



The Newsletter of The North Texas Skeptics

Volume 13 Number 10

www.ntskeptics.org

October 1999

In this month's issue:

- [The Acambaro dinosaurs](#)
- [Answers in Genesis](#)
- [The National Center for Science Education](#)

The Acambaro dinosaurs

By John Blanton

Dinosaurs went missing about 65 million year ago. Or did they?

What if they really didn't. What if dinosaurs were still around as late as 6500 years ago. And if people and dinosaurs lived contemporaneously? That would shoot holes in a lot of modern science. Paleontology would be badly wounded. Evolution would be DOA. So the thinking goes.

If you could find a human fossil in the same stone with a dinosaur fossil you would have some nice ammunition to shoot down evolution. Even better if the fossil showed a dinosaur eating a human. If all you had were something that looked like human footprint alongside dinosaur footprints you might be inclined to shop further. Enter the Acambaro dinosaurs.

A paper titled "Archeological cover-ups" by David Hatcher Childress describes the discovery of the Acambaro dinosaur figurines. ¹

In 1944 an accidental discovery of an even more controversial nature was made by Waldemar Julsrud at Acambaro, Mexico. Acambaro is in the state of Guanajuato, 175 miles northwest of Mexico City. The strange archaeological site there yielded over 33,500 objects of ceramic, stone—including jade, and knives of obsidian (sharper than steel and still used today in heart surgery). Julsrud, a prominent local German merchant, also found statues ranging from less than an inch to six feet in length depicting great reptiles, some of them in ACTIVE ASSOCIATION with humans—generally eating them, but in some bizarre statuettes an erotic association was indicated. To observers, many of these creatures resembled dinosaurs.

Childress further mentions that radio-carbon dating in the laboratories of the University of Pennsylvania and additional tests using thermoluminescence indicated the objects were made 6500 years ago.

In *Atlantis Rising*, David Lewis has explained the implications for modern science. ²

The Acambaro figurines, discovered in the 1940s in Acambaro, Mexico, depict fantastic creatures that resemble dinosaurs, as well as African and European men. If verified as authentic and dated to a time before modern science's discovery of the dinosaurs, the existence of the figurines would dismantle the major presumptions of modern evolutionary theory, and, in fact, much of the scientific and academic establishment.

Young-Earth creationist Don Patton discussed the subject of the Acambaro dinosaurs at September's meeting of the Metroplex Institute of Origin Science (MIOS). He has journeyed to Acambaro to view and photograph some of the artifacts, and he agrees with Lewis that this spells doom for evolution. Most of those attending the meeting concurred.

Don was gracious enough to provide me with copies of some of his photos, which we reproduce here. His printed brochure compares one of the figurines with a drawing from Robert Bakker's book *Dinosaur Heresies* (1986). The figurine so resembles the dinosaurs in Bakker's illustration that the ancient artist must have seen one in the flesh.

