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Book Review

Kielan-Jaworowska, Z. & P.P. Gambaryan (1994): *Postcranial anatomy and habits of Asian multituberculate mammals*. Fossils and Strata, No. 36, 92 pp. Scandinavian University Press, Oslo, Copenhagen & Stockholm.

Remains of multituberculate mammals have been found in deposits of the Late Triassic to Late Eocene. Most of them are known by their skulls or dentition. In this monograph palaeontologist Zofia Kielan-Jaworowska, who named most of the known taxa, and her colleague Petr P. Gambaryan describe in detail new fossils of postcranial skeletons of six taxa of Asian multituberculates. For two species the postcranial musculature is reconstructed and a new reconstruction of the pes and the complete animal is given. The authors conclude that these multituberculates were able to jump. They also speculate, “that the competitive inferiority of multituberculates to eutherians is related to the structure of the pelvis with a ventral keel, which hindered prolongation of the gestation period, and to abducted limbs that limited their endurance for prolonged running.” Furtheron, they state that the “analysis of multituberculate-therian postcranial synapomorphies does not support the idea that Multituberculata is the sister taxon of Theria.“ This is a good example for the art of palaeontological analysis and interpretation, and an important contribution to the ongoing discussion on the early evolution of mammals.

R. Hutterer (Bonn)

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Autor(en)/Author(s): Hutterer Rainer

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