

A partial hominoid innominate from the Miocene of Pakistan: Description and preliminary analyses

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We describe a partial innominate, YGSP 41216, from a 12.3 Ma locality in the Siwalik Group of the Potwar Plateau in Pakistan, assigned to the Middle Miocene ape species *Sivapithecus indicus*. We investigate the implications of its morphology for reconstructing positional behavior of this ape. Postcranial anatomy of extant catarrhines falls into two distinct groups, particularly for torso shape. To an extent this reflects different although variable and overlapping positional repertoires: pronograde quadrupedalism for cercopithecoids and orthograde for hominoids. The YGSP innominate (hipbone) is from a primate with a narrow torso, resembling most extant monkeys and differing from the broader torsos of extant apes. Other postcranial material of *S. indicus* and its younger and similar congener *Sivapithecus sivalensis* also supports reconstruction of a hominoid with a positional repertoire more similar to the pronograde quadrupedal patterns of most monkeys than to the orthograde patterns of apes. However, *Sivapithecus* postcranial morphology differs in many details from any extant species. We reconstruct a slow-moving, deliberate, arboreal animal, primarily traveling above supports but also frequently engaging in antipronograde behaviors. There are no obvious synapomorphic postcranial features shared exclusively with any extant crown hominid, including *Pongo*.

Sivapithecus | innominate | Miocene hominoid | torso shape | positional behavior

The Miocene hominoid *Sivapithecus* is restricted to the Indian subcontinent, with the majority of specimens having been recovered from the Potwar Plateau, Pakistan. At present, almost all *Sivapithecus* material is classified into three species: *Sivapithecus indicus* (12.7–11.4 Ma), *Sivapithecus sivalensis* (~11–8.5 Ma), and *Sivapithecus parvada* (10.1 Ma) (1); a fourth possible species, *Sivapithecus simonsi* (2), may be represented by a small number of specimens. Based on plausibly assigned postcranial specimens, both *S. indicus* and *S. sivalensis* have estimated weights of ~30–45 kg for males and ~20–25 kg for females; the two species differ somewhat in dental size and proportions but are similar enough both dentally and postcranially to be interpreted as a single lineage (1, 3). We do not believe that possible differences in palatal morphology between the two species (1, 4–6) presently warrant their separation into different genera. *S. parvada*, known from a single Potwar locality (7), is substantially larger, with males and females estimated respectively at ~60–75 and ~30–45 kg. Based on a small dentognathic sample, *S. simonsi*, if a separate species, would be the smallest species of the genus (1–3, 8).

Innominate are rare in the catarrhine fossil record. Here we describe the first attributed to *Sivapithecus*, YGSP 41216, a left partial innominate assigned to *S. indicus*. (On loan from Pakistan and curated at Harvard University, the fossil was recovered in 1990 and identified as primate in 2010.) It is from a locality in the mid-Chinji Formation, Y647, dated by paleomagnetic correlation to 12.3 Ma (9). Locality Y647 is a complex large-scale fill of a major channel (10). Two nearby fossil localities at the same stratigraphic level, Y494 and Y496, were formed by the same channel and share the same depositional environment as Y647.

S. indicus is present at all three localities, represented by the innominate, a partial maxilla (6), and three isolated teeth.

YGSP 41216 is similar in both size and general shape to the innominates of males of the cercopithecoid monkeys *Nasalis* and *Papio*; the individual from which the fossil came therefore likely fell within the 20- to 25-kg range and we consider it a probable female *S. indicus*.

