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The APE in the TREE

An Intellectual & Natural History
of Proconsul

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To the memory of John Russell Napier (1917–1987)



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Author's Note

I have tried throughout this book to give credit to the many friends and collaborators who have played a part in the *Proconsul* story as I see it, but I make no claim to have covered all the research or mentioned all the researchers whose work bears on our understanding of this ape in our tree. This book is intended to serve as a small taste, flavorful enough to attract readers and provoke their curiosity yet small enough to leave them with an appetite for more.

In the interests of telling the story well, I have not stopped at every point to thank the many foundations that have generously provided support for my work discussed here. These have been the National Geographic Society, the National Science Foundation, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Many people at several institutions have also provided invaluable assistance with historical information, notably: Harriet Ritvo of MIT; The Natural History Museum in London and its archivist, Susan Snell; the National Museums of Kenya and its incomparable staff; the Bodleian Library of Oxford University and its archivist, Colin Harris; the Keeper of the Archives at Cambridge University Library, Jacqueline Cox; and the interlibrary loan staff of the Pennsylvania State University library. People who kindly and carefully read portions of the manuscript or checked information include David Begun, Chris Dean, Wendy Dirks, Jay Kelley, Russ Tuttle, Holly Smith, Tanya Smith, and Fred Spoor.

I also want to thank the Leakey family, the Hominid Gang, the people of Rusinga and Mfangano Islands, and everyone who participated in the

various field expeditions and analyses for their help and friendship. Editor Michael Fisher and agent Ralph Vicinanza have been invariably helpful and enthusiastic.

Many of the places where important discoveries have been made are in Africa and have names that will be unfamiliar to some readers. There is a guide to pronunciation at the back of the text.

Though the stories in this book are mine, and are told in my voice, nearly all of the writing has been done by my wife, Pat Shipman, for the simple reason that she is a better writer than I am.

Alan Walker
State College, Pennsylvania

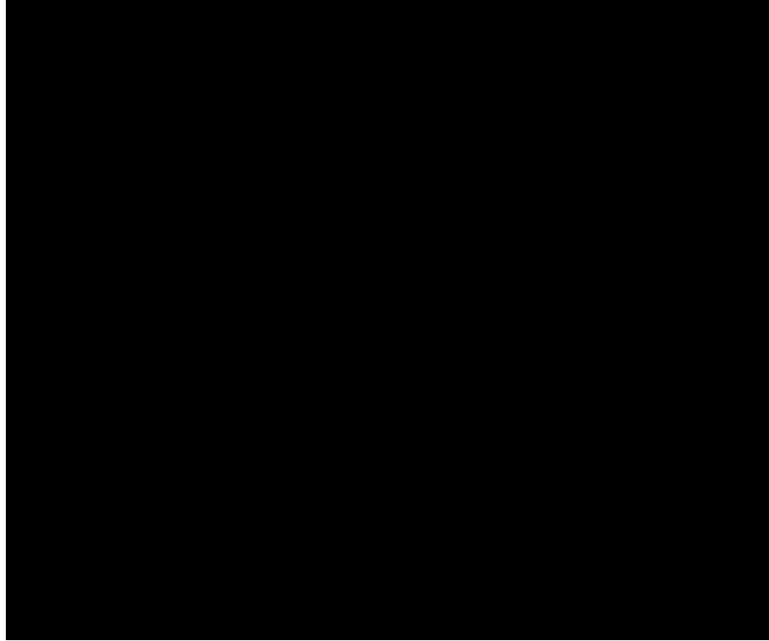
Prologue

He caused a sensation at the Folies Bergère in Paris. Elegantly attired in a custom-made tuxedo, he strode onto the stage and tipped his top hat to the crowd; they applauded wildly. Nearly all attending the show had heard of his highly successful tours of America and other cities in Europe.

His act was deceptively simple. He presented himself, played the piano, rode a bicycle, and then, as if tired by his exertions, sat down to eat a quick meal with a glass of wine. Afterward, he smoked a cigarette. As a finale, he stood on his head, undressed to his pantaloons, and somersaulted into bed.

