

Lubomíra Kaminská (compiler): **Old Slovakia 2 Paleolithic and Mesolithic. Archaeologica Slovaca Monographiae.** Archaeological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Nitra 2014. 366 pp. ISBN 978-80-89315-57-4, hardback.

In the middle of 2015, we finally had the opportunity to get our hands on a long-awaited book about the oldest settlement period in Slovakia, since the original title – *Slovakia in the upper and middle stone age* – was published by Juraj Bárta back in 1965. So after 50 years, this is the most complex compendium of Slovak authors, not counting the French written work of Karel Valoch *Le Paléolithique en Tchéquie et en Slovaquie* (published in Grenoble, 1996).

The creation of a new compendium was led by L. Kaminská and the creator of most of the texts (on the development of research into stone raw materials and a review of individual epochs of the Palaeolithic in Slovakia) and there were also contributions from other colleagues. The chapters on the evolution of the natural environment and fauna of the Quaternary period in the Slovak Republic was written by M. Moravcová, a summary of Pleistocene anthropological finds was compiled by A. Šefčáková.

Even though this is a comprehensive work, which for many years became a guidebook for many students on one or both sides of the Slovak-Czech border, it should be noted that there are several inaccuracies, right in the first two chapters: the use of out-dated terminology (riss, würm), the non-citation of

original sources (e.g. for some of the radio-carbon dating), free interchange of the MIS/OIS terms, use of English short forms in the Slovak text etc. For these two chapters, the readers may also miss more frequent and relevant citations. Not only on the climate and the environment, but also on the development and changes of Quaternary fauna, there is a plethora of newer literature, which also reflects the Slovak findings. However, as a basic overview for some less well-oriented readers, it will certainly suffice.

In contrast, anthropological fossil finds are quite readable and clearly described, also the entire evolution of the human species, including some recent findings (with regard to the period of preparing the manuscript). The chapter thus provides a quick and brief overview of the issue.

The chapter on raw material resources is relatively brief, but this is understandable considering the relatively recently released English and Czech versions of A. Přichystal's text on raw material sources of chipped artefacts in Central Europe (in Czech 2009; in English 2013).

Other parts of the book have a fixed time-regional structure, including the necessary explanatory passages. In the chapter, devoted to the late stage of the Upper Palaeolithic there suddenly appeared a short paragraph about the geomorphology of Slovakia, which would perhaps be better placed in one of the earlier parts. The writer of texts, L. Kaminská was able to capitalize on her extensive knowledge of the literature and materials and a willingness to study historical sources to be

able to adequately assess the condition of the existing resource basis. There is a detailed list of all currently known sites, the description of the material etc., including a review of the existing literature. And this book is very valuable and will stand side by side with the regularly updated *Paleolithic of Moravia and Silesia* (authors J. Svoboda *et al.*) which has long been an important study material. In the conclusion, an alphabetical list of the sites would be useful for quick orientation, such as they have in the above mentioned publication by J. Svobody *et al.* The book contains a large amount of black and white and color plates, including maps with marked locations and residential areas.

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#### REFERENCES:

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