There are clear differences in positional repertoires between extant catarrhine monkeys and apes (summarized in ref. 11). The former are pronograde quadrupedal runners and leapers whereas the latter use a range of antipronograde behaviors in addition to quadrupedal knuckle-walking in African apes (see *Supporting Information* for definitions). These contrasting behaviors are reflected in fundamentally different postcranial morphological adaptations. Of particular interest here are differences in torso shape: cercopithecoids and most ceboids have relatively narrow torsos, in contrast to the broader torsos of apes, and these differences are in turn reflected in differences in innominate shape (11). In cercopithecoid and ceboid innominates the ilia are relatively narrow and more sagittally oriented, in contrast to the relatively broad and more coronally oriented ilia of extant hominoids (Fig. S1). YGSP 41216 is therefore critical to interpreting torso shape and the positional repertoire of *Sivapithecus* and is part of a postcranium that adds to the morphological diversity of known Miocene hominoids.

Sivapithecus also figures prominently in debates concerning the evolutionary history of extant apes, with most studies favoring a close phylogenetic relationship with the orangutan, *Pongo* (4, 5,

Significance

The living apes share a number of important morphological similarities of torso and limbs; torsos are broad and shallow, lumbar regions short, and forelimbs adapted to mobility. For more than a century it was assumed that most of these similarities are homologous, reflecting descent from a common ancestor with these features. As the ape fossil record slowly expands, the story becomes more complicated, particularly in the case of the south Asian Miocene ape *Sivapithecus*. *Sivapithecus* has facial features resembling specifically the living orangutan, but no postcranial features resembling orangutans. This newly described hipbone differs from that of all living apes. Either postcranial similarities of apes are not fully homologous or the facial similarities of *Sivapithecus* and orangutans cannot be homologous.

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12–16). Some facial and palatal features resemble the pattern seen only in *Pongo* (5, 12, 14), whereas certain postcranial elements reveal that *Sivapithecus* was very different from any extant great ape (17). Thus, whether one interprets *Sivapithecus* as a member of the *Pongo* clade, or merely as a stem hominid, the suite of craniofacial and postcranial features characterizing this genus reveals substantial homoplasy, either cranial or postcranial, during great ape evolution. If *Sivapithecus* is within the *Pongo* clade, the new innominate will add to our understanding of the nature and breadth of postcranial homoplasy among the extant apes.

Description

YGSP 41216 lacks nearly all of the pubis, the ilium cranial to the auricular surface, and the most caudal portion of the ischium (Fig. 1). Although fractured in a few places, the several parts retain their correct anatomical positions and there is no sign of plastic deformation. The specimen has little abrasion but does exhibit some cracking. There are at least two perimortem puncture marks on the proximal ilium, one dorsal and one ventral, which we attribute to a crocodilian based on the distinctive shape of the punctures (18).

The iliac blade is narrow, and the region between the hip and sacroiliac joints is robust in comparison with extant great apes (Fig. S1). Although ilium width is greater at the level of the auricular surface than at its junction with the acetabulum, iliac flare would not have been comparable to that in extant hominoids, including hylobatids. The orientation of the ilium relative to the ischiopubic plane (i.e., iliopubic angle) indicates a primarily parasagittally oriented ilium and narrow torso, as in most primates (and other mammals), rather than the more coronal orientation and associated broad torso of extant great apes and hylobatids.

The iliac fossa is predominantly smooth and flat; toward the caudal end it becomes very slightly concave as it approaches the anterior inferior iliac spine (Fig. 1A). The gluteal iliac surface is markedly transversely concave at its most cranial aspect, decreasing in concavity caudally, and becoming almost flat near the acetabular rim. The anterior inferior iliac spine is flange-like and rugose, its center 20.9 mm from the cranial acetabular rim.

The iliac tuberosity is robust throughout its preserved length, from the clearly defined posterior inferior iliac spine to above

the level of the most cranial margin of the sacroiliac joint (Fig. 1A and C). The posterior superior iliac spine is not preserved. The auricular surface is preserved in its entirety and is well delimited (Fig. 1A); the cranial limb is longer and narrower than the caudal limb. Cranial and caudal limbs differ in their articular curvatures, with the cranial being relatively flat and the caudal being mediolaterally convex. The greater sciatic notch is long and shallow, as in many cercopithecoids; viewed parasagittally it is sigmoidal in shape (Fig. 1B).

