



PENGUIN BOOKS

ANCIENT TRACES

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MICHAEL BAIGENT

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*Mysteries in Ancient and Early History*



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## Introduction

In the heat of July 1989, Israeli archaeologist Professor Naama Goren-Inbar, together with her colleagues, began to excavate in the northern Jordan valley. Their site was very ancient, around 500,000 years old, and very waterlogged, for it lay close to the Jordan river.

They would have begun just after sunrise and, with considerable relief, stopped for the day at noon, just as the sun finally stole away all their shadows. Security considerations cannot have been far from their minds as they worked; the Jordan was the front line during the years of hot peace, and occasionally there were problems.

They decided first to expose all the geological levels: a mechanical digger was employed to excavate slowly two deep trenches across part of the site. As each bucketload of earth was brought to the surface it was emptied and its contents examined for bones or artefacts.

One morning, to the archaeologists' amazement, the digger dredged up part of a well-constructed and highly polished wooden plank. Nothing like it had ever been found before.

The plank was of willow wood, almost ten inches long and just over five inches wide. It had a very flat, very smooth, artificially polished surface which had been so expertly prepared that no trace of any tool marks remained. Furthermore, one edge was completely straight and deliberately bevelled. Underneath the plank the wood was roughly convex and unpolished. Both ends were broken off, a probable result of the mechanical extraction. The other pieces were never found.<sup>1</sup>

According to current archaeological thinking, no one living 500,000 years ago had any need for straight, flat and polished wooden planks. Of what possible use would one be to a lifestyle which was devoid of straight edges and flat surfaces? Cavemen, we are told, did not use rulers and set-squares.

Nevertheless, this plank was found. It had been made with considerable care, effort and skill. We must conclude, therefore, that a need for it had existed at the time. But what might this have been? Professor Goren-Inbar was perplexed; she had no explanation for it.<sup>2</sup>

Together with her colleagues, she could only conclude that the technical capabilities of these ancient people had been seriously underestimated. And, she added, there may well be further 'unconventional' finds of this type. Finds which may force a revision of opinion regarding the sophistication of early human society.<sup>3</sup>

We can see that our comfortable picture of ignorant and brutish cavemen, set far distant from our modern world not only in time but in intelligence and

capability, is suddenly in serious danger of being exposed as a deception. This find does not just provide solid evidence of an unexpected level of skill and technical prowess but it also constitutes evidence of an unexpected social and mental development – in other words, it shows that at least some inhabitants of this long-lost epoch possessed minds which could visualize and actualize elegantly constructed objects which we normally associate with a more modern world.

This well-worked plank needs a context: it seems to whisper unobtrusively but insistently to all who will listen carefully, ‘civilization’. But of *cavemen*?

This raises one possible explanation which the archaeologists did not advance, perhaps because it simply did not occur to them, or perhaps because its implications were just too wild. This plank may have been intrusive. Not in the sense of deriving from a later period, but culturally intrusive. Could the primitive humans at this Jordan valley site have obtained the plank elsewhere, from some other, more advanced, more technically accomplished group who had made and used it?

It seems probable that, in time, the very existence of this plank will force us to rewrite our ancient history. But until then it is likely that this extraordinary discovery will be ignored or, at least, marginalized to the extent that it ceases to pose any threat to the standard story of our past.

The unfortunate truth we need to confront is that history can be rather like statistics: anything can be proved; any fraudulent story of the past can be maintained so long as all unwelcome data is excluded. As we will discover during the course of this book, certain stories about human prehistory have so much money and so many reputations vested in them that they are stubbornly maintained even in the face of steadily accumulating contrary evidence. To the extent, in fact, of supporters taking every opportunity to shout louder and more often than their opponents. Which does not, of course, help towards any search for the truth.

Science demonstrates a rather similar situation. Most people forget that, at its heart, science is simply a methodology, a way of working. Its conclusions are not ‘truths’ but essentially statistical approximations. If something happens 100 times, then it is supposed that it will happen 101 times, or 1,000 times. And if, on one occasion during these 100 or 1,000 events, something else occurs, then that lone event is quickly excluded as anomalous and therefore irrelevant. It is dismissed and, in time, forgotten.