He was a chimpanzee named Consul and it was 1903.

This was more than a simple animal act. Dogs that jumped through hoops, ponies that trotted in formation, even the occasional lion or tiger were commonplace in vaudeville shows and circuses at the time. What Consul offered was something more, something that led to a questioning of the fundamental principles of identity. Consul fascinated his audiences because he revealed the biological closeness of humans and apes. He “aped” humans, as the contemporary report of his act in *La Nature* remarked. He behaved like a civilized, even well-to-do, human though he appeared thoroughly apelike, for even the custom-made tuxedo could not disguise his long arms, hairy



Consul the performing chimpanzee, shown here at the Folies Bergère in Paris in 1903. His act fascinated audiences because it blurred the line between human and ape. (From *La Nature* 1591 [1903]: 416.)

skin, small braincase, and elongated toes. The blurring of such important and distinct categories as “ape” and “human” gave the audience a delicious frisson of danger, delight, and confusion. Was he a chimpanzee? Yes, patently so. For all his élan, there was no mistaking this individual for a human. He was mute, hairy, misproportioned for a human. But did he dress, walk, eat, cycle, and smoke like a human? Yes he did. Had he been able to tap-dance and sing a song, the illusion might have been complete.

So appealing was Consul’s act that he was but one of a succession of performing chimpanzees named Consul. He—or they—were famous far beyond what might have been expected. The name Con-



Another Consul lived and performed in Belle Vue Zoo, Manchester, England. His death in 1894 was honored on a specially published broadsheet. (From Chetham's Library, Manchester.)

sul became eponymous for zoo or performing chimpanzees, even as Jumbo, a bull elephant originally exhibited at the London Zoo and then sold to the Barnum & Bailey Circus, came to mean “elephant”—and, eventually, anything huge.

There was even an obituary printed for an early Consul of the Belle Vue Zoological Gardens in Manchester, England, who died on November 24, 1894. At the top is a photograph of Consul, wearing a natty striped hat and matching blazer, like any smart British holiday-maker. He holds a pipe and sits in a rattan chair pulled up to a table bearing an empty glass and a bottle. Beneath the photo is a poem, written for the occasion by Ben Brierley.

“Hadst thou a soul?” I’ve pondered o’er thy fate
Full many a time. . . . Thou hadst ways
In many things like ours. Then who says
Thou’rt not immortal? . . .
’Tis God alone knows where the “Missing Link”
Is hidden from our sight; but, on the brink

Of that Eternal line where we must part
For ever, sundering heart from heart,
The truth shall be revealed . . .

It is doggerel, but it shows the widespread confusion about the exact distinction between *human* and *ape*.

The name Consul was so potent a symbol of the close resemblance of humans and apes that the British paleontologist Arthur Tindell Hopwood borrowed it in 1933 when he needed to create a new name for a fossil ape that he thought was ancestral to chimpanzees. He called the specimens *Proconsul africanus*, meaning “the African ancestor of Consul.” Why did Hopwood do this? As a child born in 1897, Hopwood may have been impressed by one of the Consuls that toured Europe in the early part of the twentieth century. Perhaps he had only heard stories of performing chimpanzees called Consul, as I have; I do not know. He was probably being whimsical, yet there was an important message in his choice. By formally naming these fossils after Consul, he made a lasting reference that had great meaning to his peers.

Like every poor, performing chimpanzee, Consul reminds us of Darwin’s awe-inspiring and wonderful theory of evolution—and of the descent of humans from apelike ancestors. From the written descriptions and photographs of Consul, I believe that he was perceived (by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century standards) as more human superficially than many of the indigenous peoples in far-flung corners of the European colonies or even than many of the desperately poor of Europe.

