

Ichnos:an International Journal of Plant and Animal 2017, pages 1-13

Late Carboniferous Tetrapod Footprints from the Souss Basin, Western High Atlas Mountains, Morocco

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Abstract

© 2017 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC The Late Carboniferous Souss Basin of south-central Morocco exhibits an approximately 1,800 m thick succession of fluvial and lacustrine deposits that have yielded diverse fossil remains of plants, insects, conchostracans, ostracods, jellyfish, fishes, and few tetrapod footprints. Recent exploration of ichnofossils of the Souss Basin led to the discovery of several trampled surfaces including tetrapod footprints assigned to the plexus *Batrachichnus* (Woodworth, 1900), *Limnopus* (Marsh, 1894), *Dimetropus* (Romer and Price, 1940), and *Ichniotherium* (Pohlig, 1892). These footprints can be referred to temnospondyl, basal synapsid (“pelycosaurian”), and diadectomorph trackmakers. The moderately diverse tetrapod footprint assemblage from the Souss Basin is important because it is the second-oldest record of tetrapod footprints from Africa and only the second record of the well-known ichnogenus *Ichniotherium* from outside of North America and Europe. Based on the variety of tetrapod tracks and previously collected floral and insect remains, the Souss Basin must have represented a well-established continental ecosystem during the Late Carboniferous.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10420940.2017.1320284>

Keywords

Late Palaeozoic, NW Africa, Palaeobiogeography, Palaeoecology, Vertebrate ichnofossils