

# oldest human remains

**oldest human remains** provide invaluable insight into the evolution, migration, and lifestyle of early humans and their ancestors. These ancient fossils and skeletal discoveries have helped scientists piece together the complex story of human origins, pushing back the timeline of when *Homo sapiens* and related species first appeared on Earth. Through meticulous excavation and advanced dating techniques, researchers have identified some of the earliest evidence of human life, revealing details about morphology, behavior, and environmental adaptation. This article explores the most significant oldest human remains found to date, the methods used to study them, and their implications for understanding human history. From the well-known fossils of *Homo erectus* to the surprising discoveries of archaic hominins, these remains shed light on the deep past of humanity. The following sections will cover the key discoveries, dating techniques, and the evolutionary significance of these ancient finds.

- Key Discoveries of the Oldest Human Remains
- Dating Techniques Used for Ancient Human Fossils
- Significant Species Represented by the Oldest Remains
- Geographical Distribution of the Oldest Human Fossils
- Implications of the Oldest Human Remains on Human Evolution

## Key Discoveries of the Oldest Human Remains

The oldest human remains discovered to date span a wide range of hominin species and have been found across multiple continents. Each discovery contributes unique information about early human anatomy and behavior. These fossils date back millions of years, with some belonging to species that are direct ancestors or close relatives of modern humans.

### **Sahelanthropus tchadensis**

*Sahelanthropus tchadensis* is considered one of the oldest known species in the human lineage, with fossils dating to approximately 7 million years ago. Discovered in Chad, Central Africa, this species exhibits a combination of ape-like and human-like traits, suggesting it may represent a common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees.

### **Ardipithecus ramidus**

Dating back around 4.4 million years, *Ardipithecus ramidus* fossils were found in Ethiopia.

These remains provide important clues about early bipedalism and habitat preferences, displaying adaptations for both tree climbing and walking on two legs.

## **Australopithecus afarensis**

One of the most famous early human ancestors, *Australopithecus afarensis* lived between 3.9 and 2.9 million years ago. The discovery of the partial skeleton known as "Lucy" in Ethiopia has been crucial for understanding early hominin locomotion and morphology.

## **Homo erectus**

*Homo erectus* is among the longest-surviving hominin species, existing from roughly 1.9 million to 110,000 years ago. Fossils found in Africa, Asia, and Europe show this species had a larger brain and body size compared to earlier ancestors, indicating advanced tool use and social behavior.

## **Dating Techniques Used for Ancient Human Fossils**

Accurately dating the oldest human remains is essential for constructing the timeline of human evolution. Several scientific methods have been developed and refined to estimate the age of fossils and the surrounding sediments.

### **Radiometric Dating**

Radiometric dating, including methods such as potassium-argon (K-Ar) and uranium-series dating, measures the decay of radioactive isotopes in volcanic layers above or below fossil-bearing strata. This technique provides reliable age estimates for fossils millions of years old.

### **Carbon-14 Dating**

Carbon-14 dating is effective for dating remains up to about 50,000 years old. It measures the decay of carbon-14 isotopes in organic material, making it useful for relatively recent human fossils and artifacts.

### **Stratigraphy**

Stratigraphic analysis involves studying the layers of rock or sediment in which fossils are found. By understanding the sequence of deposition, scientists can determine relative ages of fossils in relation to one another.

# Significant Species Represented by the Oldest Remains

The oldest human remains represent a diverse array of hominin species that illustrate the evolutionary path from early primates to modern *Homo sapiens*. Each species exhibits distinct anatomical and behavioral traits.

- **Sahelanthropus tchadensis:** Possibly the earliest known hominin, combining ape and human characteristics.
- **Ardipithecus ramidus:** Early evidence of bipedalism and arboreal adaptations.
- **Australopithecus afarensis:** Well-known for its upright walking ability and relatively small brain size.
- **Homo habilis:** One of the earliest members of the *Homo* genus, notable for tool use.
- **Homo erectus:** Advanced features, larger brain, and evidence of migration out of Africa.
- **Homo neanderthalensis:** Close relatives of modern humans who lived until about 40,000 years ago.

## Geographical Distribution of the Oldest Human Fossils

The oldest human remains have been found primarily in Africa, supporting the theory that modern humans originated on this continent. However, fossils discovered in Asia and Europe have also played a critical role in understanding migration and diversification.

