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A prehistory of hiking - Neanderthal storytelling

by John Feliks



Fig. 1. Upper left) 47,000-year old bone engraving from Bacho Kiro Cave in the Balkan Mountains of Bulgaria; Wikimedia image rotated 180° by the author. **Lower left)** Modern-day clip-art representation of a mountain hiker. **Upper right)** Balkan Mountain range in the direct vicinity of Bacho Kiro Cave where the artifact was found; Photo courtesy of Jinal Shah, Sheen Ltd, Bulgaria; cropped with permission. **Lower right)** View of the Balkan Mountains showing a trail at the right where hikers are able to walk across the mountains from one peak to the next as the author is suggesting is represented in the Bacho Kiro engraving; Photo courtesy of Bulgarian mountain guide Lyuben Grancharov (mountain-guide-bulgaria.com); cropped with permission.

Ever since prehistorian Alexander Marshack published his study of the 47,000-year old Bacho Kiro engraved bone (discovered by J. K. Koslowski in the seventies) it has been one of the most important examples of Neanderthal mental ability known (Fig. 1).

The critical point Marshack demonstrated was not his interpretation of the famous zigzag pattern on the Bacho

Kiro engraving (he regarded it as an abstract symbol for water) but the simple fact that the engraving was made deliberately.

Marshack did this by pointing out that when the engraver created the zigzag pattern he/she did not lift the engraving tool but held the tool on the bone and twisted it while changing direction to create an angle. This proved that the pattern was not an accidental by-product of scraping the

bone such as skeptics of Neanderthal intelligence tended to believe.

Although the tide is turning, just the simple idea that the Bacho Kiro engraving was made deliberately was not easy for the modern science community to accept because they had long taught that Neanderthals were mentally inferior to us, being a sort of "dead-end" in the story of

> [Contd on page 2](#)

A prehistory of hiking (cont.)

"Interpretations of Neanderthal art try to avoid the idea of representation."

human evolution. Neanderthals were not regarded as able to understand as we do such things as art or abstract thinking.

Even today, many still hold to the idea that Neanderthals were capable of little more than surviving from one day to the next, not even capable of developed human

engravings don't represent anything at all. Marshack at least thought zigzags were abstract representations of water. But even then, he was still thinking in terms of how much more evolved modern *Homo sapiens* was in comparison to the less-developed Neanderthals and *Homo erectus* people.

2011), then we can begin to read the history that our early ancestors left for us. From this view, there is no reason at all that we should not be able to see the Bacho Kiro engraving as representing exactly what it appears to represent, a person hiking across the Balkan Mountains 47,000 years ago.



Fig. 2. (left) No anthropologists question that the figure at the left in the famous "Well Scene" of Lascaux Cave, France, represents a modern *Homo sapiens* human being despite how obviously unlike *Homo sapiens* it appears (Wikimedia). The unnaturally elongated body, bird-like head, and stick-like arms and legs are not a deterrent because portraying people as stick figures is a very common 'modern' artistic technique. Another common technique is that of exaggerating parts of the body to help communicate an idea. The torso of the Lascaux figure, for instance, appears to have been very deliberately elongated though for some unknown reason. However, in the case of the Bacho Kiro engraving **(right)** one can easily understand how exaggerating the length of a person's legs would help represent them as walking across a mountain range. If this interpretation is correct, then the image is quite sophisticated and is more evidence that the Neanderthals were highly intelligent and not in any way our inferiors.

"According to the standard evolutionary paradigm, Neanderthals were not yet capable of 'representation' or depicting things in the real world such as people, animals, or landscapes."

speech. Certainly, no modern anthropologist would consider that a Neanderthal artist 47,000 years ago could tell a timeless narrative story in a visual form.

This is because according to the standard evolutionary paradigm, Neanderthals were not yet capable of "representation" or depicting things in the real world such as people, animals, or landscapes. Representation is always held to be an invention of modern *Homo sapiens* (Fig. 2). Even Marshack, as open-minded as he was, regarded the much later statuettes of Vogelherd (c. 30,000 years old) as the first examples of representational art.

For evolutionary reasons only, interpreters of Neanderthal art try to avoid the idea of representation. One of their interpretations is that

The most popular recent interpretation of zigzags in Palaeolithic art grants even less to Neanderthals in that they are suggested to represent entoptic phenomena or phosphene patterns. These are visual sensations in the brain resembling hallucinations and are suggested to have influenced early artists without their having any idea what they were actually doing. Experienced artists, though, tend not to think in such terms because they know firsthand that the artist has great freedom of expression.

In conclusion, if instead of 'not-quite-us' interpretations of early people we adopt the idea that there has never been any change in human cognitive ability (e.g., Feliks 1998, 2006, 2008, 2010,

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JOHN FELIKS has specialized in the study of early human cognition for over 15 years. His work demonstrates through side-by-side comparisons, geometry and mathematics that early peoples such as *Homo erectus* and Neanderthals were just as intelligent as we are today.

Letters to the editors; breaking news

"For close to 40 years we have tried to bring to public attention the incredibly important and very old archaeological sites." -VSM

The possible human bones at Calico

Last month *PCN* broke the news of possible human bones discovered at Calico Early Man Site (Master Pit 1) over forty years ago. Geologist Ren Lalatin, invoking the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), requested testing the bones to see if they are human and if found to be so, grant the proper respect the law requires.

As we go to press we would love to report positive results of which we have heard but we have also received conflicting reports. We will keep our readers informed as this story develops. -TB

Mexican Hueyat-laco site gone

On April 1 we learned that Hueyat-laco, one of four ancient archaeological sites located on the north shore of the Valsequillo Reservoir, Puebla, Mexico is essentially no more. Where the 2004 excavations had been is now a smoothed-over park-like area, fenced in by 2 meter high concrete block walls and planted with full-size palm trees.

This is the latest pot hole in the always rough and bumpy road of the Valsequillo saga, where for close to 40 years we have tried to bring to public attention the incredibly important and very old archaeological sites

(ca 250-400ky) first discovered and excavated by Cynthia Irwin-Williams and Juan Armenta Camacho in the early 60s.

Fortunately, trench profiles, sediment samples, and reference slides of the diatoms from Hueyat-laco have been preserved in the USA and Mexico, and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) Mexico City should also have in storage a full set of stratigraphic monoliths (stabilized sediment columns), taken from the trench walls in 1973, as well as the original artifacts and fossil bone samples.

Hueyat-laco may be gone, but it won't be forgotten! -VSM

The Red Crag portrait, an enigmatic shell artifact from the late Pliocene of Great Britain

By Richard Dullum

The Red Crag "portrait" (Fig. 1) dubbed so by the archaeologist's daughter, was a fossilized seashell with a carved, smiling human visage, "crude, but unmistakable," with a hole at the top, perhaps facilitating its use as a pendant.

It was excavated prior to 1881 by a trusted collector of Henry Stopes, F.G.S., from the Red Crag Formation, East Anglia (Figs. 2, 3).

Taken from undisturbed strata of Late Pliocene age, well away from the eroded beach area or talus slopes, the shell—a *Pectunculus glycymeris*—was

found to be uniformly stained, and, like other shells of the same species from the deposit, thoroughly fossilized.¹

The find was presented in 1881 at York, in a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

It was ridiculed and rejected, chiefly because of the crude execution of the visage.

