



Andreas Maier: **The Central European Magdalenian. Regional Diversity and Internal Variability.**

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The period at the end of the Last Glacial Maximum, when the Magdalenian culture was at its height, continues to attract a circle of researchers. From an environmental point of view, this is a period with the echoes of climatic extremes, which the literature claims that thanks to its harshness caused the decolonisation of large areas of Europe. At the same time, it led to the origins of a new culture in western Europe, which grew very quickly and took over a wide area of the then partly depopulated European continent.

In this dissertation, the author has used two sources of information: his own studies of selected European assemblages and most importantly the available professional publications. They were successful in collecting information from a significant number of assemblages: 651 Magdalenian assemblages from 540 sites were identified by himself and included in the database. The information platform been extended by Hamburgian assemblages (171 inventories from 161 sites). As the author states himself, the analyzed data was of varying quality, many were incomplete and could not be sufficiently used.

The main goal of this study was to resolve whether or not regional groups of same sort can be detected in the Central European Magdalenian record, and how these groups interrelate. The groups were divided up by their territories, in total there were five: Circum-Jurassic Group, Danube Group, Meuse-Rhine Group, Vltava-Saale Group and Polish-Moravian Group.

Cultural diversity and regional grouping of individual groups (their technological and typological variations) were put through statistical analysis.

The work is clearly categorised in the opening chapter (overview of the knowledge of the Magdalenian; limits of the studied region; the necessary theoretical and methodological description of the material; our own analysis of the locations in the context of their natural environment; raw materials and local suitability; and appropriate linking passages).

The geographic breadth of engagement, covering all known localities (excluding some uncertain assemblages) allows author to present some provocative conclusions. These were first talked about by Andeias Mayer at some HUGO Obermaier Gesellschaft conferences (specifically at the 54th Annual Meeting in Toulouse, 10 to 14 April 2012), where the author met with strong disapproval; author underwent a critical review of radiocarbon dates of Central European Magdalenian assemblages, which assigned ¹⁴C data not only from Epigravetian (Grubgraben, Stránská skála IV) and Epiaurignatian sites (Langmannesdorf), but also for example. Ságvárien in Hungary. After calibration and proper rounding of data (cf. Table 8.1 and Fig. 8.5) constructs a bidirectional propagation model of the Magdalenian, just on the basis that in the east we do not find locations, which are chronologically younger: the first branch expands around 20,000 from the southwest of France gradually until the Rhine and Danube, at the same time the second (independent) branch spreads from the Carpathian region of Hungary in three separate ways – to Moravia, where the Magdalenian embeds at locations in Brno-Vídeňská and Brno-Stránská skála IV, then from there to the Czech Republic and Poland. In none of these conception is Bohemia colonised from Poland or Moravia, as published by Sl. Vencl, but rather it is considered that Bohemia was settled from Thuringia.

Although we can legitimately question the outlined concept of the Magdalenian expansion, and also with regard to knowledge of archaeological material, it is necessary to allow the author a large amount of heuristic work, especially in terms of all basic sources gathered and presented on the Magdalenian era. With such global comparisons we can not be sufficiently capture in detail the nuances of individual sites, although the author drew from a large regional language literature (i.e. Not German, French or English).

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Brno: Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences; Masaryk University, 2015. 618 pp. ISBN 978-80-7524-000-2; ISBN 978-80-210-7781-2. DOI: 10.5817/CZ.MUNI.M210-7781-2015, hardback.

On 29th September 2015 in Brno, in cooperation with the Archaeological Institute of the Academy of Sciences and the Academia bookshop, there was a book launch celebration dedicated to the Jubileum of Prof. Jiří Svoboda.

There is selection of rare monographs – 618 pages – which convincingly demonstrates not only the breadth of scientific influence of the honoured professor, but also a considerable number of colleagues have contributed to the book. The original intention of the editors was to gather and publish several scholarly articles that reflect the state of current knowledge of Pleistocene research, but it has grown into an almost encyclopaedic scope. The book is divided into five sections, containing contributions by 100 authors (including editors) from 16 countries. Thematically, the first part is mainly about the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, the second part consists of contributions from the Gravettian, in the following part there are contributions of palaeolithic art, in the fourth section we can read about the Upper and Late Palaeolithic communities while climate changes were taking place and in the last – fifth section – there are contributions with Egyptian and medieval-anthropological themes. Clearly, it is wide-ranging in geographical coverage too.

From a total of 41 contributions, I have selected a handful for a more detailed overview, even though they are all worthy. Jaroslav Wilczyński gives an overview of Upper Palaeolithic settlements in Poland *The Gravettian and Epigravettian settlements of Poland*; pp. 191–213. The number of known open sites here – especially in the area of Upper Silesia is greatly influenced by the fluctuating influence of the loess cover in the case of cave sites and their research, which began in the 19th century. Even though in the past few years, several new sites have been

discovered belonging to Gravettian and Epigravettian. One of them is the Borsuka cave, which yielded up 6 deciduous teeth belonging to a child of 12 to 18 months. Drilled incisors and canines of steppe wisent or aurochs and European elk were also found, ¹⁴C dated to 27.0–25.0 ky uncal BP. While Gravettian settlements from Upper Silesia are quite well known, Epigravettian settlements are really poor, because during the LGM, the area of Southern Poland was heavily affected by the end of the glacier. Archaeological records are missing especially between 19.0 to 17.0 ky BP uncal. Some of the Epigravettian sites overlap with the following Magdalenian.