### Africa: The Cradle of Humanity

Africa hosts the majority of the oldest hominin fossils, including species such as *Sahelanthropus*, *Ardipithecus*, and *Australopithecus*. Sites in East Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, have yielded numerous crucial discoveries.

### Asia and Europe

Fossils of *Homo erectus* and other archaic humans have been found in Asia, including in Indonesia and China, indicating early migrations out of Africa. European sites have also produced Neanderthal remains, contributing to the understanding of human evolution in different environments.

# **Implications of the Oldest Human Remains on Human Evolution**

The study of the oldest human remains has profound implications for understanding the evolutionary processes that shaped modern humans. These fossils provide evidence of anatomical changes, behavioral adaptations, and migration patterns.

## **Evolutionary Timeline Refinement**

Discoveries of ancient fossils have continuously refined the timeline of human evolution, pushing back the origins of bipedalism, tool use, and brain enlargement. This helps clarify when key traits emerged.

## **Understanding Human Adaptability**

Oldest human remains reveal how early hominins adapted to diverse environments, from dense forests to open savannas. Such adaptability was crucial for survival and eventual global dispersal.

## **Insights into Human-Ancestor Relationships**

Comparisons of ancient fossils allow researchers to better understand the relationships between different hominin species, including which lineages led directly to *Homo sapiens* and which represent side branches.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are the oldest known human remains ever discovered?**

The oldest known human remains are those of *Homo sapiens* found in Jebel Irhoud, Morocco, dating back approximately 300,000 years.

### **Where were the oldest human remains found?**

The oldest human remains were discovered at the Jebel Irhoud archaeological site in Morocco.

### **How do scientists date the oldest human remains?**

Scientists use methods like radiocarbon dating, thermoluminescence, and uranium-series dating to determine the age of ancient human remains.

# **What significance do the oldest human remains have for understanding human evolution?**

The oldest human remains provide critical insights into early Homo sapiens anatomy, behavior, and migration patterns, helping to trace the evolution of modern humans.

# **Have the oldest human remains changed our understanding of where humans originated?**

Yes, discoveries like those in Morocco suggest that Homo sapiens evolved across Africa rather than in a single location, challenging previous theories of a more localized origin.

# **What species do the oldest human remains belong to?**

The oldest human remains primarily belong to early Homo sapiens, but some ancient remains belong to other hominin species like Homo erectus and Neanderthals.

# **Are there any controversies surrounding the oldest human remains?**

Yes, debates continue regarding the classification, exact dating, and interpretation of some ancient remains, which can affect our understanding of human evolutionary history.

## **Additional Resources**

### *1. The Dawn of Humanity: Unearthing the Oldest Human Remains*

This book explores the discovery and significance of some of the oldest human fossils ever found. It delves into the archaeological sites where these remains were uncovered and discusses what they reveal about early human evolution. The narrative combines scientific research with captivating stories of exploration.

### *2. Ancient Bones: Tracing the Origins of Our Species*

Focusing on the oldest skeletal remains of humans, this work examines how physical anthropology helps reconstruct our ancestral past. It highlights key fossil discoveries and explains how these findings have reshaped our understanding of human origins. The book is accessible to both scholars and general readers interested in paleoanthropology.

### *3. First Footsteps: The Archaeology of Early Humans*

This volume investigates the earliest traces of human life through fossilized bones and artifacts. It contextualizes the oldest human remains within the broader framework of prehistoric archaeology. Readers gain insight into the methods used to date and analyze ancient human fossils.

### *4. Oldest Ancestors: The Fossil Record of Human Evolution*

Providing a comprehensive overview of the fossil record, this book charts the evolutionary journey from early hominins to modern Homo sapiens. It focuses on the oldest human remains and discusses their anatomical features and significance. The author integrates

findings from multiple disciplines to paint a full picture of our distant past.

#### 5. *Echoes from the Past: Discovering the Oldest Human Fossils*

This engaging read chronicles the landmark discoveries of ancient human bones and what they tell us about early human behavior and migration. The book includes vivid descriptions of excavation sites and the scientists behind the discoveries. It also addresses debates and controversies within the field.

#### 6. *Primordial Origins: The Search for the Oldest Human Remains*

A detailed account of ongoing efforts to locate and study the earliest human fossils, this book highlights recent technological advances in dating and analysis. It presents case studies of significant finds and discusses their implications for understanding human ancestry. The writing balances technical detail with compelling storytelling.

