New Miocene faunas of terrestrial mammals in Poland


Although more than 100 fossil mammal-bearing sites from Pliocene and Quaternary times have been discovered in the territory of Poland, those of the Miocene age have remained scarce. Until recently, only six localities with remains of Miocene terrestrial mammals have been recorded, including Suszec of Early Miocene age and Sośnicowice, Opole 1 and 2, and Przeworno 1 and 2 of Middle Miocene age, all situated in Silesia, southern Poland.

The six papers present the first descriptions of remains of Miocene terrestrial mammals recently collected in a brown-coal mine at Belchatów in central Poland. The remains come from three accumulations of mollusc shells and mammal remnants deposited in lacustrine limestones intercalated between coal seams. The faunal assemblages have been referred to as Belchatów C, Belchatów B, and Belchatów A. The locality C is placed in the lower part of the Belchatów stratigraphic profile, the locality B lies in the middle part of the profile, and the locality A is situated in its upper part. A tuffaceous layer lying above Belchatów C and below Belchatów B was dated as $18.1 \pm 1.7$ Ma old. Another tuffite horizon located between Belchatów B and A was dated at $16.5 \pm 1.3$ Ma.
The Miocene faunas of Belchatów are rich in small mammals; remains of large mammals occur only occasionally. The papers describe isolated teeth of the cricetid rodent *Microtocricetus molassicus* (Belchatów A), the platycanthyid rodent *Neocometes similis* (Belchatów C and B), the anomalomyid rodents *Anomalomys minor* (Belchatów C and B) and *Anomalomys gaudryi* (Belchatów A), the gomphotheriid proboscidean *Gomphotherium angustidens* (Belchatów C), the metacodontid insectivoran *Plesiosorex germanicus* (Belchatów B), as well as some soricid insectivores, including cf. *Florinia stehlini*, *Heterosorex* sp., and an indeterminate heterosoricine of Belchatów C, cf. *Miosorex* sp., *Dinosorex* cf. *zapfei*, and an indeterminate soricid of Belchatów B, and cf. *Crusafontina* sp. and *Dinosorex* sp. of Belchatów A. In addition, provisional lists of rodent, perissodactyl, and insectivoran taxa are provided for the Belchatów localities.

In terms of the biochronological zonation of the continental Neogene of Europe, the mammal assemblages of Belchatów correspond to zones MN 4 of the Orleanian age, late Early Miocene (Belchatów C), MN 5 to MN 6 of the late Orleanian to early Astaracian age, latest Early Miocene to early Middle Miocene (Belchatów B), and MN 9 of the early Vallesian age, earliest Late Miocene (Belchatów A).

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