

Scientist says Taung Child killed by bird

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A U.S. paleontologist working in South Africa says he has unraveled what the cause of death was for the first ape-man fossil discovered in Africa.

Scientists have argued for decades about what killed the Taung Child found in 1924 -- some had believed the child was killed by leopards.

However, Lee Berger working at South Africa's University of the Witwatersrand suggests that the Taung child had been attacked from above by a bird of prey, the BBC reported Friday.

The Taung child, believed to belong to the humanlike species *Australopithecus africanus*, is considered to be the most photographed and observed fossil in history.

Berger told the BBC the injuries on the Taung Child's skull mimic those of on the skull of a baboon killed by an eagle.

"Can you imagine what it must have been like back then?" Berger asked. "Not only were we afraid of cats, and leopards -- you had to watch for aerial attacks from these ferocious predators preying on your young."

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