

Paleontology Pioneers
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First Published 10 March 2003
Answers In Creation Website
www.answersincreation.org/pioneers.htm

The article on the Answers in Genesis website titled "Messages on Stone," by Dennis Swift, tells the tale of rock art, dated from as late as 1200 A.D.¹ This rock art depicts dinosaurs and mammoths, and was drawn by natives of North, Central, and South America.

The author tries to use this as proof that these beasts lived in the past few thousand years. If true, then dinosaurs are not millions of years old, but instead are products of God's creation event that occurred only 6,000 years ago.

No fossil evidence has ever been recovered of dinosaurs which lived in the past several thousand years. Without that, there is no proof of Mr. Swift's claims. What we probably have in the rock art is this...the first paleontologists! Indians who found these massive fossil skeletons probably depicted them by drawing the beasts, to try and guess what they probably looked like.

The author inadvertently gives credibility to this argument. He states that in the American Southwest, there is a pictograph that looks like a pterosaur, which is a Cretaceous flying reptile. He goes on to state, "*not far away from this site, the University of Ohio quarried a fossil pterosaur.*" The artist was most likely trying to flesh out the creature that he saw in the rock record somewhere in the past.

In fact, this is probably the source of many mythical beasts, such as fire-breathing dragons. They were seen in the rock record, and the primitive peoples tried to describe them, and from that the folk-tales grew. It is no wonder that the Chinese culture is so immersed with dragons, given the immense number of dinosaur fossils coming from China.

It was not until the 19th century that true, objective paleontology began. Dinosaur discoveries were first published then, and with the concurrent growth of newspapers, it got a lot of attention. But, since these fossils have always been there, they certainly were not the first dinosaurs to be discovered.

¹ answersingenesis.org/docs/1123.asp