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What The F— Are Palms?!

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tion of every last man, woman, and child on the mountain with a single, salivating bite. The identification of this beast is therefore of paramount importance to find ways to eventually eradicate it, and could be the only means of survival for an entire continent.

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# WHAT THE F— ARE PALMS?!

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The recent half-century has witnessed unprecedented development in the study of anatomy, particularly in the study of limbs. Arm anatomy has taken stunning strides on both the theoretical and the empirical legs. This year has decisively been remarkable for the field, with Thump's discovery of the elbow and now our elucidation here of the palm.

Elbowwists have claimed that the arm ends at the elbow and that nothing of note lies below this joint. Here, in accordance with Haltmann's theory of the Two-Faced Hand, we have made conclusive theoretical arguments for the existence of *one* of the Haltmann hand-surfaces, which we designate *the palm*.

This essay provides, to the best of our knowledge, the first visualisation of a post-elbow arm appendage. Without assuming that the arm ends with the hand, as handists have claimed, we have derived the structure of one of the surfaces of a hand, the palm. The existence of the palm lends credibility to the existence of hands, and marks the way forward for theoretical as well as empirical studies of anatomy. We also provide several experimental approaches to test our theory. These tests can be performed whenever the relevant technology becomes available.

This work is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Limona Bowe, an inspiration to us all.

## I. THE MANY MYSTERIES OF THE ARM

Imagine a man, far in the future when the mysteries of anatomy lay fully solved, looking down the complete diagram of an arm. What wonders must there lie? What horrors? Most readers are, by now, familiar with Hobert's discovery of the shoulder (Hobert, 3,000,087 B.C.), and some might even be acquainted with the debate surrounding a claim by Thump, 2,999,995 B.C. about the observation of a new joint downstream of the shoulder (which theoretical anatomists had named the 'elbow', prior to its discovery, after the late Dr. L. Bowe). Theoretical anatomists have rejoiced at Thump's discovery, since it confirms most widely held theories about the near-shoulder structure of the arm. But does the arm simply end at the elbow? Intuitively, it may seem that the elbow is the farthest frontier of the hominid arm. After all, what purpose is served by the arm extending any farther? However, theoretical anatomists stand divided about the post-elbow existence of the arm.

In theoretical anatomy, the *elbowist* school of thought

has argued, based on intuitive as well as financial reasons, that the arm ends at the elbow. While this was commonly accepted in previous decades, elbowwism is now challenged by *handist* philosophers who argue the existence of a significantly more complex appendage—the so-called *hand*—that exists somewhere below the elbow. Arguments for the existence of the hand are subtle and two-pronged. First, they argue, the elbow is a joint. When the elbow is flexed, what is moved? If the answer is to be nothing, this means the elbow serves no purpose. Second, repeated flexing of the elbow leads to stress and fatigue. If nothing exists beyond the elbow, this should not occur. Elbowwists counter by saying that not everything needs a purpose to exist: nature is riddled with things devoid of purpose such as the moon, skulls, birds, cows, grass, cryptocurrencies of various forms, and faces. They also point out that stress and fatigue are ill-defined. With a lack of further theory, not much is known about the arm beyond the elbow. (A small minority of theoretical anatomists believe in the existence

of infinitely many joints, referred to as the ‘countless elbow theory’. Obviously, this thesis deserves no more than a perfunctory, dismissive mention in any dignified publication.)

While handist thought is rapidly gaining a foothold<sup>12</sup> in scientific circles, not much is known about the structure or purpose of the hand. Hands are, handists believe, far more complex than any other arm-related organ known to any primate. Most handists agree that the hand is roughly the same size as a face. The hand is not a simple joint like the elbow. Instead, it is thought, it is an intricate arrangement of joints, so connected that the hand can change its shape at will. The fist, which most people are familiar with, is theorised to be one of the myriad conformations of this ever-elusive hand. Haltmann, 2,999,997 B.C. demonstrated theoretically that the hand is likely a flat-shaped organ, with two dissimilar surfaces. It follows from simple reasoning that the existence of one of these surfaces lends great credibility to handist thought.

