

PALEOPATHOLOGY OF TWO MUMMIFIED BODIES FROM THE TAKARKORI ROCK SHELTER (SW LIBYA, 6100-5600 YEARS BP)

Luca Ventura¹, Cinzia Mercurio¹, Gino Fornaciari²

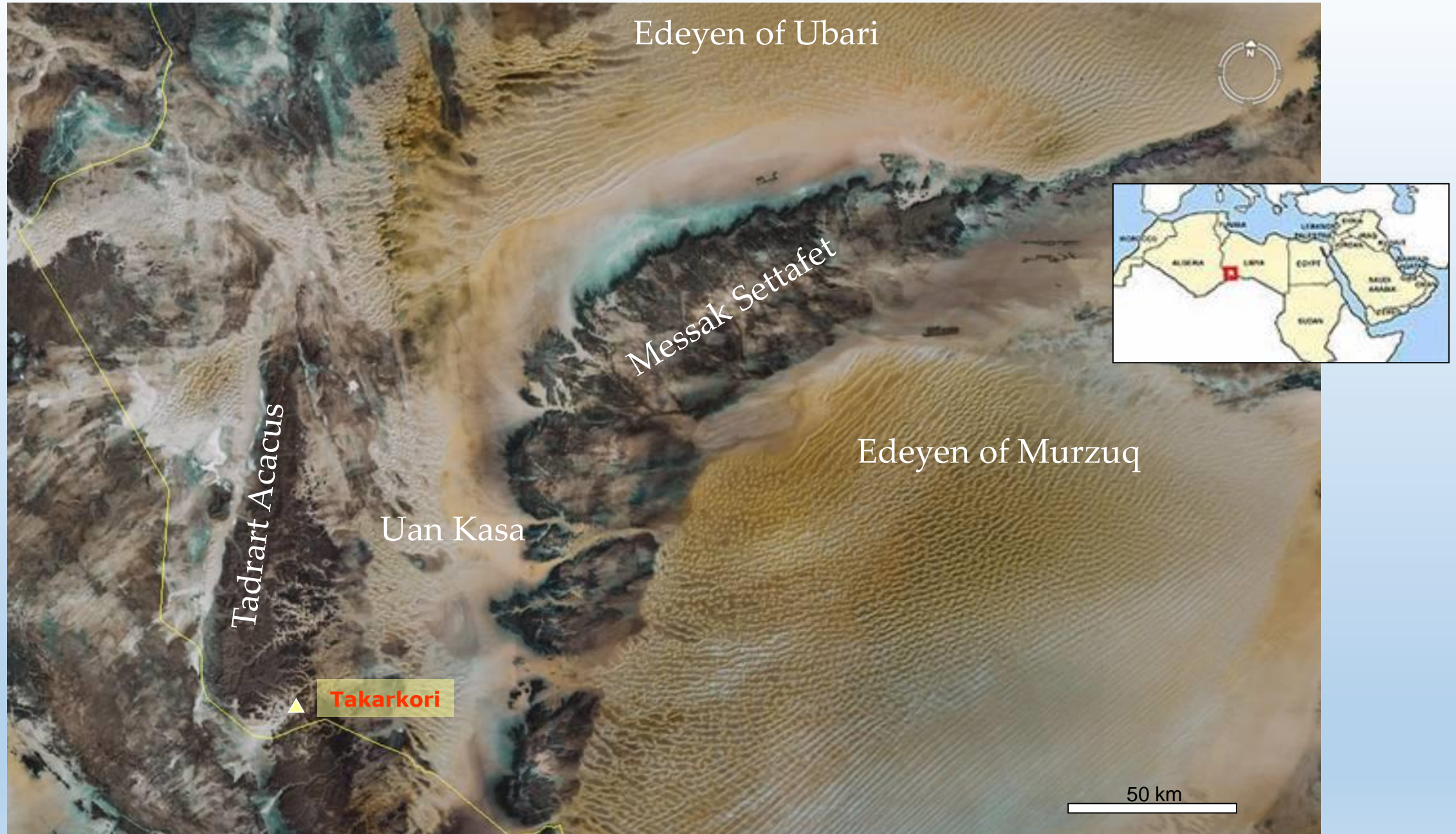
¹Division of Pathology, San Salvatore Hospital, L'Aquila, Italy

²Division of Paleopathology, Department of Translational Research and New Technologies in Medicine and Surgery, University of Pisa, Italy

INTRODUCTION

The Italian-Libyan Archeological Mission in the Acacus and Messak by the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' studied the rock art and human civilization in this area





**The area licensed to the Italian-Libyan Archaeological Mission in the
Acacus and Messak - University of Rome 'La Sapienza'**

Takarkori is considered a key site to understand Holocene human occupation in the central Sahara, giving insights on the funerary practices of pastoral groups in the region



