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Title: The Jaramillo Bottleneck for Migration of Hominins with Megaherbivores Into Europe

via the Danube-Po Gateway

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Abstract

Based on ongoing magnetostratigraphic work and updated critical reviews of sites bearing hominin remains and/or tools from greater Europe, including the Balkans and Greece, we maintain that the only compelling evidence of hominin presence in these regions was after the Jaramillo subchron (0.99 Ma), at about the time of the climatic late Early Pleistocene revolution (EPR) and the onset of enhanced glacial/interglacial activity from MIS 22 onward. Europe may have become initially populated during the EPR when, possibly for the first time in the Pleistocene, vast and exploitable ecosystems were generated along the Danube-Po Gateway in the Balkan peninsula and northern Italy. These newly formed settings, characterized by low-lands with open grasslands and reduced woody cover during glacial/interglacial transitions, represented the closest analogues to the savanna environment to which several large mammals linked with hominins in a common food web were adapted and could use as a migratory corridor. We acknowledge that lack of evidence may not be a compelling argument, but the absence of the Jaramillo and out-of-sequence cosmogenic nuclide dates with wide error margins in key sections preclude the use of such evidence to substantiate the presence of humans (and presumably associated biostratigraphic markers) prior to the Jaramillo, and thus logically deny applying such conclusions to other systems.

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