But just occasionally the anomalies become so frequent and so well known that they force a total revision of the accepted story. This book will look at the situation, for example, of evolutionary theory where more than a century of intensive research into fossil animals and plants has failed to produce the proof needed to support Darwin’s concept. Many experts are now looking elsewhere for an explanation.

Similarly challenging conventional theories are new discoveries concerning

the sudden appearance of a fully developed city culture in southern Turkey, many thousands of years ago, in an area where no trace of earlier development has been found. There are, too, further enigmas and unexplained curiosities surrounding the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. These, together with the related mysteries of alchemy, have proved unwelcome to the self-appointed guardians of orthodoxy and so have been widely ridiculed or ignored. This book will take an objective look at them.

It is noteworthy that apparently damning criticism has always been found to justify the exclusion of enigmatic and contrary data. Experts have argued, in effect, that, because such discoveries were so strange and ran counter to all that is accepted, they *must* be wrong. This is, of course, an argument based on faith rather than fact.

Nevertheless, such pundits seek to support their faith by casting doubt upon their opponents, accusing them of being incompetent, ill-trained or, even worse, rank amateurs. As if it makes a difference who actually makes the discovery. The Dead Sea Scrolls are no less valid for having been discovered by a shepherd.

Those upholding the orthodox story have always played for time because eventually the reasons for excluding conflicting data might be forgotten and thus never subjected to the critical scrutiny which might expose their hollowness. Meanwhile the data and the disputes would also be forgotten. Deep in the basements of our museums ancient bones have long grown dusty in their cardboard boxes, once-dynamic scholars who vigorously argued contrary ideas were broken in spirit, or grew too weary to continue the fight and left the field. Some even had their characters and careers destroyed, as we shall see in the case of Canadian archaeologist Thomas Lee. He dared find human artefacts far older than the accepted date of humankind in the Americas. And he dared to keep digging them up.

In this book we will be looking at much of that information which directly challenges orthodoxy: information which upsets the comfortable, but confining, boundaries of our modern world. We will look at evidence suggesting design in evolution; at discoveries indicating the existence of very ancient technology; of remnants suggesting that human beings existed millions of years before the present; of human culture emerging in lands no longer available for archaeological study. And, moving into the mystical side of our life and world, we will look at evidence, both ancient and modern, concerning the timeless mystery of death and rebirth. Can we truly have lived before? Increasingly, data is emerging to lead us to answer 'yes'.

All too often we fall into the trap of thinking that we know everything about our world. This book has gathered together information which reminds us that we do not.

# 1

## How Ancient is Humanity?

We are confidently informed that, almost 4 billion years ago, our planet was merely a spinning lump of rock. It took almost a billion of those years for life to begin, forming the bacteria and algae which have left their shadowy traces in ancient rocks. Further great stretches of time slipped sleepily by, and then primitive worms crawled out of the biological torpor.

All in all, life seemed well contented with simplicity.

Abruptly this changed. About 530 million years ago life burst its rural boundaries. It erupted in an intense, unprecedented, unexplained event now called the Cambrian Explosion.<sup>1</sup> This changed the earth's history for ever. In a frenzy of biological invention the earth became covered with creatures which first swam in the sea and, later, crawled, walked, ran and slithered all over the land. The earth changed from a country lane to Piccadilly Circus at rush hour. And it was permanently lunchtime.

During this 'explosion' all known varieties of complex animals and plants suddenly appeared. But, mysteriously, there is no trace of their development to be found in the earlier fossil record. All appear, fully formed, fully evolved, fully functioning, teeth sharpened and scales glistening. No one knows who or what let them out. Or why.

And, given such a push, life never looked back.

In time the dinosaurs ruled over the earth. The earliest appeared 190 million years ago, leading into the huge monsters of *Jurassic Park*: in fact, they ruled for almost 125 million years. But, despite this success and long after the world seemed destined to remain a Jurassic playground for ever, another mysterious event occurred. The dinosaurs abruptly died out, about 65 million years ago. No one knows the reason. Perhaps the cosmos no longer needed dinosaurs.

It was this rather sudden disappearance which gave the early mammals a chance to become widespread, filling up the ecological gaps rendered vacant. Of particular importance to humanity is the apparent evolution, during this period, of one specific branch of mammals, the primates – apes and monkeys. For if humans evolved from the primates, as we are led to believe, then our body shape has its ultimate origin at this time.

