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# ABSTRACTS

## **The *Elephas antiquus* skeleton and other large mammals from Marathousa 1 site (Megalopolis Basin, Greece): preliminary results on taxonomy, biochronology, palaeoecology and taphonomy**

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The Megalopolis Basin (Peloponnesus, Greece) has long been known for its Middle Pleistocene mammal fossils (see Melentis, 1961). In 2013 a palaeolithic/palaeoanthropological survey, conducted by a joint team of the Ephorate of Palaeoanthropology-Speleology of the Greek Ministry of Culture and the University of Tübingen in the frame of the ERC project PaGE, led to the discovery of a new locality – Marathousa 1 (MAR)–, when stratified bones and lithic artefacts were identified in a section of the Marathousa Member, Choremi Formation (Panagopoulou et al., 2015). The large mammal faunal material collected so far (2013–2016) includes the castorid *Castor fiber*, the mustelids *Lutra simplicidens* and *Mustela* sp., the felid *Felis* sp., the canid *Canis* sp., the elephantid *Elephas (Palaeoloxodon) antiquus*, the hippopotamid *Hippopotamus antiquus*, the bovid *Bison* sp., and the cervids *Dama* sp. and *Cervus elaphus*. This faunal association is common in the Galerian mammal communities of Europe (ca. 0.9–0.4 Ma). Furthermore, it is consistent with a temperate climate, and is indicative of a landscape with substantial woodland components and more open areas, close to permanent and large freshwater bodies.

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Of particular interest are an elephant cranium and several postcranial elements, which were found in close anatomical association and are attributed to a single individual of the straight-tusked elephant *Elephas (P.) antiquus*. The good state of preservation of the MAR bones allows to identify taphonomic modifications. Cut marks and percussion damage indicate hominin exploitation of elephant and other mammal bones by means of butchering activities. Carnivore gnawing is also evident on some specimens, suggesting a certain degree of carnivore competition with humans for early access to the animal carcasses.

## References

- Melentis, J.K., 1961. Die Dentition der pleistozänen Proboscider des Beckens von Megalopolis im Peloponnes (Griechenland). *Annales Géologiques des Pays Helléniques* 12, 153–262.
- Panagopoulou, E., Tourloukis, V., Thompson, N., Athanassiou, A., Tsartsidou, G., Konidaris, G.E., Giusti, D., Karkanias, P., Harvati, K., 2015. Marathousa 1: a new Middle Pleistocene archaeological site from Greece. *Antiquity Project Gallery* 89. <http://antiquity.ac.uk/projgall/panagopoulou343>