

The Guadeloupe Skeleton: A Reply to Wise and Tyler

BILL COOPER

I am never surprised when I hear of human bones or artifacts being found in deposits that are so “old” that they make a complete nonsense of evolution theory. Indeed, I have come to expect that such finds will be made. What never fails to surprise me, however, is the fact that some people will go to the most extraordinary lengths in their attempts to disprove the evidence of the find. An attempt will be made to show that the bones in question constitute a recent intrusive burial into the rocks or strata in which they are found. This claim is invariably made whenever such a find either compromises, embarrasses or plainly disproves the theory of evolution or so-called “day-age” theory of creation. The age of the deposits in which such bones are found is acknowledged to be “old”. Only the bones are said to be “recent”.

With the Guadeloupe fossil, however, an additional claim is being made by those who wish to prove it to be “recent”. Even a cursory examination of the fossil makes it obvious that the bones and the rock which surrounds them are both of the same age. The claim is therefore put forward that not only is the human skeleton a recent burial, but the rock in which it is embedded is also a recent formation. The reason for such a claim is simple to see. If a rock is acknowledged to date back to, say, the Miocene era (that is, up to 25,000,000 years ago), then the bones that were encapsulated within it when it was yet in a plastic stage, can only be the same age, which would clearly demolish the notion that man allegedly evolved from the apes during the last 1,000,000 years or so. Indeed, the fancies of Darwin and his disciples would be laughed out of court.

It is in this light that we must now consider the most recent papers of Wise and Tyler in their attempts to show that the Guadeloupe fossil and its limestone matrix are far too young to have any consideration in the current creation/evolution controversy. Wise, in particular, has submitted (once again) a very wordy statement that is backed up by no less than 59 references! However, rather than

clarify the situation, Wise’s paper serves merely to obscure the points that are vital if we are to reach a firm decision either way. For example, he cites authors whom he openly acknowledges to have relied upon each other for their information or interpretations rather than on a first-hand examination of either the fossil or the formation in which it was found.

MANTELL’S DUBIOUS ‘EVIDENCE’

One example in particular is of great interest. After a long preamble that contains such words as “. . .almost certainly. . .supposedly. . .perhaps. . .”, he goes on to rely on the testimony of G.A. Mantell. Wise acknowledges the unsatisfactory nature of Mantell’s evidence. . .

“It is not at all clear, however, whether Mantell actually visited the site. It’s possible that he got all his information from Ernouf or from Moreau de Jonnes’ unpublished notes. It is not at all clear how much faith we can put in Mantell’s conclusions. In any case Mantell adds some very interesting information not given by any other author that I’ve located to date”.

. . .and yet goes on to use such ‘evidence’ to support his case! Even more interesting is Wise’s use of Mantell’s “Plan of the Cliffs at Guadeloupe”. (This appears as Figure 1 in Wise’s paper.) Strangely, not one of the major geological surveys of the island mentions the presence of cliffs at the place where the fossil was found. Rather, the place is described as a curved beach of sand. It is under this beach and below the level of high-water that the fossil was found in a block of limestone, the limestone formation itself being about a kilometre in length. If, therefore, Wise wishes to propose with Mantell that this fossil was buried by virtue of a slowly collapsing cliff, then they both stand alone in such an assumption. Not stopping there, however, Wise goes on to speak of the

place as a cemetery! Yet again interspersed with words like “. . . seems . . . presumably . . . probably . . . seems to indicate . . . etc.”, Wise goes on to discuss certain skeletons that Mantell mentions as having been found in soft “sandstone”. Such finds will be considered later in this reply, but suffice it to say that the soft sandstone hardly approaches the exceedingly hard limestone that forms the fossil’s matrix. Wise’s arguments are not, therefore, very convincing. Indeed, they become even more unsatisfactory as he progresses. Consider, for example, his reliance upon the testimony of Duchassaing.