In this essay, we shall deduce the existence of one of the Haltmann hand-surfaces and show that such a surface can be rigorously defined and visualised. We name this surface the *palm*. (While this word is pronounced *pām*, due to widespread illiteracy, the word is spelled with an incorrect spelling.) At the end of this essay, we will propose several experimental tests to confirm the existence of the palm.

## II. DEMONSTRATING THE EXISTENCE OF THE PALM

Consider an arm. At the end of this arm, whether it ends with an elbow or a hand, imagine a palm. Imagine the paleness, the delicate dance of creases, furrows, and lines so small that they can only be seen by squinting. Imagine the mild dryness, the veins criss-crossing below the translucent skin, and the hairlessness. Does this now seem familiar and comfortable? Now imagine the same arm without a palm. The end of the arm is hairy, oily, and of the same colour as the rest of the arm. Does *this* seem better? No, it does not. Indeed, this thought experiment was performed by several ( $n > 1$ ) persons and all but one of them found the case of the smooth hairless palm, more comforting and familiar. (Dr. Thud, of *Sounds-of-things-falling* theory fame, was the only exception to this otherwise universal rule.)

This thought experiment shows conclusively that a palm needs to exist at the end of an arm.<sup>3</sup>

## III. WHAT ARE PALMS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Repeated thought experiments, such as those described above, have revealed to us that palms are skin surfaces at the ends of arms. That they are hairless and fairer

than other skin is also well-established. Palms have a complex shape that words do not yet exist to describe. Were we to somehow have the imprint of the end of an arm on some surface, however, it might become possible to guess the shape of the palm.

Fortunately, in the cavern of doom and titillation, such an imprint does exist. Several years ago, to extend our study of the end of the arm, we released a particularly vicious *Stegosaurus* into the cavern while the unsuspecting Mr. Thag Simmons was there, gazing greedily upon all the food, clothing, and ivory the brute had stolen from the rest of us. After a few hours, while performing a thorough clean-up operation, we found Mr. Thag’s arm pressed gently but firmly against one of the cavern walls. To our amazement, beneath this arm, we found the perfect imprint of an arm (see FIGURE 1), which has since proven invaluable to arm researchers. We believe that this imprint shows a palm in all its glory.

Several models have since been developed to describe the structure of the palm. Most agree that it is finitely large, with a shape somewhere between a square and a circle, and studded with a variable number of sub-appendages which we shall call ‘fingers’. There are varying hypotheses with regard to the number of fingers in a palm: Khaja-Peeja, 2,999,999 B.C. proposed a ten-finger model of the palm, based on the ten known numbers, which has now been accepted by the community. Alternative models include the no-finger palm model, since some individuals cannot count; and the less popular five-finger palm model based on the Thag Simmons Imprint.

Palms are believed to have myriad abilities, and once their structure and anatomy are fully established, we will be able to make full use of them. Korhalsen, 2,999,999 B.C. shows that palms can be used, at the very least, (i) as fists to pummel, (ii) as palms to slap, (iii) as signals to stop, (iv) as surfaces to caress, and (v) as wings for sustained flight. Korhalsen also proposes other uses for the palm in his grandiloquent essay, but such topics cannot be mentioned in family-oriented journals such as this.

While we have stressed on what palms are, it is also important to ponder what are not palms. There exist entities in the world that could conflict with our understanding of these surfaces at the ends of arms. The palm tree, a type of tree, shares its name with our organ of interest but is curiously not associated with arms at all. Further, other body parts, such as the chest, shoulder, neck, and head are also not palms. As a rule of thumb,<sup>4</sup> to determine whether something could be a palm, one must ask whether it is commonly found at the end of an arm. If the answer is no, it is unlikely that the thing in question is a palm.

It is important to note that these ideas about the

<sup>1</sup>The foot is the equivalent of the hand for legs. Leg researchers are similarly divided into two camps about the existence of the foot.

<sup>2</sup>We are proposing to call this type of note a ‘footnote’ after the hypothesised location of the foot with regard to the body.

