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**Tertiary Avian Localities of Europe.**—Jiri Mlikovsky (Ed.). 1996. Acta Universitatis Carolinae Geologica 39:519-846. Paper, \$20.00.—Although technically part of a serial publication, this book is available for purchase at an extremely reasonable price, including postage, through its editor (J. Mlikovsky, Vrsovic 11, CZ-101 00 Praha 10, Czech Republic). Anyone with an interest in paleornithology, or vertebrate paleontology in general for that matter, should have a copy of this epochal undertaking.

The book reviews, in English, all of the localities of Europe (i.e. west of the Urals and the Ural River) that have yielded birds of Tertiary age (Paleocene through Pliocene, 65 to 1.8 mya). The introduction briefly states the purpose and scope of the catalogue, gives a succinct overview of European biostratigraphy, including references, and even provides a useful table of transliterations of the alphabet in six eastern European languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Serbocroatian, Bulgarian, and Macedonian).

Localities are arranged by country, with each country being treated as a separate chapter (France is divided into 3 chapters by age). Mlikovsky has written the majority of the 29 accounts, with 10 other experts having contributed all or part of 12 of them. Each begins with a short historical introduction, a list of museums and acronyms where fossils are located, and a map showing localities by number. This is followed by a correspondingly numbered list of localities, each of which in turn consists of a precise geographic and stratigraphic description and a list of the avifauna, all densely cross-referenced. Each chapter is free-standing with a separate bibliography.

A concluding chapter by Mlikovsky entitled "Tertiary Avian Faunas of Europe" is an excellent overview summarizing the avifaunas of 14 different time periods complete with maps of localities, avifaunal dynamics in Europe in the Tertiary, and an analysis of the fossil record by major taxonomic group (mainly by family). This incredibly information-packed

volume is made even more useful by the inclusion of six indexes: new species (i.e. those originally described as new from the localities listed), genera, families, collections (i.e. institutions housing fossils), authors, and localities.

There has long been a desperate need for a volume such as this. Europe has a rich record of Tertiary birds, but many of these were described in very obscure journals that are difficult to access and often written in languages not comprehended by western scientists. Since Lambrecht's great *Handbuch der Palaeornithologie* (1933), the borders and names of many European countries have changed, and much more has been learned about geology, chronology, and stratigraphy, although this literature, often of a very local nature, is likewise bibliocryptic and widely scattered. For this reason, authors have continued to cite incorrect information from Lambrecht, or from Brodkorb's *Catalogue of Fossil Birds*, which often is derived from Lambrecht as well. Compounding the difficulty of studying the fossil record is the fact that specimens of fossil birds were often transferred from one institution to another, or were lost or destroyed, with no record of this having been published.

With the present publication one may determine the whereabouts, when known, of a given fossil in a museum collection, cite a geographically correct location for its occurrence, and place it in a much more precise chronological framework based on modern stratigraphy. Plus, one has access to the entire literature on the subject through 1995, all copiously cross-indexed.

The volume might have appeared earlier except that the editor experienced a dreadful setback when his computer was stolen. A full year was needed for him to bring the manuscript back to pre-theft form. The ornithological world can be grateful, however, that Mlikovsky had the heart to return to the project and carry it to completion. The result is a compendium that will be absolutely indispensable for anyone needing information on the most interesting 63 million years in the history of birds.—STORRS L. OLSON, *Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA.*

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