Sixty-one million years later – just under 4 million years ago – the first traces of what is believed to be early man appear. Man-like apes or ape-like men descended from the trees – so we are told – to begin a new two-legged

life scavenging on the immense African grasslands. But tool-making, one of the defining characteristics of mankind, was yet to come; archaeology has indicated that the earliest use of simple flaked-stone tools began about 2.5 million years before the present.<sup>2</sup>

Our culture is even more recent. It is thought to have begun a mere 10,000 or 11,000 years ago, nurtured in the developing settled farming communities of the Turkish highlands. Even later still is the use of metals; it took perhaps another 5,000 years. And now we can land this metal on Mars.

According to the current scientific theories, humanity and civilization have occupied only a minute fragment of the hundreds of millions of years of earth's history. In the face of the apparently solid geological and archaeological evidence, for anyone to suggest that human artefacts and human culture might long predate the last 2.5 million, or even 4 million years is to invite total ridicule.

Yet how solid is the accepted story of the past?

Does it really accord with all the evidence? Does it provide a satisfactory explanation for all the artefacts which the earth has given up?

The truth is, that it does not.

In California, early in 1848, some forty miles north-east from where the city of Sacramento now stands, a carpenter was building a water-driven sawmill. The mill-stream drew its water to power the wheel from the nearby American river. But the mill-stream proved too shallow and so the carpenter was digging it out, making it deeper to enable the wheel to turn more freely. One morning he discovered, at the bottom of the stream, some small nuggets of gold which had been exposed during the night by the rushing water. He tried to keep his find a secret; inevitably, he was unsuccessful. A stampede for gold rapidly ensued: the Californian 'Gold Rush'.

Within six months, over 4,000 men had abandoned all other occupation in order to mine the immediate area. The land exploited rapidly expanded into hundreds of square miles and the mining population itself grew to 80,000 or more, half of whom had come by sea around Cape Horn to San Francisco, the others overland by the California Trail. Either way, it took considerable effort.

The gold lay in the rivers which ran down from the Sierra Nevada mountains, through the great central valley of California, to enter the sea at San Francisco. Mining soon moved from simple panning and sieving to an increasingly intricate mechanized operation. Sluices were built to create high-pressure streams of water which could be employed to hose away entire hillsides to get at the gold beneath. Channels washed the tumbling water and rubble through a series of ridged tables which separated out the heavier flakes of gold. And, always, close inspection was the norm; every particle of gold meant money which, after all, was the reason behind all the effort and expense.

It was soon discovered, however, that this precious metal's primary source

was in deeply buried gravels, the former beds of very ancient rivers which lay hundreds of feet beneath the surface. In places they were partly exposed by great ravines cut by modern rivers, ravines which sometimes reached 2,000 feet or more in depth. The miners began to excavate horizontally into the cliff faces or deep beneath steep hills in order to gain access to these gold-bearing gravels. But the work was hard: the gravel was tightly consolidated, like concrete, and heavy pick work, often coupled with explosives, proved the only way to break it up.

The miners found gold by the ton; but, along with it, they also found many curious artefacts and human remains. Rumours began to spread throughout the mining camps of a long-lost civilization which had existed in the area millions of years before and which was the source of these remains. Certain miners began to make collections of these artefacts: skulls, bones, stone spear- and arrow-heads, knives, mortars and pestles, stone dishes, ladles, grooved stone hammer-heads or sinkers, plummet stones and other cultural remnants.

Word of the odd discoveries even reached across the Atlantic. In December 1851 *The Times* of London reported the story of a miner who had dropped a piece of gold-bearing quartz which split open to reveal, firmly embedded in the rock, a corroded but perfectly straight iron nail.<sup>3</sup>

So many anomalous artefacts were found during the subsequent decades that professional organizations began to take an interest – or at least felt that they should take some action to counter what they saw as extravagant claims about mankind's past.

In 1880 Harvard University published a monograph by one of its professors (who was also the State Geologist of California) on some of the finds.<sup>4</sup> On 10 January 1888 a report was read to a meeting of the Anthropological Institute in London.<sup>5</sup> Then, on 30 December 1890, a paper on the subject was delivered to the American Geological Society<sup>6</sup> and in 1899 the most prestigious American scientific organization of all, the Smithsonian Institution of Washington DC, made a survey and critique of all that had been found by that time.<sup>7</sup>

The Smithsonian noted in its survey that most of the finds appeared to come from gravels dating from around 38 to 55 million years ago. But it noted also that many of the artefacts came either from mines near the surface or from the sluicing away of cliffs.

