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THE EARLY UPPER PALAEOLITHIC IN THE EASTERN PART OF CENTRAL EUROPE

ABSTRACT: This paper is an introduction and a brief summary of Special Issue of Anthropologie Journal (Volume 27, Issue 2–3, Year 1989), which contains several papers concerning the important sites of Korolevo I and II in the Soviet Transcarpathia as well as the contributions to the questions of the transition of the Middle Palaeolithic to the Upper Palaeolithic in the other countries of the eastern part of Central Europe. This article is a reprint of a previously published article (Valoch K., 1989: Anthropologie (Brno) 27, 2–3: 89–91).

KEY WORDS: Eastern part of Central Europe – Transition of the Middle Palaeolithic to the Upper Palaeolithic

The questions related to the transition of the Middle Palaeolithic have been in the limelight of prehistorians and anthropologists, which is proved by the repeatedly held conferences oriented onto this topic (the last conference was in Nemours, in May 1988). A lot of publications contributing, in a decisive way, to our knowledge of this problem have been published in the eastern part of Central Europe. V. N. Gladilin's paper read at the XIth Congress INQUA in Moscow 1982 dealt with the excavations in Korolevo. His paper together with the submitted documentation and implement drawings from all levels emphasized the significance of this site exceeding the regional framework. Therefore I have made an effort to assert the publishing of the first detailed studies dealing with the industries of the Early

Upper Palaeolithic in the Anthropologie Journal edited by the Anthropos Institute of the Moravian Museum. I have asked the colleagues from neighbouring countries to send their contributions so that the regional context can be reached. This is the story how this Special Issue (Volume 27, Issue 2–3, Year 1989) came into existence.

Korolevo lies inside the Carpathian arch in the valley of the Tisa River, in a close vicinity of the Romania frontier and not very far from the Hungarian frontier, so that the Palaeolithic of that area can be considered to be a part of the development of the eastern part of Central Europe. Our attention will be devoted to the youngest Middle Palaeolithic industries of the abundantly stratified loess section with many paleosols and Middle Palaeolithic levels between which, in Korolevo I as well

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as in Korolevo II, there is a level with the assemblages of the Early Upper Palaeolithic. It is beyond dispute that it is the first documented case of such a kind of interstratification in Central Europe. The principal question is the age of these levels. The youngest Middle Palaeolithic lies on the base of loess layer 3 overlying the upper fossil soil (layer 4), which Gladilin relates to the IIIrd paleosol in the Transcarpathian area, while the Early Middle Palaeolithic occurs in the underlying bed in loess layers 5 and 6. Other levels of the Middle Palaeolithic lie deeper.

The age has been stated on the basis of several dates:

1. ^{14}C : $38,500 \pm 1000$ BP for Upper Palaeolithic industry II in Korolevo II and $25,700 \pm 400$ BP for Upper Palaeolithic industry Ia in Korolevo I ("Gostriy Verkh");
2. TL: 35 ± 6 kyr for loess layer 2;
3. PM: > 44 kyr for base of loess 3 (cf. Fig. 4 in Gladilin).

Some of these dates support Gladilin's and Demidenko's conclusions that the Upper Palaeolithic in Korolevo is more than 60,000 years old and that it belongs to the period before the Brörup. This fact is contradicted only by radiocarbon dates.

Provided that the correlation of individual sections in Korolevo and that of fossil soils in the whole Transcarpathia are exact, the date of $25,700 \pm 400$ would be too young and it would be possible to consider the

contamination with younger charcoals. However, the second date, $38,500 \pm 1000$, is in harmony with the other dates for the early stage of the Upper Palaeolithic in Central Europe.

It is true that roughly in the period of Brörup, in the North-European lowlands there appeared Middle Palaeolithic industries with striking technological and typological features of the Upper Palaeolithic (Seclin, Rocourt, Rheindahlen–Westwand, layer B1); however, they can be hardly classified as the Upper Palaeolithic. In comparison with them both the assemblages from Korolevo (cf. Gladilin, Demidenko) are completely in tune with the cultures spread in Central Europe. The industry with leafpoints, side-scrapers and end-scrapers from Korolevo II is in harmony with the Szeletian as far as its typological structure and technological features are concerned and I cannot see any reason why it could not be classified as the Szeletian. It is situated less than 180 km from the nearest hitherto known centre of the Szeletian in the environs of Miskolc in North-Eastern Hungary. Korolevo II can be considered the easternmost hitherto known site of the Szeletian. In the industry from Korolevo I with its blade technology there appear evident steep carinated forms among end-scrapers and there is no doubt that this industry, together with typologically more advanced assemblages from Beregovo (cf. Tkachenko), belongs to the Aurignacian technocomplex. The reconstructions of cores of both the industries,

