

Nycteroleter affinities of a Permian parareptile from the South African Karoo Basin

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Acta Palaeontologica Polonica 54 (1), 2009: 165-169 doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.4202/app.2009.0118>

The Middle Permian Tapinocephalus Assemblage Zone (AZ) in South Africa has produced a rich record of tetrapods dominated by dinocephalian therapsids and pareiasaurid parareptiles (Kitching 1977, Smith and Keyser 1995a). A partial postcranium from this horizon was referred to a procolophonoid parareptile (Gow and Rubidge 1997), and would constitute the oldest global record of the Procolophonoidea. In this study we reassess the affinities of this specimen, providing evidence that it is instead referable to a “nycteroleter” parareptile, an identification that is more compatible with the age of this fossil. Accordingly, this specimen represents the first record of a member of the nycteroleter clade in Gondwana.

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