The acetabular floor is broken and there is some minor bone loss to the caudal lunate surface just dorsal to the acetabular notch (Fig. 1D). The lunate surface is extensive cranially, dorsally, and caudally and is separated from the acetabular floor by a groove, shallow cranially and deepening to ~2 mm caudally.

The ischium is long and robust compared with that in extant great apes. Some parts of the contact with the tuberosity seem to be present. The flat posteromedial surface flares laterally caudal to the prominent, ridge-like ischial spine (Fig. 1B and C). A rounded ridge extending caudally from the spine separates the medial and lateral ischial borders. The lateral surface is convex. The angle and degree of flare in the preserved body of the ischium (Fig. 1B and C) are not compatible with the presence of a flattened tuberosity and ischial callosity (Fig. S1).

Although the majority of the pubis is missing, the lateral-most portion of the superior pubic ramus is preserved, including the iliopubic eminence.

Comparative Morphology

Principal components analysis (PCA) of 16 variables (Table 1, variables 1–7 and 9–17) from extant anthropoids in dataset 1 of Table 2 and fossil specimens summarize phenetic similarities among fossil and extant species (*Methods*). The first two principal components are plotted for all individuals in Fig. 2; Euclidean distances based on group means are provided in Table S1 and centroids are in Table S2.

Sivapithecus is most similar to atelines in general (Fig. 2) and to *Lagothrix* in particular (Table S1). *Proconsul*, an African early Miocene probable stem hominoid, is closest to *Sivapithecus*, and then equally to *Lagothrix* and some cercopithecoid monkey species by Euclidean distance, but clusters with the cercopithecoid individuals lying closest to the atelines in the principal components



Fig. 1. Ventromedial (A), dorsal (B), dorsolateral (C), and lateral (D) views of YGSP 41216, a partial left innominate.

Table 1. Measurements for YGSP 41216

No.	Variables*	Value†
1	Ischial length (HL)	75 [‡]
2	Lower iliac height (LIH)	68.7
3	Maximum iliac blade width (IW)	52.4
4	Iliac tuberosity width (ITW)	27.5
5	Iliac sacral surface width (ISW)	35.8
6	Dorsal acetabular wall minimum (DAW)	20.0
7	Ventral acetabular wall minimum (VAW)	16.1
8	Acetabular length (AL)	32.6
9	Acetabular depth (AD)	19.7
10	Acetabular notch width (ANW)	19.6
11	Cranial lunate surface width (CLS)	17.6
12	Dorsal lunate surface width (DLS)	10.1
13	Caudal lunate surface width (ULS)	12.6
14	Maximum ischial ramus width (XHRW)	22.0
15	Minimum ischial ramus width (NHRW)	14.2
16	Ischial tuberosity width (XHTW)	14 [‡]
17	Iliopubic angle	101°
18	Ischial ramus length (ISCHL)	58.1
19	Lower ilium cross-sectional area (LICSA)	276.9 mm ²

*Measurements defined in [Supporting Information](#) from Ward (19) and Lewton (20, 21).

†Measurements are in millimeters unless otherwise noted.

‡Conservative estimate based on preserved portion.

plot. The African Plio-Pleistocene cercopithecoid monkeys *Theropithecus oswaldi* and *Paracolobus chemeroni* fall with the extant catarrhine monkey group.

Differences between the extant groups are driven by differences in iliopubic angle, iliac breadth, hip joint dimensions, and ischial robusticity. Variables loading heavily on principal component 1, which explains 67% of sample variation and separates *Sivapithecus* from the siamangs and great apes, are iliopubic angle and ilium width dimensions (IW, ITW, and ISW) (Table 3). Principal component 2 (explaining 16% of variation) separates *Sivapithecus*, *Hylobates*, *Symphalangus*, and atelines from the catarrhine monkeys and the majority of great ape individuals and is driven by ischium dimensions (HL and XHTW) and iliac breadth dimensions (IW and ITW). As is commonly the case, principal component 1 also reflects size, with larger species falling at the positive end of the axis.

