

SOFT TISSUES PRESERVED IN FOSSILS

In 2013, Dr Mark Armitage published research on his discovery of soft tissue in fossil material from a triceratops. Because of this the university dismissed him from his post, saying that they didn't want his religious ideas in their department. My interest in this was that some 15 years ago, Mark had invited me to San Fernando Valley to speak on creation science while we were in California.

The problem for the scientists at the university is that organic material breaks down over time, and could not be preserved for a million years, let alone many tens of millions of years. If the fossils are less than a million years old, then there would not be enough time for these evolutionists, who need millions of years for dinosaurs to evolve into birds.

Mark was by no means the first to find such un-mineralised material in fossils. Nor the last! In June 2015 the BBC web site carried a cautious article on the collagen (a fibrous protein) and blood cells discovered in a dinosaur claw unearthed in a drawer in the London Natural History Museum

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-33067582>). The blood cells were similar to those of emus, so the dinosaur was probably warm-blooded.

In 2005, Professor Mary Schweitzer and her team dumbfounded the evolutionary community by announcing that they had found soft tissue in a fossil T. rex, thought to be 65 ma old. (Mary H. Schweitzer, Jennifer L. Wittmeyer, John R. Horner, and Jan K. Toporski, "Soft-Tissue Vessels and Cellular Preservation in *Tyrannosaurus rex*," *Science*, vol. 307: pp.1952-1955, 2005). In 2012 the same team reported finding un-petrified bone cells in a T. rex. Other researchers



Skull of T. Rex. Soft tissues have been found in fossilized bones of this species. Image: CSM.

have found soft muscle tissue in a salamander fossil, supposedly 18 ma old, and retinal tissue and bone cells in a mosasaur fossil said to be 70 ma old [ma is millions of years].

One of the 'oldest' fossils found with soft tissue is a '550 ma old' fossil worm with soft protein and the polysaccharide chitin, found in pre-Cambrian layers. (*Journal of Paleontology* **88**(2):224-239, 2014.)

Recently, CSM trustee Dr Bill Cooper allowed his grandson to take a fossilised dinosaur tooth to school. When Bill met him after school, the little lad was in tears because the precious tooth had been dropped and broken. He could not understand grandad's glee when he discovered un-mineralised white dentine within the tooth.

On 15th October 2013 London's Natural History Museum issued a press release announcing the discovery of a blood meal found in the abdomen of a fossilised mosquito. An international team of scientists including NHM researcher Dr Ralph Harbach studied the fossil of the blood-engorged mosquito, which had been preserved in oil shale (a type of sedimentary rock) from the USA. The team used a scanning electron microscope and mass spectrometry to identify haem, the iron-containing compound found in haemoglobin, the red pigment in blood.

Dr Harbach was reported as saying, "This fossilised female mosquito is an

incredibly rare find. For it to have died immediately after feeding and be preserved without disruption to its fragile distended blood-filled belly means that we have a unique opportunity to study whether complex molecules, such as haemoglobin, can survive tens of millions of years".

Another researcher, Dr Dale Greenwalt, of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History added, "This is the only known fossil of a blood-engorged mosquito ever found and represents the first clear evidence that some organic molecules can be preserved in a fossil of this age. We made the assumption that genetic material like DNA was not preserved. We didn't even attempt to look at it because DNA degrades very quickly. Without question there are probably other things contained in this fossil. We just don't know what they might be".

The press release also claims, "This find extends the fossil record of blood-feeding in this family of insects by 46 million years".

To claim that complex organic molecules can survive without decomposing for millions of years is nonsense. Even in living organisms, such molecules are constantly being replaced by fresh ones as creatures age.

An especially fragile biomolecule is DNA that carries genetic instructions for the organism. As long ago as 1994, it was claimed that this molecule had been

detected in a dinosaur fossil (Woodward, S. R., N. J. Weyand, and M. Bunnell. 1994. DNA Sequence from Cretaceous Period Bone Fragments. *Science*. **266** (5188): 1229-1232; and Schweitzer, M. H. et al. 2013. Molecular analyses of dinosaur osteocytes support the presence of endogenous molecules. *Bone*. **52** (1): 414-423).

DNA could not possibly be preserved for millions of years, since experiments on bones of the recently extinct Moa birds of known ages have provided a half-life for DNA of 520 years. This puts an upper limit for survival of 10,000 years. Evolutionists suggested that the samples of moa bones had been contaminated by bacteria, but tests showed that it was not bacterial DNA. The one possibility not considered was that the millions of years do not exist.

There is also historical evidence that dinosaurs co-existed with man in the not-too-distant past. A good source of information is Cooper's *After the Flood*. The tomb of Bishop Bell, who died in 1496, located in Carlyle Cathedral, clearly shows dinosaurs along with other animals that are still about. The Book of Job, chapters 40 and 41 offer descriptions of two such dinosaurs.

One can deduce from the chronology of Scripture that there have been little more than 6,000 years since 'the beginning' when God created the heaven and the earth, time, space, matter, energy, the biosphere and man. The creationist explanation for the fossils is that they

were buried alive in a catastrophic world-wide flood in the days of Noah (Genesis 6-8).

This view of history was generally accepted before 1800 AD. By then people surveying the land to build a canal network in Britain suggested that layers of rock sediments were laid down at the same slow rate that is observed on the sea floor today. However, large geological changes occur under high energy conditions, as with tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Rapid sedimentation has been demonstrated in the laboratory, as well as in the field by, for example, the eruption of Mt St Helens in Washington State in 1980.

Since the last century, radioactive decay has been used to support the millions-of-years scenario, but results are inconsistent. For example, Bowden in his *Ape-Men, fact or fallacy?* cites *J. Geophysical Research* vol. **75**, no. 14,



Lava flows off the coast of Hawaii known to have formed in 1800 are supposedly many millions of years old according to the Potassium/Argon dating method. Image in the public domain.

pp. 4601-7 concerning lava flows in the sea off Hawaii that occurred in 1800 that gave dates varying from 160 ma to 2,960 ma by the Potassium/Argon method.

In astronomy, the dating is based on the assumption that everything began from nothing by a big bang explosion. The problem with that explanation is that an explosion leaves complete disorder. Coupled with that observation, the second law of thermodynamics shows that undirected change leads to a decrease in order (if there could be any decrease after the explosion of everything). How then do we explain the high level of order that we find today? The Scriptural answer is found at the end of the Bible's first chapter, where we read that God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good – perfect order. The big bang theory is unfalsifiable non-science.

So the obvious explanation for the presence of soft tissue in fossils is that they are only some four and a half thousand years old, from the flood. Evolution becomes impossible.

We have introduced Scripture here to supply the alternative explanation for the soft tissue, not to disprove the theory of evolution. The recent discovery of the lack of evolution in the DNA epigenome formerly thought to be junk is itself sufficient to debunk evolution theory.

Moreover, the complexity of biomolecules, organs and organisms also rules out chance evolution. This is because chance changes lead to disintegration, rather than the building up, of complex structures. The collagen fibres found on some Chinese fossil dinosaurs could not evolve into flight feathers by a happy series of chance changes.

Again, each proposed evolutionary step would have to be viable, and advantageous. For an ape to lose its fur coat and strong musculature would not be an advantage.

How tragic for our young people that the education system and the media are wedded to that secular philosophy masquerading as science!

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