

## Re: Importance of Flores Overstated?

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**From:** richard01 (richardparker01\_at\_yahoo.com)

**Date:** 11/06/04

Date: 6 Nov 2004 00:46:28 -0800

Dar\_83001@yahoo.com (Daryl Habel) wrote in message  
news:<d24f0b9f.0411051123.1249ea2@posting.google.com>...

> "firstjois" <firstjoisyike@hotmail.com> wrote in message  
news:<WY6dncXswoD1ThfcRVn-ow@comcast.com>...

>

> > Thanks, Dar, I think this is fascinating stuff but it's not going to change

> > all the text books on evolution. Wonder if some old Dutch sailing logs

> > might have some info hidden away!

> >

> > Jois

>

> Well, it will, at the very least, in some small way, certainly change

> some text in paleoanthropology books. Evolutionary theory can

> accomodate LBI, so that's not going to be re-written. Do we just

> accept that LBI is an insular dwarf erectine derived Homo? Even if

> LBI is not a dwarfed *H. erectus*, it is something that has to be

> explained. Is the 380 cc brain pathological? Is it some kind of

> cryptozoic extant Asian ape, maybe now extinct? Certainly there were

> normal-sized *H. sapiens* seafarers in the Flores vicinity by 18,000

> years ago, who could have been responsible for the sophisticated tools

> (and, possibly, the death of LBI). If the 380 cc brain is not

> pathological, and LBI is some kind of Homo, it has by far the smallest

> cranial capacity known for our genus. Someone will have to rewrite the

> books on how LBI came into existence. I'm not satisfied with the

> *Myotragus* brain-size reduction explanation, and I've seen Ralph

> Holloway's initial reaction on Anne G.'s Yahoo palanthsci group, so I

> know I'm not alone with this uneasy feeling.

>

> Is the importance of Flores overstated? I don't think we really can

> answer that yet. There's been an incredible amount of hype that has

> accompanied this find, but very little in the way of comparative

> anatomical analysis included in the few pages of the *Nature* (Brown *et*

> *al.* 2004) journal article. I view this all as preliminary, so far.

> Best,

> Dar

1) Is it not possible that *H. Florensiensis* moved from 'primitive' HE  
type 'Mousterian' tools to another type 'Gravettian' just like

Neanderthal did?

It seems we are still not at all sure how Neanderthal did this, whether he could communicate with, or procreate with HS or not, but still, when the Aurignacians came along, Neanderthal moved along and did his very best to copy.

2)'Myotragus' is only one example of island dwarfism – there has been plenty of it. And there is also evidence from artificial breeding (Great Danes/Chihuahuas) that brain sizes can be reduced, along with body sizes, without huge effects on intelligence (my aunty's chihuahua is stupid, but so is my uncle's Great Dane – this may be due more to being coddled in a warm house and not being let out to hunt for a living, than to any difference in brain size).

3) All the information on H Floresiensis is still very limited – the diggers may well know (more or less) than they are prepared to publish. There may be readable DNA to be found – that might upset a lot of apple carts.

4) You are discussing over on Yahoo–Paleanthro if H floresiensis could be a 'parallel evolution' descendant of hylobates (gibbon) – (a discussion from which I am unfortunately banned after making a silly–ass comment about elections). This is quite a reasonable proposition, and would open up a whole other Pandora's box.

However, it seems to partly depend on a hylobate radiation paper (Brandon Jones) which totally ignores the Mt Toba explosion (around 72000ya) which left so much volcanic ash in India that it can be matched and measured. The effect on the Mentawai Islands (Brandon Jones' presumed radiation centre for gibbons) – very near by – of a disaster which has been reckoned to have wiped out all life on Sumatra was not even noted. Not to mention that the Mentawais are 150 miles offshore from 'mainland' Indonesia and they have an endemic gibbon of their own.

5) I have no trouble at all in accepting 'island dwarfism' in humans (any more than I do with the evidence of dwarfism of elephants, goats, deer (in Jersey within a demonstrable period of only 6000 years), etc, and maybe even the Komodo 'dragon' itself – it once had an Australian cousin 2.5 times as long and 4 times as heavy. That's just a bit more than the difference between HF & HE.

6) If we accept that H Floresiensis is only a (fairly unimportant) branch–line in our family, I (IMHO) think that the long persistence of H erectus (if all those tools found all over the place belong to him) for at least 1 million years needs some real explanation (or some more digging).

7) These things go in cycles – I would refer you to <http://www.uiowa.edu/~bioanth/giganto.html> and the quote from it:

sci.anthropology.paleo: Re: Importance of Flores Overstated?

"Meanwhile, however, Weidenreich, who had retreated from Beijing to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, set about studying plaster casts of the four teeth. Because of the unusually large size of a few of the Homo erectus specimens from Java, Weidenreich came up with the notion that there had been a period of gigantism in human evolution, and that modern humans were the diminutive descendants of these giants. In *Apes, Giants, and Man*, published in 1946, he argued that the Gigantopithecus teeth were humanlike, and that von Koenigswald had been mistaken in considering the animal an ape rather than a member of the human family tree"

regards

Richard

My Seashore Foraging & Fishing weblog is up and running at [coconutstudio.blogspot.com](http://coconutstudio.blogspot.com)