TIME EQUIVALENCE OF THE LITHOSTRATIGRAPHIC UNITS OF THE SIWALIK RANGE BETWEEN YAMUNA AND SUTLEJ RIVERS

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ABSTRACT—An attempt is made with help of vertebrate fossil assemblages to discuss the status of lithostratigraphic units between Yamuna and Sutlej Rivers, which were mapped by the earlier workers and the present author.

Age fixation of some horizons in the lithostratigraphic units of the Siwaliks is made on the basis of the vertebrate faunal assemblages.

INTRODUCTION

Field mapping of sedimentary lithostratigraphic units involves an examination of gross lithology, the structural elements and establishing the succession of strata and the boundaries of formations. Biostratigraphic studies aim at a more detailed investigation of the depositional environments of the sediments and fixing the age of the sediments.

In the Siwalik sediments (Upper Miocene to Pleistocene) rapid variations both in the vertical and spatial directions, which are made more complex by tectonics, are noticeable. Unlike some of the type sections of the

EXPLANATION OF PLATE—1


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Siwaliks in West Pakistan, the Siwaliks of the Indian foothills are locally fossiliferous, and therefore their time correlation over large areas is often uncertain. Vertebrate fossils, heavy mineral suites and band tracing along strike with the help of aerial photographs have proved very useful in correlation.

STRATIGRAPHY AND PALAEONTOLOGY

Area From Yamuna to Markanda Rivers

Bata Formation. The Bata Formation was designated by Agarwal et al (1961) based on the section exposed in Bata Nala. Medlicott had earlier mapped this as “Nahan.” This formation consists of greenish grey, hard sandstone with alternate bands of shaly clays. No vertebrate fossil was collected in this formation. A few broken dicotyledonous leaf impressions were collected from the shale.

The formation appears to be similar to “Dagshai” in lithology. The heavy mineral suite also suggests that this formation is probably the equivalents of “Dagshai.”

Nahan Formation. Medlicott (1864) was the first to designate “Nahan” (Nahun) as a separate formation. Theobald (1921) later suggested that “Nahan” formation may be omitted altogether and that it be renamed as “Murree” series. The suggestion was not followed by Medlicott.

The formation comprises of thick bedded grey compact, medium to fine grained sandstone, with alternate bands of concretionary red clay.

North of Nahan, Cautley (1836) obtained Anthracotherium (Microselenodon) silistrense and Dinotherium in the characteristic concretionary clay conglomerate, similar to those in Kalu Wala Rao north of Saharanpur.

Pilgrim (1917) later revisited the area but could not collect any fossils from this formation. Pilgrim correlated the “Nahan” formation with the Lower Siwalik Formation of Sind. He remarked that while the lithological resemblance as a whole is not very close, the concretionary clay conglomerate resembles the beds from the Lower Siwaliks of Punjab.

The fossils collected by Cautley from the Kaluwala Rao north of Saharanpur were identified by Lydekker (1876) as doubtful Anthracotherium (Microselenodon) silistrense. Other fossils like a Dinotherium tooth were obtained from the foot of the hills. Another specimen of Progiraffa sivalensis was reported to have come from the hills near Roorkee. Similar fossils were discovered by Cautley North of Nahan. Therefore, he correlated Kaulwala Rao section with Nahan Formation.

It is far likely that the supposed Nahan fossils were either of an entirely different age obtained from an outlier or they were

EXPLANATION OF PLATE—2

4. Hypselphas hysudricus approx. X 0.5 Locality Masol (30° 49' : 76° 50') Specimen No. ONGC/V/46 Formation, Rupar—II (Pinjor). 5. Archidiskodon planifrons X 0.5 Locality, Khera (30° 49' : 77° 5') Specimen No. ONGC/V/315 Formation, Masol (Tatrot). 6. Stegodon insignis X 0.5 Locality Masol (30° 29' : 77° 19') Specimen No. ONGC/V/349 Formation, Masol (Tatrot).
Middle Siwaliks as suggested by Medlicott. These fossil are similar to those obtained from the Lower Siwaliks of Chinji in the Salt Range. For these reasons Pilgrim disagreed with Oldham, who considered these beds as "Middle Siwalik," and the occurrence north of Nahan, as an Middle Siwalik outlier. Pilgrim considered it as equivalent to Lower Siwaliks and forming a part of Nahan Formation.

The heavy mineral suite of the Nahan Formation suggests Lower Swalik age. The polospore assemblage shows a dominance of Pteridophytic flora during deposition of Nahans and supports a Lower Siwalik age.

