

**Incorrupt: The New Dinosaur Hagiography**

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## **Incorrupt: The New Dinosaur Hagiography**

Who knew? How could we have known that dinosaurs were such saintly beings? St. Bernadette, St. Silvan, stand aside. The Church of Orthodox Science has declared the bodies of the clearly holy dinosaurs to be, well, incorrupt. Well, almost, but hey, 199.5 million years of preservation for even a saint's body isn't all that bad. Pilgrimages are being organized.

As the canonizations proceed, an amazing sleight of hand is also whisking before our eyes. Three years ago (AR #106), I described a crisis in raging full force around the subject of the actual age of dinosaur remains, thereby equally implying a crisis in our historical understanding, namely, just when did the dinosaurs actually perish? Was it really 65 million or even 200 million years ago, or was it within the effective range of carbon dating, i.e., 50,000 years, 25,000 years ago, or less? The crisis stems from the discovery – with now apparent great frequency – of organic matter within and without the bones of these dinosaurs. In turn, this foundational narrative supporting the long ages required for Darwinian evolution – the long and ancient history of the dinosaurs – stands in jeopardy. For current science, this threat of a massive overturning is very real. And very disturbing.

The experts whose province actually is the subject of organic matter longevity – the molecular biologists and biochemists – assert, based on both theoretical structure and extensive repeated experimentation, that the maximum longevity of protein is 100,000 years. Simply the natural, inexorable, structure-breakdown process of the law of entropy in matter assures this. These biochemistry-established decay rates have yet to be disproven. Yet we have organic materials – blood vessels, osteocytes (tiny bone cells) – found within the bones of dinos, which, based on high guesswork, even on circularly reasoned estimations on the age of the geological stratum in which the bones are found (see AR #70), are stated to be from the Cretaceous (68 million, 80 million years old) and even from the Jurassic (199.5 million years old).

Dr. Mary Schweitzer, in 2005, was the first official publisher/defender of this organic material discovery, in this case, organic matter found in the thigh bone of a mama T-Rex supposedly 65 million years old. I say the “first publisher” because, it turns out, she was far from the first discoverer. This phenomenon has been known (and not talked about) for years. Schweitzer, however, also became the chief theoretician for “explaining” this miracle. Mixing ostrich and chicken blood vessels in an iron-rich solution, she was able to extend the life of these vessels by 200X, where they yet were in a (vaguely described) “recognizable” condition, i.e., with some (unspecified) degree of preserved structure. More specifically, from an expected 3.5 days, she achieved 720 days. That the experiment employed utterly artificial conditions is ignored. That her preservative mechanism is orders of magnitude short of power, for she requires not 200X, but 20,000,000,000X to account for 199.5 million years – also ignored. But more on this later.

### **The New Normal**

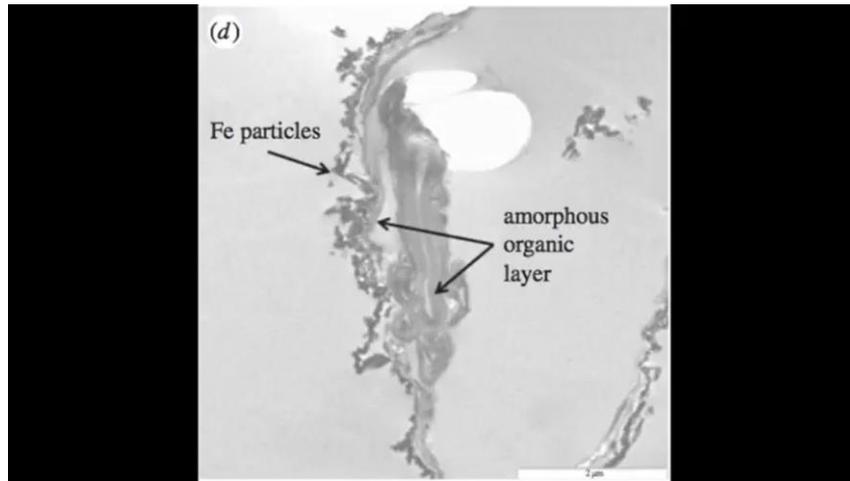
So, what has happened since? Firstly, the Schweitzer “explanation” is still the “go to” explanation – unquestioned. But it is worse. The miraculous preservation of organic matter in remains supposedly many tens of millions of years old is now being passed off as simply “normal.” Consider, for example, a January, 2017 piece in the *Christian Science Monitor* discussing a recently published article by Dr. Robert Reisz (in *Nature Communications*) on the discovery of collagen in a denizen of the Jurassic, a 195 million-year old *Lufengosaurus* in China. The article quotes Dr. Stephen Brusatte, a paleontologist at University of Edinburgh: “It wouldn't surprise me if this type of preservation is much more common than we might think...This realization could be a game-changer for paleontologists and will give us new ways to study

dinosaurs that we never before imagined.” And then the kicker: “Dr. Brusatte sees Reisz's work as key support for Schweitzer's controversial research. Taken together, he says, this kind of research ‘tells us that soft tissues and microscopic tissues may be able to be preserved for a huge swath of time – hundreds of millions of years.’”

