

Kachina Bridge Dinosaur Refuted?

Written by
Vance Nelson



Figure 1

An article entitled, “Dinosaur’ petroglyphs at Kachina Bridge site, Natural Bridges National Monument, southeastern Utah: not dinosaurs after all” was presented on the Palaeontologia Electronica website in March of 2011.¹ The authors, Phil Senter and Sally Cole, claim that “[b]ecause mainstream science has produced no alternate explanation for Dinosaur 1, it has become an important weapon in the arsenal of the anti-evolution movement.”² It is interesting that Phil Senter mentions the fact that the main petroglyph in question looks like a dinosaur.³ Senter says that “Dinosaur 1, which I’ve nicknamed Sinclair because it looks like the Sinclair Gas logo, really does look like a dino when seen with the naked eye.”^{4, 5}

It is clear that the authors set out to refute the petroglyph as evidence, usable by creationists, at any cost. They claim, “[u]ntil our study, this was the best dinosaur petroglyph — that is, the hardest to argue about, because it looked so much like a dinosaur that there was no way to interpret it as anything else...The ‘best’ dinosaur is now extinct.”^{6, 7}

In order to respond to the most important issues raised by the Senter/Cole paper, myself and a colleague revisited the site on May 20, 2011 to make a face-to-face examination and photographic record which

demonstrates, contrary to the Senter/Cole assertions, that the entire petroglyph is a unified piece of ancient artwork created entirely by intelligent people using a tool to peck away the desert varnish.

Though Senter and Cole make remarks about numerous items pertaining to the creation vs. evolution controversy, I will be remarking specifically about the sauropod petroglyph under Kachina Bridge within Natural Bridges National Monument (Fig. 1). I have visited this area on a number of occasions to study this petroglyph both prior to and after Senter and Cole published their claims.

I. PROPER CLOSE-UP INSPECTION HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN DONE:

Quoting from their own writing: “Dinosaur 1 has received considerable attention from young-earth creationists but close inspection and thorough description of it has not occurred before now. This lack of research is understandable, because it is approximately 2m above the head of the average observer on a nearly vertical surface, surrounded by rough and extremely steep terrain that discourages the carrying of a ladder, about an hour by foot from the nearest road.”⁸

*“Why couldn’t Senter and Cole manage to organize such a close-up examination?
...There is really no excuse for not bringing the proper equipment.”*

Comments: They suggest that no one has done a proper close-up examination of this petroglyph. This is simply incorrect. I personally know several researchers that have been up on the platform, have done close-up examination, have done measurements of the petroglyph, have taken photographs and done tracings of the image dating back to at least 1997. The fact is many creation researchers have been on the ledge many times doing close-up examinations. Why couldn't Senter and Cole manage to organize such a close-up examination?

II. THE SENTER/COLE METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

Quoting from their own writing: "...the four alleged dinosaur depictions were examined with the naked eye and with the aid of binoculars and telephoto lenses."⁹

Comments: They used binoculars and telephoto lens for their alleged close-up examination. With all due respect, both of these devices are by definition for long-distance viewing. Therefore, by definition, they never really did any close-up examination. There is really no excuse for not bringing the proper equip-



Figure 3

ment. A ladder is essential to properly analyze the sauropod petroglyph. On May 20, 2011 myself and a research colleague made our way to the site with the proper investigative equipment including a ladder (Fig. 2).

It took less than twenty-five minutes to reach the location of the petroglyph in question. There is absolutely no substitute for examination with the human eye from within inches of the petroglyph (Fig. 3).