Area South of Paonta

Bahral Formation. This area was mapped by Agarwal et. al (1960-61) between Yamuna and Markanda Rivers as the oldest formation in the Siwalik belt immediately to the north of the plains. They considered this formation as of Middle Siwalik age.

This formation yielded the following characteristic fauna which suggests an Upper Siwalik age:

*Stegodon insignis*, *Hypsiplephas hysudricus* (Plate 3, Figs. 8, 9) *Equus cautleyi* (Plate I, Fig. 3) *Hydaspttherium megacephulum* (Plate I, Fig. 2) *Merycopotamus* sp.

The heavy mineral suite of the samples collected by them from Chikan Kishan Khol traverse also suggests an Upper Siwalik affinity.

It is possible that a part of Baharal-I Formation, exposed in the core of Dhanaura anticline east of Dhanaura is of Middle Siwalik age, because the fossil which is found in that area, *Hydaspttherium megacephulum*, ranges in age from Dhok Pathan to Tatrot. The heavy mineral suite in Baharal-I in Katgarh Setiwal traverse suggests Middle Siwalik affinity.

Area from Pinjaur to Rupar

*Masol Formation*. This formation was named by Rao et. al (1960-61). It has highly fossiliferous horizons which can be used as a datum for time correlation. The most common fossils are as follows—

*Stegodon insignis* (Plate 2, Fig. 6) *Archidiskodon planifrons* (Plate 12, Fig. 5) *Proamphibos kashmiricus*, *Hemibos acuticornis*, *Bubalus proamphibos*, *Hexaprotodon sivalensis*, *Merycopotamus* sp.

*Archidiskodon planifrons* and *Bubalus proamphibos* are representative fossils of Tatrot. Hence the age of this formation is Tatrot, i.e. Astian.

*Rupar-I II and III Formations*. These formations were designated by Rao et. al (1960-61) They differ in lithological appearance but their fossil content is similar to that

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**EXPLANATION OF PLATE—3**

7. *Stegodon ganasa* 0.5 X Locality Rupar (30° 41’ : 76° 50’). Specimen. ONGC/V/279 Formation, Rupar—II (Pinjor). 8. *Hypsiplephas hysudricus* X 0.5 Locality Behral (30° 29’ : 77° 49’). Specimen No.—ONGC/V/24 Formation, Behral—(Pinjor). 9. *Hypsiplephas hysudricus* X 0.5 Locality Prempura (30° 47’ : 76° 41’). Specimen No. ONGC/V/50 Formation, Rupar—III (Pinjor).
of Masol formation. The most common fossil genus of all three formation is *Elephas* which is generally represented by *E. hysudricus*, the molars of which are less complex in structure than those of *E. indicus*. The most common fossils are—

*Elephas* planifrons; *Hypselephas* hysudricus (Plate 2, Fig. 4 and Plate 3 Fig. 9) *Stegodon ganesa* (Plate 3, Fig. 7 and Plate 4, Fig. 10) *Bubalus platyceras*, *Equus cauleyi*, *Rhinoceros platyrhinus*, *Hexaprotodon sivalensis* (Plate 1 Fig. 1), *Hippopotamus sp.*

*Hypselephas* hysudricus, *Elephas* planifrons and *Equus cauleyi* are representative of fossil assemblage of Pinjaur. Hence the Rupar Formation is probably of Pinjaur age. The abundance of *Elephas* planifrons in the Rupar formation in Pinjaur also supports this contention.

The Masol and Rupar Formations can be distinguished as follows:—

(i) Certain species are abundant in Masol Formation but not common in Rupar formation viz. *Bubalis promphibos*.

(e) *Rupar IV Formation*. This formation is designated by Rao et al (1960-61). As no fossil was recorded from this formation, no age determination on faunal basis can be made. The assemblage of the heavy mineral suite indicates that it may be of Middle Pleistocene (Cromerian) age.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The rocks of the Himalayan foot hills between Yamuna and Sutlej rivers have so far been mapped on the basis of their gross lithologies, heavy mineral suites and field relations. Vertebrate fossils have proved useful in fixing the time plane in some of these sediments.

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**REFERENCES**


**EXPLANATION OF PLATE—4**

10. *Stegodon ganesa* X 0.5 Locality Mandpa (30° 36' 77° 4' ) Specimen No. ONGC/V/260 Formation. Rupar—III (Pinjor)
