

Very old bird tracks claimed to be from an unknown dinosaur

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The relationship of birds to presumably feathered dinosaurs is controversial.¹⁻³ Although there have been claims of earlier birds, disputed by most evolutionists, the famous *Archaeopteryx* is still considered the oldest bird with reptilian features—a missing link. It supposedly evolved in the Late Jurassic around 150 million years ago in the evolutionary timescale from some coelurosaurian dinosaur ancestor.

Evolutionists have been finding what they call bird-like tracks in strata older than *Archaeopteryx* but have managed to explain them away, usually by claiming the tracks were made by what are called ‘non-avian dinosaurs’. These tracks have usually been poorly preserved so that the interpretation would usually stick. Not any more!

Well preserved footprints

Well-preserved and abundant fossil footprints that look very closely like bird tracks have been found in the Late Triassic sediments of northwestern Argentina.⁴ The tracks were found in two layers, separated vertically by 10 cm. This discovery is 55 million years before *Archaeopteryx*’s time! In fact, there are very few dinosaur candidates even for an ancestor back then. So, the evolutionists have a problem. They cannot date the problem away by *re-interpreting* the dates:

‘The age of the unit has been established on the basis of its fossil content and a radiometric date, and is further supported by lithologic comparison with the well-dated Late Triassic Los Colorados formation.’⁵

So we have another case in which evolutionary offspring are older than their parents.

What is a good evolutionist to do?

He could of course challenge the interpretation of the footprints as coming from birds, but the evidence is sound that the prints are nearly identical, if not identical, to modern bird footprints. Melchor *et al.* admit the case is strong for the footprints being from birds (Figure 1):

‘The Santo Domingo tracks described herein meet most proposed features that characterize bird footprints, including ... (1) an overall similarity to modern bird footprints; (2) footprints that are wider than they are long (not considering the hallux [backward-facing digit]) and of small size; (3) slender digit impressions; (4) a wide angle between digits II and IV; (5) a posterior or posteromedial hallux impression, visible both in shallow and deep tracks; (6) slender claws showing distal curvature of lateral and medial claws away from the foot axis; and (7) a sole of

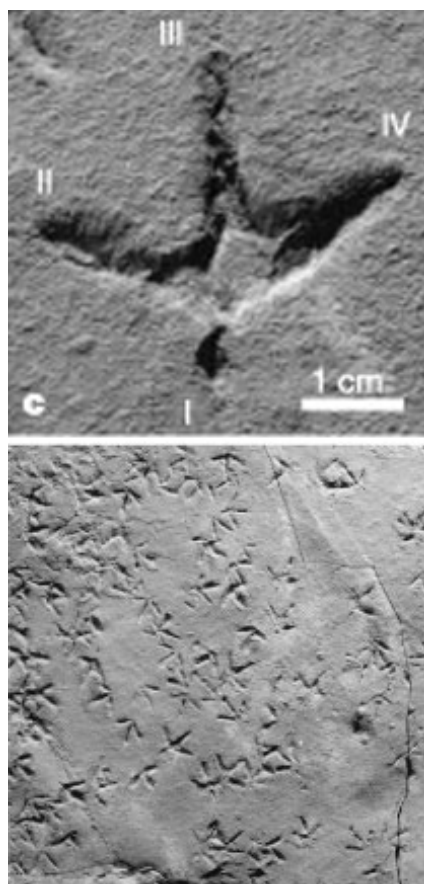


Figure 1. The footprints. Are these not avian footprints? (From Melchor *et al.*).⁴



metatarsal-phalangeal impression is visible in some footprints, where digits II and IV converge.’⁶

Further evidence for a bird interpretation is shown by comparing the tracks to modern waterbirds and waders that include a high footprint density without preferred orientation and a shallow water setting that helps preserve the tracks. The combined occurrence in the studied tracks of all these features is exclusive to birds.⁶

The researches found some minor features, which may not be in agreement with the tracks being from birds: ‘... the presence of distinct pad impressions in some footprints and the absence of associated feeding traces’.⁶ Therefore, Melchor and colleagues opt for the tracks being ‘bird-like’ and ‘... only can be attributed to an unknown group of theropods showing some avian characters’.⁶ This is really a case of missing the obvious because

of a blind allegiance to evolution. The character of the tracks, including tracks on multiple strata, and the lack of feeding traces can be explained the same way as dinosaur tracks and eggs (exposed Flood sediments caused by oscillating sea level early in the Flood, as the waters were inundating the land).^{7,8}

Circular reasoning

The interpretation of Melchor *et al.* also demonstrates the abundant circular reasoning in organizing observed data from the rocks and fossils into preconceived ideas. There has been a force fitting of data into pigeonholed evolutionary slots for many years. This is simply based on their assumption that evolution is true, and they call this *science!* The subject of origins is quite different from experimental science because evolution and the origin of the sedimentary rocks and their contained fossils have not been observed by man. To the student, or other people not familiar with the tendency to fudge data into agreement, the evolutionary story looks coherent and well verified. So much data, including multiple dating methods, seem to fit the evolutionary story. But beware, this neat-sounding story is a fabrication.

References

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