



Grasping for Straws - The Indonesian 'Hobbit'

Editorial Comment by Warren Krug

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“**F**inding ‘rewrites’ history of evolution,” said a headline in our local newspaper regarding an interesting discovery in Indonesia.

Working on a remote Indonesian island, Australian scientists have reported the finding of bones of a human dwarf species which they have named *Homo floresiensis* or Flores Man and nicknamed “The Hobbit” after JRR Tolkien’s fantasy creatures.

Flores Man, actually thought to be a female, measures about 3 feet tall and lived as recently as “18,000” years ago. It had a small grapefruit-sized brain.

According to the “astonished” anthropologists, the fossil is an entirely new creature, fundamentally different from modern humans, but one which lived on the threshold of recorded history. They probably crossed paths with the ancestors of today’s islanders.

Flores Man defies conventional wisdom which says modern humans crowded out other upright-walking species about 160,000 years ago and that Africa doesn’t hold all the answers to “human evolution.”

Yet, as usual when a discovery like this is made, there is plenty of confusion.

Despite its small brain size, Flores Man was smart enough to make stone tools, light fires, and organize group hunts for meat.

Moreover, Indonesian scientists are now saying the fossil is *Homo sapiens*, not a new species, and that the creature lived only 1,300 to 1,800 years ago.

In commenting on this discovery, Carl Weigand, an AiG scientist (<http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2004/1108hobbit.asp>) notes many reports from missionaries in the early 1900s about finding “little people” who were different from modern Aborigines. He also reminds us that brain size is not related to intelligence.

Nevertheless, the fanfare shows how desperate some scientists are to find some transitional fossils that might bridge the gap between fish and humans.

But where are the fish growing legs to become land animals? Where are the lizards growing wings to become birds? If fossils like these were to be found, the world would be impressed. LSI

—Warren Krug, editor