



Pliocene rodent fauna from Riđake (Serbia)

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This locality is situated about 20 kilometers southeast from Šabac town (western Serbia). During the construction activities, the cave opening was broken down and the limestone was covered in quite thick layer of Quaternary sediments (fluvial sediments and loess). Therefore the sediment in the entrance part of the cave remained undisturbed. During the very first excavations and sampling it was already obvious that this sediment includes a large number of fossil remains of vertebrates. The bright red, loose semi-clayish sediment included obvious broken bones of large mammals. After the sediment was sifted, over 3000 pieces of remains of large and small mammals, reptiles and birds were separated. The most numerous are remains of Lipotyphla and Rodentia, indicating that the entrance part of the cave was used as roost by owls. The remains of large mammals include artiodactyla and carnivores. Remains of small mammals (Chiroptera, Lipotyphla, Lagomorpha and Rodentia) were identified from the osteological and odontological material. The most common remains of rodents belong to Cricetidae (Arvicolinae), followed by Muridae, Gliridae, Sciuridae, Gerbillidae, Eomyidae and Anomalomyidae. According to the morphological characteristics, the rodent association from this locality may be placed in early Villafranchian (MN16). This is the first record of this type of fauna in Serbia. The further excavations will probably lead to increase in number of identified species, forming a base for correlating the sediments placed to the south from Paratethys with the sites in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Croatia.