

OPEN LETTER TO PALEOANTHROPOLOGISTS

Dear Specialists of Hominid Fossils,

Greetings from Dmitri Bayanov, a pioneer of hominology, a novel discipline which is, like yours, a subdivision of anthropology. I feel great respect for paleoanthropology as a famous sister of hominology. Actually, representatives of both disciplines are truth seekers in one of the most important fields of knowledge for human beings: the origin and nature of man. However, I address you presently not with congratulations or anything festive, but out of utter necessity. This is because official acknowledgment of hominology by the academic establishment depends on the endorsement of the discipline by paleoanthropologists, most of whom treat hominology much worse than Cinderella was treated by her stepsisters. According to mainstream paleoanthropologists, the subject matter of hominology does not exist and therefore what we are doing is a pseudoscience.

This conclusion is based not on facts and knowledge, but on faith and ignorance, because for half a century of its existence hominology has been ignored and tabooed by the paleoanthropological establishment. How and why paleoanthropology took this wrong turn can be explained and understood if we recall the making of paleoanthropology itself, especially three events in the beginning of the process.

Neanderthal bones, discovered in 1856, were first identified by an outstanding anthropologist as those of a deformed modern human. “Many curious suggestions were proposed to ‘explain’ the discovery without loss of orthodoxy. One of the most imaginative was that the Neanderthal skull was that of a soldier of Napoleon’s army, suffering from water on the brain, who met his death by the wayside on the retreat from Moscow” (John Napier). Why were such blunders possible at the time? Because a creationist paradigm in biology had not yet been replaced by an evolutionary one. Available experts became suddenly unqualified to investigate and understand “anomalous” facts.

Discovery of *Homo erectus* (1891) was next. “Eugene Dubois encountered rejection and even ridicule when he initially presented his findings, and subsequently hid the fossils, refusing any access to them for 20 years.” (Wikipedia)

Discovery of *Australopithecus africanus* (1924) followed. “As Raymond Dart was not part of the scientific establishment, and because he found the fossil in Africa, and not Europe or Asia, where the establishment supposed man’s origins, his findings were initially dismissed.” (Wikipedia)

The turbulence caused by the Darwinian revolution was not over yet. As more hominid fossils continued to be unearthed, “transformation of quantity to quality” took place. Paleontology of hominid fossils got the name of paleoanthropology, eventually becoming a legitimate scientific discipline, quite “normal” and “non-revolutionary,” in full agreement with Kuhn’s theory. It is now valued and liked by many educated people. Nobody was particularly happy with Darwin’s conclusion that man descended from the ape. In this connection the author of the theory was awarded with nothing but biting caricatures. Then the public’s attention was diverted by the efforts to find the “missing link,” later by the Piltdown fraud. In the end we have from paleoanthropology this comforting statement by Dr. Rick Potts, director of the Smithsonian Institution’s Human Origins Program, describing the classic view of human evolution: “It focuses more on the idea that we were inevitable: that famous march from ape to human. It’s a ladder of progress with simple organisms at the bottom and humans at the top. This idea of inevitability runs deep in our

societal assumptions, probably because it's comforting—a picture of a single, forward trajectory, ending in modern humans as the crown of creation.” (‘How We Won the Hominid Wars, and All the ...’ – *Discover Magazine*)

The crown of creation without the theory, or rather the idea of Creationism. Great! Is this not why the scientific establishment, after initial dismissals, accepted and legitimized paleoanthropology in the end? For the same reason, the classic view of human evolution is at the root of the existing paradigm of anthropology: we are alone and we are at the top. Why? Because we are special.

Yes, no doubt, we are special. The crown of creation is doing what no species on earth has ever done before: by diligently spoiling the planet's ecology, we are sawing off the branch of the tree of life we're sitting on. The crown of creation has created and continues to create huge stores of nuclear weapons, which if put into action will wipe out life from the face of the Earth. Yes, we are special. We are the species that claims to hold in its hands the fate of the planet.

This explains why the way of hominology to recognition and acceptance is longer and much harder than was the way of paleoanthropology. The latter did not make a revolution; it did not shift the paradigm. On the contrary, it helped to confirm and embellish the existing one, as related above. No doubt we are alone, say paleoanthropologists. Here are the bones of the hominids that lived before us. The last of them died out many thousands of years ago. No, say hominologists, some hominids different from us are still roaming around. If so, then as scientists, says primatologist John Napier, “we shall have to re-write the story of human evolution ... and we shall have to admit that there are still major mysteries to be solved in a world we thought we knew so well.”

Who will then be re-writing the story of human evolution and solving major mysteries confronting mankind? No doubt, among front-line truth seekers will be hominologists, paleoanthropologists and paleogeneticists. Hopefully, they shall learn some crucial lessons for the survival of civilization and life on the planet. “Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe,” wrote Herbert Wells in 1920. It stands to reason that relict hominids are older and more long-lived than *Homo sapiens*. They have survived by adapting to nature, not conquering it. Perhaps solution for us is in some kind of a middle road.

Anyway, what I see most needed and topical now is to open a public dialogue between hominologists and paleoanthropologists. Science may take wrong turns from time to time, but it has a knack of self-correction and after a time returns to the right road. Naturally, she does so by means of the minds and hands of scientists. With this aim in view, I invite to a dialogue well-known paleoanthropologists Dr. Lee Berger and Dr. John Hawks. The teacher of Lee Berger was famous paleoanthropologist Dr. Phillip Tobias. My teacher was the famous founder of hominology, Dr. Boris Porshnev. Both Tobias and Porshnev participated in the work of an International Committee to study hirsute hominids, set up in 1962 in Rome, Italy, by Dr. Corrado Gini. The Committee functioned there until the death of its creator in 1965. Dr. Raymond Dart was also its member. So it's logical and proper for us to resume the dialogue and contacts of our teachers. As for Dr. John Hawks, he is a friend and colleague of Dr. Berger and a strong believer that the public has a right to know what is going on in science.

Most respectfully,

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