

ONCE THE WORLD WAS FULL OF WONDERS

Once the world was full of wonders,

Teutobochus was a legendary giant and king of the Teutons present day Northern Africa. Large bones that measured 36 feet (10.97 m) discovered in 1613 were claimed to be his! It may sound so weird and not mind blowing today but archaeologists and pathologists are the true witnesses of these giants plus other extinct world wonders. This fact of Somali-land giants is such a nuance compared with what most of us have once heard about; or maybe we considered them as fairy tales or folklore but they truly existed, **dinosaurs!**

Our world dates back 4.5 billion years ago but as scientists say, life did not commence with the earth's formation. Our planet had to pass through various processes to fulfil the necessities of life as we know it. All living organisms did not sprout at the same time but evolved slowly from other organisms, what we call evolution. Worldwide, people are convinced with the idea that once the world was full of wonders, which clearly means we are now witnesses of things we have barely seen because they have become extinct. If you are not among these witnesses, hang on and satisfy your curiosity.

Imagine the frost-like environment, the cold nights and warm days back in 65 million of years ago. No men conquered the planet as we know it today because our race first appeared only **a million years** ago, but instead the dominants were powerful, fierce ground-braking creatures; **Dinosaurs**. Although the smallest dinosaurs ranged few inches, the largest were estimated to have been 50–96.4 metric tons and 30–39.7 m long and ruled the World for almost **135 million years** in the period known as the **Jurassic Era**. It sounds so cliché but dinosaurs' mystery had not yet been unraveled until early 19th century, actually in 1819 by **William Buckland** who discovered parts called **Fossils**.



This is the Pterodactyl; a flying dinosaur.

Let's dive in some of the scientific researches to-date that prove the indisputable existence of these marvels. Since the first dinosaur fossils were recognized in the early 19th century, mounted fossil dinosaur skeletons have been major attractions at museums around the world, and dinosaurs have become an enduring part of world culture. The large sizes of some dinosaur groups, as well as their seemingly monstrous and fantastic nature, have ensured dinosaurs' regular appearance in best-selling books and films. Persistent public enthusiasm for the animals has resulted in significant funding for dinosaur science, and new discoveries are regularly covered by the media. Up to now there are **700 known dinosaur species**.



Further study of the structure and function of dinosaurs under the auspice of fossils unearthed from different parts around the world, scientists together with archaeologists and pathologists have been able to reveal the secret behind the enormous size of creatures of the **Jurassic era**, the **climate!** By looking at fossils, one can determine two things. Firstly, he can work out how old the rocks are, and secondly, he can work out the **paleo environment** of the rock. Paleo environment refers to the ancient environment that the fossil formed in. To work out paleo environments, scientists like **Adam Vonk** work on the basis that the Earth back in time was similar to how the Earth is today. Adam reconstructs paleo environments by looking at the rock the fossil is in and asking: Where would this organism have been at the time of fossilization? What would be a current environment we can find on the planet now that would be similar? The world was not the same as we know it, the Earth's atmosphere was still at its epic stage. The four main components of air were totally different from today's. These favored animals to grow in monstrous sizes, perhaps you can understand it well by thinking of a **calf-sized dragonfly** or a beetle that matches a rat in size, Alas! Man with his regular size seems would not had guts to stand right there. No man alive has ever had a chance to see a living dinosaur but thanks to scientists, archaeologists and computer specialists who have

managed to reproduce life-sized shapes of extinct animals including dinosaurs. That's the reason why you may talk about the starring scenes of the movie "**Jurassic Park**" (1993) or the most recent "**Jurassic World**" (2015 and 2019) and even the photos in these essay featuring these lost creatures.

The Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction, was a sudden mass extinction of some three-quarters of the plant and animal species on Earth approximately 66 million years ago. The extinction was caused by the impact of a **massive comet** or asteroid 10 to 15 km wide. With the exception of some species such as the leatherback sea turtle and crocodiles, no tetrapods (4 limbed beings) weighing more than 25 kilograms survived. Even **Dinosaurs** perished! It marked the end of the Jurassic period opening the Cenozoic Era that continues today. Perhaps most people think of dinosaurs as fairy tales or just anything of science fiction lie, but on my behalf dinosaurs are worth of being world wonders although we believers have never had about them in the God's creation. Here comes a question of interest, were **dinos** present in the **Garden of Eden**?



An asteroid caused the extinction of dinosaurs.

Giants are another species that is said to have existed a long time ago in different traditions. Unlike today's tallest man; **Sultan Kosen** with **8 feet (2.51 m)**, giants exceeded **9 feet (3 m)** of length, hence forth being extraordinary. According to different traditions, giants lived either within normal people or lived in a community of giants but rarely did giants lived among people. Except from traditions, we know about giants by the clue of fossils or **skeletons** found in different regions around the World. Finding such skeletons is rare, because gigantism itself is extremely rare, today affecting about **three people in a million worldwide**. The condition begins in childhood, when a malfunctioning pituitary gland causes abnormal growth. In folklore we find the etymology of the word giant (from Latin and Ancient Greek: gigas) who are beings of human appearance, but are at times tremendous in size and strength or bear an otherwise notable appearance. The word giant, first attested in 1297, was derived from the **Gigantes** of **Greek mythology**.



Fairy tales such as "Jack the Giant Killer" have formed the modern understanding of giants as stupid and violent monsters, sometimes said to eat humans, while other giants tend to eat the livestock. The character in "Jack and the Beanstalk" is often described as a giant. In some more recent stories, like those of Jonathan Swift and Roald Dahl, some giants are both intelligent and friendly. What makes scientists have an appealing attraction to giants is the discovery of the fossils of a giant nicknamed the **Giant of Castelneau**. The fossil bones belong to one of the largest humans known to have existed. No modern reviewed study has been published about the mystical giant bone fragments. The bones were discovered by the anthropologist Georges Vacher de Lapouge at the Bronze Age cemetery of Castelneau-le-Lez, France in the winter of 1890. His findings were published in the journal La Nature where within the journal, the height of the individual was estimated at about 3.50 m and the bones were dated to the **Neolithic period**, since they were found at the very bottom of the Bronze Age burial **tumulus** (pieces of stones and earth raised above a tomb or grave).



The following picture depicts the sizes of men throughout history. From left, a present day man measures 6 feet (1.82 m) while the tallest man ever found has 36 feet (10.97 m) of height, incredible!



The journal includes a photo engraving of what was identified as the humerus, tibia, and femoral mid-shaft of the giant compared to a normal size humerus in the center. After a careful study of the bones, they admitted that they represented a "very tall race" of that period. Therefore here comes a very big question, where did the super race of giants end so far?

The left figure shows one of the popular giant family, *La famille des Geants Hugo.*

After reading these, doubtfully one can no longer stay stealth to agree with the theme; "Once the world was full of wonders." But it is of colossal importance to keep in mind that these do not undermine contemporary life on earth. Sure enough, I know that technology may be thought of the most marvelous wonder the Earth has ever had; flying machines, man on the moon, inter-planetary missions (probes), artificial intelligence and other fruits of technology we know but imagine of you ever getting a chance to travel 605 million of years ago, you would surely know what suppresses today's technology. And so here comes a big question or anyway a homework to you dear readers. The question flows; comparing the world you have heard throughout this essay and today's world based on technology, which one is worthy of being called a wonder?

This essay has mentioned only two of many world wonders but upcoming editions are going to cover up the topic.