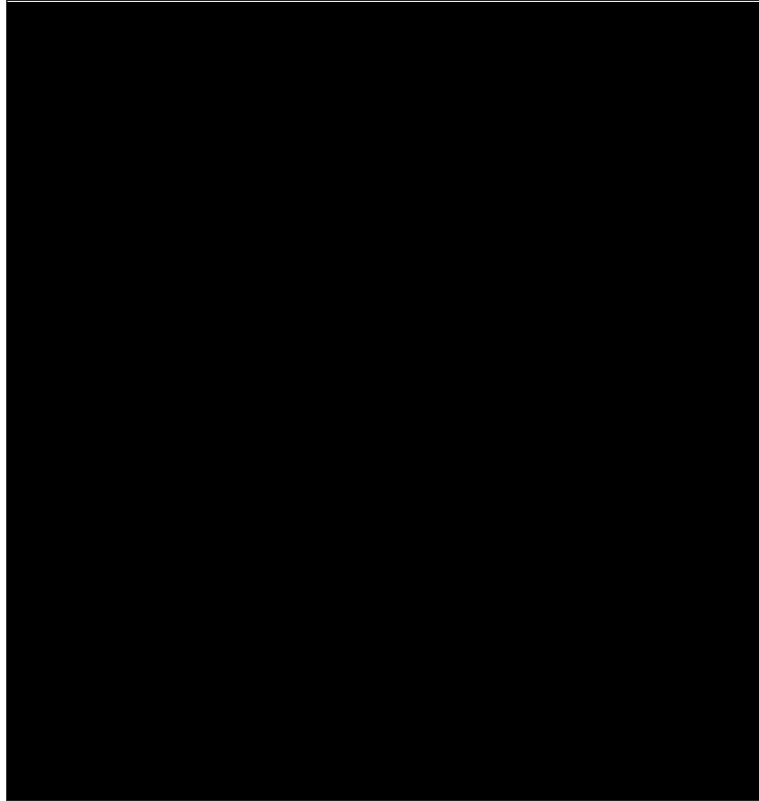
By blurring the behavioral distinction between humans and apes, Consul raised real and awkward questions. Did the nature of humanity lie in anatomy or training? Did breeding always tell? Then how could an ape be taught to walk and dress and behave like an aristocrat? In 1913, when Consul would still have been vividly remembered, George Bernard Shaw wrote *Pygmalion*, a play in which a lowly Cockney flower seller is transformed into a beautiful young

lady of society. The message of the play is that superficial things, like manners and dress, truly constitute aristocracy. Aristocracy and superiority lie not in an innate, inborn quality but in training and habit. That Consul lived offstage not in a dismal, barred cage but in a suite of hotel rooms with his manager—the Professor Henry Higgins of the ape world—intensified the sense that a barrier once thought inviolable had been crossed.

For some time, my colleague Morris Goodman has been reinvigorating the debate over the distinction between chimpanzees and humans with molecular evidence. He has suggested that chimpanzees are so like humans, molecularly, that they ought to join us in the genus *Homo*. Many people find this idea profoundly disturbing.

From its outset, then, the story of the fossil *Proconsul* has been an odd and quirky one, full of symbolism, jokes, and surprises. To understand *Proconsul* I have had to grapple with what it is to be an ape, and a human. Studying *Proconsul* is attempting to unravel the secrets of our past—*ours*, the one we share with all the apes: chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, orangutans, siamangs, and gibbons. *Proconsul* is not just a human ancestor but also an ape one, the last common ancestor to whom we—humans and apes alike—all trace our past.

It has been my good fortune to be involved in a large part of the story, although its beginning with Arthur Tindell Hopwood preceded my birth. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it seems fitting to look back at how much, and how little, we have learned about this extraordinary creature *Proconsul*. Hopwood had only a jaw and some teeth, but this first find was soon surpassed by others. There was a wonderful skull, found in 1948, and a nearly complete arm and some foot bones unearthed two years later. There were jaws here, the odd vertebra there, a leg bone at another place. Then, working in the 1980s on Rusinga and Mfangano Islands in Lake Victoria, my colleagues and I stumbled upon hundreds of fossils representing virtually every part of the body of *Proconsul*. We recovered many different individuals, including partial skeletons of infants, juveniles,



Africa. (Map by Jeff Mathison.)

