## **Unique Fossil Filter Feeder**

Written by Administrator Friday, 19 July 2013 06:43 -

Unique fossil filter feeder found, according to ScienceDaily 18 January 2012 and PLoS One doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0029233. Scientists at the University of Toronto and Royal Onatario Museum in Canada have found the fossils of a strange creature that was shaped like a tulip but was actually an animal. The animal was about 20cm (8in) tall and was anchored to the sea floor by a stalk with a disc-like structure, called a holdfast, at the base. At the top of the stalk it had a bulbous cup, called a calyx, that enclosed its feeding and digestive system. The researchers described the internal structure as follows: "A prominent organ, represented by six radially symmetrical segments with comb-like elements, surrounds an internal body cavity with a large stomach, conical median gut and straight intestine."

The calyx had a number of small holes so the researchers suggest it was an "active filter feeder" – pumping water through the calyx and extracting food particles. The fossils were found in Yoho National Park, British Columbia and are part of the famous Burgess Shale fauna – fossilised soft bodied creatures buried in fine grained rock dated as 505 million years old.

The newly described fossil has been given the scientific name *Siphusauctum gregarium* but the researchers are having a hard time putting it into a place in the animal classification system. Lorna O'Brien, one of the researchers, explained: "Most interesting is that this feeding system appears to be unique among animals. Recent advances have linked many bizarre Burgess Shale animals as primitive members of many animal groups that are found today, but *Siphusauctum* 

defies this trend. We do not know where it fits in relation to other organisms". The researchers suggest they were "probably buried en masse more or less in-situ

by rapid mud flow events".

## ScienceDaily

**Editorial Comment**: Fitting this creature into the classification system is only a problem if you believe the classification system represents lines of descent in an evolutionary tree. However, it is not a problem if all animals, including these strange extinct creatures, were created as separate kinds, and the classification system is simply a sensible means of organising our knowledge of them. Classifying other Burgess Shale animals as "primitive members of many animal groups" is a contrivance based on evolutionary assumptions, not on scientific observations. No-one has observed any of the Burges Shale fauna evolve into anything else. They appear in the fossil record as fully formed distinct creatures, and sadly most creatures in

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this fossilised "wonderful life" (as Stephen Jay Gould described them) have died out, and we only know of them because they were rapidly and deeply buried.

The Burgess Shale fauna, including these newly described creatures, remind us that the real history of animal life of earth is one of decreasing variety and extinction, fossilised only via rapid burial. This is exactly what you expect from the Biblical history of the world, i.e. creation of many separate unrelated kinds, followed by degeneration and watery catastrophe, resulting in creatures being "buried en masse more or less *in-situ* by rapid mud flow events". (Ref. fossilisation, zoology, invertebrates)

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