

Unfortunately, no details for this were provided in the accompanying online data, because their wording suggests that there *was some* collagen, and AMS requires only minuscule amounts of carbon-containing material. It would have been interesting to know whether a ^{14}C date was obtained but discarded as ‘inaccurate’ because it was the ‘wrong date’.³

Why the excitement?

This skull has created interest because it is different to a typical skull from the local Khoisan people, having some affinities with European skulls. It is therefore consistent with the ‘Out of Africa’⁴ Hypothesis, and not the Multiregional Hypothesis,⁵ the two sides of the long-running battle between evolutionists.

Both sides agree that all human types originated in Africa over a million years ago. But the Out of Africa side claim that only some tens to hundreds of thousands of years ago, one population of modern humans emigrated from Africa again, and replaced all of the other human types like *erectus*, Neandertal, etc. which had left Africa much earlier. The Multiregional proponents claim that humans evolved in parallel in many parts of the earth, such that Europeans have some Neandertal heritage, aboriginal Australians an affinity with the Java *erectus* skulls, etc.—and of course they acknowledge that there would have been gene flow as the populations contacted each other from time to time, giving rise to the many continuities between geographically diverse populations.

Each side puts forward evidence, from both genetics *and* fossils, that supports their particular view. But within the long-age evolutionary model, they can’t both be right about what actually happened—hence the many bitter disputes and rivalries. However, in the biblical creation model, the evidence for both can be easily reconciled. Human types like *erectus*, Neandertal, ‘archaic sapiens’ and ‘moderns’ (like Cro-Magnon) are

all part of the range of human variation in the descendants of Adam, after the Flood/Babel.

And since all were human, it is no surprise when someone discovers genetic links between the populations. Nor is it a surprise to find fossil evidence of e.g. Neandertal/modern hybridization.⁶

Finally, in relation to ‘Hofmeyr man’, finding various differing representatives of the range of early post-Flood humanity sharing the same part of the world is no surprise; man was never ‘primitive’ or ‘half-intelligent’, but would have had the same sorts of exploratory and migratory tendencies as we see today.

References

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2. Grine, F.E., Bailey, R.M., Harvati, K., Nathan, R.P., Morris, A.G., Henderson, G.M., Ribot, I. and Pike, A.W.G., Late Pleistocene human skull from Hofmeyr, South Africa, and modern human origins, *Science* **315**(5809):226–229, 12 Jan. 2007.
3. For an example of the flexibility of the dating game in anthropology, see Lubenow, M., The pigs took it all, *Creation* **17**(3):36–38, 1995.
4. Also variously known as the ‘Replacement’, ‘Noah’s Ark’, ‘African Eve’ or ‘Mitochondrial Eve’ hypothesis/concept.
5. Also known as the ‘Candelabra’ model, after the shape of the diagram of one path heading upwards, diverging into several separate paths. However, technically the Multiregional model is a modification of the original candelabra concept, through the addition of gene flow between populations.
6. Jaroncyk, R., A new Neandertal/modern human fossil hybrid? *Journal of Creation* **21**(1):7–8, 2007.

Jurassic mammals—more surprisingly diverse

Michael J. Oard

Evolutionists are rapidly extending the range of organisms, both younger (up) and older (down), in the evolutionary/uniformitarian geological column.¹ Sometimes the upward change is so drastic that the organism is found alive somewhere on Earth—supposedly a living fossil. During the past decade, many new mammals have been discovered further down in the column, mainly in the Cretaceous and Jurassic, the mid and late Mesozoic (uniformitarian names, ages and dates are used for argument purposes only).²

It used to be assumed just a decade ago, based mainly on teeth, that late Mesozoic mammals were just tiny shrew-like animals trying to avoid being squished by dinosaurs. This image has prevailed for over 100 years. A recent flurry of mammal fossil discoveries shows this image is false.³

For instance, a chipmunk-sized creature, probably adapted to digging, was found in Colorado.⁴ This animal is supposedly 150 Ma in the Late Jurassic, and a most interesting point was that its teeth were hollow and lacked enamel. However, these characteristics are not seen for another 100 Ma years. So, hollow teeth and lack of enamel in mammals has been pushed back much earlier.

