

WHY MEN SEARCH THE PALUXY

by Kenneth C. Herrmann

from notes on our April 1973 visit

Are there really "mantracks" with the tracks of dinosaurs in the bed of the Paluxy River near Glen Rose, Texas? A visit with one of the chief proponents of this fundamentalist doctrine left me with fairly convincing evidence that no evidence has yet been found of either human or primate tracks with the dinosaurs. I do not say these fundamentalists are knowingly misleading their followers but that they have certainly misled themselves.

Consider the evidence. The man I talked with was Michael Turnage (former high school teacher of Wesley Eckles who is one of our present Big Sandy students), an academically capable man and with strong religious convictions, a determined researcher and a hard worker. He claimed, and I think rightly so, to be the best or one of the two best informed individuals with regard to fossil tracks and fake tracks in the area.

Mr. Turnage was quite aware of the many fake tracks (mainly dinosaur like) produced and sold by local residents. I let him read my seven-page item entitled Man Tracks in the Paluxy, and was a bit embarrassed to find that he was the individual who had in the movie "Footprints in Stone" taken those long, awkward steps from one "mantrack" to another. But he took no offense and in my discussion of the matter with Wesley Eckles later I understood that Mr. Turnage is pretty well accustomed to being "given a bad time" by his high school students and that neither my paper nor my questioning were objectionable to him.

Here then was a man with full knowledge of the fake tracks and yet convinced of authentic mantracks. His conclusions and his evidence ought to be given proper attention.

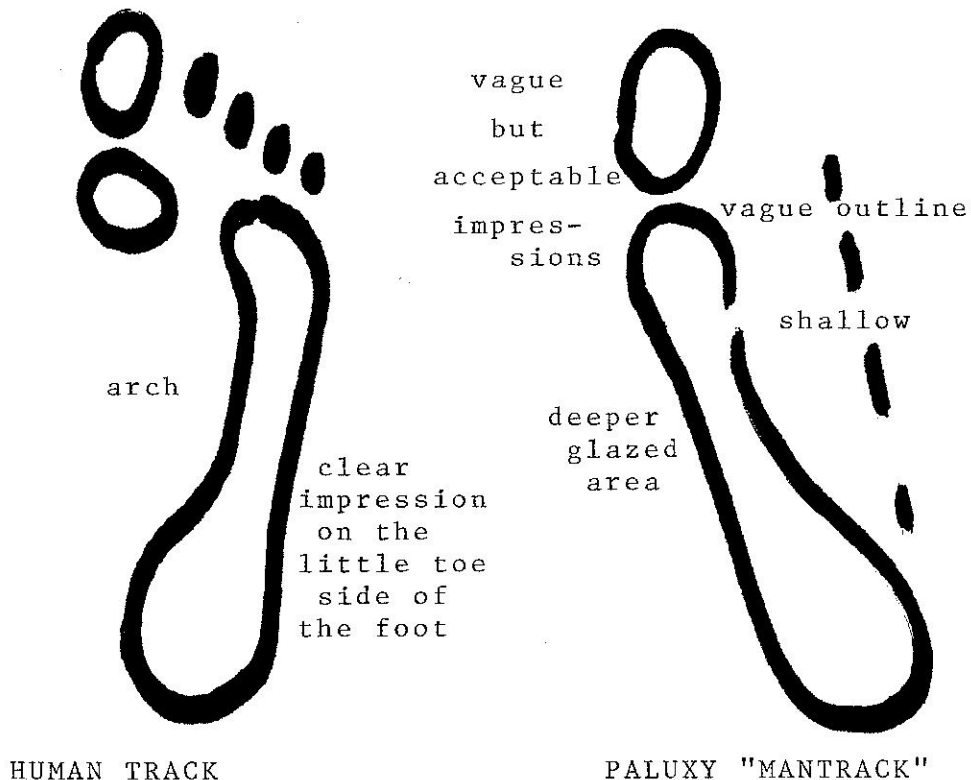
What did virgin tracks, i.e. prior to any possible tampering, resemble? Man or dinosaur tracks? Were they really authentic tracks? In answer to the latter question, yes, there seems little doubt that these tracks, uncovered by the removal of an overlying limestone ledge, were made by a bipedal creature

walking in a soft limy deposit, and not the work of "chislers" yet their appearance was not what one would even remotely call human.

