before History*, Elsevier International Publishing Co., Oxford, p. 64.
 62. Richards, M., 1993. Caveman shows his face. *The Courier Mail*, Brisbane, November 8, p. 9.
 63. Dorozynski, A., 1993. Possible neandertal ancestor found. *Science*, 262:991.
 64. Waechter, Ref. 61, p. 63.
 65. Bar-Yosef, O. and Vandermeersch, B., 1992. Modern humans in the Levant. *Scientific American*, 268(4):68.
 66. Bar-Yosef and Vandermeersch, Ref. 65, p. 68.
 67. Bromage, T., 1992. Faces from the past. *New Scientist*, 133(1803):32–35.
 68. Hummer, C. C., 1977. A plea for caution about skull 1470. *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, 14(3):171.
 69. Leakey and Lewin, Ref. 17, pp. 193–194.
 70. Chérifas, J., 1983. Trees have made man upright. *New Scientist*, 97:172–178.
 71. Bromage, Ref. 67, p. 33.
 72. Bromage, Ref. 67, p. 35.
 73. Campbell, Ref. 33, pp. 378–379.
 74. Lubenow, Ref. 4, pp. 61–64, 76–77.
 75. Lubenow, Ref. 4, p. 73–74.
 76. Custance, Ref. 51, pp. 183–184, 208–211.
 77. Beasley, Ref. 29, pp. 138–167.
 78. Rensberger, B., 1981. Facing the past. *Science* '81, 2(9):41–50.
 79. Andrews, P., 1984. The descent of man. *New Scientist*, 102:24–25.
 80. Wood, Ref. 39, p. 99.
 81. Andrews, Ref. 79, pp. 24–25.
 82. Taylor, I., 1987. *In the Minds of Men*, IFE Publishing Co., Toronto, p. 214.
 83. Wood, Ref. 39, p. 108.
 84. Wood, Ref. 39, p. 108.
 85. Beasley, Ref. 29, pp. 144–145.
 86. Beasley, Ref. 29, p. 145.
 87. Beasley, Ref. 29, p. 143.
 88. Beasley, Ref. 29, p. 163.
 89. Shipman, Ref. 56, p. 34.
 90. Wolpoff and Thorne, Ref. 36, pp. 33–37.
 91. Shipman, Ref. 56, p. 34.
 92. Shipman, Ref. 56, p. 36.
 93. Reader, J., 1990. *Missing Links*, Penguin Books, London, p. 189.
 94. Shipman, Ref. 56, p. 36.
 95. Shipman, Ref. 56, pp. 36–37.
 96. Maslen, G., 1990. Man or ape? *The Sunday Mail*, Brisbane, May 20, p. 11.
 97. Wieland, C., 1992. No bones about Eve. *Creation Ex Nihilo*, 13(4):20–23.
 98. Beasley, G. J., 1992. Is the African 'Eve' misconceived? *CEN Tech. J.*, 6(1):42–48.
 99. Denton, M., 1985. *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Adler and Adler, Bethesda, Maryland, pp. 233–307.
 100. Wieland, C., 1993. Personal communication.
 101. Mehlert, Ref. 2, pp. 10–41.
 102. Campbell, Ref. 33, p. 388.
 103. Reader, Ref. 93, pp. 188–189.
 104. Woodmorappe, J., 1983. A diluvial treatise on the stratigraphic separation of fossils. *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, 20(3):133–185.
 105. Whitcomb and Morris, Ref. 1.

A. W. (Bill) Mehlert has a Diploma in Theology and lives in Brisbane, Australia. He is a keen student of Flood geology and the fossil record, including the supposed fossil evidence for human evolution, and has written a number of important articles on these topics in the **Creation Research Society Quarterly** and **Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal**.