Sivapithecus, like *Proconsul* (11, 22), exhibits a narrow, non-great ape-like ilium, with an iliac sacral surface width (ISW) that falls just outside the range of extant cercopithecoid monkeys but within that of the fossil monkeys (Fig. S2). Extant monkeys and great apes have nonoverlapping ISW dimensions. However, iliac tuberosity width (ITW) is narrower in *Sivapithecus* than in *Proconsul* or the fossil cercopithecoid monkeys (taxa with similar ISW) and is closest to the values of the majority of extant cercopithecoids.

The lower ilium of *Sivapithecus* is robust. Its cross-sectional area (LICSA) relative to acetabulum length (our proxy for body size) is similar to that of *Proconsul* (Fig. S3 and Table S3). Both fossil taxa have larger LICSA than expected for their acetabulum lengths compared with extant anthropoids, with *Sivapithecus* having the largest positive residual among all taxa in the sample. Extant apes fall on or below the regression line and most have negative residual values (Fig. S3).

The acetabulum of *Sivapithecus* is deep and steep-sided (Fig. 1D). Relative to acetabular length, acetabular depth in *Sivapithecus* is greater than in *Proconsul* and greater than expected from the anthropoid regression (Figs. S1 and S4 and Table S3). It is similar to the majority of cercopithecoids in this respect. Cranial lunate surface size is also larger in *Sivapithecus* than in *Proconsul*, *Theropithecus*, and *Paracolobus* (all similar to each other in innominate and estimated body size). This aligns *Sivapithecus* with extant hominoids and platyrrhines (positive residuals), whereas *Proconsul*

and the two fossil monkeys align with extant cercopithecoids (generally negative residuals) (Fig. S5A and Table S3). As has been shown (22), in extant great apes the cranial lunate surface is expanded relative to the dorsal surface compared with monkeys; *Sivapithecus* plots with extant great apes whereas *Proconsul* plots closest to large fossil monkeys (Fig. S5B).

The preserved anatomy of the distal ischium, particularly ischial tuberosity width (XHTW), indicates that *Sivapithecus* did not have a large ischial tuberosity. In relative XHTW, both *Sivapithecus* and *Proconsul* are similar to atelines and great apes and unlike hylobatids and cercopithecoids (Fig. S6 and Table S3).

Although the pubis is largely lacking in YGSP 41216, we are confident in estimating the iliopubic angle from the preserved ischium and proximal pubis. The iliopubic angles of both *Sivapithecus* (101°) and *Proconsul* (107°) (19) fall within the ranges of both New and Old World monkeys, distant from those of extant apes (Fig. S7). Extant apes have very low angles, between 62° and 73° in this sample, reflecting relatively broad torsos, whereas monkeys have iliopubic angles between 84° and 113°, reflecting relatively narrow torsos (11, 23).

