

Otzi the iceman of the history essay sample

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Imagine hiking through the alps and suddenly you make the most important archeological discovery of the century? That became reality for a German couple, Helmut and Erika Simons, who were hiking in the Alps. The Iceman was discovered on the 19th of September 1991 by the Simons, who were hiking by the Austrian and Italian border. They had gone trailblazing for a short amount of time before Erika stumbled across a frozen corpse. At first, she thought it was a discarded toy or dead hiker, but it turned out to be an ancient mummy.

That mummy is now known as Otzi the Iceman. His name Otzi, comes from the Tirolean Otztal Alps which were once home to this Stone age nomad. Otzi was excavated by local authorities then handed over to the scientific and archeological community. During removal part of Otzi's hip bone was damaged and during shipping he sustained injuries to his arm. Despite these setbacks scientist were able to relocate the Ice man back to England to be displayed and studied (David, 2010). Now that the mummy was settled scientists had so many questions to answer.

Who was this person, where did he come from, and how old was he? Thanks to carbon-14 dating it was determined Otzi is about 5, 300 years old. Once it was determined he was a Neanderthal from the stone age scientists were overwhelmed by the thoughts of what story Otzi had to tell (David, 2010). Otzi was naturally mummified in an air pocket created by glacier water that flowed into a hollow behind boulders. To simulate those conditions a special freezer was built in the South Tyrol of Archeology in Bolzano, Italy.

Otzi is usually kept at -6 degrees Celsius and 98 percent air humidity, and is misted with water once a month (Between, 2009). Scientists perform regular examinations to uncover and study how his body remains preserved.

Researchers also take care of the objects found near the Ice man. All of his belongings were conditioned fixed and stored along with his body. Some researchers believe that Otzi was a shepherd due to the environment surrounding his body. Others believe he was a warrior or hunter due to the projectile point found in his back.

The truth is the world may never know exactly what the Ice man did for a living. According to research conducted by David Getz Otzi was most likely a warrior. Examinations of pollen grains in Otzi's stomach and the condition of his body and gear, suggested he was fleeing a fight. The iceman has a deep cut on one of his hands and a projectile point in his back both suggesting a conflict before death. The wounds Otzi had sustained had not yet begun to heal meaning he did not live long after the fight. In addition to puncture wounds the ice man had sustained blunt force trauma to the head.

The Ice man's possessions can tell archaeologists a lot about the stone age and the people who lived in it. The ice man's ax had a copper blade. This suggests that Otzi comes from wealth, copper was rare and valuable at the time (David, 2010). Copper tools were often traded or passed down through generations and, only important people had them. He also carried some daggers for self-defense and tool sharpening. The tool sharpener was made of deer antler with a wooden handle, it resembled a fat pencil.

The flint knife was about 5 inches (13 centimeters) long (David, 2010). He held it in a bark-cord sheath on his belt. For hunting Otzi used a longbow with flint head arrows. His bow was found unfinished with two arrows both broken suggesting he may have come from a fight. Some non-lethal tools the ice man carried were a birch bark container and a fanny pack. The bark container would have been used to carry glowing embers to start a fire later. The fanny pack most likely contained various fire-starting items (David, 2010).

Of all his clothes only one shoe survived the decades in ice. Otzi wore deer hide shoes with a bearskin hide which is waterproof he even filled them with grass for warmth. Otzi also incorporated twisted grass socks to hold the stuffed grass in place. Otzi was clothed from head to toe, he wore layers to stay warm and utilized animal hides and grass to make his outfit water proof. Scientists could determine what Otzi ate the day he died. Because food passes through the body at a known rate, scientists could use Otzi's digestive system as a kind of clock.

When they studied a tiny sample of digested food taken from Otzi, they could tell that he'd eaten it around eight hours before he died. In the sample, they found bits of a grain called einkorn. The einkorn had been ground up and had bits of charcoal in it. That means it had probably been baked into a cracker like bread, not cooked as porridge or eaten raw (David, 2010). Scientists used the digestive system "clock" to determine when Otzi died. It would have been between march and June since there was pollen from the hop hornbeam tree which only grown in warm valleys south of the alps.

Scientists learned that Otzi's first meal of the day was ibex (a type of wild goat), grains, and fruit. Before he died he ate another meal, which included red deer and inore grains. The quality and variety of the meat he ate suggest that Otzi was an experienced hunter (David, 2010). Theories suggest Otzi may have been ambushed while hunting. He managed to fend off the attackers and emerge victorious with a meal. However, his injuries got the best of him and he died due to infection and disease. Other well known theories claim he may have had cured deer meat or a jerky of some kind.