III. THE SENTER/COLE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE PETROGLYPH:

A. Quoting from their own writing: "The 'head,' 'neck,' and 'torso' are a single item: a thick, sinuous shape formed by pecking. The 'tail' is a second, U- shaped item formed by pecking. That the two items are indeed two separate items is indicated by a gap between them and also by differences in pecking patterns and densities between the two (Figure 1)."¹⁰

Comments: Here they are suggesting that the petroglyph is really two unrelated and meaningless petroglyphs that are not attached. Had Senter and Cole brought a ladder, they would

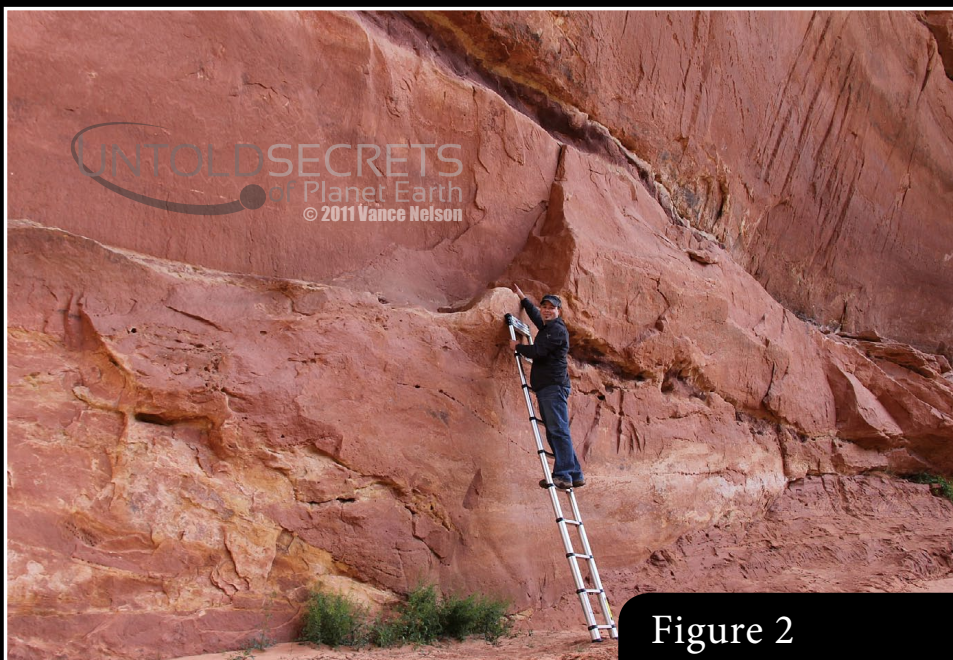


Figure 2



Figure 4

never had made such an embarrassingly false comment. We're not talking about rocket science here. We're simply talking about a ladder. It doesn't need to get delivered to the moon, just Kachina Bridge in Utah. If proper research is to be done, it requires getting up onto the ledge just below the petroglyph itself.

We have examined the petroglyph from literally inches away. The peck marks continue evenly from the body into the tail without a break in the type, depth, erosional features or patination. In other words, their claim that there are two separate petroglyphs is patently false (Fig. 4).



Figure 5

There is no gap as they claim (Fig. 5, close-up). Even their own low resolution, black and white photograph shows this fact. Either they have been inexcusably careless in their research or they have blatantly lied.

B. Quoting from their own writing: "The 'legs' are not part of the image and are not pecked or otherwise human-made but are stains of mud or some light-colored mineral on the irregular surface."¹¹

Comments: They suggest that the legs, which have apparently miraculously adhered themselves to the petroglyph, are nothing but a mud

or mineral stain. The fact that they say the legs are either "this" or "that" ("stains of mud" or "light-colored mineral") indicates they are unsure how the legs were produced.

It is clear that the legs are lighter in color which is indicative of desert varnish removal. Desert varnish removal can occur in two ways. Water running down from the top can carry abrasives, such as sand, causing desert varnish removal. Since this is clearly not the case here (streaks would be seen from the top of the bridge running down), the only other reasonable possibility is desert varnish was removed by intelligent human means.

It is possible, that originally the legs were partially created via abrasion, a technique of rubbing an area to remove desert varnish. Sometimes petroglyphs are made with both pecking and abrasion. This combination of techniques can be seen on this example from Moab, Utah (Fig. 6). In this example, you can see that the lighter color indicates desert varnish removal. Even though peck marks are resident in the



Figure 6

lighter area, they are of fairly low density, just like on the sauropod at Kachina Bridge.

