

The Guadeloupe Skeleton

— A Reply

BILL COOPER

I read with interest the comments by Tyler and Wise, and it immediately became apparent that they have both started from the wrong premise. For example, they both hold the view that the rocks of the earth have been laid down in continuous sequences over vast ages, the "younger rocks" overlying the "older rocks", and so on. This notion, however, is demonstrably false, as many "young-earth" creationist geologists have shown. Another view shared by them is that certain fossils can be used to date the rocks in which they are found. This implies at least philosophical support for either the theory of evolution or the "day-age" theory of creation, both of which are equally false premises upon which to explain the rocks and fossils **as we actually find them** in the earth's crust.

The arguments put forward by Tyler and Wise to prove a very recent age for the Guadeloupe fossil would be tenable if they accounted for **all** the facts of the case, so their arguments need to be assessed on their use of the facts that they have selected.

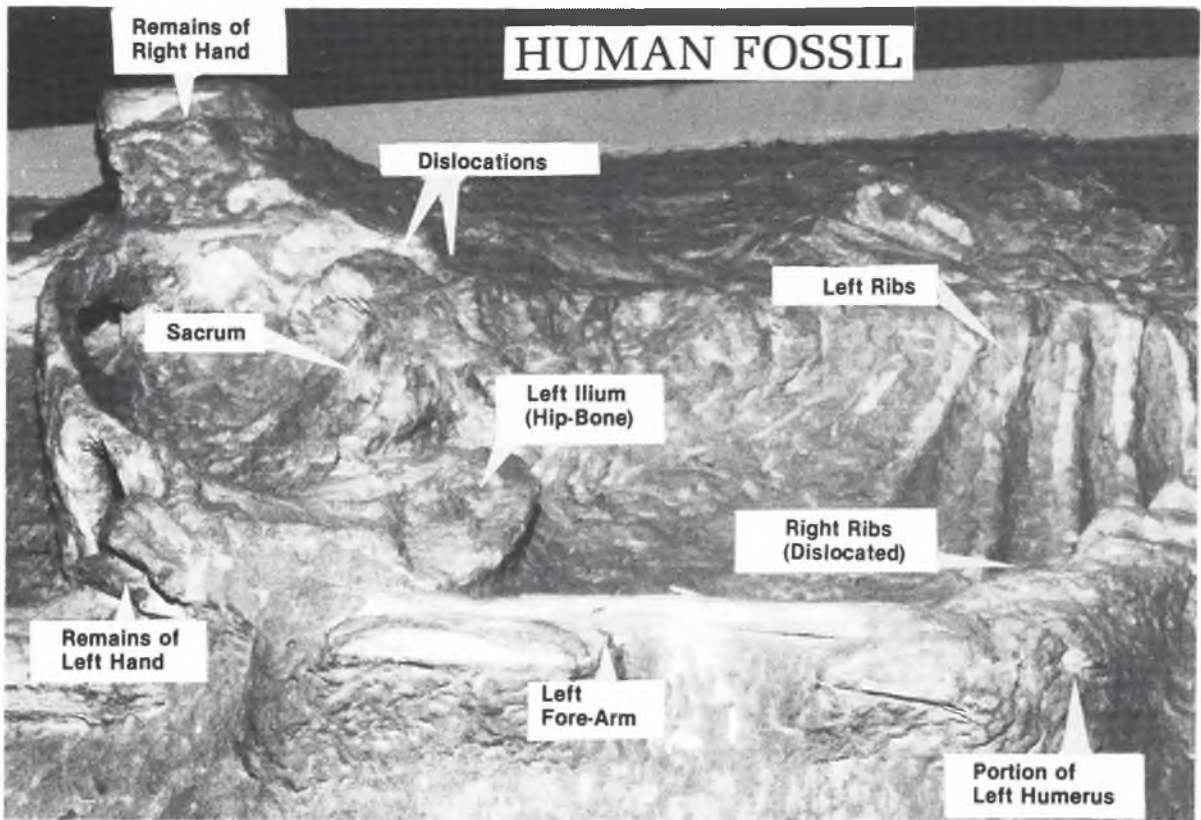
To begin at the beginning, we have a fossilised human skeleton. Moreover, this skeleton lies still embedded in a limestone mass that is harder than marble. Nobody argues with the fact that the skeleton is the same age as the rock, for that is self-evident. The facts that show this to be true are the high organic content of the rock in the immediate vicinity of the bones and the articulation of the skeleton, the latter signifying that the body was entombed prior to both its decay and the hardening (lithification) of the limestone surrounding it. In other words, the rock was still in a fluid state when it enveloped the undecayed body. The only questions that remain, therefore, are how old is the rock (and thus the skeleton inside it), and how did the rock get there? Is it a rock that has formed under modern-day conditions, thus proving a recent date for the skeleton? Or is it the same age as the rest of the island of Guadeloupe, that is, Lower Miocene (supposedly some 25 million years old)? If it can be shown that the rock and skeleton are recent, then the theory

that man evolved from the apes is not challenged by this particular specimen, and that is apparently what Tyler and Wise wish to show. If, however, both the rock and skeleton can be shown to belong to the same age in which the island of Guadeloupe was formed, whether that was 25 million years ago, **or** during the Flood of Genesis, then serious damage is done to the theory of evolution and we must look again at the question of man's true origins.