Facing page: Top: East Africa, where all *Proconsul* fossils have been found. (Map by Jeff Mathison.) Bottom: My team and I excavated hundreds of fossils of *Proconsul* from sites on two small Kenyan islands in Lake Victoria: Rusinga and Mfangano. (Map by Jeff Mathison.)

Luck and Unluck

Dayrell Botry Pigott was an unlucky man. Fossil-finding has always been a somewhat risky occupation, for fossils are often found in remote badland regions, where erosion by wind and water concentrate the petrified bones on the surface in lag deposits. If you are hunting for fossils in Africa, then, you expect to have to watch out for snakes, scorpions, and sunstroke, bad roads and worse drivers, and an uncertain supply of provisions. To find human or primate fossils, you usually have to drive halfway to the ends of the earth to get to where there might be fossils. Then sometimes you meet a local inhabitant who is convinced you are mining for gold, diamonds, or some other priceless treasure on his land, and he doesn't like the idea. The truth—that you are looking for bones that have turned hard like rocks, that are millions of years old and will tell you about your long-long-distant ancestors—sounds too absurd to be believed in many instances. There are also the odd tropical and not-so-tropical diseases to watch out for and insidious parasites that lurk in earth, food, and water, waiting to infect unsuspecting humans. Perhaps most dangerous of all is that scourge of the modern world, political turmoil, but car accidents run a close second.

What you don't expect is to be eaten by a crocodile.

Pigott probably didn't expect it either. In 1909, he was just 30

years old and the assistant district commissioner of the Kavirondo region in western Kenya Colony (as it was then). He was sent out to the town of Karungu, to check out some fossils that had been reported to a British official, C. W. Hobley.

Hobley was something of a polymath. Born in Chilvers Coton in Warwickshire, England, Hobley had had a strictly technical education in engineering at the Mason Science College (now the University of Birmingham), which specifically proscribed literary and theological subjects. As might be expected, Hobley was highly competent in many matters important to building a colony, such as geology, water supplies, road building, surveying, and establishing close and cooperative relations with leaders of the local tribes. Despite his focused education, however, Hobley had eclectic interests. He took full advantage of the novel opportunities that surrounded him in the East African colonies, writing on such diverse subjects as snakes, rhinoceroses, pottos, crocodiles, elephants, serval cats, wildlife conservation, tribal methods of hunting and trapping, tribal beliefs and magic, human origins, ethnology of the Wakamba, El Dorobo, Nandi, Kikuyu, Turkana, Suk, and Zanzibaris, archaeology, and, among other geological subjects, volcanoes, soil erosion, earthquakes, and ancient environments. Little wonder, then, that when the jaw of a deinotherium, an extinct relative of the elephant, and other fossils turned up in Kavirondo someone sent word to Hobley.

At the time of the discovery, Hobley was no longer the provincial commissioner of Kavirondo, the region now known as Nyanza Province, where the fossils had been found. Hobley was sub-commissioner of Ukamba Province, stationed in Nairobi, and he later wrote a famous monograph about the Wakamba people for whom the province was named. Even though he had left Kavirondo before 1909, Hobley's friendships with the white settlers in that region continued. When Hobley learned of the fossils, he in turn asked Pigott, who was still working in Kavirondo, to stop by and examine the specimens and the site when he was next in the area.

I have been able to discover a little of D. B. Pigott's family history.

