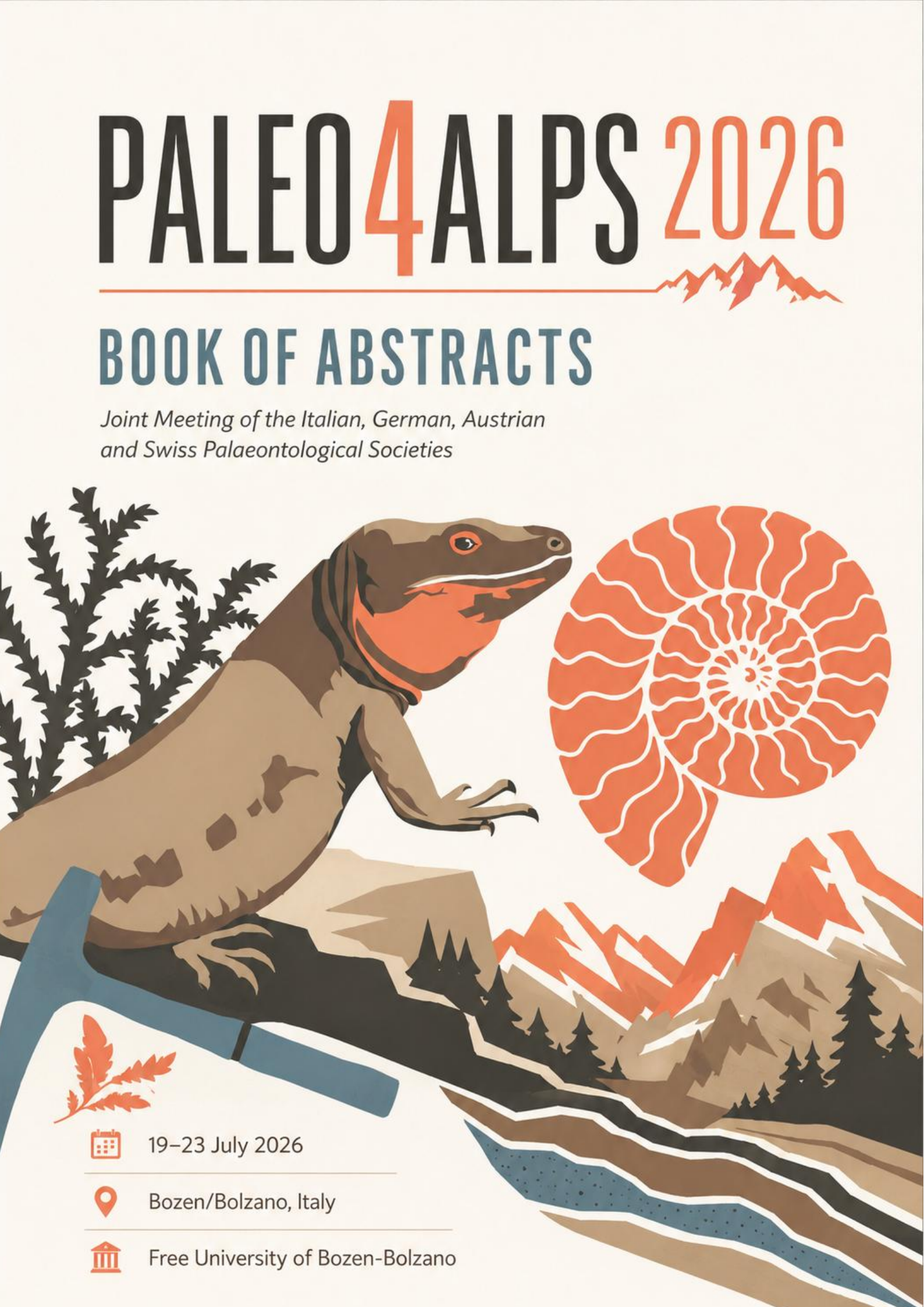


PALEO4ALPS 2026



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

*Joint Meeting of the Italian, German, Austrian
and Swiss Palaeontological Societies*



19–23 July 2026



Bozen/Bolzano, Italy



Free University of Bozen-Bolzano



Paleo4Alps

Joint Meeting of the Italian, German, Austrian and Swiss Paleontological Societies

Book of abstracts

Bozen/Bolzano (Italy), July 19–23, 2026

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

PALEO4ALPS corresponds to the **XXVI Paleodays of the Società Paleontologica Italiana (SPI)**, the **97th Annual Meeting of the Paläontologische Gesellschaft (PalGes)**, the **30th Annual Meeting of the Österreichische Paläontologische Gesellschaft (ÖPG)** and the **Meeting of the Swiss Paleontological Society**. This first joint meeting is intended to create a shared forum at the heart of the Alpine region. The conference is explicitly open beyond the membership of these societies and welcomes participants from all areas of paleontological research worldwide.

PALEO4ALPS aims to unite paleontologists working across a wide range of disciplines, geological time periods, fossil groups, and methodological approaches. By fostering exchange between different research traditions and perspectives, the meeting seeks to stimulate discussion, encourage interdisciplinary dialogue, and promote new scientific collaborations within the paleontological community.

The scientific program addresses both current and emerging topics in paleontology, ranging from Alpine case studies to global perspectives. A broad selection of multidisciplinary symposia provides a platform for integrative discussions. At the same time, field excursions to Bolca, the Dolomites, the Southern Alps, and the Carnic Alps will offer participants the opportunity to engage directly with the exceptional geological and paleontological heritage of the Alpine region.

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Partners: Free University of Bolzano-Bozen, Tiroler Landesmuseen, Museum of Nature South Tyrol, MUSE



Società Paleontologica Italiana, Paläontologische Gesellschaft (PalGes), Österreichische Paläontologische Gesellschaft (ÖPG) and Swiss Paleontological Society



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LOGO of the conference created by Isacco Alberti

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Life of a dwarf giant: preliminary results on dental analysis of the Sicilian dwarf hippo *Hippopotamus pentlandi*

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Pleistocene mammal fossils of Sicily are some of the most known Quaternary faunas in Italy, especially famous because of the phenomenon of “insular dwarfism”, which led to the occurrence of dwarf mammals, such as elephants and hippos, which thrived within the island.

The Sicilian dwarf hippo *Hippopotamus pentlandi* is one of the most emblematic dwarf mammals that inhabited the island during Late Pleistocene, represented by several fossil specimens currently stored in many museums in Italy and abroad. However, despite being known and studied for almost a century, very little is known about its paleobiology.

In this study, we present a comparative dental micro- and macro-wear analysis that has been going on between the dwarf hippo specimens stored in the Museo di Storia Naturale di Milano originating from western Sicily and the specimens stored in the Museo Paleontologico of the Università degli Studi di Catania coming from eastern Sicily.

In fact, through the observations of the traces left on the occlusal surface of the dwarf hippo molars, and their related wearing, allowed us to establish what kind of food item was especially exploited by the animal. This in order to refer hippo to one of the three main dietary classes: grazers, who feed mostly on silica-filled grass, browsers, who feed mostly on leaves and fruits, and mixed-feeders, who feed on both.

The aim of this work is to investigate the paleodietary preferences of the Sicilian dwarf hippo in both eastern and western Sicily and, indirectly, reconstruct the environment these animals inhabited, trying also to assess any potential paleobiological and paleoenvironmental differences between eastern and western populations.

Keywords: Sicily, Quaternary, Paleobiology, Paleoecology, Insular dwarfism