The uniformitarian puzzle of mountaintop planation surfaces

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Planation surfaces are a common feature across the earth.[1,2] But secular researchers often find these surfaces perplexing because it is not unusual to find them at the top of rugged mountains (figure 1):

> "Extensive tracts of low-gradient topography in steep mountain ranges, either forming rangetop plateaus or terraced pediments on range flanks are widely distributed in mountain belts around the world."[3]

Calvet *et al.*'s survey of these flat-topped mountains establishes their frequency across the globe.[4] Calvet *et al.* also point out that they are even found atop some of the most active and rapidly eroding mountains on the planet.

Uniformitarian scientists cannot explain

What makes these planation surfaces so puzzling for uniformitarian scientists is that they are not currently forming and their past formation appears to be independent of variables, such as rock lithology and the tilt of sedimentary rocks.[5] The authors admit they *cannot* explain these mountaintop planation surfaces:

> "Such low-gradient features are enigmatic given that an expected >50% of total denudation and 40% of chemical denudation occur on the steepest ~10% of the Earth's continental surface, i.e., mainly in mountains … . This would suggest that the chances of survival of planar landforms in mountain environments are slim."[6]

Some ideas rejected arbitrarily

It is interesting that although the secular scientists cannot explain planation or erosion surfaces, they are not open to the possibility that this could be a signature of a global

Figure 1. Gypsum Mountain, north-west Wind River Mountains, Wyoming, USA. The strata dip to the west at about 40°, but they have been planed flat.

flood. They reject my explanation simply because I am a creationist: "(note; here we ignore creationist views of planation surfaces, e.g. michael.oards.net/)".[6] They also reject the explanation provided by Ollier and Pain, apparently because Ollier and Pain do not fully accept plate tectonics.[7] Ollier and Pain believe strata were first folded, then planed in the Miocene, the early part of the late Cenozoic, and then were uplifted globally during the Pliocene and Pleistocene, the very late Cenozoic.[8] Accordingly most of the planing was done before mountain formation.

Planation surfaces and pediments carved by Flood runoff

Ollier and Pain's explanation of the event sequence for the formation of mountaintop planation surfaces is generally correct, but they are unable to keep planation surfaces from eroding over millions of years, making it likely that their understanding of the timeframe is wrong. Calvet *et al.*'s argument is weaker than that of Ollier and Pain, because with no clear way to connect planation surfaces in their framework to a single event, or even a single suite of causes, they are forced to resort to unknown 'case-by-case conditions' to explain the phenomena they observe.[9] They truly have no idea how to explain mountaintop planation surfaces.

The fundamental problem for both Ollier and Pain and Calvet *et al.* is deep time. Eons of time attenuates the link between causes and effects so much that it's practically impossible to establish causal links between observed effects. The Flood, however, is a specified event in which the duration is sufficiently short to enable the investigator to posit plausible causal links in observed geological phenomena and their relationships, and an adequate cause for the phenomena we see. In other words, a plausible cause-effect narrative has a better chance of being constructed in the context of Noah's Flood.[10]

In the case of mountaintop planation surfaces, they are best explained as a function of the Recessive Stage of the Flood. During Flood water runoff, the continents and mountains rose with much erosion.[1,2,11] It is expected that during uplift rapid currents would plane the top of the rocks by erosion. Continued uplift and channel erosion would divide large planation surfaces into isolated remnants near the tops of the mountains At lower elevations this erosion would divide the planation surfaces into large areas, such as plains or plateaus, depending upon the amount of uplift. The major planing episodes would have happened during the Abative or Sheet Flow Phase of the Flood.[12]

As mountains and plateaus rose above the Flood water, the water was forced to channelize down valleys. Within mountain valleys, fast flow toward the sinking ocean basins created planation surfaces along the edge of the mountains, called pediments.[1,2,13] The planation surfaces and pediments still exist because there was insufficient time for erosion to destroy these features, especially in arid to semi-arid areas. The lack of erosion provides another piece of evidence that deep time is an invalid construct, and that planation surfaces are very young.

Ollier and Pain would date the mountaintop planation surfaces as mid Cenozoic. Calvet and colleagues would also date them as mostly Cenozoic: "The presence of erosion surfaces in many mountain ranges of *Cenozoic* age raises issues [emphasis added]".[14] Given this designation, in the biblical framework the great mountain uplifts and planing occurred in the last half of the Flood during Flood runoff[15] or in the Recessive Stage.[10] This would indicate a largely late Cenozoic Flood/post-Flood boundary in areas with planation surfaces and pediments, assuming the geological column for sake of discussion.

References

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