FOSSIL ARCHOSAURS FROM THE EARLY CRETACEOUS SANTANA FORMATION (ROMUALDO MEMBER) ARARIPE BASIN: A REVIEW

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The Romualdo Member (Albian), upper stratigraphic unit of the Santana Formation (Northeastern Brazil), has yielded several archosaur specimens over the last three decades. The vast majority is composed of pterosaurs, the most abundant tetrapod in this deposit that shows great diversity (at least 10 different taxa). Most represent species of the Anhangueridae and Tapejaridae, although other clades might be present too. Anhanguerids have been recorded in Asia (Mongolia), Africa (Morocco), Europe (England), and North America (Texas), all in Aptian-Albian layers, indicating that during that time interval this group can be regarded as cosmopolitan (although at the species level taxa vary). Tapejarids are restricted to the Romualdo Member, despite their great potential to be found in African deposits of similar age. Crocodilians are represented by two species. The terrestrial Araripesuchus gomesii is closely related with taxa found in Africa (Gadoufaoua, Niger; Dinosaur Beds, Malawi; Koum Basin, Cameroon; and Madagascar). Caririsuchus camposi, better adapted to aquatic conditions, is apparently related to Trematochampsa from Niger. Dinosaurs are represented by spinosaurids that show close affinity with similar forms of Morocco and Egypt. Contrary to other Brazilian deposits, no sauropod remains have been found so far at the Araripe Basin.

The information available indicates that the archosaur fauna from the Romualdo Member has strong relation with African forms rather than with other South American taxa.