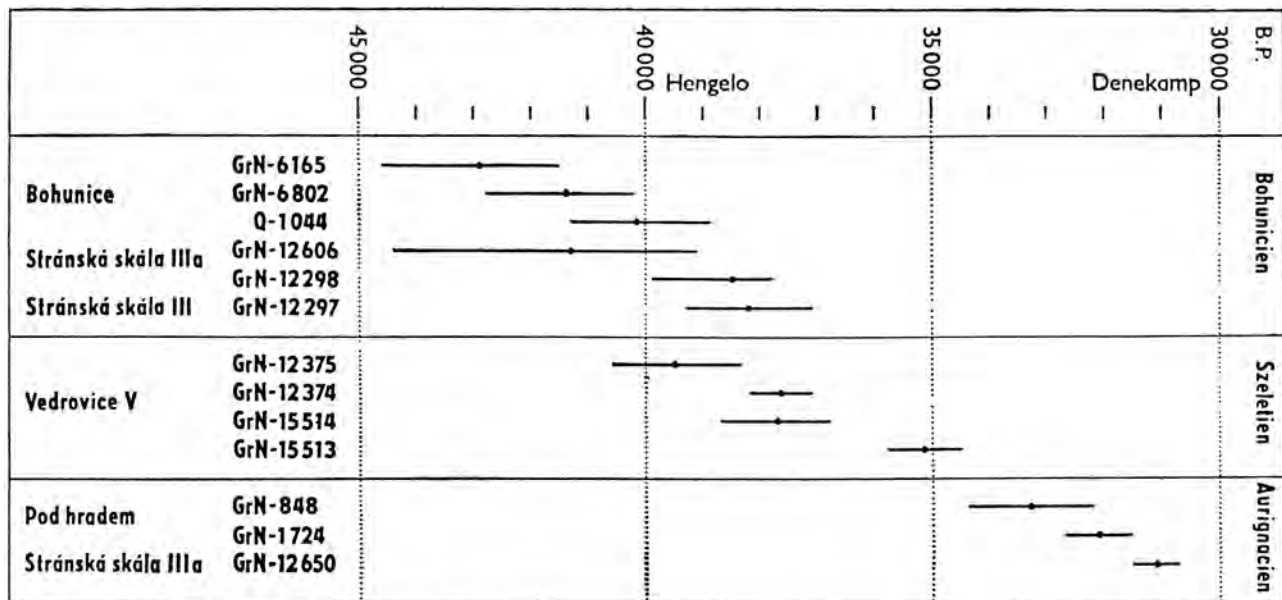


FIGURE 1. Moravian Early Upper Palaeolithic radiocarbon dates.

Korolevo II as well as Korolevo I, prove that they were mostly unidirectionally and bidirectionally flaked and that the blades formed a striking part of débitage. The remarks on the Levallois technology are suggestive (cf. Usik). From my point of view the direct genetic relation between the industries from Korolevo II and Korolevo I does not seem to be probable in spite of the fact that some features ("macro-tools") are similar in both the sites. Nevertheless the question of the origin of individual cultures has remained open and there are different standpoints this problem is taken from (cf. Gladilin and Demidenko).

The youngest Middle Palaeolithic in Korolevo belongs to the group of the denticulated Mousterian (cf. Kulakovskaya, Sitliviy) and it probably comes from a very late period. More than 20 years ago, using as a base fauna and stratigraphy, I classified the similarly denticulated Mousterian from the Šipka Cave in Moravia as "Würm 1/2", which is in harmony with the present conception of the Würmian Interpleniglacial, the period which may be very near the settlement of the youngest layer in Korolevo. The denticulated Mousterian of the eastern part of Central Europe seems to represent (Cherna-Culture after L. B. Kulakovskaya) the retarded Middle Palaeolithic parallel to the early phase of the Upper Palaeolithic.

Hungary is the country where the problems of the Szeletian come from. Both the papers (Dobosi, Ringer) dealing with the Hungarian finds from a point of view of present knowledge show that the leaf points can be found not only in the Szeletian, but also in two Middle Palaeolithic groups: the Jankovichian characterized by the Levallois technique in the western part and the Babonyian, which is a part of the Central European Micoquian, without the Levallois technique, in the eastern part. The view that this Micoquian is formed by two facies should be proved in the future. According to this theory one of the facies tended to create leaf-points (Babonyian) while the other preserved various kinds of bifaces and biface-knives till the youngest phase (cf. Ringer). It might include the youngest layer in the Ciemna Cave in Southern Poland. Other sites contained leaf points in quite a different context as early as at the end of Pleniglacial A and they are classified as the "pre-Szeletian" (cf. Kozłowski).

In Eastern Slovakia the Early Upper Palaeolithic is represented by the Aurignacian, which may be very important not only in the relation to Korolevo and Beregovo, but also to the Aurignacian of North-Western Roumania as Korolevo lies in the nearest geographical distance from it (cf. Báñez). In Moravia the beginning

of the Upper Palaeolithic is formed by three typologically and technologically different groups. The Aurignacian is abundant and its oldest phase seems to go back to the end of Pleniglacial A (cf. Oliva). Milovice, besides Stránská skála II and IIIa (excavated by J. Svoboda) is another Moravian site with Aurignacian finds. In Milovice the bed underlying the Gravettian/Pavlovian industry contains the younger phase of the Aurignacian, which has been dated by radiocarbon (cf. Oliva). The Szeletian has been excavated in Moravia only in the settlement of Vedrovice V for the time being (Valoch 1984a, b, 1986, 1993). The third group is represented by the Bohunician exclusively using the Levallois technique (Oliva 1981, 1984, Svoboda 1980, 1987, Svoboda, Svobodová 1985, Valoch 1976, 1990) (*Figure 1*).

I hope that the papers published in this issue present not only the general significance of the sites of Korolevo and the role of the whole eastern part of Central Europe in the process of the rise of the Upper Palaeolithic, but that they also have contributed, to a certain extent, to the solution of this question decisive for the cultural development.

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