Ardipithecus ramidus, a possible human ancestor, inhabited then-wooded regions of Ethiopia 4.4 million years ago. This year, studies of the fossilized skeleton of a member of the species raised surprising questions about how key human traits evolved. See the Breakthrough of the Year special section beginning on page 1598 and at www.sciencemag.org/btoy2009/.

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A combination of new and previously existing mutations in gene regulatory sequences can drive morphological evolution.
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The spatial distribution of artifacts implies that living space was organized by use as early as 800,000 years ago.

1680 Mozambican Grass Seed Consumption During the Middle Stone Age
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