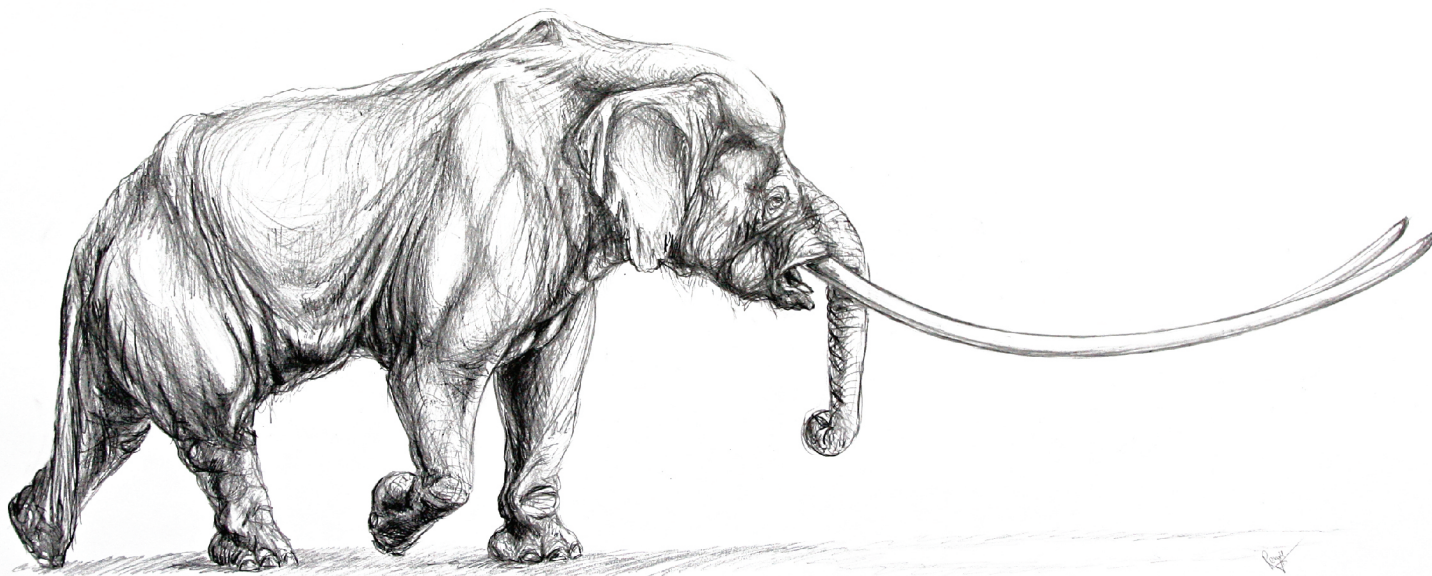




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ABSTRACT BOOK

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The five mammoth bone huts of the Upper Palaeolithic camp-site of Gontsy (Ukraine)

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The 1993-2013 excavations at the Palaeolithic settlement of Gontsy allow discovering for the first time the spatial organization of a settlement of mammoth bone huts of Upper Palaeolithic within their environment (Fig. 1). At first, it was highlighted that the installation of the Gontsy settlement is directly linked to the existence of wide mammoth bone beds intensively exploited by the hunter-gatherer groups, and provided particularly large quantity of mammoth bones for the construction of huts, the manufacture of tools and weapons and fuel for hearths.

The mammoth bone huts are located on a promontory of the river slope, along a North-South line. These are four circular or oval large huts of variable dimensions (from 4 to 7.5 meters in diameter), made by mammoth skulls and a small hut.

Many pits surrounding the mammoth bone huts were used for extraction of the loess to plug in and protect from the cold the walls of the huts, for storing food during summer upon the permafrost of the bottom of the pit, for storing bone building materials and for dumping.

The architecture of mammoth bone huts of Gontsy reveals that the largest bones of the skeletons of mammoths (skull, jaw, tusk, long bone, scapula and pelvis) are the main material for construction. Yet each hut in Gontsy has its own architectural feature. Comparison of the huts of Gontsy with huts of Mezine, Dobranichevka, Mejiriche, Ioudinovo, Kostenki 11 reveals individual features and common features that differentiate them, reflecting multiple functions: vital protection, social and spiritual life, cultural identification of the extended family, as well as the group and the intergroup relations within their geographic territory.



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Fig. 1. The mammoth bone dwellings n°3 and n°4 of the upper palaeolithic camp-site of Gontsy (Ukraine).