

Nemo me impune lacessit

The straw that broke the camel's back. We are all familiar with the expression and presumably it's meaning. Anybody and everybody can carry a burden, but there is a limit to each person's capabilities. Let's say I can carry a large stone (or, in my case, a cross) that weighs 100 pounds. What if the same load were given to me not as a single unit of 100 pounds, but rather 100 units of 1 pound each? What if we broke it down further still, say 1600 objects each weighing an ounce or 45,359 pebbles at one gram apiece? To a freight company or a mechanical scale there is no distinction between how the 100 pounds is divided, just that the total is the same.



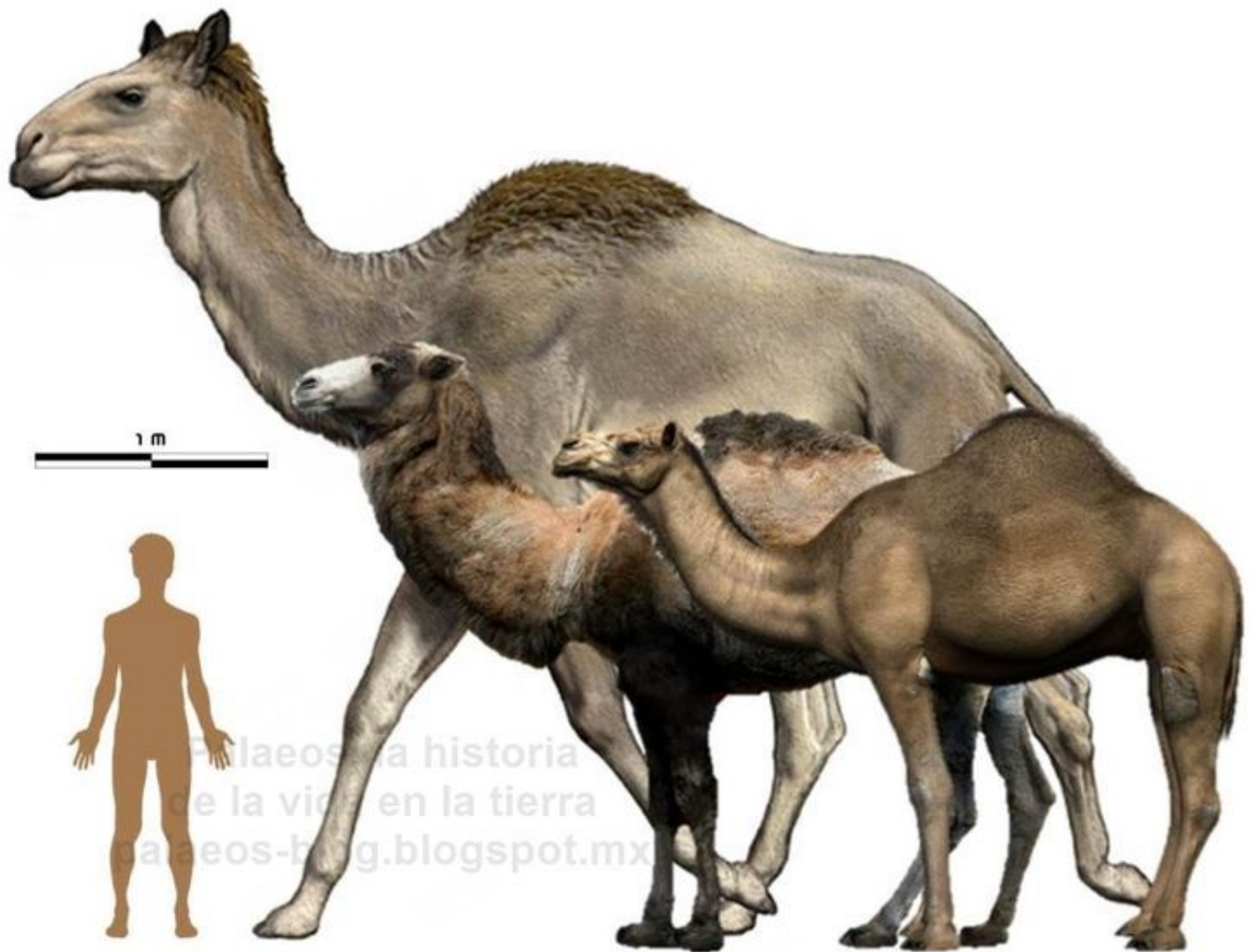
In human endeavors, however, the physical mass of the object must be augmented by an emotional weight, or psychic toll. Thus, each unit, in the case of human relations we consider events and interactions among people to be a unit, there is the extra psychic weight. It seems reasonable to assume (though I am loathe to use that word, for reasons which may or may not be clear) that the emotional weight of a big event, like the holocaust, weighs more than, say, the bus running late. That is not the case, each event weighs the same, but the holocaust is the accumulation of millions of seemingly small events thus it

