CONTENTS/INHALT

In memoriam † Prof. Dr. Volker Fahlbusch 3

Dhirendra K. Pandey, Franz T. Fürsich & Rosemarie Baron-Szabo
Jurassic corals from the Jaisalmer Basin, western Rajasthan, India 13

Joachim Gründel
Zur Kenntnis der Gattung Metriomphalus Cossmann, 1916 (Gastropoda, Vetigastropoda) 39

Wolfgang Witt
Zur Ostracodenfauna des Ottnangs (Unteres Miozän) der Oberen Meeresmolasse Bayerns 49

Neriman Ruckert-Ülkümen
Erstnachweis eines fossilen Vertreters der Gattung Naslavecia in der Türkei: Naslavecia oengenae n. sp., Untermiozän von Hatay (östliche Paratethys) 69

Jérôme Prieto & Michael Rummel
The genus Collimys Daxner-Höck, 1972 (Rodentia, Cricetidae) in the Middle Miocene fissure fillings of the Frankian Alb (Germany) 75

Jérôme Prieto & Michael Rummel
Small and medium-sized Cricetidae (Mammalia, Rodentia) from the Middle Miocene fissure filling Petersbuch 68 (southern Germany) 89

Jérôme Prieto & Michael Rummel
Erinaceidae (Mammalia, Erinaceomorpha) from the Middle Miocene fissure filling Petersbuch 68 (southern Germany) 103

Josef Bogner
The free-floating Aroids (Araceae) – living and fossil 113

Rainer Butzmann, Thilo C. Fischer & Ernst Rieber
Makroflora aus dem inneralpinen Fächerdelta der Haring-Formation (Rupelium) vom Duxer Köpf bei Kufstein/Unterinntal, Österreich 129

Michael Krings, Nora Dotzler & Thomas N. Taylor
Globicaltrix nugax nov. gen. et nov. spec. (Chytridiomycota), an intrusive microfungus in fungal spores from the Rhynie chert 165

Michael Krings, Thomas N. Taylor & Jean Galtier
An enigmatic microorganism from the Upper Pennsylvanian Grand-Croix cherts (Saint-Etienne Basin, France) 171

Instructions for Authors 175
Cover illustration: Cover illustration: The floating plant Cobbania corrugata (Lesquereux) Stockey et al. from the Upper Cretaceous of North America inspected by an Ornithomimus dinosaur. The quarry in the Dinosaur Provincial Park, Alberta (Canada), produced numerous complete specimens of this plant and the most complete skeleton of the dinosaur (Reconstruction by Marjorie Legin). For details, see Bogner, J.: The free-floating Aroids (Araceae) – living and fossil, pp. 113–128 in this issue.

On October 30th 2008 Volker Fahlbusch, retired professor for Vertebrate Palaeontology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich, passed away at the age of 74. In spite of his deteriorating health he regularly came to his office at the University during the last few years of his life to keep in touch with science and his colleagues. In November 2007, a fall from the stone stairs leading to his office resulted in serious head injuries from which he never recovered. His condition forced him into a wheelchair and kept him away from his beloved science and normal life. Nevertheless, his death came suddenly, and the painful loss of a highly respected teacher, colleague and friend was widely mourned. Volker Fahlbusch was appreciated as a scientist, not only by his colleagues at Munich (Faculty of Geosciences of the University and Bavarian State Collection for Palaeontology and Geology), but also within the global scientific community of palaeontologists. The only comfort in this grief situation is to know that death released him from his severe sufferings.