Table 2. Numbers of individuals in extant primate comparative samples

Genus and species	Dataset 1*			Dataset 2†		
	♂	♀	Unknown	♂	♀	Unknown
<i>Alouatta caraya</i>				10	10	
<i>Alouatta</i> spp.	8	2				
<i>Ateles</i> spp.	8	8	1	11	9	1
<i>Cebuella pygmaea</i>				7	5	
<i>Cebus albifrons</i>				7	8	
<i>Cebus apella</i>	2	2		14	8	
<i>Cercocebus torquatus</i>				5	5	1
<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>				10	13	1
<i>Chlorocebus aethiops</i>				10	9	1
<i>Colobus guereza</i>	9	10		7	12	4
<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	1	3		3	1	2
<i>Gorilla gorilla</i>	10	10		11	10	
<i>Homo sapiens</i>				20	20	
<i>Hylobates hoolock</i>				7	6	
<i>Hylobates lar</i>	10	10		13	11	
<i>Lagothrix lagotricha</i>	6	2		6	3	1
<i>Leontopithecus</i> spp.				9	10	
<i>Lophocebus albigena</i>	4	3				
<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	10	10		21	13	3
<i>Macaca nemestrina</i>				9	3	1
<i>Mandrillus sphinx</i>				4	3	1
<i>Miopithecus talapoin</i>				4	11	
<i>Nasalis larvatus</i>	6	10		11	7	2
<i>Pan paniscus</i>	8	10				
<i>Pan troglodytes</i>	10	10		20	21	
<i>Papio cynocephalus</i>	10	10				
<i>Papio</i> spp.				23	14	8
<i>Pongo pygmaeus</i>	6	10		15	2	2
<i>Presbytis cristata</i>	10	10				
<i>Presbytis rubicunda</i>	10	10				
<i>Procolobus badius</i>	3	10		5	5	
<i>Saimiri</i> spp.				10	10	
<i>Symphalangus syndactylus</i>	2	5	3	2	8	
<i>Theropithecus gelada</i>				1	5	

These datasets were not combined in any analyses and include overlapping individuals.

*Data collected by Ward (19) with additions to *Alouatta*, *Ateles*, *Cebus*, and *Symphalangus* by authors J.C.B., J.K., and M.E.M. (see [Dataset S1](#)).

†Data collected by Lewton (20, 21).

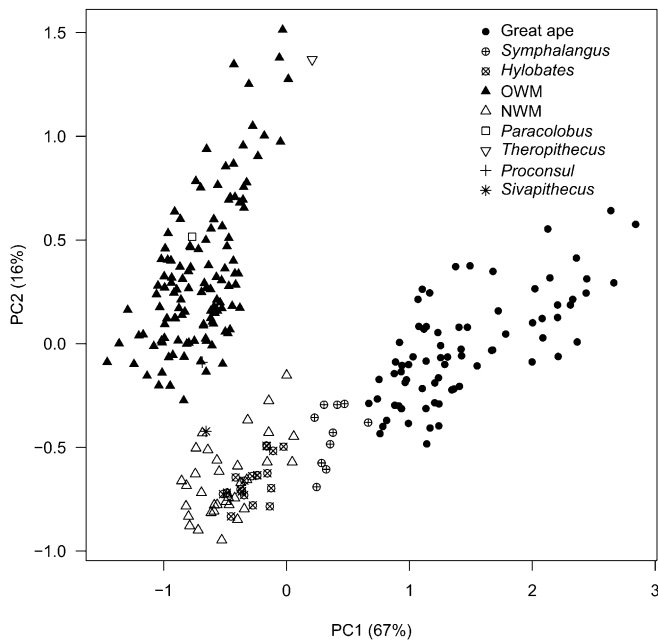


Fig. 2. Bivariate plot of principal components 1 and 2. Sample derives from dataset 1 but excludes *Colobus* and *Cebus* owing to missing data. Fossil data included are from Table 1 and Ward (19).

Discussion

Sivapithecus Postcrania: Function and Behavior. In overall morphology, the *Sivapithecus* innominate indicates positional behaviors primarily involving pronograde quadrupedalism.

The large iliopubic angle of YGSP 41216 reflects a relatively narrow torso with iliac blades oriented parasagittally, similar to extant cercopithecoïd and ceboid monkeys. The coronally positioned ilia of apes correlate with chest indices (ratio of chest breadth to depth) >120 (23). Extant ceboids have chest indices around 100, whereas those of cercopithecoïds are <100 (23). Based on the correlation of chest index with iliopubic angle in the extant primate sample (Fig. S7), *Sivapithecus* likely had a chest index between 90 and 100.

