

By E. Delson and P. Andrews

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**Kenyapithecinae**

A subfamily of Hominidae including a variety of mostly African earlier Miocene fossil apes. For many years, the Miocene great apes, broadly speaking, were included in the subfamily Dryopithecinae, placed either in the Pongidae or the Hominidae, depending upon the viewpoint of the respective author. In 1992, P. Andrews reviewed the evolution and systematics of this group, distinguishing a number of subclades: Afropithecini, Kenyapithecini, and Dryopithecini. These three were interpreted as successively more derived (in a "modern ape" direction), especially based upon incomplete postcranial evidence. They shared hominid dental characters such as relatively enlarged upper premolars and (except for Dryopithecini) rather thick molar enamel, as well as an elbow-joint morphology indicative of greater stability than in earlier catarrhines. Continued reassessment of the relationships among these taxa has led to a modification proposed in this volume.

*Dryopithecus* is now seen to be probably more derived than the other genera in its postcranium, especially, and it is, therefore, placed in a distinct subfamily: Dryopithecinae may be near the common ancestry of the living Ponginae and Homininae, and several poorly known genera such as *Lufengpithecus* may be placed there tentatively. This isolation of *Dryopithecus* makes it necessary to provide a new name for the subfamily including Afropithecini and Kenyapithecini, and the term *Kenyapithecinae* is used here. All three of these taxa may be paraphyletic, or "horizontal," in nature, but they are diagnosable, and, with greater knowledge of the included

genera, their validity may become more certain. Each of these genera is discussed in the encyclopedia in a separate entry.

Kenyapithecinae

Afropithecini

†*Afropithecus*

†*Heliopithecus*

?†*Otavipithecus*

"†*Kenyapithecus*"

? *Morotopithecus*

Kenyapithecini

†*Kenyapithecus*

†*Griphopithecus*

†extinct

*See also* Africa, East; Africa, Southern; Afropithecus; Asia, Western; Dryopithecinae; Dryopithecus; Griphopithecus; Heliopithecus; Hominidae; Homininae; Hominoidea; Kenyapithecus; Miocene; Morotopithecus; Otavipithecus; Proconsulidae. [E.D., P.A.]

**Further Readings**

Andrews, P. (1992) Evolution and environment in the Hominoidea. *Nature* 360:641–646.

Begun, D.R. (1994) Relations among the great apes and humans: New interpretations based on the fossil great ape *Dryopithecus*. *Yrbk. Phys. Anthropol.* 37:11–63.