Volker Fahlbusch represented vertebrate palaeontology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University at Munich for more than 40 years, and sedulously promoted and aggrandized the science that he so much loved. For many years he represented an integral part in the shaping of palaeontology in Germany because of his active participation in numerous scientific committees and boards. For example, he served as a referee for the German Science Foundation (he wrote over 500 reviews in 20 years), as the secretary of the Subcommission on Tertiary Stratigraphy, as a member of the advisory board for the Paläontologische Gesellschaft, as a member of the Editorial Committee of the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt/Main, as a member of the
Volker Fahlbusch’s research focused on intraspecific variability in fossil mammals and their biostratigraphic relevance. In his Habilitationsschrift „Populationsverschiebungen bei tertären Nagetieren, eine Studie an oligozänem und miozänem Eomyidae Europas“ he included more than 7000 teeth! With the successful defense of his habilitation in 1969 he was granted the „venia legendi“ for Palaeontology and Historical Geology, and was subsequently appointed as Privatdozent (Lecturer). Henceforth, he followed a straight and successful career at the University in Munich, first as an Associate Professor and later Full Professor. Between 1977 and 1979 he served as the Dean of the Faculty of Geosciences. At the acme of his career in 1979 he was offered the position of Chair of Palaeontology at the University of Mainz in succession of Heinz Tobien, one of the nestors of European Vertebrate Palaeontology. Volker Fahlbusch declined for several reasons, but primarily due to his fear that the wealth of administrative duties would keep him away from a constant and active participation in research.

During his scientific career, Volker Fahlbusch initiated and conducted countless research projects that contributed significantly to mammal palaeontology. His scientific interests usually centered around aspects of systematics, population variability and dynamics, phylogeny, biogeography, biostratigraphy, and biochronology. Although he was primarily interested in rodents (Cricetidae, Eomyidae), he also studied other groups such as priimates, carnivores, pholidotes, and artiodactyls. His favourite topics included taxonomy and phylogenetics based on tooth crown morphology, and the variability of tooth-morphological features in fossil rodents.

His scientific achievements are widely acknowledged by the international scientific community, and undoubtedly represent fundamental sources of information for many researchers working on biostratigraphy and phylogeny. Research triggered by his collecting activities greatly expanded our understanding of the evolution of fossil rodents and other small vertebrates of Eurasian faunas. Bill CLEMENS (Berkeley CA, USA) points out that „his foresight and efforts in establishing the MN(Mammal Neogene)-units certainly had and continues to have a major impact in helping improve our understanding of Cenozoic stratigraphy.” The establishment of a biostratigraphical framework for the Mammalian faunas of the European Neogene was the core topic of two international Symposia held at the Schloss Reisensburg near Günzburg in 1988 and 1992 that were initiated and organised by Volker Fahlbusch. These symposia resulted in several scientific papers and two special volumes, which all continue to be cited frequently to date.

Another one of Volker Fahlbusch’s great passions was the vertebrate fossil site of Sandelzhausen (southern Germany, Miocene) where he and his teams excavated for about 20 field seasons and recovered several tens of thousands of vertebrate and invertebrate fossils. These remains represent more than 200 different taxa and made Sandelzhausen one of the most important localities in the continental European Miocene. In 2005, he co-organised the International Sandelzhausen Symposium in Mainburg (Germany), where he was in his element and his knowledge of the quarry central to all of our
discussions. It turned out to be the last scientific meeting that he could attend. Unfortunately, he didn’t live to see the publication of two special volumes with papers summarizing the research on Sandelzhausen. The first of these volumes has just been published and the second, which will be dedicated to the life and work of Volker Fahlbusch, is scheduled to appear in early 2010.

During the early 1980s Volker Fahlbusch became the ambitious driving force behind an assembled scientific collaboration with the Institute of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Palaeoanthropology at Beijing (IVPP), and a Sino-German field campaign to the famous Mio-Pliocene localities of Ertemte and Harr Obo, Inner Mongolia. “He was a great mentor and trusted friend to us. He played a significant role in helping us promote the study of tertiary mammalian microfossils in China” remember Wenyu Wu and her colleagues from the IVPP. Gerhard Storch (then Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main) commemorates “the joint harmonious weeks in the lonesomeness of the Inner Mongolia” that made the project very successful, with an extremely rich fauna produced by screen-washing, and results for a better understanding of poorly known taxa and a proper documentation for the first time. In the opinion of Larry Flynn (Harvard University, Cambridge MA, USA), the influential series of Ertemte publications, which is continued to present, stands as a fine tribute to the collaborative nature of Volker Fahlbusch’s investigations. Also, some of these publications are still fundamental to the field.

