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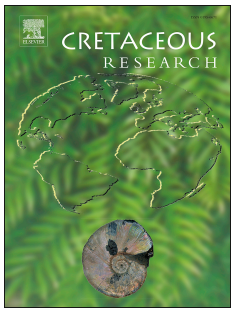

Palaeoelphidium gen. nov. (type species: *Elphidiella multiscissurata* Smout 1955): The oldest Elphidiellidae (benthic foraminifera) from Maastrichtian shallow-water carbonates of the Middle East

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Palaeoelphidium gen. nov. (type species: *Elphidiella multiscissurata* Smout 1955): the oldest Elphidiellidae (benthic foraminifera) from Maastrichtian shallow-water carbonates of the Middle East

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Abstract

The shell architecture of the benthic foraminifera *Elphidiella multiscissurata* Smout 1955 has been reviewed using material from Tarbur formation in Zagros Mountains isochronous to the type-level in Qatar (Borehole; Maastrichtian of Jebel Dukhan). Characterized by planispiral geometry and wide canaliculate umbilical plugs, the Middle-East species *multiscissurata* is removed from the Cenozoic genus *Elphidiella* Cushman 1936 (type species *Polystomella artica* Parker and Jones) and attributed to *Palaeoelphidium* gen. nov. In the new genus, spiral umbilical canals border the umbilical plugs. The spiral umbilical canal is constrained between the umbilical plate, folium and the adjacent coil and is produced by the fusion of consecutive foliar chamberlets. Vertical canals pierce the umbilical plug, thus producing communication with the spiral canals and the intraseptal interlocular spaces. Massive ponticuli lie on chamber sutures, nevertheless no retral process were defined in Smout's original description nor seen in the thin sections at our disposition. These characters place the species *Palaeoelphidium multisciussuratum* gen. nov. within the family Elphidiellidae at the base of the Elphidiids (*sensu lato*) architecture as the oldest representative of the group. The stratigraphic