

# Disclosure

of things evolutionists don't want you to know

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## MORE ABOUT ARDI

*Evolutionists think Ardi tells us things about teeth, tools, and tottering.*

Last month we started a discussion of the *Ardipithecus ramidus* reports widely circulated in the popular news media. But, as usual, the news media didn't tell the whole story. There were twelve major articles about Ardi in the journal *Science*, some of which contained important facts which were overlooked, or given scant mention, in the popular press. This month we want to give those issues the attention they deserve.

### PUTTING TEETH INTO IT

Ardi had some pretty fearsome teeth, more like apes than humans.

In apes and monkeys, the male's upper canine tooth usually bears a projecting, daggerlike crown that is continuously sharpened (honed) by wear against a specialized lower premolar tooth (together these form the C/P<sub>3</sub> complex). The canine tooth is used as a slicing weapon in intra- and intergroup social conflicts. Modern humans have small, stublike canines which function more like incisors.<sup>1</sup>

**Crown size, proportions, and variation.** The *Ar. ramidus* dentition is approximately chimpanzee-sized (fig. S1 and tables S2 to S4). Mean canine size is comparable to that of female *Pan troglodytes* [chimps], although the incisors are smaller. Upper and lower first molars (M1s) are *P. troglodytes*-sized but tend to be buccolingually broader (figs. S1 to S3). The second and third molars (M2s and M3s) are both absolutely and relatively larger (figs. S1 and S4 to S6). Postcanine size and proportions of *Ar. ramidus* are similar to those of *Ar. kadabba* and other ~6.0-million-year-old forms (*O. tugenensis* and *S. tchadensis*), as well as to many Miocene hominoids (although Miocene

ape lower molars tend to be buccolingually narrower) (fig. S3).<sup>2</sup>

That's probably more than you needed to know. The point is, Ardi had much better teeth than modern people do. Ardi didn't need to invent tools and fire to cut and cook his food to make it tender enough to eat. He could chew anything he wanted to.

The team suggests that *Ar. ramidus* was "more omnivorous" than chimpanzees, based on the size, shape, and enamel distribution of its teeth. It probably supplemented woodland plants such as fruits, nuts, and tubers with the occasional insects, small mammals, or bird eggs. Carbon-isotope studies of teeth from five individuals show that *Ar. ramidus* ate mostly woodland, rather than grassland, plants. Although *Ar. ramidus* probably ate figs and other fruit when ripe, it didn't consume as much fruit as chimpanzees do today.<sup>3</sup>

What do evolutionists make of this?

The canine/lower third premolar complex indicates a reduction of canine size and honing capacity early in hominid evolution, possibly driven by selection targeted on the male upper canine.<sup>4</sup>

It was previously believed that the common ancestor had puny canine teeth like ours, which evolved into more fearsome teeth in apes. Now evolutionists believe that the common ancestor had sharp canine teeth, but modern humans lost them. This is naturally puzzling. Why would

<sup>1</sup> Suwa, *et al.*, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "Paleobiological Implications of the *Ardipithecus ramidus* Dentition" page 69

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, page 94

<sup>3</sup> Gibbons, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "Ardipithecus ramidus: Habitat for Humanity", page 40

<sup>4</sup> Suwa, *et al.*, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "Paleobiological Implications of the *Ardipithecus ramidus* Dentition" page 94

Ardi's excellent teeth evolve into the inferior teeth we modern humans now have?

Loss of the projecting canine raises other **vexing questions** because this tooth is so fundamental to reproductive success in higher primates. **What could cause males to forfeit their ability to aggressively compete with other males?** What changes paved the way for the later emergence of the energy-thirsty brain of *Homo*? Such questions can no longer be addressed by simply comparing humans to extant apes, because no ape exhibits an even remotely similar evolutionary trajectory to that revealed by *Ardipithecus*.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, such questions can't remain unanswered, even if there are no answers. So, they have to make one up.

