

Archaeology and paleoenvironments of the Middle Pleistocene Kapthurin Formation, Baringo District, Kenya.

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The Middle Pleistocene is important for human evolution because it is the time period during which our own species, *Homo sapiens*, appeared. The Kapthurin Formation forms the Middle Pleistocene portion of the Tugen Hills succession, west of Lake Baringo in the Rift Valley of Kenya. Its age is established by $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ dates on intercalated volcanics, and its deposits represent a number of distinct sedimentary environments. The portion of the formation that lies in the time interval between ~510 ka and ~235 ka has been a focus of our research because it contains evidence for the transition from the Acheulian, characterized by handaxes, to the Middle Stone Age, characterized by new lithic technologies as well as a number of other human behavioral innovations. Kapthurin Formation sediments in the time interval between ~545 ka and ~510 ka are also of interest because they contain numerous vertebrate fossils, including both *Homo* and *Pan*, and represent fluvial, lacustrine, and fresh water spring facies.