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HOMO FLORESIENSIS AS AN ISLAND FORM
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Keywords: anthropology; Flores; Homo floresiensis; Indonesian

ABSTRACT

Homo floresiensis is a small-bodied hominin from the Indonesian island Flores. The type specimen, LB1, is believed to be a female of approximately 5 m in length with a cranial capacity of around 400 cm³. There is still no agreement on the cause of the small stature and small cranial capacity of LB1 and the associated individual. Homo floresiensis displays several island adaptations, which also have been observed among the members of other typical island fauna, indicating that Homo floresiensis might very well have been an endemic island form. Homo floresiensis has morphology similar to that of a Homo erectus juvenile, since it has a high retouched dental and brachial index, low humeral torsion, low tibial torsion and a high proximal angle. Additionally, Homo floresiensis has shortened lower limbs. The features displayed by Homo floresiensis give an indication of the manner of descents by paedomorphosis, which was by truncating growth through increase in the rate of skeletal ossification, possibly caused by hormonal changes.

Introduction
Homo floresiensis is a small-bodied hominin from the Indonesian island Flores. The type specimen, LB1, is believed to be a female of approximately 5 m in length with a cranial capacity of around 400 cm³ (Brown et al., 2004; Tiek et al., 2005). There is still no agreement on the cause of the small stature and small cranial capacity of LB1 and the associated individuals. It is believed by some that Homo floresiensis is a descendant of Homo erectus or some other primitive hominin and derived the small stature and small cranial capacity by endocrine island dwarfing (Brown et al., 2004; Marwood et al., 2005). Others believe that Homo floresiensis is a population of microcephalics, or that LB1 is a microcephalic from a population of pygmys (Richards, 2008; Jacobs et al., 2004).

That LB1 is a strange-looking hominin from the island of Flores is agreed upon by the scientific community. However, whether his peculiarities are best described by island adaptations or pathology is currently the main focus of the scientific discussion.
News on the activities of the PalArch Foundation

André J. Veldmeijer

Congratulations! Unofficially, the Foundation and its journals exist for 5 years! However, the first issue appeared in 2005, so officially we have to wait one more year to celebrate. But since we are always in for a party, the managing editors and the board gather on July 4th. To be honoust, not only to toast the existence of the Foundation but also to discuss how we should proceed. Moreover, it would be good for all to see each other in person: silly as it may sound for such a small country as The Netherlands, some people have never seen each other despite collaborating for several years! The meeting will take place at the Foundation’s office and of course a report will be published in our January 2009 issue.

We are proud that we can say that also our scientific publications are now also set in Adobe Indesign, which we think is an improvement. But of course you can see for yourself: the first publication is online at http://www.palarch.nl/Palaeontology/palaeontology.htm.

As announced previously (Newsletter Volume 5, No. 1 [January 2008]), we will be able to sustain an online archive. The first publications will be put in our online archive on approximately August 1st. Together with this, we offered our colleagues who published scientific papers to submit an erratum, which will be published in our January issue of the PalArch Foundation Newsletter.

But there is more good news relating to durability and permanent access. We still work with the Royal Library in The Hague, The Netherlands in storing our publications. Unfortunately, unexpected events has lead to severe delays, but we are happy, however, to say that we are working to make a trial package of our publications for the Royal Library and we expect, safe unforeseen happenings, that all our publications will be delivered to the Library and hopefully are available online by January 1st.

Fortunately, we have several submissions for our journals on palaeontology and archaeology of northwest Europe. Unfortunately, although we had four manuscripts submitted for our Journal on Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology the last half year, three of them had to be rejected. One, however, is still in the review process and yet another one will be submitted within several weeks from now.

Good news also about our e-book on scarabs by Cooney & Tyrrell (2005). At the IAE meeting (see further on in the Newsletter for a report), antiquarian Galerie Antinoë (Brest, France) expressed their interest and bought 20 e-books to sell at congresses, book fairs etc. We are happy of this of course and thank Carolien van Zoest for her help in establishing this contact.