In consequence the Smithsonian experts quite correctly pointed out that many of the artefacts found could well have come from more recent Indian cultures, either buried in deep graves or having long ago fallen into caves or sink-holes and, over the centuries, been covered over with rubble. It is true, certainly, that some of the human remains found revealed chemical changes which are consistent with this explanation. It is also true that sluicing, being a totally destructive exercise, removed everything wholesale. Artefacts from near the surface would be mixed with those from much lower, and thus much older, rock strata. The miners, who generally lacked discrimination in any

scientific sense, regarded all the artefacts which they found, like the gold, as coming from the ancient gravels. Clearly, in many cases, they could be wrong.

In this, the Smithsonian had found a scientifically acceptable and, in general terms, accurate explanation for the appearance of man-made artefacts in the company of rocks of great antiquity. This survey – and others rather similar – achieved the desired result: any challenge which these artefacts might have constituted to scientific orthodoxy was rendered null and void.

But at least the Smithsonian experts were honest: they did concede that there were some artefacts for which their explanation was no answer at all. They were referring to those objects which had been recovered deep within mines often hundreds of feet beneath mountains. They recognized that such artefacts were in a very different category and were not so easily explained away. But they declined to speculate upon the matter further.

Which is a pity. For these artefacts, as we shall see, are as close to definitive proof of an ancient culture as we are likely to get.

## ***Table Mountain***

To understand the situation, we need to understand the geology. In the general gold-bearing region the youngest bedrock dates from about 55 million years ago. At various times afterwards, erupting volcanoes laid wide-ranging lava deposits on top, deposits which can be dated reliably. The gold-bearing river gravels themselves, above the bedrock and below the lava deposits, are dated between 33 and 55 million years ago.

Those miners who worked within a specific geological site, rather than simply sluicing away everything indiscriminately, were better able to determine the source of any artefact. They could date with confidence anything which they might find amongst this ancient gravel; anything which long ago had been washed along by a river. Or discarded at its side.

One such site, which was to become well-known for its artefacts, was Table Mountain in Tuolumne County, California, on the western edge of the Yosemite National Park.<sup>8</sup>

The top of this mountain is a huge lava cap, 9 million years old. Beneath this cap and other rock strata lay the gold-bearing gravels, some lying immediately above the ancient bedrock.

Years of searching for gold there created a network of mines. Some were cut horizontally in through the bedrock for hundreds of feet and then shafts were driven vertically upwards into the lower gravel deposits. Other mines ran obliquely down from the mountainside into the upper layers of these same gravels.

The artefacts were all found within the prehistoric compacted gravel. Miners first came upon spear-heads, six to eight inches long, ladles with

handles and, uniquely, a curious notched slate object which seemed to be a handle for a bow. They also found a stone-grinding tool and a human jaw-bone.<sup>9</sup> These objects came from gravel dated from 33 to 55 million years ago. It is logical, and correct, to conclude that these artefacts could have a similar date.

This gives a direct challenge to science: man-made objects over 33 million years old cannot be accepted by orthodoxy; science ignores or dismisses them. But we cannot.

There is much more evidence of a similar nature: one mine-owner personally found a large stone mortar – used for grinding food – in a horizontal mine-shaft 180 feet beneath the ground surface, beneath the larva cap. A fragment of fossilized human skull was also found in the same mine.<sup>10</sup>

In 1853 a cartload of gold-bearing gravel was being brought out of one of the mines from a pit-face about 125 feet below the surface. Mixed in with the gravel was a well-preserved mastodon tooth (the mastodon is an extinct type of elephant) and a large bead of white marble, about one and a half inches long and just over an inch in diameter. It had a quarter-inch hole drilled right through it.<sup>11</sup>

In 1858 in a shaft over sixty feet below the surface and some 300 feet into the mountain, a stone axe was found. Its length was about six inches and it had a four-inch-wide cutting edge. A hole had been drilled through it to take a wooden handle. Nearby were found a number of stone mortars.<sup>12</sup>

