## First Remains of Fossil Ostriches (Aves: Struthioniformes: Struthionidae) from Bulgaria

## Zlatozar N. Boev<sup>1\*</sup>, Nikolai B. Spassov<sup>2</sup>, Dimitar B. Kovachev<sup>3</sup>

Abstract: Two finds, distal end of right tarsometatarsus and a proximal pedal phalanx of the left 3<sup>rd</sup> toe, from two sites (Kalimantsi – the middle Turolian levels, and Hadzhidimovo-2, MN 11/12 boundary, SW Bulgaria) are reported. They are referred to *Struthio* cf. *karatheodoris*. The paleoecological and paleozoogeographical aspects of the presence of struthionds are discussed. *Struthio* remains supported the concept that the openlands were a typical element of the mosaic landscape of the open woodlands/park type forest landscape in the western Pontic part of the Pikermian biome of the Balkan-Iranian late Miocene zoogeographical province.

**Key words:** Fossil birds, Ostriches, Bulgarian Miocene avifauna, Balkan Neogene vertebrates, Rila-Rodope Mountain region, Hipparion fauna

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> National Museum of Natural History, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria, e-mail: boey@nmnh.bas.bg;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> National Museum of Natural History, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria, e-mail: nspassov@nmnh.bas.bg;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Paleontological Museum, a branch of the National Museum of Natural History, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 32, Klokotnitsa St., Asenovgrad, Bulgaria, e-mail: paleo@asenovgrad.net