

Explore/Explain: Evidence for Change across Time

Chapter 2

Physical Anthropologist Copymaster: Interview with a Physical Anthropologist

Why did you decide to become a scientist, and how did you choose this field for your specialty?

As a child, I was quite interested in nature. I enjoyed hiking, camping, and fishing with my family. When I entered college in 1972, I was excited about studying the natural world. I took classes in chemistry, physics, biology, and anthropology in pursuit of knowledge on this subject. As the semesters past, I realized what I was most interested in was the evolutionary history of humans and our closest relatives, the nonhuman primates, so I decided to specialize in physical anthropology. I was fortunate to study this subject at the University of Massachusetts for my B.A., Arizona State for my M.A., and Duke University for my Ph.D. During the past 20 years, I have participated in paleoanthropological research in Egypt on four occasions, in Vietnam on five occasions, and in North America on 15 occasions. I have been a professor of anthropology at the University of Colorado, Boulder, since 1986.



Herbert H. Covert
*Associate Professor,
Department of Anthropology,
University of Colorado, Boulder*

What is the most interesting or unusual thing that has ever happened while you were doing research?

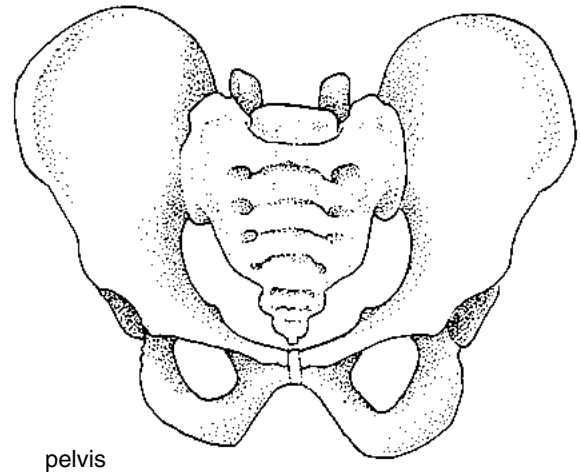
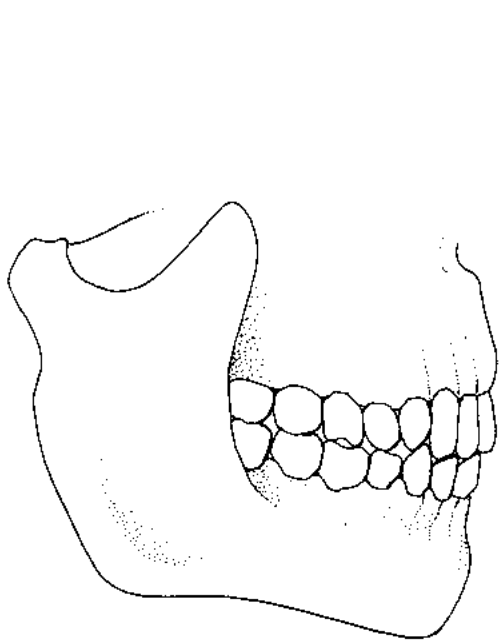
In 1981, I had the good fortune of discovering the facial skeleton of an early monkeylike primate called *Aegyptopithecus*, a creature that is thought to be a good model for the last common ancestor of humans, apes, and Old World monkeys. It was quite exciting to carefully excavate it from the ancient sands of the Sahara Desert. With each sweep of the paintbrush I was using to uncover it, I was able to get a more complete view of the face of my great-great grandparent removed by 32 million years or so!

What do you find to be the most fun and/or most challenging aspect of your work?

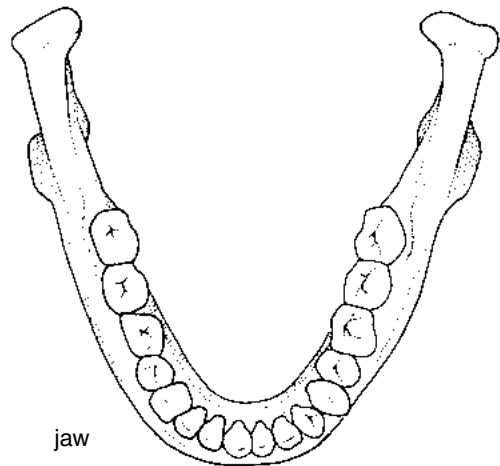
I find traveling and meeting people that share my interests in the natural history of life is the most rewarding aspect of my job. Knowing that scholars in Vietnam and Egypt have the same intellectual aspirations and interests as I is a wonderful reminder that people from around the world share the same wonderful curiosity about the natural history of our planet.