Yet another stone mortar, just over three inches in diameter, was found in 1862, some 200 feet beneath the surface and around 1,800 feet along the mine tunnel.<sup>13</sup> It had been carved out of andesite, the nearest source of which lay 100 miles away.<sup>14</sup>

Seven years later a top professional became involved. Clarence King, a well-known and highly respected American geologist, was the director of the US Government survey of the 40th Parallel. In 1869 he was looking at the geology of Table Mountain. At one particular area near to the volcanic cap, he noticed that a recent flood had exposed sections of the underlying gravel. He began a search for fossils but during this close inspection he found part of a stone pestle tightly wedged in the compact and hard gravel. After extraction it left a perfect cast of itself in the stone matrix.<sup>15</sup> King had no doubt at all that the pestle had rested there as long as the gravel itself, for many millions of years.

King was an experienced geologist; there is no possibility of doubt over the age of the rock strata in which he found this pestle, over 9 million years old: yet it is man-made. It is now in the Smithsonian Institute where an expert recognized the problem for science that this pestle posed. Nevertheless, he commented, honestly, that this particular artefact, 'may not be challenged with impunity'.<sup>16</sup>

In 1877 more artefacts were found beneath Table Mountain in the lower layers of gravel, within a foot or so of the bedrock. One afternoon during an

excavation to put a timber support in place 1,400 or 1,500 feet in from the tunnel entrance, a mine superintendent found several obsidian spear-heads, each about ten inches long.

Intrigued, the superintendent made further investigations and a few feet away found a stone mortar. Shortly after, he found another, this time with its stone pestle. The superintendent later reported to investigators that there was no trace of any disturbance of the gravel or any hole by which these objects could have been placed there more recently, perhaps as a practical joke by one of the other miners. He reported that, "There was not the slightest trace of any disturbance of the mass or of any natural fissure into it by which access could have been obtained, either there or in the neighborhood."<sup>17</sup> The site of the find, in the gold-bearing strata close to the bedrock, suggests an age of between 33 and 55 million years ago.<sup>18</sup>

These particular discoveries were the subject of a paper read to the American Geological Society in 1891; the geologist concluded with the comment:

It would have been more satisfactory to me individually if I had myself dug out these implements, but I am unable to discover any reason why [the superintendent's] statement is not exactly as good evidence to the rest of the world as my own would be. He was as competent as I to detect any fissure from the surface or any ancient workings, which the miner recognizes instantly and dreads profoundly.<sup>19</sup>

While the Table Mountain mine workings alone have provided sufficient enigmas for science, objects were found in mines at other sites which similarly indicated very ancient dates for their origin. Near the town of San Andreas, for example, 144 feet below the surface, a number of stone mortars and other unspecified artefacts were discovered.<sup>20</sup> All these were in rock strata dated to over 5 million years ago. From at least twenty-six other mining sites stone mortars, and sometimes pestles, were found, some in rock strata dated to at least 23 million years ago.<sup>21</sup>

It is an uncomfortable fact which needs to be confronted by the scholars that, by the end of the nineteenth century, literally hundreds of ancient artefacts had been excavated in geological strata of great antiquity. Can they all be dismissed as some kind of fraud or misrepresentation by untrained observers? Or as misidentified intrusive objects? In fact, an experienced miner, following the progress of the work, day by day, for his own safety looking out for cracks or old mine workings, is probably a more competent observer than any visiting geologist.

It is worth remembering too that many archaeological discoveries important to science have been found by unqualified amateurs in rock strata which are difficult to date or in circumstances difficult to reconstruct later. Yet they have been accepted into the official record.

One anthropologist, commissioned by the University of California in 1908 to investigate – and demolish – the claims to veracity made by these discoveries, put the official position bluntly. He stated that these remains

‘would necessitate placing the origin of the human race in an exceedingly remote geological period. This is contrary to all precedent in the history of organisms, which teaches that mammalian species are short-lived.’<sup>22</sup>

Science has a theory: that man evolved from the primates during the course of some 3 to 5 million years, beginning around 6 or 7 million years ago. Nothing contrary to this is acceptable. But is it so outrageous to suggest that this evolution might rather have taken place around 50 million years ago?

Or could even this date be too recent?

