

NEW MATERIAL OF *AVIMIMUS PORTENTOSUS* (THEROPODA) FROM THE IREN DABASU FORMATION (UPPER CRETACEOUS) OF THE ERENHOT REGION OF INNER MONGOLIA

RYAN, Michael J., Univ. of Calgary, AB, Canada; CURRIE, Philip J., Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, Drumheller, AB, Canada; RUSSELL, Anthony P., Univ. of Calgary, AB, Canada.

*Avimimus* is an enigmatic small theropod known from partial skeletons and isolated material collected from the Upper Cretaceous Djadokhta deposits of southeastern and southwestern Mongolia. Elements of this taxon have a mosaic of characters that suggest various affinities, ranging from basal Theropoda (including a vestigial metatarsal V) to Arctometatarsalia (in which metatarsal III is constricted between metatarsals II & IV) and extant birds (proximal fusion of metatarsal II & IV). Other reported derived “bird-like” features, such as papillae on an ulnar crest for possible feather attachments, appear to be equivocal. The incomplete nature of the material referred to *Avimimus* that lacks key cranial and forearm elements has confounded attempts to include *Avimimus* in phylogenetic analyses of the carnivorous dinosaurs.

We report here on new material of *Avimimus* collected from the Iren Dabasu Formation of the Erenhot region of northeastern China by the Third Central Asiatic Expedition of the American Museum in 1923 (a sub-adult-sized articulated right metatarsal), and the Canada-China Dinosaur Project in 1988. The latter material was surface collected from a locality worked by the Sino-Soviet expedition of 1959. Most of the elements recovered are nearly identical in size and shape to those described for the type and referred specimens. New material includes a “bird-like” scapulocoracoid and an isolated left frontal.

Recent work indicates that the Djadokhta Formation is of Campanian age, while the Iren Dabasu Formation is at least Senonian, if not Campanian in age. The new material reported here suggests that *Avimimus* in the two formations is congeneric. Additionally, isolated cf. *Avimimus* material has been collected from the Judith River Group (Campanian) of Alberta, Canada suggesting the taxon may have had a wide geographical distribution during the Late Cretaceous.