
Late Upper Palaeolithic subsistence strategies in the southern Istria (Croatia)

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Résumé

Ljubićeva cave is situated in Istria, near Marčana and has been recognized as an important archaeological site since the first excavations in 2008. New excavations at the site started in 2020 as a part of the project funded by the Croatian Science Foundation (grant IP2019-04-7821), concentrating on its Upper Pleistocene deposits that yielded numerous faunal remains in association with Epigravettian lithic assemblage. This study presents the analysis of the mammalian assemblage recovered in the new excavation (2020) and compares them to unpublished data on the material from the previous excavations (2008-11). Taxonomic analysis of the mammalian assemblage shows taxa characteristic of a range of habitats. Majority are adapted to temperate conditions with open steppe-grassland and parkland environments, indicating consistence over time. Detailed taphonomic analysis revealed numerous traces of butchery and food processing, but also the evidence of large predators (cave hyena). Foetal and neonate bones of large game are good seasonal indicators but also may be indicative of choices made by the local Epigravettian hunter-gatherers. Overall, the Ljubićeva cave faunal assemblage provides important data for understanding of the Late Upper Palaeolithic hunting and consumption practices in the wider region of the northern Adriatic and central Mediterranean.

Mots-Clés: Upper Palaeolithic, zooarchaeology, taphonomy, hunting, Adriatic

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