

Laurea Magistrale in Quaternario, Preistoria e Archeologia International Master in Quaternary and Prehistory



Homo sapiens origin and evolution

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Homo sapiens morphological features (paleontological definition of the specie)

Day & Stringer (1982)

- Short and elevated cranial vault
- Long and curved parietal bones in the sagittal plan
- High and wide biparietal vault in the coronal plan
- Long and narrow occipital bone, without projection
- Elevated frontal bone
- Non-continuous supra-orbital complex
- Presence of a canine fossa

Vandermeersch (1981, 2005)

- rounded cranial shape
- large cranial capacity
- decreased robustness (reduction/disappearance of superstructures)
- elevated cranial vault, with parallel or divergent (upward) lateral walls

- Pateria

- regularly rounded occipital bone
- short face
- teeth-size reduction tendency



Short and rounded vault Elevated frontal bone Rounded occipital bone Reduced face, placed under the braincase

Global decrease of robustness

Reduced relief of nuchal lines

> Individualized and well developped mastoid process

> > Mental foramen located under the premolar

Marked chin (mental trigone)

Elevated and convex frontal bone

Reduced supraorbital relief

(separated elements)

Canine fossa





Dental crowns reduced in size (particularly anterior teeth)











G: GlabellaA: Superciliary archB: Upper border of the orbitT: Lateral trigone

Transverse occipital torus





Homo sapiens

Homo erectus



• Narrow trunk and pelvis

- Low body mass compared to stature
- Center of gravity at the level of the 2° sacral vertebra
- vertebral column with marked secondary convexities
- Long limbs compared to trunk
- Robust and lengthened lower limbs
- Lengthening of the distal segments of the limbs
- Reduced thickness of cortical bone and large medullar cavity (compared to *Homo erectus*)



Origin Evolutionary hypothesis





Multiregional model

The principal bases of the multiregional theory are:

- Specific regional similarity between archaic Homo sapiens and modern one;

Principal criticism :

- Lack of transition shape in Asia and Europe
- Genetical proof
- This theory request a continuous gene flow between the regional population

Africans	Europeans	Asians	Australians
A			4
	Neanderthals		
			Ngandong
African	European	Asian	Indonesiar
erectus	erectus	erectus	erectus

Africans	Modern Europeans	Asians	Modern Australian
	Neanderthals		Ngandong
African erectus	European erectus	Asian erectus	Indonesiar erectus

Two views of the origins of modern humans: the multiregional model (top) and the "Out of Africa" model. Each interprets the same fossil evidence in a radically different way Africani Europei Asiantici Australasiatici Interbreeding 1-2 milioni di anni fa Homo erectus in Africa

Homo sapiens



Stringer, 1990

Partial substitution model

<u>Theory of integration (Smith, 1987) or partial</u> <u>replacement:</u>

Integration from European population of the genetic patrimony of modern human, by genetic flow*. Paleontological proof: fossils from eastern Europe (Vindija).

Hybridation theory (Trinkaus):

Interbreeding in the various geographic area of modern human and preexisting population

*Genetic flow is the diffusion of gene between population, by migration of individual in reproductive age. The genetic flow can introduce in a population new allele and can change the allelic frequency. The global genetic effect is the reduction of genetic differences between population and then limit the evolution. In another hand, genetic flow can increase the internal variability of a population, increasing the polymorphism.









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An early modern human from Romania with a recent Neanderthal ancestor

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Neanderthals are thought to have disappeared in Europe approximately 39,000-41,000 years ago but they have contributed 1-3% of the DNA of present-day people in Eurasia¹. Here we analyse DNA from a 37,000-42,000-year-old² modern human from Peştera cu Oase, Romania. Although the specimen contains small amounts of human DNA, we use an enrichment strategy to isolate sites that are informative about its relationship to Neanderthals and presentday humans. We find that on the order of 6-9% of the genome of the Oase individual is derived from Neanderthals, more than any other modern human sequenced to date. Three chromosomal segments of Neanderthal ancestry are over 50 centimorgans in size, indicating that this individual had a Neanderthal ancestor as recently as four to six generations back. However, the Oase individual does not share more alleles with later Europeans than with East Asians, suggesting that the Oase population did not contribute substantially to later humans in Europe.



«Out of Africa» Model – Genetic proofs of the African origin

The African origin of modern human evidenced by the study of actual mitochondrial DNA

Diversity of one imaginary mitochondrial genetic marker (schematic picture)



Present variability mtDNA

« all the contemporary and worldwide human mtDNA variability is also present in Africa (East Africa), thus it is the most probable place of origin of the species *Homo sapiens*. »

Fossil proofs







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ISSUES

Evolutionary Anthropology WILEY

Resolving the "muddle in the middle": The case for *Homo bodoensis* sp. nov.

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Ndutu, Tanzania 400 000 y BP

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H. erectus: Dimensions of the cranium, thickness of the vault bones.

