

# Origins Insights

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CREATION SCIENCE FELLOWSHIP



January 2003

## ICON #5

# Archaeopteryx: THE MISSING LINK

by Bob Harsh

In 2002 we introduced a series based on Jonathan Wells' book, *Icons of Evolution*. In his 2000 book Wells discussed ten commonly taught ideas that are set forth as evidence for evolution. These points of evidence are so important to the indoctrination of the philosophy of naturalistic evolution that Wells coined them as "Icons of Evolution." We are going to continue in our series with Wells' fifth icon.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Icon is as follows: "Archaeopteryx, a fossil bird with teeth in its jaws and claws on its wings was the missing link between ancient reptiles and modern birds."

By the theory of natural selection all species have been connected with the parent-species of each genus, by differences not greater than we see between the natural and domestic varieties of the same species at the present day. The number of intermediate and transitional links, between all living and extinct species, must have been inconceivably great. [Charles Darwin. 1859. *The Origin of*

**Transitional links between species were consistently missing !**

**Enter Archeopteryx**

1861 Hermann von Meyer discovered the first specimen [London specimen] in a limestone quarry near Solnhofen, Germany. It had:

- Wings
- Feathers
- Teeth
- Long lizard-like tail
- Claws on its wing



Six more specimens exist, including the 1877 masterpiece known as the "Berlin specimen."

**A MISSING LINK HAD BEEN  
DISCOVERED!**

**REPTILE ⇄ ARCHAEOPTERYX ⇄  
BIRD**

## January 21st CSF Meeting

On Tuesday, January 21 Bob Harsh will be presenting an important discussion titled

### Good Mutations/Variation/ Natural Selection.

Come out and bring a friend! Learn how evolution is supposed to work. Bob will show you how the faulty framework for evolution produces an unreliable explanation of science. He will show how variation and natural selection are part of our Creator's design for successful organisms.

Be planning now for the Creationist tour of

**Carnegie Museum on Saturday,  
February 22.**

Invite a friend. We will conduct separate tours for elementary school children and Junior high to adult.

## Take a look at the way evolutionists greeted the discovery!

Archaeopteryx - "The almost perfect link between reptiles and birds." Ernst Meyer. 1982. *The Growth of Biological Thought*

The Berlin Specimen - "More than the world's most beautiful fossil...it is an icon - a holy relic of the past that has become a powerful symbol of the evolutionary process itself. It is the First Bird." Paleontologist, Pat Shipman. *Taking Wing*

### Other paleontologists disagree.

"Archaeopteryx is not ancestral to any group of modern birds. It is the earliest known member of a totally extinct group of birds." [University of Kansas paleontologist Larry Martin 1985 in *The Beginnings of Birds*]

Mark Norell, a paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History, wrote in 1996 that most paleontologists now believe that Archaeopteryx is not a direct ancestor of modern birds.

## Two theories on the origin of flight

### **Trees Down:**

The ancestors of birds began their evolutionary journey by leaping from trees, gradually accumulating small adaptations that extended their ability to parachute and glide. [Wells, 2000]

1st - falling animals would spread its limbs and begin parachuting.

2nd - Some individuals developed better parachuting skills by developing larger surface area on their limbs such as flaps of skin. **FURTHER GENERATIONS DEVELOPED EVEN LARGER SURFACE AREA FLAPS, GIVING THEM A SELECTIVE ADVANTAGE.**

3rd - Flaps developed to the point that they could glide.

4th -Gliders developed the ability to achieve flapping flight.

### **Ground up:**

**Small animals running after prey on the ground gradually accumulated small adaptations that facilitated their ability reach and jump.**

The basis of the "ground up" theories is cladistics. Structural similarity is all that matters.

A philosophical coup has been launched.

"When biological classification is re-interpreted in light of Darwinian evolution, all groupings become ancestor-descendant sets. Organisms can only be grouped together if they share a common ancestor, and every group includes a common ancestor and all its descendants." [Wells, 2000]

"Evolution is an axiom from which systematic methods and concepts are deduced. Taking evolution as an axiom requires that preexisting methods and concepts be reevaluated in its light. Adopting such a perspective should bring the Darwinian Revolution to fulfillment." [Kevin de Queiroz. 1988. "Systematics and the Darwinian Revolution", *Philosophy of Science* 55]

Cladistics as the method is applied to the evolution of birds amounts to "homology". Homology according to Neo-Darwinists is similarity due to common ancestry. And how do we know which organisms have common ancestry? That's simple!

