

CERAMAH TEKNIK TECHNICAL TALK

Documentary: On the Trail of Primitive Life (the Cambrian Period)

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Associate Professor Dr José Antonio Gámez Vintaned, from the Department of Geosciences, Universiti Teknologi Petronas presented the talk at the Lecture Hall of the Department of Geology, University of Malaya. The talk was attended by faculties and graduate students of the Geology Department and geologists from the industry.

Abstract: The documentary explains one of the biggest events in the history of life to a general audience: the Cambrian explosion of life. It opens with a summary description of Precambrian Earth and life, with particular emphasis on the biota of the Ediacaran Period. It then focuses on palaeontological highlights of the Precambrian/Cambrian transition and the probable causes of the “Cambrian Explosion” (with a short discussion on the nature and reality of the event). The history of Cambrian studies is briefly presented, followed by a review of the importance of fossil sites with exceptional preservation in reconstructing Cambrian “wonderful life”. Sites in Wales, Canada’s Burgess Shale, Chengjiang, China, and Sinsk in Siberia are featured, with special reference to the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the Burgess Shale and its remarkable fossils. The final part of the documentary deals with the Cambrian Lagerstätte of Murero (Spain), stressing its fossil content, long and continuous record (lower to middle Cambrian), and its contribution to the understanding of sexual dimorphism in trilobites. The film ends with some brief reflections on scientific progress in palaeontology and on the unique nature of the human mind.

