

BOOK REVIEWS

BRYOZOAN FAUNA OF THE ARIYALUR GROUP (LATE CRETACEOUS), TAMIL NADU AND PONDICHERRY, INDIA (1996) by Asit K. Guha and D. Senthil Nathan, Department of Geology and Geophysics, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India. *Palaeontologia Indica*, Volume XLIX, New Series, Geological Survey of India, Calcutta, 217 pages, 22 plates.

The Upper Cretaceous marine deposits of South India have been extensively studied ever since they were first reported more than a hundred and fifty years ago. These rocks are exposed as three major patches in Tiruchchirapalli, Vridhachalam and Pondicherry areas separated by alluvial cover. The deposits at Tiruchchirapalli are the largest in extent spanning in age from Middle Albian to Danian. They are well known for their fossil content as a store house of Cretaceous fossils. Almost all fossil groups are represented in great numbers. Stoliczka (1865-1873) has described them in his elaborate Memoirs which include twenty three bryozoan forms from these beds.

The present publication comprises description of Bryozoan Fauna from the Ariyalur Group including those reported by Stoliczka. The following are the main points made out by the authors:

1. The bryozoans come chiefly from the Kallankurichchi Formation of the Ariyalur Group and its equivalent beds namely, Aladi Formation of Vridhachalam and Turuvai Formation of Pondicherry.
2. A total of 47 Cyclostome and 53 Cheilostome bryozoans are systematically described and figured in 22 plates.
3. Seventy taxa are reported for the first time with five new genera and 38 new species; some earlier reported species are redescribed with emendations.
4. A statistical analysis comprising colonial variability of some species of bryozoa is given.
5. Based on the study of the bryozoans, a Biozonation of the Kallankurichchi Formation is attempted.
6. The Ariyalur Bryozoan assemblage shows a characteristic Campanian - Maastrichtian range, corroborating the observations made by the study of other fossil groups by earlier workers, but with more Maastrichtian affinity.
7. The Ariyalur Bryozoans show no affinity with those of Bagh Beds of Madhya Pradesh or with the Wadhwan Formation of Gujarat, the other two Upper Cretaceous group of rocks in Peninsular India.
8. The Bryozoans of Kallankurichchi Formation have some common elements in the equivalent beds of Madagascar, South Africa and Europe.

The research work has been carried out after systematic collection in the field, careful preparation of the material in the laboratory and good photography of the specimens. The entire work is well presented with excellent photographs, maps and tables.

It is a welcome feature that the Geological Survey of India has published this research work of the IIT, Kharagpur and has preserved all the Type Fossils mentioned in it in their Repository.

The Bryozoan study is a good addition to our knowledge of the South Indian Cretaceous fossils and geology of the area.

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