L'HOMME DE NEANDERTAL. CENTENAIRE DE LA DÉCOUVERTE DE L'HOMME DE SPY. COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL À L'UNIVERSITÉ DE LIEGÈ 4—7 DECEMBRE 1986.

Anläßlich des 100. Jahrestages der Entdeckung der menschlichen Skelettreste von Spy, welche zur Rehabilitation des Fundes aus dem Neandertal und zur Anerkennung jener besonderen menschlichen Subspecies wesentlich beigetragen hatten, veranstaltete das Service de Préhistoire der Universität von Liège unter der Leitung von Prof. Dr. Marcel Otte ein internationales Kolloquium. Es fand im Schloß von Wegimont unweit von Liège vom 4. bis 7. Dezember 1986 statt. Die Teilnahme war sehr groß. Von fast 200 angemeldeten Forschern aus den meisten Ländern Europas, aus den USA, Canada und Israel waren etwa 150 anwesend. In acht Sektionen wurden mehr als 100 Vorträge gehalten, von denen etwa 80 in vervielfältigter Form den Teilnehmern zur Verfügung standen.

In der ersten Sektion (La chronologie, geleitet von H. P. Schwarcz) erweckten besondere Aufmerksamkeit Vorträge über neue und vervollkommnete physikalische Datierungsverfahren, mit Hilfe welcher bereits einige mittelpaläolithische Fundstellen und anthropologische Funde datiert wurden. Die zweite Sektion (L'Environnement, H. Laville) faßte paläozoologische, paläobotanische sowie chronostratigraphische Vorträge zusammen. Die dritte Sektion (L'Anatomie, E. Trinkaus) befaßte sich mit verschiedenen Gesichtspunkten des Studiums von Skelettresten. In der vierten Sektion (La Technique, J. Ph. Rigaud) wurden Vorträge über die Klassifikation, Typologie und Trassologie mittelpaläolithischer Industrien gehalten. Beachtenswerte Vorträge über Bestattungen und das Sprachvermögen der Neandertaler sowie eine kritische Zusammenfassung des sog. „Bärenkults" bildeten den Inhalt der fünften Sektion (La Pensée, O. Bar-Yosef). In der sechsten Sektion (La Subsistance, Arthur Jelinek) befaßte man sich sowohl mit Fragen der Jagd und Umwelt als auch mit neuen Grabungsergebnissen. Die siebente Sektion (L'Extinction, B. Vandermeersch) war den Entwicklungsfragen der Neandertaler und der Entstehung moderner Menschen gewidmet, wobei die Tendenz deutlich wurde, eher eine Immigration des H. sapiens sapiens nach Europa als seine Entwicklung aus dem H. sapiens neandertalensis zu vermuten. In der achten Sektion (La Mutation, J. K. Kozłowski) befaßten sich die Vorträge mit Industrien aus dem Übergang vom Mittel- zum Jungpaläolithikum, bzw. aus dem frühen Jungpaläolithikum, mit besonderer Beachtung von Technologie und Rohstoffauswahl.

Die Tagung verlief in einem angenehmen Milieu, welches trotz des gefüllten Tagesprogramms noch gute Gelegenheit zu persönlichen Aussprachen und Diskussionen bot. Der angestrebte Zweck wurde gewiß erzielt und die endgültige Publikation aller Vorträge wird eine bedeutende Bereicherung unserer Fachliteratur darstellen.

Karel Valoch

A NEW PALAEOLITHIC TRIPLE-BURIAL FIND

In August 1986 B. Klíma (Archaeological Institute of the ČSAV of Brno) discovered a unique find of an isolated calva of an adult male (of 40—50 years) at the well-known Dolní Věstonice Old Stone Age site in South Moravia, Czechoslovakia. A week later he unearthed a grave with three skeletons at the same site. The finds are dated 25.00 B.P.

The excavations of the Dolní Věstonice Palaeolithic site started as early as in 1924 by the late Professor K. Absolon who published several monographs on his activities and discoveries. Later, following World War II, B. Klíma set forth the research. Beginning with the year 1947 several sites were discovered on the Pálava Hills between the villages of Dolní Věstonice and Pavlov. Most extensive of them was the „Věstonice" locality found and excavated by Proffesor Absolon, and later by B. Klíma, and „Pavlov" found and excavated by B. Klíma. Both sites belong to the local type of Gravettian Culture called Pavlovian.

Now another locality has been discovered on the marign of the village of Dolní Věstonice, higher up on the slope. A new water reservoir is under construction nearby and the heavy earth-moving machinery for the excavation of loam used for filling the earth dam uncovered the original cultural layer now burried under 5 m thick layer of loess.

