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Partial skeleton of Ardipithecus ramidus, a hominid species living about 4.4 million years ago in Ethiopia. This female stood about 1.2 meters high. Eleven papers from an international team of authors published in print and online in this special issue describe the anatomy of this species and its habitat and discuss the implications for understanding human evolution. One result is that extant great apes are poor models for our last common ancestor with chimpanzees. See page 60 for an introduction.

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