

## What did the first humans to leave Africa look like?

The most comprehensive dataset ever assembled on our early human ancestors provides evidence that the first humans emerged in South Africa, and that the first humans to migrate out of Africa came from a small-bodied species such as *Homo habilis*, aka “Handy Man.”

The theory is a complete shake-up of the human family tree, since it has long been theorized that a relatively tall, muscular human, *Homo erectus* (Upright Man), was the first to leave Africa for Asia and Europe.

Traditionally, Handy Man “was viewed as a little human, with a relatively big brain, bipedalism, and tool-making forming part of the picture,” said Mark Collard, a professor at Simon Fraser University’s Human Evolutionary Studies Program and Department of Archaeology, and senior author of the study in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

Collard, however, added that a revised view of Handy Man is that this human was much more ape-like than us, combining walking on two legs with frequent climbing.

Since the scrappy individuals were thought to have been a favorite snack of non-human predators at the time, one can imagine that Handy Man had to be handy with his feet as well when he was threatened.

The study rejected the theory that *Homo floresiensis* individuals, “Hobbit Humans,” were simply deformed members of our own species. The data instead shows that these tiny residents of the Island of Flores, Indonesia, did indeed belong to a unique species. Collard and his team suspect that the hobbits descended from a small-bodied early *Homo* species, such as Handy Man.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post:** First Humans Out of Africa Were Small, Scrappy