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Human Palaeontology and Prehistory (Palaeopathology)

Discovery of a mass grave of Napoleonic period in Lithuania (1812, Vilnius)

Presented by Yves Coppens

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Abstract

A mass grave was discovered in late autumn 2001 in Vilnius, during constructions works. Preliminary observations led to the conclusion that this mass grave contained part of the Great Army of Napoleon I, and had been created during the Retreat from Russia (December, 1812). In March 2002, an extensive excavation was carried out on a first part of the mass grave, in the framework of a Franco-Lithuanian collaboration, completed by a second excavation of another trench in September 2002. The laboratory study of all the skeletal material ended in October 2002. These preliminary results bring new additional data to the historical knowledge of this major event in the European history; this exceptional sample represents the biggest historical mass grave discovered until now. ***To cite this article: M. Signoli et al., C. R. Palevol 3 (2004).***

Découverte d'un charnier de la Grande Armée en Lituanie (Vilnius, 1812). À l'automne 2001, un charnier a été découvert à Vilnius (Lituanie) dans le cadre d'aménagements urbains. Les premières observations de terrain ont permis d'associer ce charnier à la retraite de Russie de la Grande Armée (décembre 1812). En mars 2002, une fouille exhaustive du charnier a été entreprise dans le cadre d'une collaboration franco-lituanienne. Elle a été complétée par la fouille d'une seconde zone d'inhumation (septembre 2002) et par une étude en laboratoire de l'ensemble des ossements exhumés (achevée en octobre 2002). Ces premiers résultats confirment et complètent les données historiques relatives à cet événement historique majeur dans l'histoire de la construction européenne et apportent des informations anthropologiques originales sur cet exceptionnel échantillon paléodémographique, qui constitue le plus grand charnier des périodes historiques découvert jusqu'à présent. **Pour citer cet article** : M. Signoli et al., *C. R. Palevol* 3 (2004).



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Keywords

Biological anthropology; Mass grave; Grande Armée™; Retreat of Russia; Vilnius ; Lithuania

Mots-clés

Anthropologie biologique; Charnier; Grande Armée; Retraite de Russie; Vilnius; Lituanie

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