So how are we to account for the Guadeloupe fossil? It has been argued by a growing number of people that the formation in which the skeleton was found must have been a recent graveyard, and that this graveyard somehow has been transformed into a solid limestone mass. The formation is about a kilometre in length, and lies upon unfossiliferous clays. The part of the formation in which the skeleton was found lies below high-water mark. It is therefore being constantly covered by the incoming tide, and that is a very strange place indeed in which to find a cemetery! The natives of Guadeloupe (the Galibis) had plenty of land that was perfectly suitable for the burial of their dead, so there was absolutely no good reason to choose such a place as this. Apart from which, a typical Caribbean storm could well expose their recent dead to public view, which prospect alone would discourage the use of this site as a cemetery.

Moreover, the British Museum specimen lies straight, while the Paris specimen is in a foetal position. If we accept the cemetery hypothesis, therefore, we must also accept that here we have **two** cultures burying their dead, one laying them out straight, and the other folding them up into the foetal position. It is of interest to note that cultures who buried their dead in the foetal position almost invariably dislocated the hips in order to bind the knees to the chest. The Paris specimen displays no such dislocation, and does not lie in the normal man-made foetal position.

It is further argued that this formation may still be in the process of forming today, in other words, it



Guadeloupe Skeleton in museum basement 1982.

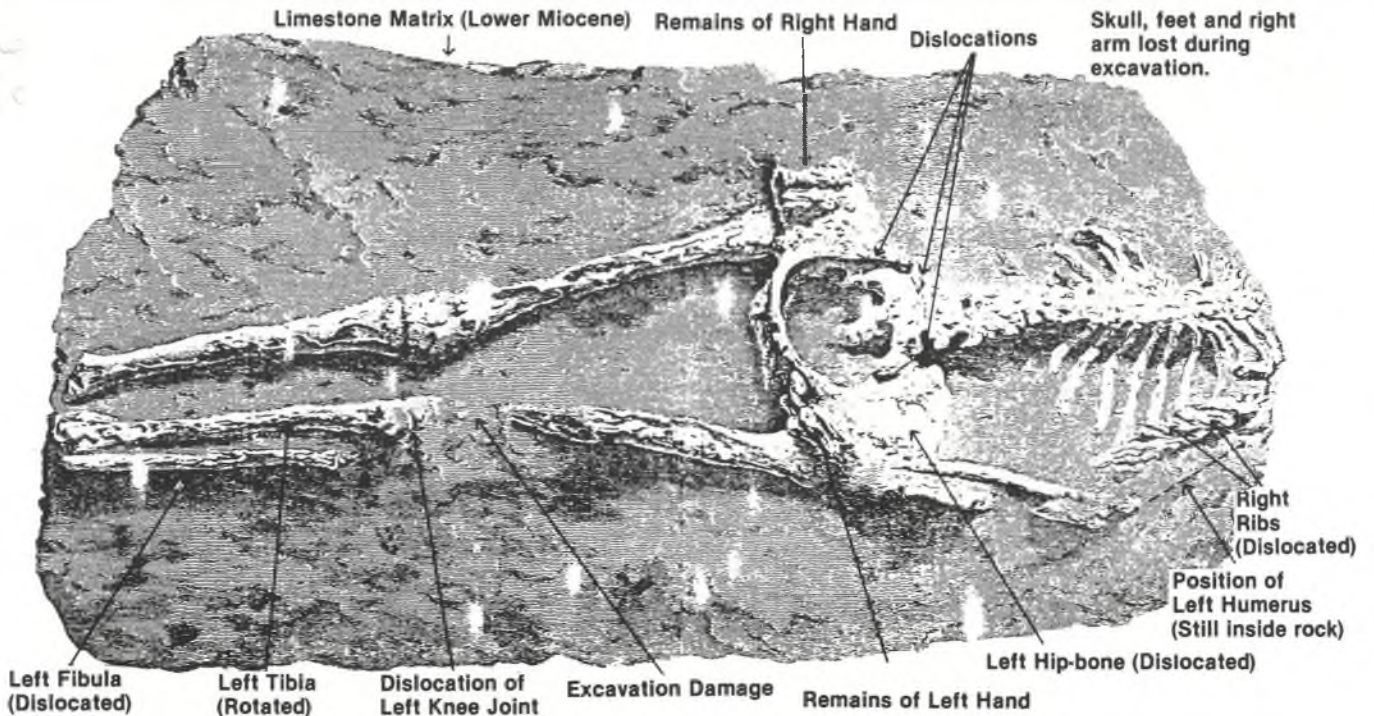


Diagram after KONIG 1814.