He came from a line of country vicars with impressive names; his father was the Reverend Eversfield Botry Pigott and his grandfather was the Reverend Shreeve Botry. D. B. Pigott went to St. John's School in Leatherhead, England, originally founded to educate the sons of clergymen as a charity but which, by the time D. B. enrolled, was attracting fee-paying students and had all the characteristics of some of the more famous British public schools. After St. John's, Dayrell went to the elite Magdalene College of Cambridge University for a B.A., graduating in 1901. In 1902 he was called to the bar and spent two years as a solicitor before becoming the private secretary to the administrator of Salisbury, Rhodesia: substantial responsibility for a young man. In 1907, he joined the Colonial Office to serve as an assistant district commissioner in Kavirondo. He'd been in that post for nearly five years before the crocodile got him on February 28, 1911.

D. B. Pigott was one of those young men of good family who had been educated in a prestigious secondary school before attending one of the superior universities, in his case Cambridge. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, dozens of young men of such background were sent out at tender ages to rule the British Empire with astonishingly little training. It was generally believed that a public school education, a few years at university, a good moral character, and some ability in sport were entirely sufficient qualifications for administering enormous tracts of land with huge populations virtually anywhere in the British Empire. What amazes me is that such a cockamamie premise worked so well for so many years, not that it eventually came to grief when the former colonies demanded their dignity and independence.

The fossil deinotherium jaw that started everything for Pigott was one of several important fossils of the Miocene age, a geological epoch that lasted from 23.5 to 5 million years ago, discovered by G. R. Chesnaye somewhere along the eastern shore of Lake Victoria. Pigott duly collected the fossils and sent them off to the British Museum (Natural History)—then colloquially known as the BM and now

called The Natural History Museum—in London, where they captured the imagination of another man, Dr. Felix Oswald. Oswald persuaded Arthur Smith Woodward, the keeper of palaeontology at the British Museum, to help him raise private funds to go to Kenya and look for more fossils. By November 1911, this fund amounted to the grand sum of £270 and Oswald set off.

But in the meantime, Pigott had met with disaster. On February 28, 1911, while traveling by raft on Lake Victoria, Pigott had encountered a truculent hippopotamus. This is not an uncommon occurrence. It happened to me fairly often when my team and I were working on Mfangano Island in Lake Victoria and I had to ferry supplies back and forth from the mainland. Unfortunately, hippos sometimes feel boats are rivals. I wonder if they are simply unable to distinguish between a rival hippo and any large object that moves through the water. In any case, hippos sometimes react as if a boat were a strange hippo invading their territory or threatening their young. Their instinct is to attack by biting the interloper or by coming up underneath it, perhaps to attack its belly. When successfully carried out, these assaults pretty well negate the seaworthiness of a vessel that is usually heavily loaded with gear, supplies, and men, many of whom cannot swim. Hippo attacks are truly dangerous and life-threatening to those in boats. I always keep a nervous eye out for hippos when I am in a small boat in Africa, though my only counterstrategy is avoidance.

Apparently Pigott had the same worries but took a more aggressive stance than I ever did; he shot the hippo. Shooting can be perfectly effective if you kill the hippo instantly—and if you don't mind killing such a magnificent creature, which I would. If you merely wound the hippo, you enrage it and encourage the hippo to attack your boat all the more ferociously, which is apparently what happened to Pigott. Probably Pigott could swim, so drowning wasn't his immediate problem. His problem was the opportunists attracted by the commotion, at least one of which was a Nile crocodile.

In the days before hunting had diminished the populations of

crocodiles, these creatures were very large. Hobley records that the duke of Mecklenburg shot a croc that was 21 feet, 6 inches long in Lake Victoria and Hobley himself killed a monster 16 feet, 6 inches long, which nearly killed him instead. Even a small 5- or 6-foot-long crocodile is a formidable opponent that can kill a human without much difficulty. A crocodile's favorite technique is to grab someone firmly by an arm or leg and then keep its struggling prey under water until it drowns. So Pigott, incautious enemy of the hippo, became the lunch of the crocodile. In London, *The Times* reported his death "by drowning" and commented with admirable understatement, "His body has not yet been found." I suspect it never was found, at least not in one piece.

