

Primate expert discounts Hobbit discovery

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A primate expert at Chicago's Field Museum says a tiny "Hobbit"-like species discovered in Indonesia has to be a pygmy version of modern humans.

Robert Martin is co-author of a paper published Monday in the journal *Anatomical Record*, which argues against the theory that a tiny Hobbit-like people lived in Indonesia 18,000 years ago, the Chicago Sun-Times reports.

Archeologists working on the Indonesia island of Flores two years ago found remains of nine individuals that were less than 3 1/2 feet tall.

Because only one small skull was found, they concluded that they had discovered a tiny Hobbit-like people with a brain smaller than a chimpanzee's.

The problem, according to Martin, is that the stone tools found along with the remains were so sophisticated they could only have come from modern humans.

Martin and his colleagues argue that the skull had to have come from a modern human who happened to have a rare genetic condition called microcephaly that causes the head to be unusually small.

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