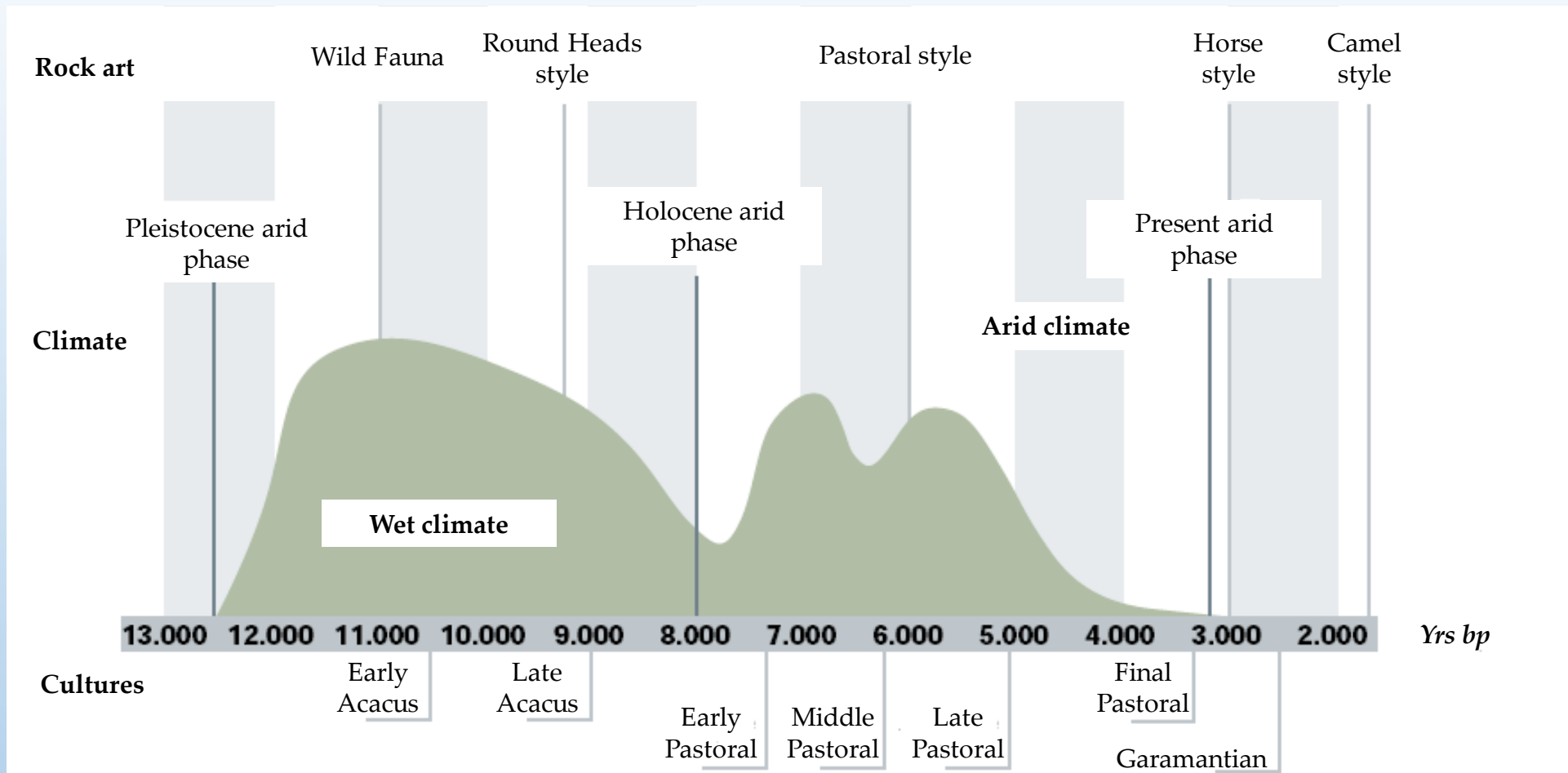
Takarkori rockshelter viewed from the dried river valley



The rockshelter during the excavation (*viewed from W*)

Two naturally mummified individuals from Takarkori, dating back to the Middle Pastoral period (ca. 6100-5000 years BP), were unearthed together with the skeletal remains of thirteen further individuals. All burials belonged to adult women or infant/juvenile subjects





Takarkori

Holocene cultural sequence and climate in the Acacus Mts. and surroundings

METHODS

The partially mummified bodies of two females (TK-H1, TK-H9), respectively dating back to 6090 ± 60 and 5600 ± 70 years BP, underwent radiologic, CT scanning, and macroscopic examination



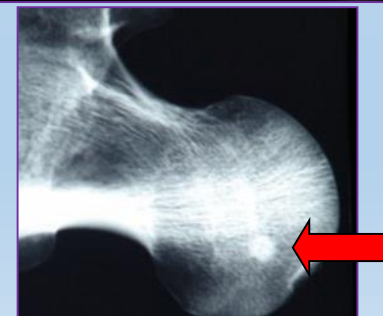
Selected samples of bones, tendons, intervertebral disks, skeletal muscles, vessels, skin and bowels underwent stereomicroscopy and were rehydrated with Sandison solution (24-72 hrs) to be submitted to histologic examination

Fulcheri E, Ventura L. Pathologica 2001; 93: 700-706



RESULTS

TK-H1 was a 30-35 years old woman, showing cranial vault porotic hyperostosis, a repaired left ulnar fracture, a sclerotic lesion of the femur consistent with enostosis (bone island), and multiple Harris' lines of proximal left tibia