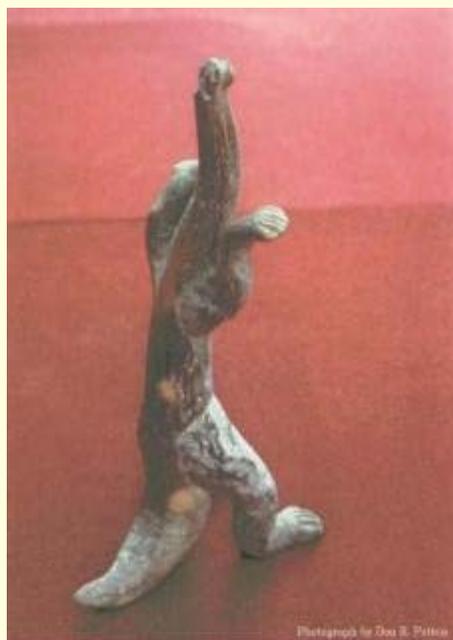


Figure 1.
Photo courtesy of Don Patton

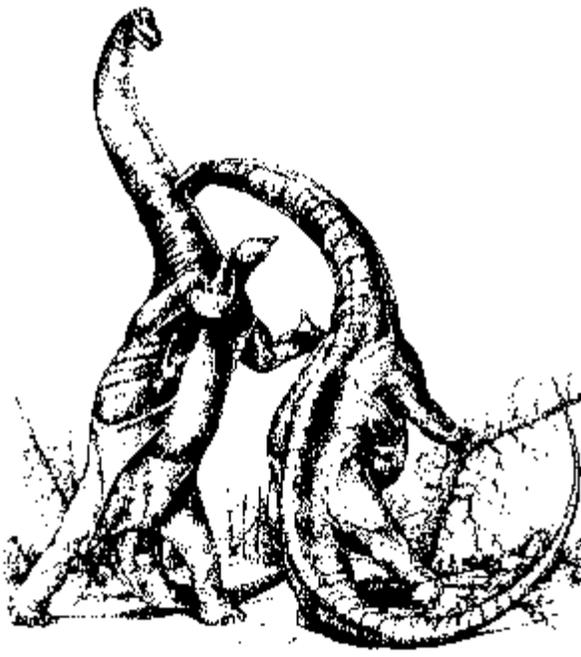


Figure 2.
Dinosaur drawing from Robert Bakker's book *Dinosaur Heresies*

Of course, modern science is not going to take this lying down, as both Patton and Childress have pointed out. Childress explains the situation in his report: ³

A team of experts at another university, shown Julsrud's half-dozen samples but unaware of their origin, ruled out the possibility that they could have been modern reproductions.

However, they fell silent when told of their controversial source. In 1952, in an effort to debunk this weird collection which was gaining a certain amount of fame, American archaeologist Charles C. DiPeso claimed to have minutely examined the then 32,000 pieces within not more than four hours spent at the home of Julsrud. In a forthcoming book, long delayed by continuing developments in his investigation, archaeological investigator John H. Tierney, who has lectured on the case for decades, points out that to have done that DiPeso would have had to have inspected 133 pieces per minute steadily for four hours, whereas in actuality, it would have required weeks merely to have separated the massive jumble of exhibits and arranged them properly for a valid evaluation.

Tierney, who collaborated with the later Professor Hapgood, the late William N. Russell, and others in the investigation, charges that the Smithsonian Institution and other archaeological authorities conducted a campaign of disinformation against the discoveries. The Smithsonian had, early in the controversy, dismissed the entire Acambaro collection as an elaborate hoax. Also, utilising the freedom of Information Act, Tierney discovered that practically the entirety of the Smithsonian's Julsrud case files are missing.

After two expeditions to the site in 1955 and 1968, Professor Charles Hapgood, a professor of history and anthropology at the University of New Hampshire, recorded the results of his 18-year investigation of Acambaro in a privately printed book entitled MYSTERY IN ACAMBARO. Hapgood was initially an open-minded skeptic concerning the collection but became a believer after his first visit in 1955, at which time he witnessed some of the figures being excavated and even dictated to the diggers where he wanted them to dig.

Adding to the mind-boggling aspects of this controversy is the fact that the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, through the late Director of PreHispanic Monuments, Dr. Eduardo Noguera, (who, as head of an official investigating team at the site, issued a report which Tierney will be publishing), admitted “the apparent scientific legality with which these objects were found.” Despite evidence of their own eyes, however, officials declared that because of the objects “fantastic” nature, they had to have been a hoax played on Julsrud!

Whether Julsrud was hoaxed is something Patton intends to pursue, although he thinks not. He says he plans to excavate under the kitchen floor of the former Julsrud home in Acambaro. This floor is original from before the time Julsrud move in, and finding similar figurines there will rule out their being recent forgeries.

Answering questions following his MIOS talk, Don explained that the figurines in question appeared to have been deliberately buried. They were found in collections of twenty to thirty and packed in sand, and they are made from local clay, which is decayed feldspar. Only ten percent of the figurines resemble dinosaurs.