The *Sivapithecus* innominate is generally robust, especially the ilium. The cross-sectional area of the lower ilium (i.e., iliac isthmus) is large relative to acetabulum size, as in *Proconsul* and larger ceboids. Lower ilium robusticity has long been thought to reflect bony adaptation to resisting loads incurred during positional behaviors (24–27), and recent work demonstrates a positive relationship between locomotor forces and lower ilium robusticity in strepsirrhines (28). Thus, for a primate of its size, *Sivapithecus* has a robust iliac isthmus that suggests the ilium was adapted to resist large loads, resulting from ground reaction or body weight forces. In addition, the convexity of the caudal limb of the auricular surface of the ilium and the robusticity of the iliac tuberosity suggest a possibly stable, iliosacral locking mechanism in *Sivapithecus* (albeit different from that in humans) (29); we have also observed this in *Proconsul*.

Ischial tuberosity width is related to the presence or absence of ischial callosities. Primates with ischial callosities (cercopithecoïds and hylobatids) form one group in this measure, whereas those lacking callosities (platyrrhines and hominids) form another (30). *Sivapithecus* strongly aligns with the latter group.

Relative to its length, the acetabulum is deep in *Sivapithecus* and the entire lunate surface provides substantial articular surface area for the femoral head. In acetabular depth, *Sivapithecus* resembles cercopithecoïd monkeys, whereas in lunate surface coverage it resembles atelines and great apes (Figs. S1, S4, and S5). This unusual combination of features, together with a femoral head morphology (preserved in *S. sivalensis*) that is spherical

and evenly covered with articular surface (8), suggests a mobile, yet quite stable, hip joint that sustained loading from multiple directions.

Among other *Sivapithecus* postcranial elements, humeral shaft morphology closely resembles that of cercopithecoïds (31), confirming the predominantly pronograde positional behavior implied by the narrow torso inferred from YGSP 41216. Other *S. indicus* and *S. sivalensis* postcranial specimens (3, 8, 17, 31–35) also sample a postcranium adapted to a kind of pronograde quadrupedalism. In most respects, the *Sivapithecus* postcranium is fundamentally like that of *Proconsul*, but with indications of greater mobility combined with stability at limb joints, including the hip, knee, and ankle joints (3, 8, 17).

Kelley (36) discussed the adaptive significance of, primarily, the *Proconsul* postcranium, noting evidence of powerful hand and foot grasping combined with forelimb and hindlimb joint mobility that was greater than in extant cercopithecoïds. These were interpreted as adaptations necessary in a tailless arboreal ape of large body size to maintain balance while moving above branches. We assume that *Sivapithecus* also lacked an external tail and was therefore subject to the same challenges as *Proconsul* during arboreal locomotion. In the absence of a tail used as a counterweight (37), balance would have been maintained by maneuvering the torso, and therefore the center of gravity, from secure hand and foot holds, with hands and feet in a variety of orientations.

The combined evidence therefore suggests that *Sivapithecus* was a large, tailless, probably cautious and deliberate, arboreal pronograde quadruped, moving in a complex 3D environment. It likely adopted a wide variety of frequently abducted limb positions and might well on occasion have used various antipronograde positional behaviors, including suspension from three or more limbs as well as vertical climbing (3, 17). However, suspensory behaviors with fully extended and abducted forelimbs are less likely. In all of these behaviors, maintaining balance would have been critical and a particular challenge in a large quadruped lacking a tail. Many of the postcranial features in *Sivapithecus* can be coherently viewed in this context.

Innominate and Torso Morphology of Other Miocene Hominoids. The Early Miocene *Proconsul nyanzae* (~18 Ma) probable male innominate is almost complete, relatively long and narrow, and would have been oriented parasagittally (11). Associated vertebral remains record a long lumbar region with six traditionally

Table 3. Principal component loadings, with percentage contributions to sample variation

