

The Glaring Task of Russian Paleontology

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After Prof. V. Amalitzki's famous discoveries of Permian Reptilia on the North Dvina (1896) within the boundaries of our country, for the past 30 years there has been made a whole series of discoveries of fossil vertebrate faunas. At present almost in all the systems (beginning from the Carboniferous) we already have more or less large places of discoveries, and every year brings ever-new discoveries. These sites of discoveries have been worked only to an insignificant degree. Nevertheless, the finds in them and the scientifically examined materials even now make it possible to set forth their importance: they have furnished highly valuable data on mammals as well as on the lower vertebrates—data that have thrown light upon the questions of systematics, morphology, biology, zoogeography, paleontology, etc.

The rare wealth in remains of vertebrates of our country promises brilliant progress for Russia paleontology in the future, but at present it sets before her a great responsibility—the task of preparing these improvements: development of the known localities of discoveries, the planning and discovery of new ones, the preservation and scientific examination of the collected material. This task is so extensive that it requires proper organization. The beginning principle of such an organization has been

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established in Pan-Union Academy of Sciences, which so far has conducted the most systematic excavations, possesses the richest collection of Russian materials, and has at its disposal suitable scientific and technical personnel. The interest of other scientific institutions has had a more casual and, unfortunately, not always a systematic character. There must be a significant role of the local (the regional study) learned societies that, in the aims of the coordinated staging of the work, should likewise be in touch with the organization set up in the Academy of Sciences [Akademiia Nauk].