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The Discovery of a Large Expanse of Dinosaur Footprints on the Ordos Plateau

by

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Between the months of September and October of 1984, the Museum of Inner Mongolia conducted research in the Manchurian Etuoke region on the Southwestern Ordos Plateau along several tens of kilometers of Early Cretaceous gray sandstone deposits stretching from Arushilange to Hadat, where there discovered a thousand individual dinosaur footprints. 180 crates of specimens were excavated. Within this set of dinosaur footprints are a variety of sizes and numerous morphologies. Footprint length range from the smallest, being 2-3 cm, through a continuous range reaching up to over 20 cm. The footprints are tridactyl, quadradactyl, and pentadactyl. All exist as negative impressions. Measurements indicate the stride lengths range from several centimeters to over two meters in length. Obviously, they represent different individuals with distinct feeding modes that are of divergent dinosaur taxonomic assemblages and may represent footprints left behind by migration or predation activities. A majority of the specimens consist of continuous trackways that cross each other vertically and horizontally, and extend into different directions. Among them are several trackways of large-scale dinosaurs aligned along a continuous length of 100-200 meters. They are preserved as if the ground had just been trod upon, and represent a rather magnificent sight. Additionally, this site displays the first discovery of tail drag impressions with a majority of them being lengths of 1.5 to 2 meters. These impressions are absolutely distinguishable.

Translated by Will Downs 11/87