Variable	PC1 (67%)	PC2 (16%)	PC3 (8%)	PC4 (3%)
Iliopubic angle (radians)	-0.24	0.11	-0.01	-0.14
HL/AL	-0.07	0.25	0.11	-0.04
LIH/AL	-0.06	-0.09	0.31	0.03
IW/AL	0.53	0.20	0.02	-0.02
ITW/AL	-0.29	0.17	0.04	-0.01
ISW/AL	0.82	0.01	0.02	0.00
DAW/AL	0.02	0.09	0.01	0.00
VAW/AL	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.03
AD/AL	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.02
ANW/AL	-0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
CLS/AL	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.00
DLS/AL	0.03	0.03	0.01	-0.01
ULS/AL	-0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00
XHRW/AL	-0.03	0.06	0.03	-0.01
NHRW/AL	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.03
XHTW/AL	-0.13	0.22	-0.05	0.14

Principal components 1–4 account for 95% of sample variation. The 11 remaining principal components each account for 2% or less of sample variation.

defined lumbar vertebrae and at least one thoracic with lumbar-type zygapophyseal articulations. Other material shows that *Proconsul* lacked an external tail (38), a feature likely to be a cladistically and behaviorally important hominoid synapomorphy (36, 39). Sampled is an animal with a relatively narrow and long torso, reflecting a generally pronograde positional repertoire.

Middle Miocene *Nacholapithecus kerioi* (Kenya; ~15–16 Ma) preserves a fragmentary ischium that provides minimal information about torso anatomy, although other postcranial features suggest a narrow torso and predominantly pronograde positional behavior (40–43). Like *Proconsul*, *Nacholapithecus* lacked a tail (38).

The latest Middle Miocene ape *Pierolapithecus catalaunicus* (Spain; 11.9 Ma) (16) is represented by a fragmentary ilium and ischium (44). The preserved ilium suggests somewhat greater ilial breadth than in *Proconsul* (or probably *Nacholapithecus*), although probably less than in the geologically younger *Oreopithecus* (discussed below) and extant apes. Some lumbar features indicate a shortened and stiffened lower back; the acute costal angle of several ribs points to a rather broad and short torso (45). Other postcranial features, for example of the hand, indicate a mixture of orthograde and pronograde positional behaviors (45, 46).

Late Miocene *Oreopithecus bambolii* (Italy; 8.3–6.7 Ma) (47) resembles extant large hominoids and siamangs in having an innominate with a broad ilium, ribs with acute costal angles (48–51), a vertebral column with five (traditionally defined) lumbar vertebrae, and mediolaterally narrow sacral alae (52), collectively indicating a short and broad trunk. Limb proportions and joint morphology (49, 53) suggest that orthograde positional behaviors were frequent, as in extant hominoids.

A currently undescribed hominoid partial innominate from late Miocene Rudabánya, Hungary (~10 Ma) has a flaring iliac blade (54), although not to the extent seen in extant large apes.

We note here also two nonhominoid taxa, the Plio-Pleistocene cercopithecoids *Paracolobus chemeroni* and *Theropithecus oswaldi*, that are similar in size to the larger Miocene apes discussed above but possess tails (38, 55). The innominates of both resemble *Proconsul nyanzae* and extant cercopithecoids in their iliac shape, being relatively narrow and long (11). Importantly, they demonstrate that increased body size alone would not explain broader torsos in hominoids.

Phylogenetic Interpretations. The new *Sivapithecus* innominate does not help resolve the “*Sivapithecus* dilemma,” that is, whether or not *Sivapithecus* is interpreted as a member of the *Pongo* clade (56). Certain facial and palatal features resemble the pattern seen only in *Pongo*, but there are no postcranial features that do so. Indeed, there are no postcranial features linking *Sivapithecus* to any particular crown hominid, although there are features, for example features of the distal humerus (8), that resemble those of crown hominids generally. However, these, although derived for at least crown hominoids, are likely plesiomorphic for hominids and not necessarily associated with orthograde posture and positional behaviors (36). Over the past two decades other Miocene hominoids such as *Pierolapithecus*, *Hispanopithecus*, and *Rudapithecus* have been described that also exhibit to varying degrees postcranial similarities to crown hominoids, but, in these instances, such features are clearly associated with orthograde postures or even suspensory behaviors specifically (15, 16, 57). These taxa have been variously regarded as hominids (16), hominines (15), or pongines (57).