Volker Fahlbusch hosted numerous international scientists for joint projects conducted at the University in Munich, including Bill Clemens (Berkeley, USA, as Humboldt Senior Scientist awardee), Oldrich Fejfar (Prague, Czechia, as a Humboldt Fellow), Wenyu Wu (Beijing, China, with a DFG project), Thomas Bolliger and Burkart Engesser (Switzerland, with a grant of the Schweizer Nationalfond), as well as many others not listed here, which all expressed their great gratitude and pleasure to work with him and some even refer to the collaboration with Volker Fahlbusch as a turning point in their professional careers. Several of the professional relationships grew into deep personal friendships that lasted up to more than 40 years.

In 1974 Volker Fahlbusch co-founded the „Arbeitskreis Wirbeltierpaläontologie in der Paläontologischen Gesellschaft“, a still existing and thriving annual meeting, which inspired many collaborations among mainly German speaking vertebrate palaeontologists. The number of attendees increased from initially 25 to 30 to currently approximately 100 scientists.

In addition to scientific research, the teaching and training of students was always one of Volker Fahlbusch’s major commitments. He supervised 40 Diploma and PhD theses, and his classes covered a wide range of subjects, including general palaeontology, invertebrate palaeontology, vertebrate palaeontology, fossil reefs, historical geology, mapping courses, as well as field trips and practical training courses in field and lab palaeontology.

As former students of Volker Fahlbusch we always appreciated and never will forget his human warmth and open heart and mind. He was an honest, upright, and at the same time discreetly modest man. We agree with Ray Bernor (Washington D.C., USA) who perfectly characterises Volker Fahlbusch: “He preferred simple words, clearly stated and sincerely felt. He was thoughtful, careful, deliberate and incredibly fair. He valued hard work, good work and taking time to do things correctly. He was highly ethical and he always made sure he did the right thing in the correct way.” Although his wariness might have given him a reputation of being picky, it made him an absolutely reliable scientist, who taught young palaeontologists to be sure about facts to the best of their knowledge.

As an enthusiastic scientist and teacher he fascinated colleagues and students with sometimes unconventional ideas and methods, e.g. by climbing on the desk in the lecture room to demonstrate limb posture in primitive and advanced tetrapods. On the other hand, his respect for the achievements of others usually made him rely on the well-tried rather than new ideas. New hypotheses had to stand on a well justified base, which he tested in sometimes uncomfortable discussions. However, he also cultivated a certain trust in his students, which gave them self-confidence – so far as even to nickname him „VoFa“ based on his abbreviated signature.

The private Volker Fahlbusch behind the official work and action, setting aside his conscientiousness for a while, happened to be met with at social events, which he appreciated and enjoyed preferably with a good meal and a glass of fine wine or a bottle of beer. Abrupt breakouts of temperament, or a soulful expression of pleasure or relief gave very rare insights into his mind, and if they happened, they often caused astonishment even among his old friends. Many of his colleagues lively remember the Arbeitskreis meetings at the Reisensburg (Günzburg, Germany) where Volker Fahlbusch highly appreciated late evening discussions with other small mammal specialists like Hans de Bruijn, Karl-Alban Honermann, Burkart Engesser, Oldrich Fejfar, Gudrun Danner-Hock and Gerhard Storch in one of the comfortable bays of the castle.

Well-tended relationships to colleagues and students were very important to him. Among these relationships, the loyalty to Prof. Richard Dehm, his venerated teacher, was outstanding and far-ranging. Although Dehm was an inconvenient contemporary who expected a lot both from himself and others in suppressing any emotions, an extraordinary well and remarkably respectful relationship developed between Richard Dehm and his student Volker Fahlbusch. A common base were the scientific objectives and the hard work that was necessary to achieve them. The principles propagated by Dehm, namely conscientiousness, correctness and orderliness were admired by Volker Fahlbusch. He owed Dehm a lot, primarily the acquisition of a precise manner of working. After Dehm’s retirement, Volker Fahlbusch accompanied his teacher Dehm with regular visits until his death at the age of 89 in 1996, which made Volker Fahlbusch an important attachment figure for the lonely old man. The influence of the strong regiment and principles of Richard Dehm on Volker Fahlbusch was hard to overlook. Nevertheless, he developed his own style, which gave his working group a special flair.

As a tribute to Volker Fahlbusch, several mammalian fossil taxa have been named after him. These include the cricetid genera Fahlbuschia Mein & Freudenthal, 1971 and...

