

Re: When Burial Begins

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.anthropology.paleo/2006-10/msg00332.html>

- *From:* "Lee Olsen" <paleocity@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 30 Oct 2006 08:36:18 -0800
-

Paul Crowley wrote:

We all put forward theories (or, if you prefer, 'imaginary scenarios'). We have an obligation to set out, as far as we can, how they would be proved or disproved. Standard PA skips this duty all the time. It does not even recognise one. Its supporters have to duck all hard questions.

My problem is not so much the imaginary scenarios, but the misrepresenting of the data used for the basis of them. The example of your using lack of lions in Europe as an argument for reasoning Neandertals didn't hunt is basic to the type of logic that you are using. I will give you the benefit of the doubt that you simply forgot about the evidence for lions in Europe. In your next post you claimed that evidence of lions simply gave further evidence of your point. This was moot because smoking gun evidence had already been around for years that they did hunt regardless of whether lions were in Europe or not. The fire-hardened tips of spears found at Hoxne, Lehringen, Schoningen along with direct associations of spears found amongst butchered bones is smoking gun evidence. There are two cases that I have cited here on sap of Mousterian points found imbedded in bone of horses found at Neandertal sites. This proves Neandertal were hunting. So to argue the presents or absence of lions using theoretical- abstract theory to refute smoking gun evidence of Neandertal hunting was not correct reasoning.

What this proves is that you are ignorant of the very works that you seek to condemn.

One test of a theory is its coherence. Does it have major gaps? No account is ever

Re: When Burial Begins

provided of crucial stages in the PA model — such as when, why and how early hominids began to sleep on the ground. The only explanation for most of the major steps in its model would be 'fairy dust spread by aliens'.

You have a gap of 6 million years for evidence of burials. No reasonable person is denying that the very first evidence found for some innovation at archaeological sites is when that innovation first began. The odds of finding the first bone flute for instance is nil. But that is not a licence to imagine bone flutes were being used 6 million years ago.

What tests does standard PA propose for its theory? The finding of fossils is so haphazard and unpredictable that one can only say that (a) individual cases will support one theory rather than the other, and (b) the overall patterns emerging will support one rather than the other.

You are generalizing about PA in the same way you generalized about lack of lions in Europe having some meaning about Neandertals hunting. You continually start out with a false assumption and spin scenarios from them. No wonder you can prove these imaginary conditions false, they never existed in the first place. Get your facts straight before you make up the hypothesis.

Little Lucy's 'rolled-up-into-a-ball' state certainly supports mine, and defeats yours. The 'First Family' supports mine and defeats yours. The identification of major pathologies in fossils, providing highly probable causes of death — such as the tooth infection of 15000 and the hypervitaminosis of 1808 — support mine and defeat yours,

The finding of numerous fossils on uplifted, formerly coastal, land supports mine. Their rarity and strange nature on inland sites defeats yours. The predominance of young males on inland sites defeats yours.

Fossils are not the only evidence for the location of archaeological

Re: When Burial Begins

sites. You and Marc both suffer from this deficiency. You are now making the same mistake in reasoning that you did with the Neandertals didn't hunt because there weren't/were lions in Europe. Your profound ignorance of the evidence available in the literature is not an excuse for posting hackneyed theory of burials.

Going back ten years is pathetic. Presumably you never make mistakes, because everything you say is copied from a book. You don't possess a mind, and are incapable of having your own ideas.

What you don't understand is I'm not condemning you for the mistake, but for repeating the same error of logic today. You are using false analogies that are counter to what is known. What happened 10 years ago is only an example of the fact you are not capable of learning from your past mistakes. I can show you were using the same kind of mis-logic 5 years ago also.

BS, you simply are not reading my threads, just like you were not reading the literature and finding for the evidence of Neandertal spears, hence hunting.

Neither Lucy's (or later Homo e) habitat was not primarily close to the coast, but ubiquitous over nearly all of Africa.

Of course. Lucy was a successful species, and could compete with lions, hyenas, elephant, buffalo, zebra, hippo and so on. Erectus and its successors were tens, hundreds and thousands of times MORE successful. That's why around 1800 A.D. (200 years ago), Africa had a hominid population in the billions,

Which has nothing to do with evidence that Lucy/all hominids buried her dead. Who was burying whom has nothing to do with being successful.

You are careful to NEVER confront the facts of the 1808 case.

Facts of proven disease and mud are not facts of burial anymore than

Re: When Burial Begins

Re: When Burial Begins

presence of lions prove Neandertals didn't hunt.

Many human tribes and cultures do not bury their dead. They are obliged to burn them, or leave them out for the vultures (e.g. Tibetans). The reasons are usually obvious -- such as the absence of suitable ground (and for Tibetans, the scarcity of wood). Sun-baked earth is hard to dig. The Maasai are cattle-herders and not much use as models for early humans. The Hazda live in semi-desert, and are just as bad. Humans did not evolve in semi-desert -- as is very obvious from our anatomy.

So how do you know Lucy was burying her dead if not all moderns can make this claim also? Yes, I already know what your answer will be, because you imagine she did and because you said so.

NOW, give me the exact same argument that you are claiming for your own exclusive domain. Evidence for savanna and desert use is far earlier than evidence for coastal exploitation by a million years; therefore, because they are of the same taxon, desert use goes right back to the split of chimps and hominids. You can not refute this reasoning without refuting your own.

'Terminally ill' is not the same as 'dead'.
They certainly don't leave corpses to rot in their camp sites.

Yes--- they do both, dead or alive, they are abandoned. They die in camp or close to it and do not rot because scavengers normally take care of the problem. The people are hunter/gatherers, they simply move on. Do you really believe hunter/gatherers sit in one camp all their lives without moving constantly? People who do not believe in an after life simply do not behave in the same way yours does.

A similar fate obviously happened to 1808.

They had looked after her for weeks -- feeding her soft liver. If they had just abandoned her,

Re: When Burial Begins

she'd have been consumed by scavengers (including vultures) within minutes, whether she was alive or dead. They obviously waited till she died, and then covered her body with rocks, or dug a shallow grave, or both.

Nope, this is not what the Hazda or the Maasai do. So now you have no way of knowing which way Lucy's group was acting, because you do not know how all H/G groups today act. Since there are choices, smoking gun evidence is the only way to resolve the problem. Not all get scavenged. Those that are floaters escape this fate because a few are buried by natural causes before they are found by scavengers. Wildebeest bones are found more often than hominid bones, both today and in the fossil record. This is because the population percentages of each group have remained somewhat constant over time. By your logic, wildebeests buried their dead.

Paul.