

# GROTESQUE DINOSAUR CANNIBAL

by David Catchpoole



## **Cannibal dinosaur is found**

by John von Radown

Fossil remains found in Madagascar have yielded the first real proof of dinosaur cannibalism.

Teeth marks on bones showed the 30 ft-long, two-legged carnivore *Majungatholus atopus* often ate its own kind.

Fossilized ones of two *Majungatholus* bore distinctive sets of teeth marks matching the size and width of its own jaws. Smaller grooves matched its blade-like teeth.

American Geologist Dr Raymond Rogers, from Macalester College in Minnesota said, "We have a smoking gun in the form of diagnostic tooth marks, and we can definitely rule out all of the other carnivores known to have been on the scene."

## **Dinosaurs ate one another**

At least one tribe of meat-eating dinosaurs didn't just prey upon vegetarian sauropods that couldn't fight back, but also ate their own species, according to a recent report in the scientific journal *Nature*.

*Majungatholus atopus*, unearthed in Madagascar, and concluded they were cannibals, eating one another and leaving their tooth marks in the bones of victims.

Reports of cannibalism in dinosaurs are not new, but previous evidence was not as clear-cut as in this case: 21 tooth-marked bones from two *Majungatholus* individuals is separate localities, with the tell-tale bite marks perfectly matching the teeth of skulls of the same species.

Rogers, R.R., Krause, D.W., and Rogers, K.C., *Nature* 422 (6931);515-518, 2003.

## **Dinosaurs eating one another! How grotesque!**

Did these dinosaurs practiced their perverse cannibalism in the 'very good' world (Genesis 1:31) *before* Adam sinned, or *afterwards*?

Why ask this question? Because for too long many Christians have compromised on Genesis. While conceding that there was no *human* death before then, that it was 'natural and God-ordained' for animals to hunt and prey (citing Psalm 104:21, 27-28, for example). But this contradicts God's instructions that animals (and man) were originally created to be vegetarian (Genesis 1:29-30) and overlooks the effects of the Curse on creation (Genesis 3:14-19; Romans 8:19-22). The Bible clearly shows that today's world is very different from the pre-Fall world.

If these dinosaurs lived and became extinct millions of years before man walked the earth, then that means that cannibalism existed before Adam sinned. Was that 'very good' in God's sight? Of course not! Genesis 1:21, 14 tells us that animals were to 'reproduce after their own kind', not to eat their own kind!

These cannibal dinosaurs were most likely buried (and fossilized) under water-borne sediment during the Great Flood of Noah's day, around 4,500 years ago. But why were these dinosaurs eating their own species rather than preying upon different species? We see today that in a post-Fall world prone to drought and famine, animals at times become sufficiently desperate to eat anything they can find – including one another, if they can get away with it.

Opportunistic cannibalism has been documented in a number of species (e.g. lions, komodo dragons and grasshopper mice), so it's not surprising that evidence of cannibalism has now been found among dinosaurs as well.

The key point here is that because dinosaurs are so often thought to have died out millions of years ago, Genesis-believing Christians can use the latest discovery to respectfully challenge those who say 'I believe in creation', but who put the millions-of-years fossil record before the Fall. The post-Fall reality of cannibalism is indeed grotesque. But so is the way in which carnivorous animals today kill other animals. All these things are clearly part of the cursed and hurting post-Fall world, a world that waits to be 'liberated from its bondage to decay' (Romans 8:21). This will be a time when 'there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain' (Revelation 21:4), because there will be 'no more curse' (Revelation 22:3).

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## Activities

1. In one or two sentences, explain the discovery that the first two articles are reporting.
2. Why did the reporter in the first article, John Radown, say that we have a 'smoking gun'?
3. What is meant by 'opportunistic cannibalism'?
4. Why is the idea of cannibalism amongst animals not consistent with God's description of the world *before* Adam and Eve sinned?
5. Most people believe that dinosaurs lived millions of years ago long before humans. What do you think about this, in the light of the evidence in this article, and God's description of the world in Genesis 1?
6. One day the curse will be removed and God's perfect creation will be restored. What will this look like?