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A CASE OF ONE-SIDED SACRALIZATION OF THE FINAL LUMBAR VERTEBRA IN THE EUROPEAN HARE (*LEPUS EUROPAEUS* PALLAS, 1778)

PRZYPADEK JEDNOSTRONNEJ SAKRALIZACJI OSTATNIEGO KRĘGU LĘDZWIOWEGO U ZAJĄCA SZARAKA (*LEPUS EUROPAEUS* PALLAS, 1778)

I observed the phenomenon of the asymmetry of the pelvis and *os sacrum* for the first time in 6 individuals out of a series of 604 specimens of the European hare from the Poznań province. The lack of the lumbar parts of the spine made it impossible to establish beyond doubt whether this was one-sided sacralization or lumbalization, although many of the data distinctly pointed to sacralization (Bujalska, 1961).

In the present case, when examining a series of 150 pelvises with *ossa sacra* and spinal columns (this material also was obtained from the Poznań province). I observed a further case of the asymmetry described previously.

The *os sacrum* in the hare (No. coll. 1005, ♂, about 8 months old) differed in respect of several details from the specimens described earlier on. The apex of the right *ala ossis sacrum*, ending in a sharp point and directed upwards, is remarkable. Even the characteristic narrowing below *capitulum proc. transversus* (Fig. 1) has been preserved. Below the base of *proc. transversus* on the left side there is a process directed towards *ala ossis sacrum*, *proc. transversus* being slightly shorter than in normal specimens. This is a sort of transitional stage to complete sacralization, also noted in this species (Bujalska, 1963)

Facies auricularis of *os sacrum* also has a different appearance, not having its characteristic semi-lunar shape on the sacralized side, but consisting of two planes intersected by a sulcus (Fig. 2).

Observation of the spine provides interesting data. The number of lumbar vertebrae is reduced to six (Fig. 1). This is indisputable proof that we are concerned here with the phenomenon of sacralization. The number of thoracic and cervical vertebrae, on the other hand, is the same as in normal hares.

The fact appears worthy of emphasis that the phenomenon of one-sided sacralization of the final lumbar vertebra is maintained in the Poznań province in about 1% of the hares examined.

Hares with an abnormal pelvis and asymmetrically situated acetabula of the hip-joint (Fig. 3) are undoubtedly handicapped to a certain extent from the locomotory aspect. It is therefore highly probable that they are more often attacked by predators.

REFERENCES

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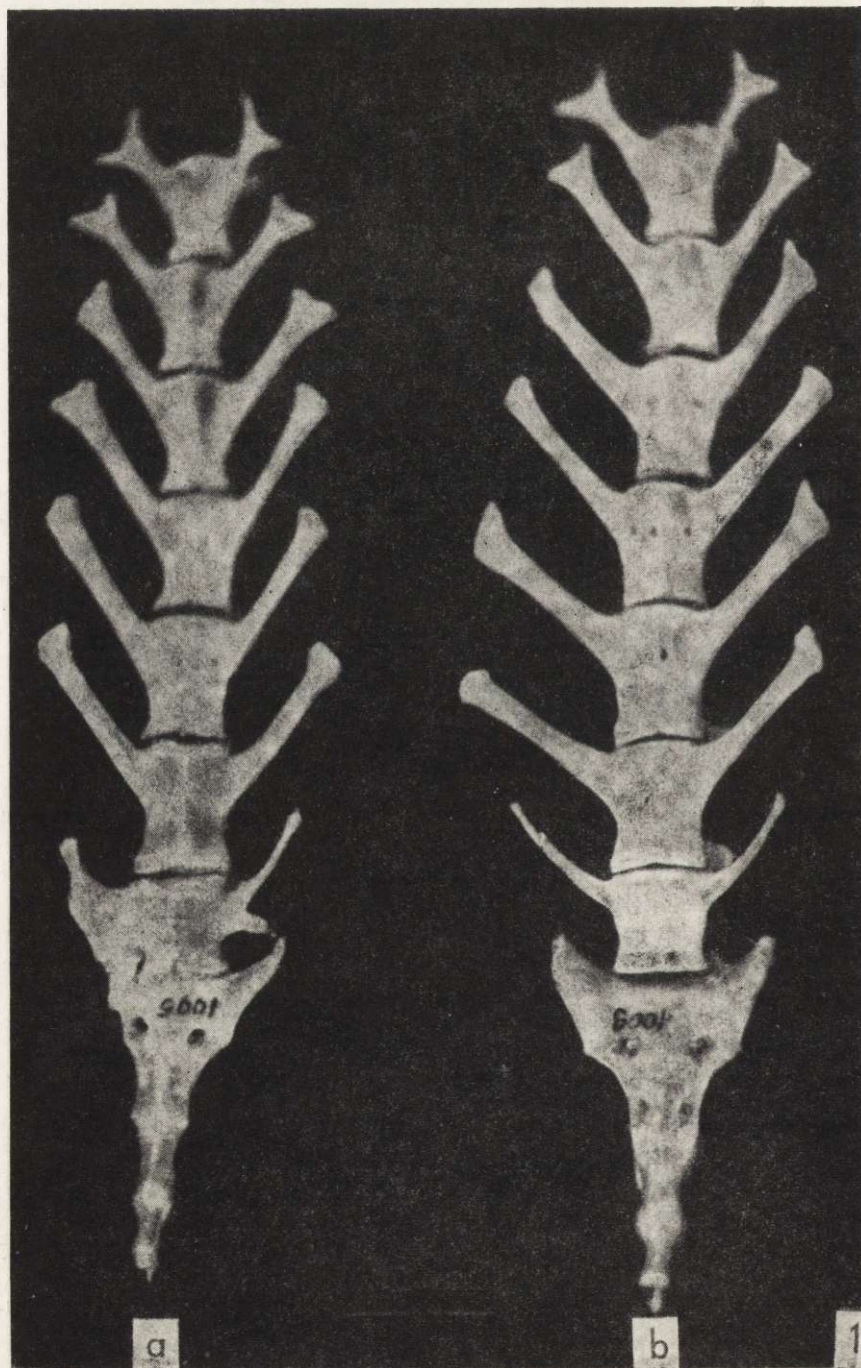


