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# Irish scientists first to rebuild 10m-yr-old animals

BY **NIALL MOONAN**

IRISH scientists are behind a groundbreaking move to rebuild the features of animals who died 10 million years ago.

In a world first, University College Cork experts have discovered a new way to put flesh on the

extinct creatures. They are the most accurate depictions yet of what animals such as frogs, tadpoles and bats – preserved in fossils for ever – looked like when they were alive.

The Rebel County palaeontologists discovered how to reconstruct the anatomy of vertebrate

animals by analysing the chemistry of fossilised melanosomes (tiny granules in their cells) from internal organs.

The study, published in a US journal, was led by UCC's Valentina Rossi and her supervisor Dr Maria McNamara, backed by an international team of chemists

from the US and Japan. Dr McNamara said: "This discovery is remarkable in that it opens up a new avenue for reconstructing the anatomy of ancient animals.

"In some of our fossils we can identify skin, lungs, the liver, the gut, the heart and even connective tissue."



**STUDY** UCC scientists