

No more love for Lucy?

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For over the last 30 years, the supposedly 3.2 Ma old *Australopithecus afarensis* specimen known as ‘Lucy’ has been boldly proclaimed as the ancestor of all humanity in magazines, television shows, books, newspapers and museums. However, Tel Aviv University anthropologists have published a study casting serious doubt on Lucy’s role as mankind’s ape ancestor.¹ Based on a comparative analysis of jaw bones in living and extinct primates, researchers concluded that Lucy and members of her kind should be ‘placed as the beginning of the branch that evolved in parallel to ours.’ In other words, Lucy should no longer be considered to be our direct ancestor. Lucy’s demise falsifies 33 years of evolutionary hyperbole and propaganda.

Lucy in competing models

Lucy was held up as the ideal transitional fossil between ape and man. Only 40% complete, anthropologists speculated that she was a fully bipedal creature possessing the perfect blend of ape-like and human-like anatomical features.²

In the biblical creation model, Lucy is considered an ancient type of ape whose kind was specially created by God on the sixth day of creation about 6,000 years ago. Based on comprehensive skeletal analysis, Lucy and other members of the genus *Australopithecus* were likely tree-dwelling ape-like creatures who possessed very limited bipedality, as do the living apes of today.

Latest discoveries

Last year, a supposedly 3.3 Ma old fossil of a very young *Australopithecus afarensis* strongly corroborated creationist predictions.³ This three-year old ape possessed a distinctly ape-like

skull, a hyoid bone virtually identical to that of a chimpanzee (crushing any hopes for speech), a curved finger bone typical of tree dwelling apes, a gorilla-like shoulder blade commonly associated with tree climbing and knuckle walking, and inner ear characteristics that confirm a largely quadrupedal locomotion. Researchers have yet to excavate the foot bones of this specimen, but creationists predict that this extinct ape likely possessed a laterally projecting big toe and curved toe bones characteristic of the other great apes.

This year’s study further strengthens creationist predictions. Tel Aviv University anthropologists determined that Lucy’s mandibular ramus, or lower jaw bone, not only appears in *Australopithecus robustus*, but closely resembles that of a gorilla. As a result, the researchers concluded that Lucy should no longer be considered man’s direct ancestor. As is typically the case in the field of human evolution, a

single bone structure overturns years of grossly exaggerated claims.

Conclusion

No doubt Lucy will be replaced with a different candidate for the ancestor of humanity. This will come in the form of a currently known ‘hominid’ specimen or a future discovery. Three powerful icons of human evolution have been overturned within the last one hundred years: Piltdown Man, Nebraska Man and Lucy. Moreover, the 100 or so years of intense anthropological investigation has been unable to establish a clear link between ancient apes and human beings.

References

1. Siegel-Itzkovich, J., Israeli Researchers: ‘Lucy’ is not direct ancestor of humans, The Jerusalem Post, <www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1176152801536&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>, 16 April 2007; Rak, Y., Ginzburg, A. and Geffen, E., Gorilla-like anatomy on *Australopithecus afarensis* mandibles suggests *Au. afarensis* link to robust australopithecids, *PNAS* **104**:6568–6572, 2007.
2. Her knee and ankle joints appeared to be more human-like. However, spider monkeys and orangutans share virtually the same knee joint angle (9 degrees) as humans, but they are in no way fully bipedal. The biblical creation model does not necessarily preclude the possibility of a fully bipedal ape. The point is that the diagnostic features of the australopithecines, when examined as a whole, always spoke strongly against full bipedality of the human type. This has also been confirmed by the angles of the organ of balance determined by CAT scans of fossil skulls. And Lucy herself has the wrist-locking mechanism of all knucklewalkers.
3. Wieland, C., The ‘Lucy child’, *Journal of Creation* **20**(3):8–9, 2006.

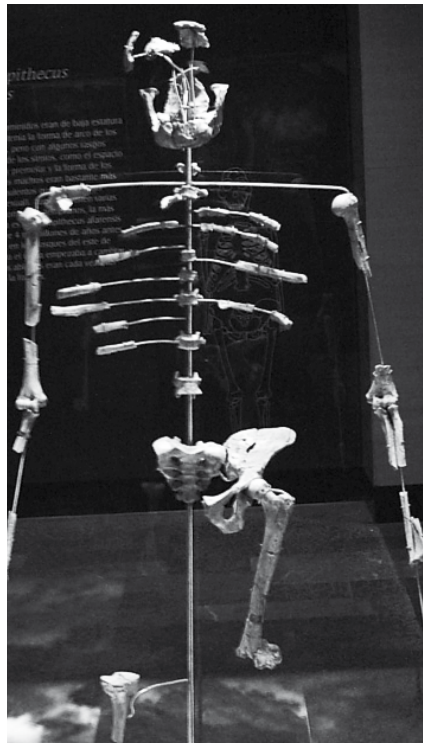


Photo by Daniel Acosta, from <Wikipedia.org>

The fragmentary nature of ‘Lucy’ (AL 288-1) specimens means that reconstructions often have to be largely speculative, i.e. guesswork, leaving free reign for evolutionary bias.