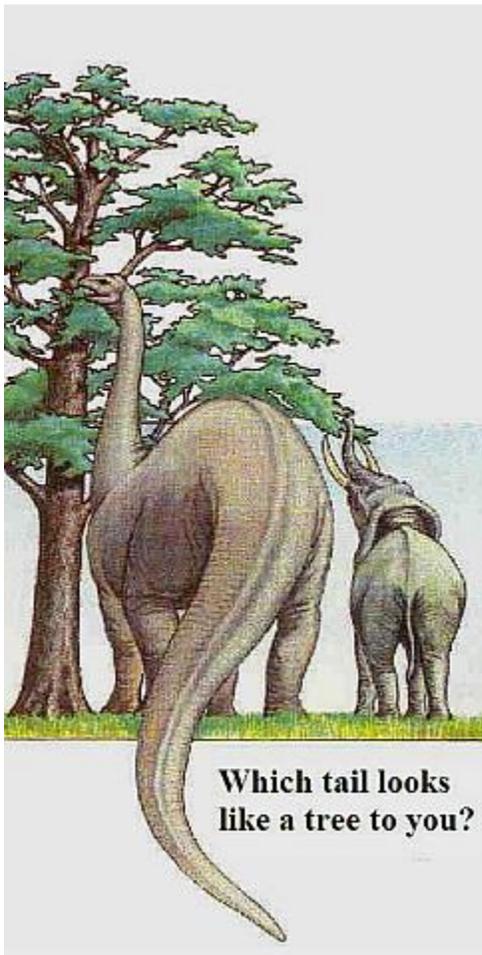


# Dinosaur Depictions

Scientists tell us that there were over 63 million years between the extinction of dinosaurs and the first traces of humanity, so it is surprising to find depictions of live dinosaurs made by people in a variety of times and places throughout the past.

Beginning with the Bible, it is easy to picture the animal in Job 40:15-24 which says "Look at Behemoth... which feeds on grass... what strength it has... what power in the muscles of its belly! Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron." It could be a hippopotamus, elephant, or rhinoceros, except for the tail - like a Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*).



*Cedrus libani*

We find animals like Behemoth engraved on this cylinder seal from Mesopotamia around 3500 BC,



this vessel from the Ming Dynasty, China (1368 - 1644 AD),



a cave painting in the jungle of northern Peru made around 4000 BC (among thousands found by Peruvian archaeologist Quirino Olivera in Utcubamba province),



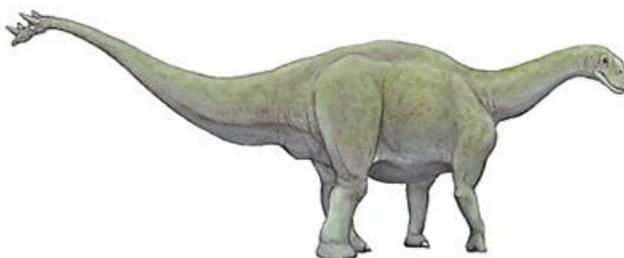
an engraving of Anasazi origin (Navajo for "ancient enemy") on a sandstone wall in the Utah desert, probably from before 1300 AD,



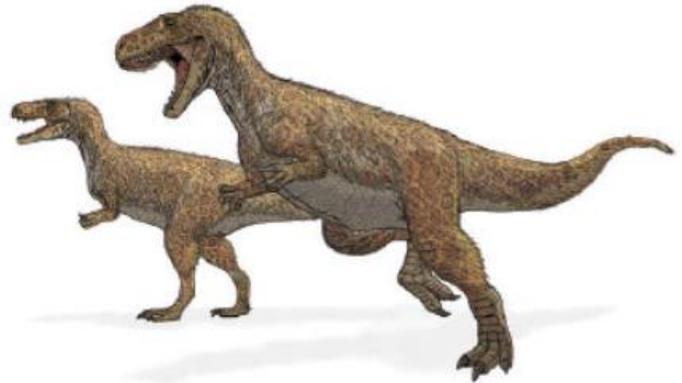
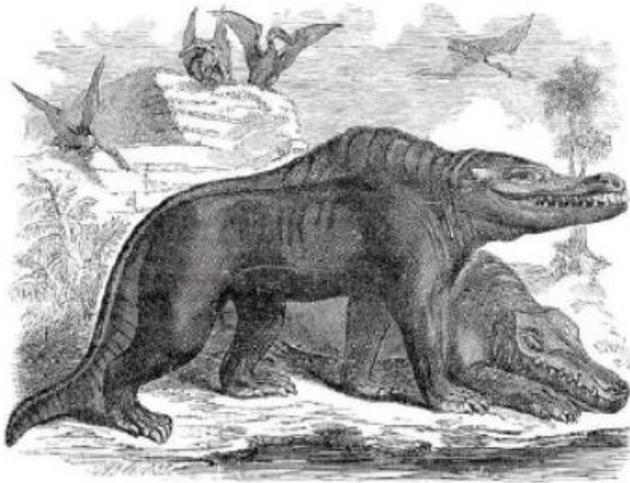
and a brass carving on Bishop Bell's tomb in Carlisle Cathedral, England, 1496 AD.