So, what does all of this have to do with Albert Einstein, Perry Mason, and *The Mysterious Origins of Man*? Glad you asked.

Patton notes ⁴

In the forward to the book, *Earth's Shifting Crust*, Albert Einstein said Hapgood's concept could be of a “great importance to everything that is related to the Earth's surface.”

Earth's Shifting Crust was the original title of Hapgood's book, which is now *The Path of the Pole*. His idea was that all the ice at the poles represented a spinning mass that exerted a horizontal force on the Earth's crust. In the mid 1950s, before the modern idea of plate tectonics was developed, but while Wegener's ideas of continental drift were being floated around, Hapgood proposed that this off-center force occasionally shifted the crust, putting the poles at the equator and causing other nasty results. Hapgood corresponded with Einstein on this topic and received encouragement. Einstein recommended that Hapgood obtain “geological and paleontological facts.”

NBC first broadcast *The Mysterious Origins of Man (MOM)* in February 1996. Host Charlton Heston explained to the audience how a lot of standard science, such as evolution, paleontology, archaeology, and anthropology got it all wrong. Young-Earth creationist Carl Baugh helped out by explaining the Paluxy River “man tracks.”

Hapgood was there to explain the evidence of sudden Earth crustal displacement. The “fact” that thousands of animals were frozen in short order (in geologic time) and that ancient maps showed an ice-free Antarctica (which was then frozen over very quickly) was given as evidence for this crustal shift. Paul Heinrich has posted a review of these claims at

<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/mom/atlantis.html>.

The creator of *MOM*, Bill Cote, has since produced a third program along similar lines. This latest is *Jurassic Art*, which deals with two topics—the Acambaro figurines and the Ica stones.

So now we are back to where we started, as James Burke would say. A great fan of the Ica stones is Don Patton, who has presented talks on them at MIOS meetings. The deal about the Ica (not Inca) stones is that they are black stones with serpentine figures carved into them. Don Patton contends these are depictions of real dinosaurs done from life. David Lewis had this to say about them: ⁵

The Ica stones are a collection of thousands of inscribed stones found near the mysterious Nasca Lines in Peru. Many of the stones depict Pterodactyls, T-Rexes, and humans cavorting with Stegosaurus. Who carved these mysterious stones? Some ancient artist who somehow knew about dinosaurs, or a modern prankster? The answer to those questions remains a mystery. Except to you, of course. Dating both the Acambaro figurines and Ica stones has proved inconclusive. Unfortunately, both the stones and figurines have been removed from their original settings, making reliable dating difficult, if not impossible. In the Peruvian case, the curator and discoverer of the artifacts, Javier Cabrera, a medical doctor, refuses to reveal the location of a cave where he allegedly found the stones, leading archeologist Neil Steede, who investigates

both cases on Cote's Jurassic Art, to question the doctor's story.

So, we come to the end of the tale, and we still don't know what's behind the Acambaro dinosaurs.

Are the figurines really 6500 years old? Don Patton, who appears to finally accept radio-carbon dating, would only give the "dinosaurs" 1500 years in his talk. A human figure he allowed 4000 years.

Are they even authentic? If they are 1500 years old and more, then it's likely they are. That was way before people found sport in fooling archaeologists.

If they are authentic, do they represent dinosaurs? Some of the ones exhibited are dead ringers for dinosaurs, but they were culled from a reported cache of over 30,000 items. Many of the figurines presented as dinosaurs required a bit of a stretch to make the resemblance. It's possible we are just seeing some selective sampling. Given the amount of variation apparent in the collection there was bound to be a dinosaur in there somewhere.



Figure 3.

While there were many figurines that resembled four-legged dinosaurs, a number of them resembled dinosaurs no better than this.

Photo courtesy of Don Patton

Research into the mystery of the figurines since the MIOS lecture has not provided further explanation, so for the time being we will have to leave it at that. Some stories just don't have neat endings.

Oh wait. I forgot to tell about Perry Mason, although it has absolutely no significance to the story. Accompanying Hapgood in his 1955 investigation of the figurines was prolific detective fiction writer Earl Stanley Gardner. The Acambaro dinosaurs, it would seem, had something for everybody.

