

# Connecting Scientific Archives with Artifacts: Reflecting on the Smithsonian's Ralph S. and Rose L. Solecki Papers and Artifacts Project at the National Anthropological Archives



**Celia Emmelhainz & Molly Kamph**

National Anthropological Archives  
National Museum of Natural History  
Smithsonian Institution  
June 28, 2023

Ralph Solecki's  
personal trowel that  
excavated the  
Shanidar Cave  
Neanderthals



Smithsonian Institution Archives



Portraits  
Smithsonian

**SAAM**

Smithsonian  
American Art  
Museum



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of African Art*

**FOLK  
LIFE**

NATIONAL  
**Anthropological**  
ARCHIVES 

NATIONAL  
MUSEUM of  
**ASIAN ART**  
 Smithsonian

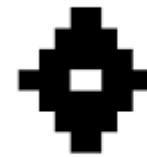
  
Smithsonian  
Gardens

**HIRSHHORN**

Smithsonian

 NATIONAL  
MUSEUM  
OF  
AMERICAN  
HISTORY

NATIONAL  
MUSEUM  
OF THE  
AMERICAN  
INDIAN



Anacostia  
Community  
Museum  
Smithsonian



NATIONAL  
AIR AND SPACE  
MUSEUM  
Smithsonian



After breakfast - new print - went down to Yapanas (Suma) village with James and small, half-bred one. Met Nicholas (1.31.23) going up river with family, women all painted red with stripes of face. Had several conversations with him - houses of no rooms except one and lot of Yapanas and Sigal rapids. Going up beyond mouth of Wasipana river (I was dumb to sail for 4 1/2 hours for this) to new clearing. Either there are no large rivers here (except the), the people don't know them, or they don't know. I got a couple of hours in Suma village (see p. 102). Came back to camp - Ralph and Harold across river fishing. Got one at 10 o'clock but no fish in river, baited with mackerel. Pigeon to buy - firm and I ran out and pulled in 4' shark (see below and notes). Got some on or I almost caught at mouth of Mungwa. Peter Haskell shot a beautiful ♂ stream (see p. 94) of the large variety. Skinned it. Had all the down river Suma and a few back up looking for it in aft. The shark on the beach attracted buzzards which sat on trees across the river - one was white-headed - Ralph said a King Gull - that may have been a caracara. Pigeon to buy - Ralph says and found for a couple of hours - for a while then want to sleep. Family good sleep. This do not bother after dark, but later and after - first!

Fresh water shark - caught 10 o'clock pm. - on Patricia, at mouth of Mungwa. See 9th Appendix / about 100 miles down river. Length 3' 10" Girth 1' 10" - found of Girth 8" 6" found of tail Weight 50 lb. Belly: dead white. Back: brown. Dappled. 5 gill slits. Teeth: 4 in long. 2 rows, teeth with teeth on between. 1 row upper teeth, 1 row lower teeth. Eyes: dull grey. Vertical black pupil. Pigeon to buy - firm and I ran out and pulled in 4' shark (see below and notes). (Ralph turned into out-landish fish 5 1/2")



"Acer rubrum.---The inner bark boiled to a sirup, into pills, and these dissolved in water, is used in cases of sore eyes; the eyes washed therewith.

"Actaea racemosa.---The root in spirits, these made use of in rheumatic pains.

"Adiantum Capillus Verenis.---A decoction of the whole plant, used as an emetic in cases of ague and fever. A very strong medicine.

# Holdings

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- 540 cubic meters of collections:
  - 5000+ manuscripts
  - 2500 km of film recordings
  - 3.5 km of paper records
  - 1 million photographs
  - 57,000 A/V assets
  - 21,000 pieces of artwork
  - and thousands of maps
- 





Shanidar Cave, Ralph S. and Rose L. Solecki papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



Ralph and Rose Solecki with artifacts excavated from Shanidar Cave, 1957



Shanidar 4 skeleton, Ralph S. and Rose L. Solecki papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



"Team Solecki" during 2016 collections pick-up. L to R: Esther Rimer, Daisy Njoku, Teresa Hsu, Ralph Solecki, Gina Rappaport.



