

## PRELIMINARY CHARACTERISTICS OF PATHOLOGIES FOUND IN THE SKELETONS OF MAMMOTHS AT THE KRAKÓW SPADZISTA STREET (B) SITE

Alina Krzemińska

*Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, PAS, Sławkowska 17, 31-016 Kraków, Poland*

*e-mail: sulymo@gmail.com*

**Summary.** A locality of Kraków Spadzista Street (B) site, Poland is known for the presence of a substantial assemblage of mammoth bones accompanied by human artifacts from the Gravettian technocomplex. The age, according to radiocarbon dating, approximates at about 24 000 years BP, placing the site in the Last Glacial Maximum. It is assumed that this place was a mammoth butchering, and probably hunting, site. Woolly mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*) is represented by 99% of the faunal remains at this site (c. 7000 bones and teeth), which are attributed to at least 86 individuals. Other large mammals are known only from isolated bones and teeth.

The age profile of the mammoths is characteristic for a stable population with the largest number of young individuals (up to 12 years old), and other age categories represented in decreasing proportions. This age profile could represent time averaged, natural, but non-selective deaths or abrupt, non selective kills affecting whole herds.

The present study revealed that a proportion of mammoth bones bore pathological changes such as healed fractures, malformations of the different parts of the skeleton (vertebrae, carpals and teeth) and various pathological changes that occurred during the lifetime of these animals (furrows on the cement surface of teeth and holes in bones due to abscess).

The study of these pathologies is ongoing; however, my present purpose is to explore whether the number of pathological bones was characteristic of a natural population of mammoths, or should be rather ascribed to human selection of defective individuals.

**Key words:** Woolly mammoth, *Mammuthus primigenius*, bone pathologies, Poland.