



**Doc. PhDr. Karel Valoch, DrSc.  
celebrating his 80th birthday**



Karel Valoch and myself have passed our entire active careers as scientists together at the Anthropos Institute, Moravian Museum (Brno, Czech Republic). This friendly co-existence of ours was evidently accompanied with a permanent exchange of opinions. We spoke almost daily of research, new discoveries, literature and all that was of any interest for both of us. That is how nearly fifty years of our common experience have passed, which undoubtedly gives me the right, but also the pleasant task, to say a few words to my colleague's and friend's life anniversary.

Of course, I am far from expressing any evaluation. I am an anthropologist, not an archaeologist; and I owe many of my archaeological knowledge namely to Karel Valoch. That is why I can only humbly mention those main outputs and results of his work that I know to have reached international renown and acknowledgement. They consist in roughly three fields of Palaeolithic research: 1) Magdalenian; 2) Middle Palaeolithic and the transition to Upper Palaeolithic; 3) Lower Palaeolithic.

Karel Valoch's study of Magdalenian hunters' culture has been based on his field research at Moravian sites, and on the study of extensive museum collections in Moravia, Czechoslovakia and abroad. This study later resulted in numerous publications, out of which special mention should be made first of all of the comprehensive work "Magdalenian in Moravia", published as a monograph in 1960, and "Le Paléolithique en Tchéquie et en Slovaquie" (1996), a book providing a survey of 35 years' work, with among others also a view



of this late period of Upper Palaeolithic hunting culture. Nevertheless, Karel Valoch published dozens of other works dealing with the Magdalenian in both Czech and foreign specialist press, scientific journals and symposia proceedings. His latest comprehensive work, "Das Magdalenien in Mähren, 130 Jahre seiner Erforschung", is currently in press at the *Jahresschrift des Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz*. All these publications are mostly representative works, moreover showing the evolution of Valoch's scientific approach in the interval of almost thirty years.

The second fundamental theme of Karel Valoch's scientific interest deals with the transition period from Middle to Upper Palaeolithic, characteristic with the apparition of the anthropological type of modern Man, *Homo sapiens sapiens*. In archaeology, that is a complex field, represented in Central Europe with stone tool assemblages of the Szeletien and Bohunicien. In principle, it is an examination of the changes in the process of cultural evolution during the Palaeolithic, in the course of which human behaviour is manifested mainly through stone tools. Valoch's experience in this topic is very rich, based on the research of both previous (Middle Palaeolithic) and subsequent (Upper Palaeolithic) sites. The most fundamental impact in his Middle Palaeolithic research has been exerted by his fifteen-years' basic research of the Kůlna Cave that climaxed in the extensive monographic publication "Die Erforschung der Kůlna Höhle 1961–1976." His views of the Middle Palaeolithic problems have been published in 1991 in several chapters of the comprehensive work *Menschwerdung* (Ed. H. Ullrich) in Berlin, while Middle Palaeolithic environmental conditions are analysed in the work "Périodes de l'*Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* et de ses contemporains" as a part of Volume I of "Histoire scientifique et culturelle de l'Humanité," Unesco, Paris. His latest work, currently in press, is named "Stránská skála III – Ateliers des Bohunicien".

As to the transition itself between Middle to Upper Palaeolithic, Karel Valoch has focussed on the study of the Szeletien ("Le Szélétien en Moravie" in the work "Feuilles de pierre" – Ed. J. Kozłowski, ERAUL No. 42, Liège). He was the first to discover, explain stratigraphically and date the position of Szeletien at the Vedrovice site, and therefore to prove the time and evolutionary position of the Szeletian cultural tradition in central Europe.

During the past decade, Karel Valoch has been intensively studying the earliest European habitation. Also here, he bases himself on mostly Moravian, and more generally on central-European material that is quite familiar to him, as he had contributed to it himself with frequent field research and collecting. While certain researchers do not suppose earlier infiltration of humans to Europe than 500,000 years B.P., Karel Valoch belongs to the group of experts putting this habitation into the previous period, i.e. between 500,000 and one million years B.P. In this context, his work on the Stránská Skála site is of particular importance, as it is dated before the Matuyama-Brunhes palaeomagnetic change, that is 700,000 years B.P. This work, based on research undertaken by Valoch in cooperation with palaeontologist Professor R. Musil (1978 and 1995), brings the information on the stone tool assemblage, one of the most ancient in Europe. Also this work was preceded by a long period of field-works and gathering Early Palaeolithic pebble, core and flake tools, mostly from southern Moravia.

All of Valoch's research and studies, exceeding 250 published titles, were made possible only thanks to his extraordinary endeavour and scientific determination. Moreover, Karel Valoch has worked intensively as a university lecturer; in his home working-place, the Anthropos Institute, he established one of the largest European Palaeolithic collections, and a large specialist library.

In the history of Czech Palaeolithic research, Karel Valoch has ranked among the famous names of J. Wankel, K. J. Maška, K. Absolon and B. Klíma.

I have always followed Valoch's unfailing activity with amazed admiration, and I wish him from all my heart a lot of happiness in private life, and much new satisfaction from his work that has always fulfilled his rich and fruitful life.

Ad multos annos.

Jan Jelínek