weighs considerably more. The key word there is accumulation. For every event that weighs 100 pounds, there is, let's say, one pound of emotional weight. While for every 1 ounce, there is a gram of emotional weight. When you add up the 1600 ounces and 1600 grams you get 3.6 pounds of additional weight. The point of all this is that 100 little things weighs more than 1 big thing and even more so for a thousand or a million individual chunks. Just like the scale in the bathroom has a limit, so too does the human psyche which is impossible to gauge without knowing the emotional weight of every individual slight. Thus, when I got ready for bed last night and found myself inexplicably without toothpaste and realized I was the victim of a theft I reached my emotional limit. That some reprobate drug addict who should have been denied access to the house could enter and, with impunity, abscond with my toothpaste was the final straw. Now, no matter the cost I will vacate the premises this weekend.

Au revoir.

If I make it through today,
I'll know tomorrow not to put my feelings out on display.
I'll put the cobwebs back in place.
I've never been to good with names,
But I remember faces.

The numbers I used are just for illustration of the point but, imagine if we broke the burden down into atoms or molecules. Imagine one mole, or 6.02×10^{23} atoms, each with its own emotional weight in addition to its conventional mass! What camel could possibly carry such a burden!?



The genus camelops roamed the Great Plains until 10,000 years ago!

Non sequitur

While looking up the Latin quote from Cask of Amontillado, which I thought to be a good reference due to the opening line about “the thousand injuries of Fortunato”, I ended up on a web page about Scottish clans and (naturally) to that of my namesake, Clan Wallace. Interestingly, a fact that I had never noticed before struck me as ... (I can't find the right word - fortuitous, serendipitous, auspicious). Anyway, it appears that I am probably related to the mathematician John Wallis.



John Wallis (November 23, 1616 - October 28, 1703) was an English mathematician who is given partial credit for the development of modern calculus. Between 1643 and 1689, he served as chief cryptographer for Parliament and, later, the royal court. He is also credited with introducing the symbol ∞ for infinity.

I considered breaking this post down into neat little paragraphs with subheadings and the like, but then I said to myself "damn their search engine optimization and their so-called readability scale!"

Epilogue

I wrote everything before this part yesterday, Friday, upon learning of the toothpaste fiasco. As it turns out, my roommate borrowed my toothpaste because he suddenly ran out and forgot to put it back, even after I asked him if that was maybe the case. This is just one more example of him not being able to do anything for himself and being an inconvenience to everyone else. While not a bad person, he is immature, self centered and without direction. Sounds a lot like me when I was his age so I can't be too hard on him, but I'm still moving out.

To accomplish my move I had to plant a lot of seeds, make a lot of phone calls, and be rejected every time. Until, finally I got a call back from a friend of a friend - a previously unavailable room is now available and would I be interested? It is more than I want to spend, but upon considering this point it occurred to me that any price would be too expensive to my mode of thinking. So, I considered everything again, this time carefully weighing the pros and cons and realized that the cost completely justifies the peace of mind I would have at this new place. Just like that I am going to move into my new room as soon as I can get a ride over there.

Keep Talking

Speech has allowed the communication of ideas
Enabling human beings to work together to build the impossible
Mankind's greatest achievements have come about by talking
Our greatest hopes could become reality in the future
With the technology at our disposal, the possibilities are unbounded
All we need to do is make sure we keep talking

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