This is just one, typical example of the new tone of discussion. Biochemistry, go away. Poor troglodyte molecular biologists and biochemists. Protein longevity 100k years? How quaint. And long live the Darwinian story.

### Schweitzer’s Magical Mystery Mechanism

Let’s look a bit more at Dr. Schweitzer’s born-in-2013, now trusty “go-to” explanation, that is, at her own sleight of hand. It is interesting to note, firstly, that the paper trots out the same Ms. T-Rex bone that had now been resting in Schweitzer’s lab for eight years. A microscope picture shows the iron particles (Fe) clustered tightly around the blood vessels, in her words, “infiltrating an organic layer.” But eight years in a nice dry lab, complete with handling, possible reagents, etc., is not eight years at Hell Creek, Montana, where the soil is indeed known for containing moisture.



Schweitzer’s Microscope Slide of Iron Particles in Organic Tissue

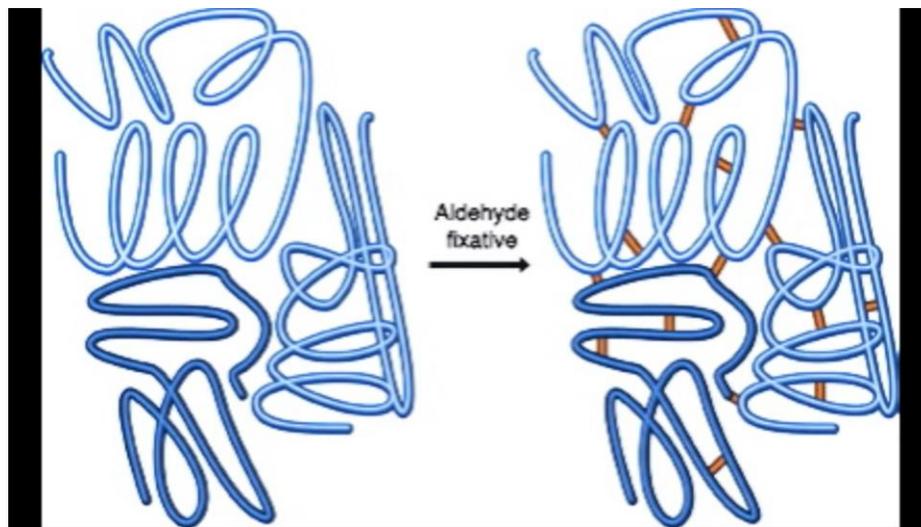
And iron particles love moisture. This love leads to forming iron oxide – a form of rust. Mark Armitage, a microscopy expert, discoverer of a number of fossils at Hell Creek, and fired from his lab-head position at Cal State for publishing in a peer reviewed journal on the subject of dinosaur soft tissue preservation, points out the following: It is quite possible that in actuality, while at Hell Creek, surrounded by moisture, the situation within the T-Rex thigh was relative stasis. Take the bone out and put it in a dry place. The matrix begins to dry out. Where do the iron particles go? Why, to the last source of moisture, namely to the walls of blood vessels. Can Schweitzer rule this out? Did she? No and no.

So let’s look again at that “go-to” experiment that demonstrated that “iron has a role” in soft tissue preservation. Note, the paper is not saying that it is iron that does the preserving, only that it “has a role.” But what this is, is questionable. To begin with, what did she do initially with the chicken and ostrich blood vessels she attempted to preserve via iron? Buried in the “methods” section of the paper, in an unlaudable non-effort to replicate the conditions of the burial of Ms. T-Rex at Hell Creek, we find that Schweitzer, a) put an anticoagulant into the blood, b) used

centrifuges – ultra high speed – on the blood, over and over, and, c) used molecular filters on the tissue before the experiment began.

