



HANS GRIMM (1910-1995)

On 1 April 1995 the German anthropologist, social and children's physician and university professor Hans Grimm died suddenly at the age of 85.

He was born in Zwickau in Saxony on 7 February 1910. He studied medicine at the University of Halle, and when the professor of zoology there, A. Remane, transferred to Kiel, he followed him and gained a doctorate in natural sciences there in 1939. He won an assistant's post in the anthropological institute in Wrocław under Prof. Eickstedt, and concluded his studies of medicine there in 1943. The end of the war found Grimm in the hospital for infectious illnesses in Poděbrady.

In 1946-47 he was accepted as an assistant at the children's clinic in Halle, where he had once studied. In 1951 he took a further degree in the field of social medicine with a thesis on struma in children.

At that time he could devote himself to anthropology only in his free time. He examined human skeletal remains in museums in Halle, Magdeburg and Weimar. When Humboldt University reopened in Berlin he was entrusted with lectures on phylogenetic evolution and, later, constitutional biology there. He finally settled in Berlin when he assumed the function of director of the Department of Social Hygiene of the Academy for Physician's Further Education. At the same time he worked as a school physician. In 1952 he became one of the founders of what was at first a professional association and later a society of sports medicine, and in 1955 contributed substantially to the writing of the first German textbook on medicine in physical education. His pedagogical activity gradually expanded to cover lectures and practical exercises in anthropology. He conceived the idea of founding an independent anthropological institute, which came into being in 1955 as part of the Faculty of Medicine at Humboldt University.

This was the first institute of anthropology in postwar East Germany, the former institute having been discredited by its racist theories under the Nazi government. With his physician's humanism, broad education in the natural sciences and patient pedagogical work, Grimm demonstrated the practical as well as theoretical utility of anthropology. He developed the institute into a scientific center whose importance soon went beyond the boundaries of the former DDR. In 1958 Grimm published a manual of anthropology for pedagogical use entitled "Fundamentals of Constitutional Biology and Anthropology". In 1959 he became co-publisher and chief editor of the periodical *Zeitschrift für ärztliche Jugendkunde*, dedicated to the anthropology and medicine of children's health, which he guided up until 1987.

His work was, unfortunately, marked by a political situation in which neither he nor his assistants were permitted the contact with foreign (Western) countries so essential for normal scientific work. When the association for anthropology, ethnology and prehistory in West Berlin awarded him the Virchow Medal for his outstanding merit in the revival and development of German anthropology, he was not allowed to accept it.

The university reforms of 1972 signified the abolition of institutes, as the result of a new conception of broad fields of study (Bereiche). At that time the focus of Grimm's research, hitherto oriented primarily toward the living young, gradually shifted to the study of skeletal findings from archaeological discoveries. Given his physician's erudition, it was not surprising that anthropological perspectives were ever more often complemented here by paleopathology, which began to develop rapidly throughout the world beginning in the Seventies. Grimm's work on different diagnostic groups of findings gained the recognition of experts. Even after his retirement he published a special monograph on the Neolithic stone mound culture (Hunengraber) in the Mecklenburg region.

He continued his work in retirement after the reunification of Germany. Only three weeks before his death he sent the author of this obituary a letter in which he discussed the future of anthropology at Humboldt University, which still concerned him even as an eighty-five-year-old man...

With him has departed a scientist, a good man and an unyielding advocate of humanism, who rejected both dictatorships, the brown and the red, under whose reign he spent most of his active life. Despite all the obstacles which came into his way as a consequence of this, he was able to resurrect a discredited field of study, develop it further and demonstrate its significance in practice and for the future. This great Humanist, anthropologist and bearer of the Hrdlička Medal will live on, not only in his students and successors, but in our memories as well.

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Ein internationaler Kongress mit etwa 200 Teilnehmern aus 18 Ländern fand im südspanischen Städtchen Orce (etwa 150 km NO von Granada) deswegen statt, da man in dortigen plio/pleistozänen Ablagerungen neben zahlreichen Faunaresten auch vermutliche Hominidenreste und Steinartefakte geborgen hatte. Die dortigen Forschungen werden vom paläontologischen Institut der Universität in Sabadell (Barcelona) unternommen und von Prof. Josep Gibert i Clois geleitet. Gegenwärtig werden vier Fundstellen untersucht; an drei davon Fuentenueva 3, Barranca León und Barranca del Paso) fand man Steinartefakte zusammen mit Tierknochen in ursprünglicher Lage, von der vierten (Venta Micena), einer seit längerem bekannten Lokalität altpleistozäner Fauna, stammen die vermeintlichen Hominidenreste sowie Spuren menschlicher Aktivität an Tierknochen. Die als Hominidenreste präsentierten Knochen bestehen aus einem occipito-parietalen Schädelfragment und einem Humerusfragment mit einer Epiphyse, beides juvenilen Alters, sowie einem unbestimmbaren Diaphysenfragment. Im Gegensatz dazu bestehen über den artefiziellen Charakter der Steinobjekte keine Zweifel. Es handelt sich um kleine unretuschierte Abschläge und dazugehörige Kerne, an bearbeiteten Geräten gibt es nur einige ausgesplitterte Stücke (pièces écaillées) in typischer Ausprägung. Geröllgeräte kommen nur vereinzelt vor. Die Anwesenheit von Menschen -tool-makers- ist also gesichert.

Die plio/pleistozänen lakustrinen und fluvialen Sedimente erreichen eine Mächtigkeit bis 80 m und sind in einer Ausdehnung von etlichen Tausend km² erhalten. Tiefe Erosionsschluchten ermöglichen das Studium der Stratigraphie. Nach paläomagnetischen Messungen sind die basalen Ablagerungen etwa 5,3 Mio Jahre alt, die gegrabenen Fundstellen stammen höchstwahrscheinlich aus dem Zeitraum zwischen 1,6-1,2 mio Jahre. Das dortige Gelände bietet fast unbeschränkte Forschungsmöglichkeiten und verbirgt gewiß noch manche Überraschung.

Die Tagung wurde durch einen Vortrag von Ph. Tobias eröffnet, in dem das Sprachvermögen der europäischen alt- und mittelpleistozänen Hominiden wahrscheinlich gemacht wurde. - Ein wesentlicher Teil der folgenden Vorträge wurde der Präsentation der Funde von Orce gewidmet. (u. a. mikrobiologische und chemische Beweise des hominiden Ursprungs der Funde von Venta Micena). Ferner wurden die Hominiden von Atapuerca sowie die Neandertaler-Reste von Las Palomas und Cueva Negra behandelt. Vorträge über die Stratigraphie und über paläontologische Funde begleiteten die jeweiligen Ausführungen. - Außerhalb von Spanien verdient die Aufmerksamkeit der Fund einer menschlichen Kalotte von „Campo Grande“ bei Ceprano in Mittelitalien zusammen mit Acheuléen-Artefakten, die vermutlich älter als 700 000 Jahre sein könnte. Die Aus-