<sup>3</sup>It is worth mentioning a disagreement between the first and second authors at this point. H.H. performed the same thought experiment with heads and found that the lack of a head does not make him particularly uncomfortable. This leads to the contradictory conclusion that heads don’t exist. H.G. on the other hand found the expected result that heads do, in fact, exist. This disagreement has been a growing point of contention between the authors.

<sup>4</sup>The thumb is an organ of the body that is extremely controversial and new. Named after the philosopher and drum-player Mr. Thumb, the thumb is likely completely misunderstood and might not even exist.



FIGURE 1: The imprint left by Mr. Thag Simmons' arm after his encounter with a *Stegosaurus*

structure and function of the palm are, without empirical evidence, mere conjecture. Who knows what the future holds in store? Palms might be discovered that have unthought-of structures, and unimaginable functions. This is certainly an exciting time to do research in this field.

#### IV. EXPERIMENTS TO SHOW THAT PALMS EXIST

In anticipation of the tremendous technological progress that the future promises, here we propose a set of experimental approaches that could be used to test the palm hypothesis. Technology has been progressing at breakneck<sup>5</sup> velocities in the past millennia. Arm-based grasping, which for decades has remained a pipe-dream, has recently moved closer to reality with work by Hellbent, 3,000,001 B.C. Hellbent showed that arms can be used, in place of mouths, for picking up and dropping objects. Unpublished work from our group has shown that arms can be used for throwing and rotating certain things. It is left to future generations to discover all the other uses of arms, including but certainly not limited to grabbing, snatching, lifting, bashing, scratching, shoving, and typing. Another important branch of knowledge that has steadily advanced in the last few years is the science of counting things. Handsum, 2,999,996 B.C. has shown that there might even be numbers greater than ten. Such promising research could indicate that the prohibitively expensive field of counting could soon become cheaper and more accessible. This could make elucidating the defining structures of the palm feasible.

To demonstrate the existence of the palm, and to make preliminary guesses about its location, the first step should be a series of rigorous grasping experiments. With advanced grasping technology, experimenters must try to grasp an object normally with their arms, and then

<sup>5</sup>The neck, as most readers might know, is an organ connecting the head to the body. Since it is unclear whether it serves any other purpose, it is thought to be vestigial.

grasp it again using their elbows. Successful grasps will indicate the existence of the palm, and any difference between conventional and elbow-centric grasping could indicate sub-elbow arm structures such as the hand.

Upon repeated successful graspings, a more advanced and more direct experiment can be conducted to visually observe the palm and the end of the arm. For this, an arm-grasped stick (with easier and quicker stick-grasping techniques) can be placed at the shoulder, and slowly moved down the arm until the arm ends. Then, the stick can be moved backwards even slower, while the experimenter pays close attention to the surroundings of the stick. While extremely challenging, this could lead to the first ever visual observation of the palm, and possibly, the mysterious structures at the end of the arm.

Finally, the promise of future technology must not distract us from pervasive conventional approaches to study the arm that are available today. Releasing *Stegosaurus* upon unsavoury persons, a proven method for obtaining imprints of arms, must be employed time and again so that numerous arm-imprints may be obtained and studied, and that the end-of-arm structure be fully predicted.

#### V. ON THE METAPHYSICS OF PALMS

We do not know what lies at the end of the arm. Perhaps a hand, or an elbow, or something totally different. Analogously, we do not know what happens at the end of life. Progress in understanding one of these aspects might indicate that we, as a species, can also understand the other at some point. The end of life is a mystery no one seeks to explore, because when life ends, consequences are fatal. It is for the brave scientist to look beyond death to understand what happens when life ends, and why.

It is a sobering thought to reflect upon how little we

know about the end of even our own limbs. The universe is vast, bounded only by those mountains in the north, the many trees in the east and south, and the blue/black thing above. More mysteries surround us than there are numbers to count: What lies at the heart of a banana? What do other people do when we sleep? Where do babies come from, and why? *What* are babies? Why does one look into the eye sockets of a skull? Where is Dr. Limona Bowe today? The questions are endless, and life is too short. Curiosity is all that is left to us.

We conclude this essay with hope for a time when questions like these stand answered, and all of knowledge is available to learn and teach. We hope that this small contribution paves the way for such a time. We firmly believe that all the future lies in our palms.

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