

Fossils fill 'missing link' gap between early humans and predecessors

Early humans were still swinging from trees two million years ago, scientists have said, after confirming a set of contentious fossils represents a “missing link” in humanity’s family tree.

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[N]ow researchers have established that they are closely linked to the Homo genus, representing a bridging species between early humans and their predecessors, proving that early humans were still swinging from trees 2 million years ago.

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Two partial australopith skeletons — a male and a female – were found in 2008 at a collapsed cave in Malapa, in South Africa’s “Cradle of Humankind.”

“Australopithecus” means “southern ape,” a genus of hominins which lived some 2 million years ago.

Their discovery set off years of debate in the scientific community, with some rejecting the idea that they were from a previously undiscovered species with close links to the homo genus and others floating the idea that they were from two different species altogether.

But the new research has laid those suggestions to rest, and outlined “numerous features” the skeletons share with fossils from the homo genus.

Australopithecus sediba’s hands and feet, for instance, show it was spending a good amount of time climbing in trees. The hands have grasping capabilities, which are more advanced than those of Homo habilis, suggesting it, too, was an early tool-user.

Read full, original post: [‘Missing link’ in human history confirmed after long debate](#)