



On January 20, 2008, an international conference was organised by Patrick Skinner and Rebecca Farbstein at the McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, entitled "Unravelling Hominin Relations with the Environment in Central Europe during Oxygen Isotope Stage 3". More than fifty colleagues participated in a day of papers and discussion that aimed to advance theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of hominin use of movement through and engagement with the environment. Papers were grouped by theme, rather than by chronology or geography, to gain a better sense of the ways our approaches were united together by common research questions and agendas. The day started with a keynote paper from Dr. William Davies (University of Southampton), who presented the results of the recent re-dating of many early Upper Paleolithic sites in Central Europe. The following two papers, presented by Alex Pryor (University of Cambridge, UK) and Cleantha Paine (University of Cambridge, UK) discussed ways of reconstructing environmental change, from a more general perspective (Pryor) and also through a case study in micromorphology and isotope analysis (Paine).

The next three papers focused on material culture and technological innovation as ways of understanding hominin interactions with their environment. Becky Wragg-Sykes (University of Sheffield, UK) presented a paper on Neanderthal use of perishable technologies, including pitch, in northern Central Europe. Dr. Iain Morley (University of Cambridge, UK) and Rebecca Farbstein (University of Cambridge, UK) both discussed hominin relations with animals, in the use of avian fauna for musical instruments (Morley) and in the variable bone *chaînes opératoires* associated with the production of Pavlovian non-figurative art (Farbstein).

Charalampos Garefalakis (University of Southampton, UK) presented an ecological model for understanding Neanderthal relations with predators during OIS-3 in Northern Europe. Subsequently, Dr. Petr Neruda (Moravian Museum, Brno, Czech Republic) discussed land use patterns during OIS-3 in Moravia through analysis of lithic resource exploitation patterns. The final paper in this section, presented by Professor Paul Haesaerts and Philip Nigst (with co-authors Bence Viola, Freddy Damblon, Michael Gotzinger, Gerhard Trnka and Christa Frank) discussed first a pan-European analysis of environmental change during OIS-3, followed by a case study in lithic raw material use at the site of Willendorf II (Austria).

Dr. Lenka Lisa (University of Cambridge, UK) followed with a paper that discussed the use of micromorphology to understand long-term climate change at the Moravian Gravettian sites. Finally, Patrick Skinner (University of Cambridge, UK), concluded with a paper about hominin – cave bear relations in Moravia during OIS-3.

Participants then enjoyed an hour's discussion led by Davies, where broad issues raised throughout the day were discussed. Issues of time-scale and geographic-scale were discussed. Advancements in dating techniques were also highlighted as important ways in which the discipline was advancing. Furthermore, the ways in which social strategies and conceptions of self are linked to the environment were explored. *Chaînes opératoires*, which were used in several papers, were also discussed as a potential way of better understanding the relationship between the social environment and the natural environment. The organisers are grateful to all participants, especially those who presented papers, for such a successful conference.

Rebecca Farbstein