



EDITORIAL

The palaeolithic record of central and eastern Europe plays a crucial role in human evolutionary studies. A source of extensive and sometimes spectacular evidence (for example, Předmostí, Pavlov, Dolní Věstonice, the Ach and Lone Valley sites, Sungir etc) it also serves to link the classic, detailed, but provincial and peripheral west European evidence with the sparser records of the Eurasian landmass and, southwards via the Caucasus and the Levant, ultimately with Africa. Given the region's importance, paleoanthropology has been fortunate to have had a scholar of Karel Valoch's calibre to recover, document and interpret that record for the academic community over a career spanning more than sixty years.

Karel Valoch's own excavations resulted in major contributions to the evidence base for the palaeolithic in Central Europe, especially Moravia. Highpoints included the recovery of a Mode 1 assemblage of cores and flakes with burnt bone from the early Middle Pleistocene site of Stránská Skála I near Brno, and major excavations at Kůlna Cave which yielded contextual data as well as evidence of human occupation from the late Middle Pleistocene to the Holocene. Karel's finds included a Neanderthal partial maxilla with right C – M¹ from the Micoquian Level 7a at Kůlna; by happy coincidence July 30th 2015 is the fiftieth anniversary of that discovery. His excavation of the large, stratified Vedrovice V site provided detailed evidence for the Szeletian in Moravia whilst his excavations at Brno Bohunice and Stránská Skála III led him to recognize and describe the enigmatic early Upper Palaeolithic Bohunician. Opinions differ as to whether the Bohunician is an indigenous development or an exotic intrusion into central Europe, but all credible interpretations of the earliest Upper Palaeolithic in the region need to take it into account.

Karel Valoch's intellectual range, coupled with a particular aptitude for languages, meant he was well equipped to author interpretive syntheses. Those same qualities, together with a naturally collegial and friendly personality, made him an interested and engaging host for visiting scholars. Numerous contributors to this volume have attested to the welcome they received in Brno, and recalled with pleasure their discussions with Karel. He was also an approachable and supportive teacher, mentor and senior colleague to younger workers, and former students and collaborators have made, and continue to make, significant contributions of their own to early central European prehistory.

Several appreciations of Karel Valoch's contributions have already appeared, including a selection of his papers in an earlier issue of this journal (*Anthropologie* LI (1) 2013) and it is unnecessary to repeat full details of his career here. But we trust that the contributions herein will be judged an appropriate memorial to an exceptional scholar and researcher. Certainly their range – spatial, technological and chronological – mirrors the extraordinary breadth of Karel's vision and they provide further insights into the lives of those Pleistocene hunter gatherer groups about whom his own work elucidated so much.

Geographically the papers naturally cluster in the Czech Republic (Blinková & Neruda; Nerudová; Smith *et al.*) and adjacent lands (Bolus; Antl & Bosch; Kaminská; Brandl *et al.*; Mania; Küßner & Jäger), but they extend eastwards – in the south through Rumania (Balescu *et al.*) to the Crimea (Demidenko) and Georgia (Moncel *et al.*),

and in the north to Vladimir, well east of Moscow (Bosinski, Trinkaus *et al.*). In addition Bar-Yosef provides a broader, corrective perspective based on a review of the East Asian evidence as a counter to rigidly Eurocentric interpretations of the palaeolithic record. Temporally the papers span a period from the later Middle Pleistocene (Moncel *et al.*; Balescu *et al.*) or even earlier in the latter case, to the final Pleistocene (MIS Stage 2) (Blinková & Neruda; Nerudová). Technologically they range from the Acheulean (Moncel *et al.*), Middle Paleolithic (Bolus; Balescu *et al.*; Mania; Moncel *et al.*; Demidenko), Szeletian (Kaminská), Aurignacian (Brandl *et al.*) Gravettian and epi-Gravettian (Antl & Bosch; Nerudová) and Magdalenian (Blinková & Neruda; Küßner & Jäger) and Mesolithic (Ullrich). They include studies of the diversity of organic artefacts and their working (Bosinski; Antl & Bosch; Bolus), and of the refashioning of lithics (Demidenko; Mania), of differentiated site activities (Blinková & Neruda; Nerudová) and burials (Bosinski; Trinkaus *et al.*). As well as the papers by these last two authors, skeletal remains are summarized by Moncel *et al.* and Smith *et al.*, who also review the fossil evidence for hunter-gatherer group interactions in the region during the first part of the pleniglacial, and their evolutionary implications. By contrast, Bolus emphasizes the discontinuity of the record in the Swabian Jura, implying a depopulation phase between Mousterian and Aurignacian groups.

I wish to thank all contributors for the prompt manner in which they provided careful drafts of their papers in English – in many cases even though this is not their first language – and their speedy and constructive responses to editorial comments. I should also like to thank Zdeňka Nerudová – one of Karel's collaborators – for her editorial work in dealing with the final papers and seeing the issue through the press. Most of all, I especially wish to thank Martina Galetová – another collaborator of Karel's in the field of palaeolithic art – who bore the burden of initiating and maintaining contact with contributors, receiving and correcting drafts and preparing many papers for printing. Martina undoubtedly carried the heaviest load in preparing this issue, and I greatly regret that circumstances beyond her and my control prevented her from completing her work and seeing the issue through the press.

Nonetheless, we like to think that Karel would have appreciated the active involvement and major contributions of two of his younger colleagues in preparing this tribute to him, as well as the scholarly regard, admiration and friendship of his academic peers manifested by the submission of such varied and substantial papers in homage to his memory.

Alan Bilborough
Guest Editor
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology
University of Durham