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RECORD OF *PRODEINOTHERIUM* (PROBOSCIDEA: MAMMALIA) FROM THE MID-TERTIARY DHARMSALA GROUP OF THE KANGRA VALLEY, NW HIMALAYA, INDIA: BIOCHRONOLOGIC AND PALAEOBIOGEOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

We describe a rare fossil of a large-bodied mammal from the Dharmsala Group of the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh. It is an isolated upper premolar of *Prodeinotherium,* a genus of an extinct proboscidean family. The find represents the highest trophic level taxon known so far from the Dharmsala and coeval horizons and is important towards understanding the pre-Siwalik large mammals of the Himalayan region of India. The Dharmsala Group has previously yielded a rodent and atypical fish remains (Tiwari and Bhandari, 2004 and 2005). Earlier, Tiwari *et al.* (1991) and Feist and Tiwari (1999) studied fairly diversified associated assemblage comprising aquatic elements such as chara gyragonites, ostracods, fishes, crocodiles, etc. The new record corroborates early Miocene age assigned earlier to the fossil-yielding horizons and extends the palaeogeographical expanse of *Prodeinotherium,* so far known from early Miocene horizons of Pakistan, by 400 km up to the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh in the east.

Key words: *Prodeinotherium*, Dharamsala Group, Kangra Valley (Himachal Pradesh), Early Miocene Mammal, Proboscidea, Deinotheriidae