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How to cite an abstract from this volume:

Yurac Diaz M., Salazar C., Meyer C.A., Suárez M.E., Belvedere M. 2022. The dinosaur ichnological record of northern Chile: a review and its potential development. In: Belvedere M., Mecozi B., Amore O., Sardella R (eds.). Abstract book of the XIX Annual Conference of the European Association of Vertebrate Palaeontologists, Benevento/Pietraroja, Italy, 27th June-2nd July 2022. *PalaeoVertebrata*, Special Volume 1-2022, 224. Doi: 10.18563/pv.eavp2022

A BETA TAXONOMY APPROACH TO LATE JURASSIC AND EARLY CRETACEOUS DINOSAUR ASSEMBLAGES

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Keywords: Paleobiogeography, Mesozoic, Similarity index, Cluster analysis, Principal Coordinate Analysis

Although dinosaurs achieved worldwide distribution during the Mesozoic Era, their biogeographic distribution patterns are subject of high debate. A major geological influence on dinosaur distribution is the progressive separation between Gondwanan and Laurasian landmasses, leading to a faunal segregation by mid/Late Cretaceous. To elucidate the *tempo* and *modo* of such segregation, we adopted a Beta Taxonomy approach by comparing the similarity of dinosaur occurrences of various geological formations around the globe. Jaccard, Dice, and Simpson similarity indices were employed for the following time-bins: Kimmeridgian-Tithonian, Berriasian-Valanginian, Barremian, and Aptian-Cenomanian. Based on each of these indices, we performed: 1) a set of cluster analyses (UPGMA, neighbor joining, K-means), 2) Principal Coordinate Analysis, and 3) Correspondence Analysis. Results derived from the Jaccard index presented the highest statistical support, appearing to be more robust when compared to the other two indices. Absence of faunal segregation between Laurasia/Gondwana was identified during Kimmeridgian-Tithonian interval, although we found evidence of Asiatic provincialism. This distribution remains unchanged during Berriasian-Valanginian, even though sampling bias in this interval partially affected our results. Similarly, Barremian sampling bias hampered the possibility to discriminate Laurasian and

Gondwanan faunas, despite having higher statistical support in our analyses than the other time-bins. Finally, the Aptian-Cenomanian interval presented a clear faunal segregation between Laurasia and Gondwana, suggesting that a major faunal re-organization occurred no later than the Barremian. Further investigation, using clade-specific historical biogeography techniques, is required to clarify whether dispersal or vicariance events shaped this faunistic re-arrangement.