A new albanerpetontid amphibian from the Barremian (Early Cretaceous) Wessex Formation of the Isle of Wight, southern England

Steven C. Sweetman and James D. Gardner

A new albanerpetontid, Wesserpeton evansae gen. et sp. nov., from the Early Cretaceous (Barremian) Wessex Formation of the Isle of Wight, southern England, is described. Wesserpeton is established on the basis of a unique combination of primitive and derived characters relating to the frontals and jaws which render it distinct from currently recognized albanerpetontid genera: Albanerpeton (Late Cretaceous to Pliocene of Europe, Early Cretaceous to Paleocene of North America and Late Cretaceous of Asia); Celtedens (Late Jurassic to Early Cretaceous of Europe); and Anoualerpeton (Middle Jurassic of Europe and Early Cretaceous of North Africa). Although Wesserpeton exhibits considerable intraspecific variation in characters pertaining to the jaws and, to a lesser extent, frontals, the new taxon differs from Celtedens in the shape of the internasal process and gross morphology of the frontals in dorsal or ventral view. It differs from Anoualerpeton in the lack of pronounced heterodonty of dentary and maxillary teeth; and in the more medial location and direction of opening of the suprapalatal pit. The new taxon cannot be referred to Albanerpeton on the basis of the morphology of the frontals. Wesserpeton currently represents the youngest record of Albanerpetontidae in Britain.

Key words: Albanerpetontidae, Lissamphibia, microvertebrates, Cretaceous, Britain.

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