Attention was called to the big toe impression. It was shallow and very vague, and might conceivably have been doctored just a bit, yet for the moment let's accept it as valid evidence. The impression of the ball behind the big toe was equally vague. No evidence of the other four (supposed) toes could be seen even in these virgin tracks.

The heel mark was acceptable, though shallow and not at all of the character presented in the models shown in the movie where replicas showed far greater depth and a snug fit for the ones who placed a foot in the model.

The perplexing evidence was the clear, authentic portion of the track between the heel and ball of the foot. Its surface was glazed showing the result of pressure, and it contained seemingly authentic detail. But regardless of how liberal I would attempt to be in visualizing these best tracks of Mr. Turnage, I could not conceive them being made by a human foot. Note the difference:



The imprint of a human right foot will have a pronounced right-edge impression. The Paluxy "man" showed a pronounced imprint cutting at a high angle to the big toe and ball alignment and on the wrong side of the foot!

No composite of these virgin prints, nor single print had a human appearance. Yet Mr. Turnage's oral presentation that accompanied these color slides and color prints was convincingly describing human tracks; and of course further digging for even better tracks was scheduled for the summer.

The problem does not lie in the appearance of the track, it is in the mind of the researcher and of the viewer. Our booklet What Kind of Faith is necessary for Salvation? explores the problem. One faith, a dead faith, is an unshakeable belief in one God, in Adam and Eve, in the Flood and maybe in a few genuinely misunderstood episodes in history.

The other faith, a living faith, is a gift of God's Spirit, a faith that is the trust of a child in his Heavenly Father. It is the faith that Job expressed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth . . ." or Daniel's three friends, "Our God is able to deliver . . . and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not (immediately), . . . we (still) will not serve thy gods."

The typical fundamentalist approach is one of attempting to strengthen this first dead type of faith with evidence, thinking that our belief in our beliefs will somehow save us. While we ourselves might search for evidence of Noah's Flood out of curiosity, or to clarify history, such evidence would not be vital to our conversion or Christian life. Nor do we recite the Nicene Creed or any other such profession of "faith" to bolster our faith.

This point of faith is vital to correctly orient our own search for evidence to accompany (not support) the book of Genesis.

A second point is equally vital. We have a promise that the Holy Spirit will lead us into truth, that it is the spirit of a sound mind. God's Church is led step by step toward a clearer, fuller understanding. (Others are led step by step away from truth and into error.) The hallmark of God' people is that they will change when knowledge becomes available.

It is the "natural" course of action taken by a repentant mind.

The task of the fundamentalist researcher is markedly different from our own assignment. They must continually attack and undermine any teaching (whether it be true or false) that in any way disagrees with their memorized church doctrines (whether they be true or false). It takes on the character of a debate and ends up in a "no holds barred" contest to "defend" God, as if He needed our defense. Such a stance is indeed noble, but hardly necessary. Elijah thought himself alone and yet was but one in 7000 protected and nourished by the God he had thought to defend.

In this fundamentalist battle, certain basic doctrines are vehemently defended, i.e. a catastrophic Flood at Noah's time depositing all or almost all sediments, an earth and universe not much older than Adam (10-15,000 years at the most), and the one-time creation of life forms, i.e. plants and animals to be with man on earth.

The evil bogy men are uniformitarianism and evolution.

The ammunition is not limited to in-context Scriptural quotation or to verifiable fact. Any theory, any hypothesis, no matter how flimsy, any hearsay, is considered proper evidence to support their Biblical (or supposedly Biblical) conclusions. (The paperback Heresies Exposed is a fine example of the attack procedure of one denomination against any and all denominations disagreeing with its dogmas.)

And conclusions they are with regard to these "mantracks". I went to Glen Rose and to Houston to learn whether mantracks were indeed to be found in the Lower Cretaceous sediments of Texas, these "researchers" had already concluded the "findings" they were hoping to substantiate.

The substance on which to base a belief of mantracks in the Paluxy is 95% fraudulent (though not with ill intent) and 5% vague impressions that do not appear human or even primate.

All factual material collected by the more cautious scientific world is regarded with total suspicion, even when

verified by decades of repeated investigation, and this by diligent observers who by training and curiosity would like nothing better than to find say a trilobite or an angiosperm in the Triassic.

