Homo sapiens' origin is not africa: looking into evidences of man's true origin

There is a common notion that man’s birthplace is Africa. Dr. Chuchward, a known anthropologist, confirmed earlier findings of anthropologists (through examination of fossil remains) found out that the oldest ancestors of the human race originated in Africa. One of the anthropologists who ventured into Africa to study human fossil is Dr. Leakey (Origin of Man: Human Beginnings 1). In 1963, Leakey found human fossils dating back to 1. 2 million years ago in East Africa (Rift Valley Region), the oldest known fossils of hominids (Origin of Man: Human Beginnings 1).

The theory was emphasized in many documentaries, usually sponsored by the National Geographic or the American Anthropological Society. Much of the content of these documentaries pointed man’s origin in the Rift Valley region in East Africa. On January 11, 1988, the Newsweek Magazine published an article entitled “ The Search for Adam and Eve. ” DNA tracing proved that the origin of man can be found to a single woman who lived in Sub-Saharan Africa between 80 000 and 200 000 years ago (Origin of Man: Human Beginnings 1).

Her descendants migrated first to the Arabian Peninsula, then to India and Europe and to the rest of the world. This was confirmed by another scientist, Dr. Eric Higgs of Cambridge University. By studying the ancient migration of men, he theorized that the first man of Europe was from central and east Africa. It was about 200 00 years ago (prior to the Ice Age). Professor Chester Chard of the University of Wisconsin noted was able to prove that there existed in the remote past migration routes. Much of the routes’ origin is in Africa. Dr.

Leakey once said that " it is inconceivable that man, the most curious and mobile of all animals, would not have come to America when the elephants, the tapirs and the deer came from Asia ... man spread out from Africa to Asia to Europe..." (Origin of Man: Human Beginnings 1). This view of man's origin had been confirmed and reconfirmed by the succeeding generation of anthropologists. For example, in 19888, Christopher Stringer and Peter Andrews pointed out that Homo sapiens had evolved from a Homo erectus group some 200 000 years ago (Bakalar1). This Homo erectus group later became extinct and replaced by their descendants, the Homo sapiens.

Homo sapiens later migrated to Asia, Europe, and to the rest of the world. A known geologist, John Martyn was able to recover human fossils in the Great Rift Valley (in Kenya). Using a new method of dating fossils, he found out that the human skulls were 2. 4 million years old. Recently, some scientists are challenging the assumption that man's origin is Africa. Professor Robin Dennell of the University of Sheffield in England and Wil Roebroeks of Leiden University in the Netherlands believed that early human fossils discovered over the past ten years indicate that humanlike or subhuman species had its origin in Asia (Bakalar 1).

They pointed to two significant finds of the century. A 1. 75 million year old small brained human fossils was found in Dmanisi, Georgia indicating that it was the descendant of Homo erectus living in the Asian continent in the past 2 million years. Another 18 000 year old hobbit fossils was found in the island of Flores in Indonesia (Bakalar 1). The two scientists theorized that because of the relatively small brains of the recent finds, large-scale migration is not possible. Professor Dennell said, " What seems reasonably

clear now is that the earliest hominins in Asia did not need large brains or bodies" (prerequisite for migration).

The two argued that there were no fossil or archeological proofs to support the claim that early humans moved from southern Africa to the Nile Valley in thee early Pleistocene period about 1. 8 million years ago to 11 500 years ago (Bakalar 1). They also argued that though the earliest evidence of a human ancestor in Asia appeared about 1. 8 million years ago (based from a human cranium found in Mojokerto, Indonesia), it cannot be said that no older specimens can be found in Asia.

To support this claim, Stringer said " Evidence of humans in the Caucasus [region of Asia], China, and Java more than 1. 6 million years ago implies either a very rapid spread from Africa after 1. 8 million years ago, or that such populations were established outside Africa earlier than present evidence suggests" (Bakalar 2). He added that rapid migration " out of Africa" was not possible owing to the fact that early climate prevented homo species from migrating out of Africa. The two said that most interpretations of early and recent findings pointed that the earliest " human" tools found in the Asian continent are usually attributed to Homo erectus (species usually thought of having its origin from Africa).

H. ergaster is an African species assumed by many scientists as both the progenitor of Homo erectus and the only primate capable of migrating out of Africa (Bakalar 2). The body form of H. ergaster is the final proof that it is the remote ancestors of the Homo sapiens. Its body has humanlike proportions; its brain is capable of learning 9e. g. how to hunt game animals). There is though one flaw in this argument. Australopithecines (which is an older form

of humanlike primates had virtually colonized the African region by 3. 5 million years ago.

" Similar grasslands extended across Asia at the time, suggesting that Australopithecines could have survived quite well in the region," the authors said. Added to that, fossil evidence for H. ergaster in the early Pleistocene period is generally unknown. This suggests that H. ergaster was not able to migrate " out of Africa" by the time Asia was teeming with early men (Bakalar 2). This interpretation was supported by the discovery of human fossils in Flores, Indonesia. The discovered fossils were named as H. floresiensis (Asian origin). Two facts were really staggering for many scientists.

The age of the fossils was relatively the same with that of the fossils found in Africa. And, H. floresiensis was capable of making primitive tools: tools which were used in hunting (Bakalar 2). The implication of the first fact is: distribution of early human populations across both the African and Asian continents was generally uniform (by 2. 6 million years ago). The two authors hypothesized that it is possible for either a multiple point origin (found in different parts of the world) or a single-point Asian origin of the human species.

The two authors noted " The unresolved status of intriguing Flores finds attributed to H. floresiensis leaves open the possibility that this species is the end result and last survivor of an ancient migration of very primitive humans, or even prehumans that formerly existed more widely across Asia" (Bakalar 2). The implication of the second fact is: stone tools used by early men across Asia did not point to an African origin nor did represent an

advanced state of development. Added to that, the two authors concluded that “ the Dmanisi [Georgia] hominins are an extremely primitive version of H. erectus that is the ancestor of the H. erectus populations in both Java and those in East Asia” (Bakalar 2).

Thus, there is a high probability that the origin of early men rests on the continent of Asia. The theory of Multiregional Evolution was examined in the article of Wolpoff and Caspari entitled “ No, Homo Sapiens Did Not Originate in Africa” (in the book Taking Sides, World History, V. 1). The theory assumed that there are multiple points of man’s evolution in the remote past. Specifically, this theory adhered to the concept of polytypism. Polytypism is the existence of observable average differences between populations.

Since different populations of early men differed significantly on certain measurements, multiregionalists argued that patterns of migration varied across potential routes. Some populations would become isolated, and hence, might show significant differences over the course of time. Some populations might become almost identical in terms of physiological characteristics because of cultural or biological proximity. Thus, multiregionalists argued that the single-point origin of the human species cannot explain the differences found across early human populations.

The two suggested that local evolutionary events took place across the world after the appearance of Homo sapiens. According to the two, populations of Homo evolved from a single species. Thus, the propensity of speciation between Pleistocene human populations was not possible (speciation is the splitting of one species into two) (Mitchell and Mitchell, 12-13). This hypothesis became a point of challenge to the prevailing Out of Africa Model

which states that Homo sapiens evolved recently as a new species in Africa, and then dispersed throughout the world (by routes).

The Out of Africa Model also claimed that Homo sapiens were responsible for replacing the existing human populations of those regions without biologically mixing with them. The two pointed out that evidences of an earlier revolution took place in a small group isolated from australopithecine species. Thus, Homo sapiens remained significantly different from australopithecines in both anatomy and physiology (Mitchell and Mitchell, 13-15).