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ABSTRACTS

Pleistocene vertebrates from the Kyparíssia lignite mine, Megalópolis, S. Greece

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Well known for its richness in fossil mammals —particularly megaherbivores— since the beginning of the 20th century (BÜRCHNER 1903, MELENTIS 1961, SICKENBERG 1976), the Middle Pleistocene lacustrine basin of Megalopolis (Peloponnese, Greece) continues to yield new material, due to the operation of lignite mines in it. During the recent years the mining activities in northernmost mine of Kyparíssia have brought to light numerous vertebrate fossils, recovered during salvage field expeditions. Most available specimens are surface finds, as the constant operation of the mine did not allow for a proper excavation in it. A number of stratified specimens indicates the presence of at least two fossiliferous horizons, which are stratigraphically closely situated. The fossils are generally widely dispersed, not in dense concentrations, but they are much more abundant along the western margin of the palaeolake. In a find-spot, which surfaced after a landslide event, two fossil assemblages are interpreted as the partial skeletons of an elephant and a hippopotamus, respectively. The recovered fauna comprises Chelonii, Aves, *Elephas (Palaeoloxodon) antiquus*, *Sus* sp., *Hippopotamus antiquus*, *Capreolus* sp., *Dama* sp., *Cervus* cf. *elaphus*, *Megaloceros* sp., Bovini indet., Rhinocerotidae indet., *Equus* sp., *Crocuta* sp., *Canis* sp. and *Castor* sp. The faunal assemblage is dominated by elephants, deer and hippopotamuses, indicating a temperate, woodland/forest environment, with continuous presence of a water body. The fossiliferous clayey sediments, rich in organic material (including wood and tree fruits), also indicate a low-energy, lacustrine, richly vegetated depositional environment, during a warm and humid (i.e. interglacial) period (VAN VUGT *et al.* 2000).

ABSTRACTS



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