
The woolly mammoth in Upper Palaeolithic occupations in the Dniester valley: Zooarchaeological analyzes of the faunal remains of the upper level of Climăuți II (Republic of Moldova)

Laëtitia Demay*^{†1,2}, Theodor Obad³, Sergei Covalenco⁴, and Pierre Noiret¹

¹Service de Préhistoire, Université de Liège – Place du 20-Août, 7 4000 Liège, Belgique

²Histoire naturelle de l'Homme préhistorique (HNHP) – Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Université de Perpignan Via Domitia, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique : UMR7194 – Institut de Paléontologie Humaine 1, rue René Panhard 75013 Paris, France

³Institute of Zoology, Academy of Sciences of Moldova – Moldavie

⁴Institute of Cultural Heritage, Academy of Sciences of Moldova – Moldavie

Résumé

The site of Climăuți II is located on a promontory on the right bank of the Middle Dniester in the Republic of Moldova. It was excavated from 1989, under the direction of I. Borziac. This site has delivered two paleolithic cultural layers. The upper layer delivered many archaeological remains related to the first part of the upper Pleniglacial (between 20 500 and 20 000 BP). The lithic industry is rich, dominated by scrapers, chisels and blades, and presents epi-Aurignacian characters. The faunal spectrum, previously identified by T. Obadă and A. David, is relatively small, dominated by the woolly mammoth. Moreover, the ivory was used as a mobile support, to make many pieces. This site has been interpreted as a relatively long-term camp. The pseudo-contemporary sites of the Dniester valley are generally dominated by relatively short-term occupations in association with the exploitation of the reindeer. The site of Climăuți II seems to be an exception. The objective here is to present zooarchaeological analyzes of this assemblage, including palaeontological, taphonomic and palethnographic data. The identification of the population profiles (age groups, sex), the skeletal representation and the agents that could have intervened within this assembly make it possible to highlight the methods of conservation of the assembly, as well as the modes of acquisition and use of fauna, particularly woolly mammoths by human groups. In addition, these results bring new data on the status of the mammoth, which has been little apprehended in the extracarpatic zone of the East European Plain.

Mots-Clés: Zooarchaeology, Climăuți, Dniester valley, Upper Palaeolithic, Mammoth exploitation, Moldova

*Intervenant

†Auteur correspondant: Laetitia.Demay@student.uliege.be