The team of authors: Roland Nespoulet, Laurent Chiotti and Dominique Henry-Gambier, describe the new research of one of the most famous sites, located beneath a rocky overhang in the valley of the River Vezère *Old collection and new excavations in a Gravettian key site: the Abri Pataudi (Dordogne, France)*; pp. 229–244. Abri Pataud is well known from as early as the 19th century, the foundational research was carried out in the 1950s by H. L. Movius. Modern research started in 2005 and has continued up to today, it is a key location which allows us to make revisions to the Gravettian chronology in France. Stratigraphic sequence provided evidence of continuous habitation from the Early Aurignacian up until the Final Gravettian found in layer 2. From this latest horizon comes most of Movius' research, including at least 429 human bones. Modern research has tried to clarify microstratigraphic layer 2, as regards the anthropological remains and their relationship in the context of the settled space. Revision shows that the human remains are younger than the Final Gravettian, where the findings assigned and it was possible to subdivide layer 2 into two sub-layers with differing phases of settlement. Human bodies, or parts of their remains were part of the funerary behavior, including the contemporary parietal art from layer 2 (collapsed limestone fragments with painted decoration were located precisely in the second layer).

Other research projects (for example, whether some human bones were burned or covered with dye) are in progress.

Co-authors Marcos García-Diez and Blanca Ochoa focussed on *The first figurative portable art in westernmost Europe: characterisation and chronological issues*; pp. 303–314. Sites from the Iberian Peninsula known for evidence of portable art are a real

rarity. They occur in two areas: the north coast of Spain in Catabria and the Basque country (El Castillo, Morin and others) and near Valencia on the eastern seaboard. The oldest art is found in the early phases of the Gravettian, for the time-being we haven't found any evidence of smaller art from the Aurignacian. The oldest document dates from Covalejos and is dated to 34.0–33.0 cal BP. The images are usually very simple engravings on pebbles or flat surfaces. From the Early or Middle Gravettian, engravings come from both regions, whereas in the Mediterranean area (Valencia) evidence from the later phase of the Gravettian is lacking.

Arts again, this time from the Pavlovian by Rebecca A. Farbstein and William Davis, *Rediscovering Paleolithic art: overlooked ceramic figurines from the Pavlovian*; pp. 328–346.

This is the first paper to come out of the project focused on studying the emergence of ceramic technologies across Palaeolithic Europe. With the help of macro- and microscopic observation of both ceramic statues and fragments, but also burned pellets the authors reconstructed an operating diagram of figurative and non-figurative ceramic from the Pavlov site. Both authors have focused on findings from research in the years 1952–1964, which yielded more than 5,600 pieces of ceramics. Only a small, representative part of them have been studied and published and these more from a typological than a technological standpoint. The remaining part of the collection consists of very small fragments of "pellets" that were the subject of study. The fundamental task was to create an appropriate methodology to describe them, that would reflect the material used – ceramics – and the resulting shape – small portable figurative art. Just as with the chipped industry, the process of selecting the material was monitored and evaluated, its modification, the production of artefacts, their use until discarding or abandonment. These stages have been quantified and compared, as in the case of numerous files facilitates further reconstruction. Analysis identified a total of 4 phases of production of the figures; method or phase I: first of all the constituent parts were brought together and worked into the individual parts of the figures (body, head, hands, legs). Occasionally, fingerprints can be seen on the figures. Phase II is made up of components that look like their future forms, which would be completed using modelling tools, for example, a bone or stone tip, might sometimes be indicated by

a pressure line, or engraving and so on. Operational scheme III shows, that for the creation of a base were sufficiently pressure or connected to the outer parts (such as ears).

The final, fourth scheme is described as the figures, which were decorated with engravings using special tools, then the production and connection to external parts. While anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures were produced using method II, i.e. "pellets" were mainly formed using procedure I. In the total of the evaluation of all the material, procedure II dominates almost 50%.

The result is a description of different or much more diversified individual phases of the manufacturing process than previously assumed.

One of palaeoenvironmental contributions is an article by Ivan Horáček, Vojen Ložek, Markéta Knitlová and Lucie Juříčková *Darkness under candlestick: Glacial Refugia on Mountain Glaciers*; pp. 363–377. The authors conducted a detailed reconstruction of shellfish and microfaunal thanatosis at Muráň 3 and Nový 3 sites, located in the eastern part of the High Tatra Mountains. The issue of refuges suitable as micro-climate shelters for climatically demanding species has been discussed in many articles. Today, these contributions are reflected with equal intensity, both with regard to the amount of newly acquired proxy data, and also with regard to climate change, which we currently witnessed. In the context of archaeological research, palaeoenvironmental reconstruction helps us to get closer to the natural conditions in immediate surroundings and its impact on the quality an intensity of human habitation.

Analysis of the assemblage for small ground mammals and molluscs from the area of the High Tatra Mountains, in the Vistulian ice-sheet area, shows that the area was inhabited a community demanding woodland elements. Conditions for their colonisation prevailed not just in MIS 3 (as earlier studies have shown), but also during LGM (MIS 2). According to the authors, this suggests that the surface area of the glacial ice sheet had a climate similar to today's Western Sayan Mountains. The existence of similar mountain refuges could be attractive for possible human habitation. Indeed, the presence cave bears in the High Alp caves is explained by the fact that climatic conditions in high mountain environments of Vistulian glacier in the Alps compared to today's much more favourable temperate conditions.

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