There is no doubt that the site at the foot of the mountain is yet another campsite of the Gravettian population. The burial with three individuals buried simultaneously is situated on the margin of the site, in a place, where much charcoal, but no fireplaces and only few tools and animal bones were found. Thus the cultural layer at the burial site differs from typical living site layers.

In the fairly large space (some 10 × 10m) surface fires were made, as the blackish soil and frequent finds of charcoals indicate. The three individuals were buried in extended position, side by side, in a very shallow dish-like depression. In 1948 a female burial was found at the Věstonice site some 200 m east of the new 1986 discovery. This female burial, similarly as the male burial from Brno, and another burial from Kostienki, in the Soviet Ukraine, were found in deeper pits, coloured with red ochre pigment and covered with large, flat mammoth bones, such as shoulder blades and hip bones. All these finds belonged to the same cultural group, to Gravettian. In the recently discovered 1986 grave the applied burial method differs. The bodies were laid down, first the central body of a 17—20 years old man, then the body of another young man (17—20 years) was placed flat on his back, along the right side of the former, so that he reached with his hand the pubic region of the first individual. On the western side laid the third skeleton belonging to a male adolescent (15—17 years old), laying on his belly, with his head turned slightly to the west, which is not the case with the other two bodies. We doubt that this situation is the result of a sheer fortuity and the position of the three skeletons poses a number of questions we are unable to answer at this stage. The only thing we know is that the central individual was buried first and the two other were added afterwards, as their arm bones cover the bones of the central skeleton. The whole situation and the stratigraphy makes it clear that all three skeletons belong to the same burial.

On the right femur of the central figure there are clear pathological changes making the leg shorter. The difference between the length of the two legs was well perceptible during his lifetime.

It cannot be ruled out that all three died in the same way eg. by an accident. But another explanation should be considered as well: Věstonice sites were evidently of permanently inhabited type. 80 km far to the north, the famous Předmostí site in central Moravia belonged to the same culture and was of the same age. K. J. Maška found here a grave with the remains of twenty individuals. The tomb was outlined with big mammoth bones and covered with stones. The Předmostí site with the remains of more than 1000 mammoths (according to dental counts) and with such a tomb was evidently also a permanent living site. New discoveries of large mammoth bones document the existence of complex mammoth bone habitations in Předmostí (Valoch, 1986).

B. Klíma discovered in Věstonice simple kilns for fireing clay figurines. It seems that in all these Gravettian localities we have to do with an advanced type of social organization of a hunting society, differing very much from the ideas generally accepted in the past. The social structure of this prosperous and demographically rich population differed greatly from that of the small hunting bands.

If this is so, the possibility of some social reasons for the found tripple burial should be investigated.

Let us have a brief chronological look at the finds discovered in the past decenia in Věstonice: the first calva was discovered in 1925, another in 1930, a female grave was discovered in 1949, the Pavlov skeleton was unearthed in 1957, and finally in 1986 a calva and a triple burial were found. It makes so far eight individuals represented by valuable cranial and postcranial remains, not to mention the skeletal fragments and dental remains of minor importance. The Pavlov man was a hypermasculine, and the Věstonice III female a hyperfeminine individual. Together with other finds they give us an idea of the variability inside this population, a unique case in Palaeolithic anthropology. It is interesting to note that the 15—17 years old boy was very strong, with prominent muscular reliefs, especially on the postcranial skeleton. At the age of 15—17 years this is not only the result of physical exercise, these features are without doubt genetical characters. Surprisingly the bones of the braincase are very thin in all three buried individuals. We could speculate that perhaps this was due to their sub-adult age (15—20 years). Nevertheless, the male calva found 15 m aside and belonging to an adult man (40—50 years of age) is also surprisingly thin, although the supraorbital and occipital relief is well developed. It seems that muscular relief and bone thickness are two separate features. We still do not know much about the mechanisms of their adaptive character.

The reconstruction and study of this new central European find is under way, giving us some important new information already at this stage, and opening at the same time some tantalizing new questions. Although some archaic features were reported with the Gravettian remains (Předmostí, Pavlov, Brno II), this population was highly developed, both culturally and socially. Their symbolic way of thinking is documented e.g. by rich and unique finds of mobile art.

It seems that similarly as in the much later Magdalenian Period, when Dordogne, the Pyrenees and Cantabria were the centres of European development, in the Gravettian Period between 25—30 000 years B.P., Moravia with its numerous large living sites was the hub of the European development. The increasing welfare brought about a population increase, with a booming exchange of biological and cultural information. Communication played a decisive role in these early chapters of our past. Dolní Věstonice and the recent find of the triple burial open the window to our better understanding of the complex hunting societies of the Upper Palaeolithic.

J. Jelínek