Part of the archival materials from the 2016 transfer (NAA Accession 2016-29)



The second transfers of archival materials and artifacts, 2018 (NAA Accession 2018-10)



The Soleckis' former lab at Columbia University, 2016



Rose Solecki (Ralph Solecki in background) in 2018 holding an example of Kurdish clothing eventually transferred in 2019.

## Archaeology

Artifacts, archaeobiological material, and data collected or created during excavation or other professional activities

### Ralph S. and Rose L. Solecki Papers and Artifacts Project

Archival collection informs the archaeological metadata associated with the artifacts and archaeobiological material during cataloging

## Archives

Arrange and describe archival material according to *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* and the National Anthropological Archives' Processing Manual to create a finding aid

## Museum

For the artifacts, follow the Smithsonian Institution's Department of Anthropology standards for cataloging into the department's KE-EMu collections database

# Challenges

## Interdisciplinary

- Mediating between disciplines
- “Archaeological curation crisis”
- Shifting professional standards throughout lifetime of collection within archaeology, museums, and archives

## Institutional

- Legacy Issues
- Tied to professional standards, funding, staff, etc.
- Organizational structure of repositories in relation to each other

## Integration

- Volume of material
- Storage for large collections
- Separate museum collections and archival databases for each repository



40

No Spring above the cave  
is called "Kani Petka"  
Set off 2 BLASTS  
using 2 capsules + 10 charges

April 25 - Friday  
Surveyed around Zami Chani  
Shanidar with Mike.

April 27 - Thursday  
Phil to cave with full  
force. I + Mike survey at camp  
Chuni. - look and George at  
out.

about 1.30 P.M. - Phil + Alder  
discovered calva of large brain  
adult skull in layer C -  
facing south - stone fallen  
on head, measuring 2.5m.  
large in N.W. section of  
B 7 at 4.34 m. from 3"  
bottom + Excavated in gully

area 41

by addai. This is a dark  
mudstone matter around  
the skull  
with organic  
matter  
yellow soil  
dark  
organic  
soil  
2.5m.  
rocks. Burial?  
most  
likely (4)

the skull had been crushed  
by the weight of the stone.  
Burial in east wall on a shelf  
surrounded among some large stones.  
About 1.05  
meters above skull is  
dark brown loamy soil large  
(?) containing many charcoal  
pieces, mammal bone fragments

In section N.W. part of A 9  
is area of many bones which  
addai and Strathairn are working on.  
many bones evidently crushed by  
a rock fall

The skull part of a burial  
evidently size of skull is 5cm. or  
smaller. Entailed a charcoal speck

Ralph Solecki's field notebook entry for the discovery of the Shanidar 1 Neanderthal, nicknamed "Nandy", 1957

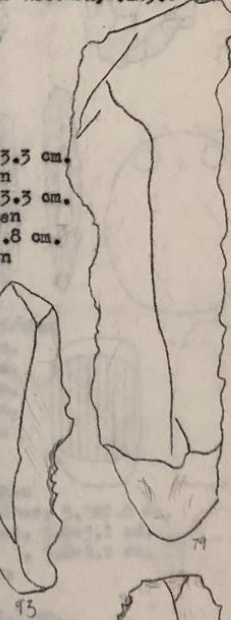
Ralph and Rose Solecki being interviewed by Molly Kamph and Diana Marsh (not pictured), photograph by Diana Marsh, 2018



Cat. Field Provenience  
No. No.

