

Evolutionary confusion on when modern humans split from Neandertals

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Evolutionists are still debating many aspects of their belief that an ape-like creature evolved into modern man. It is interesting that when a new candidate for fossil man is found, the ancestor chart is changed. Because of the competitive drive to find the missing links, evolutionists are happy to use evidence that is fragmentary, equivocal, and which rests on many evolutionary assumptions.¹

The most recent presentation is that both modern man and Neandertals arose from a common ancestor, *Homo heidelbergensis*. The split supposedly occurred roughly 400 ka (thousand years ago) in the evolutionary timescale.² However, genetic evidence, which seems to always push splits from common ancestors further back in time, suggests the split from *Homo heidelbergensis* was between 550 and 765 ka, although the genetic evidence is based on contested assumptions:

“Divergence times inferred from genomic data are highly dependent on the mutation rate and generation time estimates, which are still debated (18). Small variations of these parameters can result in very different estimates of the divergence time between two species. If these nuances are not considered, then a strict read of the values provided by aDNA [ancient DNA] analyses can give rise to radically different interpretations of the fossil record.”³

The researcher, Aida Gómez-Robles, therefore turned to comparisons between hominin fossil teeth over time.

Much earlier split claimed

Exactly when humans split from Neandertals is unknown and controversial within evolutionary circles: “The origin of Neanderthal and modern human lineages is a matter of intense debate.”³ Based on Neanderthal teeth from a Spanish cave, Sima de los Huesos, it is now claimed that the divergence occurred more than 800 ka within the evolutionary timescale.⁴ Supposedly during hominin evolution, tooth crowns changed in size and shape at a ‘steady’ rate and this rate would mean the common ancestor lived more than 800,000 ka ago:

“The Neanderthal teeth, which date to about 430,000 years, could have evolved their distinctive shapes at a pace typical of other hominids only if Neanderthals originated between 800,000 and 1.2 million years ago.”⁵

This would mean that modern humans may have been on planet Earth for 1 Ma, which is much greater than previous estimates.

To determine a rate of change in hominin teeth, Gómez-Robles used two different phylogenetic frameworks because of the *lack* of consensus on hominin phylogenetic relationships among evolutionists (figure 1). Figure 1B is an ensemble of 100 phylogenies out of 60,000 possible ones. She analyzed teeth from the same location in the jaw from many ‘ape-man’ fossils and produced a rate of change of size and shape over time. Since Gómez-Robles used ‘ancestors’ that dated older than 3 Ma ago in her phylogenies, the result was a very slow rate of change. After comparing the teeth of the Sima de los Huesos cave Neandertals,⁶ she arrived at her conclusion.

However, there are variables not included in the analysis, such as hybridization:

“Another factor that may have potentially affected dental evolution in SH [Sima de los Huesos] hominins is hybridization. On the basis of genetic analyses, it is now

confirmed that hybridization happened between Neanderthals, modern humans, and Denisovans (30, 31), probably quite often.”⁷

Regarding hybridization, teeth characteristics would seemingly be variable and not form a gradual change in shape and size. Such ‘hybridization’ indicates that these three ‘species’ should really just be considered varieties of modern man. This would agree with new research that shows Neandertals were as sophisticated as modern humans.^{8,9}

Other paleoanthropologists have generally accepted the new result, such as well-known paleoanthropologist Bernard Wood of George Washington University in Washington D.C.⁵ One researcher cautioned: “But it’s unclear if Gómez-Robles’ contention that hominid teeth evolved at a steady pace will hold true, Bailey says.”¹⁰

Implications

The evolutionary analysis always assumes human evolution and deep

time, along with other assumptions. There is abundant evidence against ape-to-man evolution gleaned from their own writings, creation research, and from fossils.¹ From a biblical perspective all or at least most of these ‘hominin’ fossils¹¹ would be considered as early post-Flood when they were struggling to survive during the Ice Age. We reject all of the uniformitarian dates, at least in an absolute sense.

