ACTA PALAEONTOLOGICA POLONICA

An ailuravine rodent from the lower Eocene Cambay Formation at Vastan, western India, and its palaeobiogeographic implications

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Acta Palaeontologica Polonica 53 (1), 2008: 1-14 doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.4202/app.2008.0101

A new ailuravine rodent, *Meldimys musak* sp. nov. (Mammalia: Rodentia, Ischyromyidae), is recorded from the lower Eocene lignites of western India. It is the oldest record of Rodentia from India. *M. musak* is more derived than the earliest Eocene ailuravine *Euromys cardosoi* from Portugal and more generalized than late early Eocene *E. inexpectatus* and *Ailuravus michauxi* from France. Its dental morphology closely corresponds to the middle early Eocene species *M. louisi*, which lived about 52 Ma in Western Europe. Meldimys was previously known only from Europe, and ailuravines were previously reported only from Europe and North America. Its occurrence in India allows the first direct correlation between the early Eocene land mammal horizons of Europe and India, and raises the possibility of a terrestrial faunal exchange between India and Eurasia close to the Palaeocene-Eocene transition.

Key words: Mammalia, Ailuravinae, Rodentia, palaeobiogeography, Eocene, India.

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