

PALEONTOLOGY

BIRDS FROM PLIOCENE DEPOSITS OF ODESSA

By P. V. SEREBROVSKY

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In the present paper is given a description of six fragments of bird bones from the catacombs of Odessa which the author received for treatment from I. G. Pidoplichka.

1. *Pliogallus* (? *Coturnix*) *coturnoides* Tug.

Material: right coracoid No. 6477 (Fig. 1). Whole bone. Slightly broken is only its lower external angle. In its general appearance the bone is very near to the coracoid of the living quail, *Coturnix coturnix*. It is however much bulkier, exceeding the latter in thickness by far more than in length. Its length in *Coturnix coturnix* and

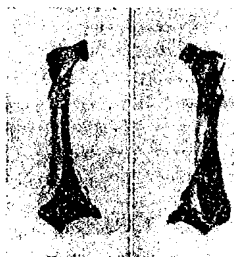


Fig. 1. Coracoid of *Pliogallus* (*Coturnix*?) *coturnoides* Tug. Length, 26 mm.

*Pliogallus coturnoides* is 24 and 26 mm respectively; its maximum thickness just below the facies clavicularis is 2 mm in *C. coturnix*, 3 in *P. coturnoides*. Comparisons with *Ammoperdix griseogularis* which among other gallinaceous birds comes nearest to it in size, have made it obvious that in the latter case we have a quite distinct genus; in *Ammoperdix griseogularis* the coracoid is much longer and is thin rather than thick. Very close to the coracoids from the catacombs of Odessa, as regards the proportion between separate parts, are the coracoids of *Francolinus*, a bird of still larger size. Yet the similarity with the living quail is closer still. Both in the fossil bird and in the living quail the facies clavicularis has the form of an oval facet with a depression in the middle which is

not the case in *Francolinus*, *Ammoperdix* and *Alectoris*. In the coracoid of the fossil bird the impressio sterno-coracoidea has in its middle two sharply defined tubercles. In the *Francolinus* and *Coturnix* of to-day these tubercles are quite distinct, especially in the former, whereas in *Ammoperdix* they are scarcely visible. The facies externa of the extracted coracoid as well as other characters are nearly identical with those of the living quail, *Coturnix coturnix*. The name by which I describe the fossil bird has been coined by Tugarinov who has described, a metacarpal bone from the same deposits. He has found his bone to come nearest to the corresponding bone of the living quail except for some few characters and a greater length. Provisorily he refers to the same species a poorly preserved coracoid destitute of capitulum and of the whole distal part. Contrary to this, in the coracoid I describe, the proximal part is slightly broken as was pointed out earlier. To prove that they are or are not similar is therefore a difficult matter. But it may be remarked that both belong to a

in the epoch when the deposits of the catacombs of Odessa were forming. No such instance has been recorded as yet. It would be more appropriate therefore to give our fossil bustard a special species name. As the type of description I consider the right coracoid No. 6..6.

### 3. *Totanus numenioides* n. sp.

Material: left humerus No. 6475 (Fig. 4). A nearly intact bone. Only the spicond. later., trochlea ulnar. and epicond. med. are slightly broken. It may be remarked that fairly different genera of tattlers have often similar humeri and no accurate identification of the genus can, therefore, be made on the basis of a single bone. In its general appearance and most of the little details the extracted humerus comes nearest to that of the living *Totanus totanus*.

In curlews too, however, a great many characters, except size, of course, for curlews are big birds, approach the respective characters of the form described. Distinctions from the humerus of *T. totanus* are confined

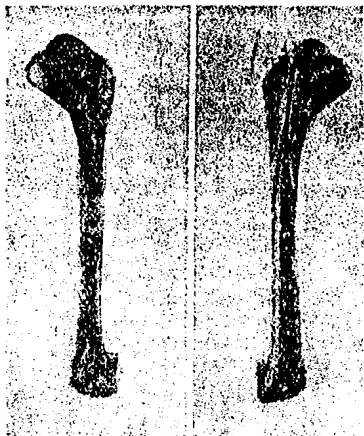


Fig. 4. Humerus of *Totanus numenioides* sp. n. Type of description. Length—50.5 mm.



Fig. 5. Right ulna of *Asio pigmaea* sp. n. Type of description. Length—59.7 mm.

to the fact that the fossil humerus is much larger and more slender, its shaft is thinner. Its length measured from the top of caput. art. to the hindmost point of trochlea radialis is 50.5 mm in the fossil tattler, 43.5 mm in *T. totanus*. The thickness of the shaft in the midlength is 3.5 and 3.2 mm respectively. Hence the bone belongs to a larger and a more long-winged tattler.

### 4. *Asio pigmaea* n. sp.

Material: fragment of right ulna No. 6482 (Fig. 5). Distal part just at the head and the end of the olecranon are slightly broken. The fragment measures 59.7 mm in length. The whole bone was probably about 66 mm long. In its general character the ulna is similar to that of owls, tattlers and certain gulls. Yet the owls can be distinguished by some details of structure and especially by the fact that their papillae ulnares are spread wider apart than in the above mentioned birds. On the basis of this bone the separate genera within the group of owls can be distinguished only with great difficulty. The extracted ulna is most closely related to the ulna of the living *Asio flammeus*, yet it is much smaller in size: in the living *Asio flammeus* the length of the ulna attains 106 mm.

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