There is much controversy in the area of human evolution with variable evolutionary phylogenies based on imperfect genetic data. Assumptions were also required in the fossil teeth analysis, including the existence of separate human species. Since hybridization (interbreeding) apparently was common between all these so-called species of man, this would support the creation science contention that all the so-called hominid species represent varieties of people groups. This supports much creation research that people are people and apes are apes, and there are no missing links between the two.¹

References

1. Rupe, C. and Sanford, J., *Contested Bones*, FMS Foundation, Geneva, NY, 2017.
2. Bowers, B., Neandertal split came earlier, *Science News* 195(11):8–9, 2019.
3. Gómez-Robles, A., Dental evolutionary rates and its implications for the Neandertal–modern human divergence, *Science Advances* 5:eaaw1268, p. 1, 2019.
4. Gómez-Robles, ref. 3, pp. 1–9.
5. Bowers, ref. 2, p. 8.
6. The cave produced 28 individuals of what was at first considered *Homo heidelbergensis*, but they have since been reclassified as Neandertals, possibly because the cave material was dated younger.
7. Gómez-Robles, ref. 3, p. 6.
8. Oard, M.J., Neandertals produced cave art, *J. Creation* 32(3):11–13, 2018.
9. Oard, M.J., More expansions of fossil time ranges, *J. Creation* 33(3):3–4, 2019.
10. Bowers, ref. 2, p. 9.
11. It is possible that some of these so-called apemen fossils are from the Flood. i.e. pre-Flood humans.
12. Gómez-Robles, ref. 3, p. 2.

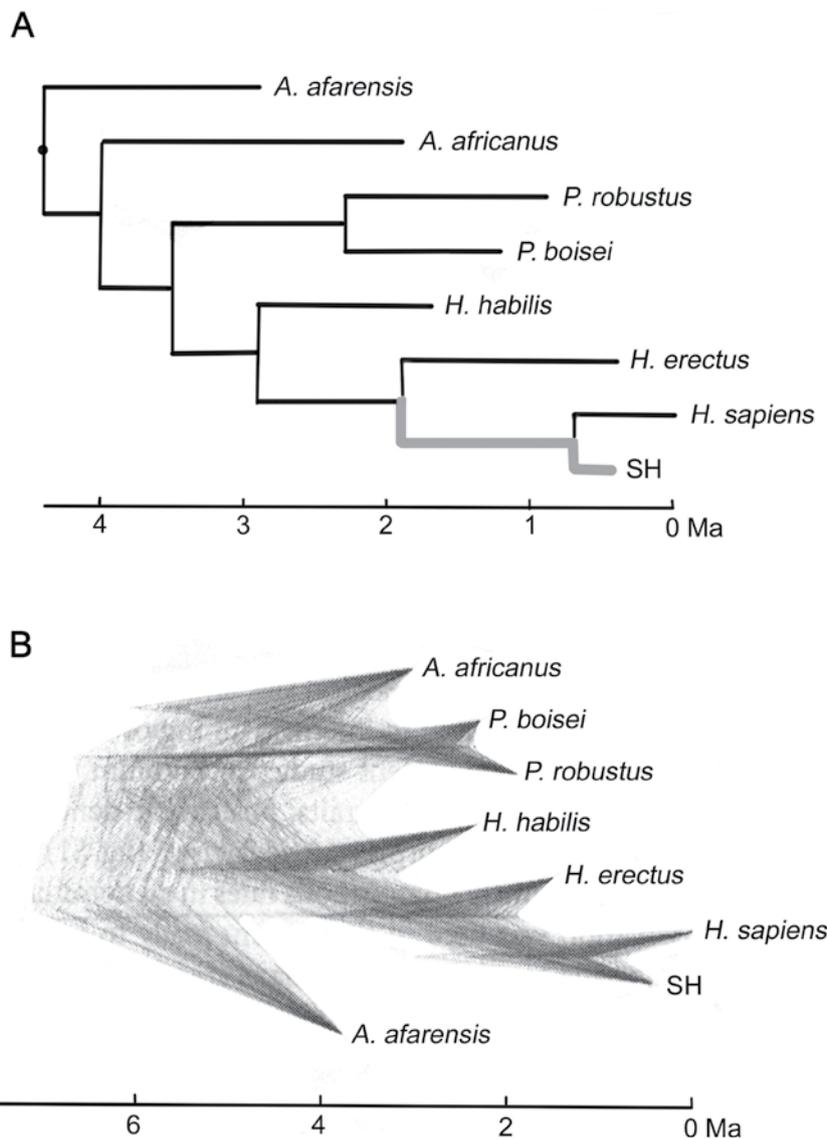


Figure 1. The two phylogenies used to estimate the rate of growth of hominid teeth over time. B is a randomly selected sample of 100 phylogenies out of 60,000 suggested phylogenetic relationships (modified by Melanie Richard).¹²