#### 7. *Skeletons of Time: Unveiling the Oldest Human Ancestors*

This book examines the skeletal remains that have provided crucial evidence about our earliest ancestors. It explains how these fossils have helped scientists piece together human evolutionary history. The text is enriched with illustrations and photographs from notable archaeological digs.

#### 8. *Human Beginnings: Insights from the Oldest Fossil Discoveries*

Focusing on the oldest fossil discoveries, this book explores the environmental and cultural contexts of early human life. It sheds light on how ancient humans adapted to their surroundings and evolved over millions of years. The narrative weaves scientific data with stories of discovery and interpretation.

#### 9. *The Fossil Trail: Tracking the Oldest Human Remains Across Continents*

This work traces the geographical journey of the oldest human fossils across Africa, Asia, and Europe. It highlights key sites and the significance of each discovery in mapping human migration patterns. The book also discusses how these remains have influenced modern understanding of early human dispersal.

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Oldest Companions, Shipman untangles the genetic and archaeological evidence of the first dogs. She follows the trail of the wolf-dog, neither prehistoric wolf nor modern dog, whose bones offer tantalizing clues about the earliest stages of domestication. She considers the enigma of the dingo, not quite domesticated yet not entirely wild, who has lived intimately with humans for thousands of years while actively resisting control or training. Shipman tells how scientists are shedding new light on the origins of the unique relationship between our two species, revealing how deep bonds formed between humans and canines as our guardians, playmates, shepherds, and hunters. Along the journey together, dogs have changed physically, behaviorally, and emotionally, as humans too have been transformed. Dogs' labor dramatically expanded the range of human capability, altering our diets and habitats and contributing to our very survival. Shipman proves that we cannot understand our own history as a species without recognizing the central role that dogs have played in it.

**oldest human remains:** *Evolution of Early Humans to Modern Humans (FREE BOOK)* by Darshan Singh Darshan Singh, 2025-07-11 The book *Evolution of Early Humans to Modern Humans* by Darshan Singh is the second in a trilogy titled "Universe is the Mother of Humans", traces human development from ape-like ancestors over 6 million years ago to modern Homo sapiens. It covers key stages like bipedalism, brain growth, tool use, migration out of Africa, agriculture, and cultural evolution. It also explores the origins of language and world religions, highlighting how human societies and beliefs evolved over 130,000 years.

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**oldest human remains:** *The Lakes of the Basin of Mexico* Carlos E. Cordova, 2022-11-01 This book is a review of research on the prehistoric and historic evolution of the Basin of Mexico's lacustrine systems. Based on this review, the book presents a model of long and short-term natural lacustrine dynamics as the basis for understanding the processes of human adaptation and transformation of the aquatic ecosystems of the Basin of Mexico. Although only remains of the former lakes exist, the book stresses the importance of the knowledge of the former natural and cultural history of the lakes. In this sense, the book addresses the misconceptions and

misinterpretations of the lakes that still exist in the literature and the media and that do not reflect the real nature of the lakes in the past. Therefore, the book attempts to not only feed into the local knowledge of the lakes, but also contribute to the worldwide knowledge of lacustrine dynamics and human populations that lived in and around them. The book should be of interest to geographers, geologists, archaeologists, natural historians and environmental scientists, civil engineers, city planners and those involved in the management of natural resources.

**oldest human remains: Interrogating Human Origins** Martin Porr, Jacqueline Matthews, 2019-12-06 *Interrogating Human Origins* encourages new critical engagements with the study of human origins, broadening the range of approaches to bring in postcolonial theories, and begin to explore the decolonisation of this complex topic. The collection of chapters presented in this volume creates spaces for expansion of critical and unexpected conversations about human origins research. Authors from a variety of disciplines and research backgrounds, many of whom have strayed beyond their usual disciplinary boundaries to offer their unique perspectives, all circle around the big questions of what it means to be and become human. Embracing and encouraging diversity is a recognition of the deep complexities of human existence in the past and the present, and it is vital to critical scholarship on this topic. This book constitutes a starting point for increased interrogation of the important and wide-ranging field of research into human origins. It will be of interest to scholars across multiple disciplines, and particularly to those seeking to understand our ancient past through a more diverse lens.

