The Origin of Man

Part II - Anthro Art

Do not be fooled by so-called "ape-men" reconstructions. Let me quote what G. K. Chesterton wrote about *Pithecanthropus erectus* (Java Man), now classified as *Homo erectus*:

"Popular histories published portraits of him like the portraits of Charles I or George IV. A detailed drawing was reproduced carefully shaded to show the very hairs of his head were all numbered. No uninformed person, looking at its carefully lined face, would imagine for a moment that this was the portrait of a thigh bone, of a few teeth and a fragment of a cranium."

Let me repeat: do not be fooled by so-called "ape-men" reconstructions for they are nothing more than figments of artists' imaginations. Furthermore, very often such reconstructions are based on nothing more tangible than a few pieces of bone.

When an artist is drawing the outward appearance of a fossil find - be it an ape, a man or any other creature for that matter - the drawing is the product of the artist's imagination and often reflects the preconceived ideas of that artist. This may be illustrated by considering the five different artistic impressions of *Zinjanthropus boisei* (see illustrations below).
Those artists that wished this creature to be ape-like, made him so, while those wanting him to appear man-like, made him so. Interestingly, Maurice Wilson made him look ape-like for Dr. Oakley and man-like for the British Museum! Zinjanthropus boisei is now classified as Australopithecus boisei, and as we saw in Creation News No. 40, the Australopithecines are now regarded as being neither apes, men, nor ape-men. So much for artistic impressions!

Below is reproduced an artist's impression of 'Nebraska Man' which was published in The Illustrated London News on 24th June 1922. The scientific name given to this creature was Hesperopithecus and he was acclaimed to be half-way between Man and Apes. Consequently, he was given widespread publicity. He and his wife, and the whole scene illustrated below, were constructed from ONE SINGLE TOOTH and this tooth was later found to be that of an extinct pig!

Do not think that the people involved in this case were amateurs - they were not! Professor H. F. Osborn, head of the American Museum of Natural History, received the tooth from a Mr. Cook who had found it in Pliocene deposits in Nebraska. Osborn considered that it had characteristics that were a mixture of human, chimpanzee and ape-man (remember it was a tooth of a pig!), and upon this evidence alone it was declared as a link between Man and Apes. Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, FRS, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Manchester, fully supported Osborn's conclusions.

by Dr. A. J. Monty White

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