Unable to get the science



Fig. 2. Location of the Red Crag formation at Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex county, England. (Editor's note: This is just a few kilometers north of Clacton-on-Sea, *Homo erectus* site of the Clactonian/Acheulian industry and the 400,000-year old wooden spear.)

press to publish the portrait, Stopes published several pamphlets privately, but dropped the matter from public view. He continued collecting flints from the Swanscombe area and corresponded with Benjamin Harrison, to whom he gave much support in his

study of the eoliths of the Kent Plateau² Henry Stopes died in 1902.

In February and June, 1912, Dr. Marie Stopes, scientist,

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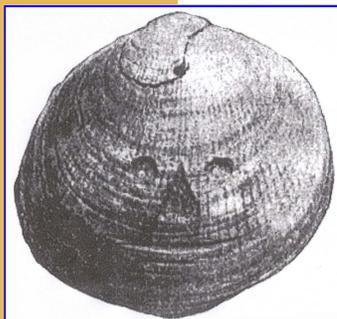


Fig. 1. The Red Crag "portrait" engraved on a fossil bivalve shell (*Pectunculus glycymeris*); photo by Marie Stopes, 1912.

The Red Crag portrait (cont.)

birth control/family planning advocate, humanist, and founder of IHEU



Fig. 3. The Red Crag formation at Walton-on-the-Naze in Essex County, southern England. The site includes exposures dating to the Late Pliocene, 2-2.5 million years old.

"After a thorough and serious re-examination of the 'portrait,' the Special Committee was able to exclude forgery by the thorough staining and Crag detritus incrustation on the cut edges of the piece."

(International Humanist and Ethical Union) defended her father's discovery in two letters to *The Geographical Magazine*.^{3, 4} After reading her paper to the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia, in February 1913⁵, an investigation was launched by their Special Committee. A salient point Stopes made in the article, was her father's treatment at the hands of academia when, on a trip to Egypt in 1879, he discovered the first paleolith from that country:

"It is significant to notice that a very similar treatment—scornful and sarcastic disbelief—was meted out to his discovery of Paleolithic Man in Egypt. He discovered the first Paleolith there, in 1879, and was greeted with derision, and hailed as sacrilegious because he suggested that it proved that Paleolithic Man had once inhabited that classic ground. People denied, resented even, the suggestion that Egypt could ever have been through such a degradingly primitive stage! Today,

I need not add a word in vindication of Mr. Stopes' position: the extensive collections of Professor Flinders-Petrie, Mr. Seton-Karr and others, speak eloquently."

After a thorough and serious re-examination of the 'portrait,' the Special Committee was able to exclude forgery by the thorough staining and Crag detritus incrustation on the cut edges of the piece, which had been examined in minute detail by Mr. E.T Newton in 1897.⁶

In his monograph, Newton attested to the above characteristics of the artifact, stating that the edges as well as the carved areas showed equal staining and incrustation by the Pliocene matrix, as other fossilized *Glycimeris* shells demonstrated.

Nothing ever came of Marie Stope's efforts, and nothing more about the 'portrait' surfaced until Michael Cremo and Richard Thompson's book, *Forbidden Archeology*, was published 80 years later in 1993.⁷

I decided to try to locate the artifact, if it still existed, and asked Michael Cremo if he could assist me. An enquiry was made through the IHEU to contact the Stopes family, particularly, Sir Harry Stopes-Roe, the grandson of Henry.

Although we never heard back from them, we learned that Henry Stopes (**Fig. 4**) was a prodigious collector and that his Lithic Artifacts Collection, in Cardiff, Wales, preserves 50,000-70,000 pieces, all of them extensively catalogued.

Mr. Cremo was assured by the Curator, Dr. Francis

Wenban-Smith, that the portrait is not among the collection. Interestingly, Wenban-Smith did not mention his own article about the very same topic, published in the 2009 annual edition of *Lithics*, #30,⁸ but he did send a copy of the article to me.

The *Lithics* article focuses mostly on Stopes' "backing the wrong horse" in the Eolith controversy of his day. The article also goes into considerable detail about the portrait itself, featuring a photo with scale.

Wenban-Smith states in the article that the shell was probably from the talus of the Red Crag, but Stopes writes in 1881, "It was found in the Crag, properly stratified (not in the talus)."

Wenban-Smith argues the shell was carved as a found fossil, probably by a medieval pilgrim making the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, in Spain, and buried as a talisman, in the talus. He provides pictures of the pilgrims' emblem (a modern scallop), none of which has ever been found with a happy-face carved in it, none of which resemble *Glycimeris* at all.

In all, Wenban-Smith's 20-page article devotes over 700 words to debunking the portrait; labeling the provenance 'uncertain,' stating that further finds have not been forthcoming, and complaining about the 'naive crudity of the image resembling a schoolboy hoax'.

Only the first two objections are capable of scientific refutation, and were in fact refuted at the Special Committee meeting in 1913. *Not one objection to the portrait in this report questions its*

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The Red Crag portrait (cont.)



Fig. 4. Henry Stopes.

"Wenban-Smith states in the article that the shell was probably from the talus of the Red Crag, but Stopes writes in 1881, 'It was found in the Crag, properly stratified (not in the talus).'"

"Not one objection to the portrait in this report [by the Special Committee, 1913] questions its provenance."

provenance.

The question of further finds were answered by Marie Stopes at the meeting, mentioning sawn bone from the same Crag layer in the British Museum from that date (in Sir Joseph Prestwich's collection) and flint implements found *under* (i.e. *older than*) the Red and Coralline Crag by Sir E. Ray Lankester (see Fig. 5 for the two crags' stratigraphic positions).

The third objection is trivial. If Wenban-Smith had read the details of the Committee Report, he would have found that though a carved fossil *Glycimeris* face was accomplished by J. Reid Moir—who spent considerable time on it to avoid shattering the fragile shell—the members still did not consider the possibility of fraud, because of the previous microscope work on it by E.T. Newton.

Interestingly, Wenban-Smith does not entirely dismiss Stopes' lithics findings, even though they may yet be classified as Late Pliocene, and generously states they should be pursued when and if the indications are fruitful for further research. I will discuss those lithics in a future issue.

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Prehistoric Society of East Anglia 1 (Part III): 323-6, Feb. 12, 1913.
⁶Newton, E.T. 1897. Tertiary Man. *Proceedings of the Geological Association* 15: 74-6.
⁷Cremona, M.A. and R. Thompson. 1993. Carved shell from the Red Crag, England (Late Pliocene). *Forbidden Archeology*. Pp. 71-2.
⁸Wenban-Smith, F. 2009. Henry Stopes (1852-1902) engineer, brewer and anthropologist. *Great Prehistorians, Lithics* 30: 62-81.