I do not say that scientists are infallible in their search into the mysteries of the material world. Yet they might be viewed as a sort of religious sect with the 9th Commandment as their fetish. Step by step they have had a hand in presenting this final generation with a glimpse of the enormity of that heavens that declares God's glory. They have had a hand in the production of the very inventions we find so valuable in carrying out the message of God's Kingdom. The words, "What hath God wrought" testify to the character of the inventor of the telegraph. The departure by night for Mount Polamar by scientists with their 200-inch mirror is testimony against the numerous "funnymentalists" bent on harassment to prevent these "evil" scientists from reaching out into God's heavens. Their weird conclusions based on "texts" out of context has lead to aberrant behavior. Example: "The secret things belong to the LORD our god." Deut. 29:29.

In their defense of God and Scripture, are fundamentalists basically honest in their application of Scripture? Hardly. Consider the opposition to a few of our basic doctrines such as the Sabbath, wine, immortality, warfare. A child reading the Bible could not go that far astray.

My conclusion is that the typical fundamentalist has totally disqualified himself in the very field he professes to have expertise. The sum total of their efforts has been confusion and as such they are properly categorized with the Roman church and its fellowtravelers and daughters.

The general tenor of their presentation is to dwell on the mysterious, the farfetched and the unknowable. The damage they have done to the progress of the Gospel is enormous. An entire segment of the educated world has been turned off by their unauthorized defense of a God who needs no defense.

The rise of atheism, agnosticism, uniformitarianism, evolution, i.e. macro evolution, these false doctrines could never have taken root except in the soil made fertile by the corrupt doctrines of false theology. Note the reaction of the scientific community of Darwin's time to the unholy situation in nominal Christianity of that day:

"We need not trouble ourselves at all about the attacks of the theologians and other unscientific men, who really know nothing whatever of nature."

Yet it was Nature that God intended to be a teacher to all mankind beginning with Adam and including these rebellious theologians! Again:

"Blind, to the infinite grandeur of the (creation) . . . insensible to the charms . . . of Nature, and without a knowledge of her laws -- they stigmatize all natural science . . . as sinful "materialism", while it is this which they (the ecclesiastical princes) exhibit in a most shocking form."

"If this is Christianity (says the scientist to the self-appointed Christian theologian), we don't want it!" Thus Darwin's macro evolution took root and grew. The only visible alternative was nominal Christianity as depicted by the Roman church and her daughters.

Now back to the Paluxy problem. Why weren't representatives of the scientific community on hand for the lifting of the limestone overburden when these virgin tracks were to be exposed? Answer; they were invited repeatedly by Mr. Turnage to participate but were "turned off" by a lifetime of "nonscience" and nonsense from the fundamentalist crowd and didn't want to involve themselves in it.

And why were not these virgin tracks shown in the film Footprints in Stone? They were photographed but in the excitement of the occasion the camera had not been properly closed and the film turned yellow.

Thus the film lead up to this momentous occasion, and . . . then presents doctored replicas that fit snugly for the ones "trying on" these Paluxy "mantracks". The question is asked, "How does it fit?" The answer: "Just fine."

The visit to Houston and Mr. Turnage did not provide any proof of human tracks in the Paluxy.

QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO GLEN ROSE TRACKS

1. Whether a track is 1) the impression made by a foot, 2) chisled by human hands, or 3) produced by the action of water dissolving the limestone unevenly.
2. If made by a foot, was it the foot of 1) a reptile, 2) a mammal other than a primate, 3) a primate other than man, or 4) man.
3. If non-reptilian and truly mammal, then a search must be made for the food supply of the creature. Angiosperms in great quantity and variety must be available. Pollen would be available and identifiable. Evidence for such plant life should be much more plentiful than for the mammal life it supported. The formation is exposed over an area of many hundreds of square miles; well cores over an even greater area would bring evidence of pollen to light. Evidence of mammals should also be found in the surrounding area in the Glen Rose formation. And likewise in the superimposed formations.
4. According to Confucius, who copied from ancient Chinese records, an early emperor named Yao about 2900 B.C. was burning the forests after the inundation. Noah's dove returned with an olive leaf supposedly from a tree which grows only at the lower altitudes. Two pillars were erected and inscribed before the Flood to preserve knowledge, one of brick, one of stone? The men who ordered their erection believed the Flood was coming and expected these pillars to survive. How then does the Flood deposit include everything from Cambrian through Tertiary?
5. To find human tracks and wildcat tracks at Glen Rose, a haven for outlaws in a state that itself was a haven for outlaws in its pre-U.S. days, to find these tracks in the thousands of cubic miles of surrounding fossil formations all lacking mammals and angiosperms, and in a community known for fake tracks, and with these very tracks admitted to have been carved by a local prankster?