



PLEISTOCENE COALITION NEWS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

MARCH-APRIL 2010

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The power of diatoms

By Sam L. VanLandingham

Technical title: *Diatom and chrysophyte (cyst) evidence of an age before the Last Ice Age (>80,000 years ago) for the artifacts at the Hueyatlaco site, Valsequillo area, Puebla, Mexico and the case against ignoring this evidence.*

Sam L. VanLandingham, Consulting Geologist/Environmental

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Diatoms and chrysophytes, widely distributed in oceans, lakes, rivers, caves, soil, and air, **are tiny one-celled algae with silica shells and short life spans.** They are ecological indicators.

Often diatoms and chrysophytes have rapid extinctions, and they have been used to correlate and date rocks and sediments since the time of Ehrenberg (1854.)

They are especially useful in oil/gas exploration, and can help determine the environment of deposition and age of human artifacts. Diatoms have even been used to determine the scenes of crimes and admitted as evidence in murder con-

victions.

Frequently, archaeological sites offer little specific fossil evidence which can be used to interpret the age of sediments and history of their deposition or of artifacts that occur in them. A few American sites, such as Clovis and Lubbock Lake, differ in that they are well known to be associated with fossil dia-

diatom/cyst age relationships when they agree with the status quo of Late Entry of humans into the Americas (< 12,000 years ago).

However, when the diatom/cyst evidence is in disagreement, as is the case with Hueyatlaco—one of four Mexican early man sites clustered on the north shore of the Valsequillo Reservoir

some 100 km ESE of Mexico City—such evidence is very likely to be ignored or disputed.

Hueyatlaco site

No other archaeological site in the world is known to be associated with such a complex, highly significant age- and environmentally diagnostic diatom sequence as Hueyatlaco.

Those who would wish to argue against the case for the great antiquity (prior to the Last Ice Age) of humans in the New World by attacking the veracity of the compelling diatom/chrysophyte cyst evidence at this site have picked the wrong

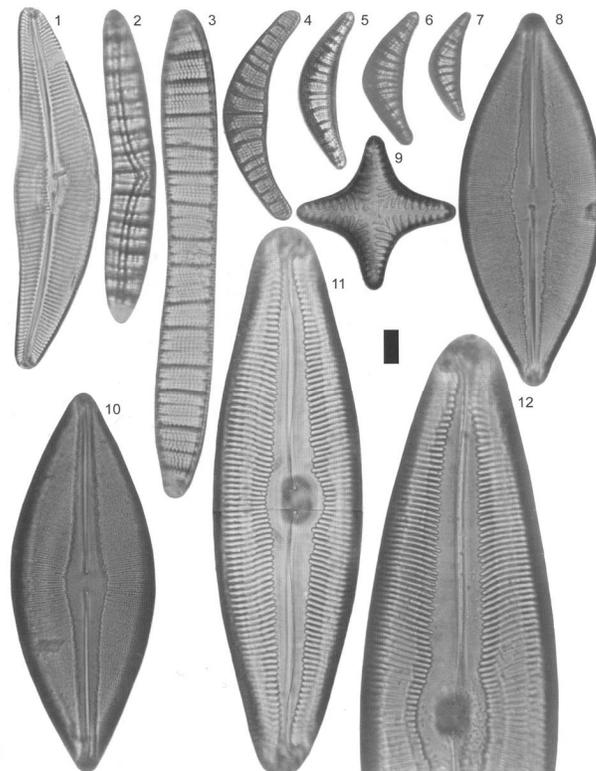


Fig. 1. Primarily extinct diatoms (single-celled algae) from the 80,000 to 430,000-year old early man site of Hueyatlaco, Mexico. VanLandingham 2004: Plate 4. Measure bar = 10 micrometers (a micrometer = 1,000th of a millimeter)

toms and chrysophyte cysts. Archaeologists usually accept

place.

> [Contd on page 2](#)

Diatoms (contd.)

Diatoms and cysts have been found in 147 samples from 22 distinct stratigraphic units at or around the Hueyatlaco site.

These samples have yielded



Fig. 2. The author with a newly-unwrapped Hueyatlaco stratigraphic monolith collected in 1973 from artifact-bearing beds (see Fryxell 1973 stratigraphic profile sheet #4).

"The odds against linking by chance all of these samples within a diameter of < 3 m, combined with the correspondence of all these many diverse factors across the alleged unconformity are astronomical."

44 extant and 39 extinct chrysophyte taxa and 467 extant and 78 extinct diatom taxa, many of which are age diagnostic indicators (marker fossils) designating a minimum (Sangamonian = sensu lato 80,000 - ca. 220,000 years) and a maximum (Illinoian = ca. 220,000 - 430,000 years) age for the Hueyatlaco artifacts.

The biostratigraphy and paleoecology of these numerous diatoms and cysts negate the likelihood of any redeposition, inset, or such unconformity directly associated with artifact-bearing beds at Hueyatlaco, as posited by the Center for the Study of the First Americans (CSFA) on its website

<www.centerfirstamericans.com> (see VanLandingham 2009a).

An age younger than the Sangamon Interglacial for 37 lines of diatom correlation (7

of which pass directly through and 26 of which pass within 3 m of the alleged unconformity of the CSFA at Hueyatlaco) and the artifacts in units B, C, E, and I of Irwin-Williams is eliminated by the presence in these lines of 30 distinct diatom taxa extinct at the end of the Sangamonian.

In addition to all of these extinct diatoms, 4 additional well established diatom correlation criteria supply abundant further corroboration of these 80,000+ year dates for the artifacts:

- (1) percentage correlation of taxa;
- (2) earliest known first occurrences;
- (3) pennate to centric ra-

association is unknown in the entire fossil record except from the Sangamonian, and it is found in the Western Hemisphere in 6 correlation lines, 4 of which pass directly through the alleged unconformity).

The odds against linking by chance all of these samples within a diameter of < 3 m, combined with the correspondence of all these many diverse factors across the alleged unconformity are astronomical. It will be extremely difficult to provide any evidence whatsoever to negate all of previous diatom publications and the 37 lines of fossil diatom correlation which dispel the imagined unconformity, and which support ages of > 80,000 years for the artifacts.

The attempt of the CSFA to discredit the evidence for the great age of the artifacts at Hueyatlaco can now be discounted, along with other failed actions in the Valsequillo region by followers of the archaeological orthodoxy



Fig. 3. The author at Hueyatlaco early man site, Valsequillo, Mexico, 2001.

tios (elongate to spheroid shapes); and

- (4) dominance/subdominance associations, (e.g., the *Cocconeis-Navicula-Synedra* dominance

of Late Entry: e.g., the accusation of artifact planting and other misrepresentations by J. L. Lorenzo at Hueyatlaco (see Hardaker,

> [Conclusion on page 3](#)

Diatoms (contd.)

