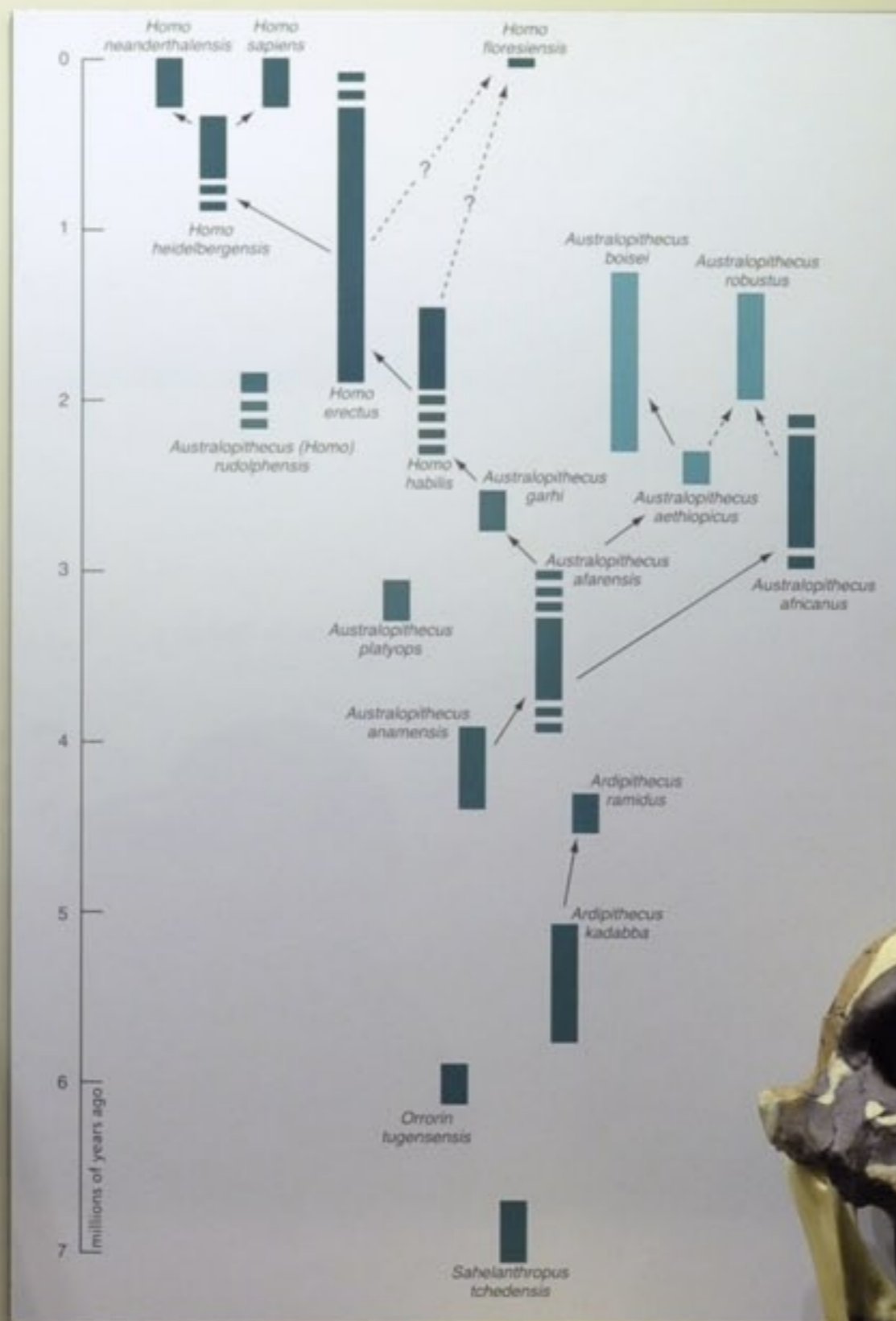


The Hominin Family Tree

The diagram seen here reflects current thinking about the evolution of all known hominin species. *Hominin* is the term used for the species in the human lineage, many of which are shown in this case. The earliest hominin yet discovered, *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, is over 7 million years old. Although relatively small-brained and chimpanzee-like in many respects, this species had molar teeth with thicker enamel, smaller canines, and was largely bipedal. Other small-brained bipedal hominins were present in East Africa until about 4 to 4.5 million years ago.

Australopithecus afarensis, "Lucy," emerged on the scene between 3 and 4 million years ago. This hominin had a fully bipedal stance, somewhat larger brain size, and much thicker teeth for chewing hard foods. About this same time the hominin tree bifurcated into two main branches. The *Australopithecus* branch of the hominin tree produced multiple species, some of which lived until at least 1.3 million years ago. A second branch of the hominin tree spawned the genus *Homo*. Several species of both *Homo* and *Australopithecus* roamed the landscape between 1.5 and 2 million years ago. Our own species, *Homo sapiens*, probably evolved in Africa 200,000 to 250,000 years ago and co-existed with one or more other species of *Homo* until about 30,000 years ago.



Homo sapiens
200,000 years ago to present
Worldwide



Homo heidelbergensis
250,000-130,000 years ago
Africa and Europe

Homo neanderthalensis
30,000-10,000 years ago
Europe and western Asia



Homo erectus
100,000-1.9 million years ago
Africa to Europe and Asia



Homo habilis
1.4-2.3 million years ago
East Africa



Australopithecus boisei
1.3-2.3 million years ago
East Africa



Australopithecus robustus
1.5-2.0 million years ago
South Africa



Australopithecus africanus
2.0-3.0 million years ago
South Africa



Homo rudolfensis
1.8-1.9 million years ago
East Africa



Australopithecus aethiopicus
2.3-2.5 million years ago
East Africa



Australopithecus afarensis