Description

56	28	2.0.3. B-4, .50-.75 m.	Microolithic Lunate, 2.1
57	72	" E-4, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " "
58	32	" C-4, .50-.75 m.	" " " "
59	56	" C-4, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
60	86	" C-1, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " "
61	54	" E-4, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
62	54	" B-2, .50-.75 m.	" " " "
63	64	" C-2, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
64	64	" C-2, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
65	75	" C-3, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " "
66	69	" B-4, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " "
67	91	" E-4, 1.25-1.50 m.	" " " "
68	53	" D-4, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
69	54	" E-4, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
70	86	" C-1, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " "
71	64	" C-2, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
72	31	" E-4, .50-.75 m.	" " " "
73	50	" B-4, .75-1.00 m.	" " " "
74	32	" C-4, .50-.75 m.	" " " "
75	64	" C-2, .75-1.00 m.	Double Side Scraper, 6.5x3.2 cm.
76	50	" B-4, .75-1.00 m.	Double Side Searper With Alternate Retouch, 6.1x3.0 cm.
77	69	" B-4, 1.00-1.25 m.	Double Side Scraper, Broken
78	77	" E-3, 1.00-1.25 m.	Single Side Scraper, 6.8x3.0 cm.
79	58	" E-3, .75-1.00 m.	Knife, 11.2x3.4 cm.
80	53	" D-4, .75-1.00 m.	Knife, Broken
81	87	" D-2, 1.00-1.25 m.	Knife, Broken
82	2	" B-4, .00-.25 m.	End Scraper, 4.1x1.8 cm.
83	54	" E-4, .75-1.00 m.	End Scraper, 5.3x2.9 cm.
84	65	" D-2, .75-1.00 m.	Notched Steep Side Scraper, 9.0x3.3 cm.
85	108	" D-1, 1.35-1.40 m.	" " " " Broken
86	54	" E-4, .75-1.00 m.	" " " " 7.4x3.3 cm.
87	64	" C-2, .75-1.00 m.	" " " " Broken
88	58	" E-3, .75-1.00 m.	" " " " 4.1x2.8 cm.
89	58	" E-3, .75-1.00 m.	" " " " Broken
90	64	" C-2, .75-1.00 m.	Steep Side Scraper, 6.6x3.1 cm.
91	127	" D-4, 1.50-1.85 m.	Notched Blade, 5.5x2.3 cm.
92	54	" E-4, .75-1.00 m.	" " " " Broken
93	72	" E-4, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " " 6.4x2.1 cm.
94	35	" C-3, .50-.75 m.	" " " " 4.9x1.6 cm.
95	90	" C-4, 1.25-1.50 m.	" " " " 5.9x1.6 cm.
96	74	" C-4, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " " 6.7x2.3 cm.
97	31	" E-4, .50-.75 m.	" Flake, 3.8x2.2 cm.
98	30	" B-3, .50-.75 m.	" " " " 3.6x1.9 cm.
99	80	" D-3, 1.00-1.25 m.	Serrated Blade, 7.5x2.2 cm.
100	80	" D-3, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " " 4.5x1.5 cm.
101	55	" B-3, .75-1.00 m.	" " " " Broken
102	61	" D-3, .75-1.00 m.	" " " " 4.9x1.9 cm.
103	84	" C-2, 1.00-1.25 m.	" Flake, 3.7x2.4 cm.
104	31	" E-4, .50-.75 m.	" " " " 2.8x2.1 cm.
105	69	" B-4, 1.00-1.25 m.	" " " " Broken
106	76	" B-4, 1.25-1.50 m.	" " " " 5.7x5.2 cm.