DUCHASSAING’S TESTIMONY

In his paper of 1847,¹ Duchassaing, after a brief description of other parts of the island, comes to the limestone formation that he named “anthropolite” (that is, rock that bears human fossils). He also refers to the same rock as “**des roches Galibis**”. This is because he believed the bones to be those of the natives who inhabited Guadeloupe when the white settlers arrived. However, in order to bolster his proposed post-Columbian date for the Guadeloupe fossil, Duchassaing goes on to tell us:

“In a higher place than this formation that is also more recent, I have found a calcaneum (heel-bone) of a dog, retaining all its gelatine, and a piece of flint”. . . “dogs and flint having been introduced by the Europeans, it all tends to prove the modern origin of these human bones”. (My translation and emphasis.)

Astounding as it may seem, that is the sole basis for Duchassaing dating the rock as having been formed since the arrival of the first white settlers. Had the dog bone and flint been found close to the spot where the fossil was found, they would by no means have constituted final proof about the age of the human fossil or the rock in which it lay. But to say that they certainly do constitute such proof when, by Duchassaing’s own testimony, they were found elsewhere, is, to put it mildly, stretching things a bit too far! What Duchassaing has asserted is exactly on a par with someone claiming that because, say, a coin dated 1902 was found in a higher and more recent place than, say, a Roman villa, then the Roman villa must have been built around the year 1900! No archaeologist in his right mind would dare to make such a claim. Yet that is precisely what Duchassaing has done.

KONIG’S OBSERVATIONS

At this point in Duchassaing’s testimony, it will be interesting to note what Konig had to say concerning the rock in which the fossil was found. Konig was the curator of the British Museum’s Mineralogy Department, and he was very interested indeed in the possibility of a modern origin for this rock, subjecting it to a very close examination indeed. Yet, much as it went against his philosophical beliefs as an admirer of the great Cuvier, he was constrained to admitting that:

“From the composition of the stone, a late period may, perhaps, be assigned to its formation; yet there is nothing in the above description that necessarily implies a very recent origin. . . we know of no limestone being formed as it were under the eyes of men; for stalactically concreted limestone, as I have already observed, should not be confounded with this”. (Emphasis mine)²

He goes even further, saying:

“. . . and I am perfectly of your opinion, that a comparison of the nature of the different varieties of shell sand with which the neighbourhood of the Caribee islands abounds, would alone be sufficient to remove many doubts relative to the origin of the bed in question. The sand from thence, which I had an opportunity of seeing, was unlike that of which the stone is composed”. (Emphasis mine)

Furthermore, Konig goes on to relate the stone **“cannot therefore be compared either with travertino, or any other chemical calcareous depositions of this kind”.**

DUCHASSAING’S DILEMMA

Konig, it must be remembered, was a qualified mineralogist, yet what does the medical practitioner, Dr Duchassaing say? He says that it is travertine rock, thus directly contradicting the findings of a man who, we may assume, knew what he was talking about. Interestingly, Duchassaing does not call it “travertine” rock until his **second** paper that was published in 1855.³ Eight years earlier, Duchassaing had stated that the bones were entombed **after** the coming of the white settlers (that is, some time in the early sixteenth century during the post-Columbian era), basing this date on the dog bone and flint that he had found elsewhere in a “higher” and “more recent” place. By the time of his **second** paper, however, he not only uses a geological term, that is, “travertine”, for the first time, but he also **reverses**

his position on the dating of the anthropolite formation, for he now says that the skeletons do “*not date from a period after the discovery of America*” (my translation). What happened, I wonder, in the intervening eight years that separated his two reports? We can only conjecture, of course, but it does seem suspiciously as if he had, in that period, come across for the first time a reference to ‘travertine’ rock, a term that he may have been anxious to use to demonstrate his up-dated knowledge; and that further sober reflection led him to realise that a post-Columbian date for the rock could be too easily discredited. Furthermore, his dating the rock to a post-Columbian age was based upon the dog bone and flint, whereas his later **pre-Columbian** dating was based on a fragment of **blue glass!**

Duchassaing, it must be remembered, was a medical practitioner whose excursions into the fields of geology and archaeology were purely of an amateur status. In other words, he was merely a member of that happy band of “gentlemen-geologists” of the nineteenth century who were given to pontificating on all sorts of things. (Indeed, Lyell himself, the “high-priest of modern geology”, was merely one among many “gentlemen-geologists” of that period, his profession being that of lawyer).