Why? Why all this? Begin with the anti-coagulant. The prime directive of blood, when exposed, is to coagulate. This is nature’s fundamental organism-saving device to stop us from bleeding to death. But if the blood were coagulated, it would have bound up the iron and made it unavailable for her experiment. She needed the iron free and available. The anti-coagulant prevented it from clotting. Why the ultra-centrifuges used multiple times? She had to filter out all the serum, thus all the clotting factors that bind up these proteins tightly in the clotting reaction. She had to remove all the cells and sub platelet cells – anything relating to clotting. And finally, she had to use a molecular filter to eliminate these things.

After all this, she was left with the red blood cells which she then lysed (broke open), freeing the hemoglobin (which holds the iron). Then she left this on a lab bench for two years at room temperature, in the absence of water, the freeze-thaw cycle, or the heat of the Montana summer. Though I’m sure that research teams are busily searching the site for the syringe of anti-coagulant, the centrifuges and molecular filters that Ms. T-Rex carried at all times in her Prada purse, needless to say, it is not too likely that any of these things happened at Hell Creek when Ms. T-Rex met her end – along with many others in her bridge club at the time.



The tiny fixative bonds formed within a protein structure

Which brings us to the notion, which arose from all these machinations, that iron is now a recognized *fixative* agent for preserving tissue. Schweitzer pointed to these as a preservative cause in that microscope slide where the FE particles are clustering along the blood vessels. Above this line of Fe particles is what she termed, in a misleading way, an area of “amorphous structure.” On closer look, this is also clearly fine structure, equally well preserved, which the iron apparently magically acts upon from a distance. In any case, here is the problem: Iron particles are nanometers in size. Yet standard fixative agents, such as formaldehyde, aldehyde or formalin, are but several angstroms in size – vastly smaller. These agents work in tiny gaps of the amine sections of the protein, binding these together (the rest of the protein being fully subject to normal degradation). To employ an iron particle, to use Armitage’s metaphor, is like driving a garbage truck into a pile of papers when all you need is a tiny paper clip to hold the papers together. If iron actually worked, he notes, one could make a mint with a patent. The world of

microscopy – whose business revolves around fixing tissue for microscope viewing – would be stampeding to your door. Iron, as a fixative, is a myth.

Schweitzer, while invoking iron fixation as a cause, also speculated that iron might be preventing bacteria from doing its normal work of breaking organic matter down. In other words, she has little clarity what iron does, or if. Combined with other problems, like the fact that places like the insides of Triceratops horns have no blood vessels to carry iron, invoking Schweitzer's solution is roughly like wafting a smoke cloud by swinging your incense censor over both the subject and the burial shrine of St. Mother T-Rex. There is an obvious remedy...

### **Carbon dating – What Happened to it?**

What we have now is the ludicrous absence of that hitherto infallible, worshipped, and revered dating method called – oh, what was it again, yes – *carbon dating*! One resistance to this hitherto from the “scientific” community has been “contaminants,” as in, contaminants would invalidate the dating. Another has been that the bones are all in fact mineralized, truly fossilized or petrified, and thus obviously have no organic material – so go away C-14 people. This latter, by the way, is largely bunk. Armitage points out that these remains are indeed just *bones* – they are *not* fossilized. The bones are often simply restored via a standard edta cleaning solution. Armitage has videos of cleaning up a Triceratops horn found at Hell Creek, using a simple saline solution for cleaning, then slicing it open and revealing a mass of spongy, highly elastic, organic material.

But where is the “contamination” when opening and testing the insides of supposed fossilized bone? Seriously, this threat cannot be controlled for? (There are plenty of protocols.) The issue screams for carbon dating. Not that it hasn't been done. Members of the Paleochronology group presented their findings at the 2012 Western Pacific Geophysics Meeting in Singapore, August 13-17, a conference of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and the Asia Oceania Geosciences Society (AOGS). Their carbon-14 dating of multiple samples of bone from 8 dinosaurs found in Texas, Alaska, Colorado, and Montana revealed that the bones are hardly from the Jurassic or Cretaceous, but rather 22,000 to 39,000 years old. Not to worry. After the conference, the abstract of the study was removed from the conference website by two chairmen. Unwilling to challenge the data openly, they erased the report from public view without a word to the authors. When the authors inquired, they received a letter simply stating that, “There is obviously an error in these data. The abstract was apparently not reviewed properly and was accepted in error.”

There are other similar incidents. The degraded nature of the situation and of current science speaks for itself. I would fear, were I a member of orthodox science staunchly defending Darwinian theory, that in continuing this suppression of results, stifling of discussion and cruel destruction of careers, I myself, when at St. Peter's gate, would fail to meet and enjoy the company of those saintly dinosaurs. Maybe unless I were a biochemist.