Archaic H. sapiens: Occipital and mastoid morphology



New fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco and the pan-African origin of *Homo sapiens*

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Fossil evidence points to an African origin of Homo sapiens from a group called either H. heidelbergensis or H. rhodesiensis. However, the exact place and time of emergence of H. sapiens remain obscure because the fossil record is scarce and the chronological age of many key specimens remains uncertain. In particular, it is unclear whether the present day 'modern' morphology rapidly emerged approximately 200 thousand years ago (ka) among earlier representatives of H. sapiens1 or evolved gradually over the last 400 thousand years². Here we report newly discovered human fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco, and interpret the affinities of the hominins from this site with other archaic and recent human groups. We identified a mosaic of features including facial, mandibular and dental morphology that aligns the Jebel Irhoud material with early or recent anatomically modern humans and more primitive neurocranial and endocranial morphology. In combination with an age of 315 ± 34 thousand years (as determined by thermoluminescence dating)3, this evidence makes Jebel Irhoud the oldest and richest African Middle Stone Age hominin site that documents early stages of the H. sapiens clade in which key features of modern morphology were established. Furthermore, it shows that the evolutionary processes behind the emergence of H. sapiens involved the whole African continent.





Modern face but archaic cranium.



Omo Kibish, Ethiopia 195 000 - 130 000 y BP









Bab El-Mandeb strait, the area where Africa and Saudi Arabia are close.



Herto Bouri, Middle Awash, Ethiopia 154-160 000 y BP





Bab El-Mandeb strait, the area where Africa and Saudi Arabia are close.

(White, 2003)

Homo sapiens idaltu

The remains were discovered for the first time in the site of Herto Bouri (Ethiopia) and have been dated to 160 ka BP.





hominids "Because the Herto are morphologically just beyond the range of variation seen in AMHS [anatomically modern Homo sapiens], and because they differ from all other known fossil hominids, we recognize them here as idaltu, Ното sapiens а new palaeosubspecies of Homo sapiens".

Order Primates L., 1758 Suborder Anthropoidea Mivart, 1864 Superfamily Hominoidea Gray, 1825 Family Hominidae Gray, 1825 *Homo sapiens idaltu* subsp. nov.

Etymology. The subspecies name 'idàltu' is taken from the Afar language. It means 'elder'. **Holotype.** BOU-VP-16/1 (Fig. 1), an adult cranium with partial dentition. Holotype and referred material are housed at the National Museum of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. Holotype from Bouri Vertebrate Paleontology Locality 16 (BOU-VP 16); differentially corrected GPS coordinates: 10° 15.5484' N and 40° 33.3834' E.

Referred material. BOU-VP-16/2 cranial fragments; BOU-VP-16/3 parietal fragment; BOU-VP-16/4 parietal fragment; BOU-VP-16/5 child's cranium; BOU-VP-16/6 R. upper molar; BOU-VP-16/7 parietal fragment, BOU-VP-16/18 parietal fragments; BOU-VP-16/42 upper premolar, BOU-VP-16/43 parietal fragment.

Stratigraphy and age. Bouri Formation, Upper Herto Member. Dated by ⁴⁰Ar/³⁹Ar to between 160,000 and 154,000 years ago (ref. 6).

Diagnosis. On the limited available evidence, a subspecies of *Homo sapiens* distinguished from Holocene anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) by greater craniofacial robusticity, greater anterior–posterior cranial length, and large glenoid-to-occlusal plane distance. *Homo sapiens idaltu* is distinguished from the holotype of *Homo rhodesiensis* (Woodward, 1921) by a larger cranial capacity, a more vertical frontal with smaller face, and more marked midfacial topography (for example, canine fossa). We consider the holotypes of *H. helmei* and *H. njarasensis* too fragmentary for appropriate comparisons.



(White et al. 2003)

The african « evolutionary sequence » for *Homo sapiens*



Homo sapiens idaltu

Left lateral views of African and Israeli archaic and early modern Homo sapiens crania (Stringer 2016)





"Human fossils such as those from Jebel Irhoud, Florisbad, Eliye Springs and Omo Kibish 2 do represent early members of the species, but variation across the African later middle Pleistocene/early Middle Stone Age fossils shows that **there was not a simple linear progression towards later** *sapiens* **morphology**, and there was **chronological overlap between different 'archaic' and 'modern' morphs**. Even in the late Pleistocene within and outside Africa, we find *H. sapiens* specimens which are clearly outside the range of Holocene members of the species, showing the complexity of recent human evolution." Stringer, 2016



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Deciphering African late middle Pleistocene hominin diversity and the origin of our species

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Deciphering African late middle Pleistocene hominin diversity and the origin of our species

Aurélien Mounier 🖸 ^{1,2} & Marta Mirazón Lahr 📴 ^{2,3}



The origin of *Homo sapiens* remains a matter of debate. The extent and geographic patterning of morphological diversity among Late Middle Pleistocene (LMP) African hominins is largely unknown, thus precluding the definition of boundaries of variability in early *H. sapiens* and the interpretation of individual fossils. Here we use a phylogenetic modelling method to predict **possible morphologies of a last common ancestor of all modern humans**, which we compare to LMP African fossils (KNM-ES 11693, Florisbad, Irhoud 1, Omo II, and LH18). Our results support a complex process for the evolution of *H. sapiens*, with the recognition of different, geographically localised, populations and lineages in Africa – not all of which contributed to our species' origin. Based on the available fossils, *H. sapiens* appears to have originated from the coalescence of South and, possibly, East-African source populations, while North-African fossils may represent a population which introgressed into Neandertals during the LMP.