Duchassaing’s reasoning in the field of geology is further opened to question when he considers that the rock in which the human fossil was found, was the same age as the coral-reefs that lay some 6-8 feet above it and which are conventionally dated to the beginning of the Quaternary epoch (that is, they are up to 3,000,000 years old). Considering that both the disciples of Cuvier **and** the new breed of evolutionists thought that man did not make his appearance on the earth until after the time that these reefs were supposedly formed, then it becomes increasingly obvious that Duchassaing found himself on the wrong end of a very serious dilemma. Therefore, by the very nature of things, he was compelled to change his mind about the date of the human fossils, using the convenient and somewhat elastic period of pre-Columbian history. To say that something dates from before the discovery of America, lends itself to the possibility of being able to prove just about anything, while remaining safely immune from the charge of ignorance or error. Even Cuvier, the spiritual mentor of both Konig and Duchassaing, “confessed to making a thousand guesses and even inventing incidents” to explain the presence of human remains within a deposit of this nature and stratigraphical position. If the master could make nothing of it, then what chance did the poor pupil stand? Duchassaing, however, was not the only one to find himself facing a dilemma.

SPENCER'S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Fifty years after Duchassaing published his first paper about the rocks of the island, Guadeloupe was again surveyed, this time by a professional geologist named Spencer, in March 1897.⁴ Wise does his best to play down the significance of Spencer’s treatment concerning the “anthropolite” formation, and for this reason I wish to emphasise something that I only briefly touched upon in my last reply to him. Spencer, in fact, found the entire island difficult to fit into the uniformitarian framework of things, finding “unconformable” strata and fossils of modern species of marine creatures intermingled with extinct “index-fossils”. He was also compelled to postulate an uplift of the entire island to some **3,000** feet above its present level, after which it descended some 3,200 feet, after which various unspecified periods of elevation were invoked in a somewhat unsuccessful attempt to account for the rocks as he found them! While we may only wonder at the prospect of such cataclysmic upheavals producing the uniform and gentle deposition (so beloved by the uniformitarians and evolutionists) of the island’s strata, we must nevertheless acknowledge that Spencer’s survey was done conscientiously and meticulously, all of his problems notwithstanding. These qualities, however, are noticeably lacking when he comes to deal with the limestone formation in which the human fossils were found. Wise finds his lack of treatment and scrupulous avoidance of facts excusable. I, for one, do not.

I do not accept Wise’s assertion that Spencer has hitherto been quoted “out of context”, especially as Wise infers that Spencer is thus blameless in his reprehensible avoidance of an awkward piece of evidence. Bowden (see his paper in this volume) quite rightly says that Spencer would ordinarily have left himself open to a charge of professional negligence. I would go further, and charge him with a far more sinister offence. Indeed, very few geologists who have striven to solve the somewhat complex mystery of the Guadeloupe fossil within the framework of uniformitarian geology and evolution theory, have come out of the proceedings with anything approaching blamelessness. Issues have been clouded, and I believe deliberately so, by those whose philosophy excludes any recognition of the role of the Flood in the formation of the earth’s rocks, and it is interesting to see exactly how this has been accomplished over the years. Usually, their arguments have been conducted along the lines of what has not been said by preceding authorities. If a witness in a court of law were to quote something that was said by some other person, then his evidence would immediately be deemed as inadmissible, simply because it is “hearsay”

evidence and not an original statement. The evidence offered by Wise and his mentors, however, is a worse kind than that of hearsay, because they rely upon what has **not** been said.