Pigott's primary tributes (from those outside his family) were the naming of a fossil crocodile in his honor, *Crocodylus pigotti*, and the persistence of an anecdote about the assistant district commissioner of Kavirondo who found fossils but was eaten by a crocodile. The sad thing is, in most written versions of the story I have seen, his name is given as *Digby* Pigott, presumably a confusion between his initials, D. B., and the upper-crust British name.

With Pigott went all knowledge of the exact location of the fossil deposits from which he had collected the fossils in Kavirondo. When Oswald appeared in Kenya Colony in November 1911, he had only vague, general information to go on.

Fortuitously, Oswald happened to encounter Chesnaye, who had found the fossils in the first place, on his way upcountry from Nairobi. Chesnaye could and did tell Oswald precisely where he had collected the original fossils, which was presumably the same spot that Pigott had found. Chesnaye also told Oswald that he had just visited Karungu and collected all the fossil material he could find, which had already been posted to London.

Oswald must have been bitterly disappointed. He had raised funds and traveled thousands of miles from London, only to find his main source of information had become crocodile food. Just when he had resurrected his hope of finding the fossil site by bumping into

Chesnaye, he learned that the fossils he sought were already on their way to London. Since he was already in Kenya, Oswald determined to search for the locality, which he found and studied. He determined that the geological deposits were fluviatile (river-laid) and he mapped several new fossiliferous areas. Since Oswald's detailed work on the paleoecology and stratigraphy of the Karungu site is still well regarded, the trip was not a total loss, though it surely was not the great success Oswald hoped for. Still, it must be said that the first two fossil-hunting expeditions in western Kenya (Pigott's and Oswald's) ended with whimpers.

Things were quiet then for a few years, but somehow the fossils of western Kenya just couldn't remain unnoticed. More Miocene fossils were found in 1927 by a former government medical officer, Dr. H. L. Gordon, on his land near Koru. Gordon was quarrying for agricultural lime at a locality that he called Maize Crib when he noticed some fossilized bones. Among them was a nodule containing an upper jaw; it was almost entirely encrusted with rocky matrix, but the tip of a long canine tooth was showing and he could guess what it was. Gordon sent this specimen and some others to E. J. Wayland, then director of the Uganda Geological Survey.

Edward James Wayland—Jimmy to his friends—was another of those inimitable types sent out to make good in the remote outposts of the Empire. Trained at the Royal School of Mines in geology, in 1918 he was named a geological expert and sent to become the first director of the Uganda Geological Survey. In January 1919, when he took up his appointment in Uganda, Wayland headed a staff of two: an assistant geologist, W. C. Simmons, and a clerk, E. N. Brohier. From that day until 1938, when Wayland left the survey, he never had more than five officers at his disposal at one time. His charge was disproportionate to the size of his staff; it was to survey the entire Uganda Protectorate (which then included much of what is now western Kenya) for minerals. While he was at it, Wayland was supposed to make a detailed geological map of Uganda, too. He was not in the least intimidated. Indeed, Wayland was a diehard field man

whose first attempt at learning about the vast territory now in his purview was to walk around it for four months—a trip of some 1,200 miles—to see what was there. Needless to say, he had a tough constitution and a forceful personality.

Wayland's first assistant geologist, W. C. Simmons, did not last long. Simmons was sent out to work in Bunyoro, near Lake Albert. In Wayland's very first annual report, he wrote: "It is with much regret that one has to record the fact that the Assistant Geologist broke down in health at the end of November and was compelled to return, after medical treatment lasting over a month, to Entebbe accompanied by a medical man. After a short stay in hospital, Mr. Simmons was released for light duty. He proceeds to England in July, 1920, for leave and further medical advice." Though Simmons's physical deterioration was regrettable, it was not remarkable. Wayland reported that during fieldwork it was routine for 20 percent of his local helpers to be sick at any one time—and Europeans were thought to be more vulnerable to tropical diseases than Africans.