In modern monkeys and apes, the upper canine is important in male agonistic behavior, so its subdued shape in early hominids and *Ar. ramidus* suggests that **sexual selection played a primary role in canine reduction**. Thus, fundamental reproductive and social behavioral changes probably occurred in hominids long before they had enlarged brains and began to use stone tools.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, **girls like boys with small teeth**. This explanation might have had more credibility if the article had not come out just a few days before the current box-office hit movie, *Twilight*.<sup>7</sup> Although the teeny-boppers lined up outside the theater may disagree about who they love more, **the vampire and the werewolf both have some really impressive fangs, and the girls love them!**

## TOOLING AND TODDLING

The articles in *Science* suggest that Ardi's skeleton shows that Ardi was very close to using tools and walking around upright, if he wasn't doing that already.

*Ardipithecus* also shows that our ability to use and make tools did not require us to greatly modify our hands. Rather, human grasp and dexterity were long ago inherited almost directly from our last common ancestor with chimpanzees. We now know that our earliest ancestors only had to **slightly enlarge their thumbs and shorten their fingers to greatly**

**improve their dexterity for tools-using.**<sup>8</sup>

They didn't really press this point. They didn't have any evidence of tools. They just wanted to plant the suggestion that **Ardi didn't use his hands for walking. If Ardi didn't walk on his hands, he must have walked on two feet.**

## DOES IT STAND UP?

We didn't mention it before, when we were talking about teeth, but the third quote in this essay noted, "*Ar. ramidus* ate mostly woodland, rather than grassland, plants." This has implications about how upright posture evolved.

This **new evidence overwhelmingly refutes the once-favored but now moribund hypothesis that upright-walking hominins arose in open grasslands**. "There's so much good data here that people aren't going to be able to question whether early hominins were living in woodlands," says paleoanthropologist Andrew Hill of Yale University. "**Savannas had nothing to do with upright walking.**"<sup>9</sup>

The old, **old story** has been that apes moved out of the jungle into the savannas, and **had to learn to walk upright to see over the tall grass**. This claim that Ardi unquestionably walked upright in the jungle is bound to start a fight.

But **not everyone agrees** with the team's interpretations about how *Ar. ramidus* walked upright and what it reveals about our ancestors. "The authors ... are **framing the debate that will inevitably follow**," because the description and interpretation of the finds are entwined, says Pilbeam. "My first reaction is to be skeptical about some of the conclusions," including that human ancestors never went through a chimpanzee-like phase. Other researchers are focusing intently on the lower skeleton, where some of the anatomy is so primitive that they are beginning to argue over just what it means to be "bipedal." The pelvis, for example, offers only "circumstantial" evidence for upright walking, says Walker.<sup>10</sup>

However, several researchers aren't so sure about these inferences. Some are **skeptical that the crushed pelvis really shows the anatomical details needed to demonstrate bipedality**. The pelvis is "suggestive" of bipedality but not

<sup>5</sup> Lovejoy, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "Reexamining Human Origins in Light of *Ardipithecus ramidus*", page 74

<sup>6</sup> Suwa, *et al.*, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "Paleobiological Implications of the *Ardipithecus ramidus* Dentition", page 69

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.twilightthemovie.com/worldoftwilight/>

<sup>8</sup> Lovejoy, *et al.*, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "Careful Climbing in the Miocene: The Forelimbs of *Ardipithecus ramidus* and Humans Are Primitive", page 70

<sup>9</sup> Gibbons, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "*Ardipithecus ramidus*: Habitat for Humanity", page 40

<sup>10</sup> Gibbons, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "A New Kind of Ancestor: *Ardipithecus* Unveiled", page 37

conclusive, says paleoanthropologist Carol Ward of the University of Missouri, Columbia. Also, *Ar. ramidus* "does not appear to have had its knee placed over the ankle, which means that when walking bipedally, it would have had to shift its weight to the side," she says. Paleoanthropologist William Jungers of Stony Brook University in New York state is also not sure that the skeleton was bipedal. "Believe me, it's a unique form of bipedalism," he says. "The postcranium alone would not unequivocally signal hominin status, in my opinion." Paleoanthropologist Bernard Wood of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., agrees. Looking at the skeleton as a whole, he says, "I think the head is consistent with it being a hominin, ... [ellipsis in the original] but the rest of the body is much more questionable."

