

***Australopithecus ramidus*, a new species of early hominid from Aramis, Ethiopia**

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IN this article we attributed hominid fossils from Aramis to *Australopithecus ramidus* sp. nov. We noted that generic placement was conservative and that *ramidus* might represent a new genus. Meanwhile, as *ramidus* is likely to be the sister taxon of the remaining hominid clade, generic separation from *Australopithecus* is appropriate. We hereby make available a new generic nomen for the Aramis fossils described in our article.

Order Primates Linnaeus 1758
Suborder Anthropoidea Mivart 1864
Superfamily Hominoidea Gray 1825

Ardipithecus gen. nov.

Etymology. ‘Ardi’ means ‘ground or floor’ in the Afar language.
Type species. *Australopithecus ramidus* White, Suwa and Asfaw, 1994.

Locality, horizon and associations. These are the same as for *Australopithecus ramidus*.

Diagnosis. Compared with *Australopithecus*, *Ardipithecus* is characterized by less postcanine megadontia, with upper and lower canines larger relative to the postcanine teeth; lower first deciduous molar narrow and obliquely elongate, with large protoconid, small and distally placed metaconid, no anterior fovea, and small, low talonid with minimal cusplule development; temporomandibular joint without definable articular eminence, absolutely and relatively thinner canine and molar enamel; lower third premolar more strongly asymmetrical, with dominant, tall buccal cusp and steep, posterolingually directed transverse crest; upper third premolar more strongly asymmetrical, with relatively larger, taller, more dominant buccal cusp.

Discussion. In late 1994 a mandible of *A. ramidus* was found at Aramis associated with a partial postcranial skeleton, 50 m north of the holotype specimen, and at the same stratigraphic level. Analysis of this specimen has begun, and will provide further features with which to characterize *Ardipithecus*. □

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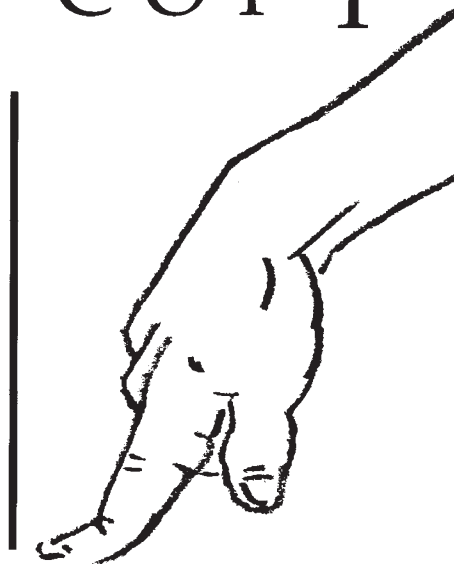
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