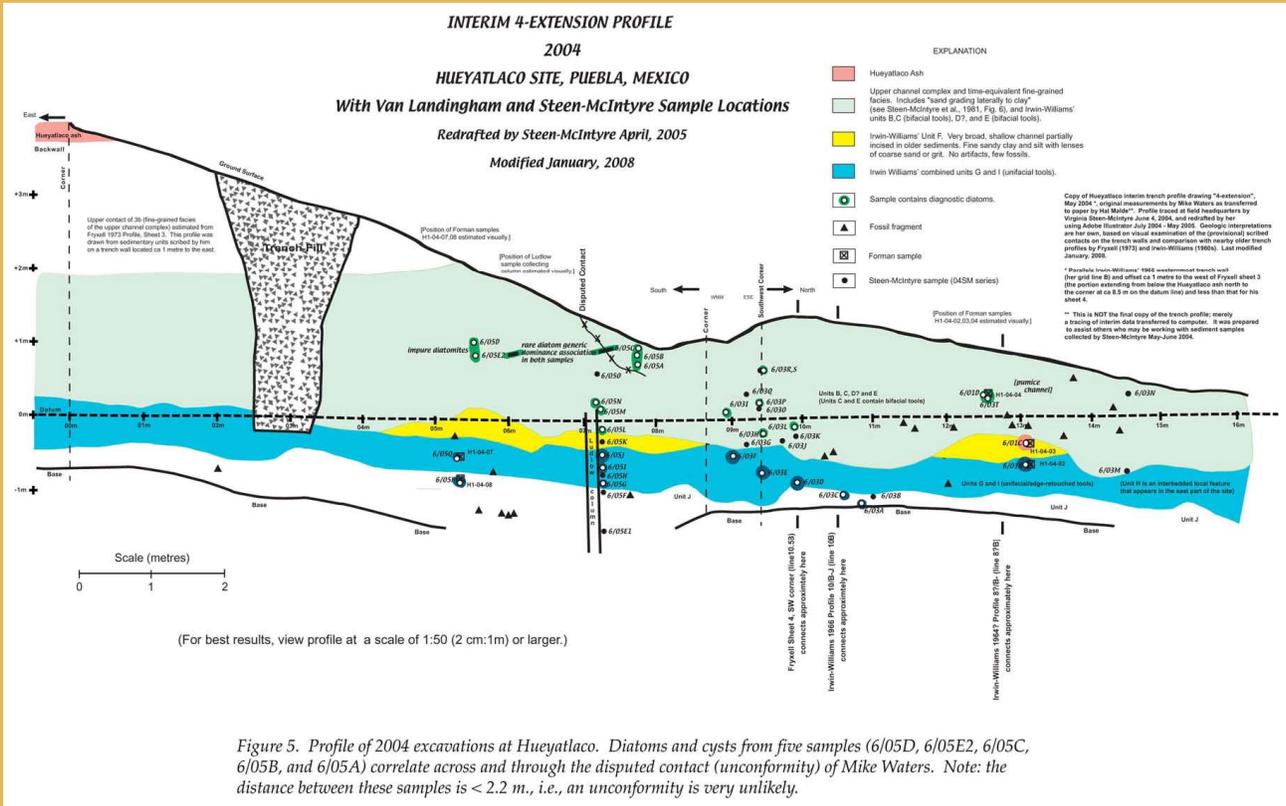


Figure 5. Profile of 2004 excavations at Hueyatlaco. Diatoms and cysts from five samples (6/05D, 6/05E2, 6/05C, 6/05B, and 6/05A) correlate across and through the disputed contact (unconformity) of Mike Waters. Note: the distance between these samples is < 2.2 m, i.e., an unconformity is very unlikely.

Fig.4. Stratigraphic profile of 2004 excavations at Hueyatlaco showing locations of diatom and cyst samples (colored dots).

"Why would it be desirable to ignore evidence presented by diatoms, especially at a locality which has the most prominent non-marine diatomaceous sequence in the entire world...?"

2007 for a complete account); contrivance of the Dorenberg skull hoax; and libelous statements made in an attempt to prevent the publication of diatom evidence for "early entry" [VanLandingham, 2009b], etc. (More on the skull caper in a later issue of this newsletter.)

In Closing, for Now...

Diatom analysis can be quite useful in archaeological studies, as many, such as R. W. Battarbee (1988) have noted. Why would so many archaeologists go out of their way to discount or ignore an abundance of diatom evidence for the great antiquity of the Valsequillo artifacts if so many similar diatom correlation studies have proven useful to large corporations in their multimillion-dollar searches for oil, to geologists in determining the age rela-

tionships of rocks, or to prosecutors as evidence in murder cases, especially at a locality which has the most prominent non-marine diatomaceous sequence in the entire world? Many of us are waiting for an answer.

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(Sangamonian = 80,000 - ca 220,000 yr. BP) and a Maximum (Illinoian = 220,000 - 430,000 yr. BP) Age for the Hueyatlaco Artifacts, Puebla, Mexico. *Nova Hedwigia*, Beiheft 135, pp.15-36.

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FORBIDDEN ARCHEOLOGY AND THE KNOWLEDGE FILTER

by Michael A. Cremo

How old is the anatomically modern human species? According to the standard views, human beings like us first came into existence between 100,000 and 200,000 years ago. Other sources, including the writings of ancient wisdom traditions, say that humans like us have existed for millions of years. In the late 1980s, I decided to look into the scientific evidence for human antiquity.

My methodology was to do a complete search of the scientific literature on human origins. The scientific literature exists in two forms, primary and secondary. The primary scientific literature is composed of original reports by researchers published in the professional scientific journals. The secondary scientific literature is composed of textbooks and survey books that make use of the primary scientific literature.

My prediction was that the complete scientific literature on humans should contain credible reports of evidence for extreme human antiquity, evidence that humans like us have existed for longer periods of time than accepted by most scientists today.

My first step was to look at the current secondary literature on human origins. This literature contained no reports

of evidence for extreme human antiquity. It contained only reports of evidence confirming the currently dominant view that humans like us came into existence less than 200,000 years ago.

But I went further. I looked at all the primary scientific literature on human origins and antiquity, from the nineteenth century to the present. I have a reading knowledge of most of the major European languages, so I looked at reports in many languages, not just English. When I looked at this primary scientific literature, I found many reports of archeological evidence for extreme human antiquity—reports of human bones, footprints, and

dary literature? There appeared to be a process of knowledge filtration. Here I am not talking about a conspiracy to suppress truth. Instead, I am talking about something historians and philosophers of science have understood for a long time: theoretical preconceptions may determine how evidence is treated in a scientific discipline. Evidence that conforms to theoretical preconceptions passes through the knowledge filter very easily, whereas evidence that radically contradicts theoretical preconceptions does not.

