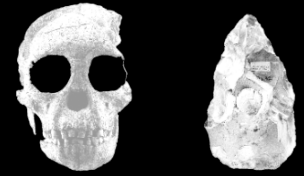


UoL Evolutionary

Anthropology Seminar Series 2018



Lecture Theatre 1,
The Gordon Stephenson
Building
Building Code 109



Thursday 3rd May, 12-1pm
Dr Susana Carvalho^{1,2}

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From behaviour to fossilization at the edge of the Eastern African Rift System (The Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa)

A major puzzle in human evolution pertains to our origins and our unique behavioural flexibility. Where in Africa did our lineage originate and under what environmental conditions? And how did climatic and ecosystem variability associate with key behavioural innovations in our lineage? Answers are hampered by major gaps in the geographic distribution of paleontological sites and by the absence of holistic approaches to the study of human evolution. To help fill these gaps, we initiated a multi-disciplinary long-term project at Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique, which is located at the southern end of the East African Rift System. Primatologists, palaeontologists, geologists, archaeologists work daily side-by-side, collecting data that converge on a common goal: to integrate paleontological evidence with studies of modern behavioural ecology to test key hypotheses of human evolution. We aim to find new fossil sites, and to use the behavioural repertoire of extant primates ranging in mosaic environments as models to understand behavioural responses to habitat variability. Our first results indicate that a) Gorongosa is a rich fossiliferous area, bearing Mio-Pliocene open air and Pleistocene cave sites, b) The extant primates of Gorongosa may be unique behavioural models, due to their quasi-experimental ecological conditions, c) Gorongosa ecosystem is an unparalleled analogue for the environments where hominins evolved, and d) Our emerging fossil record allow us to test, for the first time, key paleo-biogeographic hypotheses of hominoid evolution.



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