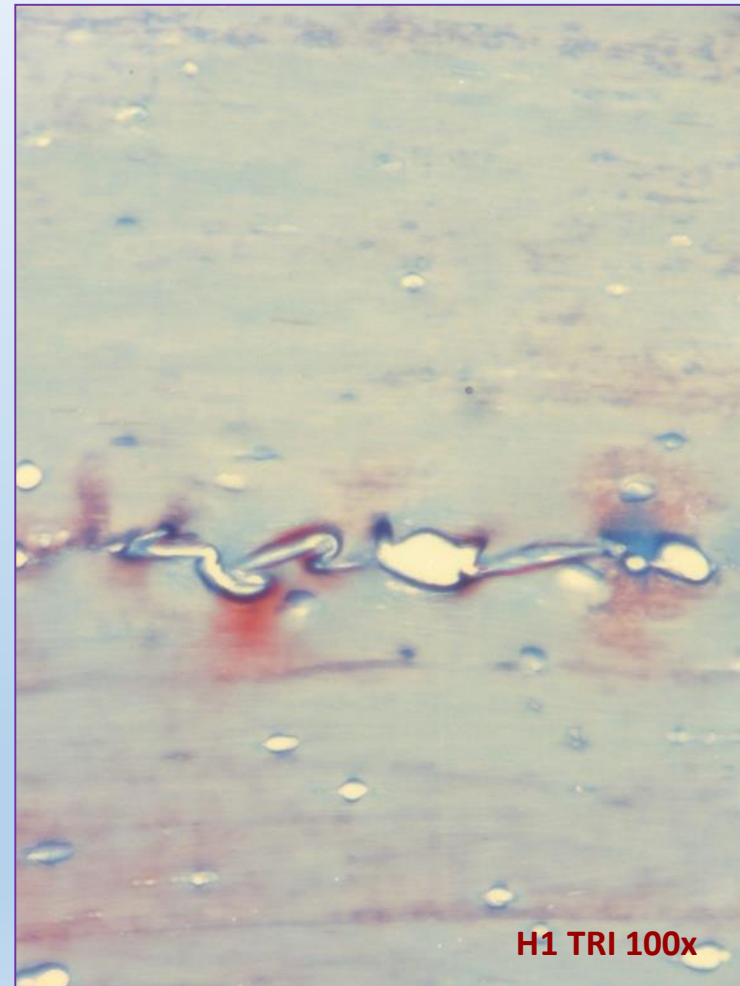
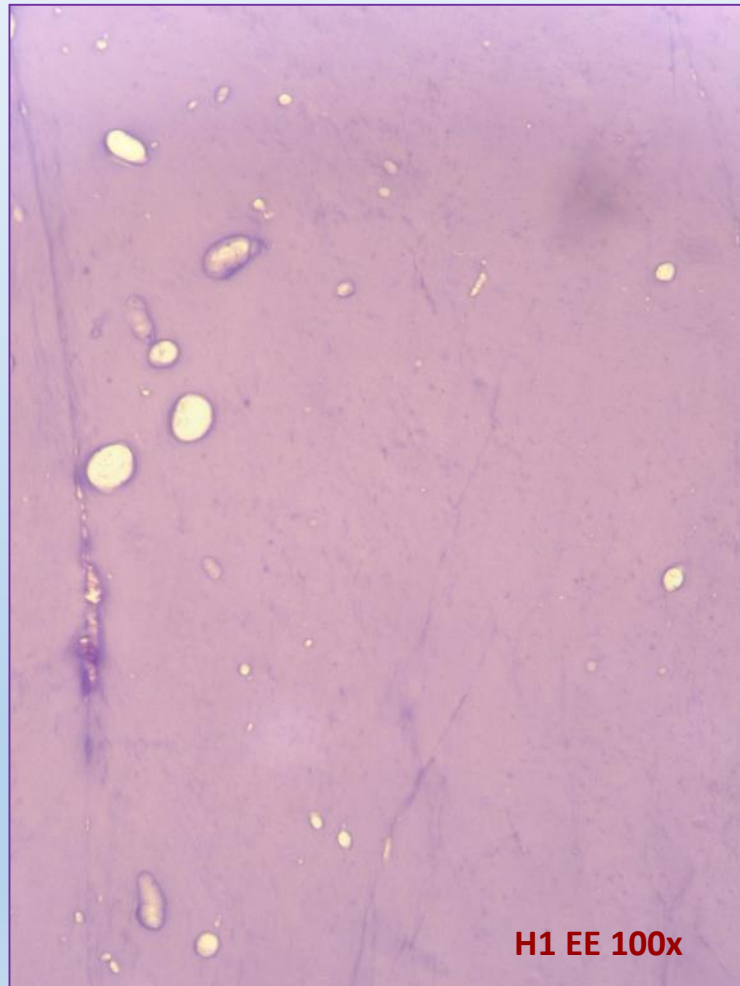
Recently, Prof. Alessandro Franchi suggested the possibility of a sclerosing bone dysplasia, namely an OVERLAP SYNDROME (osteopoikilosis + osteopathia striata + progressive diaphyseal dysplasia)