Today, the dominant theory in human origins is the theory of evolution, which now has a fairly fixed timeline for human origins, with humans like us coming into existence less than 200,000 years ago. Evidence that conforms to this timeline passes through the knowledge filter, whereas evidence that contradicts the timeline does not.

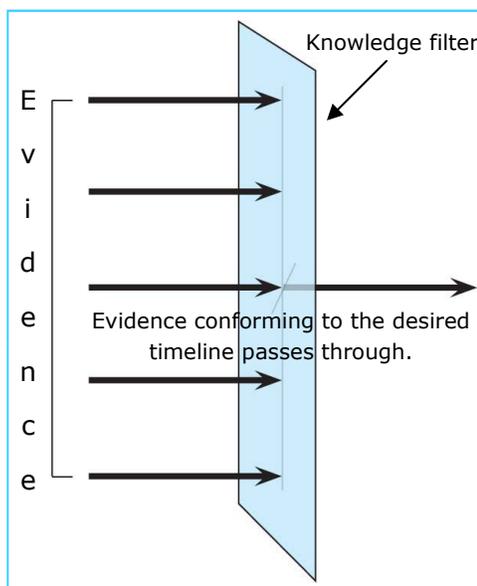
Let me give two examples of what I am talking about, one from the late nineteenth century and one from the late twentieth century.

In the nineteenth century, gold was discovered in California. To get it, miners dug tunnels into the sides of mountains, such as Table Mountain near the town of Sonora in Tuolumne County. Deep inside the tunnels, in deposits of early Eocene age (about 50 million years old), miners found human bones and artifacts. The discoveries were carefully documented by Dr. J. D. Whitney, the chief government geologist of California, in his monograph

> [Contd on page 5](#)

"Evidence that conforms to this timeline passes through the knowledge filter..."

evidence that contradicts the timeline does not."



artifacts showing that humans like us existed in the distant past.

This led to a question: why is this evidence for extreme human antiquity present in the primary scientific literature, but not in the current second-

Knowledge Filter (contd.)

The Auriferous Gravels of the Sierra Nevada of California, published by Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology in 1880. But we do not hear very much about these discoveries today. In the *Smithsonian Institution Annual Report for 1898-1899* (p. 424), anthropologist William Holmes said,

"Perhaps if Professor Whitney had fully appreciated the story of human evolution as it is understood today, he would have hesitated to announce the conclusions formulated, notwithstanding the imposing array of testimony with which he was confronted."

In other words, if the facts did not fit the theory of human evolution, the facts had to be set aside, and that is exactly what happened.

Such knowledge filtration continued into the twentieth century. In the 1960s, Harvard-trained archeologist Cynthia Irwin-Williams and Mexican prehistorian Juan Armenta Camacho discovered stone tools at Hueyat-laco, near Puebla, Mexico. The stone tools were of advanced type, similar to those of the European Late Paleolithic. A team of geologists, from the United States Geological Survey and universities in the United States, came to Hueyat-laco to date the site. Among the geologists was Virginia Steen-McIntyre. To date the site, the team used several methods—uranium series dating on butchered animal bones found along with the tools, zircon fission track dating on volcanic layers above the tools, tephra hydration dating and mineral weathering studies of volcanic glass fragments and crystals, analysis of the position of the site in the modern land-

scape, and standard stratigraphical analysis. All of these methods converged on an age of about 250,000 years for the site, well beyond the dating limits of the radiocarbon method. The archeologists refused to consider this date. It conflicted with the then dominant theories of human origins and the peopling of the Americas. In defense of the dates obtained by the geologists, Virginia Steen-

McIntyre wrote in a letter (March 30, 1981) to Estella Leopold, associate editor of *Quaternary Research*:

"The problem as I see it is much bigger than Hueyat-laco. It concerns the manipulation of scientific thought through the suppression of 'Enigmatic Data,' data that challenges the prevailing mode of thinking. Hueyat-laco certainly does that! Not being an anthropologist, I didn't realize the full significance of our dates back in 1973, nor how deeply woven into our thought the current theory of human evolution has become. Our work at Hueyat-laco has been rejected by most archaeologists because it contradicts that theory, period." This remains true today, not only for the California gold mine discoveries and the Hueyat-laco human artifacts, but for hundreds of other discoveries from the scientific literature of the past 150 years.

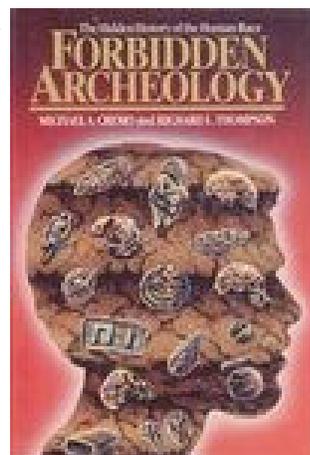
Richard L. Thompson (1947-2008) and I documented

these discoveries and the knowledge filtration process that has insured they remain little known in our book *Forbidden Archeology*. First published in 1993, the book has gone through over a

dozen reprintings and is now in several languages in addition to English.

Of course, in any scientific discipline, there does have to be some process for knowledge filtering, some system for deciding what evidence is deemed credible and what evidence is deemed not credible. So the real problem is not

knowledge filtering per se. The real problem is the application of double standards in the knowledge filtering process. Ideally, there should be a single standard for evaluating evidence that is applied evenhandedly across the board. But what often happens is that evidence that contradicts dominant theories is held to an impossibly high standard, while evidence that conforms to dominant theories is held to a very lenient standard. In *Forbidden Archeology*, we documented how such a differential standard for evaluating evidence operates in the knowledge filtering process in archeology. The result is that we are left with a radically incomplete set of facts upon which to build our theories of human origins and antiquity.



Forbidden Archeology: The Hidden History of the Human Race, by Michael A. Cremonese and Richard L. Thompson. 1993.

"A rigorously objective scientific approach was distinctly lacking from the archaeology surrounding the early key finds of palaeoanthropology."

Ardi and Ida

On their way—not only Out of Africa

By Jörn Greve and Gerhard Neuhäuser

"In many studies, outcomes tend to support what is already believed before the methodological approach is designed."

Assumptions resulting from methods of classification

In modern Western thought, all methodological approaches and concepts have the same Aristotelian, Cartesian-dualistic, Linnean and Darwinian origins. Methods are responsible for results, which may derive from a cycle of self-fulfilling messages, especially if just the outcome is considered. Therefore it is not surprising that results often will converge into what John Feliks calls an ideology (*Pleistocene Coalition News*, 2:1, p. 1.)

In many studies, outcomes tend to support what is already believed before the methodological approach is designed.

Furthermore, the final interpretation may seem to reflect some kind of a positivistic efficiency. In such a context much thought and effort are applied to setting old and even future priorities. However, in the current discussion about purported human ancestors, these make sense only in regard to what we call Darwinistic evolution. And, by the way, this could also be the reason that the 4.4 million-year old *Ardipithecus ramidus* fossil known as Ardi was interpreted overall as originally published in *Science*. (See

Fig.1 for a reconstruction based on the data presented in that publication.)