All this underscores how difficult it may be to recognize and define bipedality in the earliest hominins as they began to shift from trees to ground. One thing does seem clear, though: The absence of many specialized traits found in African apes suggests that our ancestors never knuckle-walked.

That throws a monkey wrench into a hypothesis about the last common ancestor of living apes and humans.<sup>11</sup>

## WHO CARES?

Why would anybody care about these things? People care because all these things tie together an important philosophical issue. At various times in the past, evolutionists have speculated about what caused some creature to move from the category of "animal" into the category of "human." Some said it was eating meat, which allowed us to evolve bigger brains, resulting in higher intelligence, which is the hallmark of humanity. Others said it was upright posture, which led to tool-making and social cooperation, which makes us human.

It all comes down to the nature of humanity. The significant question is whether people are just animals, or are somehow fundamentally different from animals. If people are no different from animals, it poses some logical problems for society. If it is okay to kill animals, and people are just animals, then it is okay to kill people. If it isn't okay to kill people, and people are just animals, then it isn't okay to kill and eat animals. If there is no difference between humans and animals, then there is no difference between human rights and animal rights.

Most (but not all) people believe that people are in a separate class from animals. In many

cases this belief is rooted in religion (not necessarily a Judeo-Christian religion). If one arbitrarily excludes any religious explanation for the difference between people and animals, then one has to find an objective, quantitative difference.

Evolutionists used to use brain size as the criterion that separates man from animals. If a primate had a brain less than 600 cc, it was an animal. If bigger, it was human.

The reasoning behind this distinction was that it is intelligence that makes man different from animals, and intelligence was thought to be related to brain size. That's why the science fiction movies in the 1950's always depicted the more highly evolved aliens from outer space as human-like creatures with super big brains.

The problem with this notion is that animals are a lot smarter than we used to give them credit for. Some insects, such as ants and bees, live in societies of undeniable complexity which requires far more intelligence than their tiny brains would suggest. Then, when the obviously human *Homo floresiensis* was discovered to have a tiny brain, it blew that theory out of the water.<sup>12</sup>

Now, the only difference between apes and humans is that humans habitually walk on two legs. Therefore, it is important to evolutionists to try to figure out how man learned to walk upright. Walking upright is what makes us human. Or so they say (now).

[Ardi] includes most of the skull and teeth, as well as the pelvis, hands, and feet—parts that the authors say reveal an "intermediate" form of upright walking, considered a hallmark of hominins.<sup>13</sup>

Now you know why your mother kept telling you to stand up straight! If you don't walk on two feet, you aren't human. That's why evolutionists are so obsessed with figuring out if a fossil primate walked on two feet or not.

**You are permitted (even encouraged) to copy and distribute this newsletter.**

**You are also permitted (even encouraged) to send a donation of \$15/year to Science Against Evolution, P.O. Box 923, Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0923, to help us in our work. ☺**

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, page 39

<sup>12</sup> *Disclosure*, November 2004, "*Homo floresiensis*"

<sup>13</sup> Gibbons, *Science*, 2 October 2009, "A New Kind of Ancestor: *Ardipithecus* Unveiled", pages 36-37

## JOURNALISTIC CREDIBILITY

*Journalists tell us that Sara Palin believes evolution is true—but can you believe journalists?*

This time of year newspapers love to reprint the letter eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote to the editor of New York's *Sun* that was printed on Sept. 21, 1897. In her letter she asked if there is a Santa Claus. She asked the *Sun* because, "Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.'" These days, newspapers don't have the same respect. They have lost respect and circulation. Now the primary difference between a newspaper and a supermarket tabloid is that the tabloid has sexier pictures and is more likely to be true.

People don't believe what they read in newspapers or hear on the TV news anymore because there are so many instances in which journalists report things that their readers or viewers know to be false.

