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When I was hunting dinosaurs in Africa (1965-2015)

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A century of prospecting and exploration in Africa has led to the discovery of remarkable dinosaur localities with spectacular and diverse faunas from the Mesozoic outcrops. The first observations and publications were the work of courageous travellers, intrepid naturalists or motivated soldiers. They were followed by scientific expeditions with the main purpose of collecting more complete remains of these fascinating fossil reptiles, the dinosaurs. Today, by the number, the variety and the importance of its dinosaur localities, Africa has nothing to envy the paleontological richness of dinosaurs from North America or Asia.

The description of new genera and new species of dinosaurs discovered recently in Africa completely changed the vision we had of these Mesozoic reptiles, and the knowledge of their history and geographical distribution. From the first discovery of dinosaur footprints in the south of Algeria in 1880 to the most recent collection of Triassic dinosaur bones in South Africa to Liassic dinosaur bones in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, and with the exploration of the Cenomanian sediments of the Egyptian desert, numerous localities have yielded splendid and fascinating new Theropods, Sauropods and Ornithopods.

I was lucky to be sent in January 1965 as a 25 years old paleontologist, in the Tenere desert in Niger, invited by French geologists searching for Uranium, who had discovered a new and large outcrop full of Lower Cretaceous dinosaurs bones. Gadoufaoua, as was named the site, became the most prolific dinosaur locality in Africa. Several expeditions have led to collection and description of the Iguanodontid *Ouranosaurus nigeriensis* and also numerous bones of Sauropods and Theropods, and the giant crocodile skeleton of *Sarcosuchus imperator* also called *Supercroc*.

Since 1965 until 2015, I had the opportunity to prospect and to discover numerous dinosaur bones and skeletons, in Lower, Middle Jurassic and Upper Cretaceous continental deposits in Morocco, Algeria and Madagascar.

This is the story of 50 years of research, travels, explorations and discoveries I made in Africa for dinosaurs I want now to expose before becoming myself a dinosaur.

References :

Taquet P. 1999. Dinosaur impressions. Postcards from a paleontologist. Cambridge University Press. 1-244.