It has been proposed that the postcranial similarities of extant hominoids are, to varying extents, homoplasies (e.g., refs. 16, 44, 45, and 58–62), as opposed to a view that they are mostly homologies (e.g., refs. 39, 51, and 63–65). If crown hominoid postcranial similarities are largely or entirely homoplasies, then *Sivapithecus* can be plausibly interpreted as the sister taxon to *Pongo* by invoking convergent postcranial evolution in, at least, hylobatids and African and Asian large apes. However, if the postcranial features of crown hominoids related to orthograde positional behaviors are convergent, doubts arise about phylogenetic interpretations of *Pierolapithecus*, *Hispanopithecus*, and

Rudapithecus that assume postcranial similarities between them and extant hominoids to be homologies. We acknowledge that these interpretations also rest in part on aspects of cranial morphology that are regarded as indicating membership in Hominidae, or even the African ape-human clade (Homininae) specifically (15, 16, 45, 66–68). Importantly though, even if the phylogenetic significance of these cranial features has been correctly interpreted, postcranial convergence related to orthograde may still have occurred between the African and Asian hominid lineages. As originally noted by Pilbeam and colleagues (ref. 31, p. 239), almost a quarter century later problems still remain with “the objective definition of characters, assessment of homology versus convergence as alternative explanations for similarity... and determination of whether character states are primitive or derived. We are not confident that biologically plausible procedures [currently] exist for unambiguously settling these issues.”

What might usefully contribute to greater understanding about the phylogenetic placement of *Sivapithecus* in particular, and of Miocene apes in general? Advances in at least three areas may be helpful: interdisciplinary research on “molecular clocks” to achieve consensus on timing of the crown hominoid radiation, additional hominoid fossils from West and Central Africa in the 15–5 Ma interval and Southeast Asia in the 10–5 Ma interval to better identify the antecedents of the extant great apes, and directed functional genomic research on key phenotypic features (e.g., the axial skeleton) with the aim of increasing the relative likelihood of either homology or homoplasy as explanations for observed morphological similarities.

Methods

Measures and Measurement Error. Nineteen pelvic measures were used (Table 1). Definitions in [Supporting Information](#) are from Ward (19) and Lewton (20). Measures of YGSP 41216 were taken on separate occasions by two observers (K.L.L. and M.E.M.). Each variable was measured five times. Average intraobserver error (coefficient of variation of the five measurement trials) was 1.7, and average interobserver error was 2.3. The final values for YGSP 41216 are averages of the composite 10 trials.

Samples. The extant comparative sample used here derives from Ward (19) (dataset 1) and Lewton (20, 21) (dataset 2), the former supplemented with additional specimens measured by coauthors J.C.B., J.K., and M.E.M. ([Dataset S1](#)). (Table 2 contains a complete list of measured species.) Only adult individuals with fused epiphyses were included. Not all measures were available on all included specimens. All data for fossil specimens (*P. chemeroni*, *T. oswaldi*, *Cercopithecoides williamsi*, and *P. nyanzae*) were obtained from published values (19), except for measures 1, 18, and 19 for *P. nyanzae*, which we took on a high-quality cast of the original specimen (see [Supporting Information](#) for details).

Statistical Analyses. All analyses were performed on dataset 1 except for those on lower ilium cross-sectional area, which used dataset 2. Restricted maximum likelihood was used to impute missing data points. Differences in overall pelvic shape were assessed using principal components analysis on covariances of measure 17 and size ratios (variable/acetabulum length) of measures 1–7 and 9–16 (JMP, Version 10; SAS Institute Inc.) Distance matrix results were calculated using pairwise Euclidean distances between the average of each species’ principal components scores. Reduced major axis regressions were conducted using the *smatr* software package in R (69). The natural log of several variables was regressed on ln-acetabulum length, a proxy for body size.

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