

Environment and culture of the Gravettian and Epigravettian gatherers and hunters in the Middle Dniester valley.

Central Transnistria is one of the most important areas of Europe inhabited during the second pleniglacial of the last glaciation, i.e., in years 240000-15000 (14500) BP. As a result of climatic change, the population moved from Central Europe to the areas of milder climate. With reference to these territories, we know several important sites nowadays that are evidence of the gatherers and hunters settlement. These sites provided many important data on the ways of life and economy of human groups of that time. The site of Doroshivtsi 3 is an extremely important point on this map. In the course of previous research, seven settlement layers were discovered there, which provided flint artefacts, as well as most of them included also animal bones (mammoth, reindeer, horse). Additionally, some of the layers also provided bone items or immobile structures (remains of farm constructions, hearths). However, previous research has allowed us to recognize only a small part of the site, and a number of questions about the camp remain unanswered.

The research designed in the project aims at a detailed recognition of the site, climate conditions and natural environment of settlement of that time as well as cultural changes observed by us thanks to the observation of stone artefacts. The purpose of the research is also to get answers to the questions regarding the activities that the campers were undertaking, and more broadly - the economy and survival strategies in the conditions in which people of that time lived. Another important issue that is worth considering is also the affiliation of groups inhabiting Doroshivtsi to a specific cultural tradition, which is not clear for some layers, especially the richest layer 6. What is more, an important point is also to determine the absolute chronology of layers (a series of dating is planned in a laboratory in Poznań).

In order to carry out the assigned tasks, archaeological excavations as well as geological and geomorphological studies are planned. The materials obtained in the course of the research will be subjected to detailed analyzes. Flint artefacts will be analyzed in terms of their production and implementation (analysis of use-wear traces). Bone analysis will be aimed at determining the species of animals and traces of human activity, which makes it possible to determine which animals were the objects of hunting. Palynological research, along with geological analysis will allow us to reconstruct the surrounding environment. Determining a series of dating will give an answer to the question about the time in which subsequent settlement episodes took place.

The research performed at the site Doroshivtsi 3 will be supplemented with analyzes of materials from other sites in this area, with similar chronology and similar features of stone and bone artefact sets, as well as field explorations aimed at finding further traces of settlement.

The research on the Doroshivtsi site supplemented with additional searches in the Central Transnistrian region is an important element of the settlement studies considering the areas of Western Ukraine in the coldest period in Europe during the last glaciation. This issue is one of the crucial aspect useful in the consideration of settlement processes and migrations that took place at that time in Central and Eastern Europe and which were a response to radical climate changes.

The results of the project implementation will be presented at prestigious international scientific conferences (e.g. as part of Hugo Obermeier-Gesellschaft meetings, see: <http://www.obermaier-gesellschaft.de/tagungen.html>), and published in prestigious scientific journals (from a current list A Ministry of Science and Higher Education).