
On the brink of cultural change : animal resource procurement and use in the final Mesolithic at "Tivoli" Place Saint Lambert, Liège (Belgium)

Annelise Binois^{*†1,2} and Anne Bridault^{‡2}

¹Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne UFR03 – UNIVERSITE PARIS 1 PANTHEON-SORBONNE – Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie 3 rue Michelet, 75006 Paris, France

²Archéologie et Sciences de l'Antiquité- Archéologies environnementales (ArScAn - UMR 7041) – CNRS : UMR7041 – M.A.E., 21 allée de l'Université, 92000 Nanterre, France

Résumé

Excavations in the Tivoli sector of Place-Saint-Lambert (Liège, Belgium) by P. Van der Sloot and J.-M. Léoard (SPW) yielded an exceptionally well-preserved collection of faunal remains (NISP=2037) dated to the late Final Mesolithic of Belgium (ca. 5 300 cal. BC). Due to the poor bone preservation usually recorded on similar sites, such assemblages are rare, and the subsistence strategies of this period are still under-documented. This time-frame is nonetheless one of particular interest for the study of cultural change : current research times the arrival of Neolithic farmers in the Belgian plains around 5 300 cal. BC, and it appears likely that the Mesolithic hunter-gatherers of Tivoli were (sub-)contemporary to such groups. Our paper investigates therefore strategies of animal resource procurement and use in the latest stages of the Mesolithic in this area, documenting practices in a society on the brink of major cultural change. Our results highlight that the animal economy at Tivoli is in most ways consistent with the uses of the Belgian Mesolithic in general, though regional comparisons show a number of local peculiarities, most notably in the exploitation of the red deer. Finds of worked red deer skulls and of bones with unusual weathering patterns reveal the use of animal bones for symbolic or technical purposes. Some have equivalents in other Late Mesolithic cultural contexts, other are unknown.

The unusual presence of domestic cattle (NISP=6) in the collection, a domesticate documented for the first time in Mesolithic Belgium, raises nonetheless the question of contacts between the site's inhabitants and contemporary LBK Neolithic groups.

Mots-Clés: Final Mesolithic, Belgium, zooarchaeology, animal resources, hunting, cultural coexistence

*Intervenant

†Auteur correspondant: annelise.roman-binois@univ-paris1.fr

‡Auteur correspondant: anne.bridault@cnrs.fr