

Review of Jerry Bergmans book *Apes as Ancestors* (2020)
By Johnny Bergman

New book on the origin of man

Anatomy professor Jerry Bergman is an extremely prolific and merited author. He has published more than 40 books and written over 1400 articles in scientific as well as popular press. He holds nine doctorates, which according to Amazon.com could easily have been given him a place among the "World's 10 Most Educated People". For these reasons it is always exciting to read books written by him. His new book, *Apes as Ancestors* (2020), is no exception and fully lives up to the expectations.

The book, which contains 5000 references, consists of 360 pages and is published in a large format with hard cover. Bergman has written the book together with three other researchers, of whom the neuroanatomist Peter Line and Dr. Jeffrey Tomkins are the most well-known.

It is divided into three main sections. The first addresses general objections against the theory of man's evolution from ape-like animals. Part two is about findings that are ape-like and the last part of the book deals with findings that according to the authors can be attributed to the genus *Homo sapiens* (humans).

The game behind the scenes

Dr. Bergman begins the book by giving an insight into the game behind the scenes in paleoanthropology, of which the general public knows nothing. He describes deep controversies among scholars who have split into different camps.

The Leakey family, Don Johanson, Tim White and Lee Berger are among the leaders within these competing groups, which have completely different ideas about how the alleged evolution of man came about. The most famous controversy was between Leakey and Donald Johanson. It lasted for 30 years and dealt with both dating issues and interpretations of different finds. Harvard professor Roger Lewin is in Bergman's book quoted as saying: "Fossils do not emerge from the ground with labels already attached to them. And it is bad enough that much of the labeling was done in the name of egoism and a naive lack of appreciation of variation between individuals: each nuance in shape was taken to indicate a difference in type rather than natural variation within a population." (*Apes as Ancestors*, p. 10; originally quoted from *Bones of Contention*, p. 27)

The researchers face many problems

Since the fossils under discussion among paleontologists are always fragmentary and never consist of complete skeletons, the interpretation of them becomes extremely problematic. Lucy belongs to the most complete findings, yet less than 40% of her skeletal parts have been found.

The problem is also that if someone would find an individual with characteristics halfway between apes and humans, this does not mean that one could scientifically confirm this as a "missing link", i.e., an intermediate form. It would only prove that an individual with these morphological characteristics has existed – not that humans evolved from this primate.

Bergman et al also point to the problem that almost every new fossil discovery gives rise to new genealogical family trees, and that the interpretations of these trees are influenced by the researchers' preconceived notions about human evolution.

Furthermore, there is the risk of misinterpreting differences between young and adult individuals as representatives of different species. One case in point is Laurie Godfrey's discovery of a jawbone belonging to *Mesopropithecus*. After further findings, she finally concluded that the jaw belonged to a young lemur and not an adult.

That the many interpretative challenges mentioned above are not only theoretical possibilities but also a practical reality becomes extremely evident in a list presented in *Apes as Ancestors*. This list contains no less than eleven different ape-man finds, all of which during the years 1856-1979 have been presented as “missing links”. As time have gone by, however, they have all been reinterpreted and abandoned. These findings include Neanderthal man, Piltdown man, *Homo erectus*, *Zinjanthropus*, *Gigantopithecus*, *Homo habilis* and several of the *Australopithecus* finds. Interpretations of Lucy have also changed since 1979 when she was discovered. Today she has lost her position as the first and most important link in the chain up to modern man.

An author, Michael Lemonick, commented on the contradictions and the different interpretations of the fossil finds by comparing paleontology with politics: “[P]assions run high, and it’s easy to draw very different conclusions from the same set of facts.” (*Apes as Ancestors*, p. 29)

Big differences between ape and man

Bergman addresses three major differences between apes and humans that basically nullify the idea of intermediate forms and an evolution from one to the other. The first example applies to the face. The human face is controlled by 46 muscles. Just speaking requires use of about 100 different muscles and then not only the facial muscles are needed but also muscles that are connected to the lips, tongue, teeth, mouth and the voice box inside the throat. These muscles are one of the reasons why humans can speak, which no other primate comes even close to. It has been calculated that the human face has the ability to express nearly 1000 different facial expressions.

Apes’ fur and human body hair

Evolutionists like Desmond Morris have had great trouble explaining why man lost his body fur during his alleged evolution from ape-like animals. Morris notes that of 193 living primate species, 192 are covered in fur – the only exception is humans. Evolutionists have come up with a number of unreasonable proposals for this fact, for example climate change, that man left the forest and took refuge in the savanna, and that it became easier for man to sweat when he shed his fur.

Another theory is that a mutation occurred six million years ago in the human and the chimpanzee's common ancestor, resulting in hairlessness. After many years of research, it seems fair to say that evolutionists have failed to give a reasonable explanation for the supposed hair loss among humans. It is much more likely that God created the human race without body fur from the beginning.

Teeth in humans and apes

Most fossil mammals are known only by their teeth. The reason for this is that enamel resists the test of time much better than ordinary bones. But even so a chain of transitional forms between chimpanzee teeth and modern human teeth is totally missing in the fossil record. There are no traces at all of any intermediary forms of that kind.

DNA similarity between chimpanzee and human exaggerated

One of the biggest false claims that evolutionists have trumpeted out in recent years is that human and chimpanzee DNA are 98-99% identical. This is not true since the answer to the question of genetical similarity depends on which regions of the genome one compares between humans and chimpanzees. When the entire genome has been taken into account, recent research has shown an average similarity of only 84%. That is, the difference is 16%, which corresponds to 480 million different base pairs.

