

"A Ready Answer"

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Published Monthly in The Restoration Herald



Date: March, 2010

Series: Worldviews at War (26)

Title: Human Evolution (VI)

(Continued from last month)

Ramapithecus has remained on quite a few charts as a human ancestor because if it goes, there is nothing else to place “way back there” as a step away from the assumed common ancestor. However, the growing consensus over time has been that *Ramapithecus* was also not a human ancestor. This was largely based on the fact that complete lower jaws indicated that *Ramapithecus* was very similar to an orangutan. Notice how views changed from 1970 to 1979,

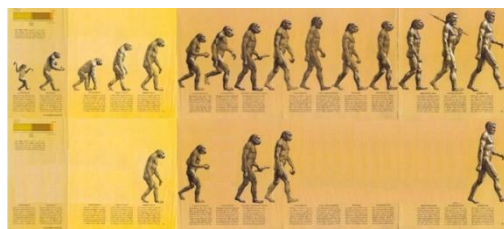
In our view, the shape of the dental arch, the continuity of the record, and the similarities between us and the African apes are all secondary to the crucial hallmarks of the Hominidae – erect posture and bipedal locomotion. The hominids are distinctive because they walk on two legs. *Ramapithecus*, on the basis of evidence currently available, was not bipedal. Therefore *Ramapithecus* was not a hominid, though it could have been the genus from which hominids emerged.¹

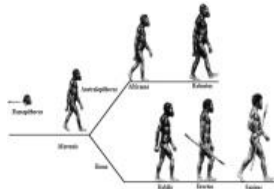
What, finally, can we say about the position of *Ramapithecus* in primate evolution? One of several kinds of apes that lived during the Miocene, it may have fed in open country, developing jaws and teeth for chewing tough roots and fibers . . . The case for *Ramapithecus* as an ancestral human has been weak from the start and has not strengthened with the passage of time. Now . . . nothing is left but his smile.²

And by 1992, *Ramapithecus* was ousted from the ranks of human ancestors completely!

. . . in 1967, when Vincent M. Sarich . . . challenged a fossil primate called *Ramapithecus* . . . they believed that *Ramapithecus* appeared after the divergence of the human and ape lineages and that it was directly ancestral to humans. . . . But new fossil finds undermined the human status of *Ramapithecus*: it is now clear *Ramapithecus* is actually *Sivapithecus*, a creature ancestral to orangutans and not to any of the African Apes at all. Moreover, the age of some sivapithecine fossils was downgraded to only about six million years.³

So, where are we now? Darwin theorized a gradual evolutionary transformation of some small ape-like ancestor into human beings, although he really had no hard evidence to support the notion. Then the hunt was on for evidence to support what European secularists wanted to believe. In the late 1800’s, Dubois put forward “Java Man,” based on pathological fossils, while hiding the fact that he had also found human bones in the same area. Then, in the early 1900’s, the Piltdown fraud was embraced as evidence for human evolution and from 1922-27 an extinct pig’s tooth was held to be “Nebraska Man.” In the later 1960’s, the Kelvin-Zallenger chart appeared in the Time-Life book Early Man, lining up 15 characters to portray human evolution from a small ape-like critter, while admitting in the small print that half of the characters were NOT believed to be ancestral forms when the book was published. (original & edited versions right)





The experts knew the Kelvin-Zallenger chart was largely bad propaganda and, by 1981, Donald Johanson's chart of human evolution (left) had trimmed the "ancestors" down to *Ramapithecus* and then just three characters leading to humans.

Since 1981, a number of experts have even eliminated *Ramapithecus* and the *Australopithecines* as human ancestors and that doesn't leave much. Although the general Darwinian story and the "Human evolution" notion continue to have an "assumed truth" cliché impact amongst those who think the Biblical theism vs. atheism issue has already been settled in favor of the latter, the hard evidence problem for Darwin's notion of human evolution is as bad as it was in his time.

Since 1871, "star players" promoted as evidence for the human evolution story have been trotted on and off of the charts faster than free-agents join and then leave teams in the NFL. The apostles of materialistic-naturalistic faith keep trotting out new fossil characters as evidence for human evolution in the popular media, but I suspect that they are also hoping that people are not keeping track of how long most of these characters remain on the roster. So, what of the newer media "stars" in evolutionary "Hollywood," such as Lucy, the Hobbits, Ardi, and Ida?

"**Lucy**" - Bones were recovered at Hadar, East Africa, in 1973-74 by Taieb and Johanson and labeled *Australopithecus Afarensis*. Donald C. Johanson, a student of F. Clark Howells, nicknamed his find "**Lucy**" and she became his ticket to fame. The bones are alleged to be of a 20 year old female *Australopithecine* in 2-3 million year old sediments. She is short-legged, has a brain 1/3 the size of a modern human, and radiometric ages for Lucy have varied between 2-5.3 million years ago.

While "Lucy" became Johanson's career-builder, others have expressed doubts. The bones appear to be that of an ape from the neck up, human-like below. The anatomists, Zuckerman and Oxnard, both reject Johanson's claim that this creature was bipedal, partially upright, and transitional to *homo sapien*. Some of the crucial bones for determining that Lucy was partially upright (esp. the knee) were found over a mile away from the others, which causes some to suspect Lucy is a hybrid of more than one creature. Others have noted that the bones of "Lucy" closely resemble a modern bonobo chimpanzee.⁴

Having found evidence of modern-looking humans in strata dated to great ages and mixed in with many of the alleged human ancestors, Richard Leakey and his mother, Mary, moved away from trying to arrange fossils into an evolutionary chronology leading to humans. Years ago, Walter Cronkite brought Johanson and Richard Leakey together for a discussion on the issue. Johanson held up a big poster with his arrangement of human ancestors based on Lucy on one side and half of the poster left blank for Leakey to draw in his view. Johanson then provoked a hesitant Richard Leakey to give his view of things. So Leakey took the marker and crossed out Johanson's arrangement. When asked what he would put in place of it, Leakey simply drew a big question mark! That speaks volumes to me as to what a hypothetical and philosophically-driven farce this whole human evolution story still is. (to be continued)

¹ Kelso & Trevathan, *Physical Anthropology*, 3rd Edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 195.

² Adrienne L. Zihlman and Jerold M. Lowenstein, "False Start of the Human Parade," *Natural History*, vol. 88 (August-September 1979), p. 91.

³ Allan C. Wilson and Rebecca L. Cann, "The Recent African Genesis of Humans," *Scientific American* (April 1992), pp. 68,69.

⁴ Tim Friend, "Fossil challenges one-lineage belief," *USA Today* (March 22, 2001), front page.