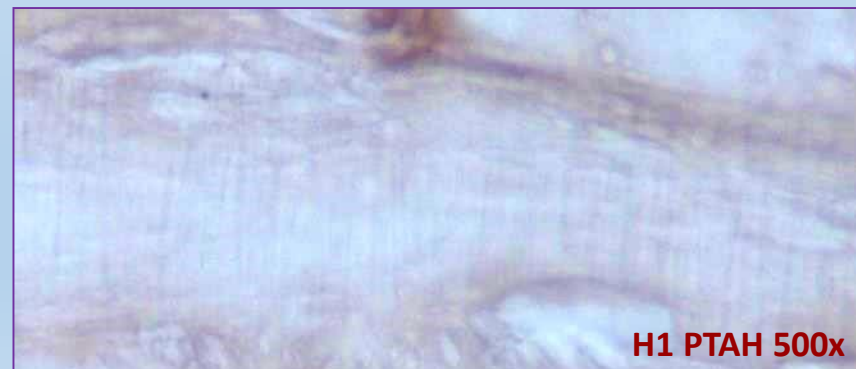
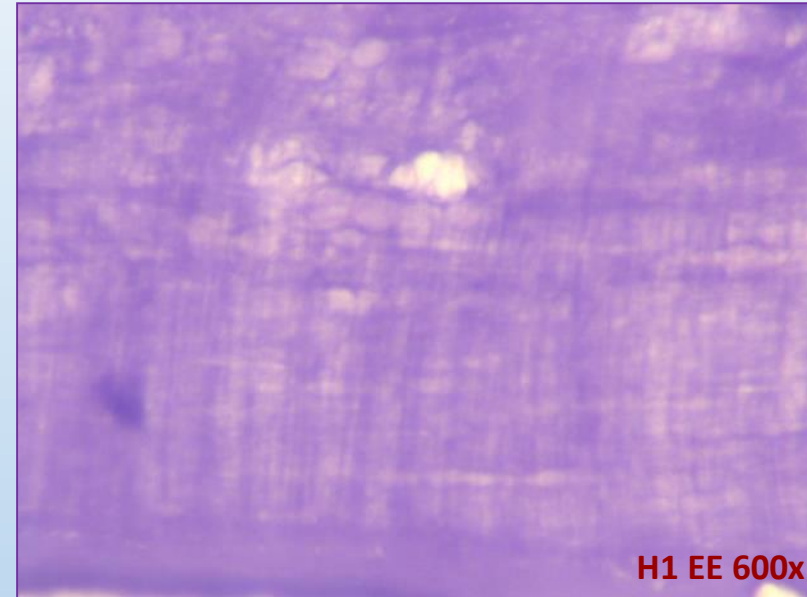
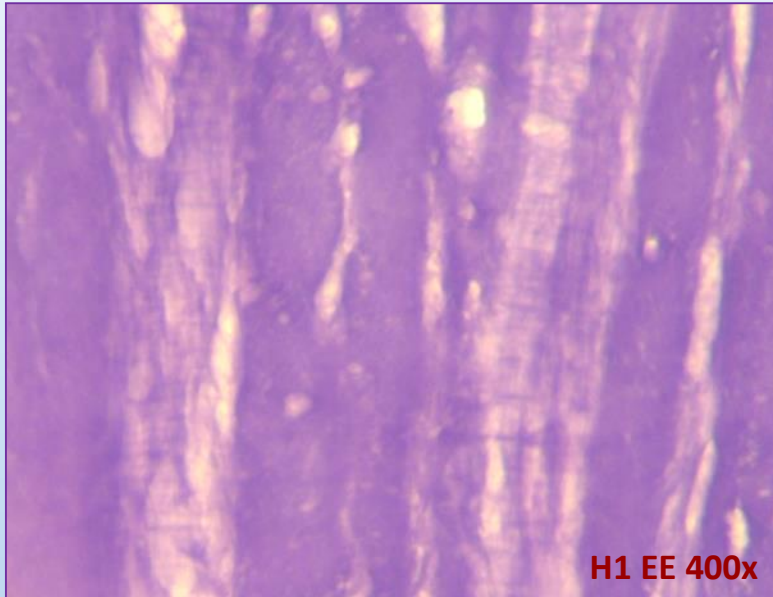
TK-H9 was a skeletally mature individual, largely incomplete, without significant radiologic findings