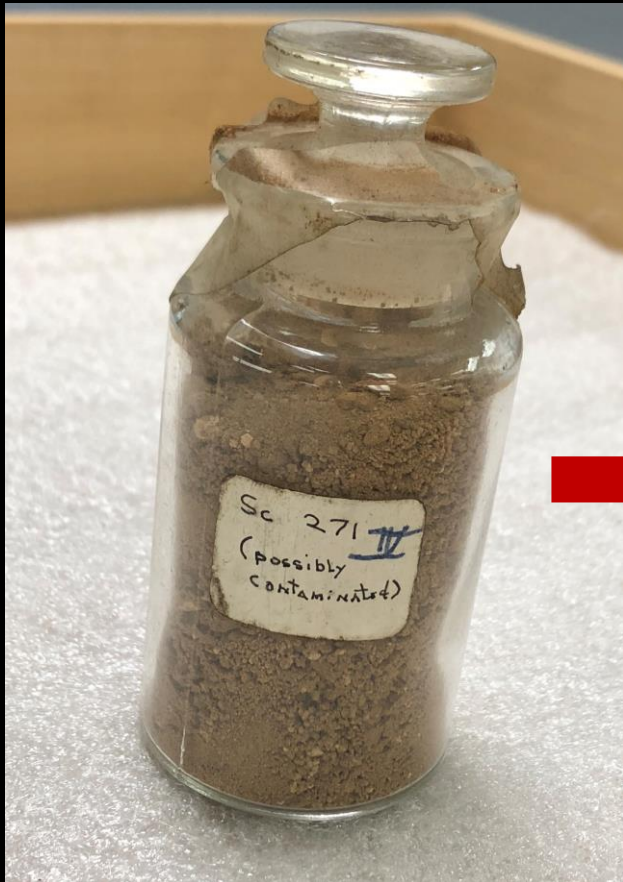


Ralph and Rose Solecki examining specimens at the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, 1966



Artifacts from Zawi Chemi Shanidar before rehousing and cataloging, Accession 220078

"Notched Steep Side Scraper" Artifact (A607238-0) and Catalog Illustration from Season IV Excavations of Zawi Chemi Shanidar, 1960