References

1. Childress, David Hatcher. Archeological Coverups? Posted by the World Explorers Club at <http://www.keelynet.com/unclass/canyon.txt>. In the quoted excerpt I have fixed some of the inconsistencies in spelling and punctuation. The capitalization has been left intact.
2. Lewis, David. Jurassic Art? At <http://atlantisrising.com/issue11/ar11jurassic.html>
3. Childress
4. From Don Patton's untitled brochure on the Acambaro figurines.
5. Lewis

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Answers in Genesis

By John Blanton

That's the US counterpart for the Australian organization Creation Science Foundation. Executive Director of AiG is Ken Ham, who was also a founder of CSF. AiG is accessible on-line, and much of the following information is from their Web site.¹ They list a US mailing address in Florence, KY.

Ken Ham "is one of the most in-demand Christian speakers in North America. In 1993, Ken spoke to over 100,000 people directly, and to millions on hundreds of radio broadcasts. Many thousands of others watched his acclaimed film, *The Genesis Solution*, in 1993."² According to the AiG Web site he has a bachelor's degree in applied science from the Queensland Institute of Technology and a Diploma of Education from the University of Queensland.

If you like to think that creationism is a science thing, then check out the site. AiG has taken the science out of "creation science."

Racism

"Inter-racial marriage: is it biblical?" is one headline on the title page, and it's authored by Ken Ham. OK, that's a long way from creationism, but let's explore that and see where it goes.

Amazing! Quoting from Ham:

Real science in the present fits with the biblical view that all people are rather closely related—there is only one 'race' biologically. Therefore, there is in essence no such thing as 'inter-racial marriage.' So we are left with this—is there anything in the Bible that speaks clearly against men and women from different people groups marrying?

That's the closest I have seen to real science in a creationist text, and it shows to what lengths the creationists will go to challenge evolution. Thirty-five years ago while I sat in arm chair comfort and watched others my age being clubbed by police for saying otherwise, the good pastors in some parts of the country were telling their congregations that white people were the chosen race.

That is dangerous ground for creationists to tread these days. If there are separate races, then evolution must have occurred, for at one time there were only two people, and we all sprang from them.

The argument has now been turned around. It's the evolutionists who say there are separate races (allowing one to be inferior). Without Darwin, we would all be viewed equally by the enlightened masses. Maybe I overstate the case, for there was racial bigotry even before Darwin. However this idea gets kicked around a lot by the reformed creationists. Ham concludes:

The church could greatly relieve the tensions over racism (particularly in countries like America), if only the leaders would teach that: all people are descended from one man and woman; all people are equal before God; all are sinners in need of salvation; all need to build their thinking on God's Word and judge all their cultural aspects accordingly; all need to be one in Christ and put an end to their rebellion against their Creator.

Sometimes there is the temptation to just let creationism slide and count our blessings.

Tas Walker

There is more, however. The heading of Tas Walker's Web page article reads —

**"Geology and the young earth
Answering those 'Bible-believing' bioskeptics"**

Walker writes (first published in *Creation Ex Nihilo*³) :

The hand-written note pinned to some photocopied pages was typical. ‘I wonder if you could help with a geological problem?’ The writer, a Bible-believing Christian, was confused. He had just encountered some tired old geological arguments attacking the straightforward biblical account of earth history, i.e., denying a recent creation and a global Flood on the basis of ‘geological evidences’.

It turns out the confusion was caused by some writers who pretended to be Christians, all the while denying the true story of creation in the Bible [my words]. You really have to be careful out there, Walker seems to be saying. The unsuspecting readers of such books, thinking they are getting something from ‘Bible-believing Christians’, expect encouragement and faith-building material. They are generally unprepared for the explosive mixture of heretical theology, poor science and vehement attacks on Bible-believers.

Alan Hayward is one of these Christian slackers.⁴ Fortunately it turns out he is really a Unitarian and doesn’t believe in the Trinity.

