

Pitldown Man Earliest Human Being

Anthropology

Dr. Osborn in Presidential Address Presents New Theory

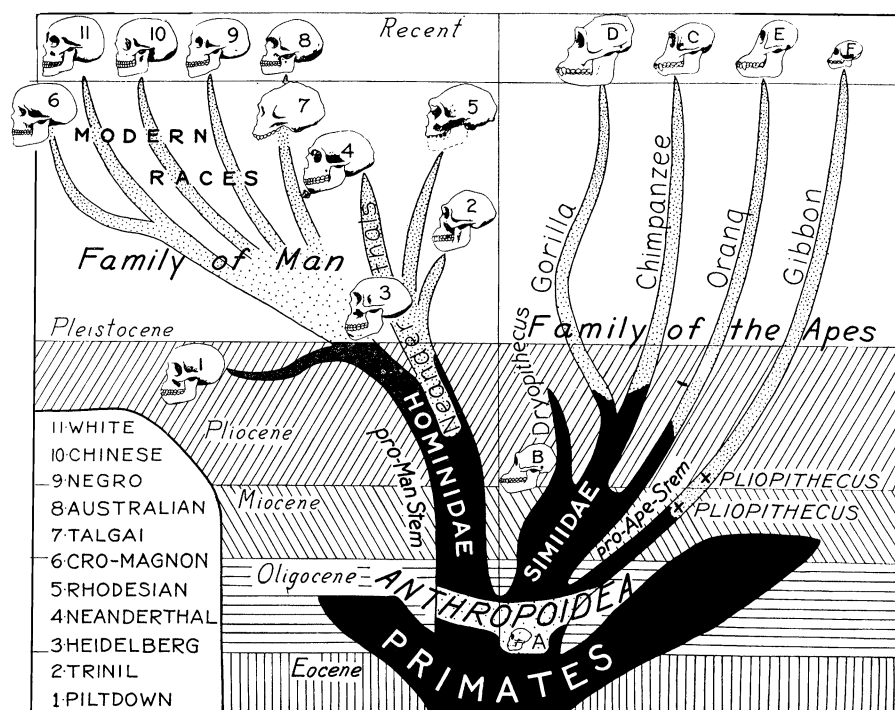
The ape-man of Darwin was read out of man's family tree and the dawn-man of Sussex, older than 1,250,000 years, was elevated to the position of man's progenitor by Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, one of America's leading scientists who spoke as retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Des Moines.

A new picture was painted by Dr. Osborn of the earliest known creature who can be called human:

His size of brain was equal to the minimum of that of the living Veddahs, Papuans and native Australians, the most primitive living men. He skillfully made implements and weapons of flint and bone and for killing animals perfected a sling-stone. He lived contemporaneously with a very primitive species of elephant whose remains are found from India to Africa to England and he hunted this beast for its flesh, bone and ivory. He had deft hands and fingers guided by an imaginative and intelligent fore-brain. He was a nomad and long and agile lower limbs were his only means of distant transportation. He was a dweller of the open plains, not of "warm, forest-clad land" as was Darwin's "hypothetical ape" human ancestor. He lived near the end of the geological period of time known as the Tertiary, in the epoch called the upper Pliocene, which was certainly more than one and a quarter million years ago.

Euanthropus dawsoni, the Pitldown dawn man, is his scientific name. This discovery and recognition of Tertiary man, in Dr. Osborn's opinion, "constitutes the goal and peak of biological discovery in the twentieth century."

The new idea of the Tertiary dawn man replaces the classic Darwin-Lamarck hypothesis of ape-man descent, Dr. Osborn said, and "carries us into a geologic antiquity hitherto undreamt of. Anthropology is forced to share with chemistry and physics entirely new notions of space and time. To my mind the human brain is the most marvelous and mysterious object in the whole universe and no geologic period



The family trees of man and apes, according to Dr. Osborn's latest theory.

seems too long to allow for its natural evolution."

While Dr. Osborn does differ with the Darwinian idea that an apelike creature, tree living, during the time of the great Ice Ages, was man's direct ancestor, his pronouncements strengthen the fundamental idea of natural evolution rather than the fundamentalist idea of a supernatural origin of man. While the roots of man's family tree are pushed deeper into the layers of geology and time, while the human race need not look upon apes and chimpanzees as such close cousins, nevertheless man and monkey are both offshoots from the same great stem of life, the primates. Dr. Osborn believes that their paths diverged in the time called Eocene, some thirty to forty million years ago.

Dr. Osborn's revision of human evolution makes the flint implements of Tertiary man found on the east coast of Anglia in 1909 by J. Reid Moir and the skull and jaw found at Pitldown, Sussex, England in 1911 by Charles Dawson, the oldest human relics. Pithecanthropus, the Trinil ape-man of Java,

is called "a case of arrested development" not, as was formerly supposed, an ancestor. It is possible that the new finds of Peking man recently reported may strengthen Dr. Osborn's contentions.

Not all scientists will accept Dr. Osborn's idea that man had arrived at so high a state of evolution over a million years ago, and that the long ice ages gave merely the finishing touches of his development. But his presentation of a new dawn man to science will stimulate discussion and research until a better idea of the past of man will rise in man's footsteps.

Any discovery of prehistoric man must be dated by the geologic strata in which his remains are found. There must be assurance that material from a later age has not been carried into the older layers of the earth. In the case of the Pitldown Man, some anthropologists believe that he lived in the second glacial epoch but that later his bones were mingled with those of animals that lived in the earlier pliocene time.

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