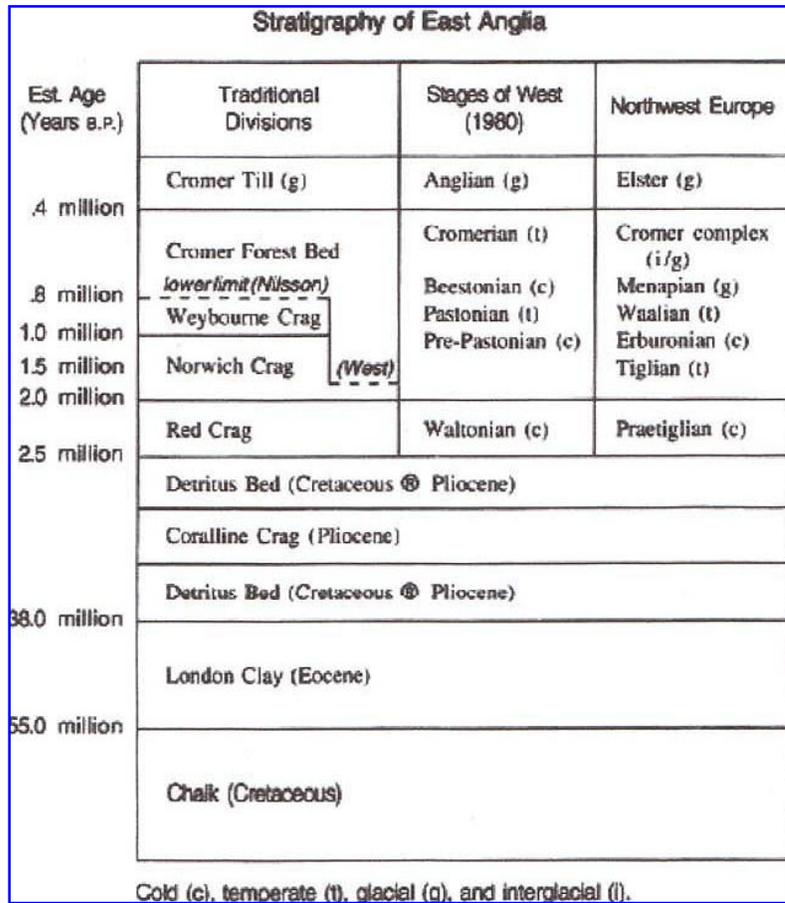


Fig. 5. Stratigraphy of East Anglia showing the Red Crag formation (left-center) and Coralline Crag (below) within the Pliocene-age stratigraphy at Walton-on-the-Naze.

³Stopes, M.C. 1912. Human art in the Red Crag. *Geological Magazine* 9: 95-6 (February).
⁴Stopes, M.C. 1912. The Red Crag Portrait. *Geological Magazine* 9: 285-6 (June).
⁵Stopes, M.C. 1913. The Red Crag shell portrait. *Proceedings of the*

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Proportional acuity—mathematics of the ancient mind

By Michael Winkler



Fig 1. 40-70,000-year old cupules (pecked holes) on Neanderthal infant burial stone from Ferrassie, France; artistic rendering, Michael Winkler.

Most modern mathematicians now formulate algebraic expressions to explore the nature of numbers. But they may be paying a price for abandoning the methodology of visualization.

The most fundamental of all mathematical concepts is proportion (the comparative relation of one quantitative value to another). In the minds of our ancient ancestors, proportions of quantitative value were an attribute of the qualitative assessments of their environment. Numbers were features of concrete phenomena rather than abstract concepts; even when counting, they touched a part of the body associated with the number.¹ Our ancestors' survival depended on their ability to assess the proportional and quantitative attributes of an often hostile environment. They had the skill to select

the appropriate size materials for tools and model those materials into shapes having functional proportions but they had no need for pure mathematics.

Since proportions were concrete attributes rather than abstract concepts, they were always associated with perceived phenomena. But our ancestors were aware that specific proportions recurred and could be modeled; they didn't treat numbers as abstractions (the act of abstraction cuts the connection to material phenomena) but rather as models of a recurring feature of the material world. Constant reappearance of a particular proportion fosters the idea that it's connected to the foundations of the world. Simple proportions are the most widely applicable because Nature has a preference for them

(we also share that preference since we're products of Nature). As such, simple proportions were viewed as sacred, and became attached to sacred rituals. An excavation at La Ferrassie, France uncovered a limestone slab bearing dot-like markings (known as cupules) which had been placed face-down over a Neanderthal infant burial dating from 40,000 to 70,000 years ago. The markings are comprised of both individual cupules and cupules in pairs (**Fig. 1**). The markings may be seen as an expression of the proportional ratio of 1:2 (the simplest ratio).

Other cupules have been discovered throughout the world which are much older. Cupules often have the appearance of small circles. We often see ancient artifacts which appear to be models of geometric shapes. The fact that the proportional relations of ancient geometries were not calculated using mathematical formulas doesn't alter the fact that they were expressions of comparative proportional regularity. Proportional regularity was obviously of interest to our ancient ancestors since they labored intently to produce models of it (*the production of these models was a rationally-mediated activity*). **Fig. 2** is an ostrich eggshell bead from Serengeti National Park (Tanzania) produced during the Middle Stone Age.²

Up until the last several hundred years, proportional balance, regularity, and sym-

metry continued to be investigated visually despite the emergence of abstract conceptions regarding the nature of numbers. And for thousands of years, basic proportions continued to be treated as the foundation of mathematics. The ancient Egyptians were so fixated on the proportional relation of 2:3 that the fraction 2/3rds became one of the two foundations of their entire system of mathematics. The reason for their fixation is unknown but Pythagoras, who studied with them, demonstrated that 2:3 was the frequency ratio of the most harmonious musical interval other than the octave (the Perfect 5th). Plato had an interest in this simple proportion because the tetrahedron (the simplest regular solid) has a vertices-to-edges ratio of 2:3. Archimedes is said to have offered a sacrifice when he discovered that the ratio of proportion between the volume of a sphere and the

cylinder which encloses it is 2:3.

Most modern mathematicians now formulate algebraic expressions to explore the nature of numbers. But they may be paying a price for

abandoning the methodology of visualization. Their approach to understanding prime numbers is an example. A prime number is defined as any natural number divisible only by itself and 1; consequently, the numbers 2, 3, and 5 are classified as primes; any description of the distribution of primes

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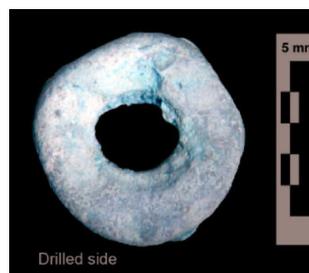


Fig 2. Ostrich eggshell bead from Tanzania; photo courtesy of Arizona State University.

Proportional acuity (cont.)

