

# Newly discovered ancient arthropod lived hundreds of millions of years ago

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The Burgess Shale Formation, in the Canadian Rockies of British Columbia, is one of the most famous fossil locations in the world. A recent *Palaeontology* study introduces a 508 million year old (middle Cambrian) arthropod—called *Yawunik kootenayi*—from exceptionally preserved specimens of the new Marble Canyon locality within the Burgess Shale Formation.

Its frontal appendage—the "megacheiran great appendage"—is remarkably adorned with teeth, emphasizing an advanced predatory function. The appendage also had long hair-like flagella at the end that likely served a [sensory function](#).

"*Yawunik* illustrates unique attributes in the early evolution of the most successful group of animals on Earth - the arthropods. It shows that the combination of functions on a single, frontal-most appendage was a type of strategy selected for before the grasping and sensory roles were ensured by different head limbs," said lead author and PhD candidate Cédric Aria.

**More information:** Aria, C., Caron, J.-B., Gaines, R. (2015), A large new leanchoilid from the Burgess Shale and the influence of inapplicable states on stem arthropod phylogeny. *Palaeontology*. [DOI: 10.1111/pala.12161](https://doi.org/10.1111/pala.12161)

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