In addition, humans have several thousand genes that are unique and are completely absent in chimpanzees, while conversely the chimpanzees have many genes that are unique to them and are completely absent in humans. Therefore, the interesting question is not why there are so many similarities between humans and apes, but rather: Why are the differences so great between human and chimpanzee if the latter is our closest relative?

Australopithecines have no links to human history

The *Australopithecines* section is written by co-author Peter Line, who covers almost ten findings that count to this group of prehistoric apes. They bear the names *Anamensis*, *Afarensis*, *Africanus*, *Robustus*, *Aethiopicus*, *Boisei*, *Bahrelghazai*, *Garhi*, *Deyiremeda*, *Platyops* and *Prometheus*. After a thorough review his conclusion is that the skull of the australopithecines was not human-like. Their brains were ape-sized, like the rest of their bodies.

No doubt this group was nothing but extinct ape-like primates who felt more at home in the trees than on the ground. Although some the australopithecines could walk upright in some way or temporarily stand upright on the ground or in the trees, it still does not indicate that they were evolving into humans. There have been other extinct two-legged tree-climbing apes in Europe, such as *Danuvius guggenmosi*, which are still not considered ape-men even by evolutionists.

Lucy is a fiasco

We will conclude by examining two more candidates to evolutionary predecessors of the human race, viz. Lucy and Ardi. According to Dr. Bergman, Lucy (*Australopithecus Afarensis*) is a fiasco. He says that almost everything that the popular press has written about her is a lie, and neither is it true what has been written in the peer-reviewed literature. Serious paleoanthropologists have repeatedly established that Lucy is just an extinct ape-like primate.

Dr. Solly Zuckerman studied *Australopithecus* fossils for fifteen years and concluded that they are all “nothing but apes”. Another authority, Dr. Wray Herbert, claims that several of his paleoanthropological colleagues have compared the pygmy chimpanzee to Lucy and found striking similarities.

Researchers Stern and Susman concluded in a comprehensive study that Lucy morphologically had more striking similarities to apes than to humans. They also noted that Lucy was missing a lot of the most important prerequisites for the upright course of modern man.

In the popular science press and educational films, it has sometimes been claimed that Lucy's skeletal parts were nearly complete or at least 60-70% complete. In the first ones the reports stated that the skeleton was 40% complete, but 22 years later, Donald Johanson, the man who

discovered Lucy, said that Lucy's skeleton consisted of only 47 of 207 bones. Since most of the bones were not complete, the figure 20% is more accurate.

Jerry Bergman devotes no less than 23 pages to carefully examining the empirical evidence i.e., the bones that has been found. To put it shortly, the main difference between Lucy and humans is, according to Bergman, the size and shape of the skull. Apes, including Lucy, have a flat, sloping face without nasal bones, which makes it impossible for them to wear glasses. Apes and Lucy also have a small brain volume, only about 400 cm³, compared to modern humans who has an average volume of 1345 cm³. The eye sockets of apes are also on the side the face, unlike humans whose eyes are directed forward and not to the sides.

Ardipithecus was just an ape

The empirical case for *Ardipithecus* consists of two different finds, *A. Kadabba* and *A. Ramidus*. The latter has attracted the greatest attention. In the Swedish book *Fyra kristna diskuterar: skapelse och evolution* (2020) [*Four Christians discuss: Creation and Evolution*], Sebastian Ibstedt mentions *Ardipithecus* as an example of an intermediate form with both ape-like and human-like features. It may therefore be interesting to see how the authors to *Apes as Ancestors* look at Ardi.

Peter Line, who wrote that chapter, notes that Peter Andrews at Natural History Museum in London early on criticized the claims about Ardi's human-like features. He pointed out that the thin enamel of the teeth of *Ardipithecus Ramidus* "is more of what you'd expect from a fossil chimp" and that "the features of an upper arm (...) suggests knuckle-walking, chimp-style, rather than (...) bipedality". Andrews also saw similarities in the proximal foot phalange with the tree-climbing *Sivapithecus* and stated that "the skull is clearly ape-like" (*Apes as Ancestors*, p. 139).

One of the major problems with *Ardipithecus* is that the material that has been found consists of more than 100 fragments all of which were soft and badly damaged. The reconstruction is very questionably done, and Craig Stanford are among those who believe that Tim White's reconstruction has been greatly influenced by speculation and preconceived notions. Lovejoy et al mention as an example that the pelvic bone was so badly crushed that no less than 14 different reconstructions had to be made via computed tomography before obtaining an acceptable reconstruction.

Ardi had long, curved fingers and a big toe that stuck out sideways, indicating she was an ape grasping tree branches and climbing in trees. Out of twelve different characteristics that are said to be found in *Ardipithecus* and *Australopithecus*, almost all of them also occur in apes such as *Oreopithecus* and *Dryopithecus*, even though none of the latter are considered to be ape-men or prehuman.

At the end of the book the two prominent creationist scientists John Sanford and Chris Rupe are quoted. They summarize the state of evidence as follows concerning Ardi: "Despite what the discovery team claims, there is no evidence that Ardi had a human-like hip. There is no evidence Ardi had a human-like lower lumbar curvature. There is no evidence Ardi's skull and teeth were evolving toward becoming human. Ardi's anteriorly positioned foramen magnum is very questionable and would not warrant its placement in the human lineage. Ardi's limb proportions, hands and feet are unmistakably that of an ape. There is no legitimate evidence to suggest Ardi walked upright like humans. The traits presented as evidence that

Ardi was in the human lineage are the very same features currently seen in living apes – as noted by evolutionary paleo-experts.” (*Apes as Ancestors*, p. 146)

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