Sarah Palin's book, *Going Rogue*, got lots of media attention when it was published last month. It sold 300,000 copies the first day with total sales exceeding 1 million so far, with expected sales of 2.5 million (if you can believe the newspapers ☺). Some of the TV news talk show hosts (or guests) said that Sarah wrote that she believed in evolution (or, as some said, was ambiguous about her belief in creation).

Typically we would quote the particular person who made the false statement, but we won't this time. It would be unfair to quote one or two individuals because we would necessarily have to omit some other self-proclaimed authorities from the list of people who got it wrong. It is not our intention to discredit one or two particular journalists—instead we want to discredit a widely circulated error about evolution.

The millions of people who actually read the book will realize that the news media lied to them again, and trust the media even less. Why do journalists say things that their audience can easily tell are untrue?

### THREE POSSIBILITIES

In particular, why would someone say that Sarah Palin doesn't believe in creation when anyone can walk into a bookstore, turn to pages 217 to 219 and read that she does? There are at least three possibilities.

Some would say that the lie is politically motivated: They hope that they can reduce her chances of getting elected by making conservative voters angry at her. The second possibility is that they think they can get conservatives to accept evolution by telling them that a popular conservative leader believes in evolution. As likely as these political and religious motives might be, we will ignore them both.

The third possibility, which is the one we will address, is that the journalists are simply too stupid to understand what Palin wrote. Since Palin presented the view shared by the major creationist organizations, and since it was apparently misunderstood, we will attempt to explain it in terms so simple even a journalist can understand it.

We are not endorsing creationism, or a political candidate. We are explaining a position that evolutionists typically distort. You have probably heard their distortion at one time or another.

Here is the creationist position as expressed by Sarah Palin:

Back out in the living room with Salter and Schmidt, the conversation turned to the topic of theories of origins. And that, it seemed, was when the big guy hit the pause button. He knew my position: I believed in the evidence for microevolution—that geologic and species change occurs incrementally over time. But I didn't believe in the theory that human beings—thinking, loving beings—originated from fish that sprouted legs and crawled out of the sea. Or that human beings began as single-celled organisms that developed into monkeys who eventually swung down from trees; I believe we came about through a random process but were created by God.

"But your dad's a science teacher," Schmidt objected.

"Yes."

"Then you know that science proves evolution."

"Parts of evolution," I said. "But I believe that God created us and also that He can create an evolutionary process that allows species to change and adapt."

Schmidt winced and raised his eyebrows. In the dim light, his sunglasses shifted atop his head.

I had just dared to mention the C-word: creationism. But I felt I was on solid factual ground. My dad, who is not particularly religious but certainly sees God's hand everywhere he looks in Alaska, had spent many evenings around our dinner table discussing treasures from his classroom with me and my

siblings. ...

[She then presents two paragraphs of examples of the scientific discussions around the dinner table.]

But in eighteen years of impromptu supper-table lessons and expert-guided field trips to America's national parks, never had Dad or anyone else convinced me that the earth had sprung forth conveniently stocked with the ingredients necessary to spontaneously generate life and its beauty and diversity; in fact, I thought that the idea flew in the face of the evidence I saw all around.

I got where Schmidt was coming from. I know the word "creationism" evokes images of wild-eyed fundamentalists burying evidence for *any* kind of evolution under an avalanche of Bible verses.<sup>14</sup>

### MICROEVOLUTION

Let's look at the sentences evolutionists tend to jump on. She said, "I believed in the evidence for microevolution—that geologic and species change occurs incrementally over time."

Microevolution is accepted by every serious creationist we know. Microevolution is minor variation within a species caused either by random combinations of existing genetic information or loss of genetic information. This is entirely different from the fanciful process called "macroevolution" which claims that new species can arise by spontaneous generation of genetic information.

We can't stress this too much. Microevolution works by natural selection causing certain disadvantageous genes, or disadvantageous combinations of genes, to be eliminated from the gene pool. Macroevolution supposedly works by some magical random process adding brand new advantageous genes to the gene pool.

