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Quartz spear point (6.4 centimeters long, museum catalog number 1273) from the Tapajós River. Excavations in a painted cave at Monte Alegre, Brazil, at the confluence of the Tapajós and Amazon rivers uncovered stone tools, pigment, and food remains from a late

Ice Age culture. These early foragers, distinct from the Clovis and Folsom cultures of North America, penetrated the equatorial lowlands of South America. See page 373 and the related News story on page 346. [Photo: R. Fialdini, Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, and B. Safra]

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SCIENCE (ISSN 0036-8075) is published weekly on Friday, except

t number. Postmaster: Send change of address to Science, P.O. Boy 1811, Danbury, CT 06813–1811. Single copy sales: \$7.00 per issue prepaid includes surface postage; bulk rates on request. Authorization to photocopy material for internal or personal use under circumstances not falling within the fai use provisions of the Copyright Act is granted by AAAS to libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) Transactional Reporting Service, provided that \$4.00 per article is paid directly to CCC, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923. The identification code for *Science* is 0036-8075/83 \$4.00. *Science* is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodica* Literature and in several specialized indexes

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This Week in Science

I

edited by PHIL SZUROMI

When two oceanic plates collide, one plate is usually forced to subduct beneath the other. Earthquakes and volcanism occur as the plates grind against each other, eventually forming an oceanic island arc. Suyehiro et al. (p. 390) used local seismicity along with a reflection and refraction survey to model the structure of the crust and upper mantle beneath the Izu-Ogasawara island arc. A relatively high velocity granitic zone was found at mid-crustal levels, which suggests that continental crust may be derived



from oceanic subducting slabs. Such a mechanism might help explain how continents formed.

_

Holding fast

Diamond coatings are desirable on metal and metal carbide parts as hard, wear-resistant coatings, but adherence of such films on these substrates is often poor, in part because the different thermal expansion properties of the coating and the substrate. Singh *et al.* (p. 396) pretreated the substrate by laser-induced microroughening and improved the adherence of diamond coating as measured by scratch and indentation tests.

-

Evading NO

Bacteria that infect a host have their own mechanisms of deflecting the host's defenses. De

Paleoindian life in the Amazon rainforest

Sites in North America, such as Clovis, indicate the emergence approximately 11,000 years ago of a culture based on hunting large game over open habitats. Consistent evidence for the situation in South America for this same period has been more difficult to obtain. Roosevelt *et al.* (p. 373; see cover and the news story by Gibbons, p. 346) surveyed several Amazonian sites and found evidence from a cave campsite for a culture based on tropical floodplain and forest foraging. This site, which appears to have been occupied between 10,000 and 11,200 years ago, revealed finely chipped stone tools and stylized rock paintings.

Groote et al. (p. 414) report that Salmonella typhimurium protects itself from noxious nitric oxide (NO) produced by the cells of infected mice by producing homocysteine. The homocysteine apparently accepts transfer of nitrosonium from Snitrosothiols, thus diverting NO away from sensitive cellular targets. Mutant bacteria that fail to synthesize homocysteine were more susceptible to NO donor compounds and were less virulent in mice. Accumulation of homocysteine occurs in association with human vascular and neurological disease, and its interaction with signals mediated by NO could represent a mechanism for these effects.

Steroids in plant development

In animals, steroid hormones are crucial in development, but the physiological role of plant steroids has been unclear. Li et al. (p. 398; see the Perspective by Russell, p. 370) now show that a mutation in the DET2 gene in Arabidopsis, which is similar in sequence to genes for mammalian steroid 5α -reductases, leads to defects in lightregulated developmental steps. However, the mutants can be rescued by application of the plant steroid brassinolide. These results suggest a role for plant steroids in the transduction of light-mediated developmental signals.

|

View to a killer

Homology between the Lag3 gene, which is expressed in activated natural killer (NK) cells and stimulated T cells, and the CD4 gene suggested that its product, LAG3, might be involved in controlling T cell responses. Miyazaki et al. (p. 405) produced Lag3 knockout mice and found that these mice are apparently normal except for defects in the killing of certain target tumor cells by NK cells; the killing of nontransformed cells deficient in major histocompatibility complex class I molecules still occurred. These results suggest multiple NK pathways and that LAG3 acts as receptor or coreceptor for defining these modes.

Histones and

transcription

Modifications of histone proteins bound to DNA are thought to influence the access of transcription factors to regulatory sites in the DNA. Inhibition of histone deacetylase in mammalian cells causes arrest of the cell cycle in G_1 or G_2 phase. Taunton *et al.* (p. 408; see the Perspective by Wolffe, p. 371) have purified and cloned the histone deacetylase catalytic subunit from human Jurkat T cells. The predicted protein is similar to RPD3, a transcription factor from yeast. These results help to explain how regulatory modification of histones contributes to transcriptional regulation at specific promoters.

Following a lead

During development of the vertebrate brain, cortical neurons migrate away from their birthplaces to form the distinctive layers of the mature brain. The neurons follow routes defined by fibers of glial cells. Zheng et al. (p. 417) find that the protein astrotactin, known to aid this guided migration in the cerebellum, is expressed in various parts of the brain where laminar structures are formed by migrating neurons. Astrotactin mediates the interaction between migrating neuron and guiding glial cell fiber.

Links to LTP

In mammals, stable changes in sensory input can induce changes in the brain itself. The relation between such experience-dependent plasticity and molecular responses to stimulation, such as the long-term potentiation (LTP) seen at individual synapses, has been unclear. Glazewski et al. (p. 421) find that adult, but not adolescent, mice lacking the gene for α -CaMKII, a protein known to be involved in LTP, show less than normal modulation of their cortical response when sensory input from their whiskers is changed, thus linking LTP and experience-dependent plasticity.

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The organization of the subject matter is thematic, so that the user is guided logically through the body of knowledge to levels of increasing depth and diversity. The encyclopedia is itself organized into six areas. The systems of Water, Energy, Environment and Food & Agriculture comprise the four major components of the total Earth system concerned with life support. A fifth area, Global Issues, describes the global life support system on the basis of Earth system and global change science, including both its physical and human dimensions. Common Science and Technology, the sixth area, is included as a reference base for the other five areas. Information in all six areas of the encyclopedia is considered from a historical perspective, extending from the origin of knowledge to the current state of understanding, whilst pointers to future trends are included also.

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Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems

Intensive efforts are under way on the compilation of a major new reference work - the Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS) - which is being conceived as essential guidance for the achievement of global security through sustainable development. Its body of knowledge has been carefully designed to integrate all fundamental aspects of the science, technology and management of systems of life support, both natural and engineered. In total, it will represent a comprehensive knowledge base describing the physical, economic and social processes occurring on our planet on a global scale.

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PROGRESS TO DATE

In view of the importance of adopting a systematic approach to the integration of the body of knowledge for the EOLSS, teams from the USA, Japan, Russia, Europe and China were invited to develop outlines for the coverage of the encyclopedia. This led to five independent proposals for the overall list of contents. These parallel efforts have ensured the inclusion of a variety of approaches to common problems, characterized by the different conditions prevailing in contrasting world regions. From all of these proposals the Configuration Control Board of the EOLSS has prepared a unified list of contents which is to be finalized at a forthcoming major workshop in the

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Further information may be obtained from:

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