



From Willendorf to Molodova – New Insights on the Climatic Background and Chronology of the Middle Pleniglacial in Central Europe

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Between 45 and 30 ka BP we recognize the replacement of Neanderthals by anatomically modern humans and the transition from Middle to Upper Palaeolithic. One of the central questions in the transition period discussion is the age of the Early Aurignacian, especially the question if an Aurignacian prior to 36,5 ka BP is present in Central Europe and its relation to the various transitional industries. As a contribution to this discussion new data gained at Willendorf II (Middle Danube Basin) and Molodova V (East Carpathian Area) will be presented. Both sites constitute the core of a renewed regional pedosedimentary sequence

with a chronological frame based on a large set of consistent radiocarbon dates on high quality charcoal. The conjunction of these complementary sequences provides for the first time an almost complete palaeoclimatic record for the period from 25 to 50 ka uncal BP. This approach confirms the predominance of highly unstable environmental conditions during OIS 3 on the scale of the European Continent and allows new insights on the distribution in a global perspective, of a large set of Palaeolithic occurrences ranging from Mousterian to Gravettian, including Early Upper Palaeolithic, Bohunician, Szeletian and Aurignacian.

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