“...THE ARGUMENTS OF SENTER AND COLE HAVE LITTLE TO NO SCIENTIFIC WEIGHT WHATSOEVER.”

Furthermore, if the legs were mud, from where would this mud have come? How did it form itself into legs and adhere itself to the bottom of the peck marks? The fact is that there are lots of mud deposits, stains if you wish, on Kachina Bridge. Where does the mud come from? It comes from high up on the bridge and is carried down by water during rains and snow melt. Figure 7 shows the distinct paths mud is carried down the natural bridge.

It is always carried from the top down. It then bifurcates into distinct lines as the water becomes less and less available to carry the sediment (Fig. 8). This is what mud deposits/stains look like at Kachina Bridge (Fig. 9).

We have been up on the ledge. We have examined the legs. They are indeed connected to the rest of the solitary petroglyph by peck marks of a slightly lower density than the rest of the petroglyph (Fig. 10). However, they have the same basic features and patination



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

as the rest of the image indicating they were not a secondary addition.

CONCLUSION:

We would contend, based on face-to-face investigation that the arguments of Senter and Cole have little to no scientific weight whatsoever.

Could Phil Senter and Sally Cole be to petroglyphs as Ernst Haeckel was to embryos? Are they archaeological frauds? You must decide.

The Anasazi Petroglyph under Kachina Bridge within Natural Bridges National Monument remains powerful positive evidence for the Biblical view of history—dinosaurs and humans coexisting.

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Figure 10

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FOOTNOTES:

¹ <http://palaeo-electronica.org/2011_1/236/236.pdf>

² <http://palaeo-electronica.org/2011_1/236/236.pdf> p.1

³ Was Phil Senter approaching the petroglyph from a staunch “young-earth” creationist perspective which caused him to “read into” the meaningless marks? Was he tainted by “Biblical literalism”? No, Senter is a staunch evolutionist; nonetheless, that is what it looked like to him as well. This is indeed significant. On July 29, 2008, while at the site, we asked a number of people to look at the petroglyph. All of them, regardless of age, education, or personal background all responded something like this, “look at the dinosaur.” We in no way coached them as to what we thought the petroglyph might be depicting.

⁴ <<http://www.livescience.com/13448-dinosaur-human-petroglyph-creationism-debunked.html>>

⁵ It is interesting that Phil Senter and myself independently noticed the similarity between this particular petroglyph to the sauropod dinosaur which is part of the logo seen on all of the Sinclair fueling stations in the U.S.

⁶ <<http://www.livescience.com/13448-dinosaur-human-petroglyph-creationism-debunked.html>>

⁷ Even if Senter and Cole had indeed refuted this particular evidence for dinosaur and human coexistence, they would still have hundreds of other examples of ancient artwork depicting dinosaurs to deal with from all over planet earth (A few of these can be seen in my new book *Untold Secrets of Planet Earth: Dire Dragons*). Furthermore, artwork is only one small portion of evidence bearing light on the time- frame of the dinosaurs’ existence. Other evidence such as eye-witness accounts, soft elastic tissue in dinosaur bones, possibilities inherent in living fossils, carbon-14 in dinosaur bones, and ancient records describing dinosaur-like creatures is powerful collaborative evidence in favor of the recent existence of dinosaurs.

⁸ <http://palaeo-electronica.org/2011_1/236/236.pdf> p. 2

⁹ <http://palaeo-electronica.org/2011_1/236/236.pdf> p. 2

¹⁰ <http://palaeo-electronica.org/2011_1/236/236.pdf> p. 4

Dire Dragons

by Vance Nelson

This is a new book, as a part of a new series, from Vance Nelson. Vance delves into the mystery surrounding those creatures known throughout the world in ancient times as dragons. Are they merely mythical, or do they have a basis in reality? The answer, based on tangible evidence documented from around the world will astonish you. *Dire Dragons* provides revolutionary and profound evidence from ancient artwork that there is a real, powerful, documentable, and defensible connection between the dragons of ancient times and the dinosaurs we know so well from fossils. If you need to see the evidence, this book is for you.



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