

NOTES

Note on a Safer Procedure for Opal Phytolith Extraction

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The use of perchloric acid in the extraction of opal phytoliths from known plants was noted to be extremely hazardous when used in proximity to any volatile organic reagent (*Quaternary Research* 1, 348-349), as in extracting opal phytolith from soil which employs organic bromide liquids and ethanol. Recently, concentrated Schulze solution (3 parts HNO₃ to 1 part saturated KClO₃ or NaClO₃ solution), normally used

in pollen extraction from coal, was found to be an equally effective reagent without the added hazards. Schulze solution is therefore strongly recommended in place of the perchloric acid mixture previously suggested.

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Molluscan Assemblages from the Late Cenozoic of the Lower Omo Basin, Ethiopia—Comments

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Two corrections of fact are required on the valuable paper of Van Damme and Gautier (1972).

First, the authors misrepresent my sedimentological interpretation of the Mursi Formation by simply stating that I had regarded it as "deltaic and prodeltaic in origin" (Van Damme and Gautier, 1972, p. 27). To the contrary, the sediment study was detailed (Butzer, 1970, 1971a) and controlled by an investigation of modern depositional environments (Butzer, 1971b),

so that I was able to state explicitly in regard to middle and upper Member III of the Mursi Formation that "loams alternate with clays, suggesting repeated shifts between the delta-fringe and a mixed littoral-alluvial environment. Concretionary bands (siderite?) are found within the loamy units and in part coincide with shell horizons, chiefly *Viviparus*. . . These littoral-foreshore deposits, in part, suggest temporary emergence" (Butzer, 1970, p. 430). In fact, these deductions now find full support by Van

Damme and Gautier's analysis of the mollusca collected by F. H. Brown, G. Eck, and myself for Gautier in 1969.

Second, Van Damme and Gautier (1972, p. 32) infer a correlation with the early Kibish Formation (Members I-III) for their molluscan assemblage Kibish A1 from above the type-exposures of the Shungura Formation. We have dated "uniid" shell from this widespread and characteristic "Uniid"-*Corbicula-Etheria* assemblage: 9300 ± 400 B.P. (L-1303-C, D. L. Thurber, *in litt.* Jan. 28, 1970) (see Butzer *et al.*, 1972, Table 1). The date substantiates the fresh morphology of these sediments and confirms their assignment, together with both the Kibish A1 and A2 faunas, to the early Holocene Member IV.

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