FILLING A GAP: LATE TRIASSIC NONMARINE TETRAPODS FROM THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

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Despite showing a priori favourable facies, the Upper Triassic strata of the Iberian Peninsula have provided quite a few evidences of the existence of nonmarine tetrapods. Yet, during Late Triassic times, the Iberian Peninsula had a particular biogeographical importance as it occupied a hinge position between two major landmasses.

In Portugal, in the area between Cordeiros de Messines and Silves (Algarve) several horizons (? Carnian and ? Rhaetian) of the “Grès de Silves” have yielded remains of indeterminate reptiles and, especially, temnospondyls. A possible dinosaur track has also been mentioned in the same region at an intermediate level of the “Grès de Silves” (? Norian).

In Spain, problematic footprints of archosauromorph affinity are known at Santisteban del Puerto (Andalusia) in a reddish sandstone of possible Carnian age. Interesting saurischian footprints have been found close to the Triassic-Jurassic boundary (“Dolomias tableadas de Imon s.l.” Fm) in the Tiermes area (Castile and Leon).

The Keuper of Manzanera (Aragon) has produced bones and teeth of a variety of marine reptiles such as late nothosaurs (probably the nothosaurid Nothosaurus), placodonts (derived cyamodontoids), and primitive ichthyosaurs. More interestingly, remains of temnospondyls (? Metoposauridae) have been unearthed at four localities of this area. They all lay in the Areniscas de Manuel Fm, which is believed to be of Carnian age. Having conducted field prospecting between Torrijas and Manzanera, we believe that facies around the latter locality show significant potential for yielding terrestrial tetrapods.