**If they have similar parts then they share a common ancestry.**

# Tautology in its finest hour !

What is important to a cladist in deciding whether birds evolved according to the “ground up” or “trees down” theory?

## Structural Similarity.

**Not the difficulties with haw evolution could have possibly taken place:**

**Not the order which the fossil record suggests the organisms be placed chronologically:**

Debate over the origin of flight is secondary, if not irrelevant. The fossil record is simply re-arranged to fit the results of cladistic analysis. [Wells, 2000] So, because the legs of birds and the two-legged dinosaurs resemble each other more than any four-legged creatures, the “ground up” theory wins and no more thought is “wasted” on other theories.

What do cladists do when the fossil record appears to contradict their cladistic picture? What if the most obvious ancestor is not found in the fossil record until “millions” of years after the supposed descendent? Not a problem; this excuse worked well for Charles Darwin in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century! **It still flies for evolutionary cladists in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!!** [See Chiappe. 1997. *Bioscience* 47]

## The Fossil Record is incomplete !!!!!

### The Dethroning of Archaeopteryx

“A cladistic grouping includes a common ancestor and all of its descendants, so if birds are descended from dinosaurs then birds *are* dinosaurs.”[Wells, 2000]

This idea defies common sense!

“Once upon a time, Archaeopteryx stood alone as the earliest bird. Its uniqueness made it an icon, conferring on it the status of an ancestor. But the existence of other bird ancestors [even if their fossils are more recent] shows that Archaeopteryx is just another dinosaur with feathers.” [Henry Gee [chief science writer for *Nature*] 1999. *In Search of Deep Time*]

With the dethronement of Archaeopteryx has come an active search for the first bird; the ancestor of Archaeopteryx.

## Enter Archaeoraptor, the bird Piltdown man

Piltdown man was the most important Icon of evolution from its discovery in 1912 until it was proved to be a deliberate fake in 1953.

### Old Human Skull + Modern Orangutan Jaw = Piltdown Man

The November 1999 National *Geographic* triumphantly introduced the world to *Archaeoraptor*. The author, Christopher Sloan proclaimed that we can now say that birds are dinosaurs just as confidently as we can say that humans are mammals!

**And how do you know that Mr. Sloan? Just look at our nice fossil. It’s exactly what we have been hoping for!**

The author, Christopher Sloan proclaimed that we can now say that birds are dinosaurs just as confidently as we can say that humans are mammals! Archaeoraptors had a combination of “advanced and primitive” features, exactly what scientists would expect to find in dinosaurs experimenting with flight.” [National Geographic November 1999]

**Hold the phone!**

**Archaeoraptor is a deliberate fake!!!!!!!!**

Chinese paleontologist, Xu Xing proved that the specimen consisted of a dinosaur tail glued to the body of a primitive bird. National Geographic printed a small half-hearted retraction in March 2000.

## How were paleontologists so easily fooled?

### They needed a new Icon !

Cladists needed to prove their theory. “Just as the need for a missing link between apes and humans led to Piltdown man, so the need for a missing link between dinosaurs and birds, paved the way for the “Piltdown bird.” [Wells, 2000]

Here is an interesting side-note: Even if Archaeoraptor had proved to be genuine, it was dated at tens of millions of years younger than an acknowledged “true bird”, Archaeopteryx.

### Bambiraptor to the rescue!

- **About the size of a chicken**
- **Sharp teeth that are pointed backwards**
- **Long 18” tail**
- **Walked on two legs**
- **Long sharp claws on all four limbs**

**This “ancestor” to birds, was discovered in Montana. Like the Archeopteryx, it was found in Upper Cretaceous rocks dated at 75,000,000 years younger than its descendant, Archaeopteryx.**

Bambiraptor has been depicted as fully feathered, yet its fossil record did not contain even a hint of feathers. The cladistic theory predicts that feathers should be present.