One of the things Hayward writes about, according to Walker, is varves. If you don’t know about varves, you should check them out. They are very thin layers of sediment laid down on the bottoms of calm bodies of water by seasonal variations in the in-flowing water. In some places they have stacked up so long they record hundreds of thousands of years of history. This would be embarrassingly long for the young-Earth creationists if the theory of varves were correct. Fortunately, Walker is able to show his readers that these varves don’t have to represent seasonal variations, and they could have been formed by the great Flood described in Genesis. He goes on to ably put down a number of other propositions of anti-Christian science.

- Thick layers of evaporites (such as found in West Texas) would seem to take a long time to form, but Walker explains they were most likely formed very quickly.
- There are too many fossils, and all of those animals could not have lived on the Earth in a period of just a few thousand years. Not enough room. Not so says Walker. Scientists are just looking at fossil graveyards and extrapolating the fossil density to the unexplored regions of the Earth.
- Scientists say there is too much coal. Trees would have had to be shoulder-to-shoulder and more to form that much coal. Once again, Walker says we are looking at tree graveyards.
- Then there is pitch. Pitch? Yes, pitch, which creationists say was formed in the Flood along with other petroleum products, was used by Noah before the flood to caulk the Ark. Walker explains that in those days pitch was made from tree resin (because there was no petroleum, remember?).

Anyhow, Hayward is all wet, along with Unitarianism, evolution, and a bunch of other science stuff. “Since we never will know everything, we must start with the sure Word of God in order to make sense of the world around us” he writes.

Damn the creationists

What?

Yes, even creationists come under attack here. This Web page article begins —

**“Exposé of NavPress’s new Hugh Ross book
Serious biblical and scientific errors deceive evangelicals into thinking that billions of years are
‘OK’.”**

Jonathan Sarfati has contributed a scathing critique of creationist Hugh Ross’s *The Genesis Question*.⁵ He writes:⁶

The astronomer Hugh N. Ross now seems to be the world’s most prominent ‘progressive creationist’ (PC). While he is insistent about distinguishing himself from ‘theistic evolutionists’ (TEs), Ross adopts the same basic philosophical approach. That is, he makes uniformitarian (i.e. essentially materialistic, billions of years, etc.) ‘science’ his authority over Scripture.

Apparently it is possible to be not creationist enough for AiG.

A recent AiG project in Boone County, KY, is their Creation Museum. It's been an item in the local news for months, as opponents of the museum have challenged the construction under the zoning laws. A hearing in October may settle the matter, and if the museum does get built it joins those other monuments to unreason that include the ICR museum in Santee, CA, and the Roswell, NM, saucer crash museum.

As Nature would dictate, if there is an *Answers in Genesis*, there must be a *No Answers in Genesis*. And there is. A web site maintained by the Australian Skeptics, Inc., spends a lot of time dealing with AiG. 7 After explaining who Charles Darwin was (there is even a picture) and what he did, the site jumps into a long list of refutations of popular creationist myths.

- *Can Noah's Flood Account For The Geologic and Fossil Record?* Lenny Flank handles this.
- Glenn R. Morton writes *The Geologic Column and the Flood*.
- Margaret Kittson has contributed *In Search of the Real Noah*.
- For the really curious there is *The Prehistory of Koalas* by Professor Michael Archer.

The Aussies take a more strident approach to anti-creationism than we do here. Of course, they do that about a lot of other stuff, too. Expect to see name-calling and in-your-face challenges on the NAIg site. Also find there one of the best collections of references to the current hot topics.