Finally, this: the figure text of Kosc photograph in our previous Newsletter was, as you might have noticed, wrong. The photograph is not of the mastaba of Mereruka, but of the wall of Djoser’s pyramid complex.

Publications in the July Issue

Papers in PalArch’s Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology ISSN 1567-214X

Still online:

Book reviews in PalArch’s Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology (ISSN 1567-214X)


Papers in PalArch’s Journal of Vertebrate Palaeontology (ISSN 1567-2158)


Papers in PalArch’s Journal of Archaeology of Northwest Europe (ISSN 1573-3939)

Still online:


Book reviews in PalArch’s Journal of Archaeology of Northwest Europe (ISSN 1573-3939)


Vertebrate Palaeontology News

Brian L. Beatty

It has been some time since I wrote an editorial for our Newsletter, but I hope that I can bring some good news. First, after a bit of a slump in submissions rates last year our present rate of submissions has risen slightly, with seven papers submitted to PalArch since January 1st of this year! Delays in getting these out have stemmed largely from engaging in a more rigorous peer review in an effort to help make the papers all the better for it. Many of those have only come in during the last month, so I anticipate that the January 1, 2009 issue will be much larger, thanks to all of those that have submitted papers in recent months. We have some exciting work on taphonomy, fossil eggs, etcetera in the works, and I hope to see the submissions continue coming in.

Regarding submissions, I would really like to see more reports of paleopathologies, new records of the geographic or temporal distribution of taxa, and more reviews. After some unexpected difficulty some colleagues of mine have had in publishing some small papers, I have seen firsthand how scarce such outlets are that are interested in publishing on the fossil record. Many journals like the Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology and others have such a tremendous backlog of papers already accepted that they have become more picky because of space concerns, and many papers of scientific merit that simply lack popularity are falling by the wayside, and perhaps forcing people to neglect publishing on fossils that don’t grab media attention.

I was just in Tennessee for the first meeting of the Southeastern Association of Vertebrate Paleontology, held at the Gray Fossil Site (a rich late Miocene fauna), and got into a conversation with a good friend about this problem. We both noticed that fewer journals are interested in publishing papers that add small increments to the fossil record, even when this information could have profound effects on subsequent large-scale interpretations of paleoecology, paleobiogeography, systematics, evolution, and/or functional morphology.

PalArch has no such space concerns thanks to the beauty of online publishing, and so though we maintain that peer review keep the work’s quality there, we are not interested in restricting ourselves to what may be interesting to the popular press or is beautiful and grandiose. I find it sad that journals that are not popular magazines like Nature and Science should be tending to become selective in similar ways to drive up impact factors. While
I wish that PalArch is valued for its impact, I hope that its impact is one that respects the value of new information for progress in our science, one that encourages us to share our individual knowledge with the collective world of science in a peer-reviewed means instead of a popularity contest.

So, if you have a new record of a taxon from a locality, or a review of a topic that you feel is worth addressing, please send it our way. This is for the science, not for our egos.

News on the Archaeology of Northwest Europe

*Elly Heirbaut en Natasja den Ouden*

The dark gloomy months of winter have passed and we can now enjoy the first rays of summery sunshine. And we all know what that means, don’t we? Yes, we can zip off our trouser legs and pick up our trowels and shovels. It’s field season again. But before you all go off to play Indiana Jones, take a chance to read the two book reviews that we have for you. And why not print off this Newsletter? It will give you something to read when you are waiting for the all purpose mini van to take you from your campsite to the excavation.

So have a good field season everyone, and we’ll see you again in winter.