### Turkey DNA from Triceritops

William Garstka reported that he had extracted DNA from “65 million” year old fossil bones from a Triceratops. They amplified and sequenced the DNA and compared the DNA to known DNA from other animals. Their conclusion:

**“We have found the first direct evidence to indicate that birds represent the closest living relatives of dinosaurs.”** [Garstka, et.al. 2000. *DNA Sequence of the Mitochondrial 12S rRNA Gene from Triceratops Fossils: Molecular Evidence Supports the Evolutionary Relationship Between Dinosaurs and Birds*]

“The DNA Garstka and his colleagues found was 100% identical to the DNA of living turkeys. Not 99%, not 99.9%, but 100%. Not even DNA obtained from other birds is 100% identical to turkey DNA.” [Wells, 2000]

### Maybe it was turkey DNA !

Anyone who has the least bit of common sense knows Garstka and his friends contaminated the DNA amplification process with the remains of a turkey sandwich! Paleontologists are not going to accept Triceratops to bird because it’s from the wrong branch of the tree.

Archaeopteryx helped many people to believe that evolution has strong support from the fossil record. It achieved the status

**Next Meeting:** January 21

**Topic:** “Good Mutations/Variation/Natural Selection“,  
Bob Harsh

**See you at CSF!**

## **Local Answers in Genesis seminar**

Local Answers in Genesis seminar with Dr. Menton will be held at the Christ Church at Grove Farm, [www.ccgf.org](http://www.ccgf.org), on Feb. 8th, 2003, from 9am to Noon. For details call the church at 412-741-4900 or Phil McCaffrey at 412-749-5227

Directions to the AIG Local Conference Meeting:

To get to CCGF take I-79 to the Mt Nebo exit and follow the signs. From the South turn right, from the North turn left. Turn right onto Duff Road across from Andora's Restaurant. The Church is on the left 1/4 mile.

## **Attention all Students in Middle School to College Age:**

The CSF extends an invitation to you to present a talk on a topic related to creation science. This is an excellent opportunity for you to research a particular topic and present a 15-20 minute talk at the March 18, 2003, meeting of the Creation Science Fellowship. Home schoolers are especially encouraged to submit a topic for presentation. All that it requires is for you to send a one paragraph or so description of that topic /idea to the CSF by the Deadline of February 1, 2002. We will select from among the topics suggested to get the maximum of 4 presenters for the evening. Each talk should allow for an additional 5 minutes of time for questions and answers. If we accept your topic, we will notify you and assign a contact person from CSF to answer questions you may have regarding your presentation. This is a chance for you to get experience in presentation skills, public speaking and scientific reasoning. You may email your topics to [csficc@pittsburgh.org](mailto:csficc@pittsburgh.org) or via regular mail to CSF, PO BOX 99303, Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

So come on, think of a topic and send us your idea.

## **Attention all Friends of CSF:**

We ask that you take the time to review the status of your affiliation with our organization. We need your help in the form of attendance, prayers and giving in order to continue to move forward as a creationist organization. None of the officers on the CSF Board receive any money but give of their time and money to promote this important ministry of support for the church and defense of the simple truth of the Scripture. Won't your consider showing your support through your attendance at our monthly meetings, prayer and gifts. If you wish to renew your membership or join, it is only \$15.00 per year. In addition, we are providing to those who renew or join a CD compilation of "Origins Insights" newsletters from 1999 to 2002. This compilation in Acrobat format will give you a printable resource of all the major articles published in our newsletter over these years. Again, your help and prayers are requested at this time of need.

Thank You!

In Him,  
Dennis E. Wert  
Chairman CSF

## 2003 CSF Meeting Topics

Tuesday, January 21 "Good Mutations/Variation/Natural Selection", Bob Harsh

Saturday, February 22 Carnegie Museum Tour - Hosts: Bob Harsh / Dennis Wert

Tuesday, March 18 Presentations by Young Creationist of Middle School to College age students. Host: Gail Pinkney, Student Presenters

Tuesday, April 15 "Creationist Response to the PBS Series on Evolution", Dennis Wert

Tuesday, May 20 "The Trinity as Seen in Creation", Bob Walsh

No Meetings for June / July/ August, Aug 4-9, International Conference on Creationism. Held at Geneva College

Tuesday, Sept. 16 "Highlights and An Overview of the 2003 ICC", Lionel Dahmer and Reid Moon

Tuesday, Oct. 21 "What is Relevance of the Biblical Creation Account to YOUR Christian Faith", Reid Moon

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