



The most recent discovery of human cranium (in November 2011) is uniquely important for it signals the availability of a historically decisive development in the study of human evolution. Tsegay Medin, who earned his MA Degree as Paleontologist in Spain, found a very ancient cranium in Mulhuli-Amo near the Buya Site- where a one-Million year old human skull was discovered more than a decade ago.

The scientists, who have been working in Eritrea strongly believe such a worthy discovery that ages more than a million year is a milestone for the reconstruction of the progressive human evolution from that of the homo-ergaster to homo-erectus and thereby to the homo-heidelbergensis and to the development of that of today's human anatomy.

Ancient relics that have been discovered in the Buya and Mulhuli-Amo areas are perfect epitomes that are highly essential for those who are regularly in search of a new finding. Tsegay, an aspiring Eritrean researcher, who has been working in the basins of the aforementioned areas for a number of years, describes the findings as incredibly important for everybody like him who engages in researching and discovering of new fossils.

Tsegay said that fossils are densely available in the new site of Mulhuli-Amo which is not far from Buya, where every kind of fossil from each type of species is available and to which he confidently reiterates as a complete eco-system. The fauna remains that exist in the area indicate the connection and association of early ancestors with that of today's humans.

As a new finding leads to a new researching activity, Tsegay along his colleagues from the National Museum and partners from the universities of France and Italy are still expecting to do further studies. According to Mr. Tsegay, based on the discoveries, the studies would focus on how those earlier humans used to disarticulate the faunal bones.

The study of evolution is somehow very complicated which seeks extra cautiousness to finally reach a reliable conclusion which could not be done by studying every single deposit of remnants. "We do a systematic study in a particular small area which could hopefully represent the overall area." Mr. Tsegay said "Some previous studies show that these newly found species

were the last representative species, mainly in East Africa as well as is also very important for the hypothesis that extends out of Africa. This basin is very important in terms of chronology, and in terms of the potential of the poorly represented earlier documentation system.”

To a visitor, the human remains that have been preserved at the National Museum may seem a trivial collection of the past. Even though a smaller portion of a much extended period of time, such collections have a profound meaning for the country's archeological development and most importantly for international scientists who have been working in such studies.

Alfredo Coppa, Professor of Physical Anthropology at the University of Rome “Lasapienza”, is of the idea that the few remains that have been preserved to date are just epitomes of a slight portion of the huge deposits that would be discovered in the future. Pointing to the archeological findings in the National Museum, “You see here on the table, human remains in a very small room, but you need to keep in mind that behind this there are huge amount of people doing scientific works.” Prof. Alfredo Coppa said “We are not only archaeologists, anthropologist, geologists, sedimentologists, paleontologists working on the found remains.” He further reinforces the importance of the Buya site in the future studies for it would enable them to have a very good reconstruction of the evolutionary phases that is not confined to the anatomy but also for a broader study of ancestral behaviors in general and this particular kind of people who lived in Eritrea around one Million years ago. So, he said “What we are beginning now is the firm basis to reconstruct, with the data frame we have, what they were and what they did and how they behaved.”

According to Dr. Yosief Lobsekal, Director General of the National Museum, prior to the findings, the research activity was mainly concentrated on the relatively recent period which is the Holocene period that dates for around



ten thousand years which would lead them to more systematic researches. The continued findings of a very ancient period, however, indicated the country is abundantly rich in terms of the earliest human fossils. In this regard, Dr. Yosief, who is a historical archeologist and coordinator of the Eritrean-Italian Buya Research project said “Generally it could be said that Eritrea is a new country but old in history. And this good discovery will have a great role in reconstructing its ancient history.”

The potentials of studying Eritrea's ancient history are very huge more than ever. But to do this, “We need to stretch our hands for further explorations and excavations of these ancient human remains.” Dr. Yosief said “There is a good potential laid before us especially in this basin to fill

this very wide historical gap that extends to about one Million years of age.”

The very finding of ancient fossils in the Buya area has led to a consecutive exploration. Since young researchers like Tsegay have been involved in these researching activities, the prospects to explore and discover yet uncovered findings is just secured before hand for a large area of the country has been identified for its enormous deposits. Dr. Yosief describes the clues to find much ancient fossils as great motive for the young Eritrean researchers to exert endeavors to that end.

What could be the reason for conducting continuous research activity in the area around Buya? Dr. Yosief said that the Geological discovery in Buya has announced the very potential of the surrounding area that is characterized by its abundant contents which is also a requisite for conducting paleontological research. And that discovery Dr. Yosief reiterated is the main reason for attracting famous researchers from Italian Universities like the University of Rome, University of Florence and other Universities are also involved. Subsequently such a development was very imperative for the enhancement of cooperation partnership. Accordingly, Eritrea's National Museum has been concentrating on this area believing that there are much more similar areas that would show such like results and ultimately help for the reconstruction of the poorly documented ancient history of Eritrea.

Generally speaking rift valleys are said to be the home for fossils deposited. Eritrea's Rift Valleys have truly asserted this fact. In this regard, Dr. Yosief puts his remark as follows:

The motive for the choice of the area for study is directly related to the fact that depressions such as the rift-valley areas are prone to accumulate deposits while highlands are areas where deposits are eroded. The probability of discovering seed plants bearing fossil life is much greater in great depression than in a highland. So, all in all, this is true that rift valleys can have a continued record. Likely, we could cover roughly one Million years. Not only human life is fossilized and preserved in this book of rift valley, which is thick of many hundred meters of deposit. So the most recent phase of human adaptation area is also poorly reported. We don't know how technologically or morphologically identify humans adapted in this area. So this is a complementary but independent to some extent adventure in the scientific terms. What I can say in principle is that notably for some thousands of years these deposits were represented in the highlands.