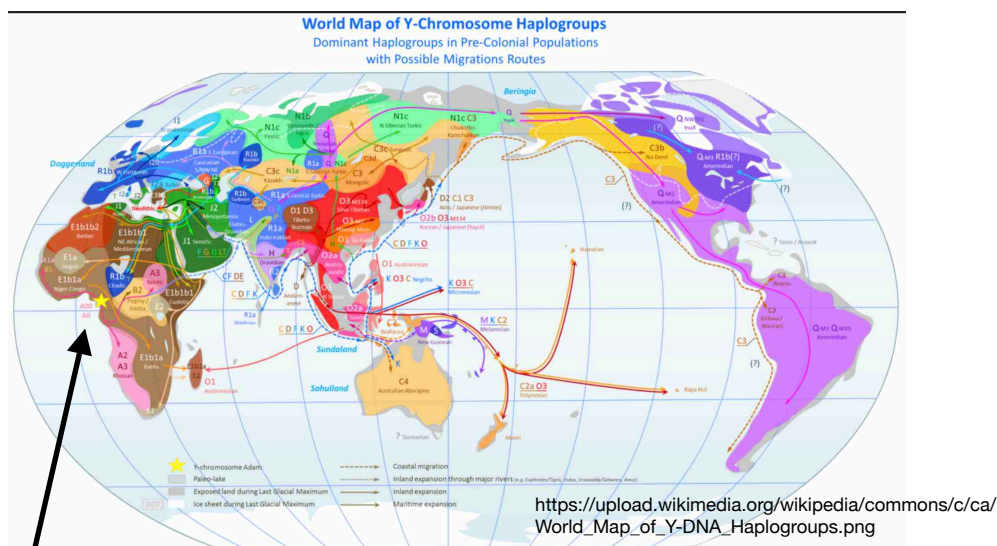


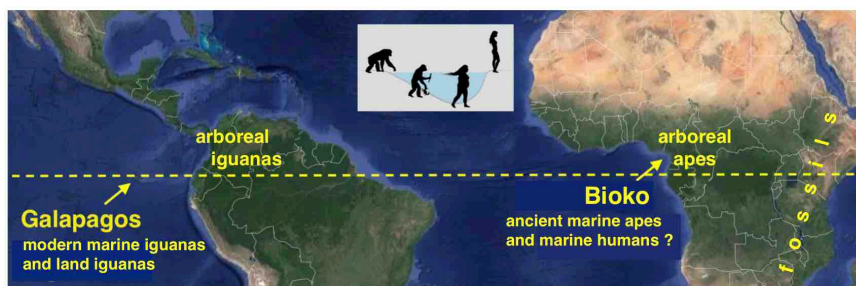
Where, when, & why did humans originate?

The most deeply divergent DNA ('A00 Adam') and oldest language (Khoi-San with 'clicks') are from western Africa, and trace back to about 200,000 years ago. But how could domesticated and anatomically modern humans (people, not wild apes) have evolved in Africa, without leaving an older fossil record of their history? Where was the large human population with 'ghost DNA' actually living?



I think humans evolved on Bioko Island in a Galapagos-like scenario:

Chimpanzees live in western Africa where there are no fossils of any mammal because bones decay too fast. About 6 million years ago, a few chimps may have rafted to the new volcanic islands of Proto-Bioko. There were no trees and no large predators. The only food was seaweed, shellfish, crabs, sea-turtle eggs and sea-turtle meat. Hundreds of huge sea turtles visit the beaches each night to lay eggs. The apes had easy, reliable marine food all year, and rain nearly every day.



Those 'marine' apes became human, probably within the first million years: they evolved bipedal gait, a bald body, blubber, large brain from the marine diet, a nose and descended larynx for diving, multipyramidal kidneys for excess salt, hidden estrus, 46 chromosomes, and other human traits. Marine selection pressures can explain all the differences between humans and chimps.

For the next 5 million years, I envision a population of 1000 to 10,000 naked marine humans living on Bioko, mostly in the water. They developed advanced language, singing in groups. On warm, cloudy, and safe Bioko they did not invent fire, clothes, shoes, tools, or weapons. About 20 to 200 people died each year and their bodies were respectfully buried at sea. They left no fossils.

A few humans got to the mainland and left fossils there (Homo erectus, Neanderthals, etc.). Most stayed on Bioko until 200,000 to 50,000 years ago, then walked over on the Pleistocene land bridge. They invented clothing, weapons, and fire, as needed to survive in Africa and Eurasia.

This paradigm of an isolated marine habitat can cut the 'Gordian knot' of human evolution. But thousands of scientific careers are dedicated to 'untying' that knot, so no one wants it to be 'cut'.