Four-year IAE Meeting Rhodes

*André J. Veldmeijer*

Every four years, the International Association of Egyptologists (http://www.iae.lmu.de/) meets during a 7 or 8 days congress. Four years ago it was in Grenoble, France; this year the "X International Congress of Egyptologists" was held 22-29 May at the Greek island of Rhodes. Rhodes is the third largest Greek island and, officially, the sunniest place in the Europe. It is situated at the crossroads of two major sea routes of the Mediterranean between the Aegean Sea and the coast of the Middle East, as well as Cyprus and Egypt. Its capital city, located at its northern tip, is the capital of the Prefecture with the Medieval Town in its centre (which, in 1988 was designated as a World Heritage City). The Medieval Town of Rhodes is the result of different architectures belonging to various historic eras, predominantly those of the Knights of St. John. (http://www.rhodes.gr/history/en/)

The congress was held “at the Rodos Palace Hotel and Convention Center (Trianton Ave., Ixia, 85100, Rhodes), one of the largest purpose-built conference centers in the Mediterranean region and the country’s most talked about and vibrant
meeting venue, with over 500 conferences and numerous exhibitions held in its premises and attended by Heads of State, Nobel laureates, innovative businessmen, renowned artists and scientists. With a total combined capacity of 4,000 delegates in 20 ergonomically designed multi-use halls ranging in size from 20-1300 persons the Center can support events of varying size and complexity. Having been selected as the official venue for the European union Summit and Western European Union Council of ministers, the Rodos Palace is identified as a prominent choice for rewarding conferences and incentives.

Over 300 presentations were held during these 6 days (the first day was reserved for registration, posting posters etc) and a boat trip to Lindos, combined with a visit of the Acropolis and the Temple of Athena after which there was time for swimming, was scheduled for the last day) and in total well over 500 scholars were registered. According to the congress’ website “The work of the Congress will be organized on a series of major themes within Egyptology, with a particular focus on multi-disciplinary approaches to general themes. Participants will be asked to orient their contributions towards one of the major themes, whatever the nature of the evidence and source material they are working with. The list of major themes for the Congress is yet to be decided but suggestions have included the following topics: Cultural Heritage, Egypt – Greece in Antiquity: ethnicity, cross-cultural interactions and adaptations, Archaeology and History of Art, The Egyptian belief-system: knowledge, sacred and profane, Sociology, Literature and Philology, The Archaic state and the origins of culture, History: historiography, foreign Relations and diplomacy.” They organizers warn, however that: “The list is not exclusive. The named themes are merely intended to provide a focus of discussion. Suggestions and comments from potential participants about themes to which they would like to contribute will be most welcome.” Be this as it may, the far majority of presentations were iconographic, art historical or Egyptological in nature. There were quite a few archaeological presentation but case studies of objects, let alone organic objects, were very few indeed. Not to mention topics of a more theoretical archaeological nature. Furthermore, the website reads “In addition to the papers read, special forums for work-groups will be considered” but there was only (if memory serves me well) one. Finally “facilities will be provided for poster sessions and visual displays. Participants should provide the Organising Committee with details of display area required and format of displays at the earliest possible date.” Unfortunately, posters are not really popular in Egyptology, in contrast to palaeontology, where it is a well established way of communicating research. Perhaps it is due to the fact that here, as well as four years ago, the posters were placed somewhat away from the main socializing area. The PalArch Foundation presented a poster as well as a A4 handout of the poster, which the organizers were kind enough to include in the information package each participant got, for which we like to thank them again!

Please, visit http://www.rhodes.aegean.gr/tms/congress2008.htm for more information and the pdf of all abstracts of the presentations.
Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections

Richard H. Wilkinson

The University of Arizona announces a new online journal to launch in late Fall 2008. The ‘Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections’ will be a wholly online scholarly publication integrating Egyptian archaeology with Mediterranean, Near Eastern and African studies – providing a new venue for this growing field of interdisciplinary and inter-area research. The journal will publish full-length articles, short research notes, and reviews of published works, each of which will be peer-reviewed in a blind screening process by an Egyptologist and a specialist from the outside area of interaction.

The journal will have a wider geographical and temporal range than existing publications while specializing in all aspects of interaction between ancient Egypt and its neighbors. The journal will consider potential contributions on any aspect of interaction (one- or two-way) between ancient Egypt and other cultures of the ancient world. Normally, the other cultures are those directly or closely surrounding Egypt in Africa, the Near East, and the Mediterranean world, though if interaction can be demonstrated between Egypt and more distant regions, that is acceptable. Posited interactions between Egypt and the New World will not be considered.

