Overall, our preliminary results suggest that age-related morphological variations of the talus may be used to determine the general age of juvenile skeletal remains, which could be valuable to many archaeological and forensic researchers.

This project is funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 724046 - SUCCESS); website: http://www.erc-success.eu/

ED-XRF study of Oldowan artifacts documents raw material selection and transport through time on the Homa Peninsula, Kenya

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At the earliest Oldowan occurrences (2.6 – 2.3 Ma) the degree of raw material selectivity is variable and materials were transported over relatively short distances. This is in contrast with sites 2.0 Ma and later where hominins frequently selected and transported materials from further afield. This shift is apparent at Kanjera South (KJS), Kenya (ca. 2 Ma) where toolmakers preferentially selected durable lithologies from non-local sources providing evidence for the earliest habitual transport of raw materials over long distances. At Nyayanga, an older locality that is also on the Homa Peninsula, hominins also selected durable materials such as rhyolite (40.4% of assemblage), quartz (29.9%), and quartzite (27.2%). Trace element geochemistry obtained from X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy indicates that rhyolite and quartzite artifacts came from the same primary sources as those previously identified for KJS. While some rhyolites may have been locally available to KJS and Nyayanga hominins, previous research suggests that quartzite was not locally available. A 2018 survey of nine paleo-conglomerates confirmed that secondary drainages carried quartzite in low frequency (<2%) four kilometers away from Nyayanga, and quartzite was not represented in conglomerates surveyed within the four-kilometer radius. Thus, Nyayanga toolmakers exhibited similar raw material preferences to KJS hominins, choosing durable lithologies that link to the same primary sources and traveled surprisingly long distances to obtain these materials. This reveals continuity in the raw material selection and transport behaviors of hominins on the Homa Peninsula through time, and extends the record of habitual transport of non-local materials for flake production.

This research was supported by the Leakey Foundation and the National Science Foundation DDIG (BSC-1836669).

Evaluating Osteon Cement-Line Interface Distances for Advancing Understanding of Bone Adaptation

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Secondary osteons (SOs) help avoid fracture because their cement lines (CLs) slow microcrack propagation. At the 2018 AAPA meeting we reported a new characteristic for evaluating this function: distances between the CLs of SOs, in net compression on one cortex and tension on the other (tension is more deleterious). CL interface distances (CL-Int-d) might evaluate this 'toughening mechanism' more adequately than only osteon population density (OPD), size, and shape because it accounts for osteonal variants (e.g., drifting SOs) and fragments. In 2018 we evaluated only medial (compression-region) and lateral (tension-region) cortices of chimpanzee femora (subtrochanteric) where bending is high. Here we also evaluate anterior (A) and posterior (P) cortices (these approximate a neutral axis). We also evaluated CL-Int-d with a denser grid and two orthogonal orientations; hence a more robust analysis. 12 adult femora (subtrochanteric) were also evaluated. Circularly polarized light images were used and CL-Int-d measured from CL tracings. Data were compared to regional variations in OPD, osteon size, and predominant collagen fiber orientation (CFO). Surprisingly, the chimpanzee femora had CL-Int-d that were greater in the medial cortex vs. the lateral cortex (in 2018 we reported these as equivalent)--this can be explained by the more robust analysis. The findings are now more logically related to the smaller SOs in the medial cortex. Human femora had equivalent CL-Int-d's in M-L cortices, which logically corresponds to their similar osteon size/OPD. Therefore, the new characteristic might not supplant conventional osteon-related measures as correlates for studies of bone adaptation in a bending environment.

Diet and Catastrophe: Dental Microwear Analysis of a Population Under Siege at the Ancient Greek Colony of Himera

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We analyze the occlusal dental microwear of individuals believed to have died during the siege and subsequent destruction of the ancient Greek colony of Himera, Sicily, in 409 BCE to evaluate diet disruptions in times of warfare. Occlusal microwear features, caused by mastication, reflect diet at the end of an individual's life, and in this case likely reflect diet of individuals affected by the Carthaginian invasion in 409 BCE. We examine molars from nine soldiers who died in the 409 BCE battle and nine citizens whose skeletal trauma and hasty graves suggest they were battle casualties (the catastrophic assemblage), as well as 14 individuals in tile-capped graves who died in the late 6th to 5th centuries BCE unassociated with destruction of the city (the attritional assemblage). Sputter-coated epoxy casts of molars were viewed at 500X with a Teneo field emission scanning electron microscope. Micrographs of the disto-occlusal facets were analyzed using Microwear 4.02 software. Results indicate that number of pits is greater in soldiers and citizens who died during the city's destruction than citizens in the attritional sample, suggesting that leading up to battle, people consumed a harder diet. This difference in diet between times of war and peace is likely due either to disruption of resource supply, or seasonal differences in resource availability. This study supports the interpretation of hasty graves as catastrophic deaths, expands knowledge of the last days of Himera, and contributes to our understanding of the strategies of ancient communities in the face of warfare.

This research was funded by National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates award numbers 1560227 and 1560158, the University of Georgia, and the University of Northern Colorado.

Neanderthal Hypercarnivory Revisited – Experimental Study of $\delta^{15}N$ Shifts in Dietary Items Produced by Various Cooking Techniques

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Nitrogen isotope ratios are used frequently in paleoanthropology and archaeology as an indicator of dietary composition. When this method is applied to collagen preserved in Neanderthal long bones, results show a highly enriched $\delta^{15}N$ signal across multiple individuals and sites. Traditionally, paleoanthropologists have attributed this to hypercarnivory, in line with or exceeding the $\delta^{15}N$ values of contemporaneous carnivores in the same sites. However, recent work on Neanderthal dental calculus and other dietary proxies indicates that the Neanderthal dietary repertoire is much more varied, including a number of plant foods. Reconciling the $\delta^{15}N$ isotopic results with other dietary indicators necessitates an alternative explanation for the highly enriched $\delta^{15}N$ signal. This study explores an alternative dietary mechanism from which a $\delta^{15}N$ signal akin to those seen in Neanderthals could result. We