## ***The Morrisonville Chain***

On the morning of Tuesday 9 June 1891, the wife of a local newspaper publisher in Morrisonville, Illinois, Mrs S. W. Culp, was filling her coal scuttle. As one of the lumps of coal was too large, she began to break it up. It broke in two, splitting almost down the middle. Inside Mrs Culp saw exposed a delicate gold chain perhaps ten inches long ‘of antique and quaint workmanship’.<sup>23</sup>

Mrs Culp’s first startled reaction was that the chain had been accidentally dropped into the coal, perhaps by one of the miners. But this thought was quickly proved wrong. When she went to lift the chain out she discovered that, while the middle of the chain had become loosened, the two ends, lying close together, were still firmly embedded. Furthermore she saw that where the chain had come loose, a circular indentation remained in the piece of coal. The chain was evidently as old as the coal itself. She took the chain to an expert. On analysis it proved to be of eight-carat gold and weighed about twelve grammes. Mrs Culp died in 1959 and the chain passed to a relative and has been lost to research.<sup>24</sup>

Due to the strange circumstances of its discovery, it was never taken seriously at the time and neither then or later investigated by any scientist. We do not know, therefore, any manufacturing details which might possibly throw some light upon its origins.

By any standard this find is extraordinary: the coal in this area is between 260 and 320 million years old.<sup>25</sup> The implication is that in some distant epoch a culture existed capable of such fine manufacture as represented by this chain.

Three immediate explanations present themselves: firstly, that our theories of human evolution are wrong, that civilized humans did exist at the time of the early dinosaurs. Alternatively, that our theories regarding the formation of coal may be wrong. Perhaps coal – or a type of coal – was made thousands of years ago rather than the millions we normally accept. Finally, perhaps the most immediately attractive explanation is that this was a simple case of mistake or even fraud. It has, from the first, been a truism that newspaper publishers are always looking for sensational events to sell their papers; this may have been one more.

A look at the newspaper revealed that the report was not sensationalized in any way; if anything, it was handled in rather a low-key manner suggesting a certain discretion on the part of the publisher. It appeared, it is true, on the front page but between the leading report which described a drowning and a droll description of the defeat of the Morrisonville baseball team (due to the lack of a pitcher).

Yet the editor clearly wished to let a wider audience know of an event which obviously mystified all who were aware of it. As the article stated, in its orotund manner, it 'almost hushes one's breath with mystery when it is thought for how many long ages the earth has been forming strata after strata which hid the golden links from view'.<sup>26</sup>

It is hard to see this as a deliberate fraud; it may be some kind of error but exactly what is hard to discern from the context. The account has a naïvely honest tone. Those involved in this discovery and its publication were educated and intelligent; it is fair to conclude that the story they printed is accurate in its details and expressed, however hesitantly, their own belief that an error or fraud had not taken place. It constitutes another anomaly which demands an answer.

## ***Gold and Culture***

Cultures produce artefacts. They generate endless quantities of tools, weapons, utensils, religious images and bones; endless quantities of bones.

Any group of people who have progressed beyond a desperate daily struggle for existence also produce art; images for ritual purposes or simply decoration and jewellery, to adorn both women and men. The production of gold or silver jewellery, in particular, is the mark of considerable cultural advance.

The making of a gold chain is a specialist enterprise; it cannot just be thrown together by someone with time on his or her hands between the slaughtering of mammoths or the stealing of wives. In addition, a delicate gold chain cannot possibly be made by stone tools. In other words, a gold chain represents a settled culture which has already undergone many thousands of years of development. A culture rather like that of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia or China.

Proof of this is that the earliest gold chains which orthodox archaeology accepts come from the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, their construction beginning around 5,500 years ago. But they are normally of pure gold. They are not of an alloy of eight carats as was the chain found by Mrs Culp.

Gold of eight carats is not really gold at all but an alloy; it is eight parts gold mixed with sixteen parts of another metal, probably copper. This is a curiosity for those who suspect error: in Victorian times gold alloys were

common but they were usually of fifteen carats – just over 60 per cent gold. And they were hallmarked. There was no standard of eight carats.

What this discovery by Mrs Culp proves – if we can accept the story – is that such a specialist culture existed before the time of the dinosaurs. Of course, this is an outrageous thought.