(the locations where the primes fall within the sequence of all natural num-

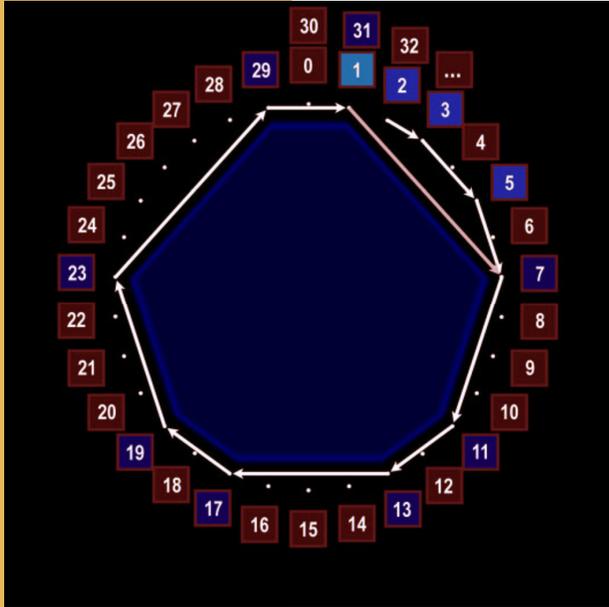


Fig 3. The 8 positions of primes in a cycle of 30.

"We've mistakenly come to believe that complexity is the test for human awareness."

bers) must include the numbers 2, 3, and 5. Mathematicians have been trying in vain for centuries to discover a system underlying the distribution of prime numbers. Their failure may be rooted in their lack of visualizing relations. **Fig. 3** illustrates a pattern embedded in a continuous 30-number cycle. Notice the 8 locations of the numbers, 1, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29; if we continue counting around the 30 number cycle infinitely, *the prime numbers will always appear at one of these 8 locations*. Primes will never appear at the other 22 locations. In short, all prime numbers in existence will emerge within the same 8 locations embedded within a continuous cycle of 30 numbers, *with the exception of the numbers 2, 3, and 5*. The patterning in our visualization indicates that 2, 3, and 5 are probably not part of the same class of numbers as the set of all other prime numbers because *they do not fit the pattern*. If we

redefine the set of primes as *all natural numbers divisible only by themselves and unity which are greater than the sum of the first even and odd number*; our methodology of visualization illustrates a regularity in the infinite set of prime numbers (note: composites [non-primes] also emerge at the same 8 locations where the primes emerge but the appearance of these composites is also systematic and predictable—the originating series is also expanding by a factorization of products of previously occurring primes; both modes of progression [additive and multiplicative] have a rigorous structure.

Our visualization of a problem in modern number theory uses a methodology derived from the proportional acuity of our ancient ancestors. But surprisingly, there are some modern mathematicians who seem to discount, not only historical methodologies of visualization, but the basic role of proportion. On February 17 of 2011, *ScienceDaily* reported that mathematicians are attempting to develop "a periodic table of shapes" from which all other shapes are constructed, including multi-dimensional shapes. The basic laws which govern 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes are applicable to all shapes; consequently, the basic building blocks of all shapes are the simple proportional relations which are already well-known. **Fig. 4** is an accurate 2-dimensional representation

of the relations of an 8-dimensional figure comprised of 6,720 edges (originally drawn by Peter McMullen, the version illustrated was computer-generated by John Stembridge [colors indicate dimensional levels]). The project reported in *ScienceDaily* is obscuring the true foundations of shape-construction by becoming too focused on a technology-based approach to design. It's not surprising that it has become difficult for many people to accept that modern thought is rooted in the minds of ancestors who lived long before 40,000 years ago because we've mistakenly come to believe that complexity is the test for human awareness.

¹ Ifrah, G. 1985. *From one to zero: A universal history of numbers*. Viking Penguin, Inc. New York, pp 15-17.

² Marean, C., J. Bower, and A. Mabulla. 2004. East African artifacts support evolution of symbolic thinking in Middle Stone Age. *ASU News*, March 31, 2004.

MICHAEL WINKLER is an international installation artist and language theorist. His work has been featured in art journals such as *Rampike Magazine* and in books such as *Imagining Language* (MIT Press, 1998). Winkler's work is also part of the permanent collections in various art and literary institutions in the U.S. and

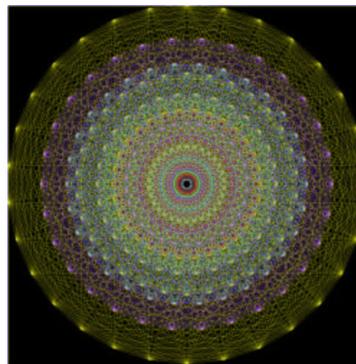


Fig 4. 8-dimensional symmetry of 6,720 edges.

abroad such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Library of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Hans Sohm Archive in Stuttgart, Germany; the King Stephen Museum, Hungary; and the National Institute of Design, India.

Website:
winklerwordart.com

Approaching prehistoric "art" by socio-systemic dating of the Cussac Cave engravings

By Jörn Greve and Gerhard Neuhäuser

Note from the editors: The editors have done their best to represent this originally much longer piece accurately. For more detail, one may contact the authors through the Pleistocene Coalition.

The overwhelming variety, enlarged proportions, and

atmosphere represented in other pictures in the cave as well.

Could this attitude have been present due to the outlook of hunters and artists, perhaps a reflection of their mythology?

to a special primordial mythological significance.

A first trial to find criteria to mark stylistic differences was done by comparing the drawings of chimpanzees and normal human children with those of medical patients who had brain lesions.

This approach suggested that the engravings of Cussac, while probably Aurignacian in age, may have been influenced by toxic substances such as CO²



Location of Cussac Cave, in the Dordogne River valley of southwestern France.

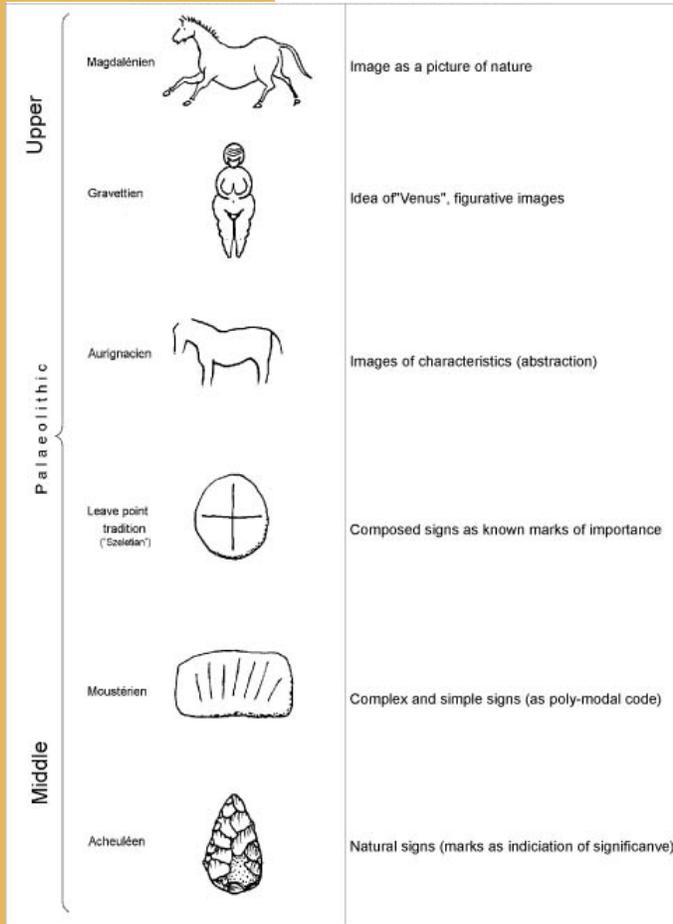


Fig. 1. Development of Symbols from "natural" to elaborated "artificial" figuration (L. Fiedler/J. Greve).

