

WHO IS THIS?

The **Oreopithecus** (*Oreopithecus bambolii*) was an anthropomorphic monkey about 1 m. tall and weighed 40 kg. It had small hands with a human like grip and a vertebral column in an upright posture with a bipedal gait. The skeleton, on display is a cast, it dates back to the Miocene period (about 9 million years ago) and was found in a lignite (brown coal) mine in Baccinello (GR), in the Tuscan Maremma, on 2 August 1958.

WHY IS THE DISCOVERY OF OREOPITHECUS IMPORTANT?

From the analysis of the skeletal elements it appears that it has characteristics matching it to monkeys in a strict sense; to the anthropomorphic apes (Gorillas) and to the hominids (Australopithecus, such as Lucy).

The rapid development of the paleontological research will in the near future allow a better understanding of where to place the Oreopithecus in the history of human evolution.



(Pavel Major / ICP)

Did you know?

What is a cast ?

A Cast is a perfect copy of the anthropometric characteristics of a skeleton.

Currently it's made with resins from a silicone matrix, whereas in the past plaster was used.

The reproduction is then coloured and finished by hand. With this technique extremely accurate detailed copies exactly like the original are obtained, in even the tiniest details.

The original skeleton is unique, precious, rare, very fragile and preserved with the greatest care.

Researchers also carry out their studies on high-quality casts.