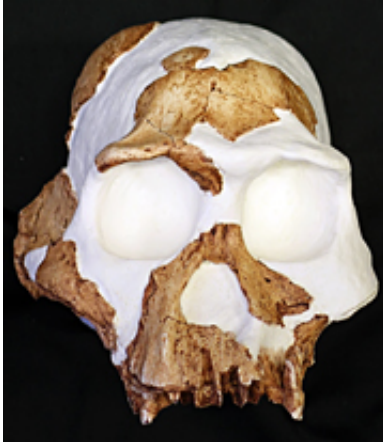


Family tree branches out

May 20 2010



Reconstruction of *Homo gautengensis*. Photo: Darren Curnoe

(PhysOrg.com) -- UNSW anthropologist Dr Darren Curnoe has identified another new early human ancestor in South Africa ? the earliest recognised species of *Homo*.

Our [family tree](#) has grown once again with the identification of another new species of early human ancestor, based on fresh analysis of a partial skull found decades ago in South Africa's famous Sterkfontein Caves, near Johannesburg.

Identified and named as *Homo gautengensis* by [anthropologist](#) Dr Darren Curnoe, of the UNSW School of Biological, Earth Environmental Sciences, the surprise finding is the earliest recognised species of *Homo*. While earlier fossils belong to the genus *Homo*, none have yet been

classified in any species.

The finding will be reported soon in HOMO - *Journal of Comparative Human Biology*.

Dr Curnoe says the broader significance of the find, like the recent discovery of another new African hominin species *Australopithecus sediba* - by a team involving UNSW palaeoanthropologist Dr Andy Herries - lies in what it adds to the surprising number of new human and human-like species announced in recent years and the growing complexity of the human evolutionary story.

More information: Read the full story in the latest issue of UNSW's magazine [Uniken](#) (p6-8).

Provided by University of New South Wales

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