

‘Modern’ humans not the first to use stone tools

The oldest stone tools on record may spell the end for the theory that complex toolmaking began with the genus *Homo*, to which humans belong. The 3.3-million-year-old artefacts, revealed at a conference in California, predate the first members of *Homo*, and suggest that more-ancient hominin ancestors had the intelligence and dexterity to craft sophisticated tools.

More than 80 years ago, anthropologist Louis Leakey found stone tools in Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. Decades later, he and his wife Mary and their team found bones from a species that the Leakeys named *Homo habilis* — ‘the handy man’. This led to the prevailing view that human stone-tool use began with *Homo*, a group that includes modern humans and their big-brained and tall forebears. The oldest of these Oldowan tools date to 2.6 million years ago — around the time of the earliest *Homo* fossils. Climate upheavals that transformed dense forest into open savannah might have catalysed ancient humans into developing the new technology so that they could hunt or scavenge grass-eating animals, the theory goes.

In 2010, researchers reported an intriguing find at a site called Dikika in Ethiopia. They saw cut marks on bones from 3.4 million years ago, when ape-like creatures such as *Australopithecus afarensis* — the same species as the famous fossil called Lucy — roamed eastern Africa. This hinted at even earlier manufacturing of stone tools. Other researchers questioned the find, attributing the marks to natural wear and tear such as trampling, or bites inflicted by crocodiles.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Oldest stone tools raise questions about their creators](#)