

Mysterious Hominoids by Francois de Sarre

The survival of various-sized hairy hominoids in the large, scarcely explored African forest may not be particularly surprising since fossil records in Ethiopia and elsewhere, are pointing out that the black continent was once inhabited by a series of human like creatures, and new species of large mammals, like the Okapi, the Mountain Gorilla and the Giant Forest Pig have recently been discovered in Africa by Zoologists.

The aim of present article is not to list the hitherto still unrecognized hominoids of Africa as they are known from the numerous eyewitness reports throughout the whole continent: The interested reader may refer to Bernard Heuvelmans' book "Les Bêtes Humaines d'Afrique" (which has still not been translated into English). I intend, in this paper to present the newest discoveries on fossil australopithecines, and to link them with the sightings of hidden hominoids in Africa for classification purposes.

Ape or Human?

In Aramis, Ethiopia, the recent discovery of the fossil of a creature that appears to be closely related to a chimpanzee, reopened the old controversy about man's origins. (Nature, 371, 1994). Australopithecus ramidus, as Tim White called it, dated from 4.5 million years ago. Some authors would have given it the generic name of Pan, but in contrast to Chimpanzees, the fossil skull presented a disposition characteristic of bipedality. The occipital hole (foramen magnum) where the spinal column enters the skull, was next to the base of the skull. In apes the hole is further back, which leads us to suppose that ramidus walked erect.

The teeth of ramidus were covered with thin enamel like those of Chimpanzees, demonstrating fructivorous habits, but the small canines look

very human-like. The articulation of the elbow suggests that *Australopithecus ramidus* could easily climb up, around, and through branches. The fossils of *Australopithecus ramidus* are accompanied by fossils of fauna indicative of a forest environment. Many authors now suggest that the bipedal, upright stand is an ancestral feature that has been lost by the apes....

Henry Gee, assistant editor of "Nature," also emphasizes: "Erect posture will thus be seen as a primitive feature that chimpanzees have lost, rather than an advanced feature that the hominids have acquired." In this way, *Australopithecus ramidus* represents a kind of 'missing link' between an early terrestrial biped and the quadruped chimpanzees of today. The theory of initial bipedalism indeed, already claimed that the different types of fossil hominoids and the various monkeys and apes are vestiges of man's ancestral line rather than his predecessors! (de Sarre, 1994). This theory is now sustained by paleontological data. The discovery of the new fossils provides powerful support for this interpretation but there are other facts which confirm this point of view.

WAS 'HOMO' HABILIS A QUADRUPED?

Skulls of *Australopithecus africanus*, "Homo" habilis and "Homo" erectus, were examined with the help of the modern technology of computer tomography scanning. The morphology of the osseous ear labyrinth gives us information on the locomotory behavior. The only species able to demonstrate modern human morphology and thus to have the ability of bipedal gait is *Homo erectus*. In contrast, the semi circular canals in the skulls of *Australopithecus* resemble those of the extant great apes.

A. africanus thus presents a locomotor repertoire combining facultative bipedalism as well as arboreal climbing. In one specimen assigned to *Homo habilis*, the canal dimensions show similarity with the canal proportions in large cercopithecoids.

The authors Fred Spoor and Bernard Wood suggest that the specimen of *habilis* that they examined (StW 53) relied less on bipedal behaviour than the

common australopithecines. *Homo habilis* may be a combination of several quite different creatures. The australopithecines were apes. They only retained a relictual bipedality, just like today's chimps. If *Homo erectus* was indeed an obligatory biped, the other hominoids of Africa, which are known only from fossils, usually had quadrupedal habits. To some observers, they appear to be apes rather than hairy humans.

DWARVES OR LITTLE FURRY MEN?

Surely Africa still harbors unknown hominoids. That is, hominoids presently undescribed by the zoologists. Many such cryptids are described as small men like the agogwe of Tanganyika reported by William Hichens in 1937. Others are naked or have a scarce pilosity. They often have a splendid mane, or at least long hair. They have bipedal gait and are about 3 feet tall. As Bernard Heuvelmans has explained, the African pygmies have downy hairs upon their bodies. Maybe smaller and hairier pygmies exist in remote parts of the deep forest?

In several of the neighboring countries where they only survive in people's memories, legends continue to surface about these small men. In other countries such as Zimbabwe, (formerly Rhodesia), they are widely mythicised and considered as goblins or other spirits. My personal opinion is that Africa's little furry men, including those resembling Australopithecines, are in fact 'Infra-Pygmies'; tiny human creatures who lived in equatorial forests, outside the areas known to be populated by man.

BIG HAIRY 'APE MEN'

Large hominoids are reported from different places, like Kenya ('Nanauner') or Zaire ('Kikomba'). They look like very pilous and muscular men. They have long hair, which sometimes hides their faces. The main difference between them and human beings is that they have no forehead at all. They are said to walk with an erect bipedal gait and sometimes they will hold a stick in one hand. They are said to be aggressive. The best identification that we can suggest would surely be *Homo erectus* or *Pithecanthropus*, rather than one of

the more robust Australopithecines such as Louis Leakey's "Zinj."