**oldest human remains: Deep Time Dreaming** Billy Griffiths, 2018-02-26 People would have known about Australia before they saw it. Smoke billowing above the sea spoke of a land that lay beyond the horizon. A dense cloud of migrating birds may have pointed the way. But the first Australians were voyaging into the unknown. Soon after Billy Griffiths joins his first archaeological dig as camp manager and cook, he is hooked. Equipped with a historian's inquiring mind, he embarks on a journey through time, seeking to understand the extraordinary deep history of the Australian continent. *Deep Time Dreaming* is the passionate product of that journey. It investigates a twin revolution: the reassertion of Aboriginal identity in the second half of the twentieth century, and the uncovering of the traces of ancient Australia. It explores what it means to live in a place of great antiquity, with its complex questions of ownership and belonging. It is about a slow shift in national consciousness: the deep time dreaming that has changed the way many of us relate to this continent and its enduring, dynamic human history. John Mulvaney Book Award: Winner Ernest Scott Prize: Winner NSW Premier's Literary Awards: Winner - Book of the Year NSW Premier's Literary Awards: Winner - Douglas Stewart Prize for Non-fiction Victorian Premier's Literary Awards: Highly Commended Queensland Literary Awards: Shortlisted Prime Minister's Literary Awards: Shortlisted Educational Publishing Awards: Shortlisted Australian Book Industry Awards: Longlisted CHASS Book Prize: Longlisted 'What a revelatory work! If you wish to hear the voice of our continent's history before the written word, *Deep Time Dreaming* is a must read. The freshest, most important book about our past in years.' —Tim Flannery 'Once every generation a book comes along that marks the emergence of a powerful new literary voice and shifts our understanding of the nation's past. Billy Griffiths' *Deep Time Dreaming* is one such book. Deeply researched, creatively conceived and beautifully written, it charts the expansion of archaeological knowledge in Australia for the first time. No other book has managed to convey the mystery and intricacy of Indigenous antiquity in quite the same way. Read it: it will change the way you see Australian history.' —Mark McKenna, historian 'Billy Griffiths' *Deep Time Dreaming: Uncovering Ancient Australia* is a remarkable book, and one destined, I believe, to become a modern classic of Australian history writing. Written in vivid, evocative prose, this book will grip both the expert and the general reader alike.' —Iain McCalman, author of *The Reef: A Passionate History: The Great Barrier Reef from Captain Cook to Climate Change*

**oldest human remains: Surgery, Gynecology & Obstetrics** Franklin Henry Martin, 1918

**oldest human remains: Encyclopedic Dictionary of Archaeology** Barbara Ann Kipfer, 2000-04-30 A modern, comprehensive compilation of more than 7,000 entries covering themes,

concepts, and discoveries in archaeology written in nontechnical language and tailored to meet the needs of professionals, students and general readers. The main subject areas include artifacts; branches of archaeology, chronology; culture; features; flora and fauna; geography; geology; language; people; related fields; sites; structures; techniques and methods; terms and theories; and tools.

**oldest human remains: Hidden Fossil Caves** Amelia Khatri, AI, 2025-02-15 Hidden Fossil Caves explores how caves serve as natural time capsules, offering vital clues about Earth's history, prehistoric life, and human evolution. Delving into subterranean geological formations, the book reveals how these archives preserve ancient remains, providing insights into extinct megafauna and early human adaptation to changing climates. These caves, shaped by processes like karstification and tectonic activity, offer a unique glimpse into past ecosystems. The book progresses from the geological processes that create and shape caves to notable fossil discoveries around the globe, linking cave fossil evidence to major events in Earth's history, such as mass extinctions. By integrating geological, paleontological, and anthropological perspectives, Hidden Fossil Caves emphasizes the interconnectedness of these fields. Ultimately, understanding the past, as preserved in these Hidden Fossil Caves, can inform present-day conservation efforts and help us navigate future environmental challenges.

**oldest human remains: The Archaeology of Human Bones** Simon Mays, 2021-03-01 The Archaeology of Human Bones provides an up to date account of the analysis of human skeletal remains from archaeological sites, introducing students to the anatomy of bones and teeth and the nature of the burial record. Drawing from studies around the world, this book illustrates how the scientific study of human remains can shed light upon important archaeological and historical questions. This new edition reflects the latest developments in scientific techniques and their application to burial archaeology. Current scientific methods are explained, alongside a critical consideration of their strengths and weaknesses. The book has also been thoroughly revised to reflect changes in the ways in which scientific studies of human remains have influenced our understanding of the past, and has been updated to reflect developments in ethical debates that surround the treatment of human remains. There is now a separate chapter devoted to archaeological fieldwork on burial grounds, and the chapters on DNA and ethics have been completely rewritten. This edition of The Archaeology of Human Bones provides not only a more up to date but also a more comprehensive overview of this crucial area of archaeology. Written in a clear style with technical jargon kept to a minimum, it continues to be a key work for archaeology students.

