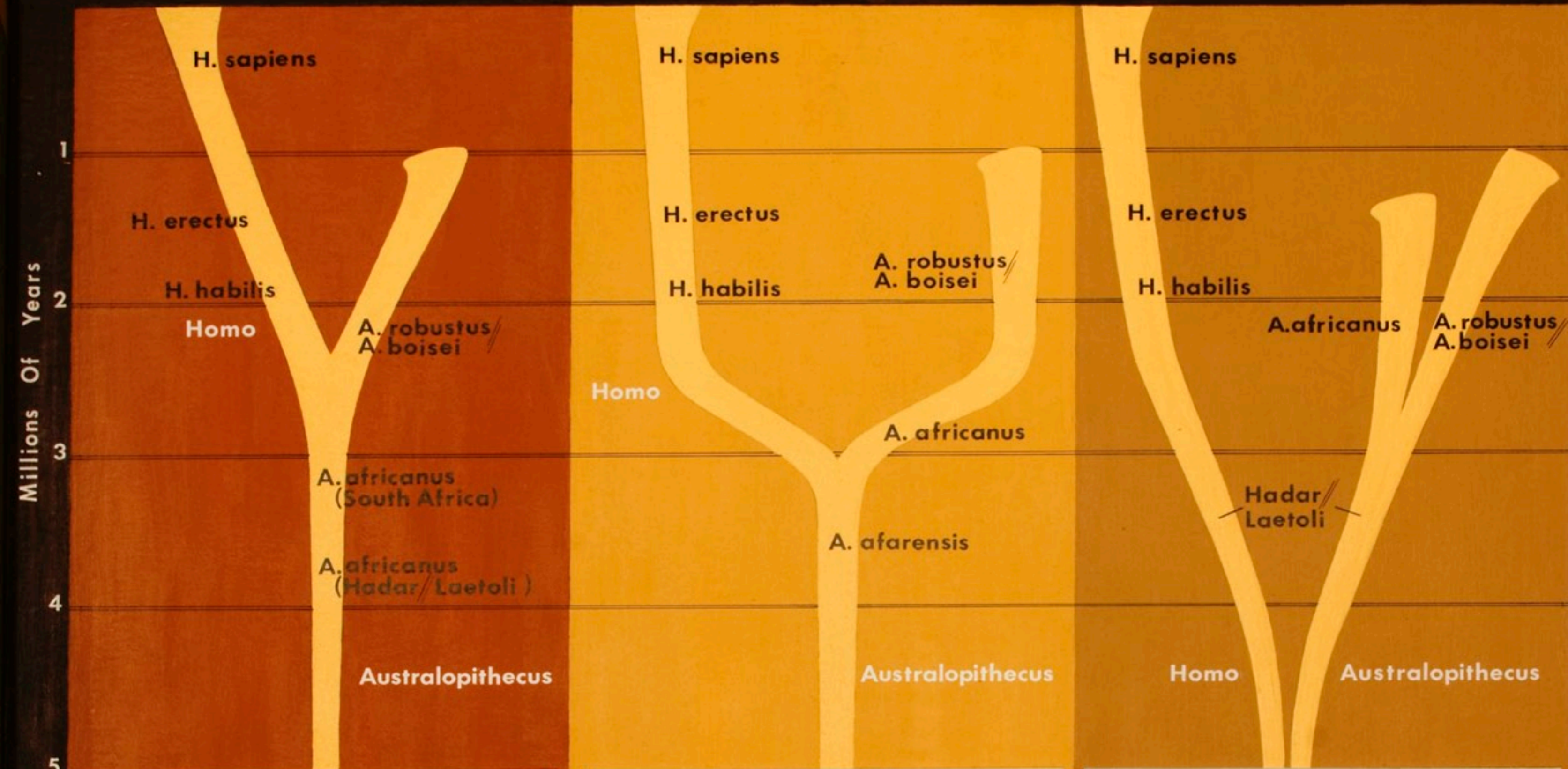


# INTERPRETATIONS

# Australopithecus, Man, and Evolution



## Phillip Tobias

Phillip Tobias has maintained the traditional view that South African *A. africanus* was the common ancestor of *Homo* and the highly specialized "robust" *Australopithecus* species, *A. robustus* and *A. boisei*. He also concludes that the *A. afarensis* fossils from the sites of Hadar and Laetoli are East African representatives of this common ancestral species. Tobias's evolutionary scheme implies a relatively late origin for the *Homo* lineage, about 2.0-2.5 million years ago.

## Donald Johanson Tim White

The discovery of the primitive *A. afarensis* fossils at Hadar and Laetoli prompted Johanson and White in 1979 to hypothesize that this species was the common ancestor of the *Homo* and "robust" *Australopithecus* lineages. A major departure from the traditional interpretation (as represented by Tobias's view) was their placement of *A. africanus* on the "robust" line, thereby removing it from the ancestry of *Homo*. Johanson and White believe the *Homo* lineage diverged from an *A. afarensis*-like ancestor about 3.0 million years ago.

## Richard Leakey

According to Richard Leakey the *Homo* and *Australopithecus* lines diverged from one another before 4 million years ago. The fossils from Hadar and Laetoli - attributed to the species *A. afarensis* by Johanson and White - are seen by Leakey as representing two species, one of *Homo* and another of *Australopithecus*. In agreement with Johanson and White, Leakey believes *A. africanus* was separate from the main line leading to modern humans.