A 1-m long badger-like animal was found in China that supposedly lived 130 Ma ago in the Early Cretaceous.³ The preserved stomach contents of its smaller cousin, an opossum-sized mammal showed that it actually had eaten a baby dinosaur!

Just recently, a swimming and burrowing mammal was found in the Middle Jurassic of northeast China.^{5,6} This exquisitely preserved mammal with soft parts was 50 cm long, had thick fur, webbed feet and a beaver-like tail—and is claimed to be 164 Ma old.

It is *convergent* with modern platypuses. Thus, the mammalian conquest of water is pushed back 100 Ma within the uniformitarian timescale!⁷

If that is not all, a Mesozoic *gliding* mammal about the size of a squirrel was just found in Inner Mongolia, China.⁸ The dating is controversial but ranges from Mid Jurassic to Early Cretaceous. Gliding is a very specialized behaviour, but the evolutionist claim that it evolved many times in different groups of animals. The new mammal, placed in a new order, pushes back the origin of gliding 70 Ma!

Evolutionists would have expected that any mammals found that were this ‘old’ to be generalized and able to evolve in many different directions with time. However, all these mammals are surprisingly (to the evolutionists) specialized and diverse—clear back in the Middle Jurassic! Thus mammal diversity is not only earlier, but the supposed evolution of mammals must have occurred much earlier, perhaps back in the early Triassic or even the Permian:

‘This exciting fossil [the platypus-like animal] is a further jigsaw-puzzle piece in a series of recent discoveries, demonstrating that the diversity and early evolutionary history of mammals were much more complex than perceived less than a decade ago. It also impressively contradicts the widely held view that early stem representatives of modern crown groups (groups of organisms with living representatives) are generally primitive and unspecialized.’⁷

These exciting discoveries of Jurassic and early Cretaceous mammals are considered just a glimpse of what is to come in the future that will fill in the many gaps remaining in the knowledge of Mesozoic mammalian diversity.⁹ Compared to what evolutionists used to say about mammals in the ‘age of dinosaurs’, these new mammal finds bring up several disturbing questions. Why weren’t such complex and specialized mammals found before the past decade? Is evolution really involved at all when

such diverse mammals are now found from the Jurassic to the Quaternary?

References

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2. I am aware that most mainstream scientists consider themselves ‘actualists’ and not uniformitarians. Actualism is similar to uniformitarianism except that the former believes in a few large catastrophes, such as meteorite impacts, sprinkled throughout Earth history. They also admit that the present is not necessarily the key to the past, but that geology must always believe natural processes operated in the past. I believe this philosophical point of view can be used as an excuse when deductions from the rocks and fossils contradict present processes. But since few people understand the distinction between actualism and uniformitarianism, I will continue using the term ‘uniformitarian’, especially since this latter doctrine was the philosophical principle used in geology to throw out the Flood.
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New study claims hobbit was a new species

Peter Line

The latest salvo in the ongoing hobbit wars is a study led by anthropologist Dean Falk, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), purportedly showing that the hobbit was not a microcephalic, but rather a new species.¹ The announcement of the study received considerable media attention, although the paper itself only appeared on the PNAS website days later—when the story was no longer ‘in the news’.

The unfolding of the hobbit debate has been covered earlier,^{2,3} and an in-depth development of the hobbit tale, from the perspective of the archaeologist who led the discovery team, is available in a recently published book.⁴

Where is the data?

The new study involved comparing 3D reconstructions of the brains from the hobbit (LB1 individual), nine microcephalic people and 10 normal people.⁵ From this, according to a media report:

‘The researchers found two characteristics—in addition to small size—that distinguish microcephalic brains: The bottom part sticks out in the back, and the region behind the forehead is unusually narrow.’⁶

Regarding these characteristics the hobbit was reported as:

‘... fitting in with normal humans, not microcephalics ... But she was unlike modern humans in four other features distinguishing her from *Homo sapiens*, crying out for recognition as a separate species, the researchers said.’¹

However, the data in the study is characteristically silent. Hence,