The same might be said of the 47 million-year old fossil primate known as Ida (**Fig.2**). Ida, from Messel, Germany, is the only com-

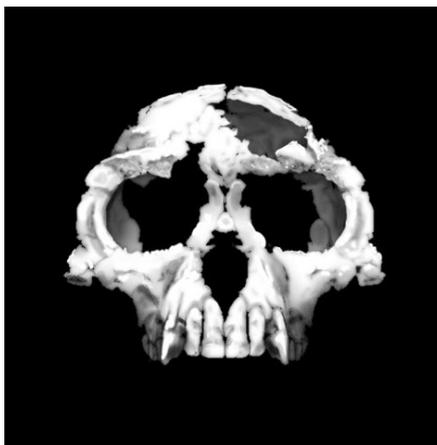


Fig.1. Digital reconstruction of the 4.4 million-year old Hominin fossil known as Ardi (*Ardipithecus ramidus*) by T. Michael Keesey

plete fossil of a possible Eocene-age (c. 56-34 million years ago) ancestor.

[J. L. Franzen et al. 2009. Complete primate skeleton from the Middle Eocene of Messel in Germany: Morphology and paleobiology. *PLoS ONE* 4(5): e5723. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005723]

Along with Ardi, these two "ancestors" fit well within the same monomorphic theory; however, Ardi and Ida, as paleontological facts, are actually just constructs to achieve some historical evidence in support of Darwinism.

Interpretation and reality of the fossil record

In contrast to Jim Harrod's perspective (*PCN*, 2:1, pp. 12-13), the fossil record could tell us a story extending much farther back in time than does any review of pertinent literature. For there still remains the possibility that Ardi, and before her, Ida, did not come out of Africa.

From the extremely sparse hominin fossil record the first-impression-only may result in the conclusion that there was a starting point near the Rift Valley in Africa. Extended, and in some sense more sophisticated, analyses are supporting another view:

If roots are followed according to the traditional concept of evolution they also demonstrate that different members of the order Mammalia are very similar in their body function, even those families that made an early adjustment to bipedality, although this is seldom noted.

In addition there has been a marked complexity and worldwide distribution of mammals similar in structure and function since Eocene times.

These monomorphic features can be extended if we consider multi-variant primate

> [Contd on page 7](#)

Ardi and Ida (contd.)

functions causing similar structure and function. Differences may be caused by so called "missing links," for instance, if a specific origin for hominization is suggested.

Regarding these facts, we need to present divergent and variable theories of origin, even though they can make the whole plot of evolution almost poetic.

We should consider more than one hypothesis about the origin of mankind and take into account a variety of roots: such as the Tarsiiformian from a special Maki (ring-tailed lemur) now living as ancestor-relics in Madagascar; Omo-myoidian formerly living in the Eocene of North America and Europe; Adapoidians from nearly the same regions; and the Eosimians formerly living from China to Northern Africa.

Because of this tremendous variability in the origins of pre-primate mammals, it is not easy to choose where to place the origins of Ardi or Ida, who certainly had companions, especially Ida (*Darwinius masillae*), in Germany as well as in Africa.

There are different ways by which mankind could have "emerged" during Eocene times, following a global pattern from Europe, North America (Texas), Northern Africa, China and India, as well as from Southern Asia.

[E.g., see J. L. Franzen's "Taphonomic Analysis of the Messel Formation (Germany)," in G. F. Gunnell (ed.) 2001, [Eocene Biodiversity: Unusual Occurrences and Rarely Sampled Habitats.](#)]

There should be a good

chance of finding fossil evidence in India and China to support these and other hypotheses. In this context, we also have to consider special conditions like mummification in the former Messel lake (e.g., Ida.)



Fig.2. The 47 million-year old notharctid fossil known as Ida (*Darwinius masillae*) from Messel, Germany. Inset represents X-rays of the fossil. Franzen et al. 2009. [PLoS ONE 4\(5\): e5723](#). Used with permission.

Conclusions

We have to state the possibility of complex relations in evolution and development.

This argument agrees well with the fossil record. It seems obvious that evolution and the Darwinian principle of natural selection will never be the only possible way.

Therefore we are in favor of a more holistic view: Life, its future and living beings are the result of self-structuring

processes, not just caused by a selfish or divine gene.

Development is not only characterized by complexity and variability but related to the given environment as a simple Lamarckian aspect.

We have to consider important long-term epigenetic influences which alter basic structures like nucleotides and other compounds of the molecular matrix.

For instance, virus-triggered mutations result in a process of iteration and multivariable sprouting analogue to Mandelbrot's mathematical model of fractals; and these "operations" have been taking place for more than six million years.

The process of innovation and generation of complexity is not destined to decline and stagnate; these consequences are caused by our own break-down products and pollution in a dialectical manner.

Development always has two directions and includes creation as well as destruction.

"Selection" under these circumstances represents only a term to describe some background for a visible outcome of fractals, and it also comprises only one aspect of the possible fossil record.

Like evolution itself, natural selection as a theory does not exist in real life—with the exception of social suppression. There are always dialectic relations and reciprocity to take into account, and there are good examples for "involution," as we hope to further explain in our forthcoming articles in this newsletter.

"It seems obvious that evolution and the Darwinian principle of natural selection will never be the only possible way."

Peking man

And a small branch of that long-cold trail leads to --Evergreen, Colorado!?

by Virginia Steen-McIntyre



Above: Small plaster cast of "Nellie" or "Peking Woman," a gift to Virginia Steen-McIntyre from Claire Taschidjian—last person to see the famed Peking Man fossils before they were lost during World War II.

Right: Handwritten note on base of Peking Woman plaster cast.

In the January-February issue of this newsletter, Ishtar made casual mention of Peking Man -- ". . . another story covered in murkiness and unexplained lacunae" (page 5).

That brought back memories!

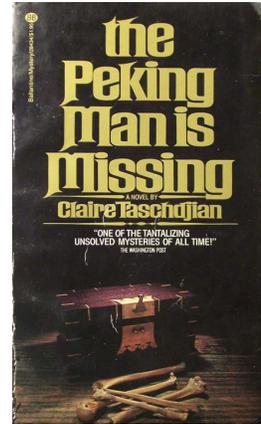
For a short while, our local nursing home in

shipment (in a redwood box, she assured me) as the Japanese marched into the city so long ago. Claire was Austrian by birth and passport, and she did not spend the war years in the local internment camp. (She later married one of the

professors from the institute as the war ended; hence the Armenian surname.)

Claire used some of her real-life experiences as background for a paperback thriller, *The Peking Man is Missing* (1977, Ballantine Books). She was also interviewed by staff from the Denver

Archivist
<khaglund@dmns.org>



for more information.

