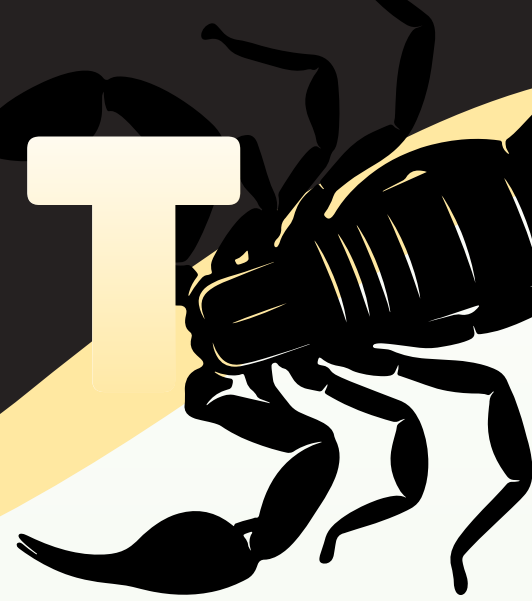


GIANT

CREEPY-CRAWLIES OF THE PRE-FLOOD WORLD



Andrew Sibley

GIANTS ARE revealed in the rock layers labelled as Carboniferous—albeit mostly insects and other invertebrates, plus a number of larger amphibians, which are vertebrates. They were significantly larger than very similar forms known today. These layers also have evidence of dense forest vegetation. Giant ‘dragonflies’ flew around ancient forests, and huge millipedes crawled amongst the ground cover and trees, along with large scorpions and amphibians.

Giant griffinflies

Fossils of large dragonfly-like insects have been found in the coal measures of France and Britain. They are classified into the order Meganisoptera, and sometimes called ‘griffinflies’ or popularly ‘giant dragonflies’. They may well represent the same created kind as living dragonflies, despite evolutionists placing living ones in a different order,

Odonata. Apart from some subtle differences, they share the same wing system, very different from other insects.

Some were huge, such as *Meganeura* (fig. 1) and *Meganeuropsis*, with wingspans of 65 to 70 cm (25 to 28 inches); about as long as an adult’s arm. Today the largest dragonfly has a wingspan of about 12 cm (5 inches). Dragonflies

in the straight position, but the two sets of wings can move independently, thus allowing for a high degree of aerobatic skill. Indeed, top design engineers, including creationist Prof. Stuart Burgess, have made flapping micro air vehicles inspired by dragonfly flight, which evolutionists claim is ‘primitive’.¹

This ‘dragonfly’ design (fig. 2)

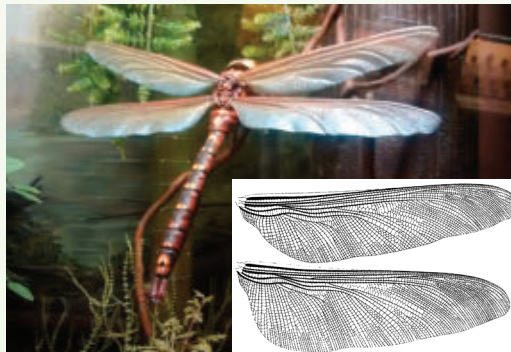


Fig. 1. Replica of the giant dragonfly (aka griffinfly) *Meganeura*. These had wingspans up to 70 cm (2¼ ft) Inset: Drawing of the wings.



Fig. 2. Male Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*)

start life as nymphs in rivers and ponds, but then turn into awesome, colourful insects. Their wings are uniquely fixed

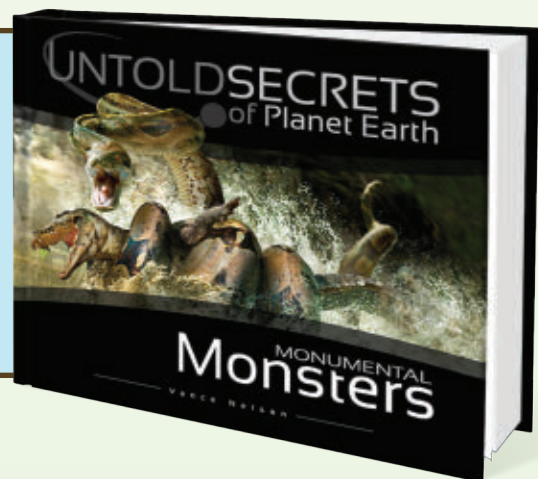
appears suddenly in the fossil record, full and complete. It then shows itself much the same in the present day. Clearly, the main difference is that these fossil specimens were substantially larger than today’s.

We all know about dinosaurs, but most people don’t realize that an enormous variety of today’s living creatures—many more than the ones in this article on creepy-crawlies—had gigantic extinct counterparts.

This hard-cover coffee-table book, in the style of Vance Nelson’s other acclaimed books, shows the fossil evidence, size comparisons of the giant form with the modern equivalent, and with human beings to give some idea of scale.