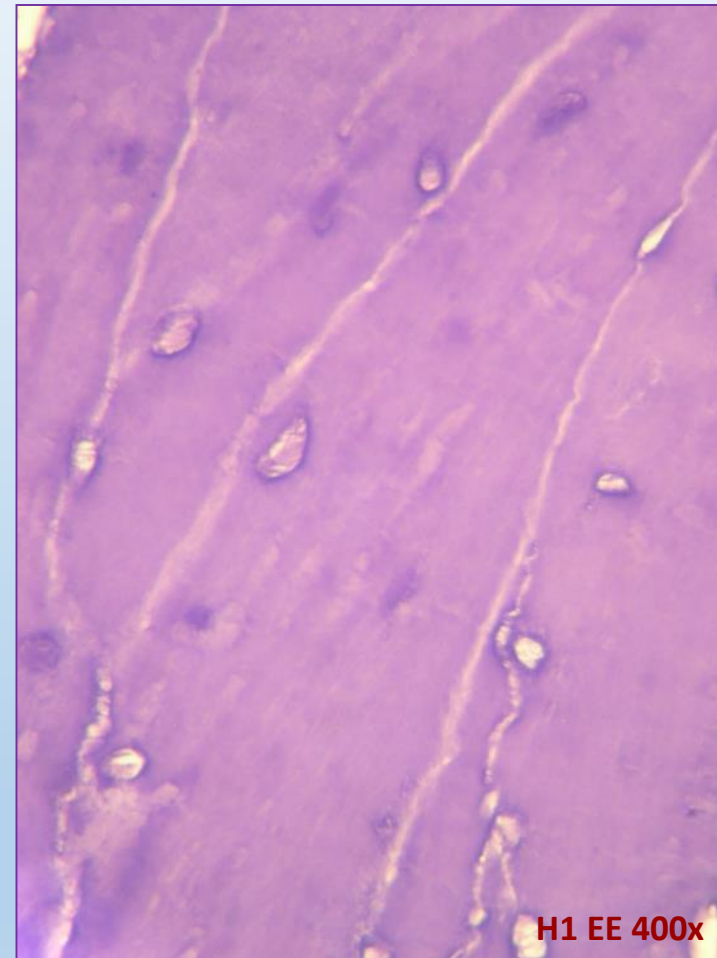
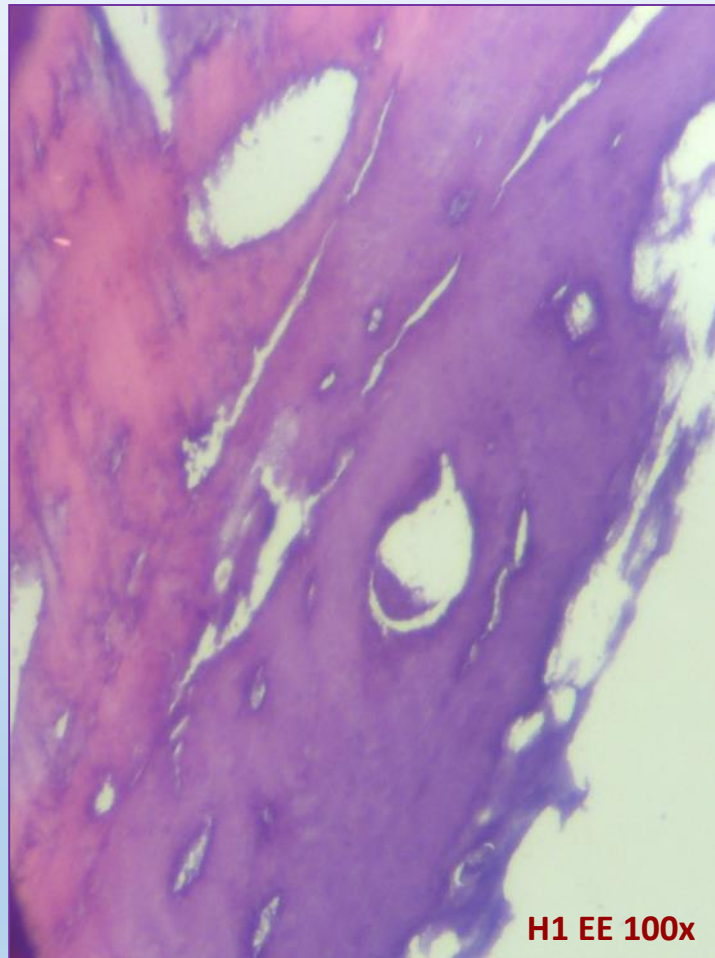
Histology highlighted fibrous tissue with taphonomic changes...