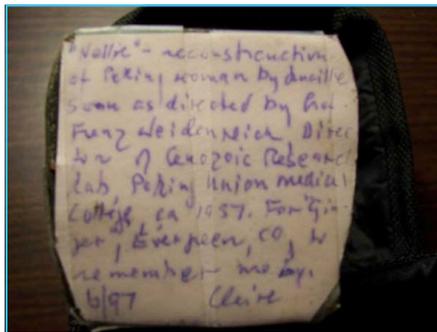
And Claire gave me a memento: a small plaster cast of "Nellie" that she received, I believe, from the Japanese while they were in control of the institute. A hand-written note attached to the base reads:

"'Nellie' -- reconstruction of Peking woman by

Lucille Soon as directed by Prof. Franz Weidenreich, Director of Cenozoic Research Lab, Peking Union Medical College, ca. 1937.

For Ginger, Evergreen CO, to remember me by. 6/97 [6/98] Claire"

Talk about a close brush with fame!



"Nellie"-- reconstruction of Peking woman by Lucille Soon as directed by Prof Franz Weidenreich, Director of Cenozoic Research Lab, Peking Union Medical College, ca. 1937. For Ginger, Evergreen, CO, to remember me by. 6/97 Claire

Evergreen housed a very frail, elderly woman, then in her last illness. Her name was Claire Taschidjian, and she was the young assistant who hurriedly packed up the Peking "man" fossils for

Museum of Nature & Science. The interview is stored in their Image Archives collection, catalog number TAPE 98-027, shot March 5, 1998. Contact Kris Haglund,

PHI, BEAUTY, AND THE NEOLITHIC

By Alan Cannell

The slideshow, [Deep Roots of Aesthetic Design](#),

makes the case that our modern tastes in design, very often expressions of the Golden Ratio - Phi, can be traced back to Paleolithic tool forms (although we must admit that the cherry-picking of illustrations and samples is a real possibility). On the other hand, it has also been suggested that modern design may have been strongly influenced by western culture: we have all been brainwashed by a dictatorship of aesthetic values, as it were. So it is worth checking to see what was considered to be

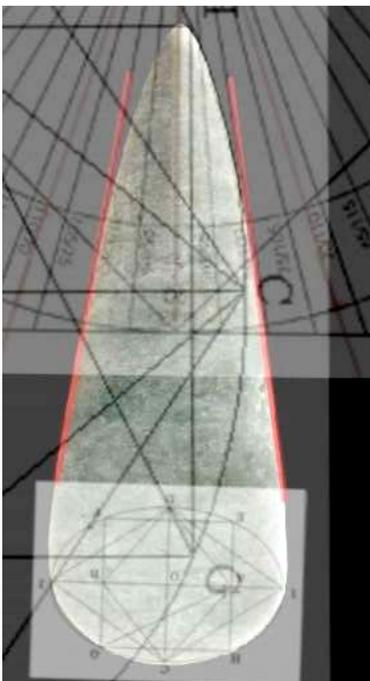


Fig.2. 5000 years old handaxe from Canterbury, England

beauty back in the Neolithic, long before the math of the Golden Ratio had been developed and the

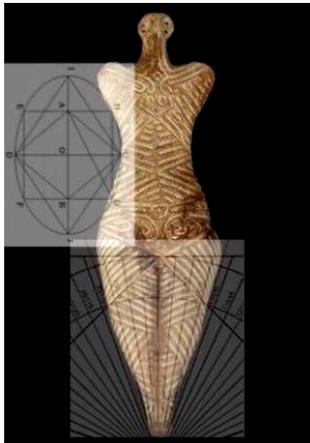


Fig.1. 6000 year old Female Figurine in fired clay from Cucuteni, (Romania).

architectural works of the Greeks, Palladio and Corbusier perfected.

A recent exposition in New York, reported by the Times, (<http://www.nytimes.com/slide-show/2009/11/25/science>), shows a 6000 year old Female Figurine (Fig.1) in fired clay from Cucuteni, (Romania).

This elaborately decorated figure has a curved torso

that corresponds to a Golden Ellipse and thighs that are set at 36 degrees, (my own modifications). Although not marked, the 'rib' and 'belly' markings are 18 degrees to the horizontal and the 'arm' stripes are set at 36 degrees to the vertical, angles that are expressions of the Golden Ratio.

Other items of delicate beauty from the same period are actual stone tools: two axe heads of

Italian jadeite that were recently presented in a BBC production (and from which the original images were taken (www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects)).

The first axe (Fig.2), some 5000 years old, was found in Canterbury and had never been hafted or used – a sign that it was made for ritual or as an object of expensive art.

Note that the head is formed by a perfect Golden Ellipse, the

head then sloping back at 18 degrees before curving inwards at a tangent with a larger Golden Ellipse – which has a central chord 1.62 (Phi) longer than the object. The relation of length to width is 2.62 (Phi²).

The second jadeite axe head (Fig.3) had also never been used and was again an object of ritual or art. At 6000 years old, this head is slightly older and was found in Wroot, Lincolnshire. The geometry is simple: the length is twice the width and the blade is a composite ellipse formed by two Golden Ellipses, again, one half the size of the other.

The possibility that these items have been cherry-picked still exists; however, as they were each made to be objects of art and/or for ritual rather than for practical use, the craftsmanship that has gone into these designs is a strong indication that mental templates were involved to



Fig.3. 6000 year old handaxe from Lincolnshire, England

make the axes pleasing and desirable.

The craftsmen could not have been influenced by any other art form other than the making of stone axes, which strongly suggests that these templates have been used for a very long time.

The imported stone was certainly expensive and it is tempting to think that the axes were actually made in Italy – perhaps a very early demonstration of the flair for design that Italians are still rightly famous for?

If you would like to submit a letter or article for publication in *Pleistocene Coalition News*, please e-mail the editor or [Virginia Steen-McIntyre](mailto:VirginiaSteen-McIntyre)

[World trade and biological exchanges before 1492](#)

Book Review ★★★★★

By Peter Faris

"...a number of the examples that went from the Americas to the Old World could have been taken back by parties that had originated in the Old World and were returning home after a voyage that had reached the Americas."

**February 15, 2010
BOOK REVIEW -**

[World Trade and Biological Exchanges Before 1492](#)

Sorenson, John L., and Carl L. Johannessen, 2009, iUniverse, Inc., New York

This very interesting book is essentially about evidence of pre-Columbian contact across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The authors find evidence in the distribution of flora and fauna found on opposite sides of the ocean. The assumption is that there had to have been a vector which caused this distribution because natural causes do not seem to be a totally satisfactory answer.

