

Curriculum Vitae

Dr. sc. nat. Marcia Silvia Ponce de León

Marcia S. Ponce de León studied civil engineering in La Paz, Bolivia. In Switzerland, she studied biology (specializing in anthropology and genetics) and informatics, and received a Master's degree in biology (1992) with a thesis on cranial evolution in *H. erectus*. In the 1990s, together with Ch. Zollikofer, she pioneered Computer-assisted Paleoanthropology (CAP) as a new research field in evolutionary anthropology. In her PhD thesis (Univ. Zurich, 2000), she used CAP to reconstruct a large series of fragmentary Neanderthal child specimens, and to analyze Neanderthal and modern human patterns of growth and development. Her continuous research in this area led to the reconstruction of the first fossil hominin ontogeny – that of the Neanderthals – from birth to death.

MPdL's research focus is on the evolutionary developmental biology of fossil and modern hominins and great apes, with a special interest in the evolution of the modern human birth process, and of brain and facial ontogeny. Further areas of active research are the comparative analysis of patterns of pathology and aging in fossil hominids and extant humans, and the out of Africa dispersals of hominids as seen from combined genetic/phenetic evidence.

MPdL has been and is a member of several international research projects focusing on new fossil finds that document key processes of human evolution: the anthropoid origins in East Asia (*Siamopithecus*, Thailand), the emergence of hominins at the Mio-Pliocene boundary (*Sahelanthropus*, Chad), the first humans outside of Africa at the Plio-Pleistocene boundary (*H. erectus*, Dmanisi, Georgia), the first modern humans in Africa (Herto, Ethiopia) and Europe (Pestera cu Oase, Romania), and the evolution, dispersal and extinction of the Neanderthals. Furthermore, she has initiated the "Virtual Ape Project", which seeks to gather high-quality biomedical imaging data of recently deceased great ape individuals from zoos and sanctuaries. As a core member of the Dmanisi Research Project (DRP) in Georgia she has initiated, together with Christoph Zollikofer, the Dmanisi Paleoanthropology Field School promoting the formation of young Georgian scientists.

MPdL was senior researcher at the Anthropological Institute at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and served as curator of the institute's primate and osteoarchaeological collections, as well as the famous A. H. Schultz collection of apes. During her time as curator, she managed to expand the collection by more than a thousand specimens, notably through the acquisition of important private donations.

Currently, MPdL is senior research associate at the Department of Informatics, University of Zurich, Switzerland, and at the IBS Center for Climate Physics (Busan, South Korea). She serves as associate editor of Quaternary Science Reviews.