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# A new relict stem salamander from the Early Cretaceous of Yakutia, Siberian Russia 

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A new stem salamander, Kulgeriherpeton ultimum gen. et sp. nov., is described based on a nearly complete atlas (holotype) from the Lower Cretaceous (Berriasian-Barremian) Teete vertebrate locality in southwestern Yakutia (Eastern Siberia, Russia). The new taxon is diagnosed by the following unique combination of atlantal characters: the presence of a transversal ridge and a depression on the ventral surface of the posterior portion of the centrum; ossified portions of the intercotylar tubercle represented by dorsal and ventral lips; the absence of a deep depression on the ventral surface of the anterior portion of the centrum; the absence of pronounced ventrolateral ridges; the absence of spinal nerve foramina; the presence of a pitted texture on the ventral and lateral surfaces of the centrum and lateral surfaces neural arch pedicels; the presence of a short neural arch with its anterior border situated far behind the level of the anterior cotyles; moderately dorsoventrally compressed anterior cotyles; and the absence of a deep incisure on the distal-most end of the neural spine. The internal microanatomical organization of the atlas is characterized by the presence of a thick, moderately vascularized cortex and inner cancellous endochondral bone. The recognition of stem salamanders and other vertebrates with Jurassic affinities in the Early Cretaceous high-latitude (paleolatitude estimate N $63-70^{\circ}$ ) vertebrate assemblage of Teete suggests that: (i) the large territory of present day Siberia was a refugium for Jurassic relicts; (ii) there were no striking differences in the composition of high-latitude Yakutian and mid-latitude Western Siberian Early Cretaceous vertebrate assemblages; and (iii) there was a smooth transition from the Jurassic to Cretaceous biotas in North Asia.

Key words: Amphibia, Caudata, stem salamanders, Cretaceous, Russia, Siberia.

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