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**Comments and
responses :**

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Résumé :

SOME REMARKS ON MAGIN'S PRESENTATION OF THE CASE FOR OR AGAINST HUMAN FOOTPRINTS IN STRATA OF
PAST GEOLOGICAL AGES

Comments and responses :

In *Bipedia* 16/1998 our friend Ulrich Magin, after having discussed the alleged evidence, or non-evidence, for human footprints in strata representing far distant geological ages, comes to the conclusion "that fossil human footprints in solid rock offer no evidence for the existence of humans in far geological past".

I would like to add some observations on his presentation of the case, and on his analysis of his "preliminary study", as he calls it. I feel he has arrived at his conclusion too hastily (as if he were in a hurry to "prove" that this whole footprints-in-stone business belonged to the realm of pseudoscience), in a rather offhand manner that cannot exactly be called responsible scholarly procedure. It is not what the reader is entitled to expect, and leaves much to be desired.

I feel that, repeatedly, serious evidence is dismissed without convincing arguments. The very first case (Belgium 1919) in Magin's list is already a typical example. When one examines the source used by Magin, to wit the famous magnum opus by Cremo & Thompson (pp. 280-283), one finds that the discover, Freudentberg, was a professional scientist reporting very seriously in a scientific journal. I cannot find anything "pseudo-scientific" in this case.

Magin has 31 entries in his list. When we dismiss those 11 cases which do not really apply (Rosstrappe, Glenmoriston etc.), we are left with 20 cases. Even if it is only a "preliminary study", Magin should have given us more insight with respect to his *modus procedendi*. As it is, the reader is left puzzled, if really serious research was invested into the true nature of those (real or alleged) footprints.

What proof does Magin have, the reader may ask himself, for the correctness of his statement that it was a *Chirotherium*, at Hildburghausen, as stated by the scientific orthodoxy ? Or the Caprie print in Piemont : what proof does he have that it was "without doubt" only naturally eroded ? And so on and on, for all the 20 relevant cases. Everywhere the reader is left in the dark on the reasons of Magin's judgment. This is not good science !

Instead of implicitly denouncing others, Magin should have concentrated on giving his readers that information (for which they have a right and which they will have expected from him), with which they could judge for themselves the validity, or otherwise, of Magin's line of argument and final analysis. As his presentation in *Bipedia* stands, the reader has no way to find out if, perhaps, Magin's final conclusion might only be a sceptic's uncalled-for denouncement.

I feel that, with such an immensely important problem like prehistoric human footprints, we should especially concentrate on good science and leave it to the CSICOP and other "sceptic" organizations, to "fight pseudo-science with pseudo-science", as a mocker once commented on their activities.

I hope Magin will understand that his presentation did not convince me at all, for the above-stated reasons and considerations. All the more so since I have just read, in the May-June issue (n° 27/1998) of the journal *Efodon Synesis*, Dr. Hans-Joachim Zillmer's report on new archaeological excavations in the Paluxy river area (Texas), in which he was able to participate, and which again showed true human footprints alongside (and even in) dinosaur footprints !

Comments and responses :

With all respect to the late William Meister's discovery (1968) of a fossil shoeprint in Utah, which Magin mentions (p. 15), where a trilobite was squashed by the shoe : there still is a living witness, who was shown the place by Meister, and who is quite willing to show it to other serious researchers. His name is Evan Hansen and his address is : HC 76 Box 258, Beryl/Utah 84714, USA. From Hansen I learned that the famous "single" print is obviously part of a whole track. Hansen told me, in a letter, that he is quite sure that it had been a human shoe, because he had in his younger years worked for some time as a shoemaker and therefore knew very well, how and where a human shoe (sole and heel) shows signs of wear.

Dr. Horst Friedrich