

Van Der Geer AAE, De Vos J, Lyras GA, Dermitzakis MD. 2005. The mounting of a skeleton of the fossil species *Candiacervus* sp.II from Liko Cave, Crete, Greece. *Proceedings of the International Symposium Insular Vertebrate Evolution: The Palaeontological Approach. Monografies de la Societat d'Historia Natural de les Balears* 12:337-346.

For the new exhibition in the Museum of Palaeontology and Geology of the University of Athens a skeleton of the endemic Pleistocene Cretan deer was mounted. This deer differs from all known recent and extinct mainland deer, mainly in its proportions. Measurements and comparisons confirm this observation, but are not enough to make the public realize its impact. A mounted skeleton on the contrary makes it at once clear that this deer had considerably shortened limbs, especially the metapodals, whereas the body length and the vertebral column length are rather normal. The overall impression is closer to that of an insular dwarf bovid like *Myotragus* than to that of a small deer such as the spotted deer (*Axis axis*). The first problem to be tackled was the selection of the material. Since a complete articulated skeleton has never been found, a composite had to be made. For this purpose, only bones of size class II (de Vos, 1979; Dermitzakis & de Vos, 1987) coming from one layer of one cave (Liko Cave, layer B) were selected. In this way a narrow geological range was assured. Subsequently, the available specimens were measured, and of all elements the average size was calculated. Accordingly, of each element the specimen that came the most close to the calculated average was selected. Left and right had to be of exactly the same size and robustness, and adjoining elements had to fit anatomically. Only in some cases a missing element had to be chosen from a different layer (layers C and D), but never from a different cave, and never from a different size class. Priority was first given to size, robustness and anatomical fitting, and next to completeness and colour. Several articulated feet were available, although of the wrong size or robustness, which were used in determining the right proportions and right stance between individual phalanges, tarsals and carpal bones. The same was valid for the vertebral column. For postural aspects, living deer were used as comparison; for extrapolation of soft tissue (intervertebral disks, articulation cartilage) also living deer stood model.

In order to keep the supporting fabrication as hidden as possible, an internal metal armature was inserted in the bones through drilled holes and fixed with polyurethane glue. The complete skeleton is fabricated in ready-to-assemble modular parts for easy transportation and reassembly on the spot. Minor missing parts (mainly vertebral processes, costal parts and the pelvic wings) have been reconstructed in epoxy putty, based on other *Candiacervus* elements from Liko or by interpolating the best fit between two existing parts. For a better impression of the fossil material, traces of the original matrix were left on the bones. A cast of the skull of the type specimen of size II of de Vos (1979) and a cast of the type specimen of antler type 1 of de Vos (1984) were made to complete the skeleton.