Extreme distortions like those at Cussac are not found in other caves, but there are somewhat similar characteristics of style found in certain out-of-the-way places in Pech-Merle cave in the Pyrenees region of southern France.

Because all dating is done by C-14, which is based on possibly older charcoal, the dating of cave wall art will always be tentative. This is true even in the famous paintings of Chauvet, also in France.

This is one reason why an ontogenetic and stylistic-comparative-structural approach could help to date Cussac by a comparison to the art found in other caves.

other peculiarities of the engravings in Cussac cave, southwest France, lead one to think of caricaturists at work mocking the creatures they are depicting.

For example, there is a huge bloated mammoth four meters in length, stumbling on clumsy fifty-centimeter legs.

There seems to be a scornful

A first attempt might suggest that the engravings of Cussac are actually older than those of the Aurignacian or Gravettian periods roughly 22,000 to 32,000 years ago. This conclusion is suggested by the vivid and intentional habit of distortion at Cussac which might possibly be connected



Fig. 2. Cussac (N. Ajoulat et al.2002. *Bulletin de la Société Préhistorique Française* 99 [1]: 129-53).

(carbon dioxide), which is present in the atmosphere of the cave.

Another scientific approach would be to assign differences in performance between the stylistic elaboration in the Cussac artwork and that found at Combarelles, also in France, as well as that of Pech Merle.

1. A psychosocial and structural analysis

The most perfect designs are found in France's Lascaux cave; but even Chauvet demonstrates examples of highly elaborate aesthetic forms that led to some archaeologists doubting the dating of the cave at c. 30,000 years old. 23,000

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Approaching prehistoric art (cont.)

"Like in similar modern histories, there is a progressive

now seems more probable (see Jaubert 2008).
Comparison of engravings of Cussac to the highly elabo-

tion (in the Magdalenian age).
Before Cussac, a state of steady and fixed "reality" is represented by rites (Fig. 1

more in later periods like in the Magdalenian (see Tysandier 2007) than in the earlier Aurignacian and Gravettian:

<u>Graphemas and their elaboration</u>	<u>Possible code (semantic contents)</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Palaeohistorical Context</u>
"Cupuli," rounded holes	ornated "holy" places connected to special events	Australia, Ferassie, (Sergeac)	(earlier?) since Middle Paläolithics
circular combined, crossed multiple lines	rhythmical relations	Clan/group specific characteristics (MTA etc. "timeless")	Middle Paleolithics
(assisting?) roundings, first symmetries	possible sexual symbols	Clan/group specific characteristics (MTA etc. "timeless")	Middle Paleolithics?
combinations of specific graphemes	general code (with special messages?)	Clan-, group spec. characteristic (?)	since Late Middle and Younger Paleolithics
combinations and first patterns	numeric categories	As related to spec. objects (Upper Paleolithics, Magdalenian)	since Upper Paleolithics:
Ornaments in fixed pattern	possible social indication (identification) and "ideological" (spiritual) significant illustration	Ferassie, Pech-Merle, (Catal Hüyük)	enlarged groups, order espec. since Early Upper Paleolithics
Arrangements of natural surroundings, position in caves	celebration of "Honor" (death)	(Atapuerca?) Feras-sie, Crapina, Neanderthal, Spy	(early?) Middle Paläolithics (Neolithic)
fanciful representations of "natural" objects/symbols	Ritual-magic differentiation/ invocation? apologizing gestures	Special; (shamanistic?) code (like in Cussac)	Since Early Upper Paleolithic
Objective ("standardized") figures in spatial order of combinations	Demonstration of power and authority ("objectivation" of mastery)	Code of social order, obedience and division of work (like in Lascaux, Chauvet)	Since late Upper Paleolithic

Table 1. Morphological analysis assessing states of symbolic elaboration

trend from objective naturalism (in the Aurignacian or Gravettian

rate drawings and engravings and even the bas-reliefs in rock walls such as those in Laussel shows a great deal of difference in the level of execution (Fig. 1 with permission of N. Ajoulat; 2002;

by Lutz Fiedler 2010, and Table 1) and a set order of things.

This is associated with symbolic compositions demonstrated in a dramatic course

For this reason, socio-ontogenetic criteria could give additional help and provide data on Paleolithic art-production especially in its early stages.

Ranking of items (main topics)	1	2	3	4
(1) Lines	cut, rugged	irregular	coherent	straight/clearly coherent
(2) Configuration	broken parts of the whole	deformed	natural	(stressed/degraded) abstract symbolic; over-natural (heroic)
(3) Proportions	equal to another/ conform	divergent	differing	(obviously regular) overloaded/ deviations
(4) Recognizability (iconographic similarities)	ambiguous	vague	obvious	overemphasized/exaggerated dimensions
(5) Congruencies (contents/formal criteria)	mawkish (trashy)	adequate	exact	oversimplified or exaggerated
(6) Syntactic coherence	inherent semantic importance/ repetition	intentional reduction (side-position)	equal embedding within a scenario	ornamental, stereotypic patterns, (over-)stressed importance
(7) Variation	("stochastic") accidental	"harmoniously structured "	intentionally straight, (iconographic abstractions)	repeated elements (iterations) stereotyped uniform
(8) Consistency of patterns	simple /irregular	multiple/variable	complex	hyper-complex/iterated/ generalized

Table 2. A summarization of the holistic and ontogenetic approach and the resulting morphological aesthetic analysis.

ages) to abstraction (in the Magdalenian age)."

s. Table 1 and esp. 2).
Like in similar modern histories, there is a progressive trend from objective naturalism (in the Aurignacian or Gravettian ages) to abstrac-

of "beasts," and this representation is an "exact" socio-behavioral analysis mirroring the socio-ecological world, which is certainly found

Imperfection of artistic representation is perhaps related to a more or less spontaneous primordial state of perception visible in irregu-

> [Contd on page 10](#)

Approaching prehistoric art (cont.)

larities and slight deforma-



Fig. 3. Pech-Merle (Le Combe) *Les Antilopes* (Lorblanchet, 2010).

The ornaments of these precursors could be the expression of a certain primordial state of thought and a means of relating to that thought world in a special shamanistic context.

tions. These traits of the artwork are likely brought about by various aspects of motor skills or attention (e.g., hands, eyes in the "head-footer"-state of children, etc., common traits up until the age of 4).

The holistic and ontogenetic approach resulting in a morphological aesthetic analysis can be summarized (see Table 2; also Greve 2009). The standardization of combined signs in a dramaturgy as presented in the powerful combinations seen in Chauvet, Lascaux or Altamira is not to be seen in Cussac.

In the Magdalenian era fixed rites may have corresponded to special designs as demonstrations of social hierarchies. Their special perfection reproduce

"living" myths as in the vivid engravings of Cussac towards liturgical rules (Tables 1 & 2) neither being phantasmagoria of a special shamanistic importance nor representing social order like in later paintings as the combined figures of Le Combe in Pech-Merle (Fig. 3; s. M. Lorblanchet, 2010: 200-208; s. Table 1).



