

2ND CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN
ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION HELD
IN BRNO (CZECHOSLOVAKIA) BETWEEN
AUGUST 26-31, 1980.

The Second Congress of the European Anthropological Association organized by the Anthropos Institute of the Moravian Museum, Czechoslovak Anthropological Association of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and by the Brno University of J. E. Purkyně took place in Brno, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, between August 26-31, 1980. The event attracted more than 210 specialist from many European and overseas countries.

The congress dealt with the evolution of man and it coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Anthropos Institute of the Moravian Museum, headed by Director Dr. Jan Jelínek, DrSc. It was a unique occasion to look back at the thirty years of fruitful scientific and educational activities.

The scientific programme of the four sections (origin of man; prehistoric man; modern man; theoretical and methodological aspects of the human evolution) and of the two symposia (secular trends and medical anthropology) covered broad research fields of the modern anthropology. It dealt with strictly theoretical problems on the one side, and with their industrial application on the other. However, two central topics attracted special interest: the origin of man and the secular trend.

Section I, dedicated to the origin of man and the secular trend, was chaired by Professor Y. Coppens and comprised 23 papers.

The attention of this section was focused on the problems of the early east-African hominids, their chronology, systematics, phylogeny, culture and environment in which they lived. The author of the opening paper (Y. Coppens) suggested that much hard work will be required till the Pliopleistocene radiation of the hominids will have been explained so that we shall be able to draw plausible conclusions as regards their mutual relations. Equally remarkable was also the paper by J. Jelínek on regional evolution of the Homo genus in southern and south-eastern Asia. The author reflected on the position of Homo erectus and has concluded that with a view to regional differences in body characters and cultural manifestations, the erectus phase should not be considered as species level and has proposed to use the scientific denomination Homo sapiens erectus instead.

The evolutionary trends in the European Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic were dealt with by D. Frayer, A. Czarnetzki, A. Poulianos, W. Henke and N. J. Xirontiris; The papers of G. Brauer, B. Jakobshagen, R. Saban and K. Jacobs dealt with the results of biometrical and somatometric comparisons inside the Hominidae family; the papers by V. Vančata and A. Guidotti et al. were focused on locomotion behaviour and related problems; the paper by the L. Malinovsky and V. Novotný studied the evolution of the sensor innervation of the vertebrates. It was a remarkable new subject of anthropological studies.

Besides biological evolution of the hominids much attention was paid also to their cultural development (J. Svoboda) and spiritual culture (H. Ullrich). V. Blažek considered the possibility of communicative contacts inside the family of Hominidae from the evolutionary point of view. M. Baldia made an attempt to explain cultural evolution with the help of archaeology, biological evolution, culture and communication. His off-beat approach aroused considerable attention.

It has followed from the proceedings of this section that the problem of radiation of the Pliopleistocene hominids, as well as the problems of their mutual relations still remain obscure, in spite of the fact that the collection of their finds have grown greatly in the recent years, namely thanks to the intense research in the deposits of the Omo and Awash areas. The same applies for the phase of the first man (Homo sp., Homo habilis) and erectus.

The 2nd Section was focused on "Prehistoric man" and M. Stloukal, Chairman of the Section invited nine speakers dealing with two groups of problems: with the history of various populations from the Neolithic to the present time.

In this group of problems let us mention the paper delivered by S. Boev (A study of the Neolithic and Aeneolithic man in Bulgaria); Kaufmann (An Anthropological study of skeletons from the Period of the Great Migration); M. Stloukal (Medieval and recent burial ground in Ducové. The Pan-Grave culture in Nubia and Egypt were dealt with by E. Strouhal. The second topical groups was oriented on Palaeopathology, mostly of prehistoric people: R. Hahn and A. Czarnetzki described the occurrence of hydrocephalic individuals in a series of prehistoric skulls; J. M. Soulié spoke about lesions on Bronze Age skulls and J. Gladkowska-Rzeczycka dealt with the presence of neoplasma on skeletons coming from prehistoric burials in Poland.

While palaeoanthropologist working with fragmentary finds are unable to draw correct conclusions as regards population analyses of the fossil hominids and later first humans without giving up the use of analogies ensuing from the study of recent primates, anthropologists specializing in prehistorical and historical anthropology are in a completely different situation. Often the good knowledge of the variability of the skeleton, but namely the priceless demographic data on the reproductive capacities of our forefathers enable them to assess the population dynamics and development trends, as documented by some studies.

Section III. Modern man (chairmen: H. Walter, V. Ferák, Z. Gavrilovič and M. Prokopec).

In two working days altogether 58 papers were read in this section. They dealt with intra- and interpopulation variability, genetic differentiation, variability and adaptability, growth and evolution, sexual dimorphism and with statistic methods.

