NATURKUNDE MUSEUM STUTTGART

Press release
State Museum of Natural History Stuttgart, Germany

A Triassic stem-salamander from Kyrgyzstan and the origin of salamanders

Stuttgart, Germany, 11.05.2020. The origin of extant amphibians (frogs, salamanders and caecilians) remains largely obscure. This results from the long evolutionary history of the group (330 million years) as well as their tiny size, which makes their fossil preservation difficult. A new find from Kyrgyzstan in Inner Asia has now been recognized as most ancient salamander in the world.

Paleontologists from Germany, Dr. Rainer Schoch – expert on fossil amphibians and early reptiles at the State Museum of Natural History, Stuttgart –, Dr. Ralf Werneburg and Dr. Sebastian Voigt were able to show in a paper appearing on May 11, 2020 that the new, 220 million year old Kyrgyz fossil and an existing skeleton in a Moscow collection pertain to the same species, *Triassurus sixtelae*.
Based on new data on the recent discovery, *Triassurus* reveals diagnostic salamander features that make the Kyrgyz species the oldest and most primitive salamander. Besides salamander features, *Triassurus* also shares characters with ancient amphibians, pointing at the origin of all modern amphibians. *Triassurus* dwelled a freshwater lake millions of years before the first dinosaurs appeared on Earth.

The paper is published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

Publication:
Rainer R. Schoch, Ralf Werneburg & Sebastian Voigt: A Triassic stem-salamander from Kyrgyzstan and the origin of salamanders in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

Published: 11.05.2020

For the media:

Media Contact
Dr. Rainer Schoch
Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Stuttgart, Germany
Tel. +49 (0)711-89 36-143, Mobil: +49 (0)151-74516380
E-Mail: rainer.schoch@smns-bw.de
www.naturkundemuseum-bw.de

Dr. Ralf Werneburg
Naturhistorisches Museum Schleusingen, Germany
E-Mail: werneburg@museum-schleusingen.de
www.museum-schleusingen.de

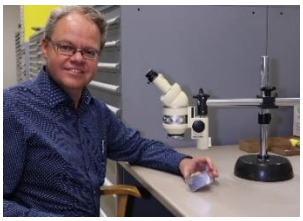
Dr. Sebastian Voigt,
Urweltmuseum Geoskop, Germany
E-Mail: csebastian.voigt@gmail.com
www.urweltmuseum-geoskop.de

Meike Rech (Press)
Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Stuttgart, Germany
Tel: +49 (0)711-89 36-107, E-mail: meike.rech@smns-bw.de

Lisa-Marie App (Press)
Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Stuttgart, Germany
Tel: +49 (0)711-89 36-106, E-mail: lisamarie.app@smns-bw.de

Figure captions /Copyright

Rainer_Schoch_Fossil_Triassurus_sixtelae_Sammlung _SMNS_T.Wilhelm.jpg
Dr. Rainer Schoch with the prehistoric salamander *Triassurus sixtelae*.



Rainer_Schoch_Fossil_Triassurus_sixtelae_Mikroskop _SMNS_T.Wilhelm.jpg
Dr. Rainer Schoch with the prehistoric salamander *Triassurus sixtelae*.
Copyright: SMNS, T. Wilhelm

Fossil_Triassurus_sixtelae_Bild1_SMNS_F.X.Schmidt.jpg
220 million year old Kyrgyz fossil of *Triassurus sixtelae.*
Copyright: SMNS, F.X. Schmidt

Fossil_Triassurus_sixtelae_Bild2_SMNS_F.X.Schmidt.jpg
Fossil of *Triassurus sixtelae.*
Copyright: SMNS, F.X. Schmidt

www.naturkundemuseum-bw.de