

THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN AUROCHS (*BOS PRIGEMINIUS BOJANUS*, 1827) IN EARLY CATTLE BREEDING IN CONTEXT OF AUROCHS REMAINS FROM CELTIC SETTLEMENT LIPTOVSKA MARA (NORTH SLOVAKIA)

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Summary. The skeletal remains of auroch were identified in Liptovska Mara II bone assemblage dated back to La-Tene Period Celtic settlement. The auroch remains were 0.47% of all identified bones. Strong fragmentation indicates on postconsumptive character of animal artifacts. The finding proved auroch presence in mountain forests environment of North Slovakia. The horn, talus, calcaneus, and phalanxes were identified and measured. The size of auroch remains were significant (ca. 30%) larger than in domestic cattle. No intermediate bone forms were found. No signs for local domestication or crossbreeding between auroch and domestic cattle were stated. The marginal importance of meat supply for Celtic community from Liptovska Mara was proved. The symbolic or other cultural aspect of auroch hunting cannot be excluded.

Keywords: auroch, archaeozoology, animal breeding, cattle domestication.