Evidence for Change across Time

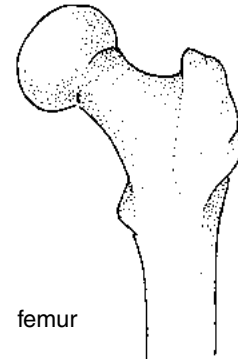
**Physical Anthropologist Copymaster:
Primate Comparisons—Human**



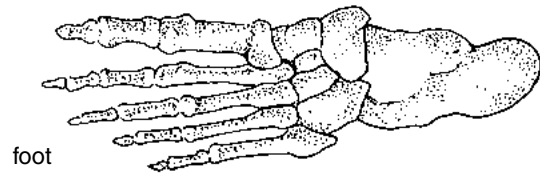
pelvis



jaw



femur



foot

Illustration by Marjorie C. Leggitt

Explore/Explain:
Evidence for Change across Time

Chapter 2

**Physical Anthropologist Copymaster:
Primate Comparisons—Chimpanzee**

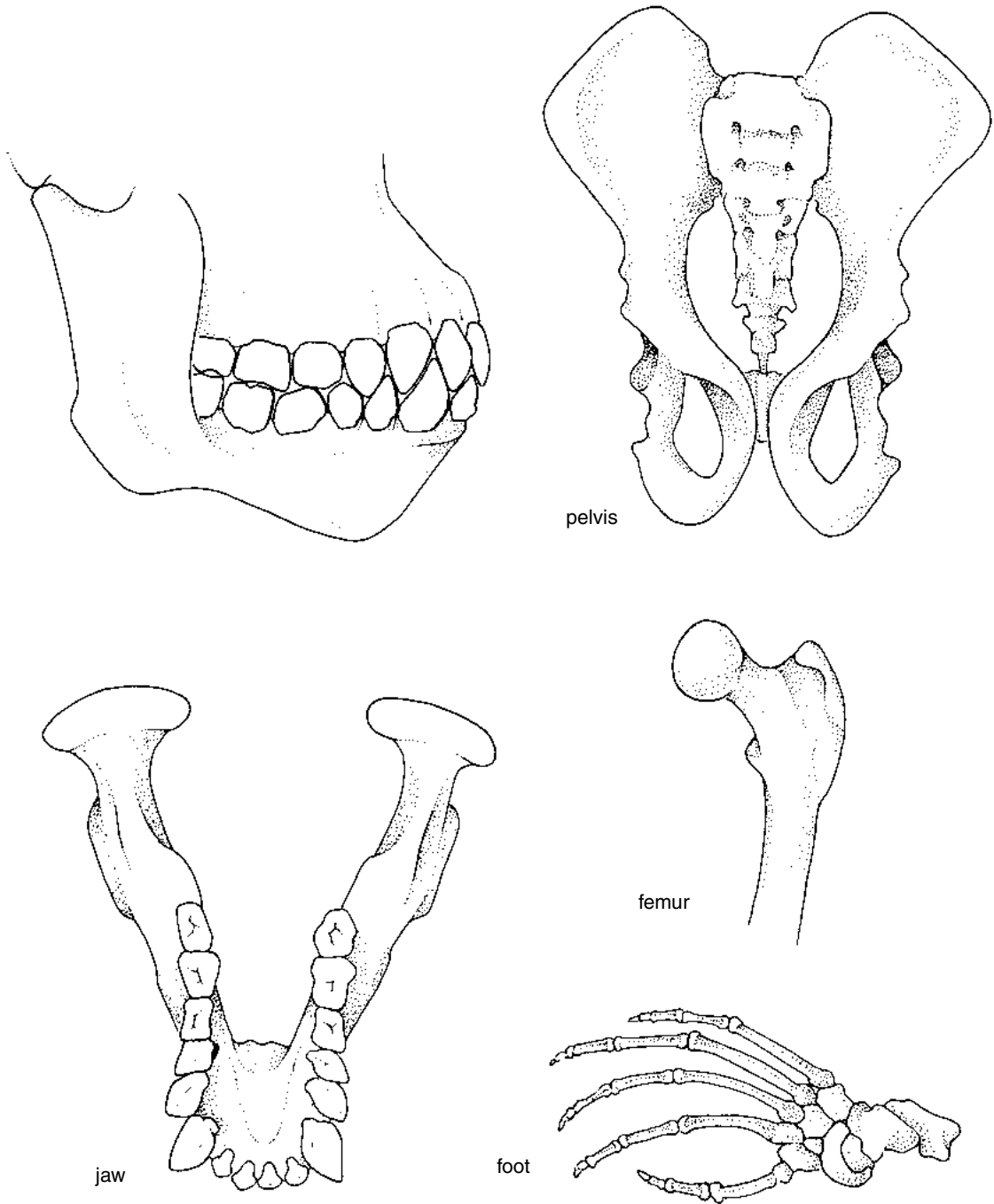


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Evidence for Change across Time

