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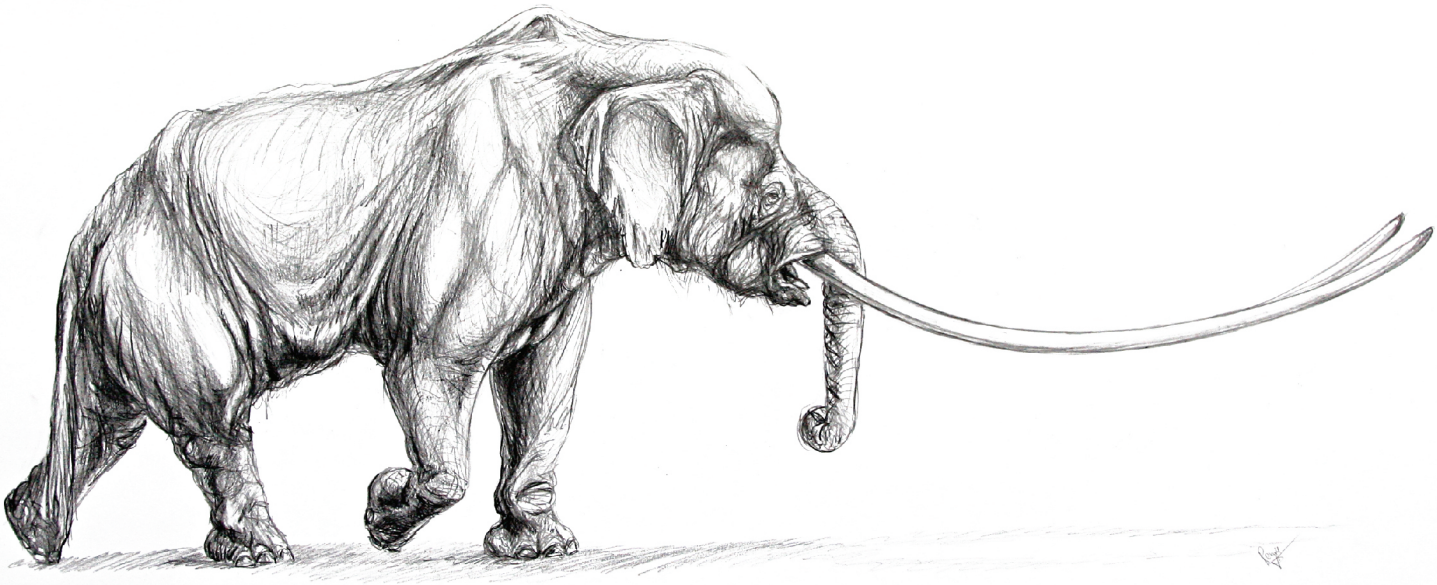

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ABSTRACT BOOK

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Coexistence between mammoth and Palaeolithic people approved – To the 150th anniversary

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In the first half of the 15th century the first mammoth bones were reported in Europe. The majority of these bones of mammoths were regarded as the remains of giants. Finally the skeleton which was discovered in Tonna near Gotha (Thuringia, Germany) in 1696 was analyzed by a historian and was described as an extinguished elephant. However, the scholars at that time were not able to explain the existence of elephants in Europe, because they were only known in warmer regions as south Asia and Africa. One idea was that they were brought to Central Europe by the Romans. Another explanation was that they were flushed to Europe by the deluge which at that time was equivalent to the diluvium – the former term for the Pleistocene (Lister and Bahn, 2005).

In 1796, however, the French anatomist Georges Cuvier postulated that these elephants are clearly different from recent ones and that they are remains of fossil elephants. This is the reason why J.F. Blumenbach attributed them in his book "Handbuch der Naturgeschichte" in 1799 to the *Elephas primigenius*. (Joger and Pohl, 2005; Lister and Bahn, 2005; Reich et al. 2007). In 1799 the first carcass of a mammoth was discovered in the area of the mouth of the Lena River in Siberia. In 1806 these remains were recovered by Michail Adams and were exhibited in St. Petersburg in 1808. This mammoth is nowadays known as Adams' Mammoth (Joger and Pohl, 2005; Lister and Bahn, 2005; Tassy, 2004). Regarding the place of discovery G. Cuvier concluded that it was an extinct species which had lived in this region and had not died in the deluge (Lister and Bahn, 2005). Finally in 1828 the English anatomist and naturalist Joshua Brookes attributed the remains of these fossil elephants to a species of its own and named it *Mammuthus* (Joger and Pohl, 2005).

Another important question asked by savants during the first half of the 19th century was if human beings had already existed during the diluvium and - if yes - whether they had coexisted with the extinguished animals. In 1847 the former customs officer Jacques Boucher de Perthes found bones of different extinguished animals associated with stone artefacts in the gravels of the Somme River near Abbeville in northern France (Lister and Bahn, 2005; Züchner, 2005).

As numerous remains of fossil animals were found in caves, scientists started to explore the caves to look for relicts from our ancestors (Züchner, 2005). In 1860 the French lawyer and palaeontologist Edouard Lartet and the English banker and explorer Henry Christy began with excavations in the rock shelter of Aurignac (Dép. Haute-Garonne, France), where they found abundant animal remains and implements made of stone and organic materials such as ivory, bone and antler (Rouquerol, 2007). After Aurignac they continued with excavations in caves and rock shelters in the Périgord (Dép. Dordogne) close to Les Eyzies where they also discovered engravings of animals on bone and antler. In May 1864 – thus 150 years ago – in the Abri de La Madeleine they finally found a mammoth tusk with an engraving of a mammoth. The depicted details prove that the person who made this engraving saw mammoths with his own eyes and thus it was the explicit first proof that people had been living at the same time as mammoths (Lartet and Christy, 1875):

Fig. 1. The first discovered representation of a mammoth on a fragment of mammoth tusk found in the year 1864 in the Abri de La Madeleine (Dép. Dordogne, France) by Lartet and Christy (1875). The length of the object is 24.8 cm.

> "This new fact will not, indeed, add any thing to already acquired convictions as to the coexistence of Man with the fossil Elephant (*Elephas primigenius*) and other great Herbivores and Carnivores which geologists regard as having lived together in the earlier phases of the Quaternary Period. This truth of retroperspective evidence is deduced now-a-days from so great a number of concordant observations, and of material facts of so clear a significance, that minds the least prepared to admit it are not slow to accept it in all its reality, when they will but take the trouble to look and then judge conscientiously" (Lartet and Christy, 1875:207-208).

After this most important first finding of a representation of a mammoth of the Ice Age numerous figures of mammoths were found in the Ice Age portable and cave art all over Europe (see Braun and Palombo, 2012).

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