

# Konobelodon was discovered firstly in China

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*Konobelodon robustus*. Credit: Wang ShiQi

*Konobelodon* is a lesser known proboscidean species and was first reported in the U.S. in 1990. Owing to limited data, not much is known about its morphology, and its classification status has been controversial. In 2015, the occurrence of *Konobelodon* was confirmed in the Old

World after a research team from Greece classified *Mastodon grandincisivus* and *Tetralophodon atticus* from Europe and Western Asia into *Konobelodon*.

In the Late Miocene strata, Linxia Basin, Gansu, China, a lot of fossil proboscideans were found. The previous studies simply identified these materials as *Tetralophodon exoletus*, but the study results in Greece gave the researchers an important clue. After in-depth comparative study, *Tetralophodon exoletus* found in Linxia Basin has now been classified into *Konobelodon*. The researchers identified a new [species](#), *Konobelodon robustus*. The latest research result was published in *Geodiversitas*, 2016, Volume 38, Issue 1.

The study result shows that the *Konobelodon robustus* in the Linxia Basin, Gansu arrived much earlier than in Europe and America during that period, and it has many primitive features, so it is the ancestor of the other two species. The study also questioned the previous study verdict that the *Konobelodon* is originated from the *Platybelodon* as the *Konobelodon robustus* has a tiny dentine column structure in the lower incisors, which represents the initial evolutionary stage of dentine column. The dentine column structure in the lower incisors in the *Platybelodon* is well developed. Therefore, the corresponding [structure](#) in both *Konobelodon robustus* and *Platybelodon* cannot represent the same lineage. Meanwhile, the research also gave two possibilities for the origin of *Konobelodon robustus*. One is that *Konobelodon robustus* and American *Amebelodon* are in a sister group, and both originated from *Protanancus* in Eurasia; the other is that the *Konobelodon robustus* originates from *Tetralophodon* in Eurasia.

Provided by Chinese Academy of Sciences

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