

M0003715: Interior view of the left femur of Pithecanthropus Erectus.

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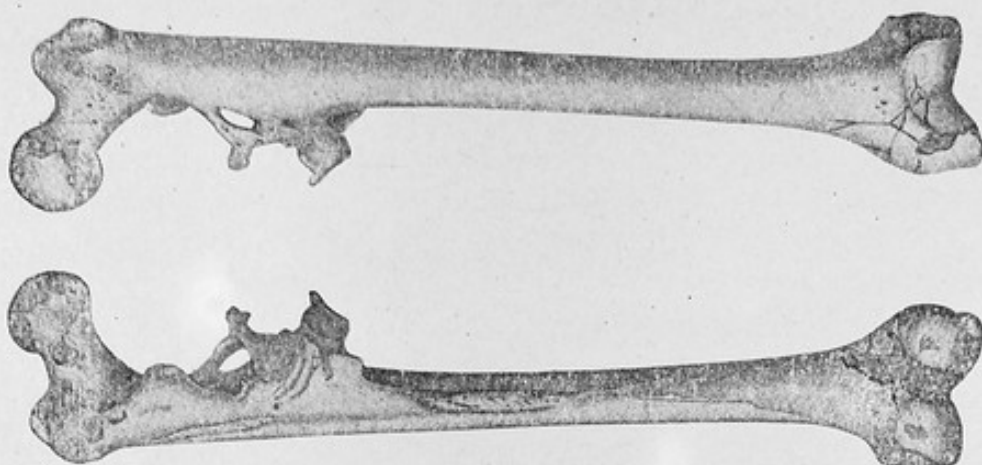


FIGURE 1

Anterior view of the left femur of the oldest known human representative, *Pithecanthropus erectus*, portions of whose skeleton, 500,000 years old, were found in 1891 in a river deposit in Java. The femur shows an extensive medial exostosis due to some chronic infection or other irritation along the line of the tendinous attachment of the iliopsoas and pectineus muscles. This is the oldest example of human pathology.

Posterior view. After Dubois.

est to us in this curious ape-like form is that the femur shows marked exostoses (Figure 1) indicating the presence of a pathological condition of great severity. This is the oldest evidence of pathology in a humanoid form.

On account of the very great interest attached to such a discovery the pathology has been widely discussed. The great pathologist Virchow, who was also an eminent student of anthropology, called attention to the similarity of the medial exostoses on the femur of the ancient form to those seen in modern femora. He exhibited a number of these which he had selected from the collections of the Berlin Pathological Institute (Figure 2).

The next oldest known form representing man is that designated *Eoanthropus*, meaning the dawn man. Sir Auckland Geddes, after an examination of these Piltdown remains, decided that this ancient Englishman, who lived and died thousands of years ago,

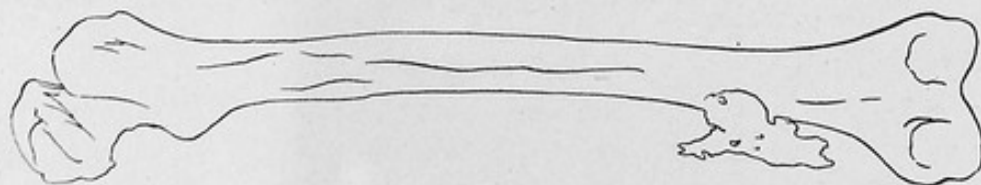


FIGURE 2

Modern human femur showing medial exostoses similar to those exhibited by the *Pithecanthropus*. These drawings were used by Virchow to demonstrate to the anthropological society of Berlin that the pathology of the most ancient man-like form was similar to modern pathology. Some scholars had argued that the femur was not human, being misled by the pathological deformation.