



NATURAL
HISTORY
MUSEUM
OF THE LESVOS
PETRIFIED FOREST

RURITAGE 
Heritage for Rural Regeneration

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES ON LESVOS GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE EXHIBITION “THE DEINOTHERIUM OF LESVOS”

Action «Rural regeneration through systemic
heritage-led strategies — RURITAGE»

HORIZON 2020 Programme

Petra, 18 July – 4 August 2019

REPORT

Mytilini, Lesvos Island
August 2019

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF THE LESVOS PETRIFIED FOREST

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The Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest, in the frame of its actions to raising awareness of the local people and the visitors of Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark concerning our natural heritage, organized in Petra village the travelling exhibition "THE DEINOTHERIUM OF LESVOS".

The exhibition was successfully presented from July 18th to August 4th, 2019 at the cultural center of Petra "Stelios Pavlis". The exhibition was organised by the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest and the Petra's Cultural Association.

The main exhibit of the exhibition was the exact pattern of the Deinotherium of Lesvos in natural dimensions with sound effects and movement.

The exhibition presents, in an appealing way, to the general public, evidence of paleontological excavations in the Lesvos Petrified Forest area that reconstruct the image of the old environment and the ecosystem where the Deinoterium lived. It also presents the plants and the vertebrate animals (microflora, herpes and fish) that lived in Lesvos 19 million years ago. Impressive plant fossils from the Lesvos Petrified Forest, rich photographic material and detailed informative texts have helped visitors to get acquainted with the geological processes of the last 20 million years in the Greek area that formed the background for the development of a variety of modern ecosystems.

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The Deinotherium of Lesvos in natural dimensions at the exhibition in Petra



The Deinotherium of Lesvos and petrified tree trunks from the forest where it lived in

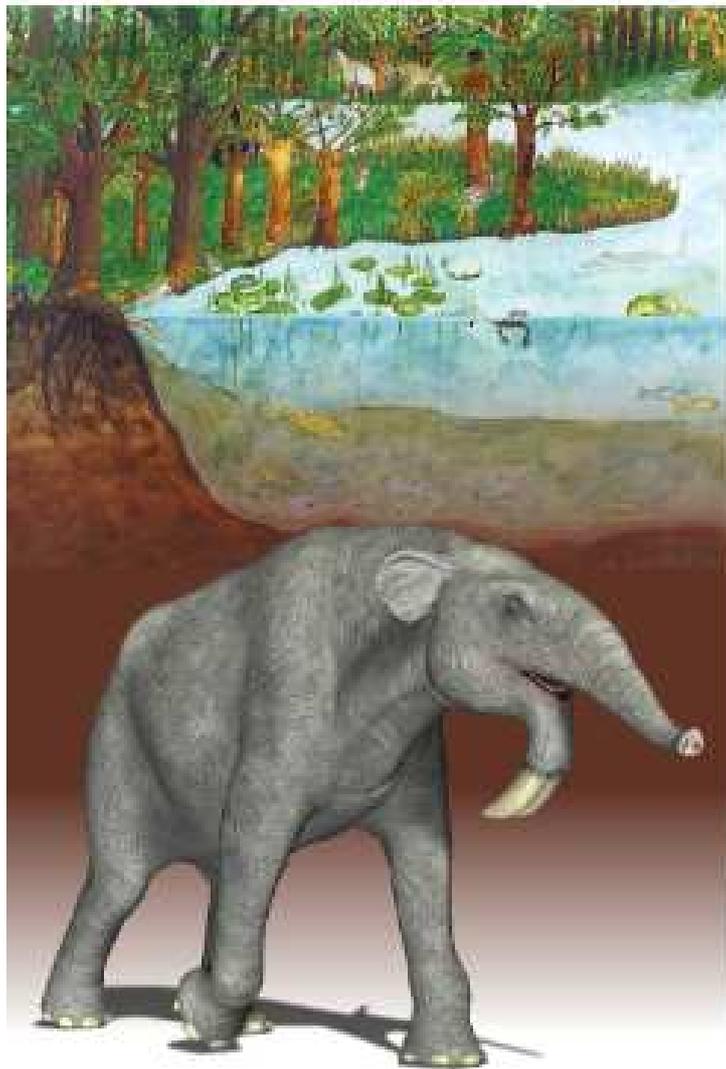


The travelling exhibition "THE DEINOTHERIUM OF LESVOS" which presented in Petra



The travelling exhibition "THE DEINOTHERIUM OF LESVOS"

ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΕΣ ΔΡΑΣΕΙΣ
Ελάτε να γνωρίσουμε
Το δεινοθήριο της Λέσβου



The poster for the presentation of the Deinotherium of Lesbos

The Deinotherium of Lesvos

In 1999 the first animal fossil of the Lesvos Petrified Forest was recovered in a location near Gavathas village. It consists of a lower jaw with ten teeth and the bones that connected it to the skull of the animal. Once the fossil was thoroughly cleaned and conserved, it was compared with fossils from various primitive animals. The comparisons revealed that it belongs to a primitive proboscidean animal (the order of animals that include modern elephants), of the species *Prodeinotherium bavaricum* (Bavarian prodeinotherium). It lived approximately 19 million years ago. Gavathas prodeinotherium is the first evidence of the presence of Miocene mammals in Lesvos. Today the fossil is exhibited in the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest in Sigri.

Gavathas prodeinotherium represents the first immigrants of the family from Africa to the eastern and it is one of the oldest known mammalian fossils from Greece. After their arrival in eastern Mediterranean the deinotheres rapidly migrated to central and western Europe as they are known in France and Spain at ~18.0 Ma. This rapid migration indicates similar palaeoecological conditions throughout Europe. As the deinotheres are forest dwellers the palaeoenvironment in Europe was close (forests). This is confirmed for Lesvos by the extensive petrified forest with big trees found in the area, where the deinotheres remains were located.



These proboscids lived throughout Europe until about 10 million years ago. The study of almost complete skeletons from Germany and Austria has proven that the height of these animals was about 2.5m. Their trunk was short, whereas their tusks were situated at the end of the lower jaw and were strongly curved backwards. The shape of their teeth shows that they fed on soft tree leaves.

*The lower jaw of the
Prodeinotherium bavaricum
(Natural History Museum of the
Lesvos Petrified Forest)*

The importance of the fossil

The fossil of the Gavathas prodeinotherium:

- indicates that this animal was an inhabitant of the subtropical forest of the area before the volcanic eruptions that fossilised it.
- is one of the oldest terrestrial vertebrate animal fossils of Greece.
- is the oldest fossil of the deinothere family and one of the oldest proboscidean fossils of Europe.
- demonstrates the migration of the deinothere family about 19 million years ago from their place of origin, Africa, to Europe via the Aegean area which at that time was part of landmass united with Anatolia.



A representation of the paleoenvironment in which the Prodeinotherium bavaricum lived, the first animal fossil found in the Lesvos



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