Fig. 4. Combarelles (DSCF 9911 69: 81).

Conclusions

A holistic as well as historical-systemic method of assessing Palaeolithic art by inclusion of a socio-ontogenetic background could be helpful in classifying and dating.

It is also useful for understanding the development of different social states. These might correspond to "aberrations" of a possible line of progressive style in Palaeolithic art showing a relationship to social size and order (Greve 2001).

This approach will also help to interpret the anomalies of Chauvet, Lascaux and similar Palaeolithic art sites.

The existence of precursors have to be assumed as well. The engravings of Cussac are a testimony of one of them and only the engravings of Combarelles can be assigned to the same period (see Fig. 3 with permission of N. Ajoulat).

The ornaments of these precursors could be the expression of a certain primordial state of thought and a means of relating to that thought world in a special shamanistic context.

They would likely have used more undetermined or even "natural signs" within a general symbol system (see Fig. 1). Taking stylistic characteristics as a degree of performance means also to classify how a figurative symbolization is done in comparison to other phylogenetic or ontogenetic developmental states performing communication.

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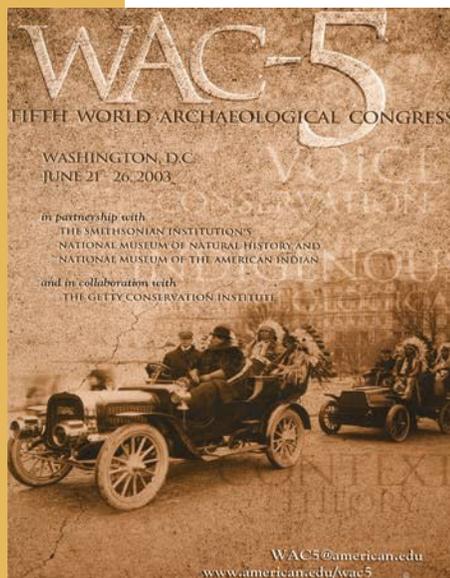
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Data block: The conference from Hell

By Virginia Steen-McIntyre

"When we finally gave our presentations, it was in a second-floor room the size of a large broom closet, without air conditioning, on the opposite side of campus from the plenary session on Early Man."



You would think that once a controversial topic is accepted for presentation at an international archaeological congress and the speakers have been given the green light, it

would be clear sailing: the meeting would meet, the information be presented, the media alerted. Done.

Not always!

Michael Cremo was co-chair of just such a session at the June 2003 Fifth World Archaeological Congress (WAC-5) in Washington, D.C.¹ Title: "The History of Archaeology in the Service of Isms." Among other presenters, Michael spoke on "The Nineteenth Century California Gold Mine Discoveries: Archaeology, Darwinism, and Evidence for Extreme Human Antiquity." Steen-McIntyre addressed "Heresy in the Camp: Hueyatlaco, a 250,000 Year Old Mammoth Hunter Site from Central Mexico and Its Treatment by

Darwinism in Late 20th Century USA." Sam VanLandingham followed with "Correlation of Artifact Horizons at the Hueyatlaco Archaeological Site with Sangamonian (sensu lato=80,000 to ca 330,000 yr BP) Age Diatomaceous Samples, Cores, Measured Sections from the Valsequillo Region South of Puebla, Mexico: A Case of Clovis Dogmatism in Archaeology."

Trouble started before the conference began. Somewhere between Midland, Texas and Washington, D.C. Sam's suitcase, containing his presentation materials and a one-of-a-kind set of cardboard-mounted 3-D Hueyatlaco trench profiles we used at meetings was stolen from the luggage compartment of the Greyhound bus he was riding.

While we were scrabbling to make hold-up posters of his data, word was received that Michael's co-chair had a sudden family emergency and would not be able to attend the meeting. So, Michael was left "holding the bag" so to speak.

Then there was a "scheduling error" and our session was not held when announced. When finally ready to go at the new time, there was another glitch: someone forgot to send over the projection equipment. When we finally gave our presentations, it was in a second-floor room the size of a large broom closet, without air conditioning, on the opposite side of campus from the plenary session on Early Man that was scheduled for the same time. Think we had about eight

people in the audience.

When I went to the media room later to pick up any left-over press-release handouts, I found them—in the trash.

It was like a bad dream. I shared our woes with a young couple while walking to the congress cocktail party in the museum. "My!" said the woman, "Sounds like a government conspiracy, doesn't it? I later discovered that the man with her was in charge of the media room.

Hmmm.

¹ WAC-5, Fifth World Archaeological Congress, June 21-26, 2003, Washington, D.C. Program, in partnership with The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and National Museum of the American Indian, and in collaboration with the Getty Conservation Institute, WAC5@american.edu; www.american.edu/wac5, 371pp., see p. 132-3 for abstracts.

VIRGINIA STEEN-McINTYRE, Ph.D., is a tephrochronologist (volcanic ash specialist) involved in preserving and publishing the Palaeolithic evidence from Valsequillo since the late 1960s. Her story first came to public attention in Michael Cremo and Richard Thompson's book, *Forbidden Archeology* (1993), and in the Bill Cote television special, *Mysterious Origins of Man*, hosted by Charleton Heston (1996).

How do you keep the wolf from the door when the door has yet to be invented?

By Alan Cannell

"In fact, four hybrid chimp/bonobos do exist in a Belgium zoo and their behavior turns out to be a mix of patterns from both species."

The face staring out of this page belongs to a creature that doesn't exist. It is the morphed image of a chimp with that of a bonobo; two species that have been evolving independently for some 1.5my, or about one hundred thousand generations (Cannell 2010).¹ The face has an evocatively hominid appearance and probably gives a good idea of what the common ancestor of Pan would have looked like: very much like a chimp and a little closer to the ancestral hominid. Going back another fifty thousand chimp generations, or about 2.25my, we would probably arrive at a creature that still looked very chimp-like, lived in the same forest environment, ate similar foods, displayed chimp-like behavior and made nests in trees to pass the night.

Although the species do not interbreed in the wild, a chimp-bonobo hybrid would also be expected to show some ancestral traits. For those readers who have a creepy 'Frankenstein Moment' at this thought, it may be worth pointing out that the hamburger you ate yesterday probably came from a hybrid cow (*Bos indicus* and *Bos taurus*) and that whole civilizations were built on the mule, the hybrid sterile offspring of two species separated by some four hundred thousand generations and yet which stubbornly tend to have the same character and general shape (incidentally very similar to the most ancestral forms of wild ass, the

Somali Ass and Greves Zebra). In fact, four hybrid chimp/bonobos do exist in a Belgium zoo and their behavior turns out to be a mix of patterns from both species. Physically they are also a mix of both species; with the longer hind limbs of the Bonobo and the stockier build of the Chimp.²

Modern humans are all hybrids. We all have chunks of archaic DNA from a range of archaic populations that developed separately for hundreds of thousands of years. Yet if we also take human evolution back one hundred thousand generations – say 2mya – we arrive at our common ancestor, *Homo erectus*, who looked very much like us (at least from the neck down) and probably experienced very similar emotions. Going back another fifty thousand generations takes us to 3mya and we would expect to find a being that again, was very similar in shape, size and behavior to *erectus*.