For example, Wise relies for his case upon what Spencer deliberately **omitted** from his testimony. Yet that is not all, for he goes on to quote Clerc⁹ and Saint-Michel⁸ when **neither** of them state that any connection exists between the Guadeloupe fossil and a certain Indian cemetery. Wise has committed himself to proving that such a connection does exist, and he supports his case by quoting those who have avoided any such contention! Moreover, Wise quotes certain aspects of Clerc's paper, yet fails to quote that part which informs us that the cemetery which Clerc excavated lay on the **opposite** side of the reefs to where the fossil was found and at an unknown distance along the coastline!

The only connection made between this cemetery and the fossil lies in the preface to Clerc's paper, and was written by Henri Rinaldo, the "President du Conseil general". Clerc himself, however, avoids any such connection even though he had ample opportunity to do so had he so wished. Intriguingly, Clerc's paper, which is replete with illustrations, lacks any plan or cross-section of the site, a curious omission indeed from any archaeological report.

Saint-Michel, for his part, reports on Clerc's find, albeit only succeeding to cloud the issues still further, and yet he also **declined** to state that the fossil came from the cemetery which Clerc excavated. Again, he had ample opportunity to make such a claim, and yet such a contention remains absent from his report. How then are we to view all this? Is Spencer's "negligence" shared among a party of culpable conspirators? Or is Wise's dependence upon such a shambles misguided? Or perhaps the plain simple truth of the matter is that uniformitarian geology is so inconsistent that its propagators cannot help but share in its inconsistency and thorough unreliability?

TWO OTHER SURVEYS

In the collected surveys of the island, there are yet two more of importance, namely those by Butterlin and Hoffstetter⁵ (both carried out in 1956), and these also make absolutely no mention of either the human remains, nor, **seemingly**, the limestone formation in which they were found. I use the word **seemingly**, because there is an account that lists **madreporic** limestone deposits that lie "principally along the eastern coastlines" (my translation), that is, both to the east and west of Moule. While dating these somewhat ambiguously to between the Pliocene epoch, (that is, some 12,000,000 years ago),

and the Quaternary (that is, some 3,000,000 years ago to the present), Hoffstetter goes on to say that:

"These various deposits are, palaeontologically speaking, too poorly known for one to be able to fix exactly their geologic age. It is certain that various post-Miocene marine fossils, native to Guadeloupe, have been described by earlier authors". . . "but their origins are often imprecise. . ." (My translation)

In other words, Hoffstetter is saying that these **madreporic** limestone deposits are of such a nature that their position in the geologic column is vague, and the study of their palaeontologic content (that is, index-fossils), does not help in assigning them to their correct age. That is a curious thing to say, for surely the presence of supposedly modern index-fossils, and especially human remains, would normally clinch the matter in the evolutionary scheme of things.

What is especially significant, though, is the fact that these limestone deposits are described as **madreporic**, a description that exactly corresponds with Konig's terminology in describing the skeleton's limestone matrix. However, in the table of formations for Grande-Terre that appears in their **other** survey of the same year⁶ (see Table 1), **all** of the island's **madreporic** limestones are dated firmly into the Miocene era, that is, up to 25,000,000 years old! Indeed, they are also shown to extend into the allegedly earlier Oligocene era supposedly up to 35,000,000 years old! The limestones that are dated as younger than Miocene, are ranged from the Miocene itself, through the Pliocene, and thus into the Pleistocene, and are termed "**calcaires recifaux**", that is, limestones that are made up of coral debris. There is certainly a strong distinction made between the two types, the line dividing them being emphatic and positive.

The problems that faced Butterlin and Hoffstetter were undoubtedly due to the circular reasoning involved in the use of "index-fossils" when dating rocks. Hoffstetter was certainly unhappy about the use that was made by earlier authors of the supposedly recent index-fossils, even suggesting that it would be well if they were thoroughly revised. But again, his main problem must have been the presence of human remains within a **madreporic** limestone matrix, for, although he does not mention these remains, he was undoubtedly aware of their presence, for both of Duchassaing's papers are listed in the references at the end of his survey.

