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The Trull Site (40PY276): A Paleoindian-Mastodon Association in Tennessee

Mark R. Norton, John B. Broster, and Emanuel Breitburg

The Trull site (40PY276) is located on an unnamed, secondary tributary of the Tennessee River in Perry County, Tennessee. This site is situated in the lower Tennessee River Valley within the Western Valley physiographic region (Fenneman 1938). The Trull site was discovered by Allen Trull, a high school biology teacher who recovered a mastodon tooth (*Mammot americanum*) and the distal portion of a tusk. A second mastodon tooth was found by another individual approximately 25 m downstream.

The ivory fragment is the distal portion of a tusk, which is thought to be mastodon as indicated by the recovery of the two teeth. The proximal end of this portion is rounded and displays wear, suggesting use as a billet for flint knapping (Figure 1). The remainder of the billet does not exhibit any modification characteristics of stream action. This implement measures 25.3 cm in length and tapers from 55.82 mm at the proximal to 33 mm at the distal diameters.

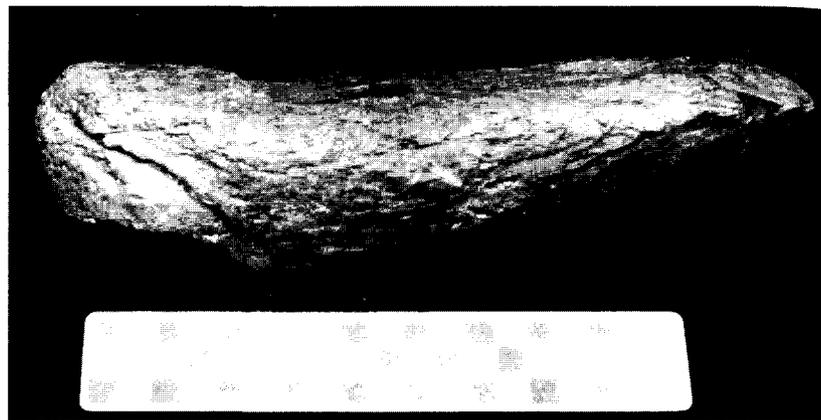


Figure 1. Mastodon billet recovered from the Trull site.

A visit to 40PY267 revealed a shallow stream fed by an adjacent spring system. This stream system drains this heavily dissected hill and valley region. The mastodon items were recovered from an exposed gravel bar, where small pieces of the ivory tusk were collected from the original location. Although no formal tools have yet been recovered, several blade-like flakes were found in the site vicinity. Close examination of the stream bed and environs, along with

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the non-tumbled appearance of these mastodon items, led to the interpretation that this ancient deposit has only recently been exposed by natural forces. This site may have been preserved and protected by deposits typical of a flooding sequence, or by deposits laid down by a beaver pond.

The geologic positioning of the Trull site and proposed depositional sequence are very similar to the Paleoindian-Mastodon association at the Coats-Hines site (40WM31) in middle Tennessee (Breitburg et al. 1997). Excavations are planned to determine if intact cultural deposits still exist here. This site will provide a better understanding of Paleoindian site selection, as well as add new information toward a predictive model for Paleoindian-Mastodon associations in the lower Tennessee River Valley.

References Cited

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Paleolithic Excavations in Tsagaan Agui Cave, Southern Mongolia

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From June to August 1997 the Joint Mongolian-Russian-American Archaeological Expedition (JMRAAE) continued a program of Paleolithic field research initiated in 1995. The preliminary results of the 1995 expedition, including a brief history of the multinational project, have been published as a trilingual monograph (Derevianko et al., 1996). A similar publication presenting principal results of the 1996 expedition (Derevianko et al.) is expected to be released in 1998.

The dolomitic limestone solution cavity in the eastern Gobi Altai range of south Mongolia, called Tsagaan Agui (White Cave), consists of a narrow inclining entryway, a lower grotto, a rotunda-like main chamber, and at least two smaller chambers behind the main rotunda.

In 1997, JMRAAE's focus of activity in Tsagaan Agui was to link the original Soviet-Mongolian soundings of 1988-1989 and our own excavations of 1995-1996 to yield a continuous longitudinal profile of the cave's main chamber down to the bedrock floor of the solution cavity.

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