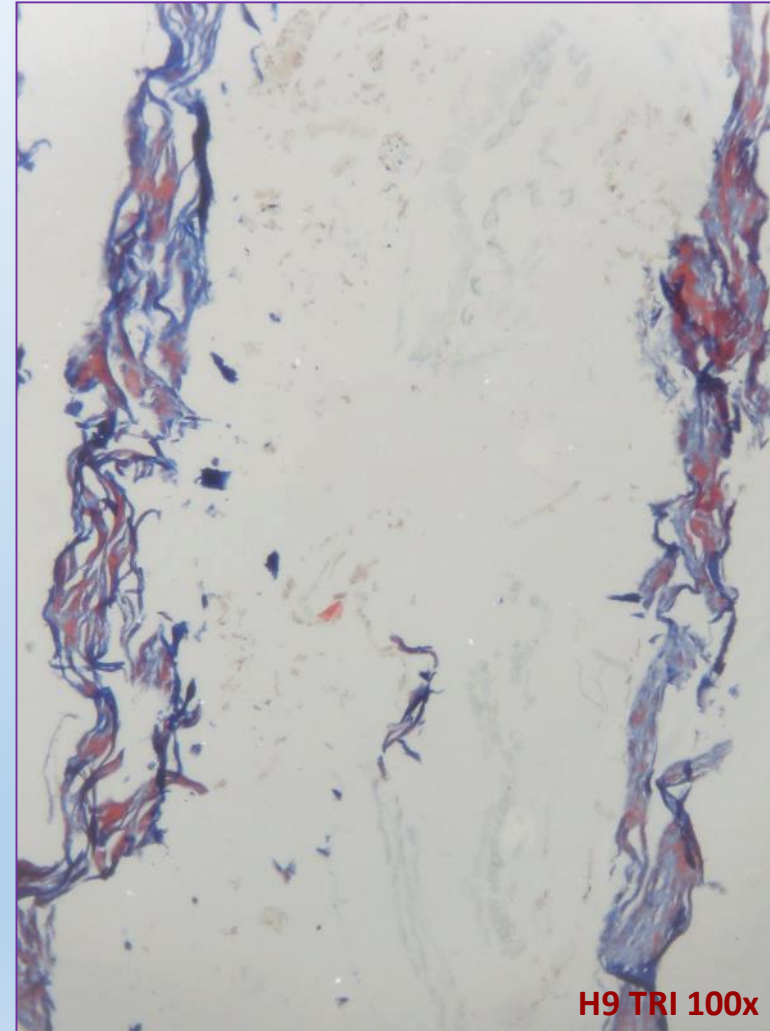
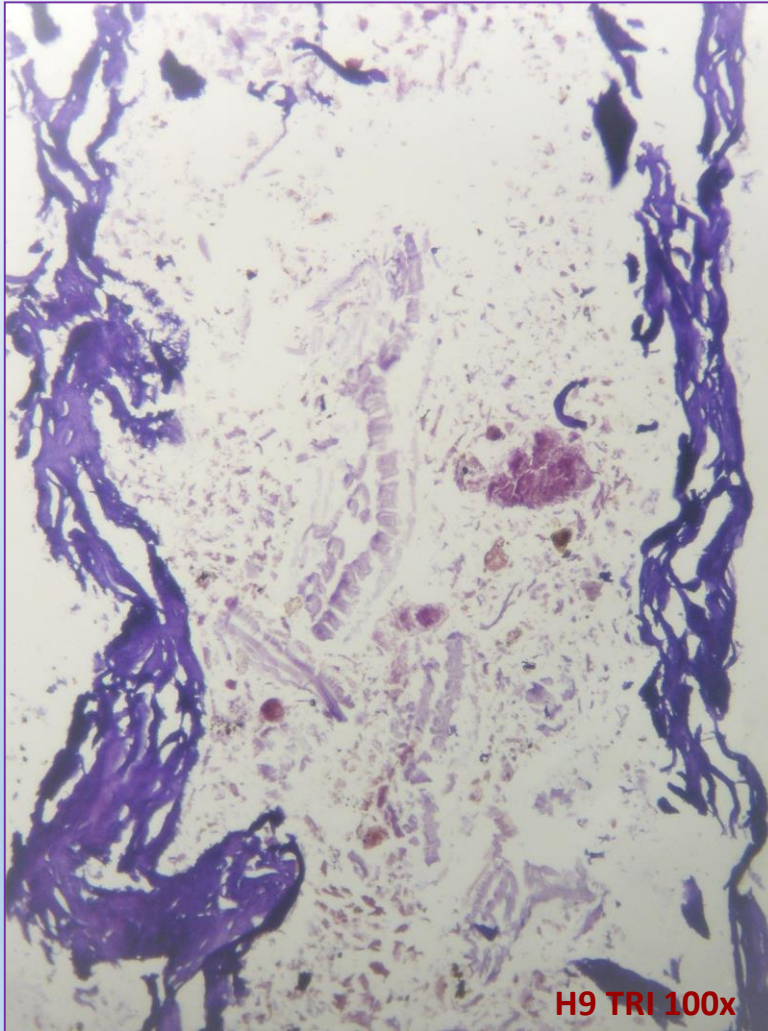
... striated skeletal muscle...