In short, we read of madreporic limestone being unquestionably of Miocene age in the tables presented in one survey, yet in the other survey **certain** deposits of this type are tentatively placed

from the Pliocene to the Pleistocene, with the added complaint that nobody can tell their real age, not even by examining their index-fossils. All of which makes nonsense of the claims of Tyler and Wise that the fossil's limestone matrix is definitely of recent origin. As Dr Austin has pointed out:

“Sandstone, limestone. . .and other rock types are not diagnostic of specific strata systems. Therefore, a rock's physical appearance cannot, with certainty, distinguish the system or strata level to which a rock may belong”.⁷

In other words, most opinions that place the skeleton's limestone matrix into the very recent past, are made merely by looking at the rock (as Tyler did with his microscope) and pronouncing it recent because, on the basis of current evolution theory, it **must** be. Those professional geologists, however, Butterlin and Hoffstetter included, who have actually surveyed the island for themselves, are compelled to admit themselves somewhat baffled over the limestone's real age, for, as Konig was the first to admit, there is absolutely nothing that would necessarily indicate a recent origin for the skeleton's limestone matrix.

Table 1. Table of formations (after Butterlin⁶).

	GRAND-TERRE
RECENT	“Calcaires recifaux”
PLEISTOCENE	
PLIOCENE	
MIOCENE	“Calcaires madreporiques” (Madreporic limestones)
OLIGOCENE	
EOCENE	

Note that all limestones termed “madreporic” are placed unhesitatingly into the Miocene era, some even into the older Oligocene. There is a clear and definite distinction made between the madreporic deposits and those that are considered to be ‘younger’. This is significant when we consider that the skeleton's limestone matrix is described as madreporic limestone. None of these formations are portrayed as ‘mixed’.

Thus far, we have considered four main geological surveys of Guadeloupe, all of which were conducted between the years 1847 and 1956, and all of which show a disturbing amount of perplexity and disagreement among the authors, all of them sharing the same difficulties when trying to account for the island's various strata within the confines of the conventional geologic column and the philosophy of uniformitarian geology. In presuming to interpret geological phenomena within the framework of an already disproven hypothesis, namely the theory of evolution, it is plain that geologists who subscribe to this notion have of necessity painted themselves into a corner. Having been fed on a diet of pure evolutionary dogma, they encounter evidence that is perplexing, and which can only be accounted for by way of strained reasoning and inconsistency of interpretation. There remains, however, hut one final survey of the island and which is also the latest to be conducted, namely that of Saint-Michel who published his results in 1961.⁸

SAINT-MICHEL'S SURVEY

Like Butterlin and Hoffstetter before him, Saint-Michel has no hesitation in assigning the **madreporic** limestones of the island to the Miocene era. **Interestingly, one of the so-called index-fossils that he cites, and that ‘proves’ these rocks to be Miocene, is Turbo, which, so Konig informs us, was also present in the skeleton's limestone matrix!** Indeed, it is when dealing with these same Miocene rocks that Saint-Michel complains of their index-fossils being virtually indistinguishable from the still-living species of the island. It is hard, therefore, not to succumb to the temptation of asking why these ‘Miocene’ rocks, that make up most of the island by the way, are not instead dated to the modern era by virtue of their plainly modern index-fossils. Could it be, I wonder, that modern conditions are incapable of producing them, Lyell's notions notwithstanding? For Saint-Michel most certainly ascribes the formation of these Miocene rocks to an “era of great tectonic agitation” (my translation). He clearly, and rightly, recognised that such conditions were necessary for their formation, implying at the very least that modern conditions, that have supposedly prevailed throughout the Quaternary, and which are the very cornerstone of uniformitarianism, give rise to **erosion** but **not** to rock-building. Their origin, therefore, could only lie in some vast geological and climatic upheaval of the past, when conditions were very unlike those of the present day.

