

3 *Fresh Dinosaur Blood*

Fresh Blood in Dinosaur Bones

The *Answers in Genesis* team, led by Kenneth Ham, has latched onto a false claim regarding blood in dinosaur remains. First, AIG claims that fresh dinosaur blood was found. Second, that it was found on non-fossilized bone. It was almost like finding a fresh kill. From this it was deduced the earth is young, even though that is a non-sequitur. Instead, even if the dino-blood claim were true (it is not), it means the T-Rex involved died a few thousand years ago, and scientists erred in thinking it was extinct for 65 my. It has nothing to do with proving a young earth.

Sadly, these false claims about dino blood are persistently pursued despite the original scientists involved explaining the misconceptions that AIG latched onto. Unsuspecting Christians repeat these falsehoods at dinner parties, and become partakers of darkness rather than light.

This sad story begins with Mary H. Schweitzer whose graduate studies on the organic residues from a single *Tyrannosaurus rex* bone were described loosely in popular scientific journals. She or the editors sensationalized her discovery as if actual blood particles were discovered. All she found were organic residues, *i.e.*, the *hema* element in blood which is an organic form of iron. ***Such iron traces would be expected to survive millions of years.***

When finally the AIG people who touted these media exaggerations had to face the facts, they would not back down one iota. Their proof? Their justification for continuing to spread falsehoods? Wieland, the AIG advocate of dino blood, answered Jack DeBaun, and explained why he would continue to pursue the dino-blood claim. Before we hear why, we need to know who was DeBaun.

Jack DeBaun

Mr. DeBaun was someone who interviewed the research group that Mary Schweitzer belonged to at Montana State University. DeBaun brought forth Dr. John Horner from Schweitzer's group, and De Baun relayed the interview:

He informed me that actual red blood cells had most certainly not been detected in his specimens. He wrote, 'What we found was heme, a form of iron that has a biological origin, but of course, ***not any soft tissue or any other component of a cell.*** It's ***preserved because it's iron.***'¹

In response, Wieland, president of Answers in Genesis Ministry, says that the exaggerations were to be taken literally and there would be no backing down on this. Unless it could be proven these were *not* red blood cells still alive, Wieland says he is free to proclaim that is precisely what they were — living T-Rex blood cells:

This [*i.e.*, the prior quote] seems rather disingenuous, since ***they saw what appeared to be red blood cells under the microscope.*** Obviously, this was stunning, and it was Dr Horner who, as we cited, suggested to Mary Schweitzer that she try to disprove that they were red blood cells that were being seen by these people under the microscope. The immunological reaction was the factor that, coupled with the histological appearance, made it more than reasonable to claim that these were ***actual red blood cells*** (*i.e.*, their remains). As you will see from the rest of this, ***they have most definitely***

1. Wieland, "Evolutionist questions AiG report — Have red blood cells really been found in T. rex fossils?," *AIG Report* 25 March, 2002, available at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2002/0325rbcs.asp> (accessed 2007).

not succeeded in disproving that these are red cells. (Id.)

Carl Wieland appears to be playing cat-and-mouse with his reader. Dr. Horner merely believes these organic residues are from red blood cells. There is no disputing that fact. Dr. Horner is saying, however, that no red blood cells were seen under a microscope. Merely the heme (iron) element was found as a residue, which is ***no big deal to find millions of years later***. But Wieland made it appear the scientists found the equivalent of fresh oozing blood. Then Wieland tells us that we must assume it is such fresh blood unless one disproves this is fresh blood. ***This is putting a burden of proof on the scientists to negate a claim of Wieland which in fact Dr. Horner adequately and perfectly did do so.***

It is amazing to read Wieland's point-by-point rebuttal. He just 'doesn't get it.'

Wieland's Original Claim in 1997

To comprehend what Wieland is defending, one must go back to Wieland's original claims from 1997 which in 2002 he still would not recant. His first article dates to 1997, entitled *Sensational dinosaur blood report*. It can be found at http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs/4232cen_s1997.asp. He opens:

ACTUAL red blood cells in fossil bones from a Tyrannosaurus rex? With traces of the blood protein hemoglobin (which makes blood red and carries oxygen)? It sounds preposterous to those who believe that these dinosaur remains are at least 65 million years old.

It is of course much less of a surprise to those who believe Genesis, in which case dinosaur remains are at most only a few thousands of years old.

And he ends:

Evidence of hemoglobin, and the ***still-recognizable shapes of red blood cells***, in unfossilized dinosaur bone is powerful testimony against the whole idea of dinosaurs living millions of years ago. It speaks volumes for the Bible's account of a recent creation.

This clearly suggested to the unsuspecting reader that we are talking about fresh meat on unfossilized dinosaur bone. Wieland talked as if hemoglobin was found instead of the *hema* iron element which indeed can survive millions of years. In truth, there was never anything slightly suggestive about this red blood cell residue that it could prove this animal lived in the past few thousand years.

Wieland persisted in publishing on the topic into 2002, available online in 2008.² This article says: "And yes, it's still safe to say that the evidence is highly consistent with ***red blood cells*** having been found in T. rex fossils."

This claim about dino blood is well-known to every evangelical Christian. A mythology has grown up around the claim. It is often repeated in social conversation into 2008 as if unquestionably true!

Dr. Gary Hurd's Evaluation: Blame On All Sides

Gary Hurd, Ph.D., provided an analysis at *TalkOrigins* on the dino-blood claim. He makes a sadly true statement:

In the case of the dinosaur 'red blood cell' argument aggressively promoted by Dr Carl Wieland, CEO of Answers in Genesis Ministry,

2. Carl Wieland, "Evolutionist questions AiG report — Have red blood cells really been found in T. rex fossils?," First Posted 25 March, 2002 and last accessed November 24, 2007 and October 6, 2008 at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2002/0325rbcs.asp>

Conclusion

Australia there is ***an active denial of fact that is astounding.***³

Hurd points out that Wieland's claims "have gained wide dispersal" and "have even been presented publicly to school boards in the United States as 'scientific proof' of a 6,000-year-old Earth...."

However, Hurd concedes the problem did not originate with Wieland. It started with Mary H. Schweitzer enjoying the presentation of her "on-going work to reporters in very speculative and even grandiose terms." A 1993 interview with Virginia Morell resulted in a news item published by *Science* (Morell 1993), and from this in 1995 Richard Monastersky wrote "Squeezing blood from a stone," for *Science News*.⁴

Yet, scientific fact cannot be based on some errant scientist or science journal trying to grab headlines. Sensationalism is not the measure of what is factual. Yet, Wieland shamelessly defends relying upon such headline-grabbing exaggerations rather than admit factually that they were simply hyperbole. There are still many Christians today who think dino blood was found, proving the dinosaurs could not possibly have died millions of years ago to persons who use 'common sense.'

Conclusion

Unsuspecting Christians are repeating lies about dinosaur blood. You hear this everywhere, but the claim is false. The young earthers who read the sensational headline of a *Science News* article did not know how to separate fact from

3. <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/dinosaur/blood.html> (accessed 11-24-07).

4. Richard, Monastersky, "Squeezing blood from a stone," *Science News* Vol. 148 (November 11, 1995) at 314.

sensationalization. Even when they are finally corrected, the young earthers claim the sensational headline is true until they are given proof there was not fresh oozing blood from T-Rex bones that were found. When the science team involved comes forth and says that is all there is, the young earthers claim, in effect, that they simply do not believe them.

The dino blood episode, still afflicting us, is more proof that young earth science is not a scientific endeavor. It is a deliberate propaganda campaign that will virtually never suffer any correction.