

Record high-redshift galaxy is probably spurious

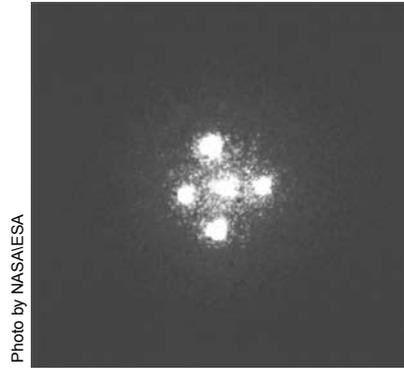


Photo by NASA/ESA

Gravitational lensing (G2237 + 0305)

A very high-redshift galaxy was discussed in *TJ* recently.¹ It had a dubious redshift $z = 10$ and a possible alternative interpretation was offered. Now it seems that the observation may be in great doubt and, in fact, may be spurious. Two papers,^{2,3} posted in September and December 2004, suggest that the galaxy may not even exist! Deeper scans have not been able to find it. And most probably it wasn't there at all. At best, as one paper suggests, it may be a dwarf galaxy of intermediate redshift, certainly no bright giant at the edge of the universe.

It seems this is the old problem again of observer bias: 'I wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't believed it.' It was only *believed* to be there (remember they were pushing the technical limits of the equipment), and they relied on a 'gravity lens' to image it. But the result was extremely 'noisy', allowing belief to transcend sound science.

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the field of a $z = 10$ candidate galaxy: Below the Lyman limit? in press, *Astrophys. J.*, available at <arxiv.org/abs/astro-ph/0412432>, December 2004.

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Vitamin C and Indian fruit bats

I recently read with interest the article in *TJ* 17(3), 2003, 'Why the "poor design" argument against intelligent design is invalid'. On page 114, however, it states that 'Guinea pigs, anthropoid apes and humans are the only known species that cannot synthesize vitamin C'. I remember from an animal science nutrition course at college that Indian fruit bats also fit in this category. I found confirmation for this at <www.cancerproject.org/protective_foods/vitamin_c.php>. My animal science teacher made it a point of mentioning (sarcastically) that this showed the close evolutionary relationship.

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New Ark landing place

I read with interest the letter by Robert Braiden, 'New Ark landing place?' in the latest *TJ* (volume 18(2), 2004). Braiden's proposal to look in the Zagros Mountains of Persia for the resting place of the Ark is not a new concept. There are long traditions of Noah's Ark being located in the Zagros Mountains (e.g. such areas as Mt Sabalon, Ecbatana, Hamadhan, the Lur tribe and the area east of the Lower Zab River). In addition, recent research

has shown that early wine production originated among the Perisan Zagros and that many early grains were first introduced in that region, pointing to a possible dispersal point of humankind from the Ark in that region. Creationist researchers should do a more in-depth analysis of this possible location site.

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Animal suffering

Compromising evangelicals have resorted to increasingly ridiculous contortions, of both Scripture and science, to try to justify their compromise with evolution and/or long ages. One of these is the harebrained notion that animals do not feel pain (as when they are attacked by predators). Anyone who has accidentally stepped on a cat's tail knows otherwise. In addition, Gurney has cited anecdotal evidence that at least some animals are also capable of *reflective* suffering.¹ He noted a report wherein elephants hover over, and appear to grieve over, one of their dead ones. The case for reflective animal suffering is even stronger than described by Gurney. Bekoff, in a recent book, provides evidence that various animals (elephants, dolphins, geese, sea lions and antelopes) exhibit behaviours suggestive of long-remembered horror and grief over the violent death of those close to them.²

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