

The multicultural site of Miechów 3 (Miechów County, Lesser Poland Voivodeship) was inhabited by various communities from the early Neolithic (Linear Pottery Culture, Malice Culture, Lengyel-Polgár Cycle, Pleszów-Modlnica Group), through the Eneolithic (Lublin-Volhynian Culture, Funnelbeaker Culture, Baden Culture), the early Bronze Age (Mierzanowice Culture and Trzciniec Culture), the Bronze Age (Lusatian Culture), Roman Period (Przeworsk Culture), up to the early Middle Ages (12th-13th century). These communities developed and improved animal husbandry and used various animal species for transport, agriculture, trade, and in symbolic culture over nearly 7,000 years.

Excavations at this site have yielded nearly 14,000 animal bones and teeth. This substantial material allowed for an analysis of the use of both domesticated and wild animals and their role in husbandry. The presented results are also significant due to the scarce number of archaeozoological studies of sites located in southeastern Poland.

During the research, animal remains underwent archaeozoological analysis. The first stage involved species identification and anatomical part identification. To examine size and morphotype changes in animals associated with different settlement stages at Miechów, a morphometric analysis was also conducted. The final stage of the archaeozoological analysis was describing all observed traces resulting from human activity (e.g., cut marks, chopping, burning), animal activity (gnawing marks), and non-living environment activity (weathering marks, plant root etching).

The research showed that the basis of the economy for the communities inhabiting Miechów was animal husbandry, with hunting playing a marginal, supplementary role. Animals were raised not only for meat but also for milk and wool. Domestic animals were also used for traction and transport. Additionally, bones, teeth, and antlers were used as materials for tool and ornament production.

Analyses indicated that short-horned, small-sized cattle of the brachycery type were particularly favored at the Miechów settlement. The second most common species was the pig. This trend in husbandry persisted throughout the settlement's existence, except during the Lublin-Volhynian, Baden, and Przeworsk cultures, where the proportion of goat/sheep remains slightly exceeded that of pigs. Remains of other domestic animal species were less numerous.