Co-author Carl Johannessen pointed out to this writer that in their book they have recorded "13 plants that came into the Americas and 84 plants left the Americas for the Asian and other tropical and subtropical zones in the Euro-African realm." If this is, in fact, correct that would represent thirteen opportunities for the external influences which are central to the epigrapher's theories to come into contact with native peoples of the Americas. Indeed a larger number than this 13 could be assumed because a number of the examples that went from the Americas to the Old World could have been taken back by parties

that had originated in the Old World and were returning home after a voyage that had reached the Americas.

I do not question that there was pre-Columbian contact between the Old World and the New World. Since the 1960 discovery of L'Anse aux Meadows (dated to approximately 1000 AD) on the northernmost tip of Newfoundland in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador we have had proof of pre-Columbian trans-oceanic contact by the Norse. There are rumors of Eskimos paddling their kayaks into the Thames River, stories of the large Chinese exploration fleets of the early 15th century, and the recent theories of Smithsonian archaeologist Dr. Dennis Stanford who postulates trans-Atlantic contact between the prehistoric Solutrean culture of Europe and the Clovis culture in North America.

What Sorenson and Johannessen have done is provide a large body of evidence of possible trans-oceanic contact based upon the evidence of flora and fauna found on both sides of oceans, and of diseases and parasites that are likewise found on both sides of oceans but which should not have been able to pass over the Bering land bridge because of the restrictions of the cold valve which assumes that a person weakened by disease would not



Temple sculpture holding an ear of maize, Somnathpur, India, 11th - 13th cent., Fig. 1, p. 489, *World Trade and Biological Exchanges Before 1492*. Photo: Carl L. Johannessen.

have survived the trek across the arctic from Siberia through Alaska to carry that disease to the population of the Americas (and if they did not walk in through Beringia they must have sailed in across the Atlantic or Pacific ocean). Other evidence toward this conclusion is provided by the facts that some of these diseases do not occur in North America (considered unlikely if the disease had been carried across North America in either direction), and that many of the parasitic organisms require residence in warm, moist soil during a portion of their life cycle

> [Contd on page 11](#)

"Instead of telling us what we should believe, they give us the data and trust us to decide for ourselves."

World trade book review (contd.)

prior to transferring to a new host and these conditions were not available in Northern latitudes.

What is most admirable about this volume is that instead of citing a few facts and building them into a huge theoretical edifice, the authors have given us relatively few pages (90) of explanation and conclusions, and a huge amount of data. They have not allowed themselves to be side-tracked into speculating on the "who", they have restricted themselves to the what. They have provided 396 pages of Appendixes in which they cite thousands of sources. Perhaps the best illustration of this is their section (pages 361-78) on Zea mays – Indian corn. They include some fifty sources on facts and data pertaining to evidence on the question of pre-Columbian distribution of corn in the Old World. Instead of telling us what we should believe, they give us the data and trust us to decide for ourselves. Their very extensive bibliography fills 64 pages, and they have even included a 10 page Index of Authors, both of which will be invaluable to researchers. Their 16 illustrations show visual evidence of this distribution of flora and fauna including Figure 1 (above) showing an Indian sculpture from between the 11th and 13th centuries of an Apsara holding what can only be interpreted as an ear of corn (maize).

So what have I decided for myself? As I said above I did not deny the fact of pre-Columbian contact, I just discounted it. I assume that some pre-Columbian contact

beyond L'anse aux Meadows took place between the old and new worlds. I just have assumed that there was no likely cultural effect from these visits. Now, with the scale of visitation implied by this much evidence we may have to leave more room for the possibility of cultural influence as well.

After reading [World Trade and Biological Exchanges Before 1492](#) no-one should be able to categorically deny the possibility of such pre-Columbian cross-ocean contact without disproving or explaining away literally thousands of pieces of data assembled by the authors, a daunting task indeed!

A HINT OF UPCOMING ISSUE #5!

The collage features several distinct images:

- Top left: A photograph of a thatched-roof structure, possibly a hut, engulfed in flames.
- Middle left: A black and white photograph of an archaeological site, possibly a settlement or a field of ruins.
- Center: A diagram showing various stages and types of corn cobs, labeled with letters A through H. The diagram includes text such as 'The first step in the evolution of the modern Zea mays', 'A diagram of the shape of the ear', and 'A diagram of the shape of the ear'. Below the diagram is the caption: 'Fig. 1. Reconstructed map of a harvest production from the Early Archaic site, Mexico, Tehuacan. (D. Fisher)'.
- Bottom left: A profile of a human skull, likely representing a pre-Columbian population.
- Bottom center: A long, slender bone or artifact, possibly a tool or a piece of evidence.
- Bottom right: A photograph of a landscape featuring a waterfall or a similar natural formation.

Chimps, bonobos and *Homo*

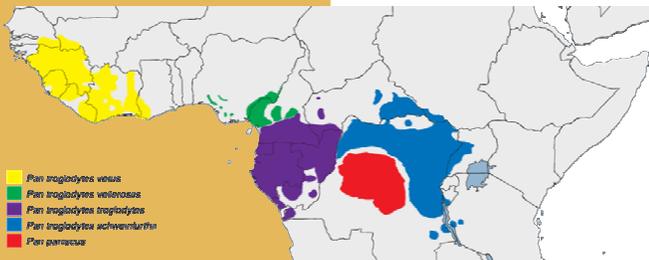
GENTLY PUTTING THE MOLECULAR CLOCKS BACK

By Alan Cannell



The Congo River at Matadi, Republic of Congo, Africa

"This geological date refers to the formation of the Congo River system which forms the dividing line between the two species of *Pan* (neither can swim) and which is estimated to have formed around 1.5-2 mya."



Bonobo/chimpanzee distribution (bonobo population in red) as separated by the Congo River (Wikimedia Commons)

In the previous Newsletter ([Pleistocene Coalition News](#) 2:1, January-February) a set of 'five predictions' were set out to provoke some discussion on possible 'hot topics' in paleoanthropology for the new decade. I was recently asked if I would put my money where this digital ink is and the immediate reply was a yes; a hundred bucks on each point. The reason for such conviction is simple: I cheated. Take, for example, the second prediction regarding the *homo*-chimp genetic split. Until very recently this was given as 6mya (maximum); the 'prediction' suggested that genetic scientists will admit that this split could be closer to around 9mya ...

The very recent discussion of the chimp-bonobo genetic separation may have slipped our reader's attention. To refresh the collective memory, two independent papers were produced in the mid 'naughties':

Evidence for a Complex Demographic History of Chimpanzees, Anne Fischer, Victor Wiebe, Svante Paabo, and Molly Przeworski (Max Plank Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology) in *Molecu-*

lar Biology and Evolution vol. 21 no. 5, 2004; and

Divergence Population Genetics of Chimpanzees, Yong-Jin Won and Jody Hey

(Department of Genetics, Rutgers University of New Jersey) in *Molecular Biology and Evolution* vol. 22 no. 2, 2005.