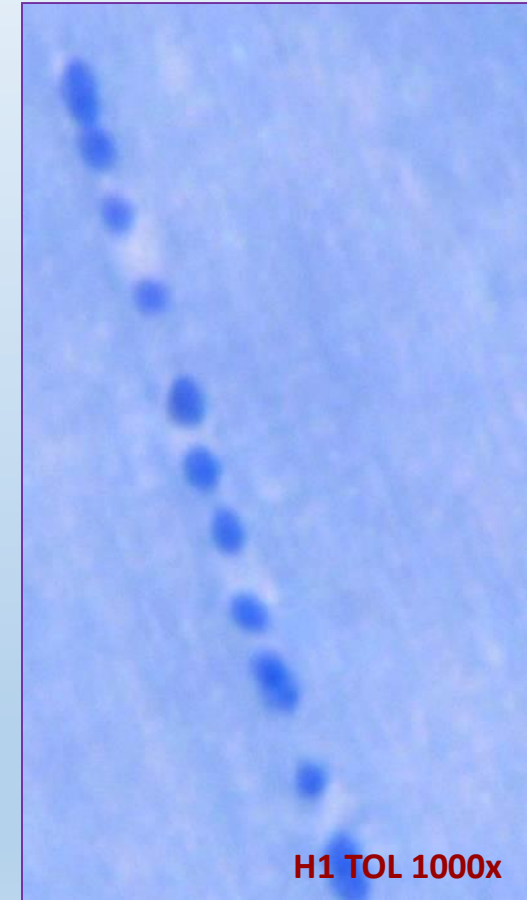
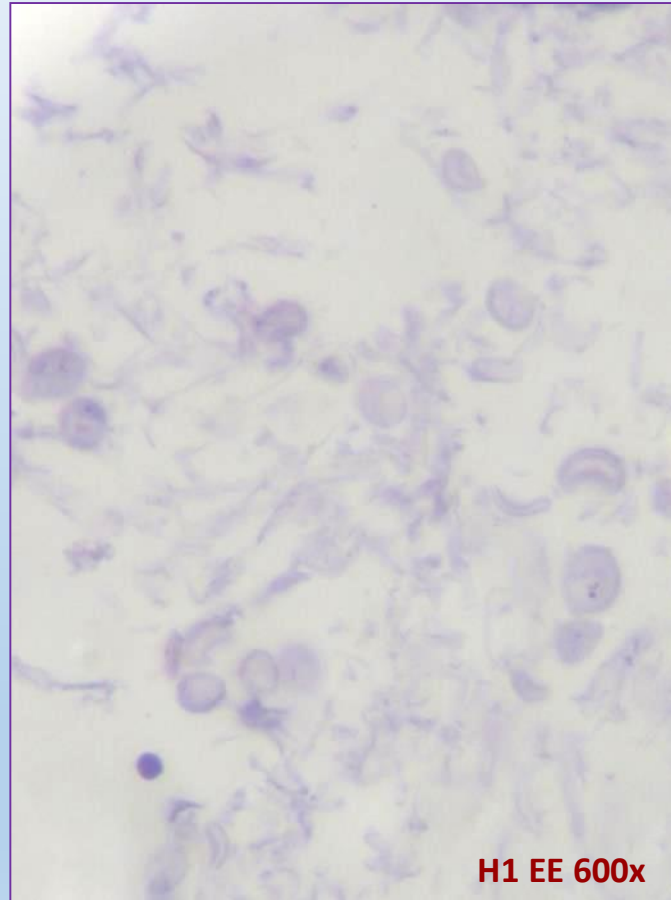
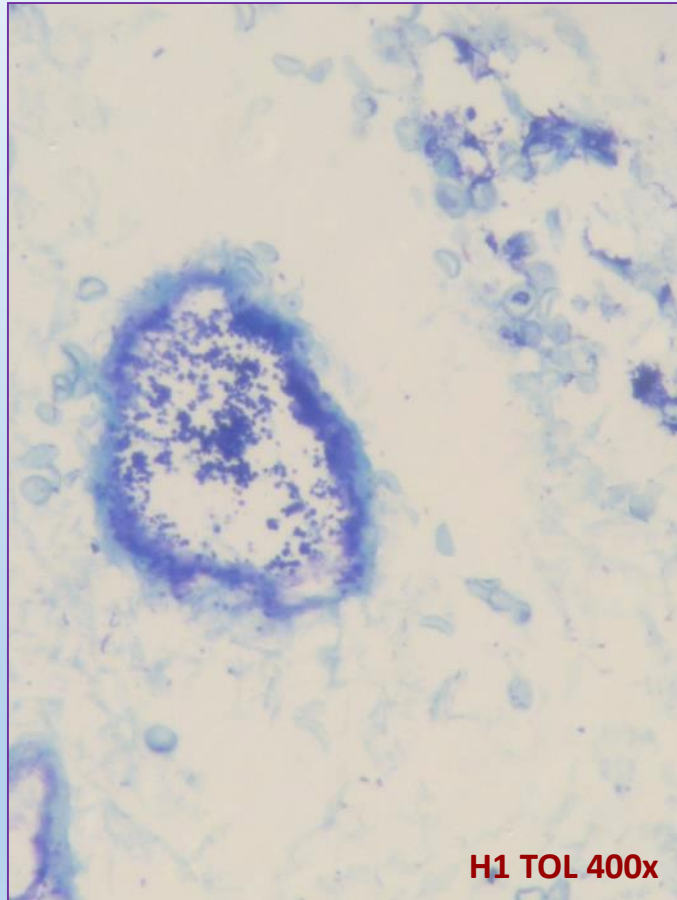
... regular compact and lamellar bone...