271 IV Soil Sample, collected from Shanidar 4 Neanderthal Skeleton

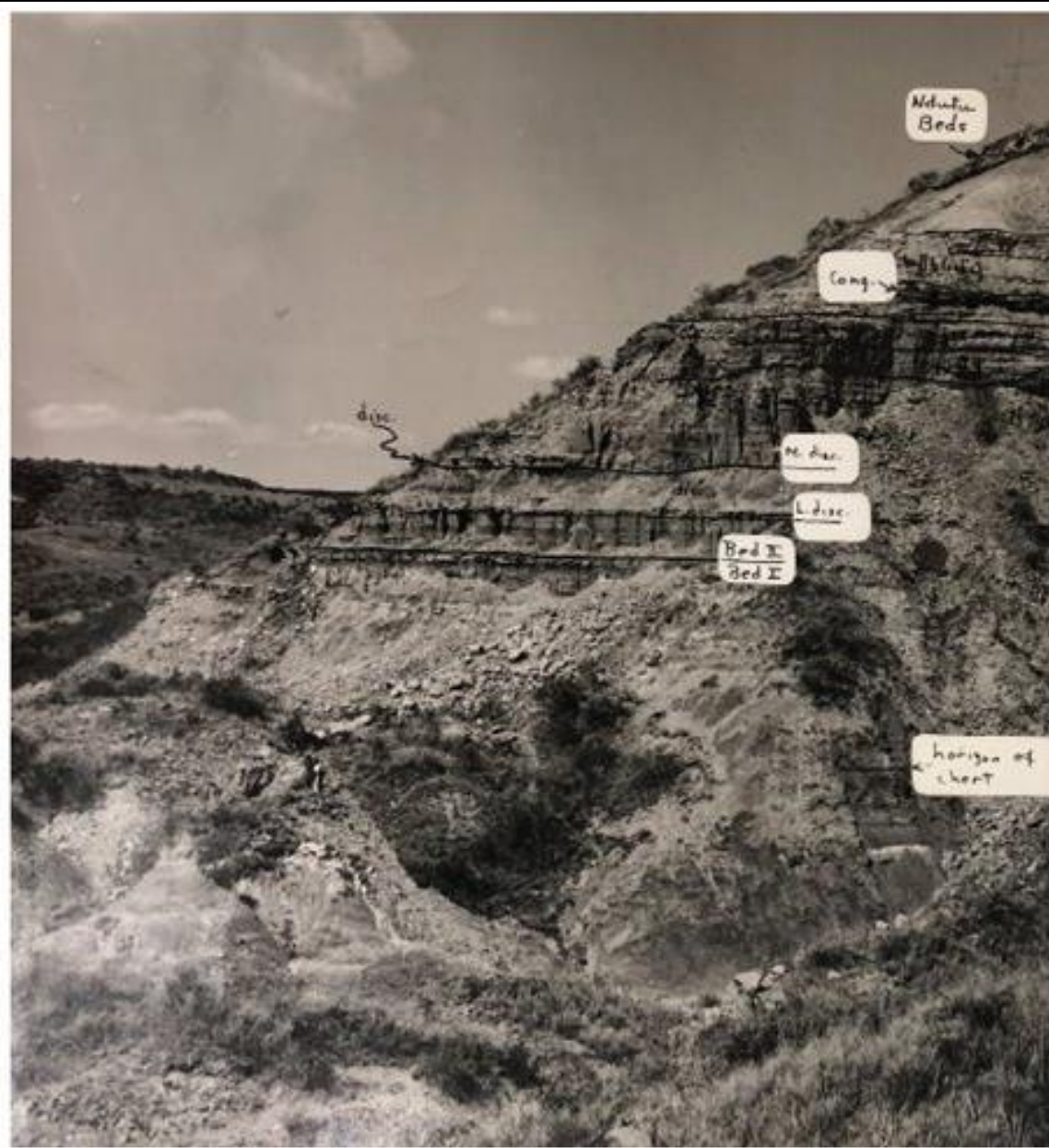
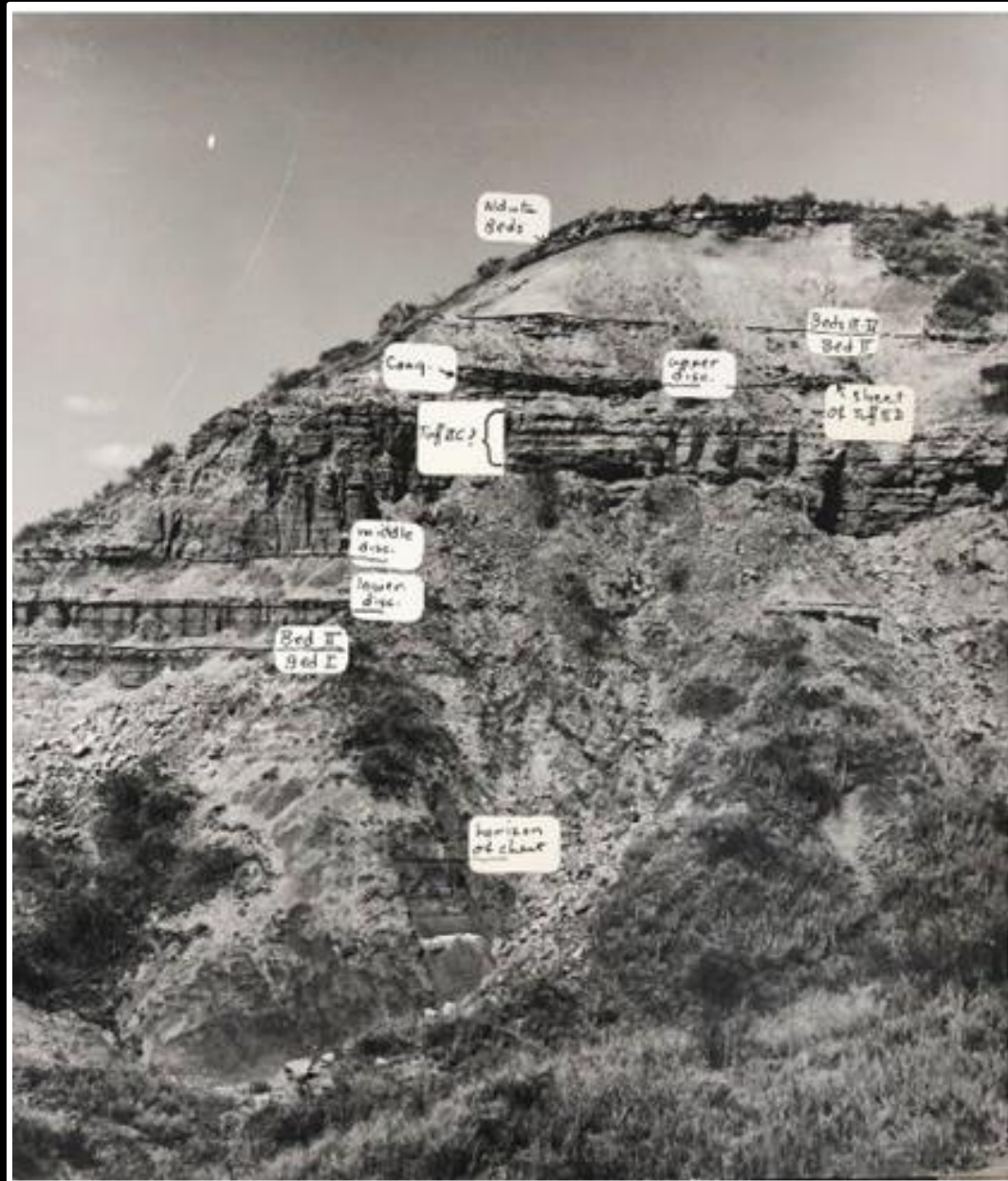


