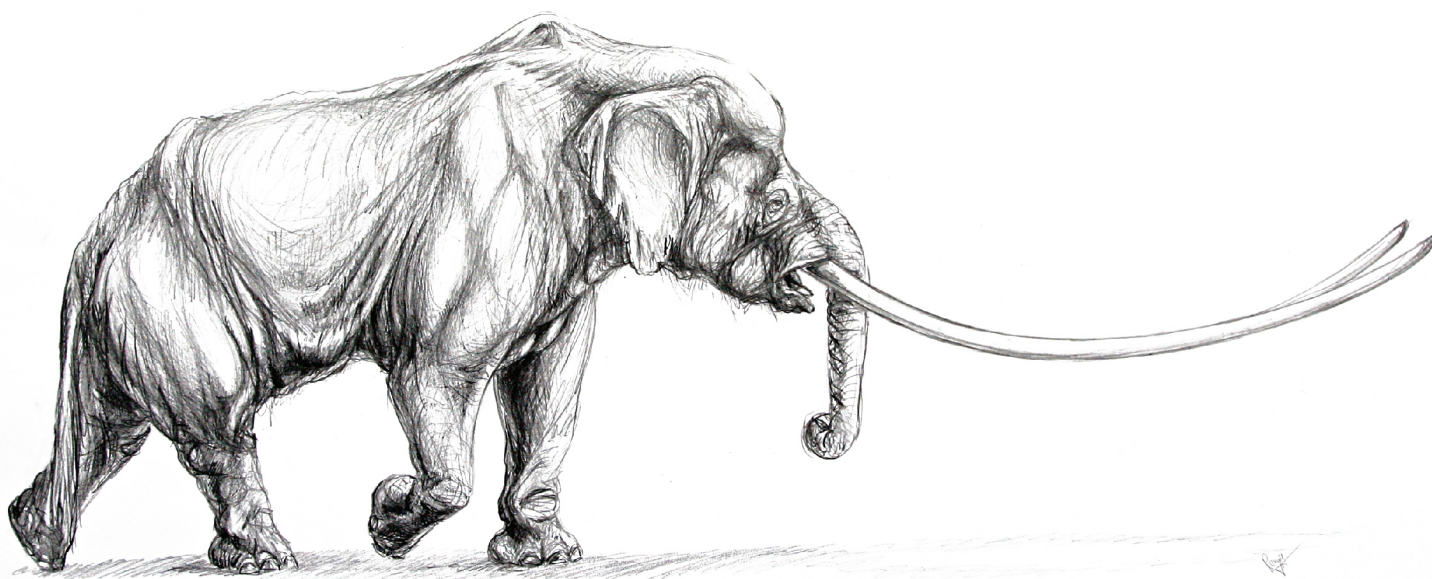




SCIENTIFIC ANNALS of the School of Geology,
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki



SPECIAL VOLUME 102



GREVENA
SIATISTA
GREECE 2014

VIth International
Conference
on Mammoths
and their Relatives

ABSTRACT BOOK

Editors:

Dimitris S. KOSTOPOULOS, Evangelos VLACHOS, and Evangelia TSOUKALA

THESSALONIKI, MAY 2014

Hunters of the giants. Woolly mammoth-hunting during the Gravettian in Central Europe (Poland and Czech Republic)

Piotr WOJTAL ✉, and Jarosław WILCZYŃSKI

Between 30,000 and 20,000 years ago, rapid climatic changes occurred as the Scandinavian ice sheet expanded. Not only did palaeoenvironments change, but human societies also transformed themselves. A considerable cultural unification occurred in Europe, which resulted in the origin of the Gravettian technocomplex. Throughout the next millennia, Gravettian hunters occupied a huge part of Europe, in an area covering several million square kilometers, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Russian plains, from the Pyrenees to the Ural mountains. The most distinctive features of the Gravettian are characteristic stone tools (backed bladelets and shouldered points) and female figurines ("Paleolithic Venuses"), the most famous being the so-called "Venus of Willendorf".

The Gravettian technocomplex had several stages, including, among others, the early (Pavlovian) and the later (Willendorf-Kostienkian) stages. The most famous sites in Central Europe related to the early stage are located in the roots of the Pavlovské (Palava) Hills (Czech Republic). They are Pavlov I, Dolní Věstonice I, and Dolní Věstonice II. During successive millennia hunter-gatherers moved into new places of residence, such as the Vah river valley (Slovakia) and south Poland (Kraków region). The Willendorf-Kostienkian stage is represented at: Willendorf II (Austria), Petřkovice (Czech Republic), Moravany (Slovakia), and Kraków Spadzista Street (Poland) (Musil 2003).

Zooarchaeological studies allow us to reconstruct and compare animal food resources from various sites and different periods of the Gravettian. The oldest Gravettian sites, Pavlov I and Dolní Věstonice II in the Czech Republic, were inhabited over many seasons and did not show clear hunting specialization (Wojtal et al. 2012). The sites have yielded a large number of remains, sometimes thousands of bones belonging to dozens of individuals of different birds and mammals. At the younger Gravettian sites from the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia huge accumulations of mammal bones have also been discovered. However the younger assemblages are dominated by bones of single species, while remains of the other mammalian taxa

are found in much smaller amounts. At Kraków Spadzista Street and Milovice I, a very large number of woolly mammoth remains was found. But at Moravany Lopata II (Slovakia), the dominating species in osteological material is reindeer. We suggest that at these sites specializations in hunting mammoths and reindeer can be observed (Svoboda et al. 2005; Wojtal and Sobczyk 2005).

Mammoth remains were found at early and late Gravettian sites. On the basis of our studies it is possible to conclude that mammoths played a very important role in the life of Gravettian hunters. The animals provided both meat and raw materials for the production of bone tools, weapons, and ornaments.

The studies were partly supported by National Science Center (grant decision No. DEC-2011/01/B/ST10/06889 awarded to P. Wojtal and No. DEC-2013/09/D/HS3/04470 awarded to J. Wilczyński).

References

- Musil, R. 2003. The Middle and Upper Palaeolithic Game Suite in Central and Southeastern Europe. In: van Andel, T.H., Davies W. (Eds) Neanderthals and modern humans in the European landscape during the last glaciation: Archaeological results of the Stage 3 Project, Mc. Donald Institute Monographs, Cambridge, pp. 167 - 190
- Svoboda, J., Péan, S., Wojtal, P., 2005. Mammoth bone deposits and subsistence practices during Mid-Upper Palaeolithic in Central Europe: three cases from Moravia and Poland. *Quaternary International* 126-128, 209-221.
- Wojtal, P., Sobczyk, K., 2005. Man and woolly mammoth at the Kraków Spadzista Street (B) – taphonomy of the site. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 32, 193-206
- Wojtal, P., Wilczyński, J., Bocheński, Z.M., Svoboda, J.A., 2012. The scene of spectacular feasts: animal remains from Pavlov I south-east, the Czech Republic. *Quaternary International* 252, 122-141.

✉ wojtal@isez.pan.krakow.pl



Citation:

Wojtal, P., Wilczyński, J., 2014. Hunters of the giants. Woolly mammoth-hunting during the Gravettian in Central Europe (Poland and Czech Republic). Abstract Book of the VIth International Conference on Mammoths and their Relatives. S.A.S.G., Special Volume 102: 224.