researchers say that *Isisfordia* predates modern crocodiles by about 20 million years. This is another example of how the so-called fossil ranges keep expanding as more fossils are discovered. As the ranges extend, evolutionary progression becomes more and more blurred. This trend means the data fits better with the creationist framework of thinking where the fossil order represents the sequence of burial during the year-long Flood.

Isisfordia was smaller than the American alligator and had a flatter and longer snout. It was only a metre long and weighed around three or four kilograms. There is considerable professional incentive (and it is common practice) for paleontologists to give their fossil finds new species names, but how could anyone know that the Queensland crocodile was indeed a different species (reproductively isolated) from the ones found in North America or Europe? We can't do breeding experiments with fossils. The small variations in skeletal shape are no more than variation within the same biblical kind, the same sort of variation seen today in dogs and bears—and cats such as lions and tigers, which can interbreed and are all descended from the one group.

The new fossil crocodile discovery shows that even within an evolutionary frame of reference, evolution must have been stationary for 100 million of these assumed years. Evolutionists call the problem 'stasis', but stasis is not a problem for biblical creation—it predicts it.

From a biblical perspective, the floodwaters were still rising on the earth when these animals perished.[5] They were still rising because animal trackways are present throughout the strata in western Queensland. At Lark Quarry near Winton they all tend to run in the same direction, suggesting they were all fleeing from the same disaster.[6] Trackways would not be expected *after* the floodwaters peaked because all the terrestrial animals would have perished by that time.

The Winton Formation has been interpreted within uniformitarian thinking as a lacustrine (lake) and low-energy fluviatile (river) depositional environment.[7] However, the new crocodile fossil is 'an almost complete, fully articulated skeleton'. It is clear that the sediment deposition rate must have been rapid if an animal of the size described were to be preserved so well, without rotting or being scavenged. Volcanoclastic sedimentation[3] was also occurring at the time, pointing to catastrophic watery deposition consistent with the biblical Flood. Uniformitarians have a time problem: where do they fit millions of years into all those catastrophically deposited sediments?

Fossils from the Winton Formation throughout Queensland include sauropod dinosaurs, lungfish, armoured dinosaurs, turtles, possible mammals, freshwater shellfish, plants, wood, spores and pollen.[3,8] In other words, the material buried includes terrestrial, amphibian and marine animals and plants. So the catastrophe affected the land, the coast and the ocean.

Although this new crocodile fossil has been described and announced in evolutionary terms, it actually supports the biblical account of Earth history.

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A new Neandertal/ modern human fossil hybrid?

Ryan Jaroncyk

A team of anthropologists claims to have discovered the remnants of a supposedly '30,000 year old' Neandertal/modern human fossil hybrid. Fossil fragments of a skull, upper and lower jaw, and shoulder blade seem to reveal a blending of Neandertal and modern human features. Study author Erik Trinkaus of Washington University said, 'At least in Europe, the populations blended.'[1] This is exciting news for young-earth creationists! This discovery further enhances the circumstantial evidence for Neandertals being fully human beings.

What was discovered?

The skeletal remains were initially discovered in a Romanian cave in the 1950s. Because they looked superficially very much like modern humans, they were filed away. That is until Trinkaus and his colleagues decided to reopen the case and take a closer look. Their study compared the fragments with those of modern humans in Africa and Europe. Surprisingly (at least to progressive creationists and other long-agers who try to relegate the Neandertals to a less-than-human status), the Romanian fragments showed a mosaic of Neandertal and modern human characteristics. For example, the skull had an occipital bun at the back of the skull, and muscle attachment scars were present at the back of the jaw. These characteristics, in particular, are very Neandertal-like. In addition, upper jaw, lower jaw and shoulder blade fragments appeared to reveal a blending of features. This evidence of interbreeding shows that the two groups 'saw each other as socially appropriate mates', Trinkaus said.

This would not be the first Neandertal/modern human skeletal mosaic ever discovered. In 1998, Trinkaus and his team unearthed the Lagar Velho I

child skeleton in Portugal, which also possessed a mosaic of features.[2]

Human skeletons

Neandertals easily fall within the wide range of skeletal variation that exists in mankind,[3] and may simply represent humans that lived during the post-Flood ice age.[4] Some of their characteristic skeletal features could therefore be attributed to their harsh life in a cold post-Flood climate, as well as to arthritis, rickets and genetic isolation.[5]

We do not often appreciate the enormous range of skeletal variation in modern humans. For example, Owen Lovejoy, a famous evolutionary paleoanthropologist, studied 1,000 year old North American Indian bones and drew the following conclusion:

> 'The Amerindian collection undoubtedly represents a population belonging to the species *Homo sapiens*, yet it includes many unusual bones that probably would have been assigned to a different species, or even a different genus, if they had been discovered as individual fossils …'[6]

Human culture

An array of archaeological evidence, such as sophisticated spears and stone tools, the controlled use of fire, building huts from animal skins, making flutes out of bear femurs and the ceremonial burial of their dead, strongly confirms that Neandertals possessed an intellectual and spiritual capacity like our own.[7] How many of us, without the aid of modern technology or an internet library, could perform these same feats? They also possessed a hyoid bone (in the larynx, or voicebox) that was very similar in shape, size and position to our own, which means they were capable of fully human speech.[7]

Human DNA?

At least one Neandertal sample of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) has shown substantial divergence from modern human mtDNA.[8] Some scientists considered this clear-cut evidence that Neandertals must have been a different species. However, even in the evolutionary community, there is still a firestorm of debate over the modern human-Neandertal relationship based on mtDNA comparisons. Issues such as postmortem contamination, small sample size, enormous mtDNA diversity in non-human primates, effects of population bottlenecks and molecular clock inaccuracies render a solution impossible at this time.[9]

Photo: © iStockphoto.com: Fanelie Rosier

A famous Neandertal skeleton found in La grotte de Clamouse (34000 France).

Just this year, US and German scientists announced plans to reconstruct a draft of the Neandertal genome over the next two years.[10] Caution is urged in the creationist community as the interpretation of this genome reconstruction will depend on which areas are accurately sequenced and the particular origins model being employed to filter the data.[11]

Neandertals in the Young-Earth Creation Model

Most biblical creationists regard Neandertals as post-Babel descendants of Noah. Although the genetic data is inconclusive at this time, the skeletal and archaeological evidence strongly supports the notion that Neandertals were fully human beings, made in the image of God and descended from Adam and Eve.[12,13]

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