

Placental nature of the alleged marsupial from the Cretaceous of Madagascar

Alexander O. Averianov, J. David Archibald, and Thomas Martin

Acta Palaeontologica Polonica 48 (1), 2003: 149-151

A recently (Krause 2001) reported fragmentary mammalian lower molar (University of Antananarivo, UA 8699) from the Late Cretaceous (Maastrichtian) of Madagascar, was attributed to Marsupialia, for which far reaching paleobiogeographical conclusions were made. The five characters used to identify UA 8699 as a marsupial are not exclusive to Late Cretaceous marsupials, but are found also in some placental mammals, notably in Late Cretaceous ungulatomorph zhelestids, known from various Upper Cretaceous strata in Asia, Europe, and North America (Nessov et al. 1998). Identification of UA 8699 as a zhelestid placental is in keeping with myriad other faunal similarities between Europe and Africa/Madagascar.

Alexander O. Averianov [sasha@AA1923.spb.edu], Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, Universitetskaya nab. 1, Saint Petersburg 199034, Russia; J. David Archibald [darchibald@sunstroke.sdsu.edu], Department of Biology, San Diego State University, San Diego, California 92182-4614, USA; Thomas Martin [tmartin@zedat.fu-berlin.de], Institut für Geologische Wissenschaften, Fachrichtung Paläontologie, Freie Universität, Malterserstrasse 74-100, D-12249 Berlin, Germany.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (for details please see creativecommons.org), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.