Intra- and interpopulation variability: On erythrocytary and serum polymorphisms spoke H. Walter, P. Hraško, M. Cresta et al., G. Cruppioni and G. Spedini; the papers of M. Pospíšil, E. Spevárová, A. Leguebe, St. Vrydagh and S. Randelová dealt with derpantoglyphics; G. Hauser read a paper on flexional palm creases, while M. Dokládál and El-Nofely concentrated on dental morphology.

Genetic differentiation: R. G. Harvey dealt with the intra-population variability of the Faroe Islands; V. Ferák et al, with the genetic differentiation of the villages of valley in Slovakia; M. Pap with the occurrence of colour-blindness in Hungary, and J. Nemeskéri and H. Walter with the selection of partners in the Ivád isolate.

Variability and adaptability with special regards to the dynamics of the environment were the subjects of the papers by H. Malá, M. Ulbrichová, J. Beneš, J. Riegerová, V. Novotný, V. Holibka et al., M. Prokopec et al., O. Tihelková et al., M. Bavor, L. Crhák and B. Vacková.

Growth and development: The development strategy during the prenatal and post-natal stages were considered by S. Mutafov, J. Antoni, K. Hajniš and M. Cresta et al.; other three studies (by Z. Gavrilovič, P. Boev et al. and G. Farkas) were monothematically focused on maturation trends.

Sexual dimorphism: The system approach in determining the sex on the pelvis was the subject of Novotný's paper, sexual differences on the sacrum were dealt with by Strádalová, while the papers of M. Černý and J. Komenda were focused on the reconstruction of body height on the basis of skeletal materials.

The rest of the studies followed methodological ends, e.g. the paper on Statistic approach to multinominal regression as a method of ergonomic standardization by Komenda et al.; Correlations and regression analysis for the forecast of growth parameters by N. Šimková; Classification of anthropometric characters through factor analysis by Z. Roth et al., and finally J. Solc, J. Rychtářiková, and J. Lochman spoke about the results of an attempt to express the dependence of the individual type through age coefficient.

The proceedings of the Third Section showed that the study of contemporary man concentrates on two basic problems: 1. On studying the hereditary variability of man, namely polymorphism and 2. on the study of the individual adaptation in the widest sense of the word and of whole populations (evolutionary adaptation) to the constantly

changing conditions of life. There is no need to emphasize the importance of this study, it is evident that the discerning and classification of variability as well as the explanation of its origin, would bring the science on man, his heredity, his reaction on the environmental stress with the possibility of forecasting and intervening, a great deal forward.

Section IV. Theoretical and methodological aspects of the human evolution (Chairman V. Novák).

The 11 papers of this section were oriented on the following problems: The principles of sociogenesis and the future of mankind (V. Novák); phylosophical and ecological aspects of the anthroposociogenesis (T. D. Kardashev); ecological research and the theory of anthropogenesis (V. Leonovichova); Some aspects of the evolution of human populations were dealt with by the paper of A. Doležal et al.; Other papers read at this section were on the research of neotheny in relation to general morphology (V. Přivratský) mutual relations of cranial dimensions and their modelling were dealt with by B. Škvařilová, Z. Šmahel and V. Delfino; J. Vácha concentrated on the problems of normality and some demographic aspects of the evolution were the subject of Z. Pavlik's paper.

Let us quote some ideas of the conclusions of the congress: "Culture is a major evolutionary factor. The social environment, whose role in the evolution of modern man cannot be doubted, has a twofold character: It results both in differentiation and in homogenization, and at the same time both these contradictory phenomena further the integration of mankind into a single biological species. Although the evolution of Homo not always had an evidently cumu-

lative line, on the very contrary, the final result appears as compact and continuous."

All the papers read at the congress will be published in a special congress volume by care of the Anthropos Institute in 1981.

Within the framework of the 2nd EAA there were held also two symposia — one on secular trends (N. Wolański) and the other on medical anthropology (J. Drobny). We shall inform our readers on the outcome of these symposia in some other place.

The screening of films dealing with various research subjects was a great success. It applies especially to the films on the expeditions to Australia (J. Jelínek, M. Prokopic) and to Ethiopia — Omo (Y. Coppens).

The 2nd Congress of the EAA was concluded on August 31 in the evening hours in the Myslivna restaurant, surrounded by the park forest high above the illuminated city of Brno. The five-day meeting of European anthropologists, combined with numerous excursions and cultural programme came to an end.

The final words of the President of the Congress Dr. J. Jelínek, DrSc. and of the President of the European Anthropological Association Professor J. Huizinga concluded the congress, opening new prospects for the anthropological research. They discovered also certain language communication and other problems of the Association that should be soon solved.

The next congress of the EAA — the third one — will be held in two years in Greece, in Petralona, where "the first European" was found.

Jan Beneš