For over two million years these beings lived in the Rift Valley where the nights are almost constant at twelve hours a day. Twelve hours of darkness. Much speculation and research has gone into how they lived, what they ate and how they moved about

on the savannahs. This article is a request for reflection on something that is often overlooked: how did they spend those twelve-hour nights? We did not evolve with good night vision, so

how do you keep the several species of African wolf – and hyenas and big cats – from the door when there are no doors, no fires and no lights?

Silver-backed Gorillas are big enough and strong enough to be given a wide berth. Other apes 'roost' in tree nests and the smaller *afarensis*, 'Lucy and company,' with their long arms and curved phalanges may have retained this habit. But our *erectus* ancestors were too small to impose on predators; their fossil 'V' shaped mandibles had no real bite and, in the dark thrown stones are ineffective.

If we take more recent human behavior as a template, a good guess would be that they spent the darkness in a sheltered place, such as a cliff overhang that protects your back, and next to a stream that offers some frontal protection as well as fresh water. A pile of thorn bushes would protect your flanks and allow the young and females to be kept safe in the rear

> [Contd on page 13](#)



Wolf at the door (cont.)

It should be noted that all the sites mentioned [in the Landscapes paper] conform to the paleolocation of rivers coming down from gorges and meeting still waters in places where land was rising due to tectonic forces.

and middle, while males armed with stout sticks kept a watch on the perimeter. [The big toe needed for walking is affected by the same gene that governs thumb development, so with the big toes we also got a large thumb that could throw and grip. The Laoteli footprints show that there were creatures around over 3mya that had both.]

When you put yourself in a paleo-environment that is mainly grassland and bush there really are no other good options for passing half the day. During this time period the old, the injured and the sick, that fossil evidence shows were cared for by the group, died in these safer zones and were disposed - probably in the river as humans unfortunately still have the habit of throwing stuff away in rivers. However, there is one big problem with this option: most cliff overhangs tend to be just above water level. And in valleys subjected to flooding there is always the risk of being caught unprepared and drowning.

Whether drowned in floods or simply flushed away, dead bodies sink in fresh water and would be swept downstream and deposited where the rapidly running stream meets the low-energy waters of a lake. Dmanisi, for example, has four *erectus* fossils in this situation and, although Walker et al have a fanciful account of the Nariokotome Boy falling into Turkana Lake with a fever,³ the bones were actually found in the bank of the Nariokotome River on the old lake shoreline, just a few kilometers downstream from ancient and deep gorges. The Hadar 'First Family' find is also a case of body parts being deposited by a river into a lake. According to

Behrensmeyer, "the Lucy skeleton and other specimens from throughout the Hadar Formation are derived from fluvial and lake-margin deposits. (...) Teeth and other surface remains from Turkana are generally associated with fluvial or fluvial-deltaic deposits."⁴

A recent paper: *Landscapes and their relation to hominin habitats: Case studies from Australopithecus sites in eastern and southern Africa*,⁵ notes that that "hominin finds often show landscape features in combinations that are not random, but result from tectonic motions, such as earthquakes. Areas with faulting and disturbed drainage patterns would have been attractive habitats for hominins providing a combination of drinking water, steep cliffs for shelter from predators, together with a range of feeding sources." Although the paper does examine the question of whether or not this is an "artificial pattern created by preferential preservation and intensive prospection," it should be noted that all the sites mentioned conform to the paleolocation of rivers coming down from gorges and meeting still waters in places where land was rising due to tectonic forces. This is a chicken and egg situation in which the presence of fossils may reflect a favored environment in which hominins spent half their time in sheltered river gorges, or simply the favourable conditions for preservation, as bodies left at shore edges are covered with silt then uplifted. A group that lived in a marine ambient and dumped the dead in the sea, for example, would leave no trace behind.

For site geologists, however, this question if of no impor-

tance as both chicken and egg offer the possibility of pre-identification of possible fossil yielding sites and minimizing the role of Lady Luck. And the next time you tuck the kids up in bed all safe and sound, spare a thought for our ancestors who had to find a safe place to sleep yet ran the risk of facing floods and wild animals in the dark. No wonder the kids ask to leave the light on...

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Valsequillo passed over - again!

By Virginia Steen-McIntyre

Chris Hardaker recently shared with us a January 24 news release¹ by the

this extinct animal linked to the human species..."

"The finding opens the possibility of the coexistence of human-kind with gomphotheres, animals similar to mammoths, but smaller, in this region of America, which contrasts with theories that declare that this species disappeared 30,000 years ago in this region of America and did not coexist with humans..."

"...This is an unprecedented finding in Mexico since

it is the first time that projectile heads are found associated to a bone bed of this kind of proboscides..."

"Gomphotheres have only been found associated to humans in South America, and in the southernmost Clovis heads were found in Costa Rica; human evidence associated with proboscides and mammoths, until now."

Exciting news but not quite accurate. The first evidence that gomphotheres were hunted by humans was reported in Juan Armenta's

1978 monograph,² and the Tetela 1 engraved piece shows one in profile (Fig. 2). Turns out that his "very old mastodon" (*Ryncotherium tlascalae*) is actually a gomphothere! It's a Family with which I was not familiar. From the English translation, page 98:

"No sooner had the investigation begun than Armenta tried to identify completely every animal represented in the engraved bone 'Tetela 1.' However, the author could not skip over a figure of a proboscidian which clearly had engraved tusks, one on the upper and one on the lower jaw (Fig. AD-1)."

"Exactly this type of double tusks characterizes *Ryncotherium tlascalae*, a very old mastodon [gomphothere] whose remains have been discovered in different Valsequillo localities (Fig. AD-2)."

"The identification of *Ryncotherium* was achieved thanks to numerous molars which have as a peculiarity three-globed [prétritos], and the characteristic enamel banding of its tusks (Fig. AD-3). This mastodon has been studied by various investigators, among whom are H.F. Osborn (5), W. Freudenberg (7), and M.

> [Contd on page 15](#)



Fig. 1. Clovis projectile point associated with the remains of gomphotheres (an ancient form of proboscidian related to the mammoth and mastodon). Photo courtesy of the National Institute of Anthropology and History [INAH].

"This is an unprecedented finding in Mexico since it is the first time that projectile heads are found associated to a bone bed of this kind of proboscides..."

Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), a group of Mexican government scientists with main headquarters in Mexico City.

Seems at an excavation complex in the State of Sonora, their archaeologists discovered three Clovis projectile points (Fig. 1) associated with the remains of gomphotheres, an ancient form of proboscidian related to the mammoth and mastodon. Below are quotes from that news release.

"... these are the first evidences in North America of

Valsequillo passed over - again! (cont.)