**oldest human remains: Islands of Inquiry** Geoffrey Richard Clark, Sue O'Connor, Bryan Foss Leach, 2008-06-01 Many of the papers in this volume present new and innovative research into the processes of maritime colonisation, processes that affect archaeological contexts from islands to continents. Others shift focus from process to the archaeology of maritime places from the Bering to the Torres Straits, providing highly detailed discussions of how living by and with the sea is woven into all elements of human life from subsistence to trade and to ritual. Of equal importance are more abstract discussions of islands as natural places refashioned by human occupation, either through the introduction of new organisms or new systems of production and consumption. These transformation stories gain further texture (and variety) through close examinations of some of the more significant consequences of colonisation and migration, particularly the creation of new cultural identities. A final set of papers explores the ways in which the techniques of archaeological sciences have provided insights into the fauna of the islands and the human history of such places.--Provided by publisher.

**oldest human remains: Historical Dictionary of Georgia** Alexander Mikaberidze, 2015-02-06 Situated in the breathtaking Caucasus Mountains between the Black and the Caspian Seas, the country of Georgia sits at the crossroads between Europe and Asia; it has gone through more turbulence and change in the last twenty five years—the casting off of the Soviet regime, a civil war, two ethno-territorial conflicts, economic collapse, corruption, government inefficiency, and massive

emigration—than most countries go through in 250 years. This small nation's strategic location at the crossroads of different civilizations has been a curse as well as a blessing. Once a battlefield between the ancient empires and the Christian and Islamic worlds, today it is caught between its NATO aspirations and its location in Russia's backyard. Yet, despite all challenges and hardships, this resilient and ancient country, with thousands of years of winemaking, three-thousand years of statehood, and almost two millennia of Christianity, continues to survive and thrive. Historical Dictionary of Georgia, Second Edition through its chronology, glossary, introduction, appendixes, maps, bibliography, and over 900 hundreds of cross-referenced dictionary entries on important persons, places, events, and institutions and significant political, economic, social, and cultural aspects, traces Georgia's history and provides a compass for the direction the country is heading. This book is an excellent access point for students, researchers, and anyone wanting to know more about Georgia.

**oldest human remains: Literary Digest** , 1909

**oldest human remains: *Entering America*** David B. Madsen, 2004-09-16 Provides up-to-date information on the nature of environmental and cultural conditions in northeast Asia and Beringia (the Bering land bridge) immediately prior to the Last Glacial Maximum.

**oldest human remains: *Creation vs. Evolution*** Frederick Guttman, In the last two centuries, a powerful war has begun against all classes that call themselves theists. Clearly the Catholic occultism of 14 centuries left strong meya, especially in Europe. The Inquisition, that is, the persecutions, the murders, the arbitrariness, the robberies and the monopoly of Rome, arrived even at the dawn of the Second World War, but the worst damage caused by them was to make the world see in Catholicism the representative image of God, and as such, a great hatred was created for everything related to religion. We know that Catholicism was born in the year 325 AD in the days of Constantine, but the religious dictatorship was not born there, because 3 centuries later, another pioneer revived religious wars, putting them at the level of battle lines. Between Islam and Catholicism they led the free world to they detested God, because in them they saw a reflection of the God that the Bible spoke of. Although the true message of God was lost at the end of the first century at the time of its precursors, the Messianic Jews or Christian Jews - as they were called in Antioch - had perished.