These appear, in the light of modern research to have been tree dwellers, which would make them hard distinguishable to the casual eye witness at least from a normal chimpanzee. Although Pithecanthropus (Ape men), as described by DUBOIS in 1894, is not the best piece of nomenclature for a wild, hairy man who really has nothing to do with the apes, it should ideally replace the generic name Homo that should be reserved for the round skulled humans of the sapiens type. I would therefore identify the larger unrecognized hominoids of Africa with surviving forms of Pithecanthropus erectus, originally a savannah form, who has recently taken refuge in the rain or mountain forest, which is usually inaccessible for men. The survival of living specimens the pithecanthropus into the present day would not be so surprising. Young fossil remains are attributed to this species; the famous fossil of the "Rhodesian Man of Broken Hills" is considered to be no more than 13,000 years old. The descriptions of the large hominoids of Africa correspond well with the way that we suspect that Pithecanthropus lived and behaved. The only difference being that the fossils do not show the typical long hair reported from the living specimens, because hair does not have the ability to form fossils.

REFERENCES

GEE Henry (1995): 'Uprooting the human family tree' NATURE, vol 373:15 5
January

HEUVELMANS Bernard (1980): 'Les Bêtes humaines d'Afrique'. Plon, Paris.

HICHENS, William (1937): 'African Mystery Beasts' DISCOVERY, 18:369-
373.

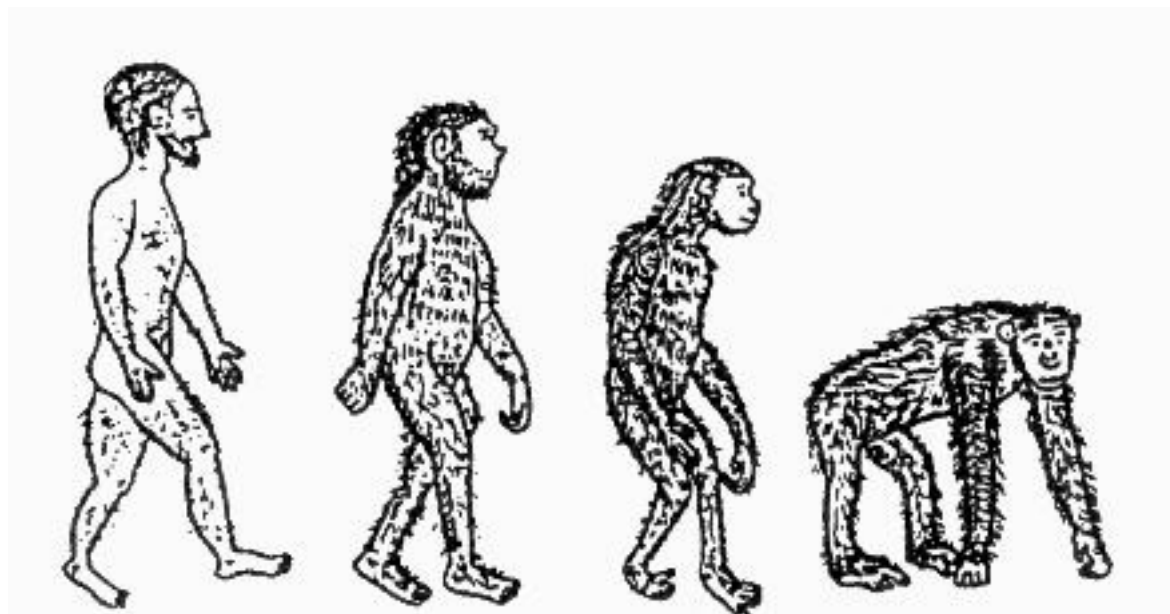
de SARRE, Francois (1994): 'The Theory of Initial Bipedalism on the question
of human origins.

BIOLOGY FORUM, 87 (2/3): 23%258, Perugia, Italy

SPOOR Fred et al. (1994): Implications of early hominid labyrinthine morphology for evolution of human biped locomotion" NATURE 369:645-823/6

WHITE Tim et al (1994) 'Australopithecus ramidus, a new species of early hominoid from Aramis Ethiopia' NATURE, vol 371: 306-312, 22 September.

"The Descent of Man" by Francois de Sarre.



© Francois de Sarre

Published in Animals & Men, Issue Six

[**Back to Biology, Scientific Papers and Field Reports**](#)

[**Back to What's New?**](#)

[**Back to Newspaper & Magazine Articles**](#)

[**Home/Main**](#)

Portions of this website are reprinted and sometimes edited to fit the standards of this website under the Fair Use Doctrine of International Copyright Law

as educational material without benefit of financial gain.

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.html>

This proviso is applicable throughout the entire [**Bigfoot Encounters**](#) Website.