could still be growing. This line of argument points to the fact that elsewhere beach rocks are still forming today, but that is to discuss **other** formations, not the one in question. That proposal holds many difficulties, however, not the least of which is the fact that these skeletons were exposed by the processes of **erosion**. If the rock is **eroding** faster than it is **forming**, then how is it claimed that the formation is still being added to? On the other hand, if it is **forming** faster than it is **eroding** then the remains would be buried deeper within the rock, and thus would never have come to light. Tyler in particular seems to be trying to confuse the issue on this point, as he mentions König's¹ and Cuvier's² opinion of **this** rock, that is, the rock in which the skeleton was found, and in the next sentence talks of the formation of **these** rocks, that is, modern beach rocks. That does not prove that they are one and the same thing at all! The formation in question lies some 6 — 8 feet **below** uplifted coral reefs that are conventionally dated to the beginning of the Quaternary, that is, some 3 million years ago. That at least tells us that this limestone is **pre-Quaternary** in origin, and the only rocks on Guadeloupe that are pre-Quaternary are said to be of Lower Miocene age, that is, some 25 million years old.

The most intriguing aspect in connection with the dating of the rock lies perhaps in the two main geological surveys of Guadeloupe, namely that of Spencer (1901)³ and that of Saint-Michel (1961).⁴ Spencer, while owning the presence of human remains within this formation, nevertheless tells us that he did not examine the site! Are we seriously to believe that this man, a highly qualified geologist, who travelled all the way to Guadeloupe (no easy journey in those days), and who conducted a most meticulous survey of all the island's **other** rocks, either failed or did not bother to examine what was surely its most interesting part? I suggest most strongly that he did in fact examine it closely, but was baffled at its implications, for he does say that Duchassaing (1847)⁵ named it the **Anthropolite** Formation, and that he thought it was the same age as the early Quaternary coral reefs that lie some 6–8 feet above it! Spencer realised that whether he qualified or denounced Duchassaing's dating, his difficulties in explaining the human remains would be insuperable either way. If he stated that the rock obviously pre-dated the coral reefs, then he would have to explain what true man was doing on the earth **prior** to the onset of the Quaternary epoch, that is, before man's alleged ancestors had even evolved. Or if he claimed on the other hand that the rock, like the coral reefs above it, was laid down at the beginning of the Quaternary, that is, some 3 million years ago, then that is still far too early for the appearance of

true man under Darwin's scheme of things. And Spencer was definitely an evolutionist!

Saint-Michel was faced with precisely the same difficulty, and his attempts to solve it are seen to lead to even greater problems. For example, he describes the limestone, which we know is harder than marble, as sands that are "sometimes consolidated"! That does not seem to be a very accurate description of the skeleton's matrix. Indeed, it does not even approximate to what we actually find. He goes on to state that other skeletons have been found in this rock, some of which are in a foetal position, though at the same time vertical. As the rock is found in definite layers some 12cm thick, then this means that the evolutionist is faced with the added problem of **polystrate** human fossils! Furthermore, these layers are today being broken up into large slabs of rock by the incoming tide, and yet we are also asked to accept that the formation is still growing when even Saint-Michel admits that it is plainly being destroyed!

Saint-Michel makes absolutely no attempt to even describe the site's precise location, other than saying that it lies somewhere "east of (the town of) Moule". So indeed does Africa! Why the reluctance to describe its exact location, and why the extremely vague, not to say misleading, description of the rock as sand that is "sometimes consolidated"? Saint-Michel even admits that the commonly held C-14 date for the skeleton as c.500 AD was taken from **another** site on **another** island in the Antilles group. As Malcolm Bowden has pointed out both in this case⁶ and in his previous books⁷, there is much that is being "deliberately left vague and unsaid" by the evolutionists. Indeed, we would do well to treat their interpretations with a very healthy scepticism.

Wise seems to imply that because Duchassaing did not actually say that the early Quaternary reefs were ever in direct contact with the limestone formation beneath them, that they therefore could not have been in contact and thus have no bearing on the date of the human remains. It is indeed strange then, that neither Spencer nor Saint-Michel settled the matter once and for all in their own surveys. If the dating of the coral reefs had **no** bearing on the age of the limestone formation, it would have been easy enough for them to have said so. Yet they both are strangely silent on the matter. To be able to demonstrate the rapid fossilisation of human remains under modern-day conditions would have gone a long way towards vindicating both uniformitarianism and the theory of evolution. They realised perhaps that the actual evidence of human remains within this particular deposit would instead contribute towards the demise of those philosophies.