... and visceral walls with endoluminal vegetal fibres and ectoparasites

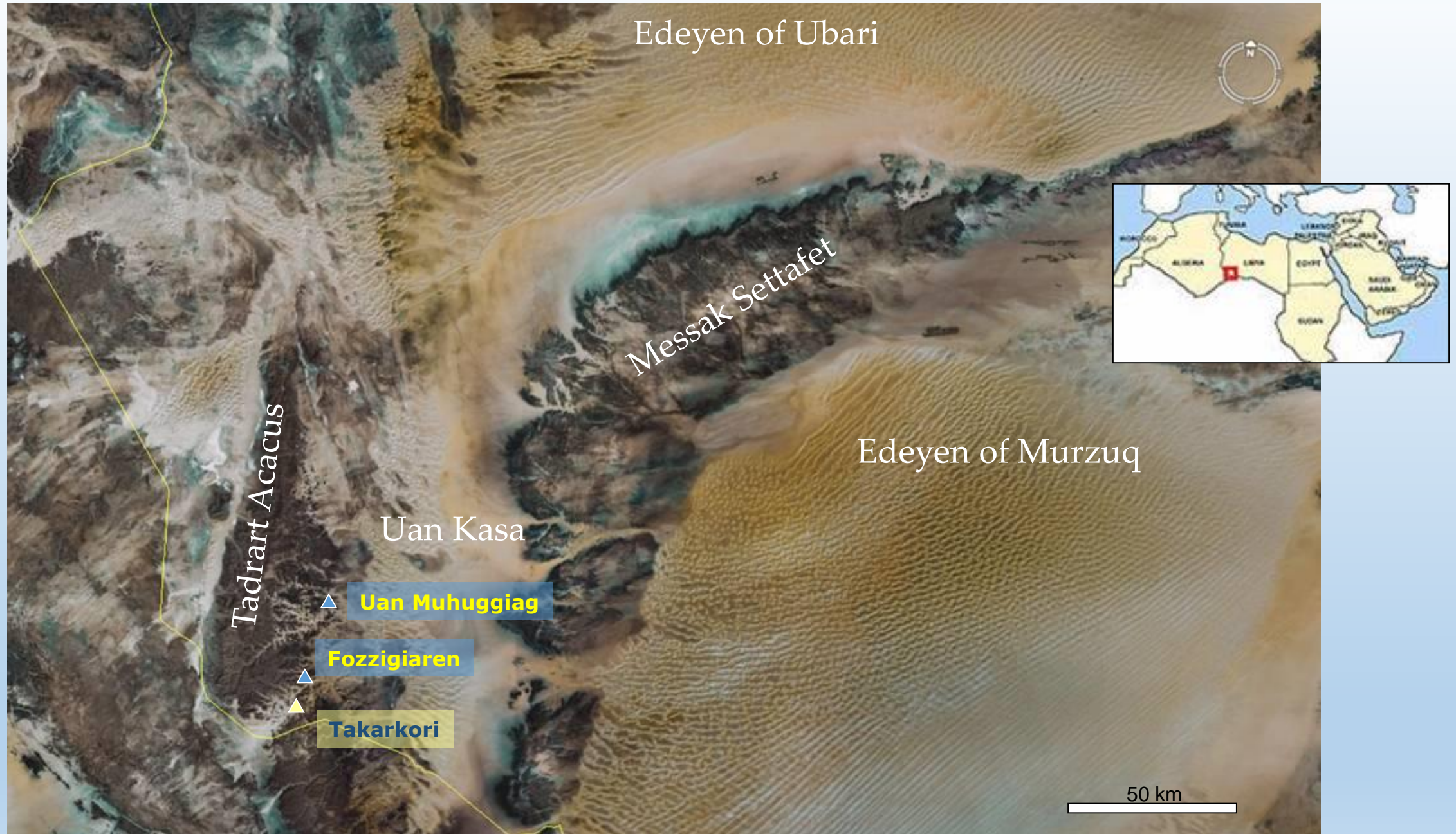


Diffuse fungal colonization was also noted



CONCLUSIONS





Along with the exceptional findings at Uan Muhuggiag and Fozzigiaren...

FABRIZIO MORI - ANTONIO ASCENZI

**“La mummia infantile di Uan Muhuggiag,,
Osservazioni antropologiche**

Nel quadro dei rinvenimenti della IV Missione Paleontologica Mori nel massiccio montagnoso dell'Acacus (Sahara Fezzanese)

(Con 13 figure nel testo)

Estratto dalla *Rivista di Antropologia* - Vol. XLVI



1959

Anno LXVI dalla fondazione

ROMA
ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI ANTROPOLOGIA
CITTÀ UNIVERSITARIA
1959

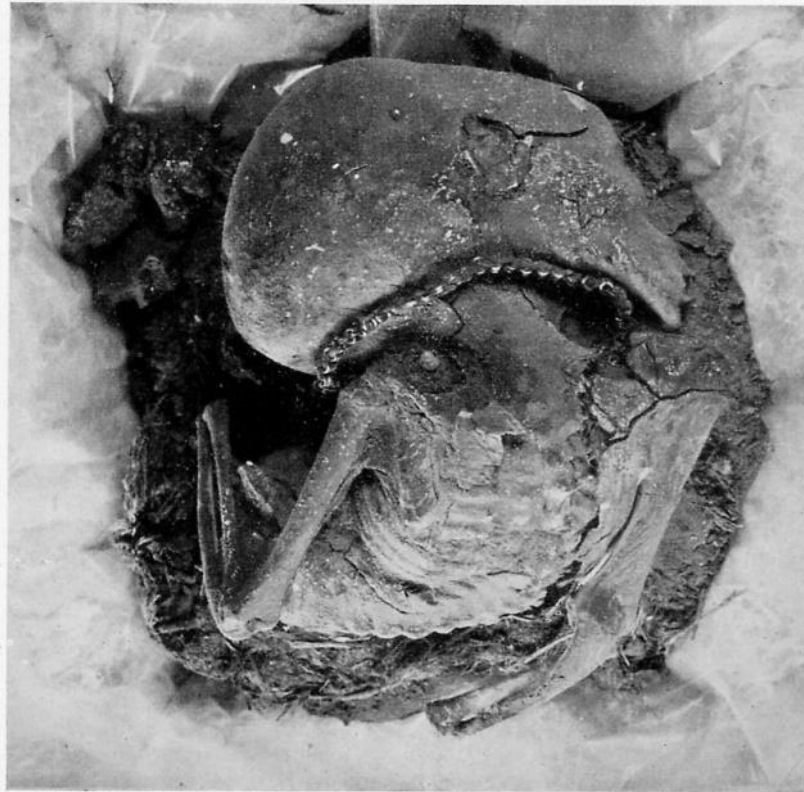


Fig. 2 — La mummia infantile di Uan Muhuggiag sul suo giaciglio.

SUPPLEMENTS TO LIBYA ANTICUA — I

LA COSIDDETTA “MUMMIA” INFANTILE DELL'ACACUS

nel quadro delle costumanze funebri preistoriche mediterranee e sahariane

DI

FRANCO SATTIN - GAETANO GUSMANO

Published by:
THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF ANTIQUITIES
MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES
TRIPOLI

Mori F, Ascenzi A. Riv Antropol 1959; 56: 125-148

Sattin F, Gusmano G. Libya Antiqua 1964; Suppl I: 7-46

...the Takarkori bodies represent extraordinary mummified examples from that area

Although largely incomplete, they showed evidence of trauma and carential alterations / genetic disorders

These individuals represent the oldest examples of mummified tissues successfully submitted to histologic examination

Fungal spores, not to be confused with erythrocytes, are a constant finding in paleohistology, with no pathologic significance

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Savino di Lernia

Department of Ancient World Studies, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Giorgio Manzi

Department of Environmental Biology, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Alessandro Franchi

Department of Translational Research, University of Pisa, Italy