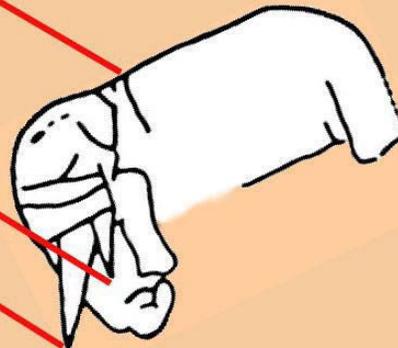


Fig. 2. Quadruple-tusked (two pair) gomphothere engraving on mastodon bone from Valsequillo, Mexico. Note the appearance of what appears to be "fingers" at the end of the trunk. Compare with the Malotki/Wallace mammoth engraving from southeastern Utah (*PCN* Nov-Dec. 2010).

"Gompho-theres have only been found associated to humans in South America, and in the southernmost Clovis heads were found in Costa Rica; human evidence associated with proboscides was limited [to] mastodons and mammoths, until now."

Pichardo del Barrio (30)" (Fig. 3).

INAH scientists should know of the "elephant" on the Tetela 1 engraving; in fact the piece itself disappeared while in their care. Why ignore it?

It will be interesting to see what the radiometric dates will be for the gomphothere bones. Will they lie within the range of the 14C method? The

Clovis projectile points from Sonora "were freed by scraping carefully a hard soil block [indurated sediment]." The Tetela 1 piece from Valsequillo

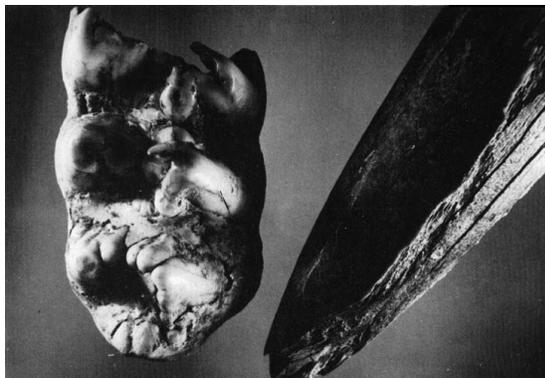


Fig. 3. Remains of a *Ryncotherium tascalae* from the Arenillas area, near the Valsequillo sites. **Left:** The three-lobed molar. **Right:** The tip of a lower tusk with its peculiar banded enamel. From Juan Armenta's monograph, page 113.²

was found some 50 meters northwest of what was later to become the Hueyatlatco site,

and in the same type of indurated sediment as the diatom-rich upper Hueyatlatco beds, which contained bifacial tools. No datable carbon was found there. A camel pelvis from that bed has been dated by U-series methods at roughly a quarter-million years.³ Other dating methods agree with this great age.

Sonora. Here is another exciting area to keep our eyes upon!

¹ Finding would reveal contact between humans and gomphotheres in North America. *art-daily.org, The First Art Newspaper on the Net.*

² Armenta Camacho, J. 1978. *Vestigios de labor humana en huesos de animales extintos de Valsequillo, Puebla, Mexico: Consejo Editorial del Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico*, p. 125.

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Avocational archaeology: Making photographs

By Virginia Steen-McIntyre

We are still thrashing out what form the Avocational Archaeology page will take. Interest and emotions (both pro and con) are running high, and many have shared their thoughts and ideas how it should develop.

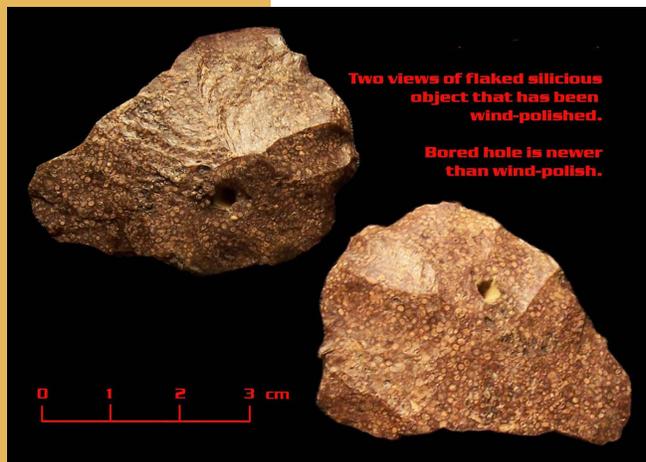


Fig. 1. Making good artifact photographs involves recording the detail, inserting a scale, and getting in close.

"Always include a scale of some kind in the final view, Base your scale on a metric ruler."

Our time and volunteer staff are limited, and that means we in turn must limit what we can consider as far as manuscripts and illustrations are concerned.

One thing is certain: as a general rule, no surface finds. We must have provenance, which means the object must have been found *in situ*, embedded within a sedimentary layer that is dated or has a chance of being dated. Other venues are not so self-limiting, and we should be able to provide a list of them for you.

I would like to see the Avocational Archaeology page be used in part for instruction. It seems to me that the professionals have dropped the ball here, and that the "amateurs" are left floundering to do the best they can.

One problem avocational archaeologists often find daunting is proper photographic documentation of their finds. Of primary importance is the inclusion of something to give scale to the image such as a person, shovel by a stream bank, or a centimeter rule by a tool. Below find more on artifact photography.

Feedback requested.

-VSM

Some pointers for photographing small objects.

By Dave McIntyre

Pick out a few of what you consider are the most typical objects and concentrate on them one at a time.

Take one or more shots of each that show typical features that you believe are especially important.

Get in close with the camera so that the features are unmistakable. Use the smallest aperture to assure as great a depth of field as the camera can provide. If using a digital camera, use its close-up setting. Make sure the background is uniform so it doesn't distract the viewer.

Always include a scale of some kind in the final view. Base your scale on a metric ruler. An American coin or a ruler in inches doesn't mean much to someone outside the U.S.

Fig. 1 is an example of what can be done. It was taken with a small, inexpensive digital camera (5 megapixels), one of those that looks like a bar of hand soap. The

picture was taken with the camera hand-held. The object was placed on a black background on my desk. I used a black equipment case. A desk lamp provided the light. I fiddled around with the light varying the orientation of the object and angle of the camera until most of the interesting features of the object showed up reasonably well. The images are not enhanced in any way.

In this example, a computer and Photoshop were used so that two views of the object could be combined. The uniform black background used during taking the shot makes it easy to select the object image, copy it, and paste it back on a black background generated in Photoshop. Lettering and scale also were added in Photoshop. The object was measured with a metric ruler and the scale adjusted to fit.

A film camera is a little more demanding. Color film requires a relatively long exposure at the small aperture

"Get in close with the camera so that the features are unmistakable."

required to give maximum depth of field. So, you really need a tripod or other rigid support for the camera. If extreme close-ups are called for, extension rings might be needed if using 35mm or 120 with the usual rigid camera

body. If using a camera with bellows, extension beyond the standard length may be necessary. Include the scale and lettering in the view while taking the photograph. The results can be excellent.

Excellent artifact photos have been made for decades without the use of computers or digital cameras. Anyone else wish to share their techniques?



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SPECIAL THANKS & WELCOME

We would like to thank Patrick Lyons for coming on board to edit the previous issue of *PC News* (Issue #9). We also extend a very warm welcome to our new copy editor, David Campbell of Ector, Texas.

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To learn more about early man in the Pleistocene visit our newly redesigned website at

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The Pleistocene Coalition is now in its second year of challenging mainstream scientific dogma.

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