-5-

Field No.	Location
223	Shanidar Cave, X7, 4.50 m.
224	" " " A7, to 4.95 m.
225	" " " A7, A8, X7, X8, Y7, Y8, Wall scrapings
226	" " " A7, 4.95-5.05 m.
227	" " " A7, 5.05-5.25 m.
228	" " " E8, flint found with Shanidar II
229	" " " Area of Shanidar II, E8, 7.30 m.
230	" " " E8, 7.30 m., soil sample
231	" " " E8, Area of Shanidar II, 7.46-7.54 m.
232	" " " E8, Area of Shanidar II, 7.54 m.
233	" " " B9, 6.20 m.
234	" " " E8, Shanidar II, soil sample
235	" " " A8, Shanidar II, soil sample
236	" " " X8, 4.50 m.
237	" " " A7, 5.05-5.25 m.
238	" " " A7, 5.25 m.
239	" " " X8, 4.50 m.
240	" " " D8, 8.50-8.95 m.
241	" " " B1, B2, surface to 0.60 m.
242	" " " Shanidar IV, B7, 7.71 m.
243	" " " C1, C2, surface to 0.68 m.
244	" " " B7, 7.71 m. Shanidar IV
245	" " " B7, B8, B9, 7.00 m.
246	" " " A8, 5.15 m. Shanidar III
247	" " " B9, 6.08 m.
248	" " " A8, 5.05-5.50 m.
249	" " " X7, 4.69-5.07 m.
250	" " " D1, D2, D3, 6.00-6.13 m.
251	" " " A7, 5.25-5.45 m.
252	" " " D7, 8.40-8.60 m.
253	" " " A7, 5.45-5.60 m.
254	" " " X8, 4.95-5.29 m.
255	" " " D7, 8.60-8.80 m.
256	" " " D7, 8.60-8.90 m.
257	" " " D7, 8.90-9.00 m.
258	" " " E8, 7.70-8.00 m.
259	" " " B2, surface to 0.60 m.
260	" " " B1, surface to 0.45 m.
261	" " " D1, D2, D3, 6.00-6.13 m.
262	" " " C1, 0.48-0.65 m.
263	" " " B1, 0.55-0.65 m.
264	" " " C1, 0.50-0.65 m.
265	" " " G5, 0.87 m.
266	" " " C1, 0.65-0.80 m.
267	" " " G5, 1.10 m.
268	" " " G5, B5, D5, scrapings of south wall
269	" " " B5, 0.90-1.10 m.
270	" " " B1, 0.65-0.70 m.
271	" " " B7, Shanidar IV, soil sample
272	" " " D7, 8.90-9.15 m.
273	" " " B7, Shanidar IV
274	" " " B7, Shanidar IV
275	" " " D7, 9.15-9.30 m.
276	" " " D8, 9.00-9.34 m.
277	" " " B7, area of Shanidar IV
278	" " " B7, Shanidar IV
279	" " " C1, Layer B, burial
280	" " " D1, 0.60-0.75 m.



Shanidar 4 Neanderthal called the "Flower Burial" excavated at Shanidar Cave, 1960



# Sustainable archives, Sustainable planet



6/28/2023

13

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