

Welcome Back

“Welcome back, Your dreams were your ticket out. Welcome back, To that same old place that you laughed about.”

- Welcome Back Kotter, Sept. 9, 1975 - Aug. 10, 1979 -

If we accept that there is one or more alien species visiting earth the question is, why? Of course we might suppose they are just curious interstellar neighbors paying a visit, but what if it is something more? Could they have a reason for being inexorably tied to this place we consider home?

The presently accepted age of the earth is 4.5 billion years (that is, 4,500 million years). Clearly this is a very long time, but let's also suppose, just for the sake of argument that the earth was inhospitable to “life as we know it” for at least 3.5 billion years as it was cooling, coalescing and developing an oxygen/nitrogen atmosphere. That would give us roughly 1,000 million years for the development of life. So then let's say that it takes 200 million years to develop life forms that are reasonably complex animals. That leaves us 800 million years to work with.

If researchers are right, the earliest recognizable ancestors of man are at most 4 million years old. So, if you subscribe to the theory of evolution, man essentially developed from an animal to our present condition in just 4 million years. If this is even remotely true then 200 different intelligent life forms such as man could have developed on earth without ever running into each other. Is there any evidence to support such a possibility?

Before we look for evidence let's assume that there is something about intelligent life on earth that preferentially adopts a four appendage bipedal form. Clearly there are exceptions even now, such as dolphins and whales, however all primates today would fill the bill. If we restrict ourselves to the four appendage bipedal form we have a pretty good chance of recognizing ancient evidence if we see it just as we recognize evidence of our immediate ancestors over the last 100,000 years. If we do this there is indeed evidence.

A pair of human footprints once graced a slab of limestone on the west bank of the Mississippi River at St. Louis. In 1816 or 1817 the slab was quarried from its position and removed by a Mr. George Rappe to the village of Harmony (now New Harmony), Indiana. The prints were 10 1/2 inches long and 4 inches wide at the toes, 6 1/4 inches apart at the heels, and 13 1/2 inches spanning between the toes, reported Henry R. Schoolcraft, "the toes being very much spread, and the foot flattened in a manner that happens to those who have been habituated to go a great length of time without shoes. Notwithstanding this circumstance, the prints are strikingly natural, exhibiting every muscular impression, and the swell of the heels and the toes, with a precision and faithfulness to nature, which I have not been able to copy, with perfect exactness, in the present drawing....

Every appearance will warrant the conclusion that these impressions were made at a time when the rock was soft enough to receive them by pressure, and that the marks and features of the feet are natural and genuine." In the geologic scheme of things, this limestone hardened about 270 million years ago. Both the rock and the prints in it were said to show the same evidence of wear and aging.

The American Journal of Science and Arts, 1:5:223-312, 1822

At the summit of Big Hill in the Cumberland Mountains in Jackson County, Kentucky, is a layer of carboniferous sandstone. In the 1880's it was crossed by a wagon trail that in time broke up the surface of the rock. When the resulting debris was cleared away, a series of tracks was discovered in this carboniferous layer about 300 million years old. There were imprints of a bear, something resembling a large horse, and two "tracks of a human being, good sized, toes well spread, and very distinctly marked." The prints were examined by Professor J.F. Brown of Berea College, Kentucky.

The American Antiquarian, 7:39, January 1885

What may well be the oldest fossil footprint ever discovered was found in 1968 by William J. Meister, an amateur fossil collector. If the print is what it appears to be, the impression of a sandaled shoe crushing a trilobite, it would have had to have been made 300 - 600 million years ago and would be sufficient to either overturn all conventionally accepted ideas of human and geological evolution or to prove that a shoe wearing biped from another world had once visited this planet.

Bible Science Newsletter, August-September 1969, Royal Research Society Quarterly, December 1968

The above are just a few examples of possible evidence for human-like footprints (bipedal locomotion) in ancient rock strata that are dated as being hundreds of millions of years old. Of course we have to consider various possibilities. Perhaps all of these people are mistaken in their belief that what they are seeing is a footprint (seems unlikely given their credentials), these really are footprints of human beings (time travelers?), human beings are very much older than we believe them to be (a little doubtful but not impossible), or something else remotely resembling a human life form was walking the earth hundreds of millions of years ago.

From 1992 to 1994 a situation comedy series titled "Dinosaurs" aired on the ABC network. Though the premise is laughable, it does give one pause to look at the characters of the show and consider the possibility of a humanoid dinosaur. If an intelligent advanced civilization of

humanoid dinosaurs had ever existed on earth would we be able to find evidence of it? Well, there is very little left of the Roman Empire after only a few thousand years. Today's buildings are considerably less substantial than the massive Roman constructions and it's likely there would be little of present architecture that would survive even 1000 years. Of course if you also throw in a couple of ice ages complete with massive glaciers to scour the land virtually everything gets obliterated. Still, there might be a few bits and pieces of advanced technology surviving buried in ancient rock strata and if so why haven't they been found? Perhaps they have. Imagine the reluctance of a researcher in regard to revealing he or she has found an integrated circuit in a 100 million year old rock. Funding grants are everything in archeological research, and that is just the kind of claim that would turn a researcher into a janitor over night.

If an intelligent race of humanoid dinosaurs existed a few hundred million years ago we should also consider that, not unlike us, they eventually develop space travel. Perhaps they even go so far as to eventually launch a multi-generational ship to another star system as we have speculated about doing. Long after one or more ships are on their way a catastrophe befalls the civilization. This could be war, a plague, a genetic problem or one of the very same asteroid impacts that have nearly obliterated life on earth many times. The old civilization is destroyed and hundred of millions of years later we come along. But what of those on the multi-generational star ships?

If they designed them well, we could suspect that they eventually reached their destinations safely. Their civilization would have gained a toehold on a new world and continued to develop, perhaps eventually finding the loophole regarding faster-than-light travel. If so, wouldn't they be interested in checking out the old "home town?" They would want to check up on their point of origin and what happened to their civilization after they left. Imagine their confusion at not finding anything resembling them on earth. Imagine wondering if we are somehow related to them, had invaded and defeated their ancestors, or something else. They can't ask us what happened because we don't know so they are stuck with performing genetic testing on us and other present inhabitants of earth. At the same time they are trying to find out what happened they may also take the approach of helping us along in hopes that as we advance we will be able to help them understand what happened. Perhaps there were those in their civilization who always considered the home world a myth and laughed about it only now to begin realizing the truth.

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