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# The Quaternary fauna of Algeria and its representation in rock art : Paleogeography, extinctions, survivals

Iddir Amara\*<sup>1</sup> and Djillali Hadjouis<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institut d'archéologie (Université Alger II) – Algérie

<sup>2</sup>Service Archéologie du Val-de-Marne, Paris – FRANCE – France

## Résumé

More than 130 ancient species of mammals are distributed, by the presence of bio-documents, in around a hundred Quaternary archaeological sites in Algeria. If during the Pleistocene and the Holocene, hunting, fishing and gathering strategies are generally more documented, even if the action of carnivores is not systematically sought in many sites, the fact remains that the representation of wild species and domestic in rock art is insufficiently illustrated (less than 50 species). Do the animal figurations represent a selection of certain emblematic species present in the environment (terrestrial animal, lake, amphibian, flying), or a symbolic representation such as the imposing animal by size (aurochs, buffalo, rhinoceros, elephant, giraffe), elegance (prestigious horned antelopes), or fear (large predators) ? Obviously, a large number of herbivore taxa, carnivores, insectivores, aquatic and flying species are absent from the bestiary of rock art representations. If some Pleistocene species will die out thanks to the optimal changes of the last glacial in Europe and its environmental repercussions in the Mediterranean and in North Africa in particular during the Neolithic subpluvial, those which are essential by their endemism in the central Sahara see their distribution geographic change by the rise of the same time by a milder climate with forest-gallery type vegetation around 6 000 BC. Other questions remain. What about the phylogenetic status of taxa represented in the Holocene, like elephantids, girafids, camelids, equines ?

**Mots-Clés:** Keywords : Vertebrate fauna, rock bestiary, Saharan Atlas, Sahara, adaptation, survival

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\*Intervenant