

EXHIBIT TRACES GENEALOGY OF MAMMALS—INCLUDING MAN

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Chicago Natural History Museum has eight large halls devoted to the mammals of the world. Since man himself is one of the mammals, the many halls of anthropological exhibits could also be regarded as mammalian exhibits, and thus more than half of the total exhibits in the Museum deal with this group of animals. In nature, on the other hand, the mammals are among the least numerous of all animal groups.

A trip through these halls gives the interested visitor a graphic idea of the astonishing differences among the various mammals. He can scarcely fail to be impressed by the bigness of some and the littleness of others, by the array of horns, hoofs, claws, trunks, flippers, or of various degrees of hairiness or nakedness. The mammals seem to have gone off in all directions in adapting themselves to their varied ways of life.

Actually there is an order in this seeming chaos, but until recently there was nothing in the Museum to show how the thousands of different kinds of mammals are inter-related, like the various members of a human family. A "family tree" of mammals, now on view in George M. Pullman Hall (Hall 13) shows these relationships at a glance. Thus it serves as an introduction to the remaining exhibits of mammals.

EVOLUTION OF CLASSIFICATIONS

Zoologists, like many other people, are inveterate classifiers. The oldest historical records contain attempts to classify mammals from various standpoints, scientific and otherwise. One of the oldest and best known is the ancient Jewish classification of mammals into "clean" and "unclean" on the basis of foot structure and cud-chewing habits (Leviticus xi). Subsequent attempts to classify mammals, made by zoologists in various parts of the world, underwent a gradual evolution that reflects the growth of knowledge over the years. In 1910, Dr. W. K. Gregory, of the American Museum of Natural History, published an interesting history of these classifications, under the title *The Orders of Mammals*. The discovery of fossil mammals, many of them entirely different from any living mammal, first became an important factor in the 19th century and since then has been of constantly increasing importance in shaping our ideas of the classification of mammals.

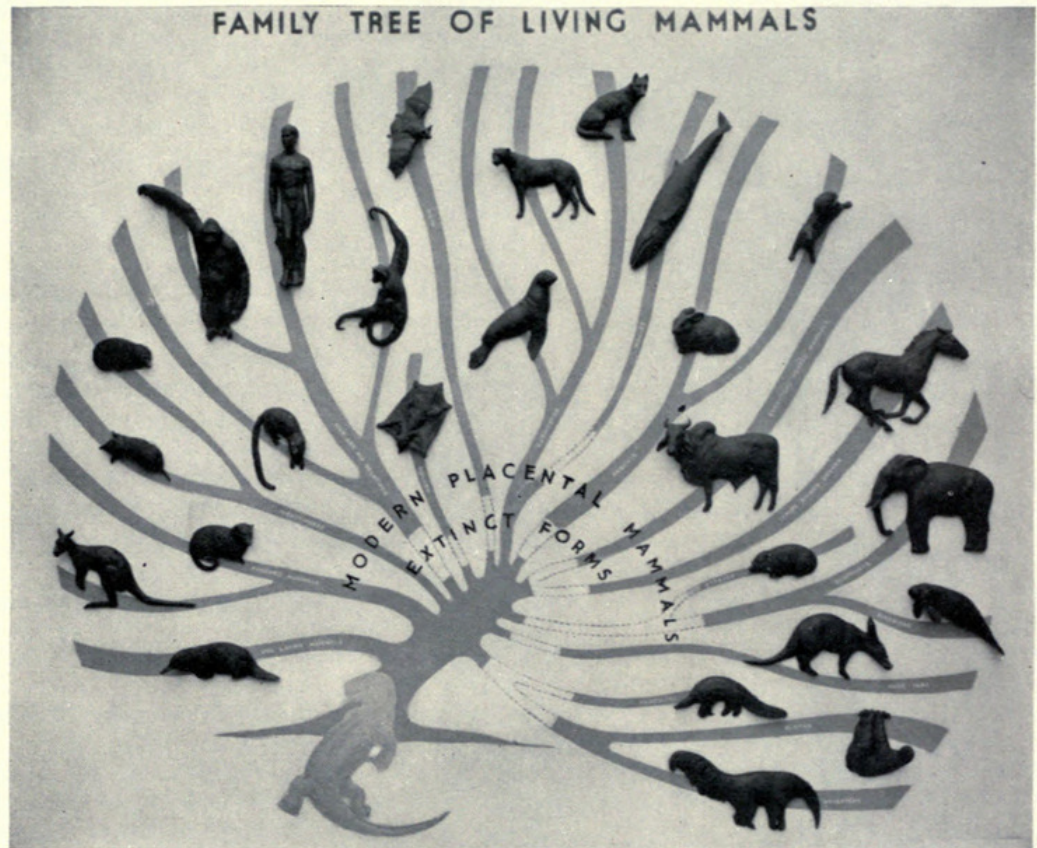
Today zoologists recognize eighteen great groups, or *orders*, of living mammals and fourteen additional orders that flourished in the past but died out and are now known to us only as fossils. Some of the orders, such as the bats, the rodents, or the carnivores, contain thousands of species, are found everywhere, and are well known to everyone. Others, such as the colugos or the aardvarks, include only a couple of

species, and the problem of their affinities has puzzled zoologists ever since they were first discovered.

MAN'S PLACE CHANGES

The question of man's position in the classification of mammals has had an in-

teresting history. Further discoveries, especially of fossils as yet unknown, and further knowledge of mammals already known, will undoubtedly change our ideas of the inter-relationships of mammals. Perhaps a century from now our present classification will look as crude and unscientific as the



MAN IS SHOWN AS ARISING FROM A LOWLY LINE

teresting history. The oldest classifiers could not bring themselves to bracket man with the beasts of the field, and they omitted him entirely from their classifications. As scientific knowledge increased it became more and more apparent that man does not differ fundamentally from other mammals. Zoologists of the 18th and 19th centuries included man in their classifications, but they gave him a very special position. Usually a classification either began with man and worked down through the "lesser" mammals to the "lowest," or it began with the lowest and ended, on a note of triumph, with man at the top. But still further research showed that man and his relatives are most closely related to the insectivores (the moles and shrews), which in turn are among the most lowly of living mammals. The new Museum exhibit accordingly shows the line that leads to man coming off near that of the insectivores.

FURTHER MODIFICATION ANTICIPATED

Of course, there is no reason to believe that the classification now in use by zoolo-

gists of the older zoologists do to those of today.

The family tree of living mammals was prepared by Museum Artist Joseph B. Krstolich, under the direction of Chief Curator of Zoology Karl P. Schmidt. A similar project for invertebrates is in process.

THIS MONTH'S COVER

This picture, from a negative made away back in 1883, shows totem poles and native houses in the old Haida Indian village of Skidegate on the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia, Canada, as they appeared at that time. Totem poles, house posts, and many other objects of ethnological interest collected from the Haida Indians who formerly occupied this village are on exhibition in Hall 10 of the Museum's anthropological exhibits.



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