From the outset, Wayland understood that one of his chief duties was propaganda, to counter the "remarkable lack of interest in the Geology of Uganda that was found to characterize the European population as a whole, prior to the establishment of this department." Part of his job was to get the settlers to understand that geology might be of practical importance to them. In 1923, he founded the Uganda Literary and Scientific Society to try to promote intellectual interests in the colony, which could be a lonely place for a man of curiosity and learning. He was also instrumental in founding the *Uganda Journal*, which published original articles on anthropology, prehistory, geology, mammalogy, ornithology, tribal customs and languages, and just about anything else to do with Uganda. Some forty years later, when I arrived in Uganda as a starting professor at Makerere University, the *Uganda Journal* was still going strong. Its editor was kind enough to accept some of the first articles I published.

Like so many of the pioneers of East Africa, Wayland was a blunt

man who tended to say exactly what he thought. Once the newly arrived governor of Uganda, Sir Bernard Bourdillon, asked Wayland if he thought it would be a good thing to bring out a “dowser” from England to find water; the governor was apparently no scientist. Wayland looked him straight in the eye and replied, in a quiet but deadly voice, that it would be better to hire a witch doctor on a temporary local agreement, and much cheaper. Sir Bernard was not amused.

Not surprisingly, Wayland thought the fossils from Koru were important. He encouraged Gordon to keep an eye out for more and to send any he found to him. A year or two later, Wayland packed up a selection of the better fossils from Gordon and sent them on to Arthur Tindell Hopwood at the BM for further identification and study.

Hopwood was a very tall, thin, rather quiet man, the sort who didn't enjoy the limelight but was perfectly happy burrowing away on some obscure problem in a dusty corner of the museum. What had come his way from Gordon via Wayland, he was delighted to see, was the jaw of an ancient ape. Very few ape fossils were known at the time, so this most chimpanzee-like creature was of supreme importance. After cleaning off the matrix adhering to the specimen and studying the fossil, Hopwood was convinced it was the ancestor of chimpanzees. When Hopwood eventually wrote up the specimen, he called the new species by the fanciful name *Proconsul africanus* to indicate its place in the phylogenetic or evolutionary tree of apes and humans. *Proconsul*, to almost anyone of that era, meant “toward the modern chimpanzee.”

But were there more fossils of this fascinating creature? If so, they were in Kenya. Organizing a fossil expedition to Africa was no simple task in those days, as Oswald had already discovered. Hopwood had no African experience whatsoever and he was more a scholar than an outdoorsman. He sought the assistance of Louis Leakey, then a fellow of St. John's College at Cambridge University.

Even as a young man, Louis was legendary, for he was like no

other Cambridge student before or since. The son of missionary parents, Louis had been born and raised in Kenya isolated from other Europeans save his family. As he grew up, his playmates and companions were Kikuyu, one of the most populous tribes of Kenya. Their language was his first language and he always said he dreamed in Kikuyu. While his parents did their missionary work, the children (Louis and his two older sisters) were educated by a series of spinster governesses. The net result was that the governesses taught Louis what *they* thought he should know and the Kikuyu elders taught him what *they* thought he should know. The sum total was unique.

Apart from his linguistic prowess in Kikuyu and some other African languages, Louis had a wealth of bushcraft that was of absolutely no use in England but that was essential to survival in the wilds of Africa. He also had an exceptional store of self-confidence that may well have come in part from being treated as an adult from the age of 14 on, as was traditional among the Kikuyu. Louis had few of the social skills of his Cambridge classmates, and none of their ever-helpful old school connections. His pre-university education had been irregular, unusual, and spotty. Nonetheless, it seems never to have occurred to Louis that he would do anything but succeed in the British academic system. As he did ever afterward, he simply plunged headlong into anything that interested him, assuming he could master it rapidly and ignoring whatever received wisdom there might be on the subject.