The journal will be edited by Richard Wilkinson, Regents Professor of Egyptian Archaeology at the University of Arizona, and steered by an Executive Editorial Board composed of distinguished scholars from a number of countries around the world, including the following confirmed members:

- Kathryn Bard, Professor, Boston University, USA
- Daphna Ben Tor, Curator, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
- Manfred Bietak, Professor and Director, University of Vienna, Austria
- Salima Ikram, Professor and Director, American University in Cairo, Egypt
- Nanno Marinatos, University of Illinois, Chicago, USA
- Donald Redford, Professor and Director, Pennsylvania State University, USA
- Thomas Schneider, Professor and Editor, Journal of Egyptian History, Univ. of British Columbia, Canada
- Günter Vittmann, Professor, University of Würzburg, Germany
- Willem J. Van den Houten, Professor and Director, UCLA, USA
- Nicolas Wyatt, Professor Emeritus, Edinburgh University, United Kingdom

In addition, a core of distinguished specialists in various aspects and areas of Egyptian interaction will serve as editorial liaisons, working with the editor and reviewing submissions to the journal. A complete list of Editorial liaisons will appear on the journal website.

An Editorial Production Board includes:

- Dennis Forbes, ‘KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt’, USA
- Patricia Spencer, ‘Egyptian Archaeology’, Egypt Exploration Society, UK

The ‘Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections’ will offer very rapid publication. If accepted for publication, submissions will normally appear within a very few months – or less – of receipt. Copyright of submitted material will remain with contributors so that submissions may be freely utilized by their authors in other venues at any time after their publication in JAEI.

The inaugural issue of the ‘Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections’ will be published in late fall 2008. Access and subscription information will be announced in October. The journal’s guide for contributors may be obtained from the editor at egypt@u.arizona.edu.
Proceedings of the 11th meeting of the Dutch Vertebrate Palaeontology Group held at Utrecht University, June 20, 2008

Natasja den Ouden

There were 20 people present; Paul Albers, Jan Robert Brand, Hans Brinkerink, Jan van Dam, Francien Dieleman, Martha Koot, Hanneke Meijer, Albert van der Meulen, Dick Mol, Henk Oosterink, Natasja den Ouden, Marvin Overbeeke, Noud Peters, Femke Lindeman, Jelle Reumer, Charlie Schouwenburg, André Veldmeijer, Hannie de Visser, John de Vos and Wilma Wessels.

Introduction

Wilma Wessels welcomes us all at the faculty of Earth Sciences of Utrecht University. She notes that the past six months have been very productive, as the activities of a number of group members have made it into the news. Books have been published by Jelle Reumer, Dick Mol and John de Vos.

Talks

Femke Lindeman presents her research on the Pleistocene and Holocene seals of the North Sea. To be able to distinguish between species, she measured long bones and mandibles. The measurements, together with morphological characteristics, form the basis for species identification. She found that although the long bones of most species differ in size, the proportions are very similar. One exception is Phoca groenlandica. This species was present on the North Sea in the Pleistocene, although it was smaller than its modern counterparts. Many of the bones previously ascribed to P. vitulina are probably of P. groenlandica. Phoca vitulina was not present in the North sea until around 2000 BP. Apart from the mandible, the humerus proved to be the most diagnostic bone. From the discussion following the talk, it becomes clear that this is the case in other animal groups as well (e.g. marine reptiles).

Paul Albers describes his quest for Saurophargis voltzi. The first specimen was found in Poland around 1900. This species has very characteristic vertebrae with osteoderm spikes. In 1999 a concentration of bones was found in the Winterswijk quarry in the Netherlands. This concentration turned out to be very important, as not only vertebrae, but also other parts of the body were preserved. Even parts of the skull were found. The pre-orbital foramen of this skull shows some archosauromorph traits. As the skulls of this group fragment easily, it explains the general absence of them in the fossil record. The Winterswijk fossils contribute greatly to our knowledge of Saurophargis. We now know that the animal was fully marine. Size differences of fossils between the two layers they were found in can be the result of taphonomic processes. However, they could also indicate the presence of two species, a larger and a smaller one.