**oldest human remains: *The Palaeolithic Origins of Human Burial*** Paul Pettitt, 2010-12-20 Humans are unique in that they expend considerable effort and ingenuity in disposing of the dead. Some of the recognisable ways we do this are visible in the Palaeolithic archaeology of the Ice Age. The Palaeolithic Origins of Human Burial takes a novel approach to the long-term development of human mortuary activity - the various ways we deal with the dead and with dead bodies. It is the first comprehensive survey of Palaeolithic mortuary activity in the English language. Observations in the modern world as to how chimpanzees behave towards their dead allow us to identify 'core' areas of behaviour towards the dead that probably have very deep evolutionary antiquity. From that point, the palaeontological and archaeological records of the Pliocene and Pleistocene are surveyed. The core chapters of the book survey the mortuary activities of early hominins, archaic members of the genus Homo, early Homo sapiens, the Neanderthals, the Early and Mid Upper Palaeolithic, and the Late Upper Palaeolithic world. Burial is a striking component of Palaeolithic mortuary activity, although existing examples are odd and this probably does not reflect what modern societies believe burial to be, and modern ways of thinking of the dead probably arose only at the very end of the Pleistocene. When did symbolic aspects of mortuary ritual evolve? When did the dead themselves become symbols? In discussing such questions, The Palaeolithic Origins of Human Burial offers an engaging contribution to the debate on modern human origins. It is illustrated throughout, includes up-to-date examples from the Lower to Late Upper Palaeolithic, including information hitherto unpublished.

**oldest human remains: Dental Record** , 1909

**oldest human remains: *The Creationist Writings of Byron C. Nelson*** Paul Nelson, 2021-10-17 Originally published in 1995 this is the fifth volume in the series Creationism in 20th

Century America. It re-publishes *After Its Kind* – a critique on theories of biological evolution and a defense of the biblical account of creation which Nelson wrote when he was a Pastor in New Jersey where he also attended classes in genetics and zoology at Rutgers university. His 1931 volume *The Deluge Story in Stone: A History of the Flood Theory of Geology*, also reprinted here was continuously in print until the 1960s. As his scientific and theological correspondence expanded in the wake of his publications, Nelson became further involved in the 'evolution debates'. During the late 1930s his writings concentrated on early man and the glacial phenomena he saw all about him in Wisconsin and he compiled the materials he thought necessary to relate Scripture to the evidence of human antiquity.

**oldest human remains: Ancestral DNA, Human Origins, and Migrations** Rene J. Herrera, Ralph Garcia-Bertrand, 2018-06-13 *Ancestral DNA, Human Origins, and Migrations* describes the genesis of humans in Africa and the subsequent story of how our species migrated to every corner of the globe. Different phases of this journey are presented in an integrative format with information from a number of disciplines, including population genetics, evolution, anthropology, archaeology, climatology, linguistics, art, music, folklore and history. This unique approach weaves a story that has synergistic impact in the clarity and level of understanding that will appeal to those researching, studying, and interested in population genetics, evolutionary biology, human migrations, and the beginnings of our species. - Integrates research and information from the fields of genetics, evolution, anthropology, archaeology, climatology, linguistics, art, music, folklore and history, among others - Presents the content in an entertaining and synergistic style to facilitate a deep understanding of human population genetics - Informs on the origins and recent evolution of our species in an approachable manner

**oldest human remains: Bones** Elaine Dewar, 2011-03-04 Scientists not so long ago unanimously believed that people first walked to the New World from northeast Asia across the Bering land bridge at the end of the Ice Age 11,000 years ago. But in the last ten years, new tools applied to old bones have yielded evidence that tells an entirely different story. In *Bones*, Elaine Dewar records the ferocious struggle in the scientific world to reshape our views of prehistory. She traveled from the Mackenzie River valley in northern Canada to the arid plains of the Brazilian state of Piaui, from the skull-and-bones-lined offices of the Smithsonian Institution to the basement lab of an archaeologist in Washington State who wondered if the FBI was going to come for him. She met scientists at war with each other and sought to see for herself the oldest human remains on these continents. Along the way, she found that the old answer to the question of who were the First Americans was steeped in the bitter tea of racism. *Bones* explores the ambiguous terrain left behind when a scientific paradigm is swept away. It tells the stories of the archaeologists, Native American activists, DNA experts and physical anthropologists scrambling for control of ancient bones of Kennewick Man, Spirit Cave, and the oldest one of all, a woman named Luzia. At stake are professional reputations, lucrative grants, fame, vindication, even the reburial of wandering spirits. The weapons? Lawsuits, threats, violence. The battlefield stretches from Chile to Alaska. Dewar tells the stories that never find their way into scientific papers — stories of mysterious deaths, of the bones of evil shamen and the shadows falling on the lives of scientists who pulled them from the ground. And she asks the new questions arising out of the science of bones and the stories of first peoples: What if Native Americans are right in their belief that they have always been in the Americas and did not migrate to the New World at the end of the Ice Age? What if the New World's human story is as long and complicated as that of the Old? What if the New World and the Old World have always been one?

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