

A Mite Difference

It is commonly known that an alleged yeti scalp was examined by professionals in 1960 and deemed to have been made from the skin of a serow (a goat/antelope). Not well-known, however, is that one of the examiners, Dr. John Hill of the British Museum, found that the granules of pigment in the hair had a symmetrical arrangement quite different from normal serow pigments.

Furthermore, he found that ectoparasites from the scalp were also different. According to Dr. Hill, the mite ectoparasites recovered from the scalp were unusual in respect to their sculpting of the cuticle, the arrangement and conspicuousness of hairs, and the size of limbs. He went on to state that such mite ectoparasites are normally very host specific, and it would be highly unusual to find non-serow mites on a serow skin. He concluded that either the serow population in the Khumbu area (where the scalp was obtained) had unique ectoparasites, or the scalp was not made of serow skin.

Unfortunately, it would not be until 1986 that DNA analysis could be performed on skin/tissue of this nature. In the last few years, such analysis was made possible on just hair. Trying to get the scalp now (or any of several scalps available) would be impossible. Even just getting a hair would not be allowed, as was experienced by a recent researcher.



Alleged yeti scalp.