Hanneke Meijer has analysed the skull morphology of Tapejara wellnhoferi and compared it to modern birds, in order to infer feeding strategies. She especially wanted to test whether Tapejara could be a seed eater. In modern birds, skull morphology is linked with diet. In seed cracking birds, the angle of the quadratum with the ventral skull base is low. The angle of the quadratum with the ventral skull base in Tapejaridae falls within the range of modern-day probers. These are birds, such as waders and geese, that forage by probing a soft substrate for invertebrates. The Santana Formation, in which Tapejara was found, also yielded fossils of soft fleshy fruits, such as those of Brachyphyllum and Gnetalis. These fruits could well have been a food source for Tapejara. In conclusion, Tapejara was not a nut cracker, but it ate fleshy fruits and probed the substrate for invertebrates.

Henk Oosterink gives us a slideshow of the Winterswijk Quarry. This quarry consists mainly of Triassic sediments. At the time these sediments were deposited, the area was at a latitude of 20 degrees north. The climate was hot and it was a tidal area. Calcium particles were trapped by algal mats with cyanobacteria. A large number of fossils have been found in the sediments: invertebrates (such as bivalves, gastropods, brachiopods and crustaceans), vertebrates (most notably Nothosaurus winterswijkensis) and a number of ichnosilss (burrows, swimming tracks, footprints).

News and views

André Veldmeijer notes the four year (unofficially five year) anniversary of the PalArch Foundation. All articles will be put in an online archive. The format of the scientific articles has changed and will be applied as of the July 2008 issue.

Jan van Dam calls our attention to a symposium organised by the Paleobiologische Kring (Paleobiological Association). Main focus will be the Triassic, and it will be held in Winterswijk on the 22nd of September.

Hanneke Meijer lets us know that the WPZ (Dutch Society for Pleistocene Mammals) will have a meeting in the Natural History Museum in Rotterdam on the 28th of June.
Henk Oosterink informs us that as of July 2008, Muschelkalk will officially be named the ‘Vossenveld Formation’.

Jelle Reumer announces the opening of an exhibition of the works of Zdenek Burian in the Natural History Museum in Rotterdam, on the 30th of August.

The next (12th) meeting of the Dutch Vertebrate Palaeontology Group will take place on November 2008 at the Natural History Museum in Rotterdam.

Prof. Dr. Stephen K. Donovan awarded with the Linnean Medal for Zoology

On May 23rd, the Linnean Society in London awarded Prof. Dr. Stephen K. Donovan, a long-time member of our Advisory Board, with the Linnean Medal for Zoology. Professor Donovan is a palaeontologist at the Naturalis Museum of Natural History in Leiden. His research on, amongst other things, echinoderms and trace fossils has contributed significantly to our understanding of systematics and natural history. On a wider scope, his work is esteemed because it translates to broader evolutionary and palaeontological questions, including taphonomy, mass extinctions and paleoecology.

By awarding the medal, the Linnean Society encourages excellence in the natural sciences and prizes for outstanding work in the zoological sciences. Thus, Steve Donovan is now in the good company of renowned palaeontologists like Sir Richard Owen, George Gaylord Simpson and Stephen Jay Gould, who received this honour before him.
Megalith Memory

Natasja den Ouden

I am sure you will remember this game from when you were little. This archaeological version, you can take with you to play on those long excavation nights when, for some unfortunate reason (or binge-drinking the night before), you are out of beer. To play, print the pictures twice, so you have two full sets. Cut them out and put them upside down on the table. Shuffle well, keeping a hypnotic gaze at your opponent. This is very important! Now turn two pictures and see if they match. If they do, you get another try. If they don’t, it’s up to your opponent to try. The player with the most matches wins. Have fun!