By the time Hopwood approached Louis to help him organize his trip to the eastern shore of Lake Victoria in search of Miocene deposits, Louis had started to organize an expedition to Olduvai Gorge, in Tanganyika (now Tanzania), for 1931. He knew there were fossils at Olduvai—a German, Hans Reck had found a human skeleton known as Oldoway Man there in 1913—and he hoped there were very ancient stone tools as well. In his total ignorance of the realities of European archaeology, Louis had been convinced since boyhood that the earliest habitations of human ancestors were in Africa. His view could be labeled “unpopular at the time” except that that is too

generous an appraisal. Very, very few of his professors and fellow students expected him to find archaeological treasure in Africa, though Louis was proven right in the end. What he wanted to do was gather the hard evidence that would convince his skeptics. Donald MacInnes and Vivian Fuchs were to go along with Louis as geologists. Now Hopwood could be the official representative from the BM to the expedition, which sounded very grand. In exchange for Hopwood's tacit backing, Louis agreed to help Hopwood visit the Miocene fossil beds in western Kenya before going to Olduvai. At the time, Louis had little interest in the Miocene, which was much too old to yield tool-using human ancestors. Louis wanted to discover cultural beings.

In August 1931, Hopwood finally got to Kenya to see for himself where this ancestral ape had come from and whether or not there were more bits of it lying around. Once they all got to Nairobi, Louis's assistance consisted of lending Hopwood a lorry, helping him get together appropriate camping equipment, and finding him a driver-cum-mechanic. For the wage of £5 a month (then about \$23,) this paragon maintained and drove the vehicle and translated among the various languages he spoke: Maasai (his native language), Kiswahili, plus two other local African languages, Hindustani, and English. Louis accompanied Hopwood and his driver to Koru, staying a few days to see that Hopwood's camp was properly set up before disappearing to conduct some excavations of his own much nearer Nairobi.

In the five weeks he spent in western Kenya, Hopwood recovered nine more specimens of apelike creatures from Koru. Some were *Proconsul*, like the original jaw, and some represented brand new species. There were also numerous other mammal fossils. There was a deinotherium that was eventually named after Charles Hopley (*Deinotherium hopleyi*), some archaic carnivores of a type known as creodonts—crude, rather hyenalike creatures—various rodents, insectivores, pigs, and a few ruminants, or cud-chewing animals.

The primates were clearly the most spectacular finds. One of them was a vaguely gibbonlike species that Hopwood named *Limnopithecus legetet*. *Limnopithecus* meant “the lake ape”; the trivial or second name referred to both the hill on which Hopwood camped and the farm on which that hill stood, for both were called Legetet. The other new species he called *Xenopithecus koruensis*, the strange or exotic ape from Koru. His collection was an impressive success by any standards. When Hopwood had finished at Koru, he returned to Nairobi, well satisfied with his haul.

On September 22, 1931, the party set out for Olduvai over appalling, dusty, rutted roads and unmarked tracks that were even worse. The expedition consisted of Louis, Hopwood, a former Indian Army Captain J. H. Hewlitt, hired primarily for his shooting prowess, Professor Reck, and eighteen Africans. The paleontological and archaeological success that the expedition met with at Olduvai is legendary. The work at Olduvai continued for many years, but that tale is part of a story of stone tools and early human ancestors, not this story of fossil apes. At the end of 1931, Hopwood went happily home with crates of mammalian fossils from Olduvai and his precious, and even older, fossils from Koru.

By that time, Louis had already publicly proclaimed that Oldoway Man was the most ancient human skeleton in all of Africa. He suggested that the skeleton was contemporaneous with the very primitive stone tools he began to find almost immediately upon his arrival at Olduvai, but he found it difficult to convince his peers in Europe. The skeleton came from a geological level at Olduvai known as Bed II; Reck had been able to relocate the exact find-spot because he had stuck four wooden pegs into the sediments at the time that he found the skeleton. The key question was whether the specimen was a more recent burial dug into sediments much older than itself or whether the skeleton was contemporaneous with the bed. Louis had no doubt the skeleton was as ancient as could be, and he was supported by no less an authority than the anatomist Sir Arthur Keith, who had risen