References

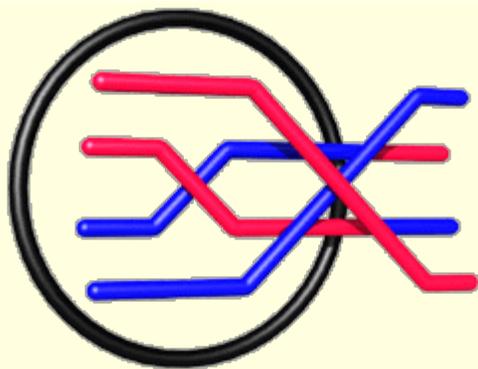
1. <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs/>
2. From the AiG Web site.
3. *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal*. 21(4):1620, September/November 1999.
4. Hayward, Alan. *Creation and Evolution: The Facts and Fallacies*, Triangle, London, 1985 [citation from the AiG site].
5. Ross, Hugh. *The Genesis Question*, NavPress Publishing Group P.O. Box 35001, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80935 [from the AiG site].
6. *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal*. 13(2):22-30, 1999
7. Check out <http://www.onthenet.com.au/~stear/index.htm>.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

The National Center for Science Education

by John Blanton

About had it up to here with the creationists? Well join the club. Join the National Center for Science Education, actually.



NCSE logo from the NCSE Web site

The NCSE seems to be the main organization on the North American Continent working to counter the movement of creationism into the public school system. The NCSE is also a strong supporter for teaching evolution and other solid science. It came into being in 1981—an offshoot of several committees of correspondence—and was incorporated in 1983. It is headquartered in Berkeley, California, but like most organizations these days it is linked across the continent through the Internet. The NCSE provides “a central information and resource clearinghouse, helping to coordinate the efforts of people working at state and local levels to preserve the integrity of science education.”¹

Eugenie C. Scott is Executive Director and a tireless spokesperson for science. [See the sidebar for the coming speaking schedule.] Kevin Padian is President, and there is a list of officers and Directors that includes Frank Sonleitner, the notorious basher of Pendas and People. Our own Ron Hastings has previously served as a Director. A list of official supporters includes a large number of people you will recognize at the heart of the C-E issue. Francisco Ayala, Brent Dalrymple, Niles Eldredge, Stephen Jay Gould, Philip Kitcher, Kenneth Miller, and Michael Ruse are ones I spot right away.

If you have been following the C-E debate for any time you will have come across the NCSE. Usually it’s in the form of Dr. Scott carefully explaining to some TV anchor why evolution is not equivalent to atheism. Two years ago Scott participated in the C-E debate on William Buckley’s Firing Line, and prior to that she faced off against creationist Forrest Mims (plus Cal Thomas) on Crossfire. The NCSE gets involved a lot off-camera when school boards and science teachers come under pressure from creationist groups to either exclude evolution or to include creationism. You may not see that on the evening news, but you do see the result of not as many schools teaching creationism.

The NCSE’s main publication is Reports of the National Center for Science Education, which comes out six times a year. As expected, Reports prints a bunch of stuff knocking creationism, and they almost never print a favorable review of a creationist book. They do print comments by creationists from time to time, usually to allow someone to respond to an issue previously raised.

If you want to keep up with C-E, and you don’t cruise the Web, then Reports is the journal of choice. In addition to the tireless Molleen Matsumura, Dr. Scott contributes a large part of the editorial content. There are also contributions from pro-evolution notables such as Gould and Dawkins and from some of your Skeptics friends.

NCSE membership is \$30 per year and includes a subscription to Reports. Outside the US, membership is higher to offset the increased postage. Since the NCSE is a 501(c)(3) organization you may want to contribute large sums and deduct some of that on your tax return. Also, joining the NCSE puts you in good company. Reports occasionally prints a list of donors—a list that includes some of the heavy hitters of modern science. It also includes a number of your fellow NTS members.

Another benefit of NCSE membership is their book sales deal. Members can get certain science books and books on C-E at a discount through the NCSE. Transcripts and tapes of C-E debates are offered, as well. I have even seen creationist books for sale!

Contact the NCSE at the address below or check them out on the Web. Check with me if you need help.

NCSE
PO Box 9477
Berkeley, CA 94709-0477
(510) 526-1674
(800) 290-6006
E-mail: molleen@NatCenSciEd.org
URL: <http://www.natcensciEd.org/>

References

1. From the NCSE Web site at <http://www.natcensciEd.org/>

[\[Back to top\]](#)