If we look at the situation carefully, then we have on the one hand **madreporic** limestones that geologists are unanimous in ascribing to the Miocene era; whereas on the other hand we have in the

skeleton's limestone matrix a **madreporic** limestone that is seemingly indistinguishable from those previously ascribed to the Miocene, and yet which evolutionists are quick to assure us is **recent**, that is, separated from the others by a period of some 25 million years. This supposed assurance is based on the fact that these madreporic deposits are virtually one and the same, with the exception that in one rock human remains are found, which are absent in the other rocks. The deciding factor, then, is the presence of human remains, and not the presence of index-fossils that draw no distinction between the two types, or rather the **one** type of madreporic limestone. Index-fossils are the foundations upon which both evolution theory and uniformitarianism either stand or fall. Yet so elastic is their use that they can be either invoked as proof, or ignored as irrelevant, thus enabling those who depend upon them to prove whatever they wish, the presence or absence of index-fossils notwithstanding.

CLERC'S BURIAL-GROUND

Saint-Michel, however, does go on to relate the presence of human remains that were found within another deposit that is undoubtedly recent, the nature of the find indicating a burial-ground that is no more than about two thousand years old. Wise and Tyler make much of this burial ground, claiming that the fossil in its limestone matrix is merely part of this cemetery. Before such confusion prevails, however, it is of the utmost importance that the following points be taken into consideration.

The archaeological site that Saint-Michel described was excavated by Edgar Clerc. Clerc describes the site as extending "along a river, is swept by the wind, **is protected from high seas by a madreporic reef**, and is close to a tranquil bay"⁹ (Emphasis mine). He also describes the skeletons and artifacts of this site as lying in four levels of sand, albeit compacted in places.

The important point to note is that the site clearly lies **inland** to some extent, whereas the fossil in its limestone matrix was found beneath the level of high-water, the incoming tide eroding the limestone deposit thus exposing the bones to view. Clearly, the fossil could by no means be described as part of Clerc's Indian burial-ground. Indeed, it lay on the **opposite** side of the reefs within a different formation altogether.

Significantly, nowhere does Clerc say that he found either bones or artifacts in limestone. They were all found in **sandy** deposits. Indeed, when describing some broken idols, he says that they were clearly broken **deliberately**, as the sand was too soft for them to have broken by being dropped onto it.

This hardly describes the fossil's limestone matrix that is literally harder than marble!

It is therefore inexcusable for Wise, Tyler and the British Museum to claim that the fossil came from this burial-ground. The fossil's limestone formation and Clerc's burial site are two distinct and separate places, and are of totally different natures. Indeed, when Wise states that the burial-ground is in places "as hard as statuary marble", then he is completely wrong! Nowhere is it described as such by those who have excavated it, and his statement is based upon the unjustifiable assumption that the fossil's find-spot and the burial-ground are one and the same place. They are not, and never could have been, and he is wrong to suggest otherwise!

THAT EXCAVATORS' REPORT

In the light of these obvious facts, there are some interesting questions that are raised by Tyler's use of a certain document that was published in 1818 by the Linnean Society. The fossil, even in those early days, was a controversial specimen, and there were various interested parties (for example, the followers of Cuvier), who were anxious to prove that the fossil was **not** a relic of the Flood. Why, then, did the writers of this report choose to remain anonymous when their findings purport to settle the matter once and for all? And why on earth should they have waited **twelve** long years before publishing it? In all, the document quoted by Tyler generates more suspicion than enlightenment, which certainly isn't dispelled by the authors' surprising reluctance to either identify themselves or publish their 'information'. Wise laments the fact that suspicion should arise over a possible "cover-up" regarding the Guadeloupe fossil and its immense implications. My only comment is that the reader can examine both sides of the case and come to his own conclusions.

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