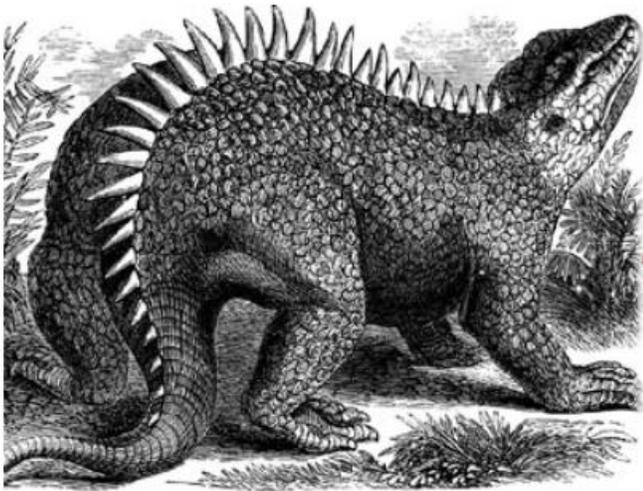
The spiked tail on the left sauropod dinosaur is like the tail of a Shunosaurus.



The first dinosaur fossils were discovered in 1819 by William Buckland, but it wasn't until 1841 that British Anatomist Richard Owen coined the term "dinosaur". Complete skeletons are rarely found. Without complete skeletons, researchers used their imaginations to depict the fossil animals as lumbering lizards.



Megalosaurus bucklandii reconstructed then and now



Hylaeosaurus reconstructed then and now

Before they were called dinosaurs, cultures around the world called them something like our word "dragon".

This dinosaur skull was found in 2004 in South Dakota and called *Dracorex Hogwartsia* because it reminded the paleontologists of dragons from the Harry Potter books, which were inspired by ancient European stories.



Those stories are echoed in the famous statue on Dragon bridge in Ljubljana, Slovenia, made 104 years before the *Dracorex* skull was discovered.



This tapestry in the Chateau de Blois is from around 1500 AD. The adult and baby dinosaurs shown here were called salamanders at the time.

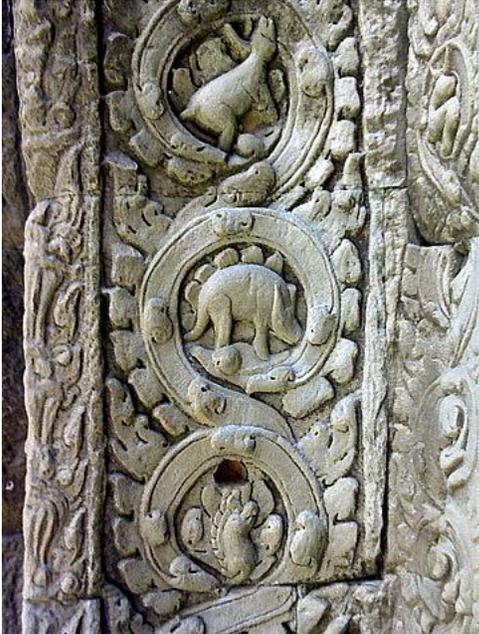


Marco Polo wrote a detailed account of his travels in a book published in 1298 AD. It says that in the province of Carajan in southern China are seen huge serpents, 30 feet long and 8 feet wide. Near the head they have two short legs, having three claws like those of a tiger, and large, glaring eyes. The jaws are wide enough to swallow a man, the teeth are large and sharp, and their whole appearance is so formidable that neither man nor any kind of animal can approach them without terror. There are others of a smaller size, being 24, 18, or 15 feet long. In the daytime, to avoid the heat, they lurk in caves, and at night they go out to seek food. Whatever beast they can lay hold of, whether tiger, wolf, or any other, they devour; after which they go to a river or lake to drink.

The description fits an Allosaurus. He could not have been writing about alligators or crocodiles, which have 5 fingers on their front legs and do not hunt tigers or wolves.



Here is a carving of a stegosaurus on the wall of Ta Prohm temple in Angkor Wat Cambodia, built in 1186 AD.



This is an Aztec shield with an image similar to the feathered dinosaur Dakotaraptor, shown here in artistic fashion. Dakotaraptor was discovered in 2005 in South Dakota. The Aztec empire reigned in what is now Mexico from 1345 to 1521 A.D.