In gratitude, admiration and friendship to Volker Fahlbusch, a special gift was prepared by his students and colleagues for his 65th birthday: the so-called „Green Book“, titled „The Miocene Land Mammals of Europe“, which includes 46 chapters on 515 pages, written by 44 authors from 11 countries – a gift for which a large number of the European Mammal palaeontologists worked for him and that has made him extremely proud, as he said. It was a pleasure to see him in good shape, and everybody wished him well and many more active and productive years ahead. Unfortunately, these wishes did not come true.

Volker Fahlbusch’s legacy will live long through his excellent publication record and the influences that he exerted on his students and colleagues. His contributions will stand as monuments to his creativity and hard work. In our memory he will always remain a lively, inquisitive scientist and contributing individual. We are all highly grateful for what he gave to us.

G. E. Rössner, Munich
U. B. Göhlisch, Vienna
M. Moser, Munich
R. Ziegler, Stuttgart

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**Curriculum vitae of Volker Fahlbusch**

1934 Born in Celle;
1955 High School graduation („Abitur“) (certificate of having passed the Abitur);
1955–1957 Undergraduate studies in geology at the University of Göttingen;
1957–1960 Graduate studies in geology and palaeontology at the University of Munich. Graduation with diploma;
1961–1964 PhD student in Munich;
1964 PhD graduation (Dr. rer. nat.);
1964–1970 Assistant Professor at the Institut für Paläontologie und historische Geologie of the University in Munich;
1965 Six months sabbatical research visit at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA;
1968 Research Associate at the Carnegie Museum;
1969 Habilitation at the Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich;
1970–1975 Universitätsdozent (Lecturer) at the University of Munich;
1975–1978 Associate Professor, at the University of Munich;
1978–1999 Full Professor at the University in Munich;
1999 Retirement.

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FAHLBUSCH, V. & LIEBRECH, R. (1996): Hasenhirsch und Hundebar ·
Chronik der tertären Fossil-Lagerstätte Sandelhausen bei Mainburg – 40 pp., 43 figs; München (Verlag Dr. F. Pfeil).


1997


1998


Taxa established by Volker FAHLBUSCH (* = new genus, ** = new species in existing genus, *** = new genus and species)

Lipotyphla, Soricidae:
** Angustidens excultus MAYR & FAHLBUSCH, 1975

Lipotyphla, Talpidae:
°* Desmanella quinquecuspidata MAYR & FAHLBUSCH, 1975

Primates, Omomyidae:
** Paraloris bavaricus FAHLBUSCH, 1995

Rodentia, Sciuridae:
°* Palaeosciurus sutteri ZIEGLER & FAHLBUSCH, 1986

Rodentia, Cricetidae:
°* Cricetodon kasapligili De BRUIJN, FAHLBUSCH, SARAC & UNAY, 1993

°* Cricetodon tobieni De BRUIJN, FAHLBUSCH, SARAC & UNAY, 1993

°* Cricetodon versteegi De BRUIJN, FAHLBUSCH, SARAC & UNAY, 1993

° Democricetodon FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° Democricetodon freisingensis FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° Democricetodon gracilis FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° Democricetodon mutilus FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° Democricetodon franconicus FAHLBUSCH, 1966

° Deperetomys bagni (FAHLBUSCH, 1964)

° Deperetomys anatolicus De BRUIJN, FAHLBUSCH, SARAC & UNAY, 1993

° Eumyarion bifidus (FAHLBUSCH, 1964)

° Kozlowskia polonica FAHLBUSCH, 1969a

° Kozlowskia magna FAHLBUSCH, 1969a

° Megacricetodon FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° M. schaubi FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° M. bavaricus FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° M. similis FAHLBUSCH, 1964

° Microtocrinus molassicus FAHLBUSCH & MAYR, 1975

° Neocometes similis FAHLBUSCH, 1966

Rodentia, Eomyidae:
°* Apeomys tuerkheimae FAHLBUSCH, 1968

°* Eomyodon pusillus (FAHLBUSCH, 1969b)

°* Ligerimys antiquus FAHLBUSCH, 1970

Rodentia, Zapodidae:
°* Eozapus similis FAHLBUSCH, 1992