



Catalogus Hahnorum Tertius

Gerhard Hahn and Renate Hahn 2007. *Catalogus Haramiyorum cum figuris (Allotheria Mesozoica)* [in German]. Fossilium Catalogus I: Animalia, pars 143. 115 pp. (edited by Wolfgang Riegraf). Backhuys Publishers, Leiden. Paperbound ISBN 978-90-5782-194-3; Price 48 Euro.

In his report on the recent *Fossilium Catalogus Plagiaulacidorum* by G. and R. Hahn (2006a), Sabath (2006) gave an historical review of the Series, the aim of which is to provide scientists with the most recent consensus on the taxonomy of a specific group of mammals.

In the same report, Sabath emphasized the qualifications of these specialists, renown for their competence and scientific exactness. These qualities are once more demonstrated in the *Catalogus Haramiyorum* that the same authors present, just a year after the preceding volume. In fact, no one could have been in a better position to write this catalogue, since Hahn and Hahn recently (2006b) devoted a whole study to the analysis of the evolution of the dentition of the Haramiyida.

Haramiyida draw their name from the genus *Haramiya*, itself coined by Simpson (1947) in replacement of the preoccupied *Microcleptes*, both meaning "small robber"; while the latter is of Greek origin, the former, of Arabic origin, testifies to the interest that Simpson had for the Arabic language. As for the genus *Haramiya*, it was synonymized with *Thomasia* Simpson, 1928, which had then priority; but the suprageneric denominations derived from *Haramiya* persist as "nomina protecta".

The group of Mesozoic mammals involved is particularly challenging, being mostly known by isolated teeth. The oldest haramiyid remains date from the Middle Triassic, and the group seems to have had its principal expansion between this epoch and the Middle Jurassic, though persisting locally into the Late Cretaceous. It has been found in Gondwanian as well as in Laurasian territories. Haramiyida are most generally included within the infraclass Allotheria, as an independent order differing from the only other Allotherian order, the Multituberculata, by the direction of the masticatory movements. They encompass two suborders, two superfamilies, five families, eight genera and 11 species: the classification adopted here is based on that published by Hahn and Hahn (2006b). The main discrepancy concerns the Early Cretaceous Moroccan Hahnodontidae, which are excluded from the present volume.

The latter starts with an historical overview, divided into six periods, extending for 60 years for the first two, to six years for the last two; this speaks eloquently of the rapid increase in our knowledge of the group (as well as that of Mesozoic mammals in general) since its first mention in 1847. Hahn and Hahn have themselves largely contributed to its expansion, as expressed by the numerous bibliographical references that they have devoted to it.

The systematic part follows, starting with a chronological list of works dealing explicitly with the order, providing at the same time the synonymies involved. Similarly, each taxonomic unit, from suborder to species, is introduced by a list of the references, followed by its subdivision into the lower category (e.g., family into subfamilies) and its geographical and chronological expansion. For each unit is then provided the reference(s) of the adopted diagnosis (not given), followed by its differential characters. For the species are added the holotype, paratypes, lecto-

types and hypotypes when applicable (with their own history, provenance, place of conservation and mention of all figurations); locus typicus and stratum typicum follow. Each species is largely illustrated, which brings us to the low point of the volume; the quality of reproduction of the photographs is not up to the quality of the text; however, these defective photos are often duplicated by drawings of better legibility. For each taxonomical category an alphabetic order is followed, the genus *Thomasia* itself, with its four species, occupying one third of the book, as befits the best represented taxon in the fossil record of the order.

As in the case of the previous volume by Hahn and Hahn, the German language constitutes no serious obstacle to the general understanding, even for the reader utterly refractory to any other language than English, the technical terms being sufficiently explicit by themselves and supplemented by the illustrations.

Having myself worked on this still mysterious group, I can appreciate the difficulties encountered by the authors to produce this compendium, and this in a very short time after the Plagiaulacoidea. However, it is difficult to imagine the amount of work, the time-consuming search for references with the innumerable verifications that are involved in such a volume. The bibliographical list is in the image of the contents of the book: extensive and undoubtedly complete. One would look in vain for a reference containing the vocable haramiyid that does not appear in this list. Finally, given the variety of terms used in 150 years of scientific publications, just compiling the index was in itself a remarkable achievement. All this testifies once more to the competence of the authors and to the debt that the palaeontological community owes to them.

As for the editorship, should my own incompetence in German prevent me from pointing out that the near-to-only typographic errors appear in the French references? Easily verziehen.

Given the specificity and limited presence of haramiyids in the fossil record, this book is mainly destined for specialists. It should however figure in all palaeontological libraries, first as an indispensable complement to the *Catalogus Plagiaulacidorum*, second as a reference to all those interested in the early evolution of Mesozoic mammals: the origin of the group remains veiled.

References

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Denise Sigogneau-Russell [ds.dr@free.fr], 20 Bd de l'Hôpital, 75005 Paris, France.