**Physical Anthropologist Copymaster:
Primate Comparisons—Mystery**

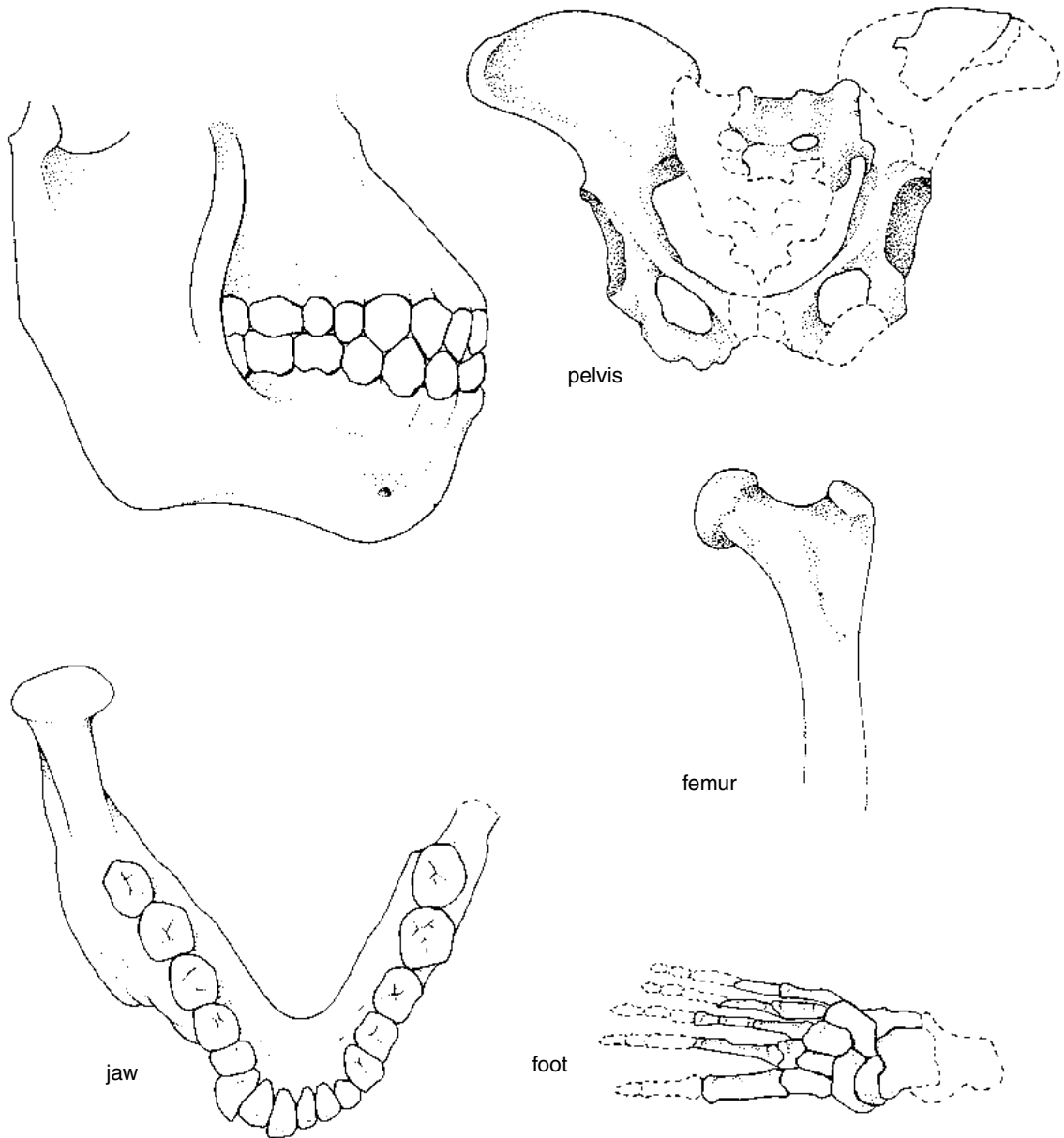


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