



**The childhood** of the human race is reflected in this skull in a double sense: It is part of a 3.3 million-year-old, almost completely preserved skeleton of a three-year-old girl found in 2000 in the Dikika region of the Ethiopian highlands. Since the discovery was made, an international team led by Zeresenay Alemseged from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig has been working on retrieving and analyzing the specimen. Like the famous "Lucy" whose skeleton was found more than two decades ago, likewise in Ethiopia, this child belongs to the *Australopithecus afarensis* species, although she lived 150,000 years earlier. Its age and good state of preservation make this child's skeleton one of the most major finds in paleoanthropology to date, promising profound new insights into the build, behavior and childhood development of the early ancestors of *Homo sapiens*.

PHOTO: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ETHIOPIA