Fig. 1. *Os sacrum* with *pars lumbalis* from the ventral side. a) with sacralized final lumbar vertebra, b) normal.

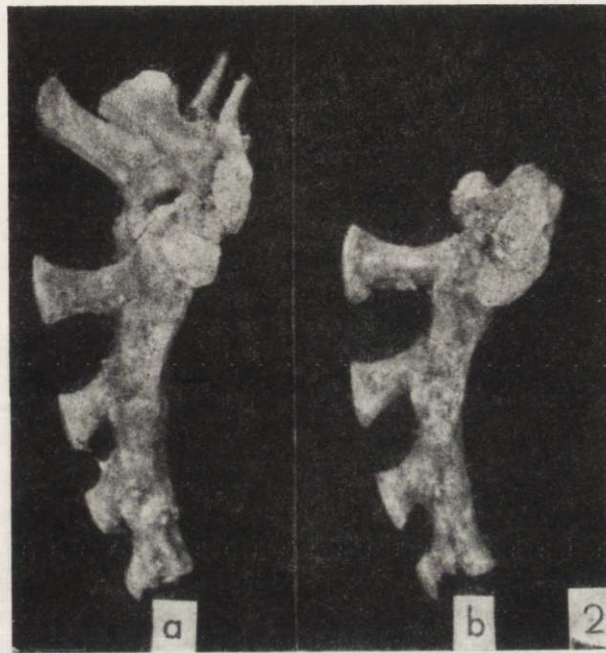


Fig. 2. *Os sacrum* from the side (a and b as above).

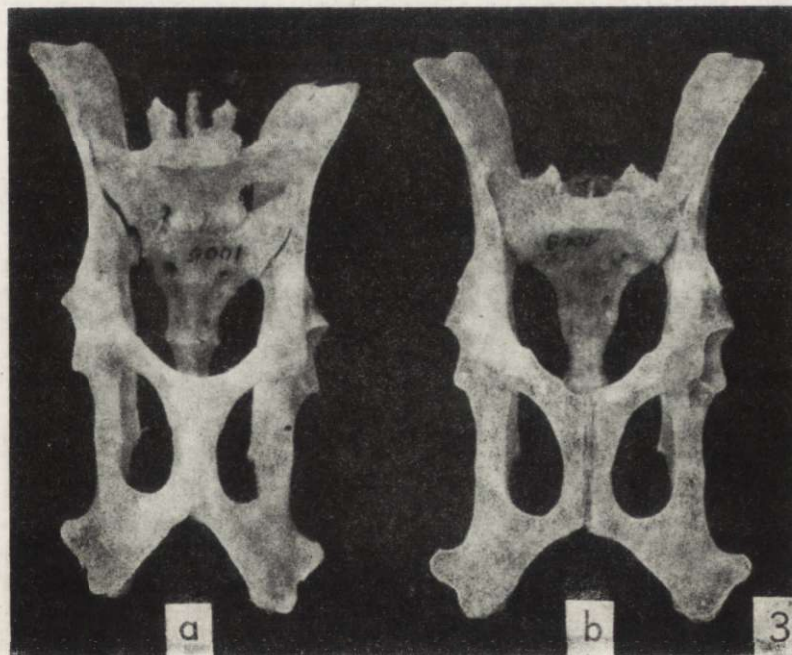


Fig. 3. Pelvis from the ventral side (a and b as above).