Wise goes on to state that "damage to the

skeleton does not necessarily mean that the body was buried violently". He does not qualify his statement, however, with an examination of the remains, choosing to cite instead "island traditions" about battles and "canoes overtaken in a storm". Only a painstaking analysis will reveal the sort of burial damage that we are actually considering. The articulation of the skeleton tells us one thing, and that is the fact that all of the damage occurred **before** the body decayed, and the nature of the damage tells us that here we are not dealing with any ordinary burial. The human rib-cage, especially when the body is complete, is an amazingly strong structure. To crush it completely requires a tremendous force. Normally when a body decays beneath the earth, the weight of the earth will press the ribs down flat. The pressure is evenly distributed over the rib-cage, and the ribs collapse downwards under the pressure as the muscles and soft tissues of the body rot away. With the Guadeloupe fossil things are very different indeed, for all the **right** ribs are now embedded in the limestone over the **left** humerus (upper arm bone). The sternum (breast-bone) and the left ribs lie crushed beneath them. This, beyond any shadow of a doubt, occurred **before** the body had decayed. What in fact we are dealing with is a tremendous impact being exerted in a right-left direction. The damage is also consistent with being caused by a fluid mass and not a hard mass such as solid rock. This impact would also have to be sudden and of extreme violence to cause this type of damage, for the damage is in no way related to ordinary burial damage that normally occurs after decomposition of the body. Much the same could be said about all the other signs of damage, for example, the dislocated left hip-bone and dislocated left tibia (lower leg bone). The damage is extraordinary in all points and cannot be compared to that occurring after ritual human interment or to normal natural burial.

Both Tyler and Wise seem to portray it as strange that man-made objects should be found with a Lower Miocene human skeleton (if it is that old). Because such objects are found in the same formation, they argue, the skeleton must apparently be recent. What does not seem to have occurred to either of them is the simple fact that wherever man is, he is likely to leave behind man-made objects, whatever the period of time in which he lived. Wise shows in his own tables that figurines, arrowheads and stone clubs are to be found in **Pliocene** deposits (sometimes claimed to be up to 12 million years old)! It should

therefore not be so strange to find man's **bones** along with his tools and weapons. Tyler goes further in saying that broken beer bottles and pepsi-cola cans have been found, although he was careful not to say that they were found in the formation that we are now considering. If they have been found elsewhere, then what possible connection is there between these items and the Guadeloupe fossil? It is of interest to note here that Duchassaing, who found various stone tools and implements normally associated with the skeleton, stated most clearly that he found them in a "higher and more recent" place than the skeleton's stated find-spot.

In short it would seem that all of the arguments that purport to show that this skeleton has no bearing upon the creation/evolution controversy, are inadequate to the task. Objections are raised, but only by arguing from comparisons or wilful vagueness where a simple demonstration of fact would have settled the matter. I believe that the evidence shows that this fossil is only one among many that lie in formations that are far too early for the appearance of man according to Darwin's theory of our evolution from apes. The creation/flood model, which this evidence supports, would account for the presence of these remains and others like them, by assigning them to the destructive and global effects of the Deluge. In the light of this perhaps the natives of Guadeloupe were not so far off the mark when they called the Anthropolite Formation the "Masonry of God".

REFERENCES

1. Konig, C., 1814. On a fossil human skeleton from Guadeloupe. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond.*, **104**: 107-120.
2. Cuvier, G., 1825. "Discours sur les Revolutions de la Surface du Globe", 3rd Edition, Paris, pages 133-136.
3. Spencer, J.W., 1901. On the geological and physical development of Guadeloupe. *Quart. J. Geol. Soc. Lond.*, **57**: 506-519.
4. Saint-Michel, A. de R. de, 1961. "Feuille de Grande-Terre et notice explicative", Paris, pages 16-17.
5. Duchassaing, P., 1847. Essai sur la constitution geologique de la partie basse de la Guadeloupe, dite la Grande-Terre. *Bull. Soc. Geol. Fr.*, **4** (2): 1093-1100.
6. Bowden, M., 1984. The Guadeloupe skeleton — some comments. *EN Tech. J.*, **1**. 44-51.
7. Bowden, M., 1977. "Ape-Man: Fact or Fallacy", Sovereign Publications, Bromley, Kent, England. Bowden, M., 1982. "The Rise of the Evolution Fraud", Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, California, U.S.A.