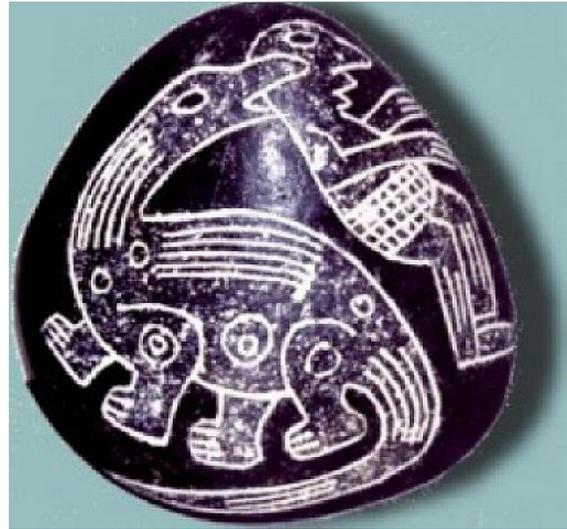
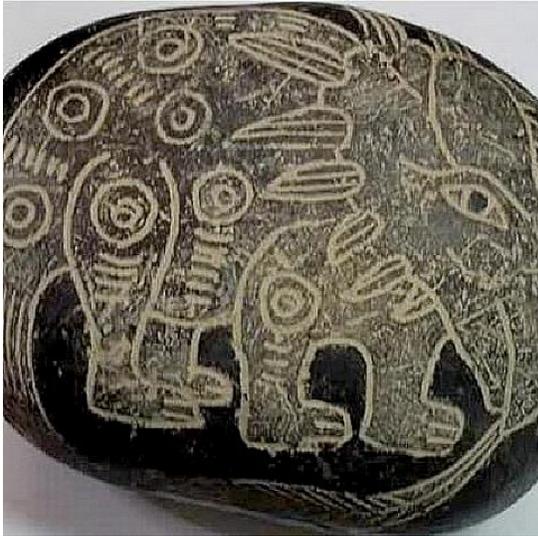


A new ankylosaur species was unearthed in Chile in 2021. It was about 6 feet long, and had a tail weapon unlike any dinosaur. An Aztec weapon called a macuahuitl resembles it. The one pictured has obsidian blades and is adorned with feathers.

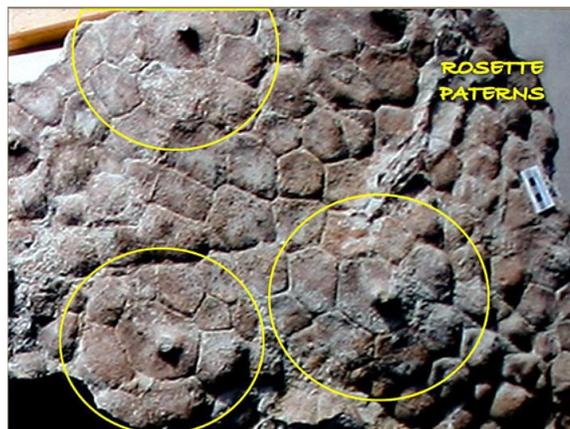
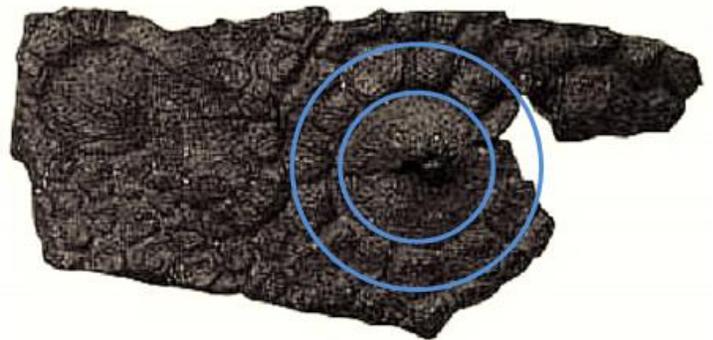
Stegouros elengassen



Ica stones are engraved stones found in ancient burial sites near Ica, Peru. Thousands are on display in a museum there. Pictures of all kinds display animals, fish, people, medical procedures, comets, and so on. They became famous in the 1960's because some of them show living dinosaurs, even dinosaurs and men together. Some fakes have been made, but they are recognizable under close examination. Notice the unusual concentric circles.



Only recently were similar circular “rosettes” found on real dinosaur skin.



Triceratops skin

From: Black Hills Institute of Geological Research, Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, 2007

The figurine on the left, resembling a baby Triceratops (right), is from the Hongshan culture in northeastern China, sometime between 3000 and 4500 BC.



Here is a figurine made during the Chinese Shang Dynasty, 1050 to 1600 BC.



This dragon head is a Roman army standard from the 3rd century BC.



Dinosaur designs are also found on cloth from Nazca, Peru, dated to 700 AD.



and this jar by a Moche potter in northern Peru from sometime between 0 and 800 AD.