Evolutionists falsely claim that microevolution produces small changes and that given enough time these small changes add up to big changes, which they call macroevolution. This is as silly as believing that if you lose a little bit of money every day, eventually you will lose enough to become a millionaire. (That only works if you were a billionaire to begin with.)

### GRADUAL GEOLOGY

We all, like Sarah, do see gradual geologic changes today. But that does not mean that every geologic feature was formed gradually. Some dramatic geologic features were formed rapidly through massive earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, or floods. Her acknowledgement that

there are some gradual geologic changes does not imply that she believes all geologic changes are gradual, or that the world is billions of years old.

### GOD AND EVOLUTION

The second oft-misinterpreted sentence is, "But I believe that God created us and also that He can create an evolutionary process that allows species to change and adapt."

Biblical creationists believe that all the so-called races of man "evolved" from Noah's three sons and their wives. That is, certain human populations tend to be shorter or taller, or have predominantly different hair color, eye color, or skin color. There insignificant differences are the result of random combinations of genes which have become more frequent than other combinations of genes in that particular group of humans.

Furthermore, various combinations of genes do allow plant and animal species to survive better than others in certain environments. This allows them to "adapt" to the environment.

Finally, she says, "I know the word "creationism" evokes images of wild-eyed fundamentalists burying evidence for *any* kind of evolution under an avalanche of Bible verses."

She has correctly observed that some people (including journalists we might add) have (intentionally or ignorantly) advanced an incorrect image of what creationists believed.

### JOURNALIST MALPRACTICE

Whether Sarah Palin is right or wrong is irrelevant. The relevant point is that TV and print journalists incorrectly reported what she wrote about evolution in her book.

It is our contention that journalists routinely report incorrectly. Here is an instance where several people on multiple television networks misquoted what someone said about evolution, even though there are more than a million printed copies of what that person actually said readily available to anyone who wants to read it. Such journalistic malpractice can't go unmentioned.

If you are a regular reader of this newsletter you are probably tired of us saying this, but we need to constantly repeat it. Don't believe something just because we say it, or because a scientist says it, or because a religious leader says it, or because a politician says it, or because a journalist says it, or because a teacher says it. Always check out the facts for yourself.

<sup>14</sup> Palin, *Going Rogue*, 2009, pages 217-219

# CREATIONISM

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/creationism/>

*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

This month's web site review looks at an article found in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP). I find it interesting that Creationism is discussed in SEP. By following a link that provides information about SEP you learn that "SEP was designed so that each entry is maintained and kept up to date by an expert or group of experts in the field. All entries and substantive updates are refereed by members of a distinguished Editorial Board before they are made public."

The article on Creationism was first published on Aug 30, 2003 with substantive revision on Oct 29, 2007. After a brief introduction where many generalities are made about Creationists you will find a Table of Contents that contains the following: 1) History of Creationism, 2) Creation Science, 3) Understanding Creationism in its Cultural Context, 4) Arkansas, 5) The Naturalism Debate, 6) Can an Evolutionist Be a Christian?, 7) Intelligent Design, 8) Is Complexity Irreducible?, 9) The Explanatory Filter, 10) Mutually exclusive?, 11) Intelligent Design and Traditional Creationism and 12) Conclusion.

It is interesting to note that in the section on Arkansas, a judge "ruled that the 'essential characteristics' of what makes something scientific are: 1) It is guided by natural law; 2) It has to be explanatory by reference to natural law; 3) It is testable against the empirical world; 4) Its conclusions are tentative, *i.e.* are not necessarily the final word; and 5) It is falsifiable." You can see that philosophy becomes an issue more than religion or science.

The Conclusion section really points out the bias of the writer of the article. Nevertheless, I find it interesting to learn that he feels that "at the moment, those opposed to Creationism are spending more of their energies quarreling among themselves than fighting the opposition". You also learn that he feels the new crop of very militant atheists will make the case for teaching evolution constitutionally hard to defend.

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