

The following pages are a section of a study unit which I prepared earlier for my biology students, and have occasionally revised since. The entire study unit lists and explains various evidences against biological macroevolution. The section no. 12 is an explanation of the so-called fossil evidence for human evolution. In this newly revised write-up, I have still retained the page numbers of the original study manual, beginning with p. 81. Page 82 has been recently expanded into 82A, 82B, etc. The "Taxonomy Supplement" (p. 84) which is attached at the back should be read before reading the main part of this paper. (Taxonomy is the science of classifying animals, plants, and other organisms.) Notice that, biologically speaking, man is classified as being in the genus Homo (abbreviated H.). The fossils of human beings, and of apes and ape-like creatures which are thought to have been ancestors of the human race, are called "hominids." The term "anthropoids" is more general, including both the modern apes and man; and the term "primates" is still more general, including lemurs, monkeys, apes, and man.

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12. The so-called "ape-man races," and the fossil skulls which are often spoken of as "early man," must be studied carefully to determine which were human and which were merely apes (or early relatives of apes). There is really no half-way point; they all must be classified as either human or non-human. Human beings possess a rational, reasoning mind which was especially given to them by God, as described in the first chapters of Genesis. No created beings below mankind were given the power to reason or to want to carry on intelligent communication with The Creator.

During the first half of this century biologists and anthropologists gave "prehuman" scientific names to some of the prehistoric races that were later recognized as being actually human. The celebrated "Java man," which was discovered in 1891, was given the generic name Pithecanthropus, from the Greek pithekos (ape), and anthropos (man). However, by the early 1960's both this fossil form and the former Sinanthropus pekinensis (the "Peking man") had been placed in the genus Homo by the leading anthropologists of both Britain and America. (See "Homo Erectus" by W. W. Howells, in Scientific American, Nov. 1966, pp. 46-53; and The Fossil Evidence for Human Evolution, by W. E. Le Gros Clark, University of Chicago Press, 1964, pp. 7-9, and 19 ff). See the book The Gods of Prehistoric Man, by J. Maringer; Knopf, Inc., 1960, for a discussion of the fact that these and other early humans had a religion of their own, art, and other exclusively human characteristics.

Even the Neanderthal man, which has long been recognized as belonging to Genus Homo, has now been declared to have been more human than was formerly thought. Dr. William L. Straus, Jr., in the December 1957 Quarterly Review of Biology, describes further studies of the Neanderthal skeletal remains, pointing out that the familiar stooped posture of the Neanderthal reproductions which we frequently see is due to the fact that the LaChapelle skeleton, after which the reproductions have been designed, was severely affected by arthritis of the bones. This has resulted in the changing of the Neanderthal displays in most museums, and Neanderthal pictures in many modern textbooks.

Now that these and the other "old reliable" fossil hominids have been classified as human, anthropologists have turned their attention to ape and other anthropoid remains which have been recently discovered in Africa. The main group of these is given the generic name Australopithecus (the name is derived from Latin australis "southern," plus Greek pithekos "ape," and does not denote a connection with the Australian continent). (The reader should realize that the living apes--the gorilla, gibbon, orangutan, and chimpanzee--are distinct from monkeys, being tailless and generally being larger than monkeys. The fossil apes are, of course, basically similar to modern apes.) The name Australopithecus originated with R. A. Dart in 1925. Since Dart's first description of the fossil remains to which he gave this generic name, there have been numerous other similar finds. Some of these have been given other generic names such as Paranthropus and Zinjanthropus, but Le Gros Clark (1964, p. 20-21) and numerous other authorities assert that they are of the same type as Australopithecus, and should be placed in "African man-apes;" they are widely regarded as being in the evolutionary line from which man is said to have evolved.