

From: Topperdragon@wmconnect.com
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This one's a little more interesting. Of course, they couldn't resist getting in the "social implications" of it. Did it ever occur to these folks that they may have made them just because they thought they were pretty?

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Fantastic Discovery in a Cave in Israel

The world's oldest bling bling has been found deep inside the Skhul Cave on the slopes of Mount Carmel in Israel. Identified by scientists as the earliest known pieces of jewelry made by modern humans, the shell beads are between 90,000 and 100,000 years old, reports the BBC News.

A similar set of beads was also found in an open-air site called Oued Djebbana in Algeria. Scientists were able to date them thanks to sediments that had stuck to one of the shells. An analysis showed that the sediment came from ground layers dated to 100,000 years ago.

These beads, which are pea-sized and have similar holes that allow them be strung together in a necklace or bracelet, predate other ancient jewelry by some 25,000 years. All three sets of shells come from the same genus of marine mollusc known as Nassarius, notes the BBC. It is likely they were specifically chosen for their size. The holes were probably made with a sharp flint tool. "We're confident these were artificially made. The position of the holes are exactly where people drill shells like this when they are making necklaces," co-author Professor Chris Stringer of London's Natural History Museum, told the BBC.

"The interesting thing about necklaces and this kind of behavior is that it is symbolic. When we wear items like this, we are sending a message," Stringer told the BBC.

"The message may be that we are powerful or wealthy or sexy, that we're part of a particular group or to ward off evil. They're not just decorative; we think they had a social meaning." The find was described in the journal Science.



Undated photo provided by the journal Science shows two hands full of modern Nassarius gibbosulus shells. Ancient

beads that may represent the oldest human attempt at self-decoration have been identified from sites in Algeria and Israel. The beads, made from shells with holes bored into them, date to 100,000 years ago, some 25,000 years older than similar beads discovered two years ago in South Africa. (AP Photo/Science, Drs. Marian Vanhaeren and Francesco d'Errico)



Undated photo provided by the journal Science shows two perforated Nassarius. Ancient beads that may represent the oldest human attempt at self-decoration have been identified from sites in Algeria and Israel. The beads, made from shells with holes bored into them, date to 100,000 years ago, some 25,000 years older than similar beads discovered two years ago in South Africa. (AP Photo/Science, Drs. Marian Vanhaeren and Francesco d'Errico)