Do you recognize any of the megaliths in this game? The solution can be found on page 13.
Egypt in photographs


Zbigniew Kosc exhibit: L’Egitto ebraico (7 May - 8 June 2008)

Judaica in Egypt - synagogues and cemeteries in Cairo and Alexandria - black and white photography. This exhibition was part of the show “Islam and Judaism” curated by Sherif el Sebaie (http://members.chello.nl/zkosc/Judaica/cairo/synagogue%20cairo.html)
PalArch: a new design

Ilja Nieuwland

That is to say: new for the scientific papers. For the Newsletter, things will remain more or less as usual, since we’ve based the new layout for the journals on the Newsletter design.

Simultaneously, we’ve moved from MS Word to the professional layout software of Adobe InDesign CS3. This will give the journals a more professional and, dare we say it, slick outlook.

Allow me to give some details about the new design. All graphical items in the journal have been standardised.

Like the Newsletter, we’re using FontFont Celeste as a base font. Celeste is a font by British font designer Chris Burke and distributed by FontShop. Although it alludes to turn-of-the-century slab serifs such as Didot and Bodoni, its overall impression is much more like a regular serif (such as Times Roman or Sabon), making it suitable for small as well as large print. Moreover, Celeste has both lower and upper case numbers, which means that it can be used in tables and figures as well. Celeste curfifs are less robust than upright type. The advantage is, that we can use contrast in a text without resorting to the use of bolder type, which can be very distracting visually.

The header font is Erik Spiekermann’s FF Meta, which is possibly one of the most-used fonts today. FF Meta was designed in 1991-93 by Eric Spiekermann based on the typeface commissioned by the German Post Office (Bundespost) in 1984 as an exclusive corporate font. However the face was not accepted by the customer and the whole project was cancelled. In 1989 its artwork was digitized and the new face of 3 styles was created by Just van Rossum. It was named FF Meta after Meta Studio 93 by Eric Spiekermann.

We have given the bibliographical data a much more prominent place on the first page of all articles. Moreover, from now on the headers will use a standard APA format, mentioning volume and (issue) numbers.
Colophon

The Newsletter is an initiative of the PalArch Foundation and is edited by A.J. Veldmeijer (veldmeijer@palarch.nl), I.J.J. Nieuwland (iljjaj@gmail.com), H.J.M. Meijer (hanneke.meijer@gmail.com), N. den Ouden (natasja@stayfun.co.uk), E.N.A. Heirbaut (nweurope@palarch.nl) and B.L. Beatty (vert.pal@palarch.nl). The illustration editing is done by M.H. Kriek (http://www.bcl–support.nl/). The Newsletter is free to download for six months; back issues (pdf, sent by email) can be ordered by sending an email to postmaster@palarch.nl. Any questions and reactions regarding the Newsletter, the Foundation or the web-based Netherlands scientific journal should be addressed to veldmeijer@palarch.nl. The address to which correspondence can be sent is: PalArch Foundation, Mezquitalaan 23, 1064 NS, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

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Call for papers

We would like to focus on our ongoing call for papers. Many of our readers are already aware of it, but for those who just to know us we would like to point out that all contributions are welcome that fall within the wider thematic framework of the journal. This includes papers on archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, archaeology of northwest Europe and palaeontology and related disciplines such as archaeobotany, archaeozoology, museology, systematics, taphonomy, the history of science and any subject that relates to these fields. Contributions can take the form of, for instance, excavation reports, material studies, databases etc. PalArch is especially, but not exclusively, suitable for submission that involves large amounts of data.

Submission of papers

The rules for submissions for our scientific issues can be found under the heading ‘Information’ at the website. Please contact the managing editor of the Newsletter for guidelines on Newsletter articles.

Megalith memory (pp. 9-10) – solution

1 Stonehenge, England
2 Evora, Portugal
3 Skegriedösem, Sweden
4 Borger, the Netherlands
5 Avebury, England
6 Knowth, Ireland
7 Skegriedösem, Sweden
8 Evora, Portugal
9 Stonehenge, England
10 Stonehenge, England
11 Knowth, Ireland
12 Evora, Portugal
13 Anloo, the Netherlands
14 Drombeg, Ireland
15 Avebury, England
16 Skegriedösem, Sweden
17 Loughcrew, Ireland
18 Evora, Portugal