The contents are highly technical and complex, but the upshot of both papers is that bonobos and chimps separated about 800kya ago (according to the Max Plank paper) or 860-890kya (according to the Rutgers data). This was five years ago.

A more recent paper in *PLoS Genetics* (April 2008, Volume 4, Issue 4) reexamined the data and carried out further DNA testing:

Analysis of Chimpanzee History Based on Genome Sequence Alignments, Jennifer L. Caswell et al, (Department of Genetics - Harvard Medical School, the Harvard Department of Anthropology, the Harvard and MIT Broad Institute and the Berkeley Department of Molecular and Cell Biology). This work (as can well be imagined) is even more complex and detailed, however, based on the new data and using a human/chimp separation of 7my (instead of the traditional 6 my) the Author's Summary estimates that the bonobo/chimp separation took place 1.3mya.

This was two years ago.

These studies produced fascinating insights on how each species of *Pan* [the scientific name for chimpanzees and bonobos] has evolved, while retaining common - but different - genetic features with *Homo* [the scientific name for humans]. **However, an important - and unmentioned - conclusion is that the highly sophisticated community of top level molecular geneticists has updated the chimp/bonobo split by some 50%- from 800kya to 1.3 mya - in the space of**

three years.

Instead, the *PLoS* paper uses different and rather confusing values of human/chimp separation of 5.4, 7 and 8mya to 'rework' ('fudge' perhaps would be more fitting) the old data, and then blandly states that: "the population separation of 1.29 mya (1.14-1.45) ... is consistent with, but more precise than, previous estimates... If we had instead used an 8 mya rather than 7 mya calibration for human-chimpanzee genetic divergence - within the range of dates consistent with the fossil record - the upper end of two of these credible intervals would have overlapped the geological date." This geological date refers to the formation of the Congo River system which forms the dividing line between the two species of *Pan* (neither can swim) and which is estimated to have formed around 1.5-2 mya.

So here we have an admission that the separation of chimps from what were still called pygmy chimps in the 80s took place around 1.3 mya (more plus than minus 12%) and that a date of human/chimp speciation of 8 mya (say, also plus or minus 12% or a million years) is probably a better match of the fossil and geological records.

The original work on human/chimp separation was carried out in 1967 by Sarich and Wilson, which arrived at a separation of humans and chimps around 5mya. A number of other studies then revised this - at the time - sensational value to even lower values: a brief 2.7mya in: **Dating of the human-**

> [Contd on page 13](#)

Chimps, bonobos and *Homo* (contd.)

ape splitting by a molecular clock of mitochondrial DNA, Hasegawa, et al. (*Journal of Molecular Evolution* 1985), until, more recently, a value of 5.4 mya was reached in **Human and Ape Molecular Clocks and Constraints on Paleontological Hypotheses**, Stauffer, Walker et al. (*The Journal of Heredity* 2001).

Younger dates of the chimp/homo split were, of course, far more

sensational than simply confirming older estimates - always useful when looking for funding. But for those of us who find these values a little

hard to accept in the face of a new date of 1.3my separating chimps and bonobos (and are not comfortable with the changes in the Y chromosome, often quoted as 'unusually rapid') it should be noted that many of these papers used complicated models to analyze the genetic data and that include a basic 'reproductive generation cycle' of 20 years. Quoting the Molecular Systematics Group of Lund University, Sweden: "Sarich and Wilson's estimate was based on the observation that the molecular distance between *Homo*, *Pan* and *Gorilla* was about 1/6th of that between any of these species and the baboon (*Cercopithecoidea*). Since Sarich and Wilson had placed the divergence between *Cercopithecoidea* and *Hominoidea* at 30 MYBP, the automatic outcome of this calculation was the three species of great apes had separated about 5mya (30 divided by 6)."

Now, as the current initial female reproductive cycle is about 6-7 years for baboons, 12-14 years for the great apes and 18-twenty-something years for humans, so all of us with a numerical background might think of carrying out a simple check on the number of generations passed (assuming a linear rate of change of the reproductive cycle for the sake of the argument).

The following table gives the time from 30 million years ago to

casually popping out a change in the human/chimp split from 6 to 9 mya. To avoid discrediting the science and losing potential interest and funds, a change of this magnitude will have to be digested in small bite-sizes spread over several years. A nod here and a wink there.

Other reasons are perhaps even more complex: if the split took place about 9mya, this event would be firmly placed in the Miocene, when there was a con-

tinuous land mass across the southern end of the Red Sea linking Africa to the tropical forests of Eurasia, (as known from evaporite deposits). The split

Date BP (mya)	reproductive cycle (y)	Generations in each block of 5my
30 to 25	6	833.333
25 to 20	9	555.556
20 to 15	12	416.667
15 to 10	15	333.333
10 to 5	18	277.778
5 to 0	21	238.095
Total		2.654.762
one-sixth		442.460

the Present, the estimated reproductive cycles and the number of generations in each 'block' of 5 million years.

The average reproductive cycle works out at 13.5 years - similar to that of the modern large apes - and a total of some 2.7 million generations have passed since the assumed divide between apes and *Cercopithecoidea*. One sixth is 442 thousand generations, which in turn corresponds to a date closer to the number of generations that have passed in the last 10 million years and not the simplistic 5 million.

A final question remains: why is the academic community so loath to push back the date of human/chimp separation? The first reason is, of course, human nature itself; nobody likes to admit an error; and if a whopping 50% increase in time for the separation of two species of chimps can be glossed over as 'consistent', the same would not be true of

could have happened anywhere within this 'ape paradise'; different branches wandering off, some certainly to Africa where they evolved into chimps and australopiths, but with still enough time to allow an offshoot to wander (on two feet) back again into Asia and evolve into something interesting. For the majority of western professionals who have staked whole lives and careers searching for human ancestors in Africa, believing that a wondrous fossil lies just a few hundred thousand years back from *Australopithecus africanus* or that *habilis* really existed, this represents a nightmare scenario. **Molecular biologists are wise to tread lightly on this land bridge.**

But this takes us to the first prediction; that the Chinese will produce an *erectus* tooth or fossil fragment dated to 2.4 mya and claim *erectus* evolved in Asia.

Do I have any takers?

"To avoid discrediting the science and losing potential interest and funds, a change of this magnitude will have to be digested in small bite-sizes spread over several years. A nod here and a wink there."

Coloring their world in the ice age

PIGMENT USE BY PALEOLITHIC MAN

By Rick Dullum

Recent finds by archaeologist João Zilhão in two coastal rock shelters of Spain's Murcia region, Cuevo Anton and Cuevo Aviones,



Location of Spain's Murcia region

have focused attention on the emergence of Early Man's art and body decoration. We know that modern humans, first entering Europe around 38-40 KYA, were well-acquainted with painting techniques as evidenced by the quality of their cave art, and we commonly view modern humans as being the first to use body painting.

