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**Variation in parietal bone thickness and structural arrangement in Eastern African *erectus*-like *Homo*: comparative evidence from late Early Pleistocene Uadi Aalad and Mulhuli-Amo, Danakil depression of Eritrea**

CLÉMENT ZANOLLI<sup>1</sup>, LUCA BONDIOLI<sup>2</sup>, FRANCESCA CANDILIO<sup>3</sup>, ALFREDO COPPA<sup>3</sup>, DAVID W. FRAYER<sup>4</sup>, YOSIEF LIBSEKAL<sup>5</sup>, TSEGAI MEDIN<sup>5,6</sup>, LORENZO ROOK<sup>7</sup>, DAWIT TESFAY<sup>3,8</sup>, and ROBERTO MACCHIARELLI<sup>9,10</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>UMR 5288 AMIS CNRS-Université de Toulouse Paul Sabatier, France, <sup>2</sup>Sezione di Bioarcheologia, Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico "Luigi Pigorini", Rome, Italy, <sup>3</sup>Dipartimento di Biologia Ambientale, Università di Roma "La Sapienza", Italy, <sup>4</sup>Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, <sup>5</sup>National Museum of Eritrea, Asmara, Eritrea, <sup>6</sup>Institut Catala de Paleoecologia Humana i Evolució Social, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain, <sup>7</sup>Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra, Università di Firenze, Italy, <sup>8</sup>Northern Red Sea Regional Museum, Massawa, Eritrea, <sup>9</sup>UMR 7194 CNRS-Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France, <sup>10</sup>Département Géosciences, Université de Poitiers, France.

Cranial vault thickness behaves as a highly variable feature in extant and fossil humans. While traditionally used to define *H. erectus s.l.* because of its relatively thick-walled bones, recent estimates show that, along the mid-sagittal plane and at the frontal and parietal eminences, bone thickness does not markedly differ between *H. erectus s.l.* and anatomically modern humans, nor does it reliably distinguish African and Asian *erectus*-like representatives. However, compared to the parasagittal areas, paleoanthropological information on thickness variation along the lateral parietal wall is scarce.

By using direct, CT- and microCT-based observations, we quantified the tabular and diploic thickness in two circa 1 Ma parietal bones from the 4.7 km apart but stratigraphically correlated sites of Uadi Aalad and Mulhuli-Amo, Eritrean Danakil depression. The first belongs to the nearly complete UA 31 cranium, noted for its blend of *erectus*-like and derived morphoarchitectural features. The second parietal bone is part of an incomplete cranium preliminarily labelled MA 64-88-378, assembled from nine elements collected on the surface in 2011-2014, whose global shape closely resembles UA 31.

While our records do not systematically sample homologous landmarks but rather comparable regions in UA 31 and MA 64-88-378, their relative thickness at various sites is nearly invariably diploë>outer≥inner table, even if proportions vary site-specifically. In all cases, intra-individual thickness variation tends to exceed that commonly observed in extant humans. We found a similar pattern, but expressing even more contrasted values, in the chronologically slightly younger parietal specimen from Gombore, at Melka Kunture, Ethiopia.

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