Monumental Monsters has realistic, attractive illustrations, with sound, fully referenced arguments, all underscoring the truth of biblical history.

This beautiful book is available from creation.com/s/10-2-654.





The first discovery of these was *Meganeura monyi* in 1880. It was found in upper Carboniferous coal measures near the town of Commentry in central France. The French scientist Charles Brongniart described the fossil, naming it after the network appearance of veins in the wings (fig. 1 inset; meganeura = large-nerved). Another *Meganeura* fossil was found in 1978, in Carboniferous layers of the English Midlands. Now known as the Bolsover Dragonfly, it is somewhat smaller than the French specimen.

Massive millipedes

Carboniferous rocks have also revealed giant millipedes. A record-breaking *Arthropleura* fossil was discovered in Howick Bay, Northumberland, UK, from rocks said by secular sources to be 300 million years (Ma) old. The scientists estimated (see fig. 3) that the



Fig. 3. Reconstruction of the giant extinct millipede *Arthropleura*

invertebrate was 2.63 m (over 8 ft) long, 55 cm (22 in) wide, and likely weighed 50 kg (110 lb).² The largest millipede today, from Africa, is about 33 cm (13 in) long.³

Scary scorpions

Evidence has also emerged of giant scorpions of the past. *Pulmonoscorpius*

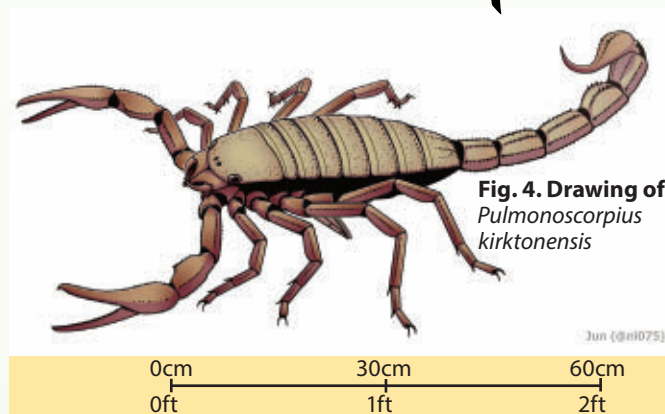


Fig. 4. Drawing of *Pulmonoscorpius kirktonensis*

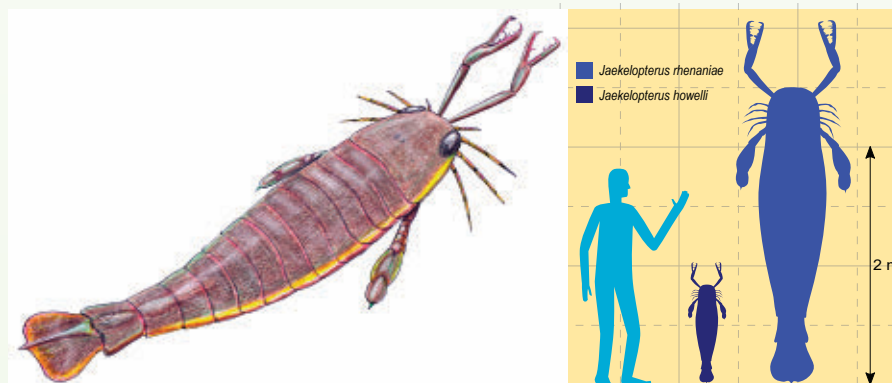


Fig. 5. a) The giant sea scorpion *Jaekelopterus rhenaniae*, largest arthropod of all b) Size comparison of two species of *Jaekelopterus*

kirktonensis (fig. 4), from East Kirkton Quarry, West Lothian in Scotland, was given its grand name in 1994. The deposits are identified by secular geologists as ‘Early Carboniferous’ (about 330 Ma). It was estimated to have been 70 cm (28 in) long.⁴ Compared to present-day scorpions, this one had relatively large eyes, perhaps necessary for crawling about under a dense canopy of trees and ferns.

Even larger scorpion fossils have been found in yet deeper layers, even to the Silurian (claimed age 437 Ma), such as the sea scorpion *Jaekelopterus*, 2.5 m (> 8 ft) long (fig. 5). But scorpions show no change in complexity to the present day.⁵

Amazing amphibians

Some massive amphibians are also found in deposits identified as Carboniferous, likely deposited midway through the 150-day period when the waters of Noah’s Flood were rising. The Carboniferous is sometimes referred to as the ‘age of amphibians’, although there is evidence of small reptiles from these layers. Again in Scotland, a near-complete fossil of *Pederpes* was discovered in 1971, coming in at 1 m (over 3 ft) in length (fig. 6). It was at first classified as a lobe-finned fish, later as a type of amphibian in 2002.⁶ Some of the amphibians of the period were 2.1 to 2.4 m long (7 to 8 ft).⁷ The largest was estimated at 6 m (20 ft).⁸ The biggest

