

Unique preservation of a mammoth carcass

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Remains of a mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*) - bones and soft tissues - have been found occasionally in the vicinity of the village Starunia, near Nadwórna, at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, (now Western Ukraine). The carcass of the mammoth layed beneath a 12.5 m thick layer of silt, containing insertions of earth-wax and imbued with salt and petroleum vapour. In comparison with Rancho la Brea (California), where only bones were preserved, in Starunia one mammoth and four rhinoceroses were found with preserved soft tissues. Among

them is the famous world-wide known woolly rhinoceros of Starunia, the only specimen in the world completely preserved, and stored in the Museum of Natural History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow. The mammoth carcass and those of the woolly rhinoceroses have been conserved in a natural way due to the earth-wax, salt and petroleum vapour. The ¹⁴C dating of the mammoth carcass is 22,600 years BP while the finds of the four woolly rhinoceroses of this site are dated between 36,000 and 14,200 years BP.