Unfortunately for those who prefer the comfort of the orthodox theories, other man-made objects have been found in very early rock formations.

## ***Ancient Artefacts...***

*The Times*, Saturday 22 June 1844, contained a curious story. ‘A Singular Circumstance’, it was headed. Some days earlier, it explained, just below Rutherford on the river Tweed, some workers in a quarry found a gold thread in a piece of rock. They took a small section of it to the local newspaper office at Kelso where it was put on display.<sup>27</sup> The author noted wryly, ‘How long this remnant of a former age has remained in the situation from which it was taken will baffle the skill of the antiquary or geologist...’

While the exact site of discovery cannot now be determined, the age of the sandstone in the area of Rutherford is 360 million years.

Equally enigmatic is a report which Sir David Brewster delivered to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. He stated that quarrymen in the Kingoodie Quarry, near Dundee, had found an iron nail in the middle of a block of sandstone. After it had been split open, the head of the nail, together with an inch of its shaft, was still firmly embedded in the rock.<sup>28</sup> The sandstone in this area is Lower Devonian, at least 387 million years old.

A similar challenge to orthodoxy emerged in 1885, in an iron foundry in the Austrian town of Vöcklabruck, midway between Salzburg and Linz. A block of coal broke open to reveal a small steel object, almost a perfect cube, measuring 2.6 by 2.6 by 1.8 inches. A deep groove ran around it and two opposing faces were rounded. The foundry owner’s son took the cube to the museum at Linz where it was studied. Analysis revealed that it was as hard as steel and contained both carbon and nickel. A cast was made of it, which was fortunate for the original has now been lost – perhaps in the chaos of war – but the cast has survived.<sup>29</sup>

In California, in 1952, an artesian well specialist, Frederick Hehr, accidentally discovered at a depth of thirty-seven feet the apparent remains of an iron chain embedded in solid sandstone. A photograph of it dating from 1955 shows the block of stone with one large ring connected to a number of much smaller ones. Unfortunately, like many of these remnants, its whereabouts is no longer known.<sup>30</sup>

Because of the anomalous character of finds such as these and the fact that they present such a challenge to the accepted scientific perspective – the orthodox ‘paradigm’ – many of these finds are not reported and those which

are fail to receive the attention which would ensure their preservation. With such official disdain, all too often they simply become lost, given away to an interested friend, filed in a box in the bowels of a museum or discarded upon the finder's death.

### ***... Or Ancient Ancestors?***

The iron nail from Kingoodie could be 387 million years old; the gold thread found in Rutherford was in rock dated to 360 million years; Mrs Culp's gold chain fell out of coal assigned a date of at least 260 million years; the finds at Table Mountain range between 35 and 33 million years: clearly there is no possibility that any of this data can be accommodated into the conventional scientific understanding of the earth's history. It suggests, at least, that those fossils of ape-like creatures which are studied by the palaeontologists have little or nothing to do with the evolution of humans at all. In fact, this evidence – if it can be substantiated even in just one of the cases we have reviewed – indicates that humans, in a modern form, have been walking upon this planet for a very long time indeed.

But while we have listed some of the artefacts found – and it is amazing that any have survived at all – what of the people themselves? Have any bones, skeletons or other remains been found?

In fact, they have.

In 1862 bones judged to be human were discovered by coal miners working ninety feet underground in Macoupin County, Illinois. The miners reported that the bones were first seen with a shiny hard coat the same colour as the coal. This, they discovered, could be scraped off leaving white bones. Recent estimates of the age of the coal there indicate a minimum of 286 million years.<sup>31</sup>

In what is unfortunately a repetitive litany, these bones have long since vanished and no other studies seem to have been made of them. We can have little doubt, however, that the miners reported the events just as they occurred. But were these bones of humans? Or were they of some early primate? Or were they some strange rock formation or mineral accretion? It would have been pleasing if the bones had been measured and described by an experienced geologist or biologist. And even more satisfactory would have been someone who had the foresight to store the remains so that we might study them now.

The thought of bones being found in coal deep beneath the surface of the earth may seem so strange as to cast doubt immediately upon the veracity of the find. However, curious though it might seem, given the great pressures and temperatures involved in the formation of coal, true fossil bones have certainly been found buried deep within coal seams.

During the early morning of 2 August 1958, coal miners working at