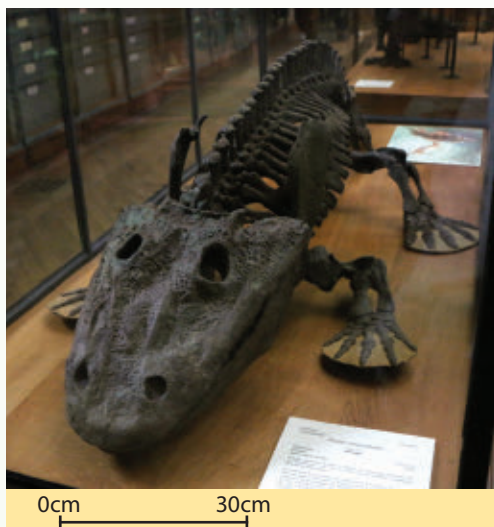


Fig. 6. Skeletal reconstruction of the giant amphibian *Eryops*, which grew up to 3 m (10 ft) long. Most are found in Permian, but some in Upper Carboniferous rock layers.

amphibian alive today is the Chinese giant salamander at 1.8 m (6 ft).

What to make of all this

We would suggest that in some parts of the pre-Flood world, there were massive virgin forests, perhaps too dense for humans, dinosaurs, and mammals to penetrate. With lack of larger predators, some of the creepy crawlies were able to progressively enlarge in size. Despite the change of size, we see no evidence of change in complexity from the fossil forms to the present day. This is despite these creatures supposedly having hundreds of millions of years of time to further evolve in random fashion.

So why don't we see such enormous insects today? There are several

likely reasons. God told Noah to take only land vertebrate kinds on board the Ark. Small invertebrates could have survived on rafts of torn-up vegetation or pumice. But maybe the larger varieties of, e.g., these dragonfly-like insect kinds could not, so the information for large size was lost. And if some did survive, post-Flood humans might have hunted them for food or because they were dangerous.

This is further evidence that supports the general truth of the fossil record: that various types of living things appear 'suddenly' and remain the same in form (*stasis*) throughout. This is because the fossil record is a record of sequential burial during the year-long biblical Flood (and its after-effects), and not a record of evolution over millions of years. ■

Do larger insects mean more oxygen in the air?

Some evolutionists use these creatures as evidence for a higher oxygen content in the Carboniferous atmosphere. Some creationists use the same creatures as evidence for an oxygen-rich pre-Flood atmosphere. This is *possible* and might be expected because of a greater number of trees producing oxygen.

But it is also not *necessary*. The strongest evidence for this idea was that insects take in air by passive diffusion, not breathing—so it was thought large insects could not exist without extra oxygen. However, it was later shown that insects really *do* breathe, rendering that argument unsound.¹

1. Catchpoole, D., Insect inspiration solves giant bug mystery, *Creation* 27(4):44–47, 2005; creation.com/insects-breathe. Based on Westneat, M.W. et al., Tracheal respiration in insects visualized with synchrotron X-ray imaging, *Science* 299(5606):558–560, 2003.



References and notes

1. Burgess, S. and Statham, D., *Inspiration from Creation*, Ch. 4: A dragonfly-inspired micro air vehicle, CBP, 2018; creation.com/s/10-2-650.
2. Davies, N.S. et al., The largest arthropod in Earth history: insights from newly discovered *Arthropleura* remains (Serpukhovian Stainmore Formation, Northumberland, England), *J. Geol. Soc.*, 179(3):jgs2021–115, 2021.
3. Cox, G., Mightiest, 'multi-million-year-old' millipede, creation.com/mightiest-millipede, 6 Jan 2022.
4. Andrew J.J., Scorpions from the Viséan of East Kirkton, West Lothian, Scotland, with a revision of the infraorder Mesoscorpionina, *Earth and Environmental Science Trans. R. Soc. Edinb.*, 84(3–4):283–299, 1993.
5. Wendruff, A.J. et al., A Silurian ancestral scorpion with fossilised internal anatomy illustrating a pathway to arachnid terrestrialisation, *Scientific Reports* 10:14, 16 Jan 2020.
6. Clack, J.A., An early tetrapod from 'Romer's Gap', *Nature*, 418 (6893):72–76, 2002.
7. Howe, J.A., Carboniferous system, in Chisholm, H., (ed.) *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 5 (11th Edn), Cambridge University Press, pp. 309–313, 1911.
8. Stanley, S.M., *Earth System History*, 3rd Edn, W.H. Freeman and Co., NY, p. 354, 1999.

ANDREW SIBLEY B.Sc.(Hons.), M.Sc, M.Phil

Andrew worked as a meteorologist in the UK for 38 years. A frequent contributor to CMI's publications over many years, he has been a speaker and writer for CMI-UK/Europe since 2021. He is the author of *Restoring the Ethics of Creation*.

For more: creation.com/andrew-sibley.