

Challenging the Africa human origin hypothesis: Turkish fossils suggest apes and humans may have shared earlier European ancestry

An ape fossil found in Turkey may controversially suggest that the ancestors of African apes and humans first evolved in Europe before migrating to Africa, a research team says in a new study.

The proposal breaks with the conventional view that hominines — the group that includes humans, the African apes (chimps, bonobos and gorillas) and their fossil ancestors — originated exclusively in Africa.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other ‘disruptive’ innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

In the new study, the researchers analyzed a newly identified ape fossil from the 8.7 million-year-old site of Çorakyerler in central Anatolia. They dubbed the species *Anadoluvius turkae*. “Anadolu” is the modern Turkish word for Anatolia, and “turk” refers to Turkey.

The fossil suggests that *A. turkae* likely weighed about 110 to 130 pounds (50 to 60 kilograms), or about the weight of a large male chimpanzee.

...

The researchers suggest that *A. turkae* and other fossil apes from nearby areas, such as *Ouranopithecus* in Greece and Turkey and *Graecopithecus* in Bulgaria, formed a group of early hominines. This may, in turn, suggest that the earliest hominines arose in Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. Specifically, the team contends that ancient Balkan and Anatolian apes evolved from ancestors in Western and Central Europe.

[This is an excerpt. Read the full article here](#)