Yet, it is a Middle Paleolithic denizen charged with the first use of body adornment 50,000 years ago, established by carbon-dating. The epitome of the crude cave-man, *Homo neanderthalensis* or simply Neanderthals, turns out to be the first European on record to adorn the body. Along with many stone tools of the Chatelperronian type (typically associated with Neanderthals), we also find teeth—both human and other mammal—pierced to string on necklaces, shell pendants, and

the most ancient use of ochre pigment yet discovered in Europe. Zilhão and his team from England's Bristol University found yellow goethite and red hematite painted on a pierced king scallop (*Pecten maximus*) shell. Two pierced dog-cockleshells (*Glycymeris insubrica*) were found that had been painted with red hematite. Three shells of *Spondylus gaederopus* (thorny oyster), one containing traces of lepidocrocite mixed with hematite and pyrite, another with mixtures of charcoal, dolomite, hematite and pyrite, were found at Aviones, suggesting cosmetic use for the pigment mixtures.

In earlier work at other European and Near Eastern sites, it was discovered that Neanderthals buried their

dead, covering the bones with ochre, demonstrating that they attached a symbolic importance to

As one researcher remarked, it was as if the ochre acted as a replacement for the flesh once on the bones. In one cave floor burial, the corpse

was placed under a slab of rock which was painted blue (as the sky is blue?) on the underside. The body was covered in ochre and flower garlands. Such actions would suggest that *H. neanderthalensis* exhibited religious and ritual behaviors we formerly attributed only to *H. sapiens* (modern man).

A noted Neanderthal expert, Dr. Erik Trinkaus, of Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., writes, "There is nothing in Neanderthal anatomy: cerebral, oral, etc., that would have kept them from being completely artistic" (pers. comm.). In other words, they match the potential of Modern man for artistic expression of any kind.

Now we must ask ourselves: at what point in their development

did early man start using pigments? Perhaps a fall into a colored mud-puddle sparked the idea? Perhaps the mud bath

was intentional, and had the utilitarian value of insect relief? Primitive man would have observed his prey animals as they rolled and wal-

"Perhaps a fall into a colored mud-puddle sparked the idea [of body painting]."



Front and back views of a painted and pierced King Scallop shell (*Pecten maximus*). Photo by J. Zilhão. Used with permission.

Coloring their world (contd.)

"In fact, this mud-and-dust bath is seen today in hunter-gatherer tribes living a near-stone-age existence in isolated areas of our world."

lowed in the mud and dust, to protect their hides. In fact, this mud-and-dust bath is seen today in hunter-gatherer tribes living a near-stone-age

existence in isolated areas of our world.

Ochre is still used as an insect-repellent, and in the not-too-distant past, the Beothuk

Indians of the eastern

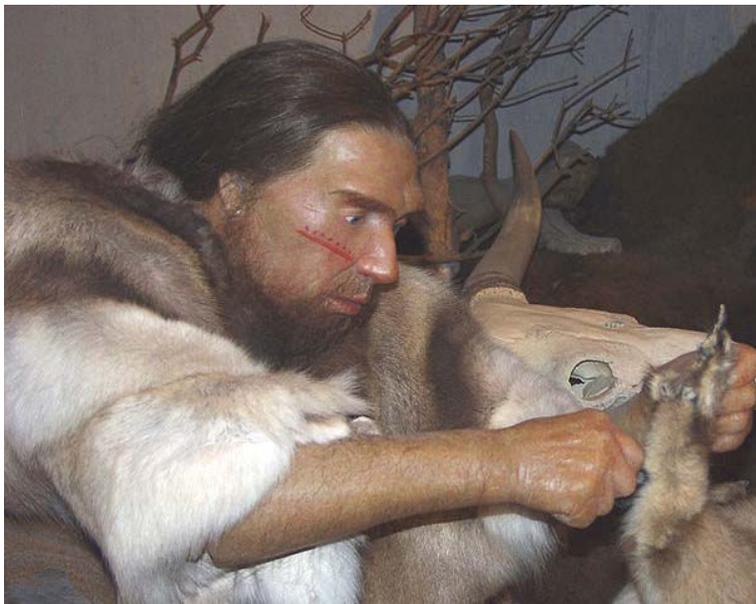
Labrador coast colored their entire bodies with ochre, to protect against the numerous biting flies and mosquitoes in their lands. It's where the expression 'Red Indians' came from, courtesy of John Cabot. Red ochre is used in India today, as it has been for untold centuries, mixed with rice powder and poured out in designs across door thresholds to keep out unwanted crawling insects. The residents of ancient Armenia near Lake Urmia—a saline, mosquito-ridden lake with no outlet—coated the insides of their dwellings with red ochre, as revealed by excavation at the Neo-

lithic level. Their land was known as the 'Land of the Red Earth Men'. The modern Maoris of New Zealand use ochre to ward off biting insects and mosquito-

in an area of dense mosquito infestation, albeit, in a culture of high artistic ability, as well.

This brief overview of pigment use among Paleolithic Man,

shows, from the archaeological evidence (which is minimal) and the anthropological observation of Stone Age-type cultures extant today or recently extinct, that pigments were used in



Neanderthal man portrayed with red face makeup. Neanderthal Museum, Dusseldorf, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany (Image public domain).

toes, and a popular line of herbal remedies sold in America, based on beeswax, features an insect repellent that includes red ochre.

Use of ochre is confirmed in the Upper Paleolithic site at Sungir, Russia, dated at 26-28 thousand years ago. Excavators there found a hollowed-out, highly polished, robust human femur packed with red ochre, buried with the skeleton of a young male, whose grave and body were covered with red ochre (and hundreds of mammoth-tusk ivory beads, but that's another story!). Again, this occurs

three ways:

- 1) as a form of insect repellent,
- 2) as an artistic medium, and
- 3) as a part of ritual behavior connected to religious expression.

Such behavior as noted in 2) and 3) has usually been regarded by scholars as only within the capacity of the fully human mind, and its finding in association with Neanderthal sites suggests that they had these same capacities. Perhaps the Neanderthals initiated the impulse to artistic expression after all.



The Pleistocene Coalition

**Challenging the precepts of
mainstream scientific agendas**

- Learn the real story of our Palaeolithic ancestors, a story about highly-intelligent and innovative people, a story quite unlike that promoted by mainstream science.
- Explore and regain confidence in your own ability to think for yourself regarding human ancestry as a broader range of evidence becomes available to you.
- Join a community not afraid to challenge the status quo. Question any paradigm promoted as "scientific" that is so delicate as to require withholding conflicting data in order to appear unchallenged.

**PLEISTOCENE COALITION
NEWS**, Vol. 2: Issue 2
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Special thanks

We would like to extend our special thanks to Tom Baldwin for taking on the daunting role of avocational editor and contributing his broad scope and insights in helping to bridge the gap between the layman reader and specialist authors who are often accustomed to writing in a highly-technical style. Great job, Tom!