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The Pliocene mammal site of Kvabebi (Eastern Georgia): new field-campaigns and age determination

A. Vekua (1), D. Lordkipanidze (1), Agustí, J. (2), and O. Oms (3)

1. Georgian State Museum (Tbilisi, Georgia), geonathist@ip.osgf.ge
2. Intitut de Paleontologia (Sabadell, Spain), agustibj@diba.es
3. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Bellaterra, Spain), joseporiol.oms@uab.es

The Neogene series of the Kure basin (Southern Caucasus) contain several mammal sites that are found in thick and continuous stratigraphic sections, particularly in the Kakheti area (Georgia). One of the most significant sites is Kvabebi, which allows to understand the mammalian dynamics in Southern Caucasus during the Pliocene. This site was excavated in the sixties by A. Vekua, providing an abundant and well preserved fauna which includes *Struthio transcaucasicus, Nyctereutes megamastoides, Ursus arvernensis, Lynx issiodorensis, Machairodus davitasvilii, Hystryx sp., Kvabebihyrax kacheticus, Anancus arvernensis, Hipparion rocinantis, Stephanorhinus megarhinus, Propotamochoerus provincialis, Eucladoceros sp., Alces sp., Procapreolus sp., Protoryx heinrichi, Oryx sp., Gazella postmitilini, Parastrepsiceros sokolovi, Ioribos aceros, Eosyncerus ivericus.*

New field campaigns have been developed in the last years by a joint Georgian-Spanish team which have provided new data on fauna. At the same time, this particular fauna has been correlated to the global stratigraphic scale after a magnetostratigraphic study. The accurate age obtained for Kvabebi